



Midwestern Higher Education Compact

2025 Minnesota State Visit

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President

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About MHEC

- **Our purpose:** To work in partnership with our 12 member states to strengthen postsecondary education through cost-savings initiatives and collaborative solutions that are informed by research and the expertise of regional leaders
- **Legislatively created** in 1991 through Council of State Governments, Midwestern Legislative Conference; Minnesota authorized legislation in 1990 to join MHEC
- **Governed** by 60 commissioners and alternates
- **MHEC annual state commitment** of \$115,000 lowest of four compacts

Minnesota Commissioners



Rachel Croson
*University of
Minnesota,
Executive VP
and Provost*



Dennis Olson
*Office of Higher
Education,
Commissioner*



Vacancy
*Appointing
authority:
Speaker of the
House*



**Sen. Omar
Fateh**
*Higher
Education
Committee,
Chair*



Scott Olson
*Minnesota
State,
Chancellor*

Alternate



**Paul
Cerkvenik**
*MN Private
College Council,
President*

MHEC's Value to Minnesota

- **Cost & Time-Saving Contracts & Programs** – technology (hardware, software and services); student health solutions; insurance programs
- **Policy Initiatives**– state-specific support on dual enrollment; open educational resources; M-SARA; credentials and learner records; FAFSA summit
- **Research** – regular reporting on data trends and responses to specific requests to inform state decision making
- **Convenings** – opportunities for legislative, executive branch, and higher ed leaders to problem solve and share ideas

FY24 Cost Savings for Minnesota

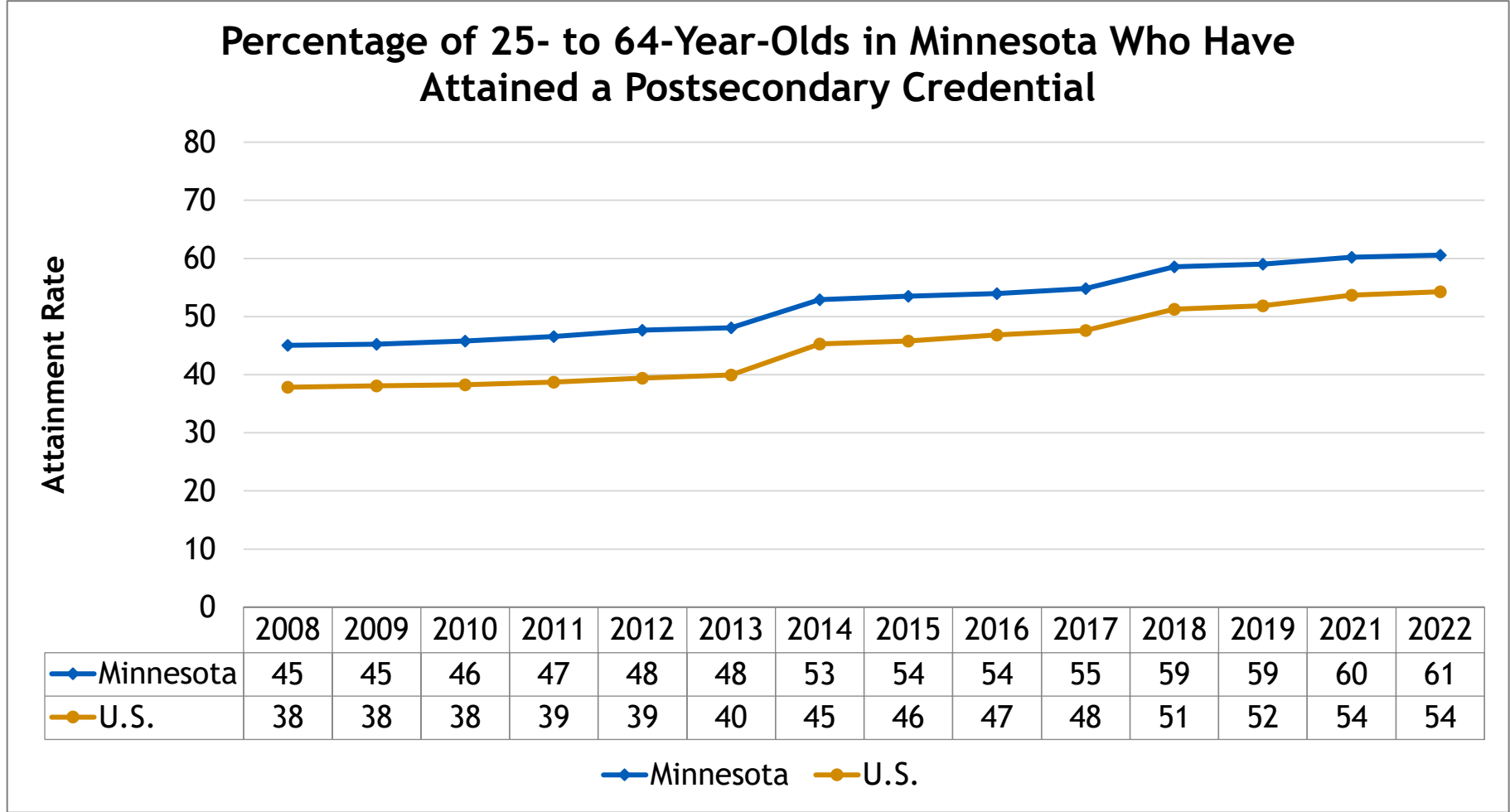
- **\$9.26M in total annual savings** for Minnesota colleges, universities, school districts, state and local governments, and students and their families through MHEC's contracts and programs
- **81-fold return** on annual compact membership commitment of \$115,000
- **\$2.33M in savings on technology** for Minnesota entities through contracts with Dell, Oracle, Xerox, CampusGuard, and others
- **\$4.05M savings on distance education** through Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement

