

College-Ready Minnesota

College Readiness Consortium
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System Academic Administration

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

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This booklet, [College-Ready Minnesota](#), describes only a sample of the many ways that the University of Minnesota is working to increase the number and diversity of Minnesota students who graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills and habits for postsecondary success.

For information on hundreds of other programs, please visit:

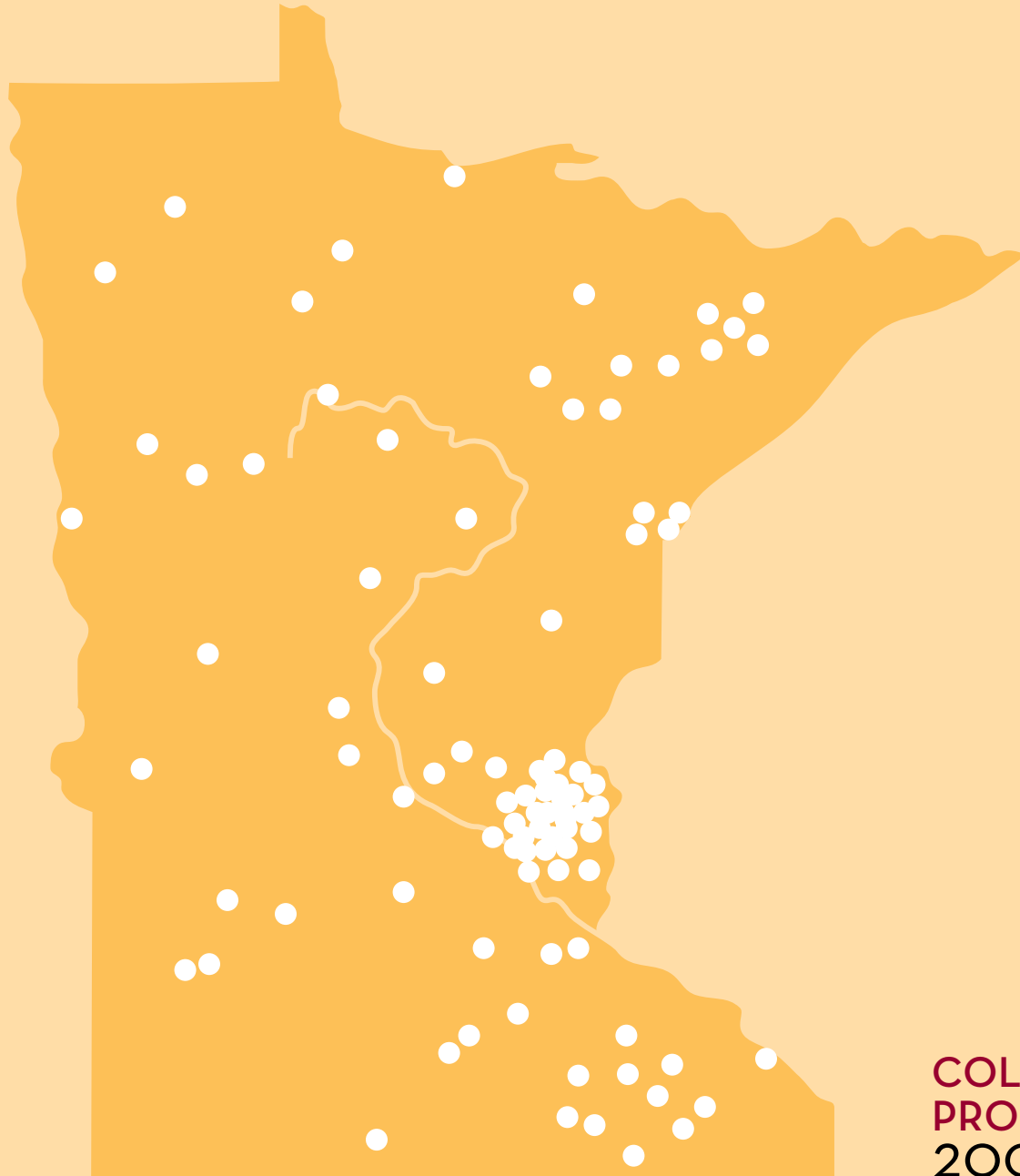
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**COLLEGE READINESS CONSORTIUM
PROGRAM SITES
2006-2011**

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In every corner and community of Minnesota today, there is a growing sense of anxiety about how well our students and our state are prepared for life in the global economy of the 21st century. Will our children be able to find jobs that pay enough to support the same high quality of life that most of their parents have enjoyed? Will our small and large businesses be able to beat the competition across the country and around the world? Will the groups of Minnesotans that are growing fastest in our state today – people of color and people with incomes below the poverty line – be able to participate fully and equally in a society of prosperity and opportunity?

