

Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) Member District Communities

Promise to Act

Education Equity and Excellence Action Plan™

Developed by Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) Member District Communities
with Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

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Promise to Act

Education Equity and Excellence Action Plan™

Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) Member District Communities

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I. Introduction: Origins of the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) Equity and Excellence in Education Action Planning Process

In 2015, the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) began a collaboration with the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) to address equity and excellence in education for the Southwest Minnesota region. The NCIC is made up of six public school district members, mostly located in Nobles County: Fulda, Round Lake-Brewster, Adrian, Ellsworth, and Heron Lake-Okabena. NCIC applied for and received consulting support from MnEEP to gather data on racial disparities in the region’s education system. This data was shared in a published report, presented at a community summit, and ultimately incorporated into a Race Equity and Excellence in Education Action Plan (EAP) with recommendations for the NCIC.

The data and content of the EAP were gathered and developed by conducting community engagement summits, holding linguistic-specific community visioning sessions, and meeting with the Promise to Act Advisory Committee (PAAC). The

“The Nobles County Integration Collaborative and Minnesota Education Equity Partnership [relationship] has been a vital collaboration in addressing educational equity issues in our region. Through this process, we have been able to build stronger relationships with families, students, stakeholders, community members, and school districts that have an interest in educational excellence for all students. The project has identified disparities that exist but also equity strategies to close the achievement gap. It’s encouraging to know that work is being done that will allow access to all student to learn and excel at their best!”

—Lakeyta Swinea, NCIC Board Chair 2017

PAAC is a leadership group of the NCIC and was responsible for collaborating with MnEEP for this entire project. PAAC members included: higher education educators and staff, K-12 teachers and administrators, communities of color, county services staff, law enforcement officials, housing services staff, and students. These advisory members met several times throughout the EAP process to review case studies from MnEEP researchers, review results from community visioning sessions, and provide advice on strategic focus areas for this report.

There are three phases in the MnEEP Race Equity and Excellence in Education Action Planning™ process. Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the equity action plan process are complete.

PHASE 1

Race Equity in Education Community Profiles + Promise to Act Summit =
Building Awareness of Gaps that Exist along
Cradle to Career Education Continuum

PHASE 2

Community Visioning + Strategy Development =
Race Equity and Excellence in Education Action Plan

PHASE 3

District implementation plans + Community-Wide Campaign =
Building Opportunity and Access for More
Students in Southwest Minnesota

PHASE 1: Building Awareness of Local Education Disparities (March – November 2015)

During Phase 1, MnEEP and NCIC leaders hired a **Policy Fellow to collect data and conduct research on racial disparities in the region’s education system**. These findings, as well as recommendations for addressing the identified disparities, were compiled in a “Community Profile” report and presented at the Equity and Prosperity Summit in November 2015. Over 100 leaders from the community, philanthropic, higher education, K-12 education, and government sectors, as well as families and students, attended the presentation. A survey of attendees highlighted overwhelming support for the equity action planning process and its potential to gather the diverse perspectives of families and students to create more equity in their local school communities and systems.

PHASE 2: Community visioning sessions and PAAC Strategy Sessions (January 2016 – March 2017)


In Phase 2, MnEEP staff and consultants collaborated with NCIC and school district staff to hold community visioning sessions in Spanish, Laotian, Karen, East African, and West African languages. The visioning session participants were mostly from the Worthington Public School District, but also included

attendees from Fulda, Ellsworth and Adrian districts. **Overall, 135 people attended the five visioning sessions and two Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes**. Staff shared the compiled results with the PAAC.

The PAAC, along with other community members, educators, and students took part in a **strategic retreat** in October 2016. This retreat focused on several key issues identified in the community visioning sessions and analyzed root causes of education equity gaps in kindergarten readiness, 3rd-grade reading, 8th-grade math, suspension rates, high school completion, and college access. **The collective action feedback from the visioning sessions and the retreat are the foundation of the education equity strategies, goals, and policy recommendations found in this EAP report.**

PHASE 3: Building Opportunity and Access for More Students in Southwest Minnesota (To Be Completed)

This phase will involve **educating other key stakeholders** in the NCIC region about the process and findings of this Equity Action Plan report. **The goal of this phase is to identify opportunities for the collaborative implementation of the report’s recommendations for equity action.**



The PAAC supports the following recommendations for creating equity and excellence in the education outcomes of students and communities in the Southwest Minnesota region. The PAAC urges all stakeholders in NCIC member districts to commit to and actively support the implementation of these recommendations during Phase 3 of the EAP process.

1. **Share the education equity research and community input** included in this report with school board members, educators, community leaders, and political leaders.
2. **Understand and reflect on the outcomes** of the community visioning process, focusing on the concerns and recommendations shared by families and students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
3. **Encourage stakeholders to mobilize and collaborate** to develop and implement the equity strategies Pre-K to workforce in the report, with attention to developing a more culturally diverse staff and teacher workforce at NCIC member districts.
4. **Review and use this report’s equity goals** to address education opportunity gaps and set high academic achievement expectations for all students in NCIC member districts on the long-term.
5. **Encourage school staff to review and consider the information and recommendations in this report** when creating policies, updating district improvement plans, setting curriculum goals and standards, selecting and revising curriculum materials, and updating annual professional development plans.

II. Historical Demographic Trends in the City of Worthington and Nobles County

As the community reviews equity strategies and actions, the historical demographic trends of the area are important contextual factors to consider in forming new policies and practices.

The area now known as Nobles County was originally populated by the Sisseton Band of Dakota Indians. French explorer Joseph Nicollet named Okabena Lake in present-day Worthington after the Dakota word for nesting place of herons (Rose, 1908). In time, immigrants from Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia eventually came to inhabit the area to build economic opportunity and better lives for their children and families.

Immigrants came to the region for different reasons. While some sought employment, others were refugees escaping war or other unrest. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigrants from Europe settled in Nobles County and established farms. Immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia were some of the earliest non-European immigrants to settle in Southwest Minnesota,

including Nobles County and the Town of Worthington. Lao refugees began moving to the region in the 1980s. The 1990 U. S. census reported nearly 400 Lao residents in the region. Among immigrants and refugees began arriving in 1991, with many relocating from the Twin Cities. Immigrants arrived in considerable numbers from around the world including Southeast Asia, East Africa, Central Mexico, and the Texas-Mexico border (Amato, 1997).

In 1980, Worthington’s population was just over 10,000 and included approximately 100 Hispanic residents (Vezner, 2011). Between 1990 and 2000, the immigrant population in Minnesota grew by 130%, compared to a 57% increase across the United States (Fennelley & Huart, 2010). By the 2000 U. S. census, Worthington’s population was over 11,000; in the 2010 census, the population of the city was 12,764 with an estimated 4,500 Hispanic residents (Amato, 1997). The diversity of the people in Nobles County has changed significantly since 1990 as is evident in the U. S. census data (see figure 1).



The Diversity of Nobles County population has changed significantly since 1990.

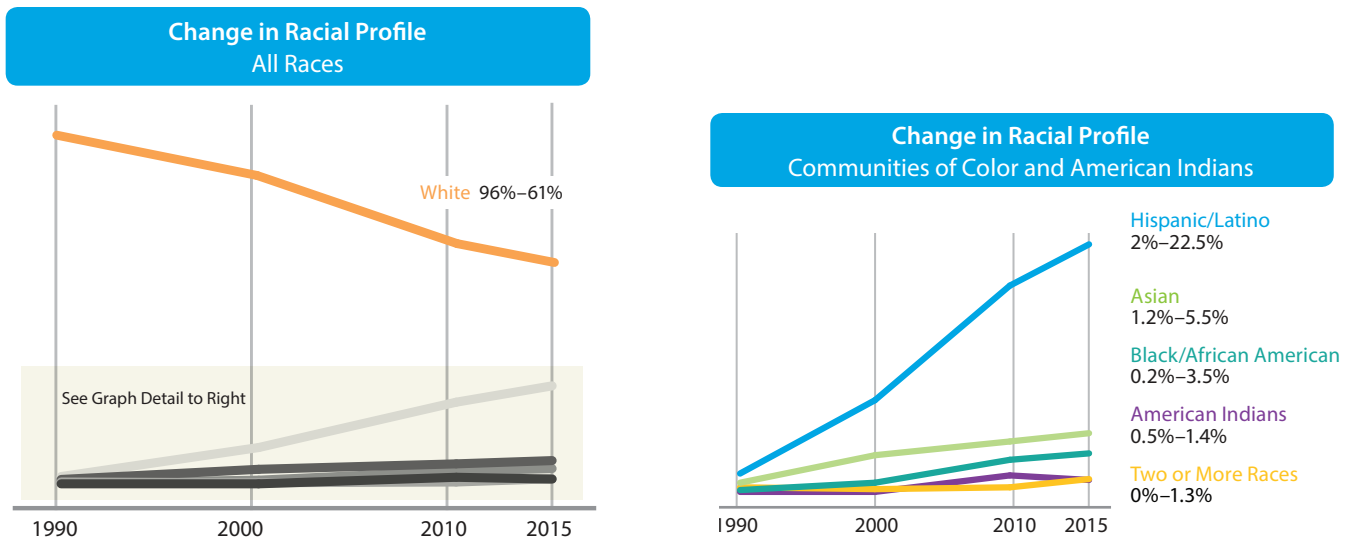


Worthington 1895. Minnesota Historical Society

FIGURE 1

Percent Change in Populations in Nobles County, Minnesota 1990-2015

U. S. Census Data



Aging Population and Immigrant Workers

The increasing number of retirees in Minnesota, coupled with increases in the out-migration of native-born workers, is creating an increase in the need for immigrant workers in the state. One report predicted that a slowing fertility rate and an aging Baby Boomer generation would reduce the average annual population growth rate to one-quarter of the growth rate of the 1990s, making job vacancies more challenging to fill over time (Allen, 2017). Thus, immigrants are increasingly important contributors to Minnesota’s economy. In Minnesota and around the country, these individuals tend to be younger and tend to fill both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs. In 2000, 25% of the physicians and 40% of the engineers holding doctoral degrees in the United States were immigrants (Fennelley & Huart, 2011).

Minnesota’s K-12 educational system has also been impacted by immigration. Between 2001 and 2006, 75% of Minnesota school districts had a decline in enrollment (Fennelley & Huart, 2011, p. 9). The employment climate in Minnesota has attracted and continues to attract immigrant workers and their families, thereby boosting student enrollment and enabling schools in smaller, often rural, communities to stay open (Fennelley & Huart, 2011). Enrollment in Worthington schools has been growing, with an estimated 500 student increase in the last decade (Koumpilova, 2015). Due to the increase, the Worthington School District added 18 full-time equivalent teachers in 2010 (AdvanceEd Executive Summary, 2013).

Economic Impact of Immigrants in Minnesota

The contribution of immigrants to Minnesota’s workforce results in a contribution to the state’s economy. The increase in immigrants moving to Minnesota has equated to an increase in the state’s gross domestic product (GDP) and, as immigrant purchasing power grows, an increase in associated tax revenue. In 2013, foreign-born residents contributed an estimated \$22.4 billion dollars to Minnesota’s gross domestic product (American Immigration Council, 2013). The estimated lifetime earnings for immigrants in Minnesota was \$659 billion dollars, with an annual purchasing power of \$5 billion dollars in 2013 (Corrie, & Radosevich, 2013).

The estimated economic impact of immigrants has significantly increased based on immigrant employment and taxes paid, as well as on the number of immigrant-owned businesses (Fennelley & Huart, 2010). In 2010, immigrant-owned businesses represented approximately three percent (3%) of Minnesota businesses, with annual sales exceeding \$2 billion dollars (Minneapolis Foundation, 2010). Studies have shown that rural Minnesota communities significantly benefit from immigrant workers and immigrant-owned businesses.

\$45 million

state and local taxes are generated annually from immigrants in Southwest Minnesota.

—Minneapolis Foundation, 2010

Nobles County Industry, Education and Community Responses to Immigration

The growth of lower-wage jobs increased immigration to the region in the late 1980s. For example, the Swift pork processing plant in Worthington added a shift in 1989, increasing opportunities for employment. This shift more than doubled the facility's workforce from 750 to 1,500 employees while also reducing wages (Amato, 1997) thus attracting immigrants looking for work opportunities to move to the region. With the increase in immigrant residents the community responded in various ways.

The arrival of workers with diverse new languages and cultural backgrounds in the area resulted in institutions such as schools and hospitals in Worthington to "re-tool" with new language offerings to assist the new residents. Other community agencies, ranging from universities to nonprofits, also helped the Worthington community to become more inclusive and responsive to immigrants.

One response was the formation of the Cultural Diversity Coalition in 1991. Through this, more than 100 people were engaged in ten working group sessions to address issues such as housing, translation services, legal matters, and racism (Amato, 1997). In 1993, the coalition was instrumental in starting a program to help newcomers to connect with support agencies and resources. This program, known as the Community Connector Program, is still in operation thanks to funding from the United Way and other local institutions and organizations. Also in 1993, a group of area residents started

the Worthington International Festival to celebrate the cultural diversity of the region. The University of Minnesota Extension has also helped rural areas experiencing an increase in immigrant residents. In 1997, Extension started an afterschool 4H program aimed at attracting students from all cultures and, by 2001, 283 students had participated (Amato, 1997).

In response to the Minnesota Legislature establishing integrated education funding in 1999, six Nobles County area school districts formed the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) through a joint powers agreement in the same year. Since then, NCIC member districts have actively engaged area residents in efforts to create welcoming and inclusive communities that use peer-to-peer learning to increase the success of all students in Nobles County. NCIC plays an important role in promoting cultural integration and education equity work in the region.

