Best Practices in High-Performing Schools

Fiscal Year 2024

Report to the Legislature

As required by 2023 Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.35, subdivision 4

For more information:

Michael Diedrich
Division of Student Access and Opportunity
Minnesota Department of Education
400 NE Stinson Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55413
651-582-8332
michael.diedrich@state.mn.us
education.mn.gov

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Legislative Charge

This report is consistent with the requirements of 2024 Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.35, subdivision 4, which states, "[T]he commissioner must annually report to the public and the legislature best practices implemented in those schools that are identified as high performing under federal expectations."

Introduction

Continuous improvement is vital to Minnesota's school system. While continuous improvement can be measured in a variety of ways, one method is to examine schools that have shown improvement on federal accountability indicators. This report focuses on schools that were identified for support under Minnesota's North Star system for school accountability under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2022 and have shown the greatest improvement in math achievement and reading achievement from 2022 to 2023.

This report focused on the 5% of Title I schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), the schools identified for CSI due to one or more student groups performing similarly to the identified 5% of Title I schools for two consecutive identification cycles, and schools identified for targeted support and improvement (TSI) due to one or more student groups performing similarly to the identified 5% of Title I schools in the 2022 identification cycle.

For each school, the change in the relevant student group's math achievement between 2022 and 2023 was calculated, as was the change in reading achievement. For the 5% of Title I schools, the relevant "student group" was an overall school-level average of all groups included in accountability calculations at the school. The 25% of schools with the largest positive change from 2022 to 2023 was identified for each identification type and each indicator. The evidence-based practices used by those schools were then analyzed and common patterns identified.

Top Quarter of Identified 5 Percent of Title I Schools

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
1	Osseo Public School District	Crest View Elementary	Bloomington Public School District	Indian Mounds Elementary
2	Saint Paul Public Schools	Cherokee Heights Elementary School	Saint Paul Public Schools	Cherokee Heights Elementary School
3	Minneapolis Public School District	Franklin Middle	Minneapolis Public School District	Jenny Lind Elementary
4	Roseville Public School District	Central Park Elementary	Hill City Public School District	Hill City Elementary
5	Saint Paul Public Schools	Maxfield Elementary School	Duluth Public School District	Laura MacArthur Elementary

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
6	Minneapolis Public School District	Bryn Mawr Elementary	Red Lake Public School District	Ponemah Elementary
7	Saint Paul Public Schools	Daytons Bluff Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Obama Service Learning Elementary
8	Columbia Heights Public School District	North Park School For Innovation	Saint Paul Public Schools	Daytons Bluff Elementary
9	Duluth Public School District	Laura MacArthur Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Franklin Middle
10	Saint Paul Public Schools	Benjamin E Mays Magnet	Saint Paul Public Schools	Hamline Elementary School

Top Quarter of Schools Identified Twice for the Same Group

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
1	Bemidji Public School District	Lincoln Elementary	Browns Valley Public School District	Browns Valley Elementary
2	Thief River Falls School District	Challenger Elementary	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary
3	St. Cloud Public School District	Lincoln Elementary	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary
4	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Jenny Lind Elementary
5	Willmar Public School District	Roosevelt Elementary	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary
6	Roseville Public School District	Central Park Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Daytons Bluff Elementary
7	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary	Roseville Public School District	Central Park Elementary
8	Browns Valley Public School District	Browns Valley Elementary	Bemidji Public School District	Lincoln Elementary
9	Perham-Dent Public School District	Heart Of The Lake Elementary	Cass Lake-Bena Public Schools	Cass Lake-Bena Elementary
10	St. Cloud Public School District	Discovery Community Elementary	St. Cloud Public School District	Lincoln Elementary
11	Columbia Heights Public School District	Valley View Elementary	Naytahwaush Community School	Naytahwaush Community School
12	Saint Paul Public Schools	Benjamin E Mays Magnet	Minneapolis Public School District	Jenny Lind Elementary

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
13	Saint Paul Public Schools	Como Park Elementary	Duluth Public School District	Piedmont Elementary
14	McGregor Public School District	McGregor Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Jenny Lind Elementary
15	Hinckley-Finlayson School District	Hinckley Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Obama Service Learning Elementary
16	Pine City Public School District	Pine City Elementary	Red Lake Public School District	Ponemah Elementary
17	Osseo Public School District	Crest View Elementary	Willmar Public School District	Roosevelt Elementary
18	Minneapolis Public School District	Pillsbury Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Benjamin E Mays Magnet
19	Saint Paul Public Schools	Daytons Bluff Elementary	St. Cloud Public School District	Lincoln Elementary
20	Minneapolis Public School District	Bryn Mawr Elementary	Perham-Dent Public School District	Heart Of The Lake Elementary
21	Roseville Public School District	Central Park Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Como Park Elementary
22	Minneapolis Public School District	Sanford Middle	Saint Paul Public Schools	Maxfield Elementary School
23	North St. Paul-Maplewood Oakdale Public School District	Weaver Elementary	Osseo Public School District	Palmer Lake Elementary