The sense of anxiety that many Minnesotans feel about our future has helped to ignite a sense of urgency about improving our public schools. Reforms are underway everywhere, from investing in early learning to raising academic standards to redesigning the way we recruit, prepare, pay and support teachers and other educators.

But the number and complexity of all these efforts raise yet another question: are all the arrows that are aiming for educational improvement in Minnesota today pointing in the same direction? If they are not, we know that

many won't reach their intended targets and that the whole of our educational reforms will be far less than the sum of its parts.

A truly coherent strategy for improving education must start and end with a clear and compelling common goal. At the University of Minnesota's College Readiness Consortium, we believe that goal must be ensuring that at least 70 percent of all adult Minnesotans have a post-secondary credential or degree by the year 2020. We have embraced that objective based upon projections of the number of jobs in our state's economy that will require postsecondary education a decade from now. Our goal is also bolstered by a growing mountain of evidence that the world's most successful economies and societies are working to ensure that all of their citizens finish college or another form of education after high school.

At present, approximately 40 percent of adult Minnesotans have earned a two-year associate's degree or higher. That means that we need to dramatically increase the number of high school graduates who go on to finish some form of college every year. This report, *College-Ready Minnesota*, provides a glimpse of how the University of Minnesota is working in partnership

with a diverse array of organizations and individuals to shift our educational system from one that traditionally views only 25-30 percent of students as "college material" to one that puts all students on the path to postsecondary success.

The university launched the strategy described in these pages in 2006, not only in the interest of the state it serves, but also in the long-term interest of our institution. We know that the children in Minnesota's preK-12 schools today are the college students of the future, and we are committed to help them develop the knowledge, skills and habits for success on our campuses and the campuses of the many other superb postsecondary institutions across our state. Our strategy is very much a work in progress, and we invite your ideas and involvement as we turn college readiness for all from a goal into reality over the decade ahead.



Kent Pekel
Executive Director
College Readiness Consortium
University of Minnesota



The College Readiness Consortium helps to bring the university's best minds and ideas to Minnesota's ongoing discussions about how to most effectively educate our students—from preschool through postsecondary options.

The College Readiness Consortium coordinates the university's involvement in the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership, and brings in university faculty and staff to sit on various partnership committees.

The partnership brings together 22 statewide organizations plus legislative representatives to align and improve Minnesota's educational policies and systems. Some important accomplishments of the partnership include:

- A comprehensive definition of college and workforce readiness in Minnesota, giving K-12 students and schools a clearer set of expectations
- Ongoing involvement of leading university faculty in revisions of the state's K-12 academic standards in math and science
- A longitudinal data system for Minnesota, making it possible for preK-12 and postsecondary educators, as well as policy-makers, to monitor and improve student progress throughout all levels of the educational system
- Development of a model assessment and accountability system for high schools focused on and aligned with college readiness

Mathematics professor Lawrence Gray says his involvement with developing the state's current standards for high school mathematics stems from his concern that too many high school students would find themselves unprepared for university-level

STATE POLICY:

Aligning preK-12 and postsecondary systems

To learn more, start with:

Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership, *The Roadmap to College and Career Readiness for Minnesota Students* (2009) Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz., *The Race between Education and*

mathematics without significant changes in the standards. “Mathematicians needed to be involved in this process,” Gray says. “Both we and high school math teachers need to be involved, and math education faculty as well. Each brings a particular perspective that is valuable in determining the best ways to teach math and to assess the effectiveness of the teaching. K-12 can’t operate in a vacuum and neither can higher education. If the students at both levels are going to succeed, all of us need to be in agreement about our goals and how to measure them.”

Janet Dubinsky, professor of neuroscience, agrees. Her department holds and has held a series of grants from the National Institutes of Health to teach neuroscience to middle-school teachers and to teach them how to teach science to middle-school students. She has been involved in helping to devise science standards for Minnesota schools.

“In our grant work, we model teaching methods that involve interaction, that are question-driven, and very open-ended... because we know that’s how to truly engage learning in science,” Dubinsky says. “We also discuss the latest developments in neuroscience that can help teachers of kids this age to understand what is happening developmentally in these kids’ brains.

“If the teachers understand some of these things, I think they will be better able to help and change their students’ abilities to learn and succeed. I care about that. It will help those kids to finish high school, come to college, and maybe end up in my classroom. I think all of us at the university need to be doing this kind of work.”

“College readiness is a system challenge, whether that system is a school, district or statewide educational policies,” said Julie Sweitzer, director of leadership initiatives for the College Readiness Consortium.

