



MINNESOTA STATE

Degree and Certificate Completion

Report to the Legislature

Academic and Student Affairs
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Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
Academic and Student Affairs
30 East 7th Street,
St. Paul, MN (zip) 55101
(Phone) 651-201-1496
Jesse.Mason@MinnState.edu
MinnState.edu

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
LIST OF TABLES	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
Completion Goals and Plan	3
Developmental Education	4
Opportunity Gap and Equity.....	5
Minnesota State Completion Measures	6
BACKGROUND	11
MINNESOTA STATE DEGREE COMPLETION AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION	12
Completion Goals	12
Challenges Related to Degree and Certificate Completion	13
Ongoing Completion Efforts and Completion Plan	14
Developmental Education	14
Challenges of College Readiness and Developmental Education	15
Ongoing Innovations and Developmental Education Plan	16
Opportunity Gaps and Equity	18
Equity 2030.....	18
MINNESOTA STATE COMPLETION MEASURES.....	20
Students, Measures, Disaggregation and Data Suppression	20
Students Reported.....	20
Measures	20
Disaggregation.....	22
Data Mart Updates	23
Data Suppression	23
Completion Measures	24
Developmental Education Enrollment Rate.....	24
Developmental Education Completion Rate	26
College Level Course Completion Rate	29
Credit Completion Rate	31
Student Persistence and Completion Rate.....	32
Completion Rate	34
Credits Earned at Graduation	35
Institution Level Data.....	37
CONCLUSIONS	38
Completion Measures	38
Equity 2030	40
REFERENCES	41
APPENDIX A: RELATED LEGISLATION	44
2015 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 69, Senate File 5, Article 3, Section 23	44
2017 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 89, Article 2, Section 25	45
2023 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 41, Article 2, Section 34	45
APPENDIX B: COMPLETION MEASURE REPORT BY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate-Seeking Students.....	20
Table 2: Measures and Definitions	21
Table 3: Fall Entering Students Who took Developmental Courses	24
Table 4: Developmental Education (DE) Enrollment Rate by Subject	25
Table 5: Developmental Education (DE) Enrollment Rate by Student Group.....	26
Table 6: Developmental Education (DE) Completion Rate in First Year by Subject.....	27
Table 7: Developmental Education (DE) Completion Rate in First Year by Student Group and Subject .	28
Table 8: First Year College Level (CL) Course Completion Rate by Subject.....	29
Table 9: First Year College Level (CL) Course Completion Rate by Student Group and Subject	30
Table 10: Twenty and Thirty Credit Completion Rates.....	31
Table 11: Twenty and Thirty Credit Completion Rates by Student Group	32
Table 12: Second Fall Persistence and Completion Rate by Student Group	33
Table 13: Completion Rate by Sector and Student Group	34
Table 14: Average Credits Earned at Graduation by Award and Student Group.....	35

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota legislature has passed three pieces of legislation related to credential completion and developmental education since 2015:

- **Completion Plan:** The 2015 Minnesota legislature passed legislation related to degree completion. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) submitted a report in January 2016 detailing the system's plan to encourage and assist students to complete credentials.
- **Completion Measures:** The 2015 Higher Education Appropriations Act (2015 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 3, Article 3, Section 16) requires the Minnesota State Board of Trustees, beginning in January of 2018, to submit a report on its activities and achievements related to improving timely completion, including reporting on seven specific completion measures.
- **Developmental Education Plan:** The 2017 Minnesota legislature passed legislation that required the Minnesota State Board of Trustees to prepare a plan that reforms developmental education offerings. The Developmental Education Plan report was submitted to the legislature in February 2018.

This Degree and Certificate Completion report fulfills the second reporting requirement listed above and provides an update to the report submitted annually to the Legislature starting in January 2018. The report includes updated data on the progress made on the seven completion measures outlined in the legislation and also serves as a supplement to the 2016 College Completion Plan report and the 2018 Developmental Education Plan. The specific measures reported are: Developmental Education Enrollment, Developmental Education Completion, College Level Course Completion, Credit Completion, Student Persistence and Completion, Completion Rates and Credits Earned at Graduation.

In addition, in 2023 the Legislature initiated a review of “admission and course placement policies, practices and assessments used by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system” (2023 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 41, Article 2, Section 34); this review was overseen by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Over the course of 2024, Minnesota State supported the efforts of the consultants undertaking the review, providing data access and supporting outreach and information gathering processes. The final report from the consultants was posted in July 2025.

Completion Goals and Plan

A core commitment of the 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State is to provide access to higher education for all Minnesotans. The system has been very successful in providing this access, while acknowledging that there is still work to be done to meet our Equity 2030 goal to eliminate the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university. Many students leave our colleges and universities without earning a credential. Degree and certificate completion is important not only for the individual student and their family, but also for the state to meet its talent needs. Minnesota State has implemented a number of efforts to improve completion rates.

While Minnesota State is committed to improving degree and certificate completion rates, we recognize that there are several opportunities and challenges as we seek to assist more students in reaching their educational goals in a timely manner. The challenges include Minnesota State’s open-door mission, college affordability, the uncertainty of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on many

factors impacting the state's population and the potential recovery from those effects. The system's open access mission means that it serves diverse student learning and support needs with a substantial number of students facing financial and academic challenges that are associated with lower rates of college completion.

These challenges are balanced by the opportunities that exist for Minnesota State to better serve the learning and support needs of its students. Minnesota State has been actively working to improve completion rates through a variety of initiatives that have demonstrated promising outcomes. The initiatives include systemwide and local partnerships with K-12 school district associations, adult basic education, business and industry, and non-profit organizations, as well as a variety of campus-based initiatives. The system's completion plan capitalizes on the initiatives that are demonstrating success and promotes practices as well as policies that have been shown to have a positive impact on completion.

Developmental Education

Since many of our students come to college with varying support needs, many benefit from additional academic preparation to be successful in college. The colleges and universities of Minnesota State offer developmental education, including courses in reading, writing, and mathematics, and courses for English Language Learners (ELL), as well as academic support services and interventions designed to develop students' skills and prepare them for college-level coursework. Throughout this report, the term *developmental education*, rather than *remedial education*, is used because it is a broader term that encompasses both coursework and support services.

Minnesota State is the primary provider of developmental education in the state. The system is committed to meeting students where they are and building on the range of strengths and assets they bring to the colleges and universities, and to better serve students as they pursue their educational goals. Minnesota State's work towards structural changes in the broad developmental education space has been underway to address challenges associated with open admissions policies, assessment testing and course placement, traditional developmental education structures, and the need for holistic student support.

Minnesota State has rolled out a course placement pilot that incorporates a multiple measures approach to course placement. There have been several iterations of multiple measures models utilized in recent years. Broadly, the current placement pilot includes a range of measures to help recognize and capture student preparation, including High School Grade Point Average (HSGPA) as a standalone measure or in connection with high school course taking, self-guided placement options for students who do not have a valid HSGPA, and a range of standardized assessments including the ACT, SAT, MCA and ACCUPLACER examinations.

