

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 below¹:



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.²



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.³



88%
(versus 85% of all enrolled)

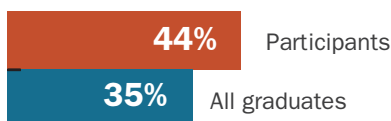


78%
(versus 72% of all enrolled)

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.⁴



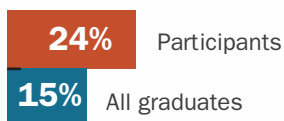
Selective



44% Participants
35% All graduates



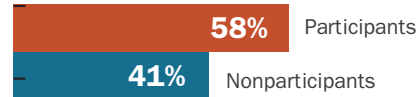
Very Selective



24% Participants
15% All graduates

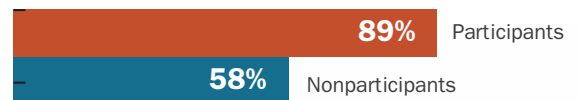
Acceleration program participants had more positive early college outcomes than nonparticipants.

Enrolled in a Minnesota college the fall after high school graduation



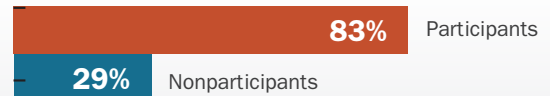
58% Participants
41% Nonparticipants

Enrolled in only nonremedial classes in first semester



89% Participants
58% 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.

Data source | Davis, E., Smither, C., Zhu, B., & Stephan, J. (2016). *Acceleration programs in Minnesota: Characteristics and college pathways of students who participate* (REL 2017-234). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

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

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.]