“To increase the number and diversity of students who graduate high school ready for postsecondary education and 21st-century responsibilities, higher education needs to work with state and school leaders to identify and make the necessary changes,” Sweitzer says. “We’re quite pleased with the number of U of M faculty who are interested and involved in K-12 education. After all, those students are the future of their disciplines, as well as the future of our state.”

“If the teachers understand some of these things, I think they will be better able to help and change their students’ abilities to learn and succeed. I care about that. It will help those kids to finish high school, come to college, and maybe end up in my classroom. I think all of us at the university need to be doing this kind of work.”

Janet Dubinsky, professor of neuroscience

Most people would agree that K-12 principals have important and demanding jobs.



Despite that belief, it can be difficult for principals to find professional development that truly improves their ability to lead schools where kids succeed and pursue postsecondary education.

The University of Minnesota Principals' Academy fills that gap. It is a research-based program that uses a curriculum developed by the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), to help district and charter school leaders create and sustain schools in which all students are on the path to college readiness.

Mary Donaldson, principal and director of the St. Paul charter high school, the Concordia Creative Learning Academy, which won a 2010 Minnesota Business Partnership Award in recognition of the progress its students are making, says, "The Principals Academy allowed me to continue growing and learning. The most important thing I learned was how to do strategic planning—to really focus. And perhaps the biggest benefits have been the colleagues who have become my support network and friends."

Juanita Hoskins, principal at Roseville Area Middle School, says she would not hesitate to recommend the academy to other principals. "The academy was timely and offered what I needed to become an instructional leader," she says. "It gave voice to the things I was thinking needed to happen to make systemic changes in my school. It gave me strategic focus and a sense of urgency."

MINNESOTA PRINCIPALS ACADEMY Leading schools to high performance

To learn more, start with:

Karen Seashore Louis et al., *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning* (2010) Sir Michael Barber et al., *Capturing the Leadership Premium: How the World's Top School*

The fact that the academy was offered through the university was important, she says. “It is imperative that universities be involved in the professional development of principals in Minnesota.

Many times principals are not given the tools we need to do our jobs effectively,” she adds. “In the academy, we did not have to wait until the next school cycle to think about making change. We were able to do things now. The university ought to be and is the place where innovative ideas flow freely.”

For Mary Jo Schmid, principal of Ellen Hopkins Elementary School in Moorhead, the academy was critically important. Since her academy experience, her school has gone from not making adequate yearly progress (AYP, a measurement under No Child Left Behind) to successfully making AYP.

“The curriculum is contemporary, hard-hitting without being abrasive, and offers a vision for the future,” she says. “It gave me a lot of tools to work with. It helped me to think about kids’ needs in a larger sense. I came to understand that if we didn’t attempt to do anything new or different, nothing would change.”

The academy provided a professional road map for Tom Brenner, principal at Cloquet Middle School. Quite simply, he says, “it taught me how to be an instructional leader. From the very broad philosophical things to the very detailed aspects. I came back to my school ready to ask what we stand for and what do we want to accomplish. It has helped us to narrow our focus and to say no

to all the various things that come along that can pull you off track.”

Offering the Principals’ Academy through the university makes sense to Brenner. “The U is the end game—that is, it’s very important that what we’re doing in K-12 makes sense in connection with higher education. Our goal is to prepare our kids so that the door is open to high school and then on to postsecondary experiences. I hope the university is able to continue to share its academic resources with us. It’s a critical piece for K-12 education in Minnesota.”

The University of Minnesota’s College Readiness Consortium coordinates the academy, which is funded by a legislative appropriation passed with bipartisan support, and was created in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, and the University of Minnesota.

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Mary Jo Schmid, principal of Ellen Hopkins Elementary School



Ramp-Up to Readiness™ is an innovative program that guides junior and senior high school students through a sequence of courses, projects, activities and experiences to get prepared for college success. Ramp-Up equips students with the knowledge, skills and habits not just to gain admission to college or another postsecondary institution, but to succeed once they get there.

The research-based Ramp-Up program is needed because teenagers want to go on to college, yet often have an incomplete and incorrect understanding of what it takes to get ready for, get into, and succeed at college.

In addition, only about 40 percent of them, at current rates, will go on to complete a two-year associate degree or higher. Yet in the 21st century, postsecondary education is essential because income, opportunity, and education are more closely connected than ever before.

“Ramp-Up helps students make informed decisions about possible career paths, find the best postsecondary options for getting into those careers, and create an academic plan to reach their postsecondary aspirations,” says Jim Bierma, director of Ramp-Up.

After three years of development and testing in local school settings, Ramp-Up has been piloted in 11 schools in the metro area and Austin, Minnesota. Starting in the fall of 2012, Ramp-Up will be available to school districts throughout the state.

