



Minnesota Department of Education

Strategic Plan

Introduction

Public education is a fundamental right for all students, and educational access and equity are the foundational principles upon which education must be built. It is the passport to human development that opens doors and expands opportunities and freedoms (Declaration of Human Rights). As educators our purpose is to create genuine learning opportunities for all students and recognize that every child has an endearing quality that must be valued, validated, and utilized to enhance their learning. As an education system we need to foster a mindset that all students have unique learning needs and that it is the responsibility of each education professional to work to eliminate the gaps in access, participation, and representation in achievement, opportunity, and belief that many of our students face.

State educational agencies (SEAs) find themselves in an unprecedented and pivotal position in leading change to improve student learning (Rhim & Redding, 2011). Governors and state legislators view SEAs as engines for administering high-priority school initiatives. The federal government sets high expectations for state and local use of federal dollars while allowing greater state autonomy in achieving these goals. Local educational agencies (LEAs), more readily than in the past, turn to their states for guidance and support in meeting their constituents' demands for better school performance and in navigating the complexities of teaching and learning in an era of accountability (Redding, 2012).

As State leaders in education, MDE is shifting our organization to better meet these demands, and are finding new and bolder solutions to close gaps in academic performance for our students of color, Indigenous students, and students with disabilities as well as increasing academic performance, social-emotional, and behavioral learning for all students. As a result, the Minnesota Department of Education is considering its role differently to provide leadership, support and partnership to our school districts and charters to ensure that every student, those of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds, zip codes, and abilities have access to a world-class education.

Equity and Inclusion

The Minnesota Department of Education's strategic plan is student-centered and anchored in equity, diversity, and inclusion. It strives to remove barriers to student success, eliminate systemic racism, promote anti-racist and anti-bias practices throughout school communities, expand opportunities, and enhance family/caregiver/guardian engagement. MDE believes that educational access and equity are the foundational principles upon which education must be built, and while Minnesota celebrates many successes for our students we also face some of the largest gaps in opportunity and achievement in our students of color, Indigenous students, and students with a disability. Across Minnesota, students cannot access or participate in opportunities because of where they live, the color of their skin, their abilities, their zip code or the property wealth of their community. This is why MDE is dedicated to

serving every student, from birth through adult education, and working to ensure that they are all prepared for career, college and their community.

The Minnesota Department of Education also believes that we must think of education beyond kindergarten to grade 12. Education starts with the beginning of a child's life until they successfully earn their high school diploma or diploma equivalent. We know that opportunities and learning happen outside of the school building, before a student is old enough to attend kindergarten, and often after a student leaves high school and decides to continue learning. Minnesotans need to know that our Department of Education will work with them and alongside them every step of the way in their education journey.

Our students deserve our best, and they must be engaged in an educational experience that honors their individuality and ensures that they have life options once they graduate. The Minnesota Department of Education is dedicated to partnering with students, families, educators, and schools to ensure access, participation, and representation for every student in their school setting.