Just as the region was developing the programs and services to support its new immigrant community members, the Swift pork processing plant was raided by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers on December 12, 2006. This raid was one of the largest in U.S. history, affecting more than 1,200 Swift employees across six meat processing plants and their associated communities. Approximately 230 workers, an estimated ten percent (10%) of the company's employees, were arrested during the raid (Steil, 2006). Research conducted highlights that the effects of the Worthington raid were still



"Worthington celebrates its diversity and proactively works to build a united community. Our City hasn't been content to simply let things be; we've taken steps to work with and encourage all community members to build a sound foundation for the future. By working together, we've established a remarkable level of community trust...Worthington can only achieve the best version of itself as a united community."

—Troy Appel,
Chief of Police Worthington

felt among residents and workers a year after the event (Steil, 2007). In response to the disruptive effect of raids on children and their families, several local nonprofits and churches in the Nobles County region collaborated to provide emergency assistance (Urban Institute, 2007, p. 4).

The social, emotional, and academic impacts of real and potential raids on children are especially relevant for communities with new immigrants. These impacts are not only felt by the first generation of immigrants that directly experienced raids but are also felt by subsequent generations due to the ripple effect of past trauma. (Urban Institute, 2007). Research has shown that collaboration between communities and school districts in times of disruption, such as after an immigration raid, plays a significant role in ensuring the security of immigrant children and unifying the community (http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im_uac-educators-guide_2016.pdf).

Stakeholders in the region continue to work together to support community members facing human rights issues associated with immigration raids (e.g. displacement of immigrant children, separation of immigrant families, etc.).

Summary

Southwest Minnesota has experienced an increase in immigrants settling in Nobles County. Immigrants benefit Minnesota economically by increasing jobs, increasing the tax base, increasing the workforce for otherwise aging communities, and increasing enrollment in rural schools. Worthington has addressed the challenges of increased diversity by developing the Cultural Diversity Coalition in 1991, hosting the annual International Festival since 1987, establishing the Community Connector program in 1994, forming the Nobles County Integration Collaborative in 1999, and many other efforts.

Importance of Diverse Populations as Reflected by Local Leaders

The following statements were offered to demonstrate the importance of a diverse community in Nobles County and the Southwest Minnesota region.

“Worthington celebrates its diversity and proactively works to build a united community. Our City hasn’t been content to simply let things be; we’ve taken steps to work with and encourage all community members to build a sound foundation for the future. By working together, we’ve established a remarkable level of community trust. The community trust in Worthington starts early, in the schools. The schools, like the city, have flourished as a result of willing participation by all ethnicities.

The Police Department partners with the School District through DARE and the Blue in the School program. In the Blue in the School program, officers spend time at the schools and interact with students while reading books, having lunch or just hanging out during various school activities. The Chief of Police starts with youngest in the school district every year, by reading and chatting with students in each and every kindergarten class in town. Worthington can only achieve the best version of itself as a united community. Those of us who have been around for a while need to help create awareness for newcomers and embrace new cultural activities to broaden our own horizons. Worthington is blessed with opportunities, throughout the year, to showcase its diversity through various events, culminating with the International Festival. The people of Worthington, working together, have made it a great place to live and raise a family.”

—Troy Appel, Chief of Police, Worthington

“As a lifelong resident of the Worthington area I have watched with interest as our community has changed from all-white to one that has more diverse cultures for its size than nearly any community in Minnesota and possibly the United States. The change has not been easy for many residents including older whites and newcomers who have different native languages than English. Many of the negative biases, prejudices, and stereotypes of other cultures that have been learned in families, communities, and countries of origin continue to linger. Only when individuals of our diverse cultures begin to intentionally relate with each other on a personal level, be it in school, the workplace or social settings will the richness, depth and splendor of our varied backgrounds be accepted as an asset to be appreciated and valued rather than a problem that we have to live with.”

—Linden Olson, School Board Director

III. Education Equity Strategies Can Build a Prosperous Community

An equitable society is one where everyone can participate and prosper

Everyone Wants What Is Best for Their Children

Undeniably, everyone in Minnesota wants what is best for their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Families from all cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds want their children to have fair access to a quality education that will provide better opportunities than previous generations.

However, the unequal treatment of children of color, American Indian children, and immigrant children in U.S. schools over multiple generations has created a legacy of systemic education bias that interrupts the intentions and efforts of underserved communities to guide their children into the next generation of leaders.

Families and communities must understand how the current education system was created before they can dismantle its legacy and bias. To do this, these stakeholders must also understand how equity tools can be used to transform education policies, structures, and leadership approaches.

History of Unequal Education for Distinct Student Groups in the United States

Unfair education policies and practices in the U.S. over multiple generations have reproduced and compounded the unequal treatment of students of color, American Indian students, and immigrant students (Billings, 2006). This historical legacy has resulted in a pervasive bias in the current education system that must be acknowledged and addressed in every community.

Beginning with the treatment of children in slavery and continuing through the era of school segregation by race under Jim Crow laws, African-American students have had to struggle and fight for generations to gain a legitimate place amongst their white peers (Billings, 2006).

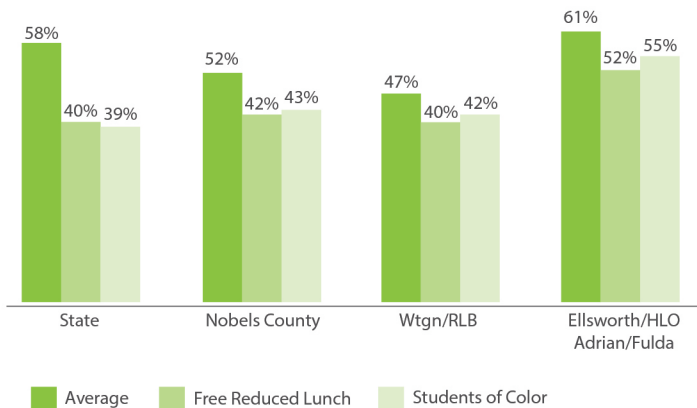
American Indian students suffered through the era of harsh treatment in government-funded boarding schools that forced them to adopt English and Christianity, punishing those who spoke their native languages (Child, 2000).

“The education achievement gap reflects an education opportunity gap, with under-achieving student groups often having the most limited access to critical resources for academic achievement.”

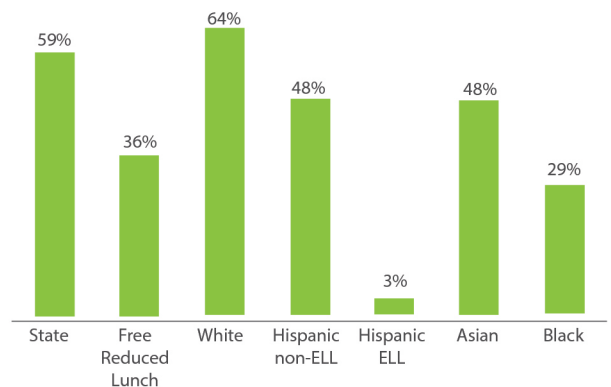
FIGURE 2

MCA Proficiency 2015

3rd Grade Reading



8th Grade Math—Worthington



Source: Minnesota Department of Education

More recently, undocumented immigrant Latino, Asian, and African children (known as the “Dreamers”) who have grown up in the United States with full access to a K-12 education services under the Supreme Court’s Plyler v. Doe decision have increasingly faced discrimination and uncertainty in access to U.S. higher education (<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act>).

What is Structural Racism and How Has It Caused Opportunity Gaps in Education?

Structural racism is “racial bias across institutions and society... the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systemically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color” (Annie E. Casey, 2014, p. 5). In education systems, the “achievement gap” (i.e. academic test score variances between students of color, American Indian students, and English Learner students compared to their white peers) is a manifestation of structural racism. There are also gaps between low-income, rural white students and the state average test scores.

The achievement gap is not evidence of a lack of intelligence in one student group compared to another, nor is it proof that one person or “racist actor” is intentionally limiting educational opportunities for certain student groups. Rather, achievement gaps reflect opportunity gaps, a difference in resources or opportunities, coupled with the compounding



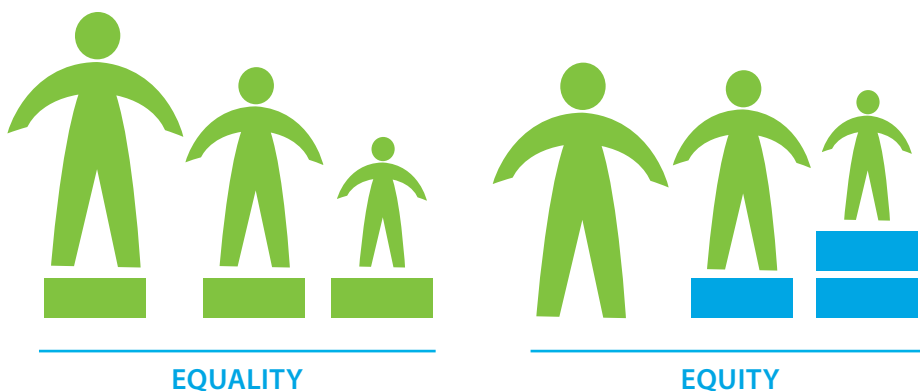
effect of historical and present-day systemic inequities and barriers in education policies and practices (see figure 2). Over time, students from specific low-income and cultural communities begin to experience an “education debt” as they are increasingly unable to access educational pathways and economic opportunities for success (Billings, 2006).

Building a Just and Equitable Education System Is Possible

Achieving authentic equity in any context requires an understanding of the distinct needs of different people. Equity is different than equality, which implies that everyone “gets the same thing” and assumes that everyone starts out from the same place (see figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Diversity is Not Equity



- Diversity is not equity. Diversity is the description of the various cultural groups or distinct populations in an area; equity is the creation of the conditions that allow everyone in that area to reach their full potential.
- Equity is about just and fair inclusion in society.
- An equitable society is one where everyone can participate and prosper.

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Under U.S. civil rights law, educators are required to monitor and provide enhanced support to protected classes, as defined by the federal government. This definition includes, but is not limited to: race, class, gender, socioeconomic level, family history, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, migration status, ethnicity, geography or region, and cultural practices (Jackson, & McIver, n.d.). In response, city government agencies and school boards throughout the U.S. have begun to implement equity policies and practices to ensure that public education institutions are more inclusive, equitable, and just. Equity-Centered Capacity-Building (ECCB) is one approach to achieving this outcome.

ECCB provides a lens, a set of skills, and specific strategies that support school systems and communities as they move along the continuum of transformative and sustainable improvements. Along with other capacity building strategies like teacher quality, effective data systems, leadership capacity...ECCB also directly addresses issues of power, race, socioeconomics, gender, and other dynamics of difference, plus historical community, cultural, and political tensions as they relate to the healthy functioning of classrooms, schools, and school systems (Petty, 2015, p. 64).

The key to the ECCB approach is utilizing the experiences of educators, students, and communities during the process of defining, implementing, and refining education strategies (Petty, 2015, p. 64).

Education Equity Strategies Will Develop a Prosperous Region

An example of an education equity strategy that successfully addressed inequities and spurred prosperity in the US is the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the G.I. Bill. Passed after World War II, the G.I. Bill "was an important tool in creating postwar prosperity, enabling millions of veterans to attend college, finish vocational training, obtain VA loans for homes and businesses, and receive unemployment payments." (Leddy, 2009)

Research shows the economic impact of more equitable and inclusive policies and institutions. In a paper published by the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank, Randall Eberts of the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and colleagues analyzed growth in 118 regions in the 1994–2004 period and found that racial inclusion and income equality were positively correlated with economic growth measures including employment, output, productivity, and per capita income. A

Equity-Centered Capacity-Building provides a lens, a set of skills, and specific strategies that support school systems and communities as they move along the continuum of transformative and sustainable improvements.

later analysis by Pastor and Chris Benner at the University of California, Davis, found that concentrated poverty, income inequality, and racial segregation exerted a significantly stronger drag on growth in older industrial cities—the same places where growth is most needed—than on cities with stronger markets (Treuhaft & Madland, 2011, p. 8).

Just as past eras have used policy and institutions to educate the workforce and build prosperity, contemporary stakeholders can use education equity strategies to address specific inequities and build a stronger future for all people.