This pilot was based on research about the accuracy of HSGPA in course placement (Bahr, Fagioli, Hetts, Hayward, Willett, Lamoree, Newell, Sorey & Baker, 2019), the recognition that students arrive at Minnesota State campuses with a range of experiences, and that traditional, test-first placement approaches can exacerbate equity gaps in placement. This broader range of placement options allows for more accurate and equitable student placement. It also continues improvement efforts in this space that have been implemented over several years. A previous iteration of a multiple measures model included the above measures but specifically introduced pairing HSGPA with testing results to

potentially move students to a higher placement level than their standalone test score would have allowed. The results of this current pilot are being continually evaluated, and the system is moving towards adopting an updated procedure built on findings from the student success results of the pilot and informed by national best practices.

Minnesota State institutions are also implementing innovations in developmental education to increase student retention, persistence, and completion rates. Additionally, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities created a Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap (DESR) to guide the systemwide work on developmental education redesign with clearly identified strategic goals, key action steps, targeted timelines for implementation, and measurable outcomes.

Essentially, the DESR is the framework under which system institutions can develop and engage in curriculum development redesign and delivery efforts coinciding with academic support mechanisms to further help students develop their academic acumen to meet their educational goals. Curriculum redesign efforts include co-requisite models in Mathematics, Reading and English, intrusive academic support systems such as PTIC (peer tutors in the classroom), as well as curriculum improvements in gateway coursework, and efforts to better align the required Math courses in programs with the outcomes and learning needs that are specific to those programs. This, combined with increasing access to co-requisite support courses for math students, has been the focus of Minnesota State's Math Pathways project.

The details of the developmental education plan are outlined in the 2018 Developmental Education Plan report. Each college and university has a corresponding local plan in place and is making progress on the goals outlined in the DESR.

Opportunity Gap and Equity

National, state, and Minnesota State data show the opportunity and outcome gaps that exist between underrepresented and majority students in higher education. Minnesota State is foundationally committed to addressing the gaps evident in our colleges and universities. Our data show that gaps are evident and persistent by race and ethnicity and by income. There are gaps between students of color and American Indian students in comparison to white and U.S. nonresident students and between students who are Pell eligible in comparison to students who are not Pell eligible.

Minnesota State is committed to eliminating, together with our partners, educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by the year 2030. This is both a moral imperative and Minnesota's economic imperative. Our approach to eliminating the educational equity gaps includes addressing:

- **Enhanced Access** to a higher education by strengthening partnerships and collaboration with K-12, business and industry, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners to expand and grow current programming and identify new ways to support students.
- **Student Academic Success** by establishing guided learning pathways that focus on academic preparation, progression, and accomplishment within an area of study and career.
- **Student Engagement and Support** within the institution, both academic and non-academic, including supporting basic needs.

- **Data-Guided Decision Making** by building a technology infrastructure and expanding capacity for deeper data analytics.
- **Financial Resources and Support** for students and growing the financial resource base for campuses.
- **Workforce Diversity/Strategic Talent Management** by incorporating the local and national context with the changing student and employee demographics and needs - focusing on cultural competence development, inclusive hiring practices, and improved campus climate.

More information about Minnesota State Equity 2030 is available at:

<https://www.minnstate.edu/Equity2030/index.html>

Minnesota State Completion Measures

The completion measures presented in this report were generated from a longitudinal analysis of fall entering undergraduate students who were pursuing a degree, diploma or certificate.

The measures included in the January 2026 Degree and Certificate Completion report have been updated with the most recent information from the system's student record system and developmental education data mart, and an additional cohort of students is now included in the analysis. Although recent updates and improvements to the data mart have resulted in some data points changing slightly from the data reported last year, the general trends and patterns observed in the earlier report remain unchanged.

As the data on the following pages illustrate, the Minnesota State colleges and universities have made progress on improving most completion measures. As noted above, however, more work is needed to address gaps across student groups and the system is committed to eliminating gaps by the year 2030.

Summaries of key points on each of the measures are presented below. For each measure, differences between students of color and American Indian students are contextualized compared to white students and U.S. nonresident students. The U.S. nonresident category consists primarily of international students and students who are not permanent residents of the United States, in line with federal, state and Minnesota State systemwide reporting standards. Data on differences between Pell grant eligible students and students who are not eligible for Pell grants are also included.

Developmental Education Enrollment Rate:

- The number of fall entering undergraduate degree, diploma and certificate seeking students who took developmental courses during their first two years **decreased by 68.4 percent** between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023. This decline was vastly accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic with the implementation of Multiple Measures Course Placement (MM/CP); about 20 percentage points of this decline occurred between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020.

- The **percentage of entering students enrolled in developmental courses in their first two years also decreased**, from 35.1 percent to 14.4 percent between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023, with the greatest decrease occurring for developmental math courses.
- The **percent of students of color and American Indian students who took developmental courses declined by nearly a third (29.6 percentage points)** and the **percent of Pell grant eligible students who took developmental courses declined by nearly a quarter (24.0 percentage points)** since Fall 2014, but both groups continued to have higher developmental course taking rates relative to their comparison groups of white and U.S. nonresident students and students who are not eligible for Pell grants. Equity gaps in these rates continued to tighten.

Much of the enrollment decline in developmental education can be attributed to the placement, curricular, and support innovations that have been implemented across our campuses. Ongoing efforts to develop and scale co-requisite courses in place of longer, pre-requisite course sequences also change the experience of developmental education as students who place below college level would still have direct access to gateway college-level courses, but with additional support designed to improve success outcomes.

Developmental Education Completion Rate:

- The percentage of students completing their developmental education requirements in their first year **declined in writing by 5.1 points, by 6.1 points in math and by 4.6 points in reading** between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023.
- The percentage of **students of color and American Indian students** who completed all their developmental courses by the end of the first year has **decreased by 6.7 points in math, 4.7 points in writing, and by 1.5 points in reading since Fall 2014**. Gaps between students of color and American Indian students relative to white and U.S. nonresident students in developmental course completion remain significant.
- The percentage of **Pell grant eligible students** who completed their developmental courses in the first year **decreased by 6.4 points in math and by 3.5 points in reading** between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023.
- As indicated in the College Level Completion Rate data presented in the following section, as fewer students were placed into developmental education, the college-level outcomes were generally steady or improved. One explanation for the decline in developmental education first-year completion rates is that placement accuracy improved from the multiple measures pilot approach, so the students who were placed into developmental courses after its adoption were more likely to be those with greater academic support needs.

Across Minnesota State, faculty members, departments, and academic and student affairs divisions have been innovating both within and beyond the classroom to better support students enrolled in developmental education, including supplemental instruction and accelerated developmental education pathways. As campuses improve, scale, and/or add new innovative practices and programs across campuses, and as co-requisite models are implemented more broadly throughout the system, it is anticipated that there will be additional increases in student completion of developmental education courses by the end of their first year.

College Level Course Completion Rate:

- The percentage of students completing college-level mathematics in their first year was 27.3 percent for those entering Fall 2023 as compared to 23.5 percent for those entering Fall 2015. The rate for math course completion is 3.8 **percentage points higher** than for those entering Fall 2015.
- Of Fall 2024 entrants, 39.9 percent completed **college level writing in the first year**, compared to the 40.0 percent rate observed for Fall 2015 entering students.
- The percent of **students of color and American Indian students and of Pell grant eligible students** who completed a college level course by the end of their first year **has increased in both math and writing since Fall 2015**, but both groups had lower college level course completion rates relative to their comparison groups.
- The **gap** between students of color and American Indian students as compared to white and U.S. nonresident students in completion of college level writing **tightened** between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024 (from a gap of 7.2 percentage points to 4.6 points). Similarly, the **gap** in completion of college writing for Pell grant eligible students as compared to students who were not eligible **decreased** from 8.5 percentage points for Fall 2014 to 5.5 points for Fall 2024 students.
- Gaps for completion of a college level math course proved harder to close; the **gap in comparison based on race/ethnicity declined slightly** from 10.9 percentage points in Fall 2015 to 8.8 points in Fall 2024, and the **gap based on Pell eligibility** with regard to completion of a college level math course was 12.1 percentage points in Fall 2015 and remained so for the Fall 2024 entrants.