Input from Minnesotans

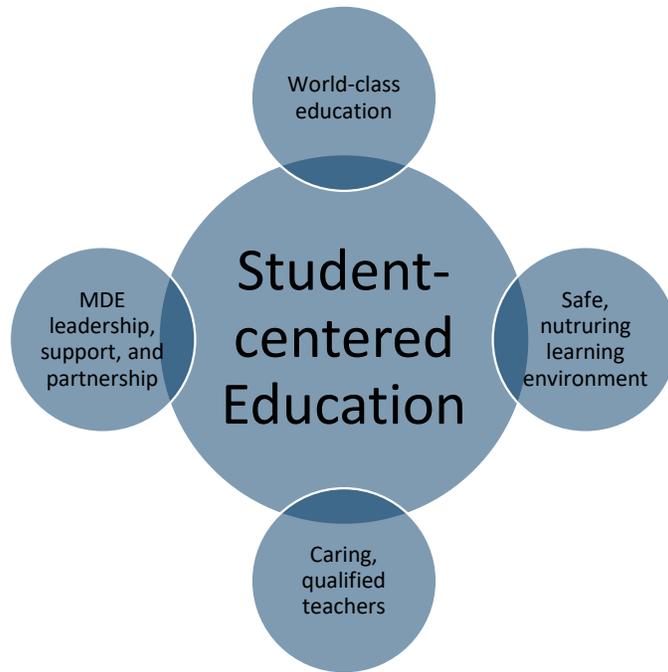
Our partnership and collaboration with school leaders across the state was invaluable in helping to frame what we need to do to ensure that all students receive a world-class education, in a safe nurturing learning environment, from caring qualified teachers. Schools across Minnesota work hard every single day for the students they serve. From Fairmont's welding program to Cass Lake-Bena's alternative learning program, it is clear that Minnesota educators go above and beyond to create opportunities for their students that match their needs. As MDE traveled the state visiting schools, we were inspired by many exceptional, innovative programs, and it is our goal to expand these ideas that are moving the needle for our students in every part of the state. Whether that's the full-service community school in Rochester, or the high school in West Saint Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan that are closing gaps in their graduation rates, every single one of our priorities has a story. The ideas in our strategic plan are strong, because these are all ideas for Minnesotans, by Minnesotans.

One Minnesota

Minnesota has a bold vision for our future, where every child thrives. One Minnesota is focused on making Minnesota the best place for children to grow up, and our schools play a critical role in reaching our goals. Minnesota faces large gaps and obstacles in education, and it will take bold goals and strong collaboration across our communities to tackle our challenges. Closing gaps in our educational system requires us to improve the entire system in a way that removes inequitable practices and brings in supports where children need them. A world-class education requires a student-centered approach that removes structural barriers, provides the best teacher workforce that reflects the students in our classrooms, and creates safe and welcoming environments in every school in Minnesota. Prioritizing equity, diversity, and inclusion with a plan for measurable results will help us accomplish our goal. The goals and measurable results in the One Minnesota plan reflect the ambition and tenacity required to make progress.

What Success Looks Like

Our measure of success is simple: We'll know we are on the path to success when gaps close, graduation rates increase for every student group, students see themselves in what they learn and who is teaching them, and more students report feeling safe and welcome in school. This is what MDE is working to ensure for each and every student in Minnesota, inclusive of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds, zip codes and abilities.



One Minnesota Plan

Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and leaders of their administration have had the immense privilege of traveling across the state to meet with thousands of Minnesotans in their communities. The following mission, vision, guiding principles, and priorities reflect common themes from these conversations. These core components of the One Minnesota Plan, combined with ongoing input from Minnesotans, guide the efforts outlined in our agency's strategic plan.

This section of the plan states explicitly how our agency's plan aligns with the One Minnesota Plan's priority areas and, where applicable, quantifiable goals. This integration is critical, as one of the strategies embedded in the One Minnesota Plan is that each agency will develop and execute its own strategic plan that aligns with the administration's priorities and guides the work of the agency.

Each agency is working to realize the One Minnesota plan's vision: to make Minnesota the best state in the country for our kids to grow up in, and to do so in a collaborative way that brings people together and builds One Minnesota. And each agency is supporting work in the priority areas and working to embed the guiding principles of the Walz Administration into their organizational culture.

Mission

Improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results.

Vision

Minnesota is the best state in the country for children to grow up in - those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic statuses, gender identities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, and zip codes.