Other MHEC Benefits for Minnesota

- **Minnesota students and their families** who participated in the Midwest Student Exchange Program saved \$2.8M
- **MHEC supported Minnesota with grant funds** to invest in the creation of Minitex Network for Open and Affordable Practice, a program that supports librarians and educators in MN, SD, and ND
- **MHEC provided research** to Minnesota leaders on several topics including funding for college access and success initiatives and trends related to campus and academic program closures
- **Nine Minnesota leaders** attended MHEC's FAFSA Summit
- **Eight technology leaders** engaged in MHEC's free professional development and networking

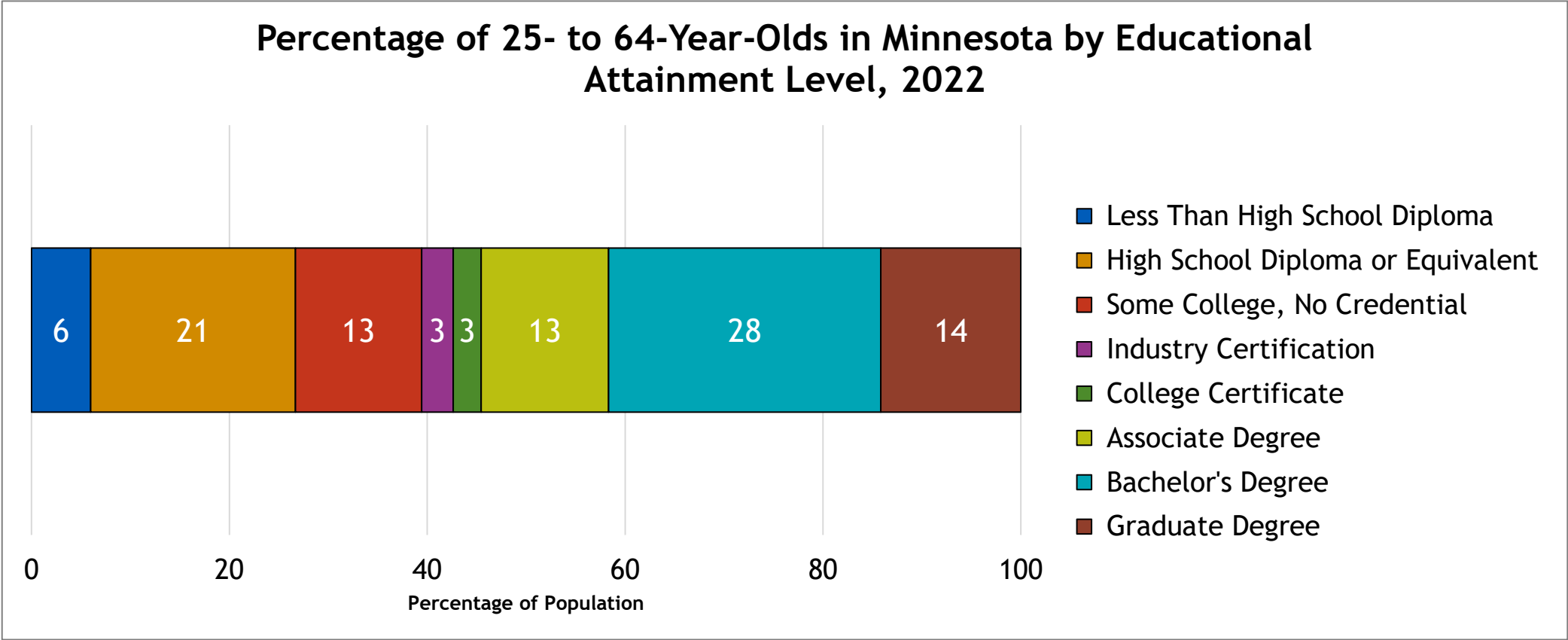
Key Indicators for Higher Education in Minnesota

ATTAINMENT: About 61% of Minnesotans have a postsecondary certificate or higher, compared to 54% nationally.



