

Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project Final Report for State Fiscal Year 2014 August 2014

**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;
- to employers who are looking for opportunities to directly influence their future workforce;

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 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) 2014 – Year 1, the pilot sites served 1,448 youth through individualized services and 7,699 through group activities.

SFY 2014 – Year 1

Because of inadequate resources, only three sites operated in SFY 2014. Of those three sites, two sites operated at half capacity. The following data indicates the breakout of the \$160,000 allocation for Year 1, services provided and activity through June of 2014:

- **Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT), \$80,000** – NEMOJT has partnered with 32 independent school districts in Northeastern Minnesota to implement Northeast Minnesota Career EdVenture.

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.
- ***Activity through June 2014:*** Thirty-two school districts have participated in the program. From September to June of this school year, 1,020 students received individual, one-on-one guidance, of whom 39% were seniors, 39% were juniors, 14% were sophomores, 2% were freshmen, and 6% were either out-of-school youth or 8th grade or younger. Topics students are talking to NEMOJT counselors about include: accessing online career exploration tools (21%); career assessments (18%); job search/resumes/applications (31%); WorkForce Center tours/information (3%); post-secondary training and financial aid (21%); transition from high school planning (22%); and career assessment and planning activities (22%).

Over 3,000 students participated in group presentations or workshops, including assistance with online career exploration tools (720); career assessments (750); job search workshops (582); school-based career fairs (460); Navigating Business Culture workshop (148); mock interviewing (95); industry-specific learning events (115); and CEOs in the Classroom (738), a program that places local business leaders in 8th grade classrooms to talk about the importance of early career planning.

- **Stearns Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC), \$40,000** – 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.

Activity through June 2014: From September 2013 through June 2014, SBETC served 2,131 students (564 unduplicated) through the HECAP program.

SBETC staff met weekly with students from Apollo High School and the St. Cloud Area Learning Center (ALC). SBETC staff focused primarily on individual rather than group sessions. At Apollo High School, SBETC staff met with each of three Work Experience Classes to complete individual career planning sessions, provide mock interviews, perform resume critiquing and create cover letters with students. At the ALC, SBETC staff worked with each of four Work Experience classes providing these same services for students.

SBETC staff served students at a career fair for area high schools at the WorkForce Center. Nine students participated in individual mock interviews and fifteen participated in tours of the WorkForce Center. The students also participated in informational sessions about available services, a demonstration of MinnesotaWorks.net and a brief presentation on career and labor market information featuring ISEEK.

SBETC staff also presented to 100 students at the Kennedy School Career Day on "Success Skills."

- **Rural Minnesota CEP, \$40,000** – Rural MN CEP partnered with the Moorhead and Dilworth/Glyndon/Felton school districts to provide the following services to students:
 - Provided career exploration instruction including information on career pathways and occupations in demand.
 - Provided one-to-one career counseling including interest assessment, skills identification, goal setting and development of a career plan.
 - Provided NCRC system including assessment, KeyTrain curriculum for remediation, and testing for NCRC certification.
 - Provided job search assistance, including information on job search strategies and processes.
 - Provided information on training programs and the value of continued education and high demand occupations.
 - Assisted students to tour training facilities, colleges, and local WorkForce Center.
 - Provided individual assistance to students and families in completing financial aid applications.

Activity through June 2014: The RMCEP Career Advisor served over 1,000 students and parents through a variety of activities including career, post-secondary training and financial aid-related presentations at Senior/Parent night, Junior/Parent night and Parent/Teacher Conference events, a WorkForce Center tour, hands-on workshops and presentations to classes on financial aid and career assessment tools. The advisor collaborated with Minnesota State University Moorhead (M-State) on guidance lessons with career exploration workshops for 76 students. The advisor worked with 119 middle school students to provide interpretation of EXPLORE results along with hands-on "next step" career exploration based on the results. Seventeen students accompanied the advisor to M-State for a StartSmart workshop, tour and presentation. The advisor accompanied a group of 240 juniors and seniors to the Fargo/Moorhead

College Fair, and has met individually with 138 students for career and college exploration activities, post-secondary application assistance, financial aid information, employment and job shadowing opportunities. The Career Advisor was also involved in the Health, Tech and Trades Career Expo at the Fargo Dome with over 2,500 attendees from the surrounding area. The advisor worked with several students to take the WorkKeys tests to meet graduation requirements and also used KeyTrain with other youth who wanted to obtain their National Career Readiness Certifications.

- **Hennepin-Carver** – Hennepin-Carver WSA agreed to delay participation in the HECAP pilot project until July, 2014.

SFY 2015 - Year 2

All four pilot sites, Northeast, Stearns/Benton, Rural Minnesota CEP, and Hennepin-Carver, will operate in the second year of the biennium with a total allocation of \$340,000. Funding is in place for the second year projects as of July 1, 2014.

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