RAMP-UP TO READINESS

Putting every student on the postsecondary path

To learn more, start with:

David Conley, *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School* (2010) William Tierney et al., *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do: A*

Here are what some of the school counselors and principals in the pilot Ramp-Up schools are saying about the program and its impact:

“Teachers have reported a great deal of success with the Ramp-Up lessons,” says Holly Garnell, school counselor with Twin Cities Academy in St. Paul. “For example, students and their parents are seeking out teachers and advisers to discuss college planning much sooner and more frequently than in the past. They also report that Ramp-Up has made the advisory period ‘the best it’s ever been’ and that the lessons spark conversations that extend into other classes.”

Alex Loesch, counselor at Olson Middle School in Minneapolis, says that Ramp-Up fits with his school’s mission of college readiness for all of its students. “Ramp-Up helps students to understand the connection between what they’re doing now and their future,” Loesch says. “We’re still adjusting to Ramp-Up but it’s already providing a framework for discussions during parent-teacher conferences that is very helpful.”

Katie Berglund, principal of Ellis Middle School in Austin, says that “creating, promoting, and sustaining a college-going culture needs to begin early. It’s irrational to think that that can start in the 11th grade. We need to begin that instruction as early as the 6th grade.” With Ramp-Up, Berglund says, her school is being given the opportunity to be part of the development of a system that creates that culture.

“The Ramp-Up program has given us a framework around academic readiness, personal-social readiness, financial readiness—areas that are critical to helping kids to . . . make that transition from high school to admission to a college, being able to pay for that, and having the personal-social capacity to do well,” says Steve Massey, principal at Forest Lake High School. “The University of Minnesota and Ramp-Up bring a wealth of resources and ideas and people together to help schools make big gains in creating college-ready students.”

“Creating, promoting, and sustaining a college-going culture needs to begin early. It’s irrational to think that that can start in the 11th grade.”

Katie Berglund, principal of Ellis Middle School in Austin



Readiness Goal

A student who has reached this goal can do the following:

Academic Readiness

The student has the knowledge and skills to do first-year, credit-bearing, college-level work.

1. Demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills required for college-level work in mathematics, English and science outlined in Appendix B of the Minnesota P-20 Partnership's *Road Map to College and Career Readiness*, which can be downloaded or requested in hard copy at www.mnp20.org
2. Analyze complex problems and scenarios and develop sound answers and solutions
3. Critically evaluate claims and hypotheses
4. Ask and investigate important questions about ideas, issues and the world
5. Evaluate and revise academic work to ensure accuracy and achieve precision

Admissions Readiness

The student has completed all requirements for admission to the type of postsecondary education that is a match for his or her goals, interests and abilities.

1. Describe the purpose of postsecondary education and the opportunities it offers in the U.S. today
2. Explain the main types of postsecondary institutions in the U.S. and the differences among them
3. Identify the type of postsecondary institution that could be a good match for his or her academic, career and personal goals
4. Outline the admissions requirements for the type of postsecondary institution that he or she plans to attend
5. Plan for and successfully complete the process of applying to at least three postsecondary institutions that are good matches for his or her academic, career and personal goals

Career Readiness

The student understands how education increasingly determines income and opportunity in the global knowledge economy, and knows which types of jobs in the future will need skilled workers, will pay enough to support a family and might be a good match for his or her interests and abilities.

1. Describe the ways that globalization and technology-driven change are reshaping the workplace and society today and predict ways that those forces will affect the future
2. Understand and illustrate the great and growing connection between the highest level of education a person completes and his or her later income and quality of life
3. Identify careers and jobs that pay enough to support a family, provide opportunities for advancement within the field and that will be in demand over the next two decades
4. Identify the knowledge, skills and habits and the credentials and/or degrees that are required to enter and succeed in a range of careers
5. Identify one or more careers that could be a good match for his or her talents, interests and abilities

A CLOSER LOOK AT RAMP-UP TO READINESS

The Ramp-Up Student Goals

Readiness Goal

A student who has reached this goal can do the following:

Financial Readiness

The student is able to cover the cost of the first term of study at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, work-study and financial aid.

1. Create a budget and make decisions based upon it
2. Identify the current average and projected future cost of study at each of the main types of postsecondary institutions in Minnesota
3. Explain the major ways that families can cover the costs of postsecondary education
4. Outline the level and type of financial assistance that he or she is likely to receive at the type of postsecondary institution he or she is likely to attend
5. Complete the process of applying for needed financial aid
6. Produce a realistic plan to cover the cost of at least the first term of study at the postsecondary institution of his or her choice through savings, employment, loans, grants, scholarships and other means

Personal and Social Readiness

The student knows how to set educational goals, make and monitor progress toward them and create relationships with peers and adults that support academic success.

