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# Education Partnerships Coalition Fund

## Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Session Laws 2017, 1<sup>st</sup> Sp. Session, Chap. 5, Art. 9, Sec. 1,  
2021 Minnesota Statutes, Section 24D.99, Subdivision 6

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$500 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses.

*Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, braille or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.*

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## Legislative Charge

The legislative charge is to report on the education partnership program. At a minimum, the report must summarize grantee activities, identify grant recipients and awards and analyze program performance measures and outcomes, and make any recommendations for legislative changes.

### Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.99, Subdivision 6. Legislative Report

By December 15 of each odd-numbered year, the commissioner shall submit a report on the education partnership program to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education, early childhood education, economic development, and human services. At a minimum, the report must summarize grantee activities, identify grant recipients and awards, analyze program performance measures and outcomes, and make any recommendations for legislative changes.

## Executive Summary

The intent of this program is to establish a program supporting a coalition of coordinated, aligned education partnerships to form a comprehensive network of evidence-based support services. These services are designed to close opportunity gaps and improve educational and developmental outcomes of children and their families within communities experiencing poverty and impediments to economic viability.

This grant program is based on leveraging partnerships at all levels. For education partnerships to be effective, communities must engage multiple stakeholders at the state, regional and local levels to ensure all possible supports are in place for success, and to meet the varying needs of children and families in each unique community.

Each education partnership community works together to define solutions that will enable them to impact schools' readiness, third-grade reading, high school graduation and close achievement gaps. This report highlights the work that programs did to meet the immediate needs of families during the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest following the murder of George Floyd while at the same time continuing efforts to close opportunity, education and achievement gaps.

## Introduction

The Education Partnerships Coalition includes eight communities in Minnesota: Austin Aspires (Austin), Cradle to Career (Rochester), Every Hand Joined (Red Wing), Generation Next (Minneapolis and St. Paul), Northfield Promise (Northfield), the Northside Achievement Zone (Minneapolis), Partners for Student Success (St. Cloud), and the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (St. Paul). The coalition uses the collective impact model to build the civic infrastructure in local communities needed to drive meaningful change and deliver measurable results for Minnesota's children across all races and income. The coalition's work reaches more than 120,000 children across Minnesota.

All the Education Partnership Coalition grantees focus on a common set of collective goals that prioritize human capital and workforce talent. Those goals include: all children are ready for school; all third-graders can read at grade level; all racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed; all students graduate from high school; and all students are ready for career and college.

This grant program complements many existing statewide initiatives and legislation. Most notable, the goals of the Education Partnership Coalition are very similar to the state’s World’s Best Workforce initiative, under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11. Other areas this grant program complements is the Full Service Community Schools grant program, the Early Learning Scholarships program, various other state- and county-level assistance programs, the work being done on supporting communities to align their early learning systems pre-K through 3rd grade, and adult basic education and family education programs.

These programs recognized the needs of families were changing during the COVID-19 pandemic and shifted work to meet those needs. Many delivered food to families with food insecurities. They provided computers, iPads and laptops to families whose children need to attend school through distance learning. Many found ways to provide access to internet and broadband services. While some provided support for masks and supplies to sanitize facilities. These were critical supports needed by families during times never before encountered.

**Analysis**

The overall analysis of the annual reports submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is positive. Each community has a unique set of strategies being implemented that are best suited to address their needs. Flexibility was provided in how grantees met the high level of needs of families in their communities during the pandemic. Through the review of the annual reports, MDE has determined each grantee demonstrated continued progress toward goals, is in compliance of the intent of the grant and is working toward their goals areas in a proactive and efficient manner. Below is a small sampling of highlights from each grantee:

	2017 Legislation	2019 Legislation	2021 Legislation	Core Activities	Performance Highlights
Austin Aspires	N/A	Supporting Partner (no grant)	N/A	Priority is to increase college persistence rate.	Purchased 200 hotspots with data plans  Laptops were purchased and provided to families and child care programs

	2017 Legislation	2019 Legislation	2021 Legislation	Core Activities	Performance Highlights
Rochester Area Foundation for Cradle to Career	N/A	\$250,000 each year	N/A	Priority is to engage stakeholders and increase the number of community partners to work on Kindergarten Readiness and On-time Graduation.	To date, 65+ partners have been identified.  Provided learning cards to caregivers to provide guidance to get learners ready for kindergarten.  Launched videos in three languages to help parents and caregivers guide their children in distance learning.
Generation Next – Twin Cities	N/A	Supporting Partner (no grant)	N/A	Priority is to increase number of children screened at 3 years old.	Several in-person required activities prevented/delayed children from being screened during COVID-19.  Generation Next continues to advocate for policy solutions to ensure children get supports they need in early years.
Jones Family Foundation for Every Hand Joined – Red Wing	\$16,000 each year	\$250,000 each year	N/A	Priorities include increasing postsecondary completion and kindergarten readiness.	Data-sharing agreements allowed four entities to access information about 500 students that allowed for individualized instructional strategies for students.

	2017 Legislation	2019 Legislation	2021 Legislation	Core Activities	Performance Highlights
Northfield Healthy Community Initiative – Northfield	\$160,000 each year	\$250,000 each year	N/A	Priority is to improve literacy proficiency.	166 students in grades 1-3 met their reading growth goals and 90 moved up at least a full grade level in reading.
Northside Achievement Zone – Minneapolis	\$1.3 million each year	\$1.3 million each year	\$1.3 million each year	Priority is to accelerate reading proficiency.	Distributed 726 Chromebooks and iPads and 719 noise-canceling headphones to families with multiple children in distance learning.  Provide 1000 families with free broadband access.
United Way of Central Minnesota – Partners for Success – St. Cloud Area	\$160,000 each year	\$250,000 each year	N/A	Priority is to close opportunity gaps.	Trained community navigators worked with families to improve mental health.  Provided support to Boys and Girls Clubs to individualize outreach to students.
St. Paul Promise Neighborhood – St. Paul	\$1.3 million each year	\$1.3 million each year	\$1.3 million each year	Priority is preventing summer learning loss.	Close to 6,000 families regularly attended the virtual model.

## Conclusion

During the time covered by this report, communities have struggled to meet the needs of children and families during COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest. These grantees have worked to meet the immediate needs of

students and families in their communities while at the same time continue their commitment to closing the achievement gap.

The pandemic exacerbated racial and economic disparities. The organizations in Education Partnerships Coalition along with their partners provided meals, emergency funds for housing, hot spots and devices. These efforts allowed children to continue learning during the pandemic.

A sampling of comments from grantees:

Every Hand Joined – Red Wing “We have been able to spend less time collecting data and more time working directly with kids to help them.”

St. Paul Promise Neighborhood – St. Paul “These funds helped ensure that children in St. Paul can build a positive future through wraparound supports even amid our current pandemics.”

Partner for Student Success – St. Cloud Area “[Partner for Student Success] removes the barriers of transportation, access to Wi-Fi, food scarcity, language support needs and partners with the 742 School District to create best learning environment in response to COVID.”

## **Bibliography**

[EPCReport2020\\_Jan25.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)