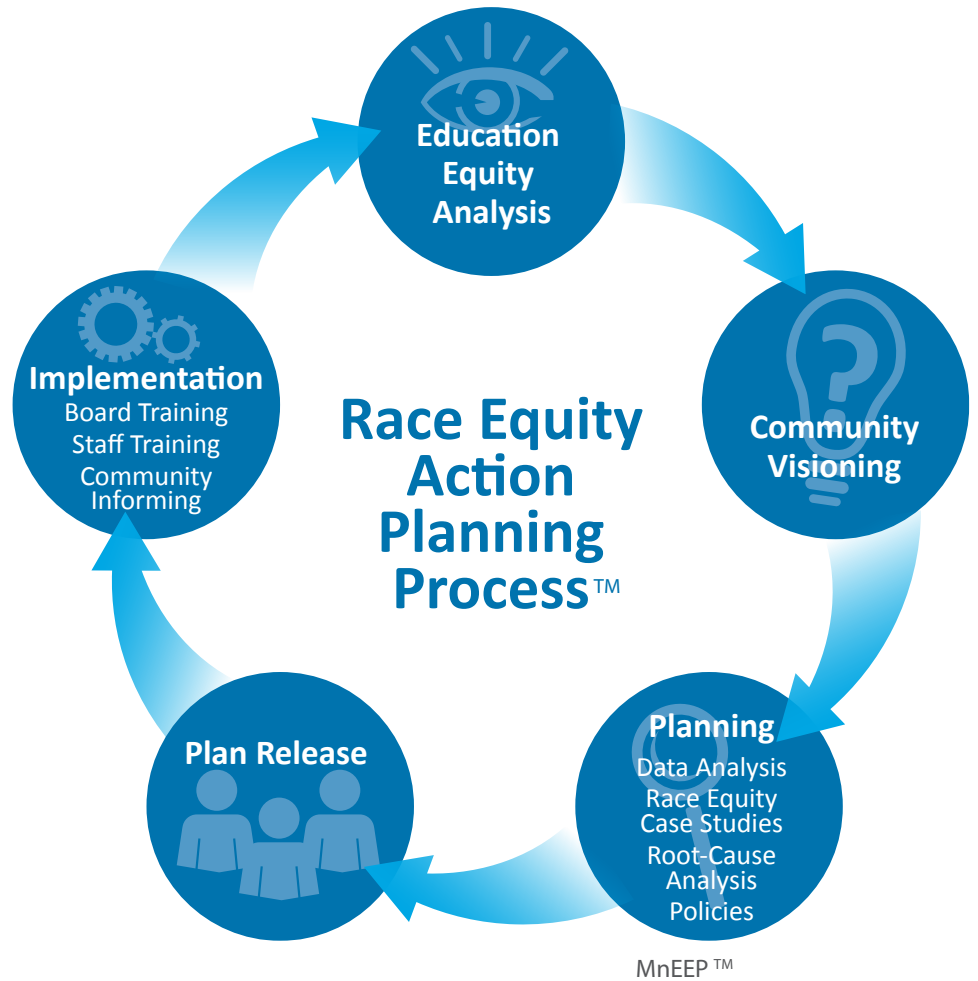
The education equity strategies and recommendations found in this Nobles County Integration Collaborative Equity Action Plan report focus on meeting the needs of the families and students in communities of color, American Indian communities, and immigrant communities based on information gathered in community visioning sessions. These sessions were held in multiple languages and resulted in specific recommendations for the schools in NCIC member districts to become more equitable, inclusive, and accessible for underserved communities and students. Research and case studies on equitable education policies and practices support the included strategies and recommendations.

Successful implementation of the strategies and recommendations in this report is an opportunity to enhance the economic and social prosperity of the Southwest Minnesota region. Doing so will ensure that the graduates of NCIC school districts will contribute to an educated and diverse workforce that is capable of creating new jobs, leading vibrant communities, and ensuring the growth and prosperity of Minnesota.

IV. Community Visioning: Collective Equity Strategy Development

The community plays a vital role at the center of the **MnEEP Equity and Excellence in Education Action Plan™ (EAP)** process. The process uses authentic dialogues with community members and listening sessions with specific communities of color and immigrant communities to gather the lived experiences of families and students in the education system. The process includes gathering their ideas for addressing and transforming education opportunity gaps. Feedback is transformed into goals and strategies for communities to use to create school policies and practices that are more inclusive and responsive to their children’s needs, talents, and overall well-being.

The EAP process for Nobles County provided a variety of engagement opportunities for community members to learn from one another, reflect on their lived experiences in the education system, and identify potential policies and practices for advancing education equity in the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) member districts. These community engagement opportunities included an “Education Equity and Prosperity” Summit held in November 2015, community visioning sessions held throughout 2016, a strategies retreat held in October 2016, and on-going Promise to Act Advisory Committee (PAAC) meetings held throughout the process to review community input, data, research, and case studies (see Appendix B for the details of specific of engagement events).



“Simply put, a smart education system links a high-functioning school district with a web of supports for children and families that collectively develop and integrate high-quality learning opportunities in all areas of students’ lives—at school, at home, and in the community. Such systems actively engage youth and community members in the development and implementation of services to ensure that they meet community needs. Community members provide pressure and support; districts and service providers are accountable to the community for improving a broad range of outcomes for children and youth.”

—(Rothman, 2010)

Nobles County “Education Equity and Prosperity” Summit

On Saturday, November 7, 2015, the MnEEP and NCIC co-hosted a community-wide “Education Equity and Prosperity” Summit at the Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The event was attended by over 100 parents, students, community leaders, elected officials, school board members, and business leaders.

MnEEP staff and consultants presented the findings of the “Community Profile” report for the NCIC region which outlines the racial disparities in education present in each of NCIC’s six member school districts. With this information in-hand, attendees participated in a community-wide dialogue that focused on the most pressing disparities in the data and the possible solutions to address the associated opportunity gaps in the participating school districts.

Suggestions for the issues to resolve to achieve education equity included:

- increasing cultural awareness amongst teachers and students;
- increasing the number of teachers of color; and
- expanding parent education and involvement.

The summit also captured attendee feedback on the “next steps” for the MnEEP-NCIC collaborative project before its start in January 2016. The event concluded with attendees offering their strong support and commitment to the Equity Action Plan process in the NCIC region.



Summit 2015

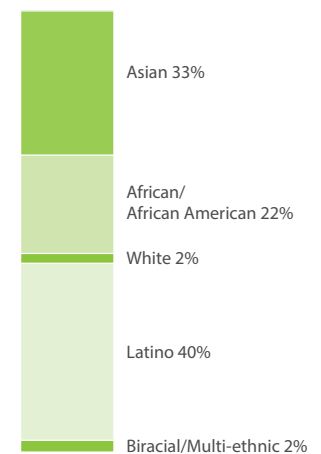


Community Visioning Sessions with Cultural Communities

Between June and July 2016, MnEEP hosted community visioning sessions with community groups, including two sessions with Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. The purpose of the visioning sessions was to engage distinct community groups about the dreams and aspirations they held for their children’s education, as well as their expectations and suggestions for how schools in the NCIC region could make those dreams a reality. Visioning sessions were hosted for specific cultural groups present in NCIC member districts including Lao, Latino, Karen, African, and African-American communities. NCIC staff were instrumental in providing community outreach for the sessions which were largely attended by parents, grandparents, students, and other community members. The session participants were mostly from the Worthington Public School District area, but individuals from the Fulda, Ellsworth and Adrian districts also attended. Individual session attendance ranged from 10 to more than 30 participants, with approximately 135 total individuals participating in the visioning session process overall.

Figure 4 illustrates the racial makeup of the NCIC visioning session process, as determined by completed participant surveys. 40% of all participants identified as Hispanic or Latino, 33% identified as Asian or Asian American, 22% identified as African or African-American, 2% identified as White, and 2% identified as biracial or more than one race.

FIGURE 4
Visioning Session
Participants by Race



The small group discussions addressed four key questions

- 1 | What are your dreams for children or grandchildren growing up in our community?
- 2 | What does an equitable educational system look like?
- 3 | What are the barriers to achieving equity in that educational system?
- 4 | How can we help eliminate barriers and create our desired educational system?

The sessions were conducted in Spanish, Lao, Karen, and multiple African languages. Each session started with an introduction of key equity concepts and information about the overall MnEEP-NCIC collaboration project to develop an EAP report for the region. After this introduction, attendees were divided into small groups of up to twelve people. Language interpreters were present and served as small group facilitators to support equal participation. The table interpreters and facilitators led the discussion and documented the participants' comments. At most visioning sessions, there were two facilitators at each table.

Following the small group discussions, attendees shared a meal that reflected the cultural backgrounds of those present and, before the session ended, each table shared a few thoughts from their discussions with the larger group.

Community Visioning Response Summaries

Methodology: Each visioning session and adult basic education (ABE) session had one bilingual note taker per small group that recorded participant comments. Notes were initially recorded in the native language of each small group and later translated into English. All notes from the sessions were

entered into QDA Miner qualitative data analysis software by the project consultant. After a thorough review of the compiled information, major themes from the session discussions were identified and coded.

The quotes included in this report highlight the experiences of some of the session participants in relation to the education system of NCIC's member school districts. While these quotes and experiences may not represent views of all individuals or families in these districts, it is important to note the perceptions of all people as this is a critical element of equity work.

QUESTION ONE

This question was **"what are your dreams for children and grandchildren growing up in our community?"** Common themes in question responses included:

"I want my grandkids to be up to date with technology and learn how to use technology so that they become experts"

"Graduate from high school"

"Be a leader in the community"

Become professionals: "doctor, teacher, engineer, lawyer, judge, social worker, mechanic"



What are Your Dreams for Children and Grandchildren Growing up in Our Community?

Character-building [education]

Be a leader in the community

I want my grandkids to be up to date with technology and learn how to use technology so that they become experts.

Children to not live in fear and have the freedom just like their peers. Equals, a fair shot in education.

For children to have more self-esteem to reach their dreams

That my child has a career.

More opportunities, better jobs.

To get more education. A PhD, Masters degrees.

To be independent

Children to see educators that look like them. Seeing children to advance—college education.

Graduate from high school

I have 5 kids, 5 dreams!

My first daughter's dream is to be a teacher. Another One a Doctor.

Become professionals in these fields: "doctor, teacher, engineer, lawyer, judge, social worker, mechanic..."

The hope and dream is for our children to be successful! We want them to accomplish their dreams. We want them to be able to get a good education and job, and be in a good position where they are comfortable with a professional job.



QUESTIONS TWO, THREE, AND FOUR

These questions were: “**what does an equitable educational system look like?**” “**what are the barriers to achieving equity in that educational system?**” and “**how can we help eliminate barriers and create our desired educational system?**” Four themes emerged: cultural responsiveness, learning support, parent engagement, and basic needs.

Cultural Responsiveness

The theme of cultural responsiveness emerged in all visioning sessions and was discussed in different ways. A culturally responsive school uses an equity lens to understand each student’s academic, social and cultural strengths and challenges. As researchers Jackson and McIver explain, “cultural responsiveness means knowing the ‘stuff’ of each student’s life and using it to engage students in learning. It also means paying attention to the multiple parts of each student’s identity as the student sees himself/herself.”

Culturally responsive schools train teachers to recognize the strengths and challenges of each child and to use cultural understanding to incorporate different ways of thinking into their classroom. Furthermore, there is a legal mandate that

requires educators to recognize federally protected classes of students based on race, class, gender, socioeconomic level, family history, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, migration status, ethnicity, geography or region, and cultural practices (Jackson & McIver, n.d.).

Visioning session participants commented that students of color, including children of immigrants, are often negatively perceived in comparison to their white peers. To mitigate this, participants shared that it is important to have teachers who understand the unique background of each student and that this could be accomplished by ensuring that districts hire teachers and staff who reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the students they serve.

Visioning session participants also shared that they would like schools to provide opportunities for their children to explore their native cultures and languages while learning English in all academic courses, not just in language arts courses. Finally, session participants expressed that all children should be encouraged and given the opportunity to excel toward high school graduation and transition to college.

Participants shared their concerns on the current level of cultural responsiveness in their school districts and made recommendations to develop a more positive education environment for their children.

Cultural Responsiveness

“If you have the right last name, you’ll get in and get the help you need to go to college regardless of your ability. If you’re in football, for example, and you have the right last name, you’re automatically a starter, and that leads to scholarships.”

—Asian American and Recent High School Graduate

“Racism. The schools and teachers don’t encourage kids of color to take [Advanced Placement] AP classes, [Postsecondary Enrollment Options] PSEOs [are] not encouraged. AP classes aren’t full. White students with lower achievement [and] GPA get into the classes, but students of color aren’t let in. Others got in; classes are predominantly white. Teachers don’t encourage it.”

—African American and Recent High School Graduate

“For teachers to learn more about [the] culture of the students. There can be more trust between teachers and students and students will have more incentive to learn. Have more teachers of color.” —Latino Parent

“Breaking language barriers by teaching in both English and native language not by separating. Language can connect children and families, create understanding between cultures, will lead to more support in home and out, to help guide and encourage students who want to excel.” —Lao Parent

“Having educators that look like my children. I want my children to be influenced by someone who looks like them. I want my children to have a piece of themselves to be in the school system. I want my children to feel like they have contributed to this world we live in.”

—African Parent

Learning Support

Learning Support

Many ideas emerged from the visioning sessions regarding the current learning support programs provided by schools and how this could be improved to better support student achievement.

Learning support programs focus on a child's unique learning needs and incorporate co-learning opportunities to create an environment of enrichment rather than remediation (Genesee, Leary, Saunder & Christian, 2005; Nora, 2013). Schools that seek to eliminate achievement gaps in outcomes should eliminate tracking systems and shift their focus to meeting a student's unique circumstances and needs. (Corbitt Burris & Garrity, 2008).

Key feedback and recommendations on learning support programs from session participants included:

"I would like to see my daughter get more help with homework from the school. Right now, she is young, and we can help her. But when she gets older, and it gets harder, we won't be able to help her anymore. Getting homework in Spanish would help some, but we didn't go to that much school, so we don't know how to help her." —Latino Parent

"Provide tools for all students to develop their own skills." —Latino Parent

"Extracurricular activities that help the student but might not have the family support financially. Having equal opportunities for students regardless of financial status." —Lao Parent

"Say yes to math, require kids to stay after school." —Karen Parent

"Additional services such as after school programs for those kids who need it. Change the stigma about kids who need extra help; kids assume that they are placed in after school program because they are dumb. School should do better in placing positive emphasis on afterschool programs." —African Parent

"There is an issue of the conditions children came from. These children may be psychologically in trauma or [have] physical problems. Schools need more support for these children." —Karen Parent



Parent Engagement

Parent Engagement

Parents and community members were enthusiastic and strongly interested in the possibility of being more deeply involved with the NCIC's member districts. Parents expressed their desire to work with teachers and administrators to support their children's academic success. Across all groups, families and community members stressed the importance of greater communication between schools and families.