1. Set and continually monitor progress toward reaching important goals
2. Continually put the necessary time and effort into reaching important goals
3. Take responsible risks to advance toward achieving important goals
4. Accept, seek out and learn from honest feedback that helps improve progress toward important goals
5. Seek help from adults and peers and use other strategies to overcome obstacles on the road to achieving important goals
6. Manage time efficiently and effectively
7. Know how to form and work effectively in study groups that help the student master challenging academic material
8. Create and maintain positive relationships with teachers, professors and other adults in positions of responsibility and authority





	Stage 1: Understand	Stage 2: Believe
Academic Readiness	The student understands the academic knowledge, skills and habits needed for college success and his or her current level of academic readiness	The student believes that intelligence is not fixed and that through effort and support he or she will become academically college-ready
Admissions Readiness	The student understands the different types of postsecondary institutions, their admissions requirements, and which types might be a good match for his or her interests and skills	The student believes that he or she will get into and graduate from a postsecondary institution that matches his or her interests and skills
Career Readiness	The student understands that high-skill careers are the best path to a financially secure future and knows which careers might be a match for his or her goals and interests	The student believes that he or she will enter and succeed in a high-skill career that matches his or her interests and skills
Financial Readiness	The student understands the value of an investment in postsecondary education, the projected cost of postsecondary education, how families can cover that cost, and the basics of borrowing and budgeting	The student believes that with planning and assistance he or she will cover the cost of study at the postsecondary institution he or she chooses to attend
Personal/Social Readiness	The student understands that goal setting, self-management, persistence, and building positive relationships with peers and adults are essential to college success and knows his or her strengths and weaknesses in these areas	The student believes that with effort and support he or she can set and achieve goals, manage his or her own learning activities, persist through challenges, and build positive relationships with peers and adults

A CLOSER LOOK AT RAMP-UP TO READINESS

The Ramp-Up Student Standards

	Stage 3: Plan	Stage 4: Achieve
Academic Readiness	The student creates and regularly updates an academic plan that includes a sequence of courses and, as needed, support programs that will prepare him or her to succeed in credit-bearing courses at the type of postsecondary institution he or she plans to attend	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student completes as many courses that offer both high school and postsecondary credit as is possible and appropriate 2. The student completes and receives honest feedback on individual and group projects that require the use of GASP Learning Strategies (Gather, Analyze, Synthesize and Present) 3. The student takes the PLAN test and adjusts his or her academic plan to close any gaps in college readiness 4. The student avoids the “senior slump” and maintains academic momentum through the end of 12th grade
Admissions Readiness	The student creates and regularly updates an admissions plan that outlines the steps he or she will need to take to gain admission to the postsecondary institution(s) of his or her choice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student visits at least three postsecondary institutions 2. The student practices writing effective admissions essays 3. The student prepares for and takes the ACT and/or SAT 4. The student applies to at least three postsecondary institutions
Career Readiness	The student and regularly updates a career plan that includes informed decisions on possible careers, the best postsecondary options for those careers, and steps to reach his or her postsecondary aspirations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student identifies at least three high-skill careers of interest 2. The student identifies the requirements for entering and succeeding in his or her careers of interest 3. The student interacts with professionals and/or has a work-based experience in one or more of his or her career fields of interest
Financial Readiness	The student creates and regularly updates a financial plan that outlines the steps the student and his or her family will take to finance postsecondary education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student completes the FAFSA financial aid form 2. The student researches and applies for grants and scholarships 3. The student applies for financial aid from his or her institution 4. The student practices developing and living within a budget for postsecondary education
Personal/Social Readiness	The student creates and regularly updates a personal/ social plan that includes steps to self-manage, persist in the face of challenges, and manage and build supportive relationships in order to meet college and career goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student uses a planner to manage time and achieve goals 2. The student self-monitors the process of applying to postsecondary institutions and adjusts plans and actions to complete all requirements in full and on time 3. The student effectively collaborates with peers on a major project and/or activity 4. The student demonstrates strategies for persisting through difficulty such as problem solving and asking for help







SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS: Connecting with Kids

The University of Minnesota's college readiness strategy has two parts.

First, the university is working through state policy initiatives, the Minnesota Principals Academy, Ramp-Up to Readiness and other efforts to change the PreK-12 system from an Industrial Age model in which only a select group of students are seen as college material to one in which all students are expected and prepared to earn a post-secondary credential or degree.

Second, the university is working with educators and others to improve student success in the preK-12 system as it exists today.

The following pages describe just a few of the many partnerships that university colleges and departments have launched in recent years to raise expectations, enhance effort and increase achievement at every level of Minnesota's educational system.