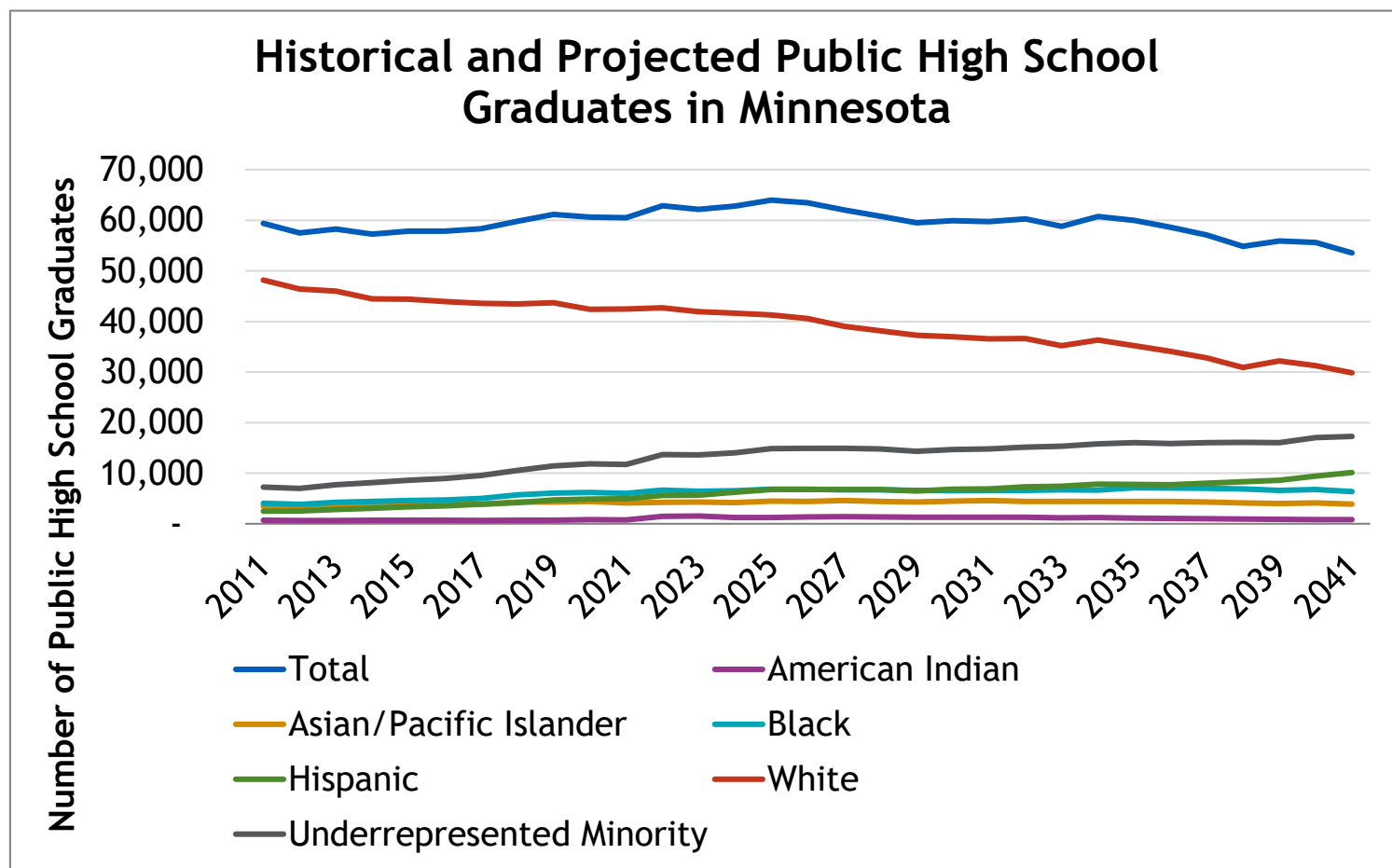
Source. Lumina Foundation. (2024). *A Stronger Nation*. Note. Since 2014, the attainment estimate includes postsecondary certificates. Since 2018, the attainment estimate includes industry-recognized certifications. 2020 estimates are not available due to sampling problems that occurred during the 2020 administration of the American Community Survey.

ATTAINMENT: Minnesota residents have attained various types of postsecondary credentials, ranging from industry certifications and college certificates to bachelor's and graduate degrees.