By partnering with parents, schools and districts can help ensure that families have the best information, tools, and support to advocate for their children's academic needs. Additionally, by creating physical space in schools for parents and family to access resources and by including parents in decision-making, schools can build the vital relationships with underserved communities (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008).

Visioning session participants expressed a strong desire to become more involved with their local schools and suggested ways for the schools to improve engagement.

"The most influential intervention in the education system is to let parents know the current situation of their student at that moment, not wait until parent conferences or [use] internet/technology if people don't know how to use that tool." —Latino Parent

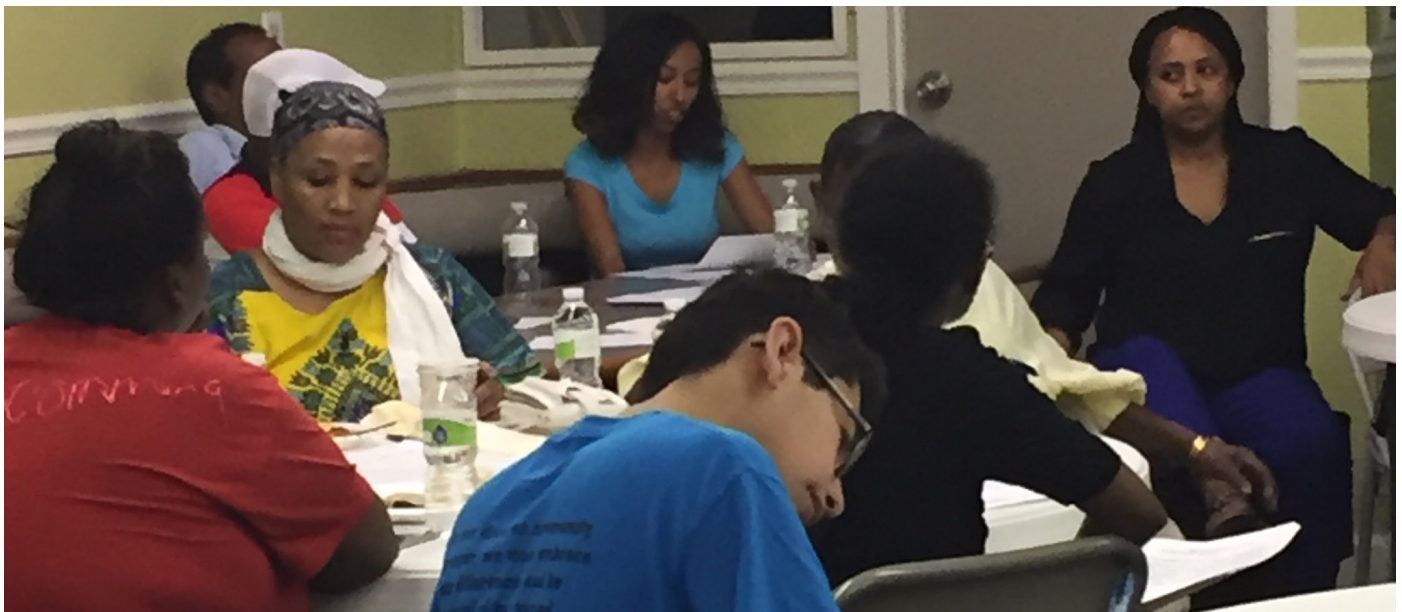
"Parents need to receive information [when their children are at] the appropriate age so that parents understand and can read it." —African Parent

"Parents need to be involved. Parents need to be aware of all the resources available to better be a support system for their child, such as FAFSA, financial aid for students." —Lao Parent

"Have at least three meetings between parents and teachers each year. Conferences are good but need interpreters. Phone is complicated 'discommunication' [sic]. Better communication about programs that are offered." —Karen Parent

"More community pride. Attended a meeting this year, we all wrote notes about how we felt about school. Someone wrote "kids should speak English" but I feel it's okay to speak native tongue." —African-American Participant

"Better orientation for families and children to the schools. Interpreters and understanding is key. We don't have enough information about the schools." —Adult Basic Education Participant





Basic Needs

Participants in the visioning sessions expressed concerns about financial insecurity and its impact on their children's ability to succeed in and beyond school. Many participants shared that they struggle to meet the basic needs of their children.

Basic needs are defined as stable housing, food, clothing, transportation, and employment. Research has recognized the significant impact poverty has on educational outcomes for K-12 students. Without the ability to meet basic needs, families live in constant state of transition and crisis. This state results in family stress which directly affects a child's ability to thrive in school and access opportunities for future success (Levin, 2007).

Session participants cited the lack of adequate public transportation as a key barrier to meeting basic needs. They also shared that the free school supply backpacks provide by school districts were a good resource, but that they did not include all the supplies their children needed.

Basic Needs

Some additional insights participants provided regarding basic needs included:

"Lack of transportation including public transit as well as school bus. The economy is an issue. The focus is usually on education, but we are concerned about basic needs like food, housing, transportation." —Latino Parent

"Parents having to work. Education is important but mom taking care of food, clothing are issues." —African Participant

"Dentists. They don't have dentist in town. They have to go to Sioux Falls and Mankato, and they are very expensive." —Adult Basic Education Participant

"We do not have the time to spend with our children due to work and not making enough money for our child to go to college or even pay for tutors." —East African Participant

"The economy. What concern us are basic needs—so the least of our focus tends to be education." —Latino Parent

"Connecting parents and students to services such as WIC, food stamps, cash assistance, meal programs, clothing." —East African Participant

Strategies Retreat 2016

In October of 2016, NCIC and MnEEP staff and consultants hosted a “celebration reception” to recognize the successful completion of the community visioning process and to host the Nobles County Equity in Action Strategies Retreat. This full-day retreat reviewed the community input from the visioning sessions via an intentional discussion with approximately 35 stakeholders. These individuals were identified as leaders in the Nobles County EAP process and included the Mayor of Worthington, school board members, county officials, regional planning staff, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, families, students, and other individuals.

The objectives of the retreat included:

- 1) **Provide an update on the community visioning process:** share the direct input from the Latino, Karen, East and West African, and Lao visioning sessions regarding education equity in the Nobles County region.
- 2) **Develop a shared strategy:** engage in a root cause analysis and strategy session using education indicators (pre-K preparation, 3rd-grade reading, 8th-grade math, high school graduation rates, suspension rates, and college-going rates).
- 3) **Create an opportunity for collective learning:** using case studies to build understanding on how collective action principles and cultural responsiveness can close education opportunity gaps and create education equity.

The retreat included an in-depth presentation on the results of the visioning sessions, along with research and case studies supporting the major themes. A brief video on equity in education was presented before participants divided into small groups of six to eight people. These groups identified several root causes of education inequity in the NCIC region, identified stakeholders who might be able to address these causes, and articulated strategies for creating change through a collective action approach of shifts in schools, community and families, and students.

NCIC Member District PAAC Meetings

From January 2016 to March 2017, the PAAC held seven advisory sessions on the EAP process. These two-hour advisory meetings were facilitated by MnEEP staff and consultants and reviewed the information gathered as part of the EAP process. These meetings included data from public meetings, data from visioning sessions, and research on successful education equity policies and practices from other communities. The PAAC also reviewed and agreed upon the sections and key recommendations of this EAP report. The PAAC is comprised of community representatives, school officials, NCIC staff, county leaders, and local nonprofit leaders.



Strategies Retreat

“It was eye-opening listening to the importance of teachers of color and cultural responsiveness for families and students that came out in the listening sessions.”

— Community Leader

“I am glad I participated, we are here for action.”

— School Board Member

“I am learning that we need to shift how we communicate with families, we need their ideas and strategies to improve our education system.”

—Teacher

Worthington High School Student Interviews on College Preparation

In March 2017, the project's consultant interviewed three current Worthington High School seniors who were preparing to attend college the following year. The purpose of these interviews was to understand student perceptions regarding the Worthington School District's performance in preparing students for college.

The interviewed students commented on how school programs, teachers, and counselors helped to prepare them for college:

"For me, one of my teachers taught anatomy and he's a concurrent enrollment teacher, and he opened my eyes to how the human body works and the fields in biology that I can go into, and that's why I got interested and stuff like that. [In] a concurrent class you get high school credits and college credits taught by a high by a teacher who is certified to teach in a high school and in a college."

"I'm in a College Possible program. Our school works with College Possible [a St. Paul-based nonprofit organization] and gives you a lot of assistance. They talk you through the college applications process. My counselor calls me every month to find out how I'm doing. She helped [me prepare for] the ACT test, helped with scholarship information, and they paid the fee for the ACT tests, [helped with] applying for scholarships and knowing what to expect in college.... it's really nice since I'm a first-generation college student [and] since my parents don't know what to expect with the process or college. My counselor is there any time and they'll respond right away. It was nice having someone to lean on."

The interviewed students described opportunities to develop skills and leadership:

"Being a part of band helps me with my English because I get to hang out with people who don't speak my language. So, I learn from them too. Also, it's really fun, really fun. I was also in the fall musical. Since I came to America late I don't get to play an instrument; it's too late for me, so I did color guard. The reason why I stay in the musical theater is because it really helps me with my speaking skills. I'm also in the Worthington Public Art Commission, and I got the job because of the art teacher who told me about that. Our school has many opportunities."

"I started with the Odyssey Program. It's for eighth-grade kids offered through NCIC. It helped with schoolwork, and it also helps think about colleges and look at colleges we might want to go to. For Odyssey, some other things we've done is to go to Sioux Falls to work in a food shelf to serve food. We also went to Chicago to visit food shelves. We went around and saw how the different rural areas are. That was a big eye-opener for me. It showed me that people don't have the same experiences we have here in Minnesota."

One of the students interviewed was a representative to the Worthington ISD 518 School Board. They described their role in bringing the student voice to school board meetings:

"I am the School Board Representative from the senior class. It's really helped me understand how our school works, how it comes together and what happens in the school. I see how much work they go through. What I do is that I attend the meetings...I bring them the suggestions from school. It makes me more appreciative of what happens in the school. I let them know what's going on in the month, let them know what the students are talking about, let them know all the concerns and worries of some of the kids. There are two representatives, one of us is a sophomore, and I'm a senior representative."

V. Collective Action Strategies to Address Opportunity Gaps in and around the Nobles Region

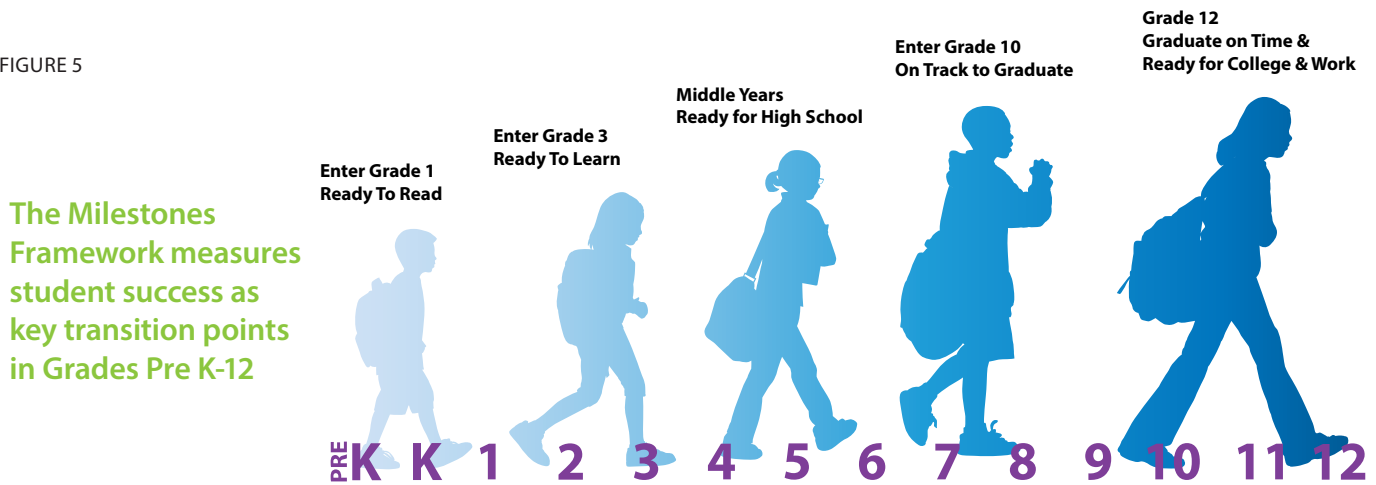
To address opportunity gaps in education, a systemic analysis of the barriers and root causes of these gaps is essential. At the 2016 Strategies Retreat, educators, community members, students, and other leaders conducted such an analysis and brainstormed strategies for addressing the root causes of educational opportunity gaps. The work of this retreat was supported by the work of the Promise to Act Advisory Committee (PAAC), whose meetings brought together research, case studies, and feedback from the community visioning process to finalize the recommended Pre-K to college education equity strategies found in this Equity Action Plan (EAP).

The following tables highlight in-depth equity strategies for the entire Pre-K to college access continuum to be implemented by the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) member districts (see Figure 5 for an overview of the access continuum). The tables are organized according to the achievement indicators associated with the education continuum: Pre-K, 3rd-grade reading, 8th-grade math, 11th-grade math, graduation rates, suspension rates, and college access.