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: Reach for the Sky

Follow the reasoning and you'll see the impetus behind Reach for the Sky:

- 1) American Indian students have a 55 percent-or-less chance of graduating from high school.
- 2) Math and science have been identified as among the hardest subject areas for American Indian youth to master.
- 3) Success in math and science has been found to be predictive of future academic success.



Reach for the Sky is a science and math focused program at the White Earth Nation that began as a cooperative program between the tribe and University Extension in 1999.

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), along with the College of Science and Engineering and the College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences, have become involved, too. CEHD received modest funding support from the College Readiness Consortium to expand the program and to focus more explicitly on college readiness skills. Additions to the program include a visit to the White Earth Tribal College, and an overnight stay at the U of M-Crookston campus.

“These kids want to do science, not hear science,” says Gillian Roehrig, associate professor of science education, CEHD. In Reach for the Sky they definitely are doing science. In 2010 the students sent 12 science experiments into near outer space with a balloon launch that carried cameras, temperature probes, gauges for air pressure and humidity, a Geiger counter, solar panel, and tracking radios.

Preparing the balloons and cargo and then analyzing the resulting data completely engaged the students. The additional activities funded by the Consortium allowed the students to meet college students who are American Indians as well as from around the world, Roehrig says. “They were able to connect their work with potential majors that could lead to careers that would allow them to return to the reservation—it is important for them to understand that college doesn't have to be an experience that alienates them from their life experience and culture.”

Another essential element of the additional days was the opportunity for the students' parents and grandparents to be more involved. The Reach for the Sky session ended with a feast and a display of the students' work.

The assessment of the 2010 program revealed a 60 percent increase in the number of students saying science is fun and a 65 percent increase in the sense that they are good at science. Computer skills increased exponentially as did students' comfort levels in working on computers.

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: Brain Awareness Week

Getting the chance to touch a real brain ranks very high as a favorite activity for the fourth- to sixth-graders who participate in Brain Awareness Week (BAW) in Minnesota. But preliminary surveys show that they like another aspect of BAW, too: they enjoy knowing that by learning new things they are building new synapses in their brain and actually becoming smarter.

It turns out, knowing that you can “turn on your own genes” and progress intellectually—that your intellect isn’t set in stone—is powerful knowledge that can keep students motivated and help them succeed academically. With modest funding support from the College Readiness Consortium (CRC), the University’s Department of Neuroscience in the Medical School was able to spend more time in its BAW activities to emphasize the brain’s plasticity and to survey and assess its students to see if the message “took.”

Janet Dubinsky, professor of neuroscience, saw the CRC support as an opportunity to both measure the effectiveness of BAW and to emphasize a critical component of college-readiness—attitudes toward learning and academic progress.

Both the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses offer Brain Awareness Week activities in elementary school and middle school settings—it’s one of the largest BAW programs in the U.S. with more than 900 school visits since its beginning.

More than 100 volunteer professors, scientists, graduate and undergraduate students spend an hour in classrooms throughout the metro area and in rural schools close to Duluth offering hands-on activities and talking about brain health and structure, neuroscience, and the ability of the brain to fire up new synapses as a person learns new things.

“Teachers love this program,” Dubinsky says. “It raises curiosity and interest levels about science and models the possibility of science careers for women and under-represented groups because we emphasize that in terms of who we have volunteering. But we need to also show that it isn’t merely popular—that it’s also having a real impact.”

The initial surveys from 2010 show that the program, although brief, has had a positive impact on the students. Dubinsky said the survey will be repeated on a more rigorous level that will also



gather demographic data. “We were happy with the initial results, though,” she says. “They showed that the presentations produced significant positive shifts in the students’ opinions—they came out of the experience feeling that they are enjoying science and are good at it and that they can change how smart they are. And that’s terrific.”

To learn more, start with:

Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2007), Janet Dubinsky, “Neuroscience Education for Prekindergarten-12 Teachers”, *Journal of Neuroscience* (2010)

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: Adelante



Lisa Sass Zaragoza is a clear-eyed optimist. She works with Latino teenagers to help them prepare to successfully take the ACT. She looks beyond the numbers while she works. “We get very determined kids, kids who want to succeed, but who face significant institutional barriers. How we define success has to shift to reflect the realities these kids face every day.”

Sass Zaragoza is program coordinator in the University’s Department of Chicano Studies. The department’s ACT and college preparation program, only in its second year, received College Readiness Consortium financial support to provide training for the class instructors and detailed assessments of the pre-test results from the ACT classes. The department’s community partners are El Colegio High School, Edison High School, and Juventud Conectada.

