

Bringing Direct Admissions to Every High School Senior: A Simple Intervention with a Significant Impact

No student should miss out on higher education based on the false belief that they “aren’t college material.” Across Minnesota, there are post-secondary programs aligned to numerous pathways and aspirations—and as a state, we owe it to our students to open as many doors as possible.

The Direct Admissions Program does just that. Launched in 2022-23, the program uses high school course data to automatically admit students to colleges across the state. Students receive a letter in the fall letting them know which of the 55+ technical schools, tribal colleges, community colleges, four-year public and private universities they have been accepted to—all they have to do is finalize the application.

In the first two years of implementation, the program has shown success on many measures:

- **More students file the FAFSA**, connecting them to resources to pay for college. At participating high schools, 50% of students filed the FAFSA in the year before Direct Admissions, and 58% filed in the first year of Direct Admissions
- **More students enroll in a Minnesota college**. At participating high schools, 31% of recent graduates enrolled in a Minnesota college in the year before Direct Admissions, and 33% enrolled in the following year.
- **Improved outcomes held true across demographics**, including for low-income students and students of color.
- **Early adoption is going well!**
 - 57 colleges and universities are signed on to proactively admit students
 - 120 high schools are participating, with more in the pipeline
 - 59% of students at Direct Admissions high schools are in the 7-county metro and 41% are in Greater Minnesota

All Minnesota students should benefit from the Direct Admissions Program! The upfront investment to build out the program is a worthwhile effort that can bridge the gap between K-12 and college. It’s a program that benefits all students—but most importantly, helps ensure students on the fence about their college potential don’t fall through the cracks. This simple intervention makes a big difference for Minnesota kids and should be a universal practice across the state.

Organizations that support statewide expansion of Direct Admissions