These tables include distinct action steps for different stakeholders, including: community institutions (e.g. libraries, city governments, police departments, hospitals, businesses, etc.), school boards, school administrators, teachers, families, and students. This collective action approach is intended to encourage diverse stakeholders to provide unique forms of leadership and action that are unified under a common goal of achieving equity and excellence in education. **As Dr. Ron Ferguson of Harvard University states, “In the context of a movement for excellence with equity, it is important to view the changing cultural norms in schools, homes, and youth peer groups as collective action projects requiring organizers and leadership, not adjustments that individuals will carry out in isolation without regard for others’ responses” (Ferguson, 2008, p. 285).**

It should be noted that the following strategy charts are intended to complement School Improvement Plans and Integration Plans. While these planning processes predominantly focus on teacher activity and development, this report addresses teachers within a broader spectrum of education stakeholders and seek to integrate the action and support of the entire community.

FIGURE 5



Cultural Responsiveness: Teachers and schools are sensitive to the unique needs of each student. Students have opportunities to explore their native cultures and languages. Country of origin or race is not the determining factor of a student’s academic success.

Learning Supports: Students have additional learning opportunities. They are encouraged and able to attend advanced, college prep courses. Students are able to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Parent Engagement: Parents are eager to be involved with their children’s education. They need information and opportunities to be involved. Parents need information on college admissions as well as financial aid.

Basic Needs: Parents struggle to meet basic needs for their kids including stable housing, food and clothing. The lack of public transportation is a barrier.

Vi: Equity & Excellence in Education Strategies

The strategies for closing the achievement gaps in NCIC’s member districts that are presented in this chart were identified by community members during the Strategies Retreat held on October 1, 2016. The strategies relate to achievement indicators that are recognized by scholarly research and widely used by agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Education. Each indicator listed in the table contains recommended strategies, followed by targeted actions for key stakeholders to consider for implementation. Stakeholders include community members (including elected city and county officials, city and county government staff, nonprofit organizations, and other community members), school board members, district administrators, teachers, education staff, parents, students, and extended families in the NCIC region. Supporting research and relevant case studies are provided when available and appropriate.

Collective Action Strategies | Kindergarten Readiness

Strategies	Community Members	Community Members	Teachers & Education Staff	Students & Families
<p>1. Develop a comprehensive approach to early childhood experiences and education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide families more information on formal pre-K programs to overcome uncertainty due to lack of experience and exposure (e.g. businesses and non-profits can collaborate with schools to launch informational campaigns in multiple languages). <p>(Case Study: Mission Promise Neighborhood Collaborative Partners)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with nonprofit organizations to expand the availability of information about early childhood experiences and programs for families. <p>(Case Studies: Hayward Promise Neighborhood; Northside Achievement Zone)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct an assessment of incoming kindergarten students to determine benchmark skills. <p>(Quirk, Furlong, Lilles, Felix & Chin, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct home visits for children 0 to age 5 with a teacher or school district staff and an interpreter. <p>(Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Isaacs, 2008; Lin & Bates, 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expose children to vocabulary and learning concepts in native languages, or English, or both. <p>(Case Studies: Hayward Promise Neighborhood; Logan Square Neighborhood; Tabors, 1998, EC ELL Models)</p>
<p>2. Enhance early childhood programming with culturally relevant and responsive curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop more early childhood learning experiences for multilingual families, such as library programs, picnics, and fairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use an equity lens on current preschool and early childhood offerings to clarify who is underserved by existing programming. <p>(Case Study: Portland Public Schools' Equity Lens tool)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use an equity lens on current preschool and early childhood offerings. <p>Increase teachers of color and staff of color in preschool and other early childhood education programs in Nobles County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expose children to vocabulary and learning concepts in native languages and English. <p>(Case Study: Hayward Promise Neighborhood)</p>
<p>3. Implement social/emotional screening for refugees to assess the impact of trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate public health and community partners to assess children to see if therapy is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide counselors trained in trauma/cultural responsiveness. <p>(Breen, 2016; West-Olatunji, Goodman, Shure, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide teacher training on identifying behavior consistent with trauma. <p>(Traumaawareschools.org)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide parents information about early childhood exposure to trauma and its effects on development.
<p>4. Address the basic need for transportation to access early childhood programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance public transit for towns and cities in NCIC region to increase access to childhood learning opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with city and county officials to address transportation needs. 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Collective Action Strategies | 3rd Grade Reading

Strategies	Community Members	School Board Members & Administrators	Teachers & Education Staff	Students & Families
<p>1. Develop stronger adult literacy programming in the community that focuses on immigrant adult and family literacy needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build stronger collaboration between schools and county services to provide more Adult Basic Ed (ABE) programming at different sites and times in Nobles County region. ● Increase book programs to share books amongst families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support increased community education and ABE programming to reach more immigrant and refugee community members. ● Seek funds to launch multi-lingual information campaigns that educate families on the impact of adult literacy on child's reading levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reach out to families as early as possible regarding family and adult literacy programming available in the community. <p>(Case Study: Mission Neighborhood/ Comunidad Promesa de la Mission)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model reading and importance of literacy as early as possible in native languages, English or both. <p>(Methods and Models, ColorinColorado.org)</p>
<p>2. Increase cultural relevancy of school reading curricula from the 1st to 3rd-grades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage local libraries to carry more culturally relevant reading and video materials (e.g. stories from multicultural communities and nationalities, etc.). <p>(Biando Edwards, Rauseo, & Unger, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the cultural relevancy of reading curricula in districts by requiring the completion of a curriculum equity audit and curriculum mapping. <p>(Galloway, Ishimaru & Larson, 2015; Vasquez, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use more culturally relevant reading and video materials in schools (e.g. stories from multicultural communities and nationalities, etc.). <p>(Gay, 2000)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that parents feel welcome in the schools and educational system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build awareness of child's needs and develop the capacity to support reading development. <p>(Promise Neighborhood model: Mission Neighborhood/ Comunidad Promesa de la Mission)</p>
<p>3. Provide multilingual information to families around literacy programming and 3rd-grade reading programs in the schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide information on reading strategies and tips for families via kiosks at hospitals, grocery stores, and major retail stores. ● Have free book drives at more places than libraries (e.g. Wal-Mart or Hy-Vee). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-evaluate how information is currently disseminated to families to address barriers to information access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issue questionnaires to families to determine what information parents currently lack and what information they need to best support their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with schools and districts to obtain the information needed to support child's education. <p>(Case Study: Comite de Padres Latinos (COPLA) from Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008)</p>



Collective Action Strategies | 8th Grade Math

Strategies	Community Members	School Board Members & Administrators	Teachers & Education Staff	Students and Families
<p>1. Set high expectations for students of color to excel in math.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set high expectations for students of color and white students to excel in math. ● Encourage local math clubs and award ceremonies from groups like the Kiwanis Club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze math preparation and A.P. course enrollment patterns for student groups, including students of color that are also EL students and those students of color that are not EL students. ● Set school policy for an annual review course enrollment patterns and address outcomes through shifts in course structure, curriculum, and faculty. <p>(Case Studies: San Jose, Portland, Montgomery County) (Corbitt Burris & Garrity, 2008; Gay, 2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set high expectations for students of color and white students to excel in math. ● Provide teachers with professional development in cultural responsiveness for math instruction. <p>(Gay, 2000; Weinstein, Thomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set high expectations for students of color and white students to excel in math. <p>(Case Studies: San Jose, Portland, Montgomery County)</p>
<p>2. Increase cultural responsiveness of educators, schools, and districts to increase the engagement and expectations of students of color in math courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create government resolutions that lift up the important contributions made by different cultural and religious groups in Nobles County. ● Have PR around a proclamation about why it's important. As an example, the Worthington Mayor proclaimed on June 22, 2015 that July 6 through 12 would be Worthington International Festival week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lift up the importance of cultural responsiveness in teaching and learning through school policy. (Case Studies: Portland Public Schools, Roseville Public Schools, Brooklyn Center Public Schools) ● Set high expectations for students than state standards to achieve college-ready math levels. <p>(Case Studies: San Jose, Portland, Montgomery County)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train teachers to teach math and science by embedding skills in everyday activities and cultural practices of different ethnic groups to connect to each student's unique ways of knowing. <p>(Gay, 2000)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage parents and students so that they feel welcome and to ensure that their cultural background is respected as an asset in the learning process. <p>(Gay, 2000)</p>
<p>3. Provide additional tutoring support for achievement in math.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create partnerships between community organizations to offer out-of-school tutoring and programming. <p>(Case Studies: Hayward Promise Neighborhood, Alameda, California; Boston Public Schools)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a math help-line and increase the number of math tutors to help students excel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recommend out-of-school programming. <p>(Case Studies: Hayward Promise Neighborhood, Alameda, California; Boston Public Schools)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Collective Action Strategies | Suspension Rate Gaps

Strategies	Community Members	School Board Members & Administration	Teachers & Education Staff	Students & Families
<p>1. Address disproportionate suspension rates for students of color by addressing systemic issues with discipline codes and increasing restorative practices to encourage supportive school climates for students of color.</p> <p>2. Engage youth of color in the Nobles County region to increase their visibility as community leaders and builders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate the community on restorative practices as alternatives to suspensions. Develop neighborhood picnics with youth of color leaders and white students to encourage diversity in youth leadership in Nobles County. Encourage development of ethnic businesses in Nobles county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a systemic analysis of the discipline gap disparities between students of color and white students. Establish a moratorium on early grades suspensions. <i>(Balmert & Sparling, 2017; JustChildren, 2016; Matros, 2014)</i> Update school policies on discipline codes. Hold school leaders accountable for the implementation of restorative practices to decrease suspensions. <i>(Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Payne & Welch, 2017)</i> Enhance youth development programming and ensure that youth of color are participating by gathering information on the barriers to participation. <i>(Case Study: Robbinsdale Schools)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train teachers in latest restorative practices regarding school behavior. Train teachers in cultural responsiveness in teaching and engaging students of color. <i>(Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Lewis, 2009)</i> Invite past graduates of color to speak to current students. Work with students of color to envision their future and how they will contribute to society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage youth talents, dreams so that school is viewed as a vehicle to student dreams. Hold school leaders accountable for implementation of restorative practices and to decrease suspensions. Encourage children to become involved in community. <i>(Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008)</i>

Collective Action Strategies | High School Graduation

Strategies	Community Members	School Board Members & Administration	Teachers & Education Staff	Students & Families
<p>1. Set high expectations for students of color to graduate from high school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrange for community groups (such as Kiwanis Club, churches, YMCA, etc.) to host workshops with students on the importance of graduating from high school and going to college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create tools to recognize potential of each student to graduate from high school. ● Adopt a system to create graduation plans that encourages all students <small>(see GradMinnesota Campaign, MNYouth.net)</small> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide teachers with training in culturally responsive teaching to help them inspire students of color to complete high school. ● Encourage teachers to participate in a forum that highlights recent college graduates of color. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage students to recognize their potential and support their progress toward high school graduation. <small>(Case Studies: San Jose, Portland, Montgomery County)</small>
<p>2. Educate parents, students, and community members on the importance of high school graduation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite college recruiters of color for presentations at NCIC member school districts. ● Invite Worthington High Schools graduates to come back and speak to classes and teachers about life after high school and college or career pathways. ● Create a system to connect high school graduates with area employers to build employment options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase direct multilingual and multi-method communication between school and families regarding the requirements, importance, and support for high school graduation. ● Work with parents as partners in their child's education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide teachers with training in culturally responsive teaching that recognizes each student's potential to graduate from high school. ● Create teacher norms for student achievement and encourage teachers to challenge the system and the behaviors other teachers. <small>(Case Study: Montgomery County, MD)</small> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase involvement in education decision-making. ● Work with teachers and education staff to support student's needs. ● Take advantage of available information about the K-12 educational system, the culture of high school, and the requirements for high school graduation. <small>(Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008)</small>



Collective Action Strategies | College Attainment Gap

Strategies	Community Members	School Board Members & Administrators	Teachers & Education Staff	Students & Families
<p>1. Encourage college, high academic expectations for all students of color and white students in Nobles County region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold “Aim High” college-enrollment campaign in Nobles County region. ● Train more community members from cultural groups on how to apply for college and apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set policies to create college and career readiness benchmarks for students of color in Worthington schools. ● Increase the number of counselors to inform students about college and career options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage relationship-building between teachers and students to talk about their higher education dreams and set high expectations. ● Provide multilingual information to families about college options, access issues, and financial resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather and use information about the benefits of college attainment for child’s job prospects. ● Support and build prosperity in the community.
<p>2. Make college affordable for all students in Nobles County region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage more community groups (e.g. churches, banks, businesses) to hold “College Financial Information Nights” for community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set FAFSA completion goals for high schools in Nobles County school districts, potentially with a competition among NCIC member district high schools. <p>(Hoyt, 2014; Martin-Urban, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the number of counselors to inform students about various financial options. ● Advocate at state level for free college tuition for all low-income students and families in MN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide multilingual information to families about college options, financial resources, and scholarship opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend FAFSA and other financial information sessions from Pre-K-12.
<p>3. Provide more college preparation coursework for students of color in the Nobles County region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage businesses to work with schools to develop stronger college preparation course work for students of color in the Nobles County region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the A.P. enrollment patterns of students of color in Nobles County schools and correct for under-representation by providing appropriate information to students and by creating an accountability system to enroll eligible students of color. ● Develop opportunities for English Learner (EL) students to use immigrant experience and their native language to support their academic development. <p>(See International School model: Sylvan, 2013)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop accelerated high school preparation opportunities in elementary and middle school. <p>(Case Studies: Montgomery County & San Jose) (Nora, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the A.P. enrollment patterns of students of color in Nobles County schools and correct under-representation by providing appropriate information to students and by creating an accountability system to enroll eligible students of color. ● Inform families in multilingual ways about college coursework and pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage children to take college preparation coursework and set high expectations for college and career success.

