

LEARNING MATTERS

March 14, 2014

Agency News

Achievement Gap Update

The goal is set. Reduce the achievement gap by 50 percent by 2017. Annual targets have been established in reading and math for all student groups. Every district and school in the state has their own unique targets to meet. And schools have the proficiency index rates of the Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) to measure their school's performance against their targets.

What's next? Achievement Gap Summit. School superintendents and other district personnel are invited to join a professional conversation about the achievement gap. Summit participants will be able to gather more information on their data and learn about technical assistance available from Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff, including support and resources in the areas of: English learners, special education, academic standards, data analysis and assistance available through the Regional Centers of Excellence.

When and where: Friday, March 21, 9 a.m. -12 p.m. at the TIES building, 1667 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55108. [RSVP to Maria Vincent](#).

Exciting New College and Career Readiness Videos

The Minnesota Department of Education's Office of College and Career Success contracted with Twin Cities Public Television to produce a collection of high-quality and accessible videos to promote college and career readiness among students and families throughout Minnesota. The videos will be available soon on the Ready, Set, Go, Website.

Video participants are students or families of currently enrolled students. They are honest about the barriers they have overcome to reach their current path, and excited about the path they have chosen.

A screening and discussion of the videos is scheduled on Friday, March 28, 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. at our office in Roseville. Questions? [Contact Beth Barsness](#).

ACT College and Career Readiness Recognition Ceremony

Minnesota is one of eight states partnering with ACT in 2014 around the goal of college and career readiness for all. Commissioner of Education Brenda Cassellius and ACT Public Affairs Manager Denton DeSotel presented awards to nominees in each category: high school students, high schools, community colleges and employers.

The ceremony concluded with awards presented to the state finalists:

- Sandra Yimbo, Osseo Senior High, received the Minnesota Student Readiness Award
- St. Louis Park Senior High received the Minnesota High School College and Career Transition Award
- Ridgewater College in Willmar received the Minnesota Community College Career Preparedness Award
- Lakeland Mold received the Minnesota Workplace Success Award.

[Read news release for more information and full list of nominees.](#)

World's Best Workforce

Wondering just what the World's Best Workforce is, how we will get there and just what MDE's role is? Here's a quick primer: 2013 World's Best Workforce Legislation (Section 120B.11) commits the state to achieving five key goals in every district in the state: improving kindergarten readiness, achieving universal literacy by third grade, a 100 percent high-school graduation rate, achievement gap reduction and wholesale college- and career-readiness. To get there, every school district in the state will develop strategic plans around the five goals, hold an annual public meeting to report its progress, and set interim goals for the next year.

[Read more.](#)

Education in the News

Tri-City United School District and World's Best Workforce Legislation

The Minnesota 2013 Legislative Session enacted the World's Best Workforce statute (Minn. Statutes, Section 120B.11) which sets a goal for all students in Minnesota's public schools to meet graduation standards and be prepared for college and/or the world of work. [Read full Le Center Leader article.](#)

Northfield School District Wants "World's Best Workforce"

Six months of planning by Northfield School Superintendent Chris Richardson and Mary Henson, the district's director of teaching and learning, culminated in a presentation about the World's Best Workforce at Monday night's school board meeting. [Read more at Northfield News.](#)

Amended Anti-bullying Bill Appeases Key Minnesota School Groups

Minnesota schoolchildren picked on by other students would have stronger protections under an anti-bullying bill that has been revamped to win the support of key education groups. [Read StarTribune story.](#)

Minnesota House Passes School Lunch Funding Bill

Lawmakers in the Minnesota House unanimously passed legislation Thursday that would guarantee a hot school lunch to any student who wanted one but could not afford it. [Read more on TwinCities.com](#)

Recent BloggED posts

How Bad is this Winter, Really?

It's that time of year in Minnesota when everyone has cabin fever. Every conversation is about the weather. Will it be above freezing from here on out or are we due for another plunge into the polar vortex? [Read on.](#)

Increasing Access to the Most Important Meal of the Day

Breakfast has long been known as "the most important meal of the day." This is not without reason. A healthy breakfast not only provides a kick of energy to start the day, it has been found to help with weight control, lower cholesterol, provide more strength and endurance to engage in physical activity and also improve concentration and performance whether you're on the job or in the classroom. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming Events

Achievement Gap Summit – March 21!

School superintendents and other district personnel are invited to join a professional conversation about the achievement gap. Summit participants will be able to gather more information on their data and learn about technical assistance available from Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) staff, including support and resources in the areas of: English learners, special education, academic standards, data analysis and assistance available through the Regional Centers of Excellence.

Friday, March 21, 9 a.m. -12 p.m. at the TIES building, 1667 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55108. [RSVP to: Maria Vincent.](#)

Screening: College and Career Readiness Videos

You are invited to attend a screening and discussion of a sampling of the Shaping Your Future videos on Friday, March 28, 10:30 a.m. -12 p.m. at our office in Roseville, 1500 Highway 36 West. Conference Center A, Room 14.

The Minnesota Department of Education's Office of College and Career Success contracted with Twin Cities Public Television to produce a collection of high-quality and accessible videos to promote college and career readiness among students and families throughout Minnesota, particularly students under-represented in higher education. We plan to distribute the videos to interested constituents and stakeholder groups across the state. Registration requested. Questions? [Contact Beth Barsness.](#)

By the Numbers

75 percent

of Minnesota districts on track or nearly on track to close achievement gaps by 50 percent by 2017 in reading.

2 Million

investment to expand the Regional Centers of Excellence from three to six in order to better serve schools statewide.

485 Million

historic investment by 2013 Legislature to address equity and accelerate efforts that are proven to reduce gaps and improve student achievement.

Thank You for reading Learning Matters. Questions or comments? Send to L Hildebrant.