Guiding Principles

- Practice servant leadership
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Do the right thing, especially when it is difficult
- Ask how your actions are reinforcing or removing structural inequity
- Promote the common good over narrow special interests
- Be accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Include voices from communities who will be most impacted

Priorities

Minnesota does best when state agencies and community partners collaborate to achieve common goals. We will solve problems in education, health care, environment and energy, housing, jobs, transportation, and so much more by focusing on these key priorities:

- Healthy Minnesotans and COVID-19 Protection
- Economic Recovery and Working Minnesotans
- Children and Families
- Equity and Inclusion
- Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results
- Minnesota's Environment

One Minnesota Priorities

Governor Walz’s One Minnesota strategic plan features measurable goals for student achievement. In order to reach these goals, Minnesota must prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion, and support a whole child approach. The strategies included in MDE’s One Minnesota plan work together with teaching and learning supports, to create better results and experiences for our students. The strategies focus on: closing gaps, ending disparities in access, participation, and representation, serving students of color and Indigenous students, increasing graduation rates for every student group, ensuring students see themselves in what they learn and who is teaching them, and having more students report that they feel safe and welcome in school.

Healthy Minnesotans and COVID-19 Protection

- Continue to provide access to resources that help to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 including: saliva testing for all staff and students, masks, face shields, gowns, and other protective equipment.
- Craft and implement a Safe Learning Plan – a localized, data-driven approach to guide Minnesota schools on determining the appropriate learning plan for their school community and the health protocols that accompany each one.
- Create and sustain Regional Support Teams that partner with local public health officials, MDH and regional service cooperatives to support school districts and charter schools in navigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-21 school year.
- Partner with the MSHSL to support activities and athletics within health parameters.
- Partner with school leaders and state decision makers to ensure available state and federal funding is allocated for the highest priority needs, schools are informed of fund availability, and processes support fiscal accountability.
- Continue implementation of federal USDA waivers and increase student participation in school nutrition programs.
- Support enhanced student and family support strategies in the face of significant barriers and inequities presented by the pandemic to sustain or increase engagement and attendance before reporting student absences to local social services.
- Maintain equitable and affordable school-age childcare options for children of critical workers by partnering with child care providers, school-age programs, schools and all other childcare setting to prioritize Tier I worker’s children.
- Increase access to mental health resources and supports for children and families by ensuring educators and staff are trained in evidence- based practices that are implemented with fidelity and through a trauma-informed and culturally responsive lens.
- Partner with school communities to support the academic needs of students, including flexible grading guidance, strategies to support students’ academic success meeting standards, and professional development on accommodations for students receiving special education services,

those experiencing homelessness, learning English as a new language, and the disparate impact of distance learning on students of color, Indigenous students, and students living in poverty.

- Identify, support, and implement structures to be implemented the summer of 2021 to help close any gaps in learning due to the pandemic.
- Identify, support, and implement strategies for the 2021-2022 school year (e.g, academic, social/emotional learning, mental health) to help close any gaps in learning due to the pandemic.
- Develop specific guidance for districts on how to assess student learning across in-person, hybrid, and distance-learning models (print and video modules).
- Develop protocols for review of assessment data of, and for, student learning.
- Implement the Minnesota Department of Education’s Strategic Plan to ensure that every student has a world-class education, attends a safe, nurturing learning environment, and learns in a classroom with caring, qualified teachers.
- Assist the Minnesota Department of Health in vaccine implementation support, if appropriate, in school communities.

Economic Recovery and Working Minnesotans

- Increase access, participation, and representation in rigorous coursework, concurrent enrollment, and Career and Technical Education courses to expand opportunities for students to prepare and train for career or college.
- Build a partnership with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and institutions of higher education to offer students the opportunity to earn a two-year degree while in high school.
- Expand educator career pathway programs in high schools across the state.
- Create a state sponsored loan forgiveness program for Minnesota teachers who teach in Greater Minnesota.
- Ensure stable resources for districts and charters that accounts for temporarily reduced student membership due to the pandemic.
- Collaborate with school leaders and the legislature to develop solutions to compensatory revenue loss that will result from a decline in families filling out benefit forms.