Nearly 80 percent of Latino high school seniors say they want to attend college, according to the ACT High School Profile Report: The Graduating Class of 2008, Minnesota. But, the report also says, of those students, only 56 percent took the ACT and of those, only 16

percent scored at or above the benchmark scores for college readiness.

Fifteen students from eight schools took the initial diagnostic test offered through the Chicano Studies’ ACT class, but only five kids were able to attend consistently after that. The realities of their lives are not easy. “Some kids moved, some were deported, some had to go to work to help support their families,” Sass Zaragoza said.

But for the students who were able to stay in the program, composite scores rose quickly and one student has begun the college admission process. Parent participation and support is high. For Sass Zaragoza, watching these kids work so hard, against such big odds, “has been really intense.”

“We are meeting students and families exactly where they are,” she says. “The Latino community on the whole is gaining its footing in the educational system of this country. Together we are beginning the slow and steady climb.”

To learn more, start with:

Melissa Roderick et al., *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College* (2008) Sampson Davis et al., *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* (2002)

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: Literacy TREC

What is sadder than a child saying, “I’m stupid,” or “I just can’t do it—Am I dumb?”

Pam Solvie, associate professor of literacy education at the U of M-Morris, and her student tutors hear this kind of comment too often and are working hard, not only to help their young students become better readers but also to change their attitudes about themselves.

“If we can turn their attitudes around and help them to see themselves as learners, that will be enormous,” Solvie says. The Morris program, Literacy Tutoring, Reading, and Enabling Children (Literacy TREC), is an after-school program for struggling readers in grades kindergarten through three. Because of modest financial support from the College Readiness Consortium, the program was able to expand the program’s hours to include work on personal and social skills and to offer transportation from school to the program at the Morris campus library.

“Attendance was fluctuating more in previous years,” Solvie says. “Parents would sign up, but the children weren’t coming consistently. We believed it was a

transportation issue. We think offering the transportation has helped although we’ll probably always be looking at more ways to increase consistent attendance.”

Solvie and her paid tutors and volunteers are working hard to increase parent involvement and she says they are seeing the parents grow as advocates for their children. Parental support is a critical element for children’s academic success, she says.

In addition to very focused and structured work on reading skills, the program also offers the children the opportunity to work on skills in organization, time management, self-control, frustration tolerance, consistent effort and attention, peer interaction, and positive attitude.

“It may seem that a program working with such young children isn’t really related to college readiness, but we are laying the groundwork,” Solvie says. “Personal skills and social readiness skills are a now a big part of this program and both are needed for college readiness—we feel the earlier we start the better.”



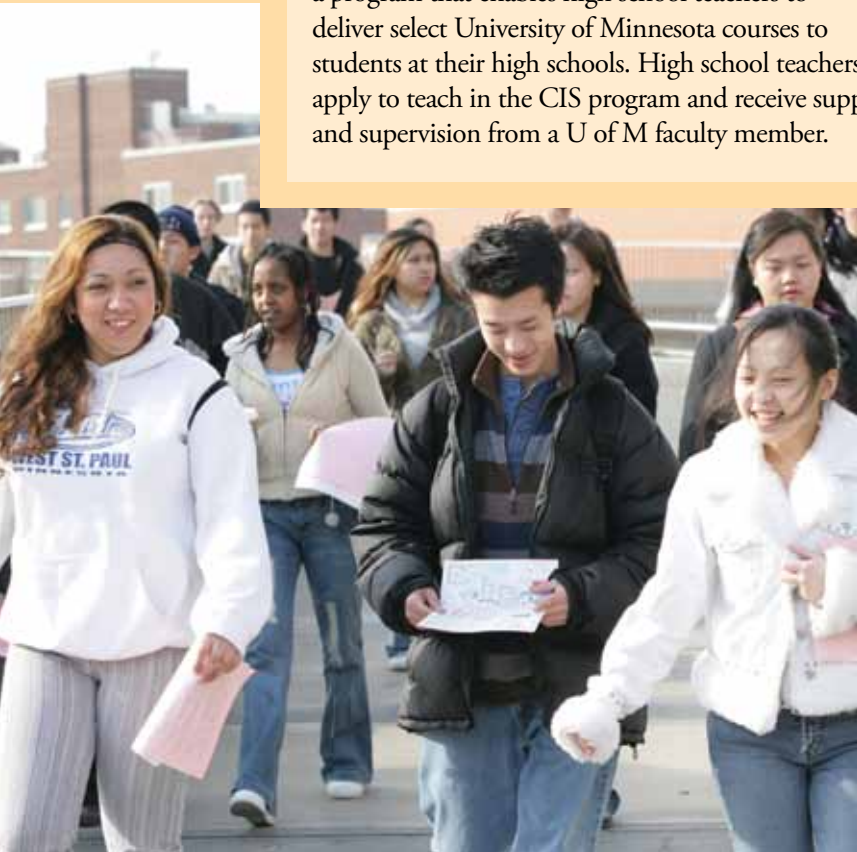
To learn more, start with:

Bonnie Ambruster et al., Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read (3rd edition, 2006) National Reading Panel, Teaching Children to Read (2000)

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: Entry Point Project

Recent research has found that one of the best predictors of a student's likelihood of earning a college degree is the difficulty of the courses he or she takes in high school. As a result, high schools across Minnesota are encouraging students to take a wide range of accelerated courses, including many that offer both high school and college credit.

