

Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project Final Report for State Fiscal Year 2015

**Prepared by: Office of Youth Development, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic
Development (DEED)**

Overview: The Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP)

Chapter 85 of the 2013 Session Law directed four Workforce Service Areas/Local Workforce Investment Boards (WSAs/LWIBs) to partner with at least one public school district to provide a program to assist high school students in choosing careers and provide information about the education and training required for those careers. The WSAs/LWIBs identified are: Northeast Minnesota, Stearns Benton Employment and Training Council, Rural Minnesota CEP, and Hennepin-Carver. The pilot project is titled Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot (HECAP) and is authorized in Laws of Minnesota, 2013, Chapter 85, Article 3, Section 27. The HECAP addresses the following goals:

- Assist high school students in selecting a career of interest to the student and a post-secondary path to prepare for that career;
- Provide effective career counseling and labor market information to the region's youth and families in collaboration with school counselors;
- Build on the work of the LWIBs in identifying strategic industries and high-growth, in-demand occupations;
- Raise local youth and parent awareness and usage of Minnesota's workforce development system and engage local workforce, education and economic development partners.

Governor Dayton's Education, Career/College Readiness Priorities

In 2013, the Governor championed education with landmark funding and policy changes. Minnesota is getting the tools to ensure that we have the world's best workforce for years to come. As part of that legislation, there is a provision in law that requires school districts, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, to assist all students by no later than grade 9 to explore college and career interest and aspirations and develop a transition plan to postsecondary education or employment. The demands on Minnesota's public high school counselors are intense, with an average statewide student to counselor ratio of 782 to 1 for the 2010-11 school year¹. HECAP offers an opportunity for the workforce development system to complement the work of the school counselors by providing school staff, students and families with the most current career and post-secondary education information available.

HECAP has connected students:

- to career counselors with vast amounts of knowledge about post-secondary training, the local job market, and what it takes to succeed in today's workplace;
- 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;

¹ Keaton, P. (2012). *Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment and Staff Counts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2010–11* (NCES 2012-327). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 5/15/13 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

- 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.

Outcomes Summary

For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015, the pilot sites served 2,018 youth through individualized services and 8,649 through group activities.

SFY 2015 – Year 2

Each of the four pilot sites received an allocation of \$85,000 for SFY 2015. The following services and activities were provided:

- **Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT)** – NEMOJT has partnered with 32 independent school districts in Northeastern Minnesota to implement Northeast Minnesota Career EdVenture. Career EdVenture offers a standardized menu of services from which any school district in the region can select resources needed for their students.

The project activities include:

- Providing information to individuals and groups regarding occupations and industries in demand and with the highest growth throughout Northeast Minnesota using current labor market information, including providing opportunities for students to directly experience occupations through job shadowing, mentoring, and business tours.
- Providing workshops to classes on planning for post-secondary training, including accessing financial aid and selecting an appropriate program, as well as other career planning topics such as goal setting and navigating business culture.
- Providing opportunities to interact with local business and industry including tours, organizing business and industry speaker panels, job shadowing, and mentorship.
- Providing individual counseling and career exploration including career assessments, resume preparation and job searching assistance, and mock interviews.

Examples of Activities in SFY 2015:

- Northland Foundation’s Career Expo was held for 11th and 12th grade students from across the region. More than 1,200 students attended this event in October 2014.
- Using Career EdVenture materials and expertise, the Office of Job Training operated a breakout session for those undecided on a career path, called “The Career is Right” where students played Price is Right-themed games focused on career exploration and labor market information.
- Distributed Career EdVenture materials to each workforce service area in the state.
- Spring and summer activities included CEOs in the Classroom. Business representatives/CEOs are provided the opportunity to share insights to youth about the importance of making appropriate life choices and the overall impact that those choices may have as they relate to careers.
- In March of 2015, students involved with Career EdVenture participated in Construct Tomorrow. The event showcased opportunities for youth and others to explore careers in the crafts and trades. Local employers and trade unions provided hands on activities, interactive displays, and apprenticeship information.
- The three day Iron Range Science and Engineering Festival held in April 2015 at the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm Minnesota demonstrated how early engagement by staff of 7th

- grade students exposed youth to local occupations that involved Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) skills.
- Career EdVenture youth participants attended two regional Minnesota job fairs, the Northland Job Fair in Duluth and Iron Range Job Fair in Virginia.
 - CLIMB Theater was offered to those served in regional classrooms as an EdVenture summer activity.
- **Stearns Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC)** – SBETC worked with the St. Cloud School District to provide the following services to high school students:
 - Connections to businesses and community resources through a local career fair, career event, and tours of businesses in strategic industries;
 - Group and individualized counseling including instruction and presentations on ISEEK, labor market information, strategic industries and demand occupations;
 - Introduction to the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) test and access to the KeyTrain curriculum to prepare students to take the NCRC test;
 - Individualized counseling including career exploration and career assessments, resume preparation, mock interviews, and job search assistance;
 - Tours of the WorkForce Center and information about the resources available at the center and how to access and utilize the resources.