Completion rates for college level writing have varied somewhat by sector and institution. System Institutional Research will work with campus staff to explore the data related to the recent decreases observed in some student populations to more clearly understand the changes and identify possible explanations for the changes (e.g., issues with coding college writing coursework and changes in enrollment patterns or changes in program requirements).

Additionally, as the system moves towards adopting a co-requisite model across mathematics, writing, and reading, more students will have earlier access to college-level courses in these disciplines, reducing or eliminating a stop out point in the transition from developmental to college-level coursework that can impact even students who successfully complete their developmental courses. This could specifically impact the gaps in first-year completion rates for Pell-eligible students and students of color as the percentage of students taking part-time course loads is higher in both groups relative to their comparison groups.

Credit Completion Rate:

- The percentage of full-time fall entering students who completed 30 semester credits during their first year **increased by 6.4 percentage points between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024**, but the percentage of fall entrants who completed 20 semester credits **grew slightly (1.8 points) between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024**.
- The percentage of students of color and American Indian students who earned 20 credits within their first year increased by 3.3 percentage points between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024, reaching a high benchmark in the most recent year for the years reported here, but the **gap between this group and its comparison also widened** by 0.2 percentage points.

- The percentage of students of color and American Indian students who earned 30 credits within their first **year increased by 9.4 percentage points** between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024, also setting a high benchmark in Fall 2024. This gap has declined 2.2 percentage points since Fall 2015.
- Some of the disaggregated groups in Fall 2021 made up ground that had been lost between the Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 incoming students, and in Fall 2024 Pell eligible students completed both 20 credits and 30 credits at the highest rates of the years included in this report.

Student Persistence and Completion Rate:

- The second fall persistence and completion rate for Fall 2023 entering full-time undergraduate students was **1.5 percentage points higher** than for those entering in Fall 2014, setting a historic high benchmark of 78.5 percent.
- The **increase in second fall persistence** and completion was **greater for students of color and American Indian students** as compared to white and U.S. nonresident students.
- The rate of improvement for Pell eligible students matched the rate as their non-Pell eligible peers between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023, leaving the gap unchanged.

Although institutions have focused efforts on the opportunity gaps and increasing students of color and American Indian and Pell eligible students' persistence rates, it is evident that there is still much work to be done. In addition to expanding evidence-based programs, practices, and initiatives, campuses are focusing on increasing student engagement and sense of belonging and creating positive campus climates.

Completion Rate:

- The 3-year completion rate in the colleges for full-time students entering Fall **2021 was 58.9 percent, a new historic high benchmark. This rate is an impressive 8.0 points higher than for Fall 2012 entrants.**
- The state college completion rate for students of color and American Indian students has increased but remains lower than the rate for white and U.S. nonresident students, and gaps remain around fourteen percentage points. The rate at which the gap for state college completion rate improved for Pell eligible students compared to their non-Pell eligible peers was 0.6 percentage points higher, meaning that the gap is closing again.
- The 6-year completion rate for the state universities **increased by 1.3 percentage points to 56.1 percent** for the entering cohort of Fall 2018.
- Even with modest improvements in the 6-year state university completion rates for students of color and American Indian students (up 2.2 points from Fall 2012) and Pell eligible students (up 0.9 points from Fall 2012), the gaps between both populations and their comparison groups persist and are still substantial.

Increasing credential completion rates continue to be an imperative and a primary commitment of Minnesota State. The range of transfer pathway degrees has increased opportunities for smooth transfer and reduced obstacles towards completion as students transfer, such as program courses being treated as elective credits at the receiving institution. Despite more recent increases in completion rates, gaps have not narrowed enough as compared to those entering Fall 2011.

Eliminating the opportunity gaps between students of color and American Indian student completion rates and white and U.S. nonresident student completion rates, as well as the gaps between Pell eligible students and students who are not Pell eligible, is one of the most important priorities of Minnesota State. The pivot to a broad adoption of a corequisite developmental education model has shown indications of success (Ran & Lin, 2022) in improving gateway course completion rates, although the early impacts of this change alone have not necessarily translated to improvements for longer term outcomes like degree completion. Minnesota State will be building on the best practices and learning shared from these implementations over the next few years to align the corequisite model with promising wraparound support practices to address the challenges of success and completion more holistically.

Credits Earned at Graduation

- The average **cumulative credits at graduation increased** for certificates and decreased for associate and bachelor's degree graduates.
- **Students of color and American Indian students** who earn Minnesota State certificates or associate degrees at system colleges **complete with fewer credits** than their comparison group of white and U.S. nonresident students. This pattern also holds true for Pell eligible students as compared to students who are not eligible for Pell grants.
- At the bachelor's degree level overall, total credits earned at graduation declined for all groups between Fall 2012 and Fall 2018, but the decreases were larger for students of color and American Indian students and Pell-eligible students than their respective comparison groups.

The declining number of credits at graduation reflects, at least in part, credit caps Minnesota State implemented for the vast majority of its programs during the last decade. The Minnesota Legislature enacted language in 2007 that required the Minnesota State system to implement credit caps of 60 for associate degrees and 120 for bachelor's degrees. Institutions across Minnesota State also are working to expand and strengthen their academic advising and career guidance services to support students' academic and career planning. The introduction of transfer pathway degrees has also reduced the likelihood of students needing to retake coursework to meet program requirements after transferring.

There are many other factors that may also impact cumulative credits at graduation, including students taking additional courses due to personal interest, changing their major and having to meet new major or degree program requirements. Co-requisite models of developmental education have also been implemented at colleges and universities throughout the system, and in combination with curricular alignment changes around math courses in programs, these changes have reduced the total number of required credits to reach graduation for students in specific pathways, and this implementation will expand systemwide in the next few years.

BACKGROUND

The Minnesota legislature has passed three pieces of legislation related to postsecondary completion and developmental education since 2015:

- (1) In 2015 legislation was passed to address completion rates for all of Minnesota's public colleges and universities (see Appendix A). Minnesota State submitted a report on January 15, 2016, detailing the system's comprehensive plan to encourage students to complete degrees, diplomas, or certificates in their chosen field of study. The report is available at <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2016/mandated/160011.pdf>.
- (2) The 2015 Higher Education Appropriations Act (2015 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 69, Article 3, Section 16) includes the following requirement:

Beginning in 2018, the Board (of Trustees), report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher education on its activities and achievements related to the goal of improving timely completion of degrees and certificates. The report must, at a minimum, include for the previous academic year:

- (1) *the percent of students placed in remedial education;*
- (2) *the percent of students who complete remediation within one academic year;*
- (3) *the percent of students that complete college-level gateway courses in one academic year;*
- (4) *the percent of students who complete 30 semester credits per academic year;*
- (5) *the student retention rate;*
- (6) *time to complete a degree or certificate; and*
- (7) *credits earned by those completing a degree or certificate or other program.*

The report must disaggregate data for each college and university by race and ethnicity, Pell Grant eligibility, and age and provide aggregate data.

