



Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance

Research Update • August 2017



Message from the partnership facilitator and research liaison

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest is partnering with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to establish the [Midwest Career Readiness Research Alliance](#) (MCRRA). Over five years, MCRRA will undertake collaborative and systematic inquiry into the career readiness and postsecondary pathways of Minnesota public high school students, with a focus on uncovering and understanding opportunity gaps experienced by students in rural districts, including American Indian students.



In addition to representatives from MDE, the alliance includes representatives from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and three rural Minnesota school districts: Kelliher Public Schools, Onamia Public Schools, and Worthington Public School District. These stakeholders play a key role in the development of MCRRA's research agenda as well as serve as critical partners on two projects. The first project involves a synthesis of districts' World's Best Workforce (WBWF) plans. The synthesis will be used to inform the development of resources that MDE will use to enhance the capacity of districts to implement their WBWF plans, particularly with respect to strengthening their college and career readiness strategies. The second

project will draw on Minnesota's statewide longitudinal education data system to study the postsecondary pathways taken by Minnesota high school graduates, with a specific focus on uncovering opportunity gaps. Findings from this study will inform Minnesota's ongoing efforts to improve college and career readiness and close opportunity gaps.

We hope you enjoy learning more about MCRRA in the following articles and resources.—**Jenny Scala, partnership facilitator, and Amy Feygin, research liaison**

Webinar recap: Preparing American Indian students for college and careers

MCRRA hosted a webinar on August 17 on supporting American Indian students as they prepare for college and careers. The webinar featured Dr. Amanda Tachine, postdoctoral scholar at Arizona State University, and Tami Johnson, counselor for the Indian Education Program at Minneapolis Public Schools. Dr. Tachine shared research on the unique challenges that American Indian students face, as well as culturally responsive strategies that can help students overcome these challenges. Johnson shared college and career preparation strategies from her work in Minneapolis, highlighting practices that respond to American Indian students' cultural contexts, communities, and lived experiences. Recordings of the full webinar and individual presentations, along with the presentation slides, will be posted soon on the [REL Midwest website](#).

Meet the partnership facilitator

Jenny Scala may be new to MCRRA, but she is familiar with the world of collaborative research. Get to know the senior researcher who is bringing together individuals from different agencies to explore research questions related to career readiness.

[Read more](#) →

Project takes deeper dive into World's Best Workforce plans

Minnesota state legislators passed the WBWF legislation in 2013, requiring each school district in the state to develop a plan to address five strategic goals. Learn how MDE is partnering with REL Midwest to gain insights into common themes and priorities from these plans.

[Read more](#) →

Meet the alliance member

MCRRA member Paula Palmer is the director of career and college success at MDE. Hear from Palmer about her hopes for the alliance's work on preparing Minnesota's students to graduate ready for careers.

[Read more](#) →

State liaison builds coalitions among researchers and local stakeholders

For Taishya Adams, the Minnesota state liaison for REL Midwest, the North Star State is familiar territory. In this interview, Adams explains how state liaisons build coalitions among state education staff, researchers, and other key stakeholders.

[Read more](#) →

Resources and events

A number of high-quality resources related to career readiness are available online. We curated seven resources that you should know about, including several REL Midwest resources.

[Read more](#) →

Contact Us

Please contact us for more information about any of the items in this newsletter or to speak to a member of our staff. We look forward to hearing from you.

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