Children and Families

- Provide leadership in enterprise-wide goals of educational opportunity through the Children’s Cabinet and cross-agency strategies, including leading strategies on mental health, anti-racist practices, increasing teachers of color and indigenous teachers, and other priorities that lift up each and every child.
- Develop a comprehensive, statewide high school drop-out prevention model.
- Add school support staff across the state to improve mental health supports to students.
- Create and launch a recommended state-wide family education model to increase parent engagement.
- Develop recommended models for instruction and student support for academics, social emotional learning, behavioral learning, mental health.
- Develop recommended models for including student voice in all aspects of school.

- Ensure educators are prepared to meet the academic and social emotional needs of early learning students.

Equity and Inclusion

- Create an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Center at the MDE designed to provide equity and inclusion training and focus for MDE staff, public districts and schools.
- Implement Indigenous Education for All by providing curricular resources and creating professional development for educators with input from tribal nations within Minnesota, and other American Indian education specialists.
- Develop and provide training for all school staff on anti-racist and anti-bias practices.
- Develop Minnesota academic standards that reflect Minnesota's students of color and Indigenous students.
- Create a system of equity, diversity, and inclusion support through the Regional Centers of Excellence.
- Expand access, participation, and representation in out-of-school enrichment opportunities.
- Develop guidance for instruction so students are seen and heard in culturally relevant courses.
- Launch and expand programs to specifically recruit teachers of color and Indigenous teachers.
- Expand evidence-based student-based relationship building programs and pass legislation to help eliminate suspension disparities.
- Increase services available to students at school by increasing the number of full-service community schools.
- Create and implement a statewide data literacy program model through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.

Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results

- Require Kindergarten Entry Profiles for every student starting kindergarten in the state to measure growth in social emotional development.
- Launch a statewide teacher mentor program offering teachers professional development and support to stay in the teaching profession.
- Develop a statewide system of supports to partner with public school and districts to meet their strategic goals.
- Fund a 21st century education, by freezing the cross subsidy for special education and English language learner services and guaranteeing at least 80 percent of compensatory aid funding is supporting students historically left behind.

Minnesota's Environment

- Continue to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on innovative ways to support cleaner energy alternatives for our schools, including the pilot grant project for electric school buses.
- Expand Farm to School efforts to increase school meal ingredient sourcing from local farms, expand student knowledge of where their food comes from, and increase the number of schools with school gardens.
- Serve as a member on the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team which coordinates interagency efforts for pollinator protection, develops cross-agency policies and programs, and reports on progress toward pollinator protection goals.
- Implement the 2019 Minnesota Academic Standards in Science.
- Develop and execute a professional development plan to implement and evaluate the 2019 Minnesota Academic Standards in Science.
- Monitor usage and implement sustainability best practices to reduce consumption of fleet fossil fuel, energy, water, solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions to preserve natural resources for future generations and reduce costs.

Minnesota Department of Education Strategic Plan

Mission: Ensuring every child receives a quality education, no matter their race or zip code.

Vision: Make Minnesota the Education State, where the public education system is intentionally designed to ensure that each individual student thrives.

Guiding Principles: Collaboration, Leadership, Equity

Objectives:

- Every student deserves a world-class education.
- Every student deserves to attend a safe, nurturing learning environment.
- Every student deserves to learn in a classroom with caring, qualified teachers.
- Minnesota Department of Education will provide leadership, support, and partnership to every public school district across the state.

Objective 1: Every student deserves a world-class education.

Key Results:

- Increase the use of anti-racist and anti-bias practices in school districts and charter schools, including academic standards that reflect Minnesota’s students of color and indigenous students.
- Decrease the four-year high school dropout rate to 2.5 percent, and to at most 5.0 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, migrant students, and homeless students.
- Increase four-year high school graduation rate to 90 percent, and to at least 85 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, migrant students, and homeless students.
- Close gaps in student achievement by increasing:
 - 3rd grade reading to 79 percent overall, and to at least 64 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, migrant students, and homeless students.
 - 5th grade science to 78 percent, and to at least 65 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, migrant students, and homeless students.
 - 8th grade math to 78 percent, and to at least 63 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, migrant students, and homeless students.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement Minnesota academic standards that reflect Minnesota’s students of color and Indigenous students.
- Increase services available to students at school by increasing the number of full-service community schools.
- Increase access, participation, and representation in rigorous coursework and Career and Technical Education courses to expand opportunities for students of color, Indigenous students, and students with a disability as well as students in greater Minnesota to prepare and train for career or college.
- Create and implement a statewide data literacy program model through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.
- Build a partnership with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and institutions of higher education to offer students the opportunity to earn a two-year degree while in high school.
- Ensure educators are prepared to meet the academic and social emotional needs of early learning students.
- Expand skills of educators in supporting social and emotional development in children through professional learning opportunities on social/emotional standards, curriculum, and evidence-based instructional strategies
- Implement Indigenous Education for All by providing curricular resources and creating professional development for educators with input from tribal nations within Minnesota, and other American Indian education specialists.
- Implement the P20 Action Plan for Literacy Achievement.

Objective 2: Every student deserves to attend a safe, nurturing learning environment.

Key Results:

- Increase the proportion of Voluntary Prekindergarten, School Readiness Plus, and Early Childhood Special Education students who make greater than expected developmental gains in social and emotional development by 5 percent overall, and by 10 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, students receiving Special Education services, and homeless students.
- Decrease the number of disciplinary actions for all students by 10 percent, reducing the disproportionality for Black students, American Indian students, and students receiving Special Education services by 25 percent.
- Increase the percentage of students consistently attending school to 95 percent, and to at least 90 percent for students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, English learners, and students receiving Special Education services.
- Reduce the proportion of students experiencing mental health problems by 10 percent by increasing access to high-quality promotion, prevention, treatment, and recovery supports for all youth.

Strategies:

- Require Kindergarten Entry Profiles for every student starting kindergarten in the state to measure growth in social emotional development.
- Add school support staff across the state to improve mental health supports to students.
- Expand evidence-based student-based relationship building programs and pass legislation to help eliminate suspension disparities.
- Expand access, participation, and representation in out-of-school enrichment opportunities.
- Create and launch a recommended statewide family education program to increase family engagement.
- Partner with the Department of Corrections to bring incarcerated parents into their student's education, when appropriate.
- Reduce the proportion of students experiencing mental health problems with increased high quality supports for wellbeing, prevention, treatment, and recovery for all youth.

Objective 3: Every student deserves to learn in a classroom with caring, qualified teachers.

Key Results:

- Increase the use of anti-racist and anti-bias practices in school districts and charter schools, including academic standards that reflect Minnesota's students of color and indigenous students.
- Increase the number of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers entering into, and staying in, the teaching profession.
- Less than 20 percent difference in state-wide staff and student demographics.

Strategies:

- Develop and provide training for all staff on anti-racist and anti-bias practices.
- Partner with the Office of Higher Education and the Professional Educators Licensure Board to launch and expand programs to specifically recruit teachers of color and Indigenous teachers.
- Partner with the Office of Higher Education and the Professional Educators Licensure Board to launch and expand programs to specifically retain teachers of color and Indigenous teachers.
- Expand educator career pathway programs in high schools across the state.
- Create a state sponsored loan forgiveness program for Minnesota teachers who teach in Greater Minnesota.
- Launch a statewide teacher mentor program offering teachers professional development and support to stay in the teaching profession.

Objective 4: MDE will provide leadership, support, and partnership to every public school district across the state.

Key Results:

- MDE is perceived as a strategic partner with school districts to help improve teaching and learning conditions across our state.

Strategies:

- Develop a statewide system of supports to partner with public school and districts to meet their strategic goals.
- Create an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Center at the MDE designed to provide equity and inclusion training and focus for MDE staff, districts and schools.
- Develop recommended models for instruction and student support for academics, social emotional learning, behavioral learning, and mental health.
- Fund a 21st century education, including by freezing the cross subsidy for special education and English language learner services and guaranteeing at least 80 percent of compensatory aid funding is supporting students historically left behind.