- (3) The 2017 Minnesota legislature passed legislation requiring that the Board of Trustees of Minnesota State prepare a plan that reforms developmental education offerings at system campuses aimed at reducing the number of students placed into developmental education (see Appendix A). The January 2020 Developmental Education Plan report is available at <http://www.minnstate.edu/system/asa/index.html>.

This Degree and Certificate Completion report meets the second legislative requirement and includes comprehensive reporting and discussion of the specified seven completion measures. The report updates the data included in each annual report submitted beginning in January 2018. Appendix B of this report presents data on the seven measures for each college and university. The data are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Pell Grant eligibility, and age. Trends for up to five years are reported for the measures. The report also serves as a supplement to the College Completion Plan and the Developmental Education Plan but does not provide the detailed context included in those reports.

MINNESOTA STATE DEGREE COMPLETION AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Completion Goals

One of the core commitments of the 33 colleges and universities of Minnesota State is providing access to higher education for all Minnesotans. As stated in the 2016 College Completion Plan, Minnesota State has been very successful in providing this access, with acknowledgement that there is still work to be done. In fiscal year 2024-2025, approximately 227,000 students enrolled in credit courses at Minnesota State College and University campuses. Minnesota State institutions continue to be the first choice in higher education for the majority of Minnesotans and especially students of color, low-income students, adult learners, and those pursuing technical careers. Minnesota State educates more college graduates than any other provider of higher education in the state, and its graduates include the majority of the state's K-12 schoolteachers, law enforcement professionals, and healthcare professionals.

Data on degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled in FY2024-2025 indicate that among the Minnesota State student population:

- Forty-eight percent are Pell grant eligible;
- Forty-two percent of students are enrolled in the fall on a part-time basis;
- The average age of undergraduate students is 25, and 35 percent of students are age 25 or older;
- Fifty-six percent are first-generation by the federal definition that the student's parents have not earned a bachelor's degree;
- Forty percent of students are students of color or Indigenous;
- Over 7,000 students seek educational accommodations related to a physical or cognitive disability.

Although Minnesota State continues to provide widespread access to higher education, there is also recognition that many students leave Minnesota State colleges and universities without earning a credential. The lack of a credential has significant negative consequences for the student, the college or university where the student enrolled, and our economy (Postsecondary Value Commission, 2021).

Degree and certificate attainment increases average earnings over the course of a lifetime (Carnevale, Rose & Cheah, 2011), is associated with improved health outcomes (Raghupathi & Raghupathi, 2020), decreases likelihood of unemployment, and increases contributions to communities and our society (Ma, Pender & Welch, 2019). Degree and certificate completion has important economic and career implications for individual students and their family as well as for the state's ability to meet its workforce and talent needs. With a commitment to providing access and meeting the Governor's credential attainment goal (MOHE, 2022), Minnesota State has implemented efforts to improve completion rates, at every level of award from certificates and diplomas to associate, bachelor's and graduate degrees.

Challenges Related to Degree and Certificate Completion

While Minnesota State is committed to improving degree and certificate completion rates, we recognize that there are several challenges as we seek to assist more students in reaching their educational goals in a timely manner. National trends and the existing literature indicate that these challenges are not unique to Minnesota but are significant factors across all institutions that must be addressed for a comprehensive completion plan to be successful.

A detailed discussion of these challenges can be found in the 2016 Degree Completion Plan and they are summarized briefly here:

- **Open Door Mission:** Minnesota State's mission as the public-serving post-secondary education system for the state of Minnesota plays a critical role in this context. Minnesota State colleges have open admission policies and admit all students with a high school diploma, regardless of academic preparation levels, which results in attracting students with a broad range of preparedness, as well as learning and career needs. Consequently, Minnesota State institutions enroll many students who require more intentional and expansive levels of academic support. Only 28 percent of Minnesota high school graduates who took the ACT in 2021-2022 had a score reflecting college readiness in all areas (Computzano, 2022), a ten-year low in that figure. A clear gap in academic preparation for college-level coursework persists and was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Affordability:** The cost of obtaining a college credential continues to be a barrier for many students. Thirty-six percent of Minnesota State degree seeking undergraduates were Pell grant eligible in fiscal year 2023 and 56 percent received some form of financial aid (not counting awards given as part of the federal CARES Act). In addition, just under half of Minnesota State graduates complete their credentials with some modest debt, and there is a concern regarding the decline in the number of entering students having completed the FAFSA.
- **Changing Face of Unemployment:** Minnesota's economy responded to the COVID-19 pandemic much like other state economies. Periods of spikes in unemployment were followed by a significant worker shortage as businesses and public employers tried to return to pre-pandemic function intercut with waves of increases in the pandemic case rate. Whereas unemployment increases have historically led students to go back to school for retraining, the unique nature of this crisis has led to counter-cyclical enrollment declines, coupled with unprecedented wage increases, historic lows in the unemployment rate, and job placement bonuses for accepting full-time work. Given that many Minnesota State students are working adults, many with families, the ability to find gainful employment can mean that they will opt to take fewer credit hours or stop-out entirely because they have found a job with a family sustaining wage. Because more than half of our population takes fewer than twelve credit hours per semester and part-time work is at an unprecedented low, students are more challenged than ever to remain in school on any basis while working full-time.

The access and inclusiveness that Minnesota State provides to Minnesota residents means that we enroll a substantial population of students who face financial and academic challenges that can lead to lower rates of college completion. Data on students enrolled in FY2024-2025 indicate that among the Minnesota State student population:

- Forty-eight percent of degree seeking undergraduates are Pell grant eligible;
- Forty-two percent of students are enrolled in the fall on a part-time basis.

Ongoing Completion Efforts and Completion Plan

Minnesota State has been actively working to improve completion rates through a variety of initiatives that demonstrate promising outcomes. Initiatives include a variety of campus-based activities and both systemwide and local partnerships with K-12 school district associations, Minnesota Adult Basic Education, business and industries, and non-profit organizations. A summary list of ongoing completion efforts is provided in the 2016 Degree Completion Plan. Examples include learning communities, emergency grant programs, early alerts systems, advising programs, first-year-experience courses, cohort models, grants to parenting students, and intrusive support services. The Minnesota State comprehensive completion plan capitalizes on the initiatives that are already demonstrating success while also promoting practices and policies that have been shown on a national level to have a positive impact on completion rates.

Developmental Education

Given that academic preparation is a significant predictor of persistence and completion, Minnesota State must effectively provide our students with the support and resources to bridge the gap between their varied academic background and the skills needed for college and their future career success. Developmental education has served as one component of this critical bridge.

From 2018-2021, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities created a Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap (DESR) to guide the system-wide work on developmental education redesign with clearly identified strategic goals, key action steps, targeted timelines for implementation, and measurable outcomes. In addition, the DESR provides the framework under which system institutions develop and engage in curriculum development re-design and delivery efforts coinciding with academic support mechanisms to further student academic acumen to meet their educational goals. Curriculum redesign efforts include co-requisite models in Mathematics (see Appendix C), Reading and English, intrusive academic support systems such as PTIC (peer tutors in the classroom) and curriculum improvements in gateway coursework.

