Acceleration programs in Minnesota: Characteristics and college pathways of students who participate

Nearly half of Minnesota’s 2011 high school graduates participated in acceleration programs, but participation varied by student characteristics and was associated with early college outcomes.

Acceleration programs are academically challenging courses in which high school students have the opportunity to simultaneously earn credit toward a secondary and a postsecondary degree. Acceleration programs include those shown below:

- Advanced Placement
- Concurrent enrollment
- Postsecondary enrollment options
- International Baccalaureate

High school graduates who participated in acceleration programs were more likely than all high school graduates to be female, White, and not economically disadvantaged.

- 57% (versus 50% of all graduates)
- 87% (versus 82% of all graduates)
- 73% (versus 62% of all graduates)

Among acceleration program participants who enrolled in a Minnesota college, graduates who were White and not economically disadvantaged were more likely than other groups to be awarded at least one dual credit.

- 88% (versus 85% of all enrolled)
- 78% (versus 72% of all enrolled)

Acceleration program participants who enrolled in Minnesota colleges were more likely to enroll in very selective colleges than all high school graduates who enrolled in Minnesota colleges.

- 44% Participants
- 35% All graduates
- 24% Participants
- 15% All graduates

Acceleration program participants had more positive early college outcomes than nonparticipants.

- Enrolled in a Minnesota college the fall after high school graduation
  - 58% Participants
  - 41% Nonparticipants

- Enrolled in only nonremedial classes in first semester
  - 89% Participants
  - 89% Nonparticipants

- Persisted to second year of college
  - 83% Participants
  - 29% Nonparticipants

High schools and colleges may want to expand acceleration program opportunities for economically disadvantaged students and racial/ethnic minorities because (1) these groups are underrepresented in Minnesota’s acceleration programs and (2) participation is associated with early college success.


**Additional Information** | For more information, contact REL Midwest by e-mail (relmidwest@air.org) or by phone (866-730-6735).

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1 Please see full report for acceleration program definitions.
2 Economic status is an indicator of school lunch program eligibility. Economically disadvantaged students were eligible for the school lunch program and non-economically disadvantaged students were not eligible.
3 REL Midwest evaluated all postsecondary enrollment, which includes less than two-year certificate programs, two-year programs, and four-year programs.
4 College selectivity was based on the college’s competitiveness rating from Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges. [Data obtained from the following reference: Barron’s Educational Series. (2010). “Barron’s profiles of American colleges 2011, 29th ed.” Hauppauge, NY: Author.]

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