Top Quarter of Schools Identified Once for a Student Group

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
1	Anoka-Hennepin Public School District	Wilson Elementary	Bloomington Public School District	Indian Mounds Elementary
2	Spring Lake Park Public Schools	Park Terrace Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin Public School District	Wilson Elementary
3	Fit Academy	Fit Academy	Osseo Public School District	Fair Oaks Elementary
4	Elk River Public School District	Lincoln Elementary	Truman Public School District	Truman Elementary
5	Minneapolis Public School District	Howe Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Howe Elementary
6	Saint Paul Public Schools	Adams Magnet Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Lucy Laney Elementary

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
7	Kelliher Public School District	Kelliher Elementary	Minneapolis Public School District	Webster Elementary
8	Osseo Public School District	Elm Creek Elementary	Duluth Public School District	Laura MacArthur Elementary
9	Bemidji Public School District	Gene Dillon Elementary School	Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools	Pleasantview Elementary
10	Lakeville Area Schools	Orchard Lake Elementary	North St. Paul-Maplewood Oakdale Public School District	Cowern Elementary
11	North St. Paul-Maplewood Oakdale Public School District	Cowern Elementary	Elk River Public School District	Lincoln Elementary
12	Osseo Public School District	Elm Creek Elementary	Cass Lake-Bena Public Schools	Cass Lake-Bena Elementary
13	Saint Paul Public Schools	Groveland Park Elementary	Osseo Public School District	Zanewood Community School, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts And Math
14	Bloomington Public School District	Indian Mounds Elementary	Verndale Public School District	Verndale Elementary
15	Truman Public School District	Truman Elementary	Cook County Public Schools	Sawtooth Mountain Elementary
16	Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools	Pleasantview Elementary	Osseo Public School District	Elm Creek Elementary
17	Winona Area Public School District	Jefferson Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Groveland Park Elementary
18	Kelliher Public School District	Kelliher Elementary	Osseo Public School District	Elm Creek Elementary
19	Central Public School District	Central Elementary	Austin Public School District	Neveln Elementary
20	Red Wing Public School District	Burnside Elementary	Central Public School District	Central Elementary
21	Duluth Public School District	Laura MacArthur Elementary	Winona Area Public School District	Jefferson Elementary
22	Minneapolis Public School District	Lucy Laney Elementary	Kelliher Public School District	Kelliher Elementary
23	Win-E-Mac School District	Win-E-Mac Elementary	Saint Paul Public Schools	Mississippi Creative Arts Elementary

Rank	Math Achievement District	Math Achievement School	Reading Achievement District	Reading Achievement School
24	Verndale Public School District	Verndale Elementary	Moorhead Area Public School District	Ellen Hopkins Elementary

Analysis

Schools identified for support in Minneapolis or St. Paul work with their district leadership on school improvement. All other schools work with state-funded staff in Minnesota's network of regional service cooperatives. The leadership teams at identified schools work with school improvement staff to conduct needs analyses, identify evidence-based practices aligned to those needs, and implement those practices with fidelity.

The selection and implementation of evidence-based practices is deeply informed by the Minnesota Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MnMTSS) framework, which includes five fundamental components:

- Infrastructure for Continuous Improvement
- Family and Community Engagement
- Multi-layered Practices and Supports
- Assessment
- Data-Based Decision Making

Each of the fundamental components of MnMTSS is itself divided into multiple subcomponents. The evidence-based practice(s) selected by each school can then be mapped onto the corresponding subcomponent(s). This report's analysis examined the reported information on evidence-based practices in the schools showing the highest levels of growth and identified three subcomponents that were most frequently selected: Tier 1 (Core) Practices, Systems Evaluation, and Professional Learning. While a range of other areas were reported by one or two schools, the three described in this report were the most frequently reported across multiple schools.

Tier 1 (Core) Practices

By far, the most commonly selected evidence-based practices among these schools corresponded to Tier 1 (Core) Practices, a subcomponent of Multi-Layered Practices and Supports. Of the three tiers in the MnMTSS framework, Tier 1 includes culturally and linguistically sustaining standard-based and differentiated academic, social and emotional instruction for every student as a necessary foundation for tiered support.

Within this broad practice, the most common specific emphasis was on structured literacy or other similar literacy-focused interventions. In some cases, the focus was on facilitating meaningful mathematical discourse or other mathematics-related core practices. Even among the schools showing significant improvement in math achievement, however, literacy-focused work was the most common reported practice.

Systems Evaluation

Another somewhat commonly reported area of emphasis was Systems Evaluation, a subcomponent of Assessment. In the MnMTSS framework, this subcomponent provides information to use in discussions about how well systems and programs are functioning to serve every student. The most frequent form for this was the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) or professional learning teams (PLTs) that engage in systematic analysis of data—mostly collected at the classroom level—to inform instructional choices and the ways adults support students in school.

Professional Learning

The other most frequently reported subcomponent was Professional Learning, which is part of Infrastructure for Continuous Improvement. In the context of the MnMTSS framework, this involves training and coaching to develop the competency of all staff in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that improve student social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes and ensure continuous educator growth in anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices and decision-making.

Schools implementing practices in this subcomponent could again use PLCs or PLTs as avenues for learning, or they could use other high-effectiveness methods that embed learning in strategically selected topics (which could include Structured Literacy or other Tier 1 practices) throughout the school year.

Conclusion

Any attention to best practices and school performance must include the domain of continuous improvement. By focusing on the selection and implementation of practices in schools that have shown particular strength in continuous improvement, this report points to further avenues for exploration and support at both the state and local level.