Developmental education consists of precollege-level courses and/or co-requisite support courses in reading, writing, mathematics, and courses for English Language Learners (ELL), as well as academic support services and interventions, offered by postsecondary institutions designed to develop students' skills and prepare them for college-level coursework. Throughout this report, the term *developmental education*, rather than *remedial education*, is used because it is a broader term that encompasses coursework and other academic support services that prepare students for success in college. *Remedial education or remediation*, the term used in 2015 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 3, Article 3, Section 16, can imply courses that repeat material taught earlier that the student did not learn adequately the first time.

Although developmental education courses are offered for credit, the credits do not count toward the requirements of degrees, diplomas or certificates. Students who are eligible for need-based financial aid can use that aid for developmental and ELL courses and for up to thirty credits of developmental reading, writing, and mathematics coursework.

It also is important to note that while postsecondary institutions typically assess the readiness of new entering students for college level academic coursework, students can enroll in a variety of technical

programs that do not require college-level skills in reading, writing and/or math. Many students can graduate with postsecondary occupational certificates or diplomas and obtain a living wage job without taking developmental courses.

Across all Minnesota postsecondary institutions, the percentage of recent high school graduates who enrolled in developmental education within two years of graduating has decreased from 30 to 13 percent between 2008 and 2020, cutting the rate by more than half. However, as a result of our colleges' open-door mission, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities enroll 93 percent of the public high school graduates who take developmental education courses within two years of graduating high school. (OHE, 2024).

Challenges of College Readiness and Developmental Education

Minnesota State is committed to meeting students at their level of academic preparation and helping them to achieve their educational goals in a timely manner, but there is also an acknowledgement that challenges persist. These challenges are consistent with national trends and the existing literature, and many of them are currently being addressed by the system and campuses. Some of the challenges are significant and must be addressed systemically.

A detailed discussion of these challenges can be found in the 2018 Developmental Education report. These challenges along with ways we are responding to critical needs are summarized briefly here:

- **Open Admissions:** The open admissions policies of Minnesota State allows for admitting students to our colleges and universities along the continuum of readiness that may benefit from co-requisite developmental education and additional student support services. The offerings of co-requisite developmental education often reflect an institution's student demographics and program admission criteria. Minnesota State is working to build its capacity and expand its resources to meet the learning and basic needs of students.
- **Assessment Testing and Course Placement:** Course placement practices have traditionally utilized single, high-stake tests to identify students' knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics and to place them into college-level or developmental-level courses based on those levels of college readiness. There is concern that the use of a single placement test results in some students being placed into courses that are not well matched to their needs or academic abilities. Minnesota State is working to increase the accuracy and effectiveness of the course placement process by implementing a comprehensive multiple measures program that includes the use of more than one measure for placement.
- **Developmental Education Curriculum:** Traditional developmental-level curricula are offered in a sequential fashion in which students may be assigned to two or three semesters of coursework before being able to take a college-level course in the corresponding subject area. Studies have illustrated that the more courses students are required to take before beginning their college-level coursework, the less likely they are to persist and complete. Minnesota State is working to take to scale a co-requisite developmental education model that addresses students' needs and reduces the time to completion of developmental coursework.
- **Holistic Student Support:** When considering how to best support students, post-secondary institutions must address students holistically. In addition to academic knowledge and skills, factors that more often impact the college readiness of recent high school graduates are prior college-knowledge and college-going high school environments. In addition, factors that more often impact

student persistence are outside of curricular factors, such as financial and college affordability, work and family obligations, and other factors such as mental and physical health and socio-economics. Current system office and institutional efforts are focusing on supporting students through Guided Learning Pathways, a comprehensive and integrated academic and student support model.

Ongoing Innovations and Developmental Education Plan

Most Minnesota State colleges and universities have implemented innovations in developmental education to increase student retention and completion rates. These innovations vary from institution to institution as programs are customized to meet the needs of students within their local context. Developmental education innovations have been implemented in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics.

Reading: The majority of campuses offering reading curriculum have one or more innovations in place including:

- Integrated reading and writing curriculum that provides students with a more comprehensive learning of reading and writing.
- Reading courses offered as paired courses or in learning communities, where a cohort of students co-enroll in two or more courses which allow them to learn within a community, experience an integrated learning environment, and apply knowledge and learning across disciplines.

English: Most campuses have implemented one or more innovations in their English curriculum. In addition to integrated reading and writing curriculum and learning communities or paired courses, campuses are offering:

- Accelerated models designed to increase students' progress through developmental education over a shorter period of time and include:
 - Enrolling students immediately into college-level courses while providing supplemental supports and co-requisite models such as the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP).
 - Combining content from multiple developmental education levels into a single course that students can complete within one semester.
 - Compressing the course content over a shorter period of time, allowing students to complete two fast-track or compressed courses within one semester.

Mathematics: Likewise, most campuses have one or more mathematics innovations in place, including:

- Accelerated models similar to those described for reading and English.
- Multiple pathways in math provide different developmental course sequences for students pursuing different degree pathways. While one pathway may lead to college-level courses in algebra, others focus on preparing students for statistics and/or quantitative reasoning.
- Technical program mathematics requirements are tailored to needs of the program and may not require college-level mathematics.

Wrap-Around Strategies: Campuses have implemented wrap-around academic and student support strategies that are critical to increasing the success of students in developmental education courses, including:

- Early alert systems,
- Academic advising,
- Academic support centers,
- Tutors embedded into courses (supplemental academic instruction),
- Targeted support options addressing students' basic needs, and/or
- Peer and professional tutoring.

Developmental Education Roadmap: The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities created a Developmental Education Strategic Roadmap (DESR) to guide our systemwide work on developmental education redesign. The DESR includes clearly identified strategic goals, key action steps, targeted timelines for implementation, and measurable outcomes. The Developmental Education Workgroup, comprised of Minnesota State faculty, staff, students, administrators, and system office leadership, led the creation of the DESR. The Workgroup reviewed and promoted national, systemwide, and campus efforts to redesign developmental education. In 2016-2017, to advance the collective work of Minnesota State on developmental education redesign, the Workgroup developed a draft strategic roadmap. Campus stakeholders had opportunities to provide input on the draft DESR during 2017. The Minnesota State DESR was finalized in January 2018 and provides our redesign "roadmap" for the next four years. The details of the developmental education plan are outlined in the 2018 Developmental Education Plan report.

The DESR includes the seven strategic goals:

- **Strategic Goal 1:** Improve student completion of developmental education and entry into college-level courses by redesigning developmental education curricula to include an acceleration option.
- **Strategic Goal 2:** Improve the accuracy of course placement by implementing a multiple measures placement program at all colleges and universities.
- **Strategic Goal 3:** Improve student success in developmental education by developing a comprehensive student support system for students in developmental education programs.
- **Strategic Goal 4:** Increase college readiness of high school graduates attending Minnesota State campuses by partnering with secondary partners.
- **Strategic Goal 5:** Increase college affordability for students by implementing student-cost-saving approaches.
- **Strategic Goal 6:** Improve student success in developmental education by expanding and strengthening professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators.
- **Strategic Goal 7:** Improve student success in developmental education by strengthening evaluation and continuous improvement efforts.