Vii: Efforts and Necessary Support to Increase the Number of Teachers of Color

During the development of its Race Equity and Excellence in Education Action Plan (EAP), the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) Promise to Act Advisory Committee (PAAC) discussed efforts to increase the number of teachers of color in the region's schools. These discussions included the topics of pursuing state funding and developing collaboration between NCIC member school districts and Minnesota universities to support this goal. The PAAC recommends that education stakeholders in the NCIC region pursue three strategies for increasing the number of teachers of color in the region, with a specific focus on Worthington Public Schools District (Worthington ISD 518).



1. Support public policies that address teacher licensure barriers that discourage people of color to pursue teaching and increase funding for “Grow Your Own” pathway programs for teachers and education staff of color.

Current licensure requirements are a barrier to increasing the diversity of licensed teacher in the state. Therefore, NCIC member districts are encouraged to advocate for the Minnesota State Legislature to change the current testing and licensing guidelines and increase funding for “Grow Our Own” teacher and education staff preparation programs. NCIC member school districts are encouraged to follow all present and future policies, guidelines, and mandates relating to increasing teachers of color that are provided by the State of Minnesota.

2. Encourage and financially invest in K-12 and college or university partnerships that develop stronger pathways for teachers and education staff of color.

Worthington ISD 518 is encouraged to collaborate with the Minnesota state college and university system to develop programs that create more pathways for people of color to obtain four-year education degrees. One option is allowing students to earn two years of academic credits at an accredited institution, such as Minnesota West Community and Technical College, and complete their remaining credits while working at an NCIC member district school. This option would diminish cultural barriers associated with students living away from home and would likely increase the number of people of color who pursue education degrees and obtain teaching licenses in Minnesota. Rural program models such as those used in Austin, Minnesota (McGuire, 2015) or Mauston, Wisconsin provide useful templates for the NCIC region (teachtollead.org). These programs provide support services for future teachers and nurture a seamless transition to teaching.

3. Support NCIC member district staff in finding new approaches for finding and recruiting teachers of color.

All NCIC member districts are encouraged to use a variety of outreach efforts to recruit teachers that reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of their student populations. Worthington ISD 518 currently attends job fairs and networks with district faculty and staff to attract and recruit a more diverse group of applicants.

Viii: Equity Goals Recommended for Nobles County Integration Collaborative Member Districts

This section sets goals to monitor the progress and impact of the strategies and actions recommended in this plan. The eleven achievement indicators (kindergarten readiness, 3rd-grade reading, 4th-grade reading, 8th-grade math, 11th-grade math, PSEO and advance course participation, high school graduation, college enrollment, college attainment, suspension, and teachers of color) are recognized by scholarly research and widely used by agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Education. For the reading and math benchmarks, test scores from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) were used. The intention of the recommended strategies and actions is to eliminate proficiency and achievement gaps in Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) member school districts in a manner that ensures that all students have an equitable educational experience and the opportunity to grow and thrive as contributing members of the community.

The target goals included here have been aggressively set for all student achievement outcomes based on practices from school districts across the United States that focus on eliminating the predictability of academic achievement outcomes based on race (see citations). The target goals in this section are referred to as adjusted proficiency goals (APG). These APGs reflect an increase of 10% above state average outcomes for each of the benchmarks featured in this report. These targets are aggressive goals for students of color, English Learner (EL) students, and students receiving free and reduced lunch (FRL).

NCIC member school districts are encouraged to support students from all cultural groups to achieve at their highest ability. By setting and maintaining high expectations and aggressive goals, the rationale of this report is that NCIC member school districts will implement education innovations to support student groups facing the largest gaps in achievement outcomes and that the successful implementation of these interventions will translate to higher achievement outcomes for all students.

Note: Nobles County school achievement data points are used for regional comparison purposes in this report and reflect school districts within county's geographic boundary. NCIC member districts Lake Heron/Okabena (HLO) and Fulda are not in Nobles County and are not included in the county-wide data.

INDICATOR #1 Kindergarten Readiness

NCIC member districts are independent, and each maintains its testing program to measure kindergarten readiness. Academic skill building and related assessment may focus on recognition (letter, number, and sound), counting, and vocabulary abilities. Efforts to implement a county-wide assessment and to develop a common benchmark that can be tracked over time are underway.

TABLE 1
Grade 3 | Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Reading Proficiency Scores in NCIC Districts

	District Average Students	Students of Color	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap between SOC & APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	58%	39%	68%						
Nobles County	52%	43%	68%	25	48%	53%	58%	63%	68%
Worthington /RLB	47%	42%	68%	26	45%	50%	55%	61%	68%
Ellsworth/HLO/ Adrian/Fulda	61%	55%	68%	13	58%	61%	64%	66%	68%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 10, based on data from MDE Report Cards.

INDICATOR #2
Grade 3 MCA Reading Scores

Students in Nobles County performed at a lower proficiency (52%) than the statewide average of 58% in 2015. Students of color in Nobles County had lower proficiency outcomes with a countywide average of 43%. Students of color in Worthington and Round Lake-Brewster Districts averaged 42%, and the other districts averaged an aggregated proficiency of 55% for students of color. To identify proficiency gaps between groups of students based on race or free and reduced lunch (FRL), aggregated data for all students of color was subtracted from the district average of all students.



To create the 3rd-grade reading adjusted proficiency goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state average of 58% to create an aggressive goal of 68% proficiency for all student outcomes in NCIC member districts by the year 2022.

Within the Worthington School District 518, students of color and FRL students had lower proficiency outcomes versus their

White peers in 2015. White students achieved 59% proficiency on their 3rd -grade reading MCA tests. 40% of FRL students were proficient. Students of color tested between 23% and 66% proficient, with Hispanic (23%) and Asian EL (27%) students at the lowest proficiencies, indicating the need for more intensive focus for EL students relating to 3rd-grade reading proficiency outcomes.

TABLE 2
Grade 3 | Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Reading Proficiency Scores by Race in Worthington School District 518

	District Average Students	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency and APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	58%	68%						
White	59%	68%	9	61%	63%	65%	67%	68%
FRL	40%	68%	28	45%	51%	56%	62%	68%
Hispanic non-EL	58%	68%	10	60%	62%	64%	66%	68%
Hispanic EL	23%	68%	45	32%	41%	50%	59%	68%
Asian non-EL	66%	68%	2	67%	68%	68%	68%	68%
Asian EL	27%	68%	41	35%	44%	53%	62%	68%
Black	54%	68%	14	56%	58%	61%	65%	68%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 10, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

INDICATOR #3 Grade 4 MCA Reading Scores

Students in Nobles County performed at a lower proficiency (49%) than the statewide average of 58% in 4th-grade reading proficiency in 2015. Students of color in Nobles County had lower proficiency outcomes with a countywide average of 43%. Students of color in Worthington and Round Lake-Brewster Districts averaged 42%, and the other districts averaged an aggregated proficiency of 55% for students of color. To identify proficiency gaps between groups of students based on race or free and reduced lunch (FRL), the aggregated data for all students of color was subtracted from the district average of all students.

To create the 4th-grade reading adjusted proficiency goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state average of 58% to create an aggressive goal of 68% proficiency for all student outcomes in NCIC member districts by the year 2022.

Within the Worthington School District 518, students of color and FRL students had lower proficiency outcomes versus their White peers in 2015. White students achieved 67% proficiency on their 4th-grade reading MCA tests. 39% of FRL students were proficient. Students of color tested between 11% and 60% proficient, with Hispanic (11%) and Asian EL (14%) students at the lowest proficiencies, indicating the need for more intensive focus for EL students relating to 4th-grade reading proficiency outcomes. The levels of proficiency were lower for the 4th-grade cohort than the 3rd-grade proficiency outcomes in 2015. It is recommended that district focus on EL interventions before and continuing after 3rd-grade to address the widening gaps among and between EL students and their peers.

TABLE 3
Grade 4 | Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Reading Proficiency in NCIC Districts

	Student Average for District	Students of Color (SOC)	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	58%	39%	68%						
Nobles County	49%	38%	68%	30	44%	49%	55%	61%	68%
Worthington /RLB	48%	40%	68%	28	43%	48%	54%	61%	68%
Ellsworth/HLO/Adrian/Fulda	51%	23%	68%	45	31%	40%	49%	58%	68%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 11, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

TABLE 4
Grade 4 | 2015 MCA Reading Proficiency Scores by Race in Worthington School District 518

	Student Average Proficiency	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	58%	68%						
White	67%	68%	1	68%	68%	68%	68%	68%
FRL	39%	68%	28	36%	44%	52%	68%	68%
Hispanic non-EL	54%	68%	14	57%	60%	63%	66%	68%
Hispanic EL	11%	68%	57	25%	37%	49%	59%	68%
Asian non-EL	57%	68%	11	59%	61%	63%	65%	68%
Asian EL	14%	68%	54	25%	37%	49%	59%	68%
Black	60%	68%	8	62%	64%	66%	67%	68%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 11, based on data from MDE Report Cards.

INDICATOR # 4 Grade 8 MCA Math Scores

Students in Nobles County performed at a lower proficiency (48%) than the statewide average of 59% on their math MCA tests in 2015. Students of color in Nobles County had lower proficiency outcomes with a countywide average of 36%. Students of color in Worthington and Round Lake-Brewster Districts averaged 37%, and the other districts averaged an aggregated proficiency of 28%. To identify proficiency gaps between groups of students, the aggregated data for students of color was subtracted from the district average of all students.

To create the 8th-grade math adjusted proficiency goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state average

of 59% to create an aggressive goal of 69% proficiency for all student outcomes in NCIC member districts by the year 2022.

Within the Worthington School District 518, students of color and FRL students had lower 8th-grade math proficiency outcomes versus their White peers in 2015. White students achieved 59% proficiency, while 40% of FRL students were proficient. Students of color tested between 3% and 48% proficient, with Hispanic EL (3%) students at the lowest proficiency, indicating the need for more intensive focus for EL students.

TABLE 5
Grade 8 | Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Math Proficiency in NCIC Districts

	District Average Students	Students of Color (SOC)	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	59%	39%	69%						
Nobles County	48%	36%	69%	33	42%	48%	54%	60%	69%
Worthington /RLB	46%	37%	69%	32	43%	49%	54%	60%	69%
Ellsworth/HLO/ Adrian/Fulda	52%	28%	69%	41	36%	44%	52%	60%	69%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 12, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

TABLE 6
Grade 8 | 2015 MCA Math Proficiency Scores by Race in Worthington School District 518

	8th-Graders Meeting or Exceeding Math Proficiency	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals by Year				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	59%	69%						
White	64%	69%	5	65%	66%	67%	68%	69%
FRL	36%	69%	33	42%	48%	54%	62%	69%
Hispanic non-EL	48%	69%	21	52%	56%	60%	64%	69%
Hispanic EL	3%	69%	66	16%	30%	44%	57%	69%
Asian	48%	69%	21	52%	56%	60%	64%	69%
Black	29%	69%	40	36%	44%	52%	60%	69%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 12, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

INDICATOR #5 Grade 11 MCA Math Scores

On their 11th-grade math MCA tests, students in Nobles County performed at a lower proficiency (39%) than the statewide average of 49% in 2015. Students of color in Nobles County had lower proficiency outcomes with a countywide average of 23%. Students of color in Worthington and Round Lake-Brewster Districts averaged 21%, and the other districts averaged an aggregated proficiency of 33% for students of color. To identify proficiency gaps between groups of students based on race or FRL, the aggregated data for all students of color was subtracted from the district average of all students.

To create the 11th-grade reading adjusted proficiency goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state average of 49% to create an aggressive goal of 59% proficiency for all student outcomes in NCIC member districts by the year 2022.

Students of color and FRL students had lower proficiency outcomes versus their White peers in 2015 in the Worthington School District. White students achieved 52% proficiency on their 11th-grade math MCA tests. 18% of FRL students were proficient. Students of color tested between 0 and 47% proficient. In 2015, there were no EL students, either Asian or Hispanic, who achieved proficiency on the 11th-grade math MCA test. While some EL students may have recently arrived in the United States and have limited language skills, the Worthington School District should consider culturally responsive math pedagogy as well as international school teaching methods to increase the proficiency outcomes for EL students in math.

To create the 11th-grade math adjusted proficiency goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state average of 49% to create an aggressive goal of 59% proficiency for all student outcomes in NCIC member districts by the year 2022.