Examples of Activities in SFY 2015:

- Individual Career Exploration and Planning: SBETC Career Planners worked with 1,297 students on various individual career planning activities. Each student established a written plan and action steps for completion.
 - Class Presentations: SBETC staff presented to 1,057 students on the following topics: Workforce information as a Resource, Career Exploration, Skill Identification Assessment, Current Hot Jobs, Safety in the Workplace, Interviewing, Resume Building, Labor Market Information, Online Applications, Social Media Do's and Don'ts, Volunteering and Internship Possibilities, Labor Laws, What Employers are Looking For, and how to use the online sites such as the Department of Employment & Economic Development and MinnesotaWorks.net.
 - Mock Interviewing: SBETC staff conducted mock interviews with 137 students.
 - SBETC staff administered the online MCIS (Minnesota Career Information System) program to 1,491 students. This online program includes learning modules that cover: Career Information, Assessments, Budgeting, College and Apprenticeship Information, Labor Market Information, and Starting to Build a Resume. These meetings also took place in the English Language Learners classes.
 - Career Day/Fairs/Tours: SBETC staff participated in two career days. The first day at North Jr. High School was a presentation to 242 students on Success Strategies in School and in the Workforce. The second career day included numerous local businesses from the St. Cloud area. SBETC staff helped with coordination, took students on a tour of the WorkForce Center, presented on a panel, hosted a presenter and staffed an information booth on programs and resources for the students. Approximately 1,000 students attended this day.
- **Rural Minnesota CEP** – Rural MN CEP partnered with four school districts to provide the following services to students:

- Career exploration instruction including information on career pathways and occupations in demand;
- One-to-one career counseling including interest assessment, skills identification, goal setting and development of a career plan;
- Information on training programs and the value of continued education and high demand occupations;
- Assistance to students in touring training facilities and colleges;
- Individual assistance to students and families in completing financial aid applications;
- Job search assistance, including information on job search strategies and processes;
- NCRC (National Career Readiness Certification) system including assessment, KeyTrain/Career Ready 101 curriculum for remediation, and testing for NCRC certification.

Examples of Activities in SFY 2015:

- The RMCEP Career Advisors delivered a variety of presentations to students and parents, including an overview of career exploration, NCRC, career advisor services to over 200 seniors and parents at Moorhead High School,
 - Promoted Fargo-Moorhead College Fair with students,
 - Held on-site career fair for Moorhead High School seniors,
 - Presented overview of ACT PLAN results and interpretation of results along with start of career exploration activities for 10th graders,
 - Arranged job shadow opportunities for students,
 - Met individually with students to help with career exploration and post-secondary planning,
 - Presented workshops at Transition Expo for students with disabilities,
 - Reviewed and critiqued resumes and conducted mock interviews with students,
 - Organized and presented financial aid night for students and parents during parent teacher conferences,
 - Presented hands-on career exploration tool “Drive of Your Life” to 8th grade students,
 - Provided “train-the-trainer” workshop for alternative learning center teachers on GPS LifePlan tool,
 - Provided orientation for incoming ninth grade students on what to expect in high school, grades, careers and post-secondary training.
- **Hennepin-Carver** – Hennepin-Carver WSA partnered with six schools/districts to provide services including the following:
 - Career assessment using tools including but not limited to the O*Net Interest Profiler, Skills Profiler and mySkills myFuture website to identify career choices;
 - National Career Readiness Certification as appropriate;
 - Individual counseling and a variety of resource information, including labor market information, to allow students to explore possible career paths;
 - Summer and year-round internships;
 - Career, post-secondary and financial aid information for parents;
 - Youth-oriented job/resource fairs;
 - Connections with business leaders (CEO Forums, etc.).

Examples of Activities in SFY 2015:

During the Fall 2014 Semester, the following activities took place:

- The Career Center staff of Maple Grove Senior High School held mock interview sessions with senior students on January 13th and 16th. Approximately 500 students participated along with 80 volunteer interviewers over the two day period.
- The 2014 Star Student Awards Breakfast, a North Hennepin Chamber of Commerce event, took place in honoring over 70 students from Brooklyn Center, Maple Grove, Osseo, Osseo Area Learning Center, and Park Center High Schools.

During the Spring 2015 Semester, the following activities took place:

- Mock interviews at Maple Grove Senior High School and Bloomington Kennedy High School
- Career/College Readiness Meeting at Northwest Suburban Integration School District Offices
- Meeting with Osseo Schools Instructors that included a presentation on the inclusion of school to work orientation for faculty members and instructors.
- A Labor Market Information Overview power-point presentation identified key industry areas in the Twin Cities area offering employment opportunities that current and emerging high school graduates should be aware of, in terms of local employment prospects.

For more information about HECAP contact:

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“I am one of the school counselors and I am so glad to have the career advisor on board as a resource for my students. I have a case load of 400+ and don’t always have the time to spend doing research and inventories so having a person to whom I can refer these students is fantastic.” – School Counselor