Minnesota State has led the systemwide DESR planning, implementation and evaluation work. Currently, each college and university has a local action plan in place is nearing completion of implementing the goals outlined in the DESR.

Building on the work and innovative practices implemented in recent years, a Developmental Education Steering Committee was convened in Spring 2024 to support and oversee the development

and implementation of a co-requisite model for developmental education in mathematics, writing, and reading across the system. This also coincided with the convening of faculty workgroups, representing each discipline, who met over the course of 2024 to develop recommendations for the parameters of the model and related guidance and support. These recommendations have recently been approved, with the goal of scaling the model systemwide by Fall 2027. This work has drawn from existing co-requisite work and expertise across the system and national best practices. In conjunction with improvements in course placement practices, Minnesota State is undertaking systemic change efforts to meet the Equity 2030 goals and better serve students across the state.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education review of Minnesota State placement and admissions practices also intersected with the work being done internally to meet completion goals and the broader Equity 2030 goals. While the final recommendations are pending, the core questions (1) where barriers persist and (2) how best to remove them, so that there are no longer predictable patterns of disproportionate impacts for specific student groups, have already informed the internal work of groups charged with the developmental education redesign work and course placement policy and procedure updates.

Opportunity Gaps and Equity

National, state, and Minnesota State data show the opportunity gaps that exist between underrepresented and majority students in higher education. Minnesota State is deeply committed to addressing the gaps evident in our colleges and universities. Our data show that gaps are evident and persistent by race and ethnicity and by income, between students of color and American Indian students in comparison to white and U.S. nonresident students and between students who are Pell eligible in comparison to students who are not Pell eligible. These gaps are illustrated in financial resources, as measured by median income of students and Pell-Eligibility, and in academic preparation, as measured by student enrollment in developmental education courses and assessment test scores. The gaps also are evident in second fall persistence and completion rates and subsequent completion rates. It is important to note that systemic and structural inequities are contributing factors, which Minnesota State is working to address through its systemwide Equity 2030 initiative.

Students of color and American Indian students are compared throughout this report to white students and U.S. nonresident students. The U.S. nonresident category consists of international students and students who are not permanent residents of the United States, in line with federal, state and system reporting standards.

Since addressing the opportunity gaps is a key priority for Minnesota State, the system has been collecting and reporting data with disaggregation by student demographics. Minnesota State colleges and universities and the system office have been engaging in collective discussions, strategic planning, and the implementation of evidence-based policies, programs and practices toward eliminating the gaps. These discussions, strategic plans, and implementations have also occurred in our developmental education work and redesign.

Equity 2030

Minnesota State is committed to eliminating, together with our partners, educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by the year 2030. This is both a moral imperative and

Minnesota's economic imperative. The approach to eliminate the educational equity gaps will include addressing:

- **Enhanced Access** to a higher education by strengthening partnerships and collaboration with K-12, business and industry, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners to expand and grow current programming and identify new ways to support students.
- **Student Academic Success** by establishing guided learning pathways that focus on academic preparation, progression, and accomplishment within an area of study and career.
- **Student Engagement and Support** within the institution, both academic and non-academic, including supporting basic needs.
- **Data-Guided Decision Making** by building a technology infrastructure and expanding capacity for deeper data analytics.
- **Financial Resources and Support** for students and growing the financial resource base for campuses.
- **Workforce Diversity/Strategic Talent Management** by incorporating the local and national context with the changing student and employee demographics and needs - focusing on cultural competence development, inclusive hiring practices, and improved campus climate.

More information about Minnesota State Equity 2030 is available at:

<https://www.minnstate.edu/Equity2030/index.html>

MINNESOTA STATE COMPLETION MEASURES

The 2015 Higher Education Appropriations Act requires Minnesota State to report data on seven completion measures for each college and university with disaggregation by race-ethnicity, Pell grant eligibility and age. Trends are presented for each measure in order to illustrate any changes during the last several years. The detailed reports on the measures for each college and university, with the disaggregation, are presented in Appendix B.

Students, Measures, Disaggregation and Data Suppression

This section describes the student population for whom the measures are reported, defines the measures, describes the disaggregation, and outlines the data suppression used in the detailed reports to address data privacy issues when measures included small numbers of students.

Students Reported

Since the measures focus on completion of credentials, only undergraduate students who were pursuing a degree, certificate or diploma when they entered the college or university are included in the cohorts. Students who were not pursuing a degree, were taking courses while in high school (a source of enrollment increase), or who had previously earned a degree are excluded. The number of fall entering undergraduate credential seeking students decreased by 11% between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024, as shown in Table 1. This decrease in enrollment follows national enrollment trends over the same time period, although the Fall 2024 numbers reflect an upswing from the previous fall that has been attributed at least in part to the impact of the North Star Promise program, which began in the fall of 2024.

Table 1: Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate-Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Sector	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change
System	44,711	44,065	42,452	41,800	40,304	36,216	34,760	34,360	35,676	39,772	-11.0%
Colleges	30,910	30,163	29,466	29,179	28,336	24,998	24,541	24,271	25,155	28,152	-8.9%
Universities	13,801	13,902	12,986	12,621	11,968	11,218	10,219	10,089	10,521	11,620	-15.8%

Measures

The 2015 legislation requires Minnesota State to report on seven completion measures. The legislative measures, the measure names and definitions and, where appropriate, the subject disaggregation are shown in Table 2. The developmental education enrollment rates and completion rates are reported separately for Mathematics, Reading and Writing or English. A few colleges and universities do not offer developmental reading and/or developmental writing and consequently will not be included in the developmental enrollment or completion rates reported. Although a few Minnesota State colleges and universities offer developmental courses in English as a Second Language (now described as English Language Learning or ELL) and in other disciplines, the numbers of students taking these courses is relatively small. As such, measures are not reported separately for these disciplines, but the students are included in the overall success measures and in the persistence and completion rates.

Table 2: Measures and Definitions
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Legislative Measure	Measure Name	Definition
Percent of Students Placed in Remedial Education	Developmental Education Enrollment Rate	Percent of entering students who took any Developmental Education course (Math, Reading, Writing, ESL, Other) in the first two years
	Developmental Education Enrollment Rate: Math	Percent of entering students who took Developmental Math courses in the first two years
	Developmental Education Enrollment Rate: Reading	Percent of entering students who took Developmental Reading courses in the first two years
	Developmental Education Enrollment Rate: Writing	Percent of entering students who took Developmental Writing courses in the first two years
Percent of Students Completing Remediation in One Year	One-Year Developmental Completion Rate: Math	Percent of students who took Developmental Math in their first two years who completed all required Developmental Math courses by the end of the first year
	One-Year Developmental Completion Rate: Reading	Percent of students who took Developmental Reading in their first two years who completed all required Developmental Reading courses by the end of the first year
	One-Year Developmental Completion Rate: Writing	Percent of students who took Developmental Writing in their first two years who completed all required Developmental Writing courses by the end of the first year
Percent of Students that Complete College-Level Gateway Courses in One Year	One-Year College Level Course Completion Rate: Math	Percent of entering students who completed a College-Level Math course by the end of the first year
	One-Year College Level Course Completion Rate: Writing	Percent of entering students who completed a College-Level Writing course by the end of the first year
Percent of Students Who Complete 30 Credits per Year	Thirty Credit Completion Rate in First Year	Percent of full-time entering students who completed 30 credit hours in the first year
	Twenty Credit Completion Rate in First Year	Percent of full-time entering students who completed 20 credit hours in the first year

Table 2: Measures and Definitions - Continued
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Legislative Measure	Measure Name	Definition
Student Retention Rate	Student Persistence and Completion Rate	Percent of full-time entering students that were either Retained, Transferred, or Graduated as of the beginning of the second fall term one year after entry
Time to Completion of a Degree or Certificate	Completion Rate	<u>Colleges</u> : The percent of full-time entering State College students that Transferred or Graduated by the end of the third spring term after entry <u>Universities</u> : The percent of the full-time entering State University students that Graduated by the end of the sixth spring term after entry
Credits Earned by Those Completing a Degree or Certificate	Average Credits Earned by Graduation	Average number of credits students had earned at graduation with their first award for a Certificate or an Associate degree at the colleges and a Bachelor's degree at the universities (reported by entering cohort).

Disaggregation

The legislation specifies that the measures should be disaggregated on several dimensions:

- **Institution:** The measures are reported for each of the 33 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities as well as for all colleges, all universities and for the system as a whole.
- **Age:** The measures are reported for the following three student age groups
 - 24 and Under
 - 25 and Over
 - Unknown age
- **Race-Ethnicity:** The measures are reported for the following nine race and ethnicity groups as the data is rolled up to be reported to IPEDS
 - American Indian
 - Asian and Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic of any race
 - Two or more races
 - All Students of Color and American Indian Students: Includes the five categories above
 - White
 - U.S. nonresident: A student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of the U. S.
 - Unknown race and ethnicity
- **Pell Eligibility:** Eligibility for a federal Pell grant is used as a measurement proxy for low income status and includes three reporting categories
 - Pell Eligible: A student who applied for a Pell Grant and was determined to be eligible.
 - Not Pell Eligible: A student who applied for a Pell Grant and was determined not to be eligible.
 - Unknown Pell Eligibility: A student who did not apply for a Pell Grant.

Data Mart Updates

The measures included in the January 2026 Degree and Certificate Completion report have been updated with the most recent information from the Minnesota State student record system and the system's developmental education and completion data mart. The data mart was created to allow reporting of the legislatively required measures and to allow colleges and universities to more easily analyze data on their students to support efforts to increase student success.

Updates to the developmental education data mart during the last year included the addition of a new cohort of entering students and modifications to increase the accuracy and the completeness of the data reported on developmental and college level course completion including, for a few campuses, updating the classification of the highest developmental education course in a sequence. Although the improvements to the data mart have resulted in some specific data points changing as compared to the data reported last year, the general trends and patterns observed in the earlier report remain unchanged.

Additionally, beginning in January 2024, courses that were categorized as "other" developmental education were no longer counted as DE course activity; some of these courses appeared to work as placeholders and could not be tied back to the goals of the DESR.

Data Suppression

The student records and data elements that were used to prepare the completion measures presented in this report are classified as private educational data under both the U. S. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) and consequently, may not be disclosed. The prohibition on disclosure extends to summary data prepared from the student records when the number of students reported is small and it therefore may be possible to identify individual students from the summary data.

Data suppression is a method used to minimize the risk of disclosing data about individual students. Suppression takes the form of removing data from cells rather than reporting the actual number of students. The goals of suppression are to ensure that reporting does not reveal, directly or indirectly, personally identifiable private data about an individual student and to ensure that cells are of sufficient size to yield statistically reliable information.

The data suppression method used for the completion measures in this report is based on a technical brief published by the U. S. Department of Education in 2012 (NCES). The approach includes the following three components:

- **First-Order Suppression:** Suppress any numerator, denominator and rate where the denominator is less than 10 students.
- **Second-Order Suppression:** Suppress very high and low rates when the denominator is small enough or the rates are high or low enough to reveal something about all of the students in the cell.
- **Complementary Suppression:** Suppress a second cell in the same column at the same institution and at another institution to prevent the calculation of the first suppressed cell.

Completion Measures

This section of the report presents data on each of the seven legislative completion measures. Each section describes the measure, presents system level trends in the measure, and describes any differences between students of color and American Indian students compared to white and U.S. nonresident students and differences between Pell grant eligible students and students who are not eligible for Pell grants.

Developmental Education Enrollment Rate

The developmental education enrollment rate was measured by student enrollment in one or more courses that are identified as developmental level during the first two years after entry. Because student participation is measured in their first two years after entry, note that the most recent data for this population is a year less recent than for the other measures. The developmental education enrollment rate is reported for full- and part-time fall entering undergraduate degree, diploma and certificate seeking students.

The number of fall entering students taking developmental courses during their first two years decreased by a little more than two thirds, from 16,280 students in Fall 2014 to 5,135 students in Fall 2023, as shown in Table 3. The decrease for the same time period was 68.5 percent at the colleges and 67.6 percent at the universities during this period. Although the total number of students taking developmental courses increased at both the colleges and universities in Fall 2023, that coincided with an overall enrollment increase, and the overall proportion of students taking developmental courses continued its decline.

**Table 3: Fall Entering Students Who took Developmental Courses
Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**

Sector	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
System	16,280	14,730	14,140	13,042	12,388	11,209	6,906	5,910	5,004	5,151	-68.4%
Colleges	13,847	12,269	11,713	11,060	10,319	9,222	5,762	4,944	4,228	4,362	-68.5%
Universities	2,433	2,461	2,427	1,982	2,069	1,987	1,144	966	776	789	-67.6%

This overall decline includes one particular year in which a dramatic drop off occurred, from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020; the count of fall entering students at the colleges taking developmental courses between these two semesters was nearly cut in half. This time period coincides not only with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the myriad changes and interventions that our institutions undertook to maximize delivery of support services to students, but also specific planned-before-the-pandemic changes to the Multiple Measures/Course Placement (MM/CP) procedures that affect advisement and placement in courses for beginning students. This juncture should be thought of as an important comparison point between results prior to this point and results afterward. It could be said that developmental education, as well as the techniques used to track and describe its efficacy, changed permanently for the colleges and universities of the Minnesota State system at this point.

The percentage of the system's fall entering undergraduate students enrolled in developmental education courses in their first two years decreased in all subjects between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023,

and especially dramatically between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020. The system percent of students who took any developmental courses decreased from 35.1 percent to just 14.4 percent, as shown in Table 4. The largest decrease occurred among students taking developmental math courses, dropping 15.3 points from 24.9 percent for Fall 2014 to just 9.6 percent for Fall 2023.

Table 4: Developmental Education (DE) Enrollment Rate by Subject
Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Subject	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
Any DE	35.1%	32.9%	32.1%	30.7%	29.6%	27.8%	19.1%	17.0%	14.6%	14.4%	-20.7
DE Math	24.9%	23.3%	22.6%	22.2%	21.4%	19.4%	12.7%	11.1%	9.8%	9.6%	-15.3
DE Reading	12.4%	10.5%	9.8%	9.2%	7.4%	6.8%	4.9%	4.0%	2.5%	2.2%	-10.2
DE Writing	13.9%	13.0%	13.0%	11.4%	11.1%	10.4%	7.6%	6.7%	5.9%	5.7%	-8.2

We attribute much of this decline in enrollment in developmental education to the curricular and support innovations that have been implemented across our campuses, as outlined in the previous section. Starting in Summer 2019 and stepping up with the interruptions to course placement testing procedures necessitated by shelter-in-place restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities engaged its institutions to utilize a system-wide course placement pilot incorporating a Multiple Measures model. As a result, Minnesota State continues to enhance the course placement process, and more and more students are being placed into the appropriate course that addresses their academic needs, with more students being placed into college-level courses and provided the academic and student support needed for their success. Although the degree of change was smaller for Fall 2023 than in several other recent years, that may reflect a maturation of the currently implemented approaches to course placement.

We cannot address academic preparation alone, so our system is working closely with our external partners to increase the career and college readiness of students arriving at our colleges and universities. Minnesota State colleges and universities are collaborating with their K-12 partners to improve practice and curriculum alignment so that we can ensure that more high school students graduate career- and college-ready. In addition, campuses continue to partner with their local adult basic education partners, workforce centers, businesses and industries to build seamless transitions into Minnesota State institutions. The system also continues to collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, other state agencies, and community-based organizations to improve students' college transitions.

The percentage of students of color and American Indian students and of Pell grant eligible students who took developmental courses has decreased substantially since Fall 2014, but both groups continue to have higher developmental course taking rates relative to their comparison groups. Approximately 21.5 percent of Fall 2023 entering students of color and American Indian students took developmental courses compared to 10.1 percent of white and U.S. nonresident students, as shown in Table 5. For Fall 2023 entering students, 19.0 percent of Pell grant eligible students took developmental education courses, compared to 10.5 percent of students that were not eligible for a Pell grant.

Table 5: Developmental Education (DE) Enrollment Rate by Student Group
Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Student Group	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
Any DE-White/NR	28.5%	26.2%	25.5%	23.6%	22.5%	20.6%	13.3%	11.9%	9.8%	10.1%	-18.4
Any DE-SOC & AI	51.1%	48.4%	47.1%	45.9%	43.8%	41.6%	30.1%	26.6%	22.5%	21.5%	-29.6
Any DE-No Pell	27.7%	26.4%	25.7%	24.4%	22.9%	21.4%	14.0%	12.3%	9.9%	10.5%	-17.2
Any DE-Pell	43.0%	41.1%	40.5%	39.0%	38.3%	35.9%	26.4%	23.4%	20.4%	19.0%	-24.0

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

Addressing the gaps between students of color and American Indian students as compared to white and U.S. nonresident students is a key strategy in terms of our partnerships with our K-12 partners, adult basic education, workforce centers, businesses and industries. The partnerships with our local high schools and the Minnesota Department of Education are taking a broad account of identifying career and college readiness early on and providing early interventions for students who are not on track to graduate.

The significant drop off in taking any developmental education coursework between the Fall 2019 entering class and the Fall 2020 entering class continued the trend, but there was also progress toward closing equity gaps based on both ethnicity and Pell eligibility status. The gap for race/ethnicity had been as much as 21 percentage points as recently as the entering cohort of Fall 2019, and decreased to 11.4 percentage points among the Fall 2022 cohort. The gap based on Pell eligibility status had been 14.5 percentage points in Fall 2019, and decreased to 8.5 points for the Fall 2022 entering students. Although the gaps persisted, they did narrow, though from two directions. The enrollment rates for Pell eligible students and students of color and American Indian students both continued their pattern of decline from prior years, but the rates for non-Pell eligible students and white and U.S. nonresident student simultaneously increased. The decreases for both students of color and American Indian students and Pell eligible students were greater than the upticks for the other groups, so although this marks a change from prior years, it still reflects movement towards the system's strategic goals. It is not yet clear if this deviation between groups represents the start of a new pattern of difference for this measure.

Overall, these outcomes are consistent with available literature and trend data highlighting multiple measures placement, particularly the inclusion of High School GPA (HSGPA), as a tool to address equity gaps in course placement. However, equity gaps can also be present in any single measure, including HSGPA, so approaching placement more holistically is an ongoing goal.

Developmental Education Completion Rate

Student completion of developmental education courses was measured by passing the last course in a sequence (e.g., Intermediate Algebra), passing their last developmental mathematics or English course and taking a college-level mathematics or English course, or earning a credential within the first academic year after entry. The developmental education completion rate is reported for full and part-

time fall entering undergraduate credential seeking students who had enrolled in developmental education courses.

Table 6: Developmental Education (DE) Completion Rate in First Year by Subject
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Subject	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
DE Math	41.0%	42.8%	43.9%	43.7%	44.9%	48.1%	42.2%	41.3%	37.7%	34.9%	-6.1
DE Writing	61.1%	62.9%	64.2%	63.6%	64.7%	66.1%	57.1%	56.1%	55.8%	56.0%	-5.1
DE Reading	60.4%	60.7%	61.6%	61.4%	60.0%	59.6%	53.4%	54.2%	58.1%	55.8%	-4.6

The percentage of fall entering students completing their developmental education requirements by the end of their first year has fluctuated somewhat in recent years and retrenched significantly between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020. The completion rate for Fall 2023 entrants shows a continued decline for students completing developmental math in their first year, a decline in the completion rate for developmental reading after an increase the prior year, and a slight increase for the completion rate of developmental writing over the previous year.

Across Minnesota State, faculty members, departments, and academic and student affairs divisions have been innovating both within and beyond the classroom to better support students enrolled in developmental education, including supplemental instruction and accelerated, one-year developmental education pathways; examples include acceleration of supplemental education opportunities such as peer tutoring in the classroom (PTIC), engagement system-wide course redesign work in areas such as Mathematics, and campus co-operational delivery of Reading and Writing instruction.

As campuses and the system office work collaboratively to improve, scale, and add new innovative practices and programs, and in particular as a systemwide co-requisite developmental education model is implemented for mathematics, reading, and writing, it is anticipated that the percentage of students completing developmental education courses in their first year will increase.

Many campuses have also instituted campus-level policies that require or highly encourage students to enroll in developmental education courses their first semester or first year. These policies help ensure that students receive the academic and student support they need to be successful in completing their degree or certificate.

As shown in Table 7, the percentage of students of color and American Indian students who completed their developmental courses by the end of their first year had generally increased in all subjects since Fall 2014 until Fall 2020. The completion rate for students of color and American Indian students in Fall 2023 was down across subject areas, with the smallest decrease for developmental writing. The rates for writing and reading were near or above, respectively, the rates from Fall 2020, but the rate for developmental math continued to decline.

**Table 7: Developmental Education (DE) Completion Rate in First Year by Student Group and Subject
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**

Subject & Student Group	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
DE Math-White/NR	43.9%	46.9%	48.6%	48.2%	50.6%	53.8%	46.9%	48.1%	44.7%	41.4%	-2.5
DE Math-SOC & AI	35.6%	35.9%	36.9%	37.4%	37.6%	41.1%	37.3%	34.0%	31.5%	28.9%	-6.7
DE Writing-White/NR	65.9%	69.3%	68.9%	69.4%	69.4%	73.5%	64.2%	65.8%	62.9%	63.0%	-2.9
DE Writing-SOC & AI	57.1%	57.6%	60.3%	59.8%	61.7%	61.6%	52.8%	50.5%	52.6%	52.4%	-4.7
DE Reading-White/NR	67.1%