TABLE 7
Grade 11 | Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Math Proficiency in NCIC Districts

	District Average	Students of Color (SOC)	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	49%	28%	59%						
Nobles County	39%	23%	59%	36	30%	37%	44%	51%	59%
Worthington /RLB	34%	21%	59%	38	29%	36%	44%	51%	59%
Ellsworth/HLO/Adrian/Fulda	34%	33%	59%	26	38%	43%	48%	53%	59%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 13, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

TABLE 8
Grade 11 | 2015 MCA Math Proficiency Scores by Race in Worthington School District 518

	Meeting or Exceeding 2015 MCA Math Proficiency Average	Adjusted Proficiency Goal (APG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between Current Proficiency & APG	Proficiency Goals				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	49%	59%						
White	52%	59%	7	53%	54%	55%	57%	59%
FRL	18%	59%	41	26%	34%	42%	50%	59%
Hispanic non-EL	23%	59%	36	30%	37%	44%	51%	59%
Hispanic EL	0	59%	59	12%	24%	36%	48%	59%
Asian non-EL	47%	59%	12	49%	51%	53%	56%	59%
Asian EL	0	59%	59	12%	24%	36%	48%	59%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 13, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

INDICATOR #6

Enrollment in Advanced Classes at Worthington High School

At Worthington High School, Hispanic and Asian students had lower rates of advanced math class enrollment than their White peers in the 2014-2015 school year. To achieve equity in the district, there should not be a gap between the demographic population enrollment percentage and rate of advanced class enrollment. Comparing the high school population numbers for each racial group with participation rates in advanced classes, the school had 40% White overall student enrollment that comprised 49% of the total students enrolled in advanced classes. 41% of students enrolled in the district identified as Hispanic, but only 33% of students taking advanced classes were Hispanic. The total Asian enrollment in the school district was 13% with 12% of students taking advanced classes who identified as Asian. Black students comprised six percent of the school district and six percent of the advanced class students identified as Black. Thus, Black students did not have a gap in

the total enrollment and advanced class participation.

Table 9 only reflects Worthington High School data from the 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot report. To calculate the gap between enrollment for students of color in advanced math classes, the percentage of students enrolled in advanced math classes was deducted from the percentage of students in that category in the school. For example, 41% of all students enrolled at Worthington High School identified as Hispanic. Of those students, 33% enrolled in an advanced math class, for a difference of 8%. To calculate the increased participation rate, the goal in 2022 is for 41% of Hispanic students and 13% of Asian students to be enrolled in advanced math. Black students were enrolled at 6% for the 2014-2015 school year which was the same rate as overall enrollment for that population of students within the school. Thus, no additional goal was set.

TABLE 9

2014-2015 Enrollment in Advanced Math Classes at Worthington High School

	Percent Total School Enrollment by Race	Percent in Advanced Math	Gap Between Total Enroll & Advanced Math Enrollment	Increased Participation Rate Goals				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	40%	49%	0					
Hispanic	41%	33%	8	35%	37%	39%	40%	41%
Asian	13%	12%	1	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Black	6%	6%	0	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 14, based on data from 2014-2015 Civil Rights Data Collection Report, Office of Teaching and Learning.

TABLE 10

2014-2015 Enrollment in Advanced Science Classes at Worthington High School

	Total Enrollment	Advanced Science Enrollment	Gap Between Total Enroll and Adv Sci Enrollment	Increased Participation Rate Goals				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	40%	43%						
Hispanic	41%	35%	6	36%	37%	38%	40%	41%
Asian	13%	15%	0	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Black	6%	7%	0	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 14, based on data from 2014-2015 Civil Rights Data Collection Report, Office of Teaching and Learning.

In advanced science courses at Worthington High School in the 2014-2015 school year, Hispanic and Asian students had lower rates of enrollment than their White peers. Comparing the Worthington High School population numbers, the school had 40% White student enrollment with 43% of students enrolled in advanced science classes who identified as White. 41% of students enrolled in Worthington High School identified as Hispanic and 13% identified as Asian in the high school, but only 35% of advanced science students were Hispanic. Asian and Black students enrolled at higher rates in advanced science classes than the overall population rates for the two groups within the school.

Table 10 only reflects Worthington High School data from the 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot report. To calculate the gap between the student of color enrollment in advanced science classes, the percentage of students enrolled in advanced science classes was deducted from the percentage of students in that racial or ethnic group in the school. For example, 41% of all students enrolled at Worthington High School identified as Hispanic. Of those students, 35% enrolled in an advanced math class, for a difference of 6%. To calculate the increased participation rate, the goal in 2022 is for 41% of Hispanic students to be enrolled in advanced science courses. Asian and Black students were enrolled higher rates in advanced science than the enrollment for that population of students within the school. Thus, no additional goal was set. However, the school should maintain its enrollment rate for Black and Asian students.

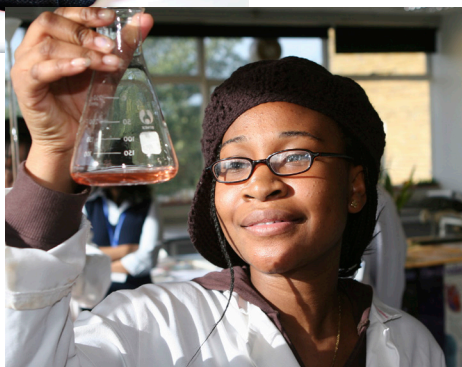


TABLE 11
2014-2015 Post-Secondary Enrollment by Race in Worthington District 518

	Auto Class	PSEO at MN West
White	70%	48%
Students of Color	30%	52%

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 14, based on data from ISD 518.

Students in the Worthington School District enrolled in post-secondary educational options.

White students (70%) disproportionately took advantage of the auto mechanics course offered, versus just 30% of their peers who identified as students of color. For the post-secondary educational option at Minnesota West, a higher rate of students of color (52%) took advantage of the option than their White peers (48%).



INDICATOR #7 Graduation/Drop Out Rates

The four-year graduation rates for students in the Nobles County School Districts are higher than the state average, yet students of color have lower graduation rates than the district averages. For example, 50% of students of color in the Ellsworth school district graduated in 2015, contrasting 94% of their White peers. This equates to a 44% gap in graduation outcomes for students of color. At Worthington High School, 72% of students of color graduated compared with 84% of their White peers.

To calculate the graduation goals for the next five years, an additional 10 percent (10%) was added to the state average of 81% to create a more aggressive four-year graduation goal for all students in Nobles County.

Six-year graduation rates for all Worthington high schools in 2015 were higher than the four-year graduation rates. Since some students arrive at the high school with limited English proficiency and educational experience, they may require additional time to build proficiencies in subjects required

for graduation. 94% of White high school students within Worthington Public Schools graduated within six years, which is higher than the state average of 85% and higher than rates for Hispanic students (73%), Asian students (75%) and Black students (64%).

To set the adjusted graduation goal, an additional ten percent (10%) was added to the state graduation rate for a 2022 target six-year graduation rate of 95%. Gaps in graduation rates were calculated for each group, then graduation rates each year were increased to reach the goal.

Allowing six years for graduation, only 2% of White students dropped out of high school in Nobles County in 2015. Their Hispanic (23%), Asian (22%) and Black (14%) peers had higher dropout rates. To create equity in achievement outcomes, the dropout rate gaps between students of color and their White peers must be eliminated.

The dropout rate gap was calculated by subtracting the SOC rates with the 2% dropout rate for White students. To calculate the five-year goal, the gap in dropout rates for each racial/ethnic group were incrementally reduced each year until they reached an outcome of two percent (2%) dropout, which is the same rate as their White peers.



TABLE 12

Four-Year Graduation Rates in NCIC District High School

	Four Year Graduates: District Average	Four Year Graduates: Students of Color	Adjusted Graduation Goal (AGG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between AGG and Grad Rates for SOC	Graduation Goals				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	81%	70%	91%						
Adrian	94%	70%	-	24	75%	80%	85%	90%	94%
Ellsworth	94%	50%	-	44	59%	68%	76%	85%	94%
Fulda	91%	75%	91%	16	78%	81%	84%	88%	91%
HLO	88%	80%	91%	11	83%	85%	87%	89%	91%
Wtgn WHS	84%	72%	91%	19	76%	80%	84%	88%	91%
Wtgn Other	38%	39%	91%	52	49%	59%	69%		

Source: 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 16, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

TABLE 13a

Six-Year Graduation Rate Comparison between State Average and Worthington High Schools by Race

	Six Year Graduates: District Average Students	Adjusted Graduation Goal (AGG) State Average + 10%	Gap Between AGG and Grad Rates for SOC	Graduation Goal				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
State Average	85%	95%						
White	94%	95%	1	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Hispanic	73%	95%	22	78%	83%	88%	92%	95%
Asian	75%	95%	20	79%	84%	88%	92%	95%
Black	64%	95%	31	70%	76%	82%	88%	95%

Source: 2015 MDE Report cards accessed online February 8, 2017.

TABLE 13b

Worthington High Schools (All) Non-Graduates/Dropouts Class of 2013 After Six Years (Data from 2015)

	Non-Graduates by Year 6	Gap Between White and SOC	Graduation Goal				
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	2%						
Hispanic	23%	21	17%	13%	9%	5%	2%
Asian	22%	20	16%	12%	8%	4%	2%
Black	14%	12	10%	8%	6%	4%	2%

Source: 2015 MDE Report Cards accessed online February 8, 2017.

INDICATOR #8 Suspension Rates

Worthington School District had 31% White student enrollment in the 2015-2016 school year. White students accounted for 21% of all suspensions including in-school suspension (ISS) and out of school suspension (OSS). The rates of suspension for students of color were higher. 50% of the district enrollment was Hispanic, but 57% of suspensions were Hispanic. Black students accounted for 6% of total enrollment in the district, but 21% of the suspensions.

To understand the gaps in suspension rates, the school enrollment percentage was deducted from the suspension rate for the population. For example, the population of Black students in the district was 6%, with a suspension rate of 21%,

leaving a 15-point gap between the population and suspension rate. To achieve equity in the district, there should not be a gap between the population enrollment percentage and the percentage of suspensions.

Students of color in the Worthington School District accounted for 69% of the overall population, yet had 79% of the suspensions in the 2015-2016 school year. The rate does not reflect individuals who were repeatedly suspended during the year. The out of school suspension (OSS) rate is higher for students of color than their White peers. To achieve equity in student outcomes, the suspension gap between SOC and their White peers must be eliminated.

TABLE 14
Suspension Rates 2015-2016 in Worthington (Dist. 518) by Race (Unduplicated by Offender)

	Worthington School Population by Race	Proportion of Suspensions by Race	Gap Between Race Population and Suspension Rate	Suspension Gap Reduction Goal				
				2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	31%	21%						
Am Indian	0.2%	1%	0.8	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	11%	8%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	50%	57%	7	6%	4%	3%	2%	0
Black	6%	21%	15	13%	10%	8%	4%	0

Source: data provided by ISD 518.

TABLE 15
Comparison of Suspension Rates 2015-2016 in Worthington by Race (Unduplicated by Offender) and Suspension Type

	Total Student Population	Suspension Rate (Unduplicated by Offender)	District Average	OSS Cases	OSS Rate	Gap Between White & SOC	OSS Rate Goal				
							2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White students	31%	21%	2	8	<1%						
Students of Color	69%	79%	4	38	17%	17	14%	11%	8%	5%	2%

Source: data provided by ISD 518.

INDICATOR #9
Enrollment at Institutions of Higher Learning

White students who graduated from the Worthington School District (75%) enrolled in higher educational institutions at higher rates than students who had been receiving free and reduced lunch (40%) while in high school. Students of color enrolled at a rate of 37%, equating to a gap of 38% when compared with their White peers. EL students (16%) had an even larger gap of 59%. To be equitable in educational outcomes, the District must prepare all students for college. Parents need to be educated about applying and financing college. Students need assistance seeking higher educational options and making the transition.

To eliminate the achievement outcome, the enrollment rate at higher education institutions 16 months after high school graduation must be the same for SOC, FRL, and EL students compared with their White peers. To calculate the higher education enrollment goal (HEG), the FRL, SOC and EL rates were subtracted from the White enrollment rate. To level the outcomes with their White peers, enrollment must increase for the three groups.

TABLE 16
Students Enrolled in Higher Education 16 Months after High School Graduation in 2014

	Worthington (Students Enrolled)	Gaps in Enrollment	Increased Higher Ed Enrollment Goal				
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	75%						
FRL	40%	35	48%	56%	64%	70%	75%
SOC	37%	38	46%	54%	62%	70%	75%
ELL	16%	59	28%	40%	52%	64%	75%

Source: data from the 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 18, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

TABLE 17
Graduates on Track to Graduate from Public Institution of Higher Learning in 2014

	Worthington HS Grads	Enrollment Gap (White – Other)	Increased Enrollment Goal				
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	78%						
FRL	48%	30	54%	60%	66%	72%	78%
SOC	40%	38	48%	56%	64%	70%	78%
ELL	67%	11	69%	71%	73%	75%	78%

Source: data from the 2015 Regional Equity Snapshot Report, p. 18, based on data from 2015 MDE Report Cards.

Note: “On track” is defined as students who complete at least one year of credits within two years of enrollment at a public higher educational institution. 78% of White students who enrolled in public higher education institutions were on track to graduate in 2014. Only 40% of students of color and 48% of free and reduced lunch students were on track. EL students (67%) were closer to their White peers than SOC and FRL students. These data points may indicate that White students were better prepared for college than their peers. The NCIC member school districts should prepare all students to succeed in college to achieve equity in long-term outcomes.

The increased enrollment goal (IEG) was calculated by subtracting the “on track” gap of FRL/SOC/ELL from White students, with a 2022 goal of having 78% of all students on track to graduate from public higher education institutions.

INDICATOR #10
NCIC Member District Staff by Race

There are very few teachers of color (TOC) in Worthington School District and no TOC in neighboring NCIC member districts. However, there was a high enrollment of students of color in especially Worthington (69%) and Round Lake-Brewster (66%) districts in 2015. Since increasing teachers of color is partially reliant on current attrition, the goals for increasing teachers of color are more gradual than other goals in this report. In addition to hiring and retaining teachers of color, culturally responsive training and practices should be incorporated into the classroom and curricula.

