



AN INITIATIVE OF THE NORTHEAST  
MINNESOTA OFFICE OF JOB TRAINING

## Final Report

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is pleased to provide the final report on the new pilot project to bring free career planning and guidance resources to students throughout the region – **Northeast Career EdVenture**. This groundbreaking program was funded by a grant from the state of Minnesota in recognition of the dire need for these services and the natural intersection between the Workforce Center system and public education. There are many reasons why this work is critical:

- ♦ Minnesota ranks second to last in the country on the ratio of students to guidance counselors;
- ♦ Employers constantly cite fear concerning an unprepared or unavailable future workforce
- ♦ Immense levels of career guidance and exploration expertise currently resides in the Workforce Center system;
- ♦ In an era of diminishing resources, it makes perfect sense to share badly needed expertise between one public system and another.

**Career EdVenture** has connected students...

- ...to professional career counselors with vast amounts of knowledge about postsecondary training, the local job market, and what it takes to succeed in today's workplace;
- ...and schools to the business community for real-world learning opportunities through Workforce Center networks such as the Workforce Investment Board and other business and trade groups;
- ...to employers who are looking for opportunities to directly influence their future workforce;
- ...to other organizations that offer a host of resources such as Junior Achievement and local colleges and universities;
- ...to a centralized, regional mechanism for free career planning and exploration resources that can be used as a vehicle for other career development efforts by local partners.

Through **Career EdVenture**, students and schools have been able to access the following resources:

**Individuals:** Career assessments of interest, aptitude, and ability; guidance on postsecondary options; resume and cover letter development; financial aid opportunities; job search assistance and practice interviewing; and access to community resources.

**Classes/Groups:** Locally developed workshops such as *Navigating Business Culture* that deals with workplace communication, expectations, culture, and generational differences; social media and the job search; LMI presentations; computer-based career planning tools, including MCIS, ISEEK, and O\*NET; fun, engaging career planning games and activities; mock interviews and school-based job and career fairs; and industry panels with local business representatives.

In the first half of the grant year, July 1 – December 31, 2012, **Career EdVenture** began to establish itself in the region as a resource for schools and students. Because this is such a major undertaking, much time has been spent in **development and outreach**, including:

- Presentations to teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors including St. Louis county schools, high schools in Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Eveleth, and other education groups including the Applied Learning Institute steering committee which includes administrators from 17 districts plus MnSCU representatives
- Presentations to business and trade groups including the Arrowhead Manufacturing and Fabricators Association, Chambers of Commerce throughout the region, Rotary groups, Minnesota Power, Arrowhead Human Resources Association, Iron Mining Association, the Northeast Career Development Professionals Association, the Iron Range Economic Alliance, and the Arrowhead Growth Alliance.
- **Career EdVenture** adopted as the regional mechanism for delivering information to students, guidance counselors, and administration for Northeast Workforce Investment Board, the Skills@Work effort, and a newly created regional STEM collaborative.
- Helping the Northland Foundation develop a regional youth career exploration conference that will feature **Career EdVenture** and showcase resources available through this project.

Beginning development of a school-based program at the onset of a school year posed some problems for widespread integration of resources, but **Career EdVenture** enjoyed some early success and has established itself as an ongoing resource for schools in the years to come. Now that we have established this resource, we anticipate an even wider response from districts in the 2013-2014 school year.

#### **Final progress includes:**

**6,668 students received services through the project:** 1,377 individuals and 5,291 through group activities (may include duplicate counts as **Career EdVenture** delivered a variety of group activities in several districts); 10% of students receiving individual services were a minority; males and females have accessed resources at roughly the same rate.

#### **Individual Students Receiving Services:**

32% were seniors, 36% juniors, 12% sophomores, 5% freshmen, and 10% 8<sup>th</sup> grade; remainder includes younger than 8<sup>th</sup> grade and out of school youth. Eighteen percent received a career assessment, 35% job search assistance, 7% financial aid/scholarship information, 15% transition from high school planning, 24% information on college/postsecondary training and 40% received information on employment/internships-mentoring opportunities. In the second year of this program, we plan a special emphasis on individual services.

#### **Group presentations:**

Presentations included industry panels in Babbitt for 250 6-12<sup>th</sup> graders; *In Demand Careers* presentation using local LMI for 175 10<sup>th</sup> graders at Grand Rapids high school; and several group activities and topics for groups of Native American students, including money management, career assessments, and creative job search; 29% were 8<sup>th</sup> graders who participated in the CEO's in the Classroom presentation about the importance of early career planning.

Businesses- nearly 30 businesses have committed to participating in some way with this project including MN Power, U. S. Steel, American Bank, Blandin Foundation, Essentia Health, MN Discovery Center, and a host of small businesses.