The University of Minnesota helps meet the need for such courses through College in the Schools (CIS), a program that enables high school teachers to deliver select University of Minnesota courses to students at their high schools. High school teachers apply to teach in the CIS program and receive support and supervision from a U of M faculty member.



If CIS students pass the class, they earn U or M credit.

Participation in CIS courses is normally open only to high school juniors and seniors whose GPAs place them in the top 20 percent of their graduating classes. In order to broaden the number and diversity of students who participate, the CIS program on the university's Twin Cities campus partnered with the College Readiness Consortium and the Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (PSTL) to launch the Entry Point Project, a set of university courses that are open to students in the top 50 percent of their graduating class.

CIS Entry Point Project (or eCIS) courses focus on concepts and use methods of instruction that appeal to students who are not on the traditional college prep track. The first three eCIS courses were offered during the 2009-2010 school year in the areas of writing, mathematical modeling and inquiry physics.

But while students in an eCIS course are often taking their first college-level class, it is designed not to be their last. "For many students in the academic middle," says College Readiness Consortium Executive Director Kent Pekel, "taking their first accelerated course is a huge hurdle. Once

they find out that they can succeed, taking a second course is less daunting. It's all about building academic momentum."

PSTL faculty member Barbara Hodne works with teachers to ensure that the rigor of eCIS writing course is as high as it is in her own classroom at the university. At the same time, she helps those teachers, "take the students where they are in their learning, and ramp them up."

College in the Schools Director Susan Henderson says expanding the reach of College in the Schools is essential. "We have always heard from our students that the program really helped them to be well-prepared for college and allowed them to hit the ground running," she says. "So it doesn't take a genius to see that if the goal is to expand the number of kids ready for college, College in the Schools can be very helpful."

During its pilot year, the Entry Point Project enrolled 262 students from 13 schools. 62 percent had at some point qualified for free/reduced-price lunches; 56 percent came from homes where English was not the primary language spoken; and for 48 percent neither parent had gone to college. Their grades were impressive: 91 percent earned grades of C or better, virtually the same as with on-campus sections of the same courses, and 68 percent earned A's or B's.

To learn more, start with:

Michael Kirst, *From High School to College: Improving Opportunities for Success in Postsecondary Education* (2004) Barbara Schneider et al., *The Ambitious Generation: America's Teenagers Motivated but Directionless* (1999)

FROM K-12 TO P-13 and Beyond

Taken together, the strategies outlined in College-Ready Minnesota reflect and are helping to bring about a fundamental shift in America’s educational system. In the 20th century, education for all began in kindergarten and ended with high school graduation. In the 21st century, the educational expectations for every American increasingly include early childhood programs and extend through completion of a postsecondary credential or degree. This paradigm shift has profound implications for almost every aspect of education in our nation:

	The Old Paradigm: College Prep for Some	The New Paradigm: Postsecondary Preparation for All
Expectations	Only some students are seen as “college material” and only some schools are seen as “prep schools”	All students are expected to succeed in higher education and schools are intentionally organized to help them reach that goal
Rigor	Many students do not take the courses required for admission to and success at most four-year colleges and selective technical programs	Every student completes a core curriculum that prepares him or her to enter and succeed in a range of postsecondary programs
Personalization	Students progress through school by moving from grade to grade with a large group of peers at approximately same pace	Educational technology, Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and other approaches are used to personalize the path to postsecondary education
Planning	Many students choose courses with no clear destination after high school	Students develop and act upon postsecondary plans that give direction and motivation to their high school careers
Mindset	Intelligence is seen as a fixed commodity that defines a limited set of options for each student	Intelligence is viewed as a quality that can, like a muscle being exercised, be continually increased over time
Guidance	Most students navigate the transition to college largely on their own	All students receive guidance and direction from counselors, advisers and other caring adults
Funding	Planning to pay for postsecondary education is seen as the family’s or student’s responsibility	Students learn about financial planning steps throughout their years in junior and senior high
The Finish Line	Many students embrace and many schools tolerate a “senior slump” during the final year of high school	Students maintain their academic momentum through senior year and start postsecondary education ready for success the following fall