Although there are more staff of color in the Worthington School District than TOC, 18% staff of color is significantly lower than the 69% SOC rate. There are no staff of color in

neighboring school districts. To achieve equity, students of color need mentors and role models who reflect a similar heritage and racial or ethnic identity. Families also need people with whom they can speak and relate. Hiring staff of color may be a significant step in achieving equity in the NCIC member school districts.

To achieve a diverse workforce, SOC populations in Worthington (69%) and Round Lake-Brewster (66%) and the current rates of staff of color throughout the districts in Nobles County were considered. Since increasing staff of color is partially reliant on current staff attrition, the goals for increasing staff of color are more gradual than other goals in this report. In addition to hiring and retaining staff of color, culturally responsive training and practices should be incorporated into the school environment.

TABLE 18
Teachers of Color in NCIC Districts

	Total Teachers	White Teachers	Teachers of Color	Students of Color	Increase in Teachers of Color				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Worthington	212	97%	3%	69%	5%	7%	9%	11%	13%
Round Lake- Brewster	22	95%	5%	66%	7%	9%	11%	13%	15%
Fulda	28	100%	0	13%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
Adrian	41	100%	0	14%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
Ellsworth	18	100%	0	3%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
HLO	27	100%	0	12%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%

Source: data provided by Sharon Johnson from Worthington ISD 518 and information on the other NCIC member school districts from the Minnesota Report Card retrieved on February 7, 2017.

Note: the teacher counts include only teachers, not para professionals or others.

TABLE 19
District Staff of Color (Non-Teaching, Includes District Interpreters)

	Total Staff	White Staff	Staff of Color	Students of Color	Staff of Color Goal				
					2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Worthington	245	81%	19%	69%	21%	23%	25%	27%	29%
Round Lake-Brewster	23.21	91%	9%	66%	11%	13%	15%	17%	19%
Fulda	30.96	100%	0	13%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
Adrian	37.32	100%	0	14%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
Ellsworth	18.45	100%	0	3%	0	2%	2%	4%	5%
HLO	27.37	93%	7%	12%	9%	10%	11%	12%	12%

Source: data provided by Sharon Johnson from Worthington ISD 518.

Viv: NCIC Member Districts Current Education Equity Efforts

Schools in Nobles County Integration Collaborative have been working to address education equity and close gaps for a number of years. Many strategies have been implemented over the years. A few of the highlights are referenced here.

—Sharon Johnson, ISD 518 Community Education Director

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Differentiated Instruction and Interventionists

Each school has provided professional development opportunities and implemented differentiated instruction practices to better meet the needs of each child. Additionally, each elementary school offers support through an interventionist to provide targeted support to students as they need it during the school year.

Professional Learning Communities

Several districts in the NCIC area utilize Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to improve instructional practice through peer collaboration, personal reflection, research, and data-driven decision-making. The PLCs recognize that teachers have different strengths, so by connecting with other teachers, PLCs increase each teacher's ability to meet the unique needs of every student.

Increased Minutes for Literacy Skill Development

Round Lake-Brewster implemented specific strategies to increase academic performance and student engagement. First, they increased the number of minutes per day that each teacher spends on literacy and language skills. Second, they worked to remove barriers to participation such as providing transportation for after-school programs and parent-teacher meetings.

Professional Development

All NCIC member districts provide professional development opportunities and each one targets strategies that they believe will be most effective in their schools. ISD 518 utilizes the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) method implemented five years ago at the elementary school and two years ago at the middle and high schools. All teachers in ISD 518 have received SIOP training.

Collaborations

ISD 518 has been working with Dennis Duffy at the Minnesota Department of Education as well as the WIDA Institute, an organization with a purpose of advancing language devel-

opment and achievement for youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Through partnerships such as these, ISD 518 is tapping into resources to meet the diverse needs of students. Since Prairie Elementary was designated a "focus school" by the Minnesota Department of Education, ISD 518 works with Dr. Martina Wagner to identify and implement strategies to close achievement gaps. Currently, the District is purchasing a newcomer curriculum and is conducting an audit of EL service minutes to students, to ensure that all EL students are receiving an appropriate amount of service and to balance teacher-student ratios for EL instructors. The goal is for each EL teacher to serve or monitor 40 students or fewer. In 2016, a group of teachers went on a site visit learn about the Newcomer model in Faribault, MN. In the Faribault program, students work with an EL teacher for part of the day, and then participate in general classes for part of the school day. The majority of the day is intensive learning with peers.

STUDENT SUPPORTS

Language Support

Districts increased language services. ISD 518 employs 3 full time Spanish language interpreter/translators. Many written materials are translated into Spanish. These staff members also provide interpretation between school personnel and students/parents each day. The districts hires additional interpreters for school conferences. Worthington also employs three bilingual Parent Liaisons to assist families and NCIC employs bilingual staff who provide language support in all six of its member districts as needed.

Early Childhood Education

Over the last few years, all NCIC member districts have expanded their early childhood offerings in an effort to have all children start school "ready for kindergarten". A group of Early Childhood stakeholders meets quarterly in Worthington. Through this collaboration, all local preschools have agreed to complete the same screening assessment form at the end of the year. Copies of incoming kindergarten students' results are forwarded to the elementary school for kindergarten teachers. Additionally, ISD 518 kindergarten teachers and early childhood teachers conduct home visits to the families of incoming kindergarteners who participated in the district's school readiness programs to ensure a smooth transition to elementary school.

More Aggressive Math Requirements than State Standards

The Minnesota Department of Education requires high school students complete three years of math to fulfill requirements for graduation. ISD 518 requires four years. The District shifted this requirement five years ago, recognizing that if students are pushed to go farther they would increase exposure to higher math concepts. A new initiative at the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) will be adding a math interventionist to help build math language skills and provide a dedicated practice time with supportive adults to help students with math assignments. Math and EL teachers will work collaboratively to co-teach the language of math.

Out-of-School-Time opportunities

NCIC member school districts also encourage students to participate in out-of-school-time programs offered by NCIC. The secondary out-of-school-time programs are designed to help students build relationships, understand graduation requirements, stay on track to graduate from high school, and develop college and career readiness skills. The programs take students on college site visits, address the college application and funding process, and provide civic engagement and leadership opportunities. Elementary students from Adrian, Ellsworth and Worthington have the opportunity to participate in El Sistema, an after-school and summer music and literacy program.

Summer Literacy Heron Lake-Okabena, Fulda, Round Lake-Brewster and Worthington provide summer literacy opportunities. These classes extend the time that students have to learn each year and help close gaps by building vocabulary and literacy skills during the summer months.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Adult Basic Education

In addition to the many K-12 interventions, Adult Basic Education (ABE) offers courses focusing on English language skill development, employment skills, civics education, and citizenship preparation. The courses also help teach parents how to support student learning. ABE classes are offered during the day and in the evening to accommodate various work schedules. ISD 518 provides transportation and childcare free of charge to remove these barriers to participation.

Parent Engagement and Parent Education Opportunities

All elementary teachers meet with parents and students for a conference prior to the start of each school year for individual conferences. Interpreters provide language assistance for families whose first language is not English.

Community Education offers the Parents Advocating for Student Success (PASS) program. Courses are taught in Spanish, Karen, and other languages. The classes connect families to school counselors, parent liaisons, and administrators. The purpose is to educate families about the school system, to help parents know how to help their child experience success, and to answer questions parents have about school-related topics.



Promise to Act Advisory Committee Recommendations

The Promise to Act Advisory Committee (PAAC) recommends the following actions for creating equity and excellence in the education outcomes of students and communities in the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) region. The PAAC urges all stakeholders in NCIC member district communities to commit to and actively support the implementation of these recommendations during Phase 3 of the Race Equity and Excellence in Education Action Plan (EAP) process.

- 1 Share the education equity research and community input of this EAP report with school board members, educators, community leaders, and political leaders.**

Timely presentations by PAAC members are opportunities to share this report.

- 2 Understand and reflect on the outcomes of the community visioning process, specifically the concerns and recommendations shared by families and students from diverse cultural backgrounds.**

This report includes unique reflections, concerns, and recommendations from the Latino, African, African-American, Laos, and Karen communities in NCIC member districts. Understanding these perspectives can provide insight on the appropriate approaches for improving education equity, academic success, and community prosperity in NCIC school districts. Furthermore, the community visioning process is a one-of-a-kind model for conducting community engagement in multiple languages in the Midwest that can be expanded to other regions.

- 3 Encourage stakeholders to mobilize and collaborate on the implementation of the EAP report's strategies for Pre-K to the workforce equity, with particular emphasis on developing more diverse teachers and staff at NCIC member districts.**

To better support underserved student groups, the NCIC member districts are developing stronger collaborative efforts to address cultural responsiveness in family engagement and college/workforce readiness. The 2016 Strategies Retreat built upon these efforts by collecting specific recommendations for increasing and unifying equity in NCIC member districts. For example, this report includes a three-prong strategy for increasing the diversity of teachers and staff of the NCIC region. This strategy requires shifts in state policy, as well as the collaboration between schools, colleges, governments, businesses, and communities. Further, it also requires the on-going recruitment of teachers of color via job fairs and networks throughout the state.

- 4 Review and use the Equity Action Plan report's equity goals to address education opportunity gaps and set high academic achievement expectations for all students, prioritizing the largest opportunity gaps in the NCIC member districts.**

According to Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation, school districts are required to close their racial and achievement gaps. This report includes equity goals for NCIC and other Minnesota districts to use in meeting this state requirement.

- 5 We urge school staff to review and consider the information and recommendations in this report.**

This report is a valuable tool to use when creating policies, updating district improvement plans, setting curriculum goals and standards, selecting and revising curriculum materials, and updating annual Professional Development plans.

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APPENDIX A: Key Definitions

Race Equity	<p>Race equity is fair and just inclusion in society. Equity is creating conditions that allow for everyone to reach their full potential. This is often synonymous with Racial Justice, systemic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone.</p> <p>Specifically, for Race Equity in Education, this means raising the achievement of all students while narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories. (Sources: Dr. Ron Ferguson, Singleton).</p> <p>Equality is giving everyone the same thing, while equity speaks to the specific needs and supports that those groups most left behind require. (Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation)</p>
Diversity	<p>This term is used to describe the various cultural groups or variety of backgrounds from people in one society or community. The phrase “we embrace diversity” is often used to convey a welcoming environment for various cultural groups in a community.</p>
Structural Racism	<p>Structural racism is the racial bias across institutions and society. The cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors systemically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. Since the word ‘racism’ often is understood as a conscious belief, “racialization” may be a better way to describe a process that does not require intentionality. Race equity expert John A. Powell writes: “Racialization” connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race... ‘Structural racialization’ is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors.” (Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation)</p>
Achievement Gaps and Opportunity Gaps	<p>Achievement gaps between student groups are the different proficiency levels on key academic indicators, such as 3rd grade reading or 8th grade math. Achievement gaps do not measure the abilities or talents of each student, rather, they capture the outcomes of test scores from a standardized test done in one moment in time and a comparison of test scores between student groups.</p> <p>Opportunity gaps capture the underlying cause of variance in test scores—the difference in resources or opportunities—that students and student groups have due to barriers faced historically and present-day by schools and communities. Communities and schools can be transformed, through equity in leadership, structure and policies to address opportunity gaps and aggressively raise the levels of student achievement and success for every student group.</p>

APPENDIX B: Convenings and Locations

Summits	Equity and Prosperity Summit November 7, 2015 Minnesota West Community College, Worthington, MN
Community Visioning Sessions	<p>Latino community (Spanish language) May 15, 2016 West Learning Center</p> <p>Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes May 16, 2016 West Learning Center</p> <p>Lao (Laotian language) May 15, 2016 West Learning Center</p> <p>Karen (Karen language) July 1, 2016 West Learning Center</p> <p>East African, West African, African American (Oromo, Arabic, Amaharic, French, and Swahili languages) July 24, 2016 Grace Community Church</p>
Student Interviews regarding college preparation	By phone with research consultant, March 15, 2017
Strategies Retreat (review of community visioning sessions and root cause exercises)	September 30 – October 1, 2016 Minnesota West Community College, Worthington, MN
10 Promise to Act Advisory Meetings (NCIC offices):	<p>—January 27, 2016</p> <p>—May 16, 2016</p> <p>—June 13, 2016 (administrators meeting)</p> <p>—June 15, 2016</p> <p>—August 10, 2016</p> <p>—October 26, 2016</p> <p>—November 16, 2016</p> <p>—February 1, 2017 (make-up of January meeting)</p> <p>—February 27, 2017</p> <p>—March 22, 2017</p> <p>**Additional Reviews of Sections of Report by conference call: Jan 25, 2017, March 9, March 10, (Molly and Sharon/Katie), and March 13</p>

MINNESOTA EDUCATION EQUITY PARTNERSHIP

OUR MISSION

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership uses a race equity lens to transform educational institutions, organizations, and leaders to ensure that students of color and American Indian students achieve full academic and leadership success.

OUR VISION

We envision a just society in which an equitable educational ecosystem ensures all students achieve their full potential. Achieving this vision would mean that race is no longer a predictor of educational success.

MnEEP.org

The Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) is a rural consortium of adjacent school districts in the Southwest region of Minnesota. Their mission is to promote student success and community acceptance of differences by providing opportunities for students, families and staff from diverse backgrounds to learn from and with one another. A summary of their mission and activities can be found at <http://www.isd518.net/ncic-mission-and-goals>.



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