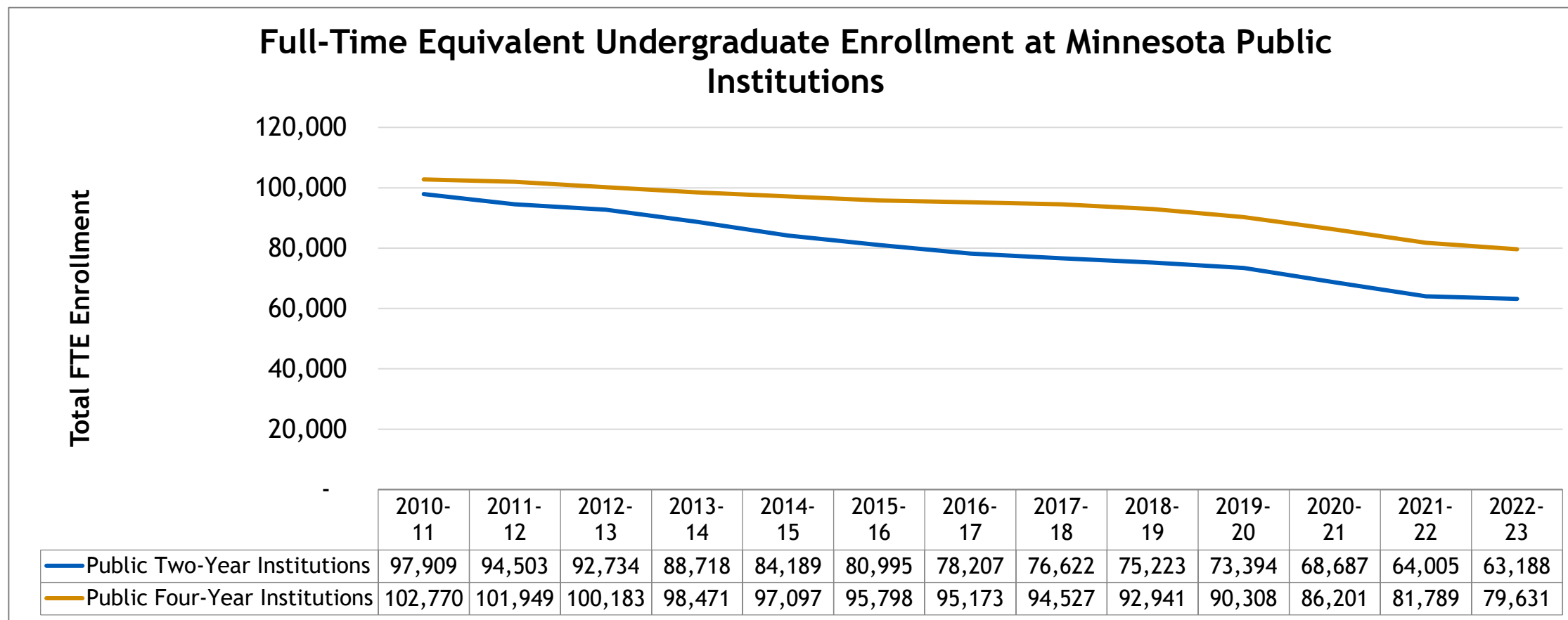
Source. Lumina Foundation. (2024). *A Stronger Nation*.

ENROLLMENT POOL: High school graduates are projected to decrease in Minnesota over the coming decade, with decreases for White graduates but increases in underrepresented graduates.



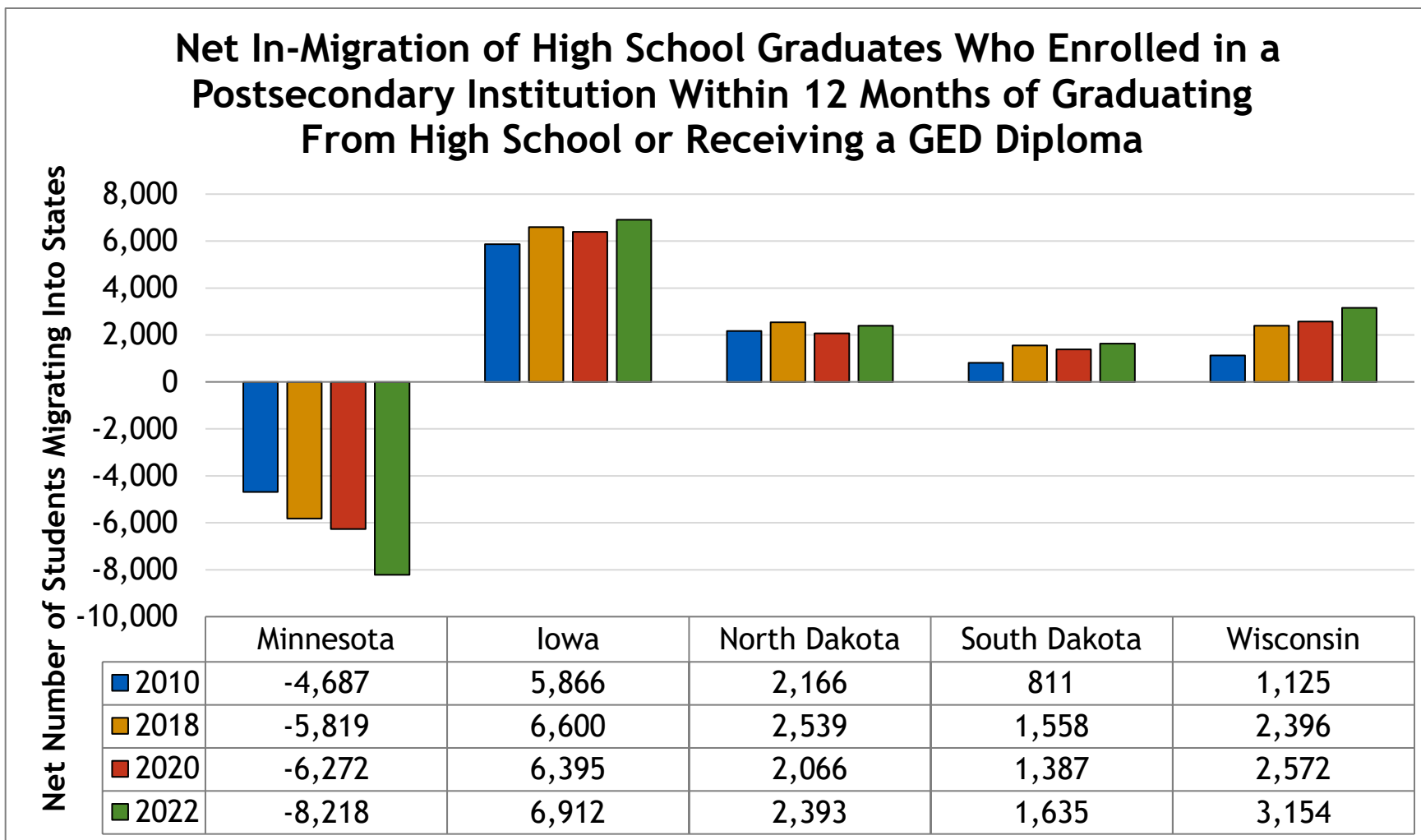
Source. WICHE. (2024). *Knocking at the College Door*. Note. The *Underrepresented Minority* category comprises American Indians, Blacks, and Hispanics.

