

2019 POLICIES

Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Development

Minnesota's highly skilled, talented and reliable workforce has been a competitive economic advantage for generations. As demographics shift and the need for greater numbers of skilled workers accelerates, effective education and workforce development programs and curriculum must be successfully delivered at every level to all students.

ALIGN K-12 ACADEMIC STANDARD AND ASSESSMENTS

The standard for high school graduation must be that all students are ready – both practically and academically – for a post-secondary education or a career. Minnesota K-12 academic standards, especially in STEM areas, must measure students' academic mastery of grade-level standards, and students must demonstrate mastery of state standards to receive a high school diploma. Together, the K-12 system and postsecondary institutions must identify common thresholds for college readiness and assess student progress toward those thresholds.

OUR KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2019 SESSION INCLUDE:

- Align K-12 and post-secondary education.
- Offer more affordable, efficient postsecondary education and workforce development programs that align with industry-needed skills.
- Build collaboration, drive innovation across education and workforce training providers.
- Promote and accelerate private-sector efforts to connect students, employers and education systems.

PROMOTE POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Postsecondary option programs provide high school students with opportunities to earn credit toward certificates and degrees from high schools, two-year colleges and four-year universities. Dual-credit postsecondary enrollment options should be promoted to all students, including postsecondary enrollment options, early college, concurrent enrollment, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, career and technical education, and college level examination placement.

OUR GOALS

To enhance the state's global economic competitiveness, there must be a strong alignment of education and workforce development with employer needs. Too often, publicly funded workforce programs are difficult for employers to utilize. Therefore, we support private sector initiatives to increase employer engagement in the training of workers in addition to supporting policies that ensure student readiness. Also needed are reforms to our federal immigration system, recognizing that immigrants are a critical source of workers and entrepreneurs for Minnesota's economy.

REDUCE REMEDIATION AND UTILIZE PRIOR LEARNING

Postsecondary remediation is duplicative of the responsibilities of the K-12 system, increases student costs and is associated with reduced completion rates. High schools should administer and utilize standard assessment testing and provide targeted services to ensure students reach postsecondary readiness. Students in need of support at the postsecondary level, such as

returning learners, should be offered intensive support through college or program readiness courses. The costs of remedial courses should be minimized, and some costs of remediation should be borne over time by school districts producing significant numbers of students in need of remediation, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.

EXPAND STATE GRANT PROGRAM

State funding should help students who, without state aid, would not be able to access postsecondary education. The Minnesota State Grant Program, the state's need-based aid program, should be strengthened to help lower- and middle-income students access and afford postsecondary education, or training, beyond a high school diploma at the postsecondary institution of their choice.

USE DATA TO BETTER UNDERSTAND TRAINING NEEDS AND HIGH DEMAND CAREERS

To produce certificates and degrees in areas of greatest demand, post-secondary institutions and workforce programs need to more closely track and adapt to changes in the labor market and workforce needs. Access to work-based learning and career pathway resources should be expanded with data-driven efforts detailing workforce supply and demand projections, and tracking the outcomes of workforce programs including projected shortage areas, high-growth employment sectors, and significant skills gaps by industry sector. Paired with reporting on degree/certificate attainment, employment and earnings by public and private institutions, data will help inform which programs are producing outcomes and align programs with the state's economic needs. Programs and institutions should provide transparent and accessible information to allow students to make informed decisions on the institutions and programs that best fit their needs.

CENTER FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

The Minnesota Chamber Foundation's Center for Workforce Solutions is a first-of-its-kind in Minnesota business-led initiative. Through leadership, collaboration and key partnerships, it offers research and programs to confront the state's worker shortage and helps the state's economy change and grow.

- **RealTime Talent** provides real-time market data to better understand the worker shortage.
- **MN Job Match** is a job-to-candidate matching platform that helps employers find the right fit in qualified candidates.
- **Business Education Networks** connect businesses and local chambers with students, educators and workforce training programs so students are aware of career opportunities in their communities and the coursework and training required for those jobs.
- **Hiring Minnesota Heroes** works one-on-one with employers to develop and implement veterans hiring programs.
- **Educational opportunities** bring together community and business leaders facing these challenges and offering solutions to ensure long-term economic success. ■