ENROLLMENT: Undergraduate enrollment at Minnesota public two-year and public four-year institutions has declined since 2010-11.



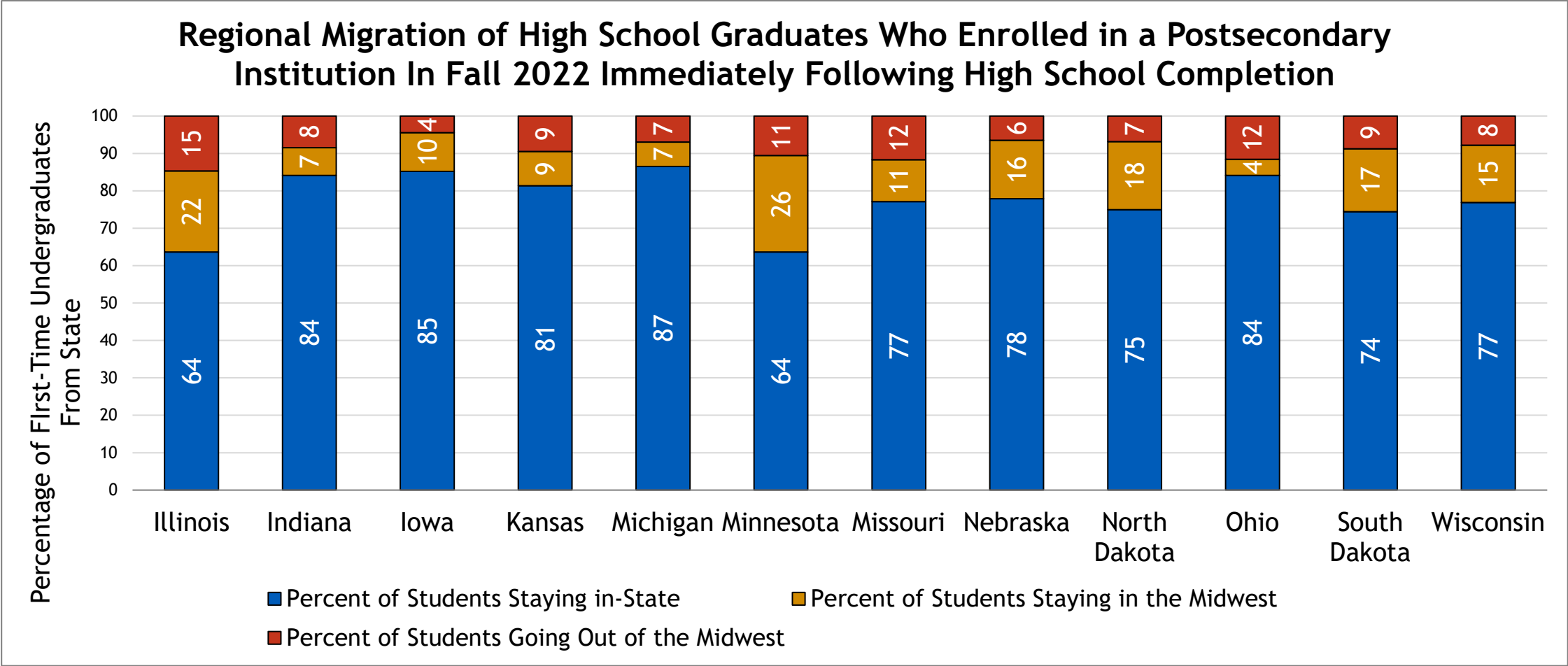
Source. NCES IPEDS. (2023). *12-month enrollment*. Carnegie Classification was used to classify institutions. Institutions with mixed categories were classified according to their distribution of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded. Tribal colleges and universities are excluded. Categorizations may change over time.

MIGRATION: More students migrate out of Minnesota than migrate in.



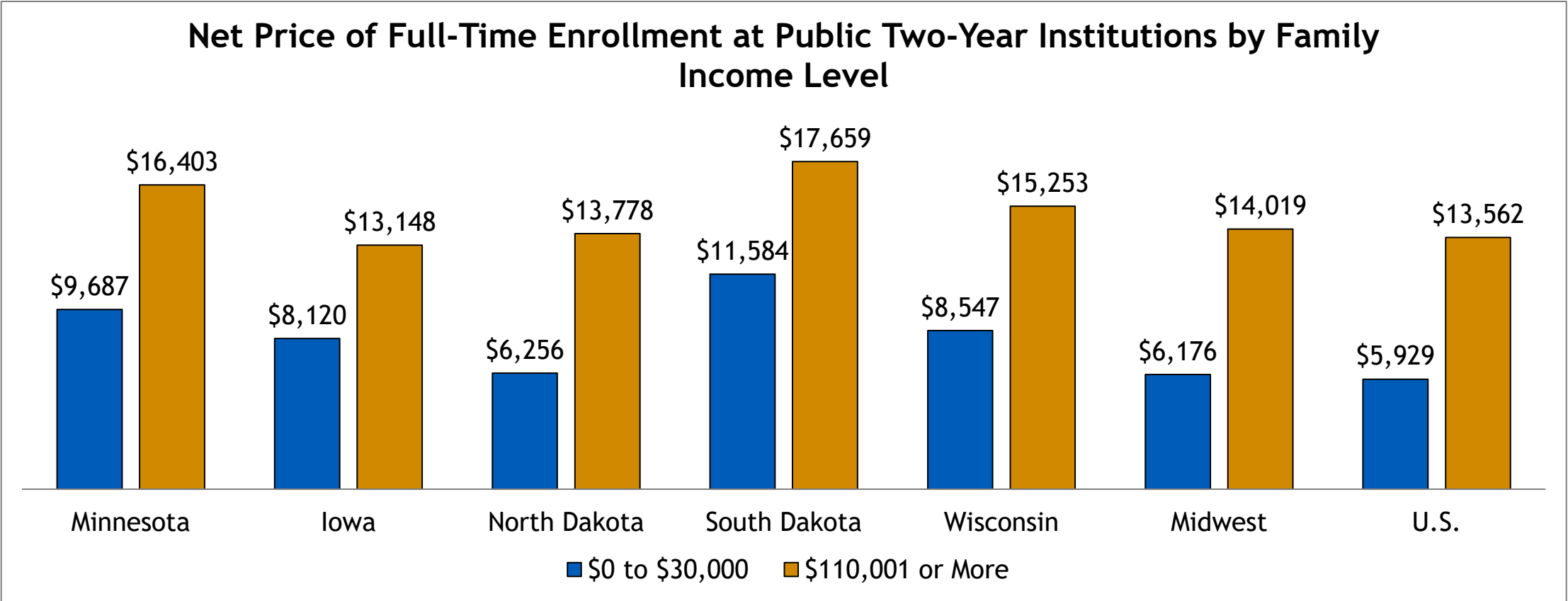
Source. NCES IPEDS. (2022). *Fall enrollment*.

ENROLLMENT LOCATION: Of first-time college students from Minnesota in 2022, 64 percent enrolled in state, 26 percent enrolled elsewhere in Midwest, and 11 percent enrolled outside the Midwest.



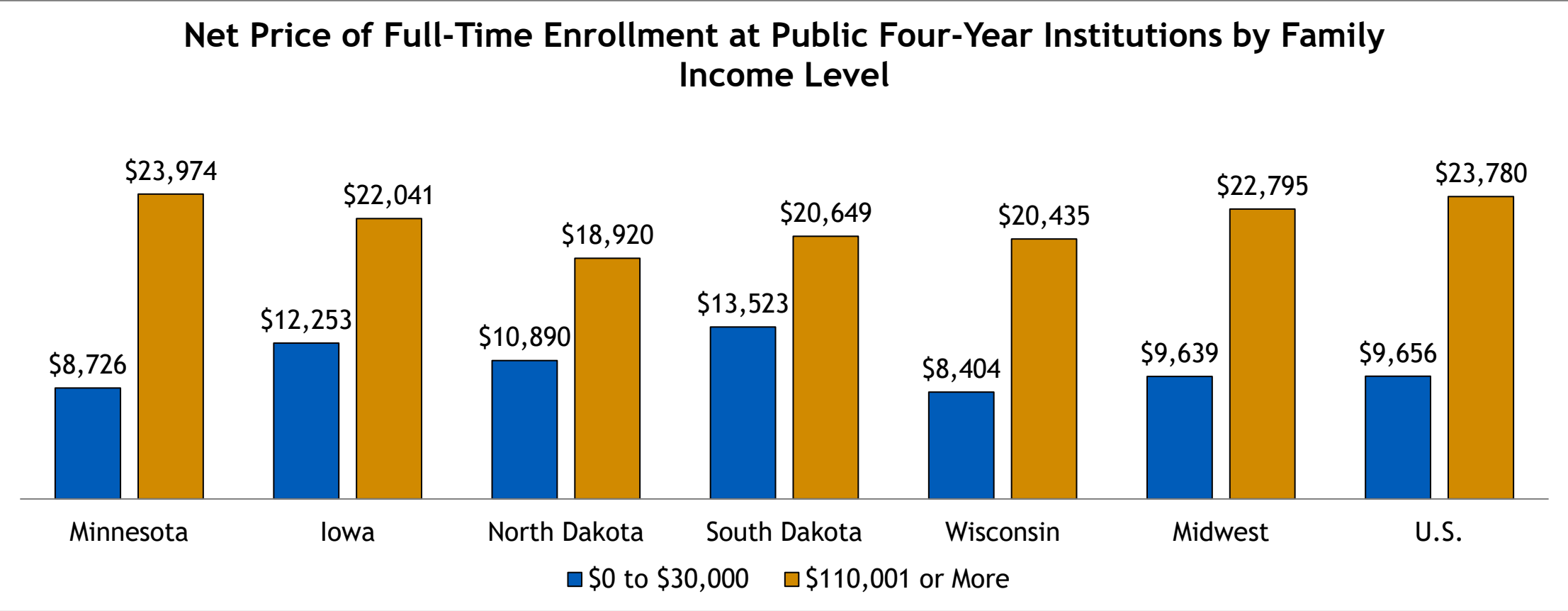
Source. NCES IPEDS. (2022). *Fall enrollment*.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PRICE: Average net price for low-income students at Minnesota public two-year institutions is higher than the Midwest and national averages but lower than South Dakota.



Source. NCES IPEDS. (2023). *Net price*. Estimates are weighted by income group of first-time/full-time students. Total price of attendance includes tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, transportation, and other designated costs. Carnegie Classification was used to classify institutions. Institutions with mixed categories were classified according to their distribution of associate and bachelor’s degrees awarded. Tribal colleges are excluded.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE PRICE: Average net price for low-income students at Minnesota public four-year institutions is lower than the Midwest and national averages and lower than Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.



Source. NCES IPEDS. (2023). *Net price*. Estimates are weighted by income group of first-time/full-time students. Total price of attendance includes tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, transportation, and other designated costs. Carnegie Classification was used to classify institutions. Institutions with mixed categories were classified according to their distribution of associate and bachelor’s degrees awarded. Tribal colleges and universities are excluded.

Policy & Research and Resources

[MHEC Strategic Plan 2022-2025](https://www.mhec.org/resources/strategic-plan-2022-2025)

<https://www.mhec.org/resources/strategic-plan-2022-2025>

[MHEC Interactive Dashboard](http://mhec.org/dashboard)

<http://mhec.org/dashboard>

[2023-24 MHEC Cost Savings](https://www.mhec.org/resources/2023-24-mhec-cost-savings)

<https://www.mhec.org/resources/2023-24-mhec-cost-savings>

[Minnesota Highlights 2023-2024](https://www.mhec.org/resources/minnesota-highlights-2023-2024)

<https://www.mhec.org/resources/minnesota-highlights-2023-2024>

[2025 State Performance Update-Minnesota](https://www.mhec.org/resources/2025-state-performance-update-minnesota)

<https://www.mhec.org/resources/2025-state-performance-update-minnesota>

State Support for College Access and Success Initiatives

Mark Wiederspan, PhD

Question

What has research found with regards to effective school counseling for college-going?

(Terms “college” and “postsecondary education” are used interchangeably)

Interventions to Promote College Access in High School

Six primary interventions to increase college rates in high school:

- Information-only interventions
- Text message interventions
- High school counseling
- College advising, coaching, and mentoring
- Virtual advising
- School-based college-going programs

Information-Only Interventions

- **Information-only interventions are considered light touch interactions with students:**
 - Mailing general college related information or hanging posters advertising a state-wide financial aid program has no effect on college enrollment or FAFSA completion rates (Cummings, 2024; Gurantz, et al., 2021; Hyman, 2020)
 - Providing personalized information about financial aid options and eligibility has been found to increase college enrollment for high-achieving, low-income students (Dynarski, et al., 2021; Hoxby & Turner, 2013)

Text Message Interventions

- **Text messaging is also a form of a light touch interaction and provides students with reminders or information about the college-going process and FAFSA application.**
 - Small-scale text-messaging that target a specific population found to be effective in increasing enrollment and FAFSA rates and reducing summer melt (Avery, et al, 2021; Castleman, et al., 2012; Castleman, et al., 2014; Castleman & Page, 2015; Page, et al., 2020)
 - Nationally large-scale text-messaging through platforms like the Common Application and the College Board have no impact on enrollment or FAFSA rates (Avery et al., 2021; Bird et al., 2021)

High School Counseling

- **School counseling has been shown to be positively associated with:**
 - FAFSA filing intentions and submissions (Fitzpatrick, 2020)
 - College application rates (Bryan et al., 2011; Robinson & Roksa, 2016)
 - College enrollment rates (Belasco, 2013; Bryan et al., 2022; Engberg & Gilbert, 2014; Poynton & Lapan, 2017)
- **Counselor capacity limits their ability**

College Advising, Coaching, and Mentoring

- **Some school districts have introduced non-profit organizations and partnerships between high school and colleges to provide students with college advisors, coaches, mentors.**
 - Provides one-on-one assistance with college information and applications
 - Has found to improve college intentions and enrollment among disadvantaged high school students (Avery, 2013; Bettinger & Evans, 2019; Castleman et al., 2015; Castleman et al., 2020; Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2013)

Virtual Advising

- In absence of in-person advising, virtual or remote advising has been shown to provide positive college enrollment outcomes (Gurantz et al., 2020; Sullivan et al., 2021)
 - Includes face-to-face sessions, emails, phone calls, and text messaging exchanges
- However, impacts have been limited to students identified as being highly motivated and high-achieving.
- In comparing remote advising to in-person advising, outcomes are larger with in-person advising

School-Based, College-Going Programs

- School-based approaches integrate college-going process within school curriculum or staffed resource centers
 - Has been found to increase college enrollment and FAFSA rates (Cunha et al., 2018; Oreopoulos & Ford, 2019)
- However, the research on embedding college-going process into curriculum and school operations has been limited to a small number of high schools.

Questions

- How do states structure their college and success work, including the number of full-time equivalent staff (FTEs), where they place FTEs throughout the state, and the focus of their work?
- How much money for college access and success initiatives is appropriated to state agencies through the legislature?

(Terms “college” and “postsecondary education” are used interchangeably)

Inquiry Approach

- MHEC developed a survey for the 12 Midwestern states
 - Administered to members of National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP)
 - MN Office of Higher Education is the designated member of NASSGAP
 - 11 out of 12 states responded to the survey (92% response rate)

College Access and Success Work & Initiatives

- All 11 state agencies reported overseeing at least 1 college access and success initiative
 - 3 states have a Universal FAFSA policy (IL, IN, & NE)
 - MI is currently planning for the implementation of a Universal FAFSA
- Types of Services: (# of states in parentheses / MN in bold)
 - **FAFSA Completion Assistance (7)**
 - **Financial Aid Information & Support (8)**
 - **College & Career Counseling (3)**
 - Test Preparation (SAT/ACT) (0)
 - **Outreach, Coordination, & Recruitment (8)**

Activities to Support Initiatives

Types of Activities: (# of states in parentheses / MN in bold)

- Text messaging campaigns targeting students and families (2)
- **Training on college and FAFSA applications for high school counselors (7)**
- **Attendance at college fairs (6)**
- **Organizing FAFSA completion events (7)**
- **Hosting webinars or information sessions on college admissions and financial aid processes (6)**
- **Providing summer bridge activities to prepare students for college (2)**
- **Creating college and financial aid information guides (7)**
- **Offering grants to schools districts or high schools to support college access and success programs (3)**
- Offering stipends or incentives to schools for achieving FAFSA completion goals (1)
- **Maintaining publicly available FAFSA completion dashboards (5)**

Funding for College Access and Success Work & Initiatives

- **7 of the 11 agencies reported on state appropriations being used for college access and success initiatives in FY25**
 - IL - \$7.8 million
 - IA - \$600,000
 - KS - \$27 million
 - Provided to public universities for activities
 - MI - \$20.9 million
 - \$20 million used for FAFSA grant stipends and incentives
 - **MN - \$2.6 million**
 - MO - \$640,000
 - OH - \$1 million

Funding for College Access and Success Work & Initiatives

- 8 of 11 agencies indicated additional funding through external sources (# of states in parentheses / MN in bold)
 - **Federal funding (5)**
 - TRIO, GEAR UP, AmeriCorps, U.S. Department of Education grant
 - **Nonprofit or private foundation grant funding (6)**
 - Revenue from agency programs (2)
 - Fees, service charges, loan collections

Staff Support

- 6 of 11 state agencies have dedicated employees, though the number of FTEs and where they are located vary greatly
 - IL – 90 FTEs, 84 distributed across regions aligned with community college districts
 - IN – 11 FTEs, working in central office and distributed across state
 - IA – 20 FTEs, working in central office
 - MI – 10 FTEs, distributed across state
 - MO – 5 FTEs, working in central office and distributed across state
- States reported FTEs are to assist with the college-going process
- MN reported they have 20 FTEs dedicated to college access and success initiatives
 - Also rely on collaboration with external organizations

Overview

- Midwest states prioritize FAFSA completion and college-going initiatives, but variations exist in the allocation of resources, staffing, and activities.
- Research suggests that personalized and targeted support strategies are key to improving college access outcomes.
- In-person advising and counseling is important for college access outcomes.
 - In absence of in-person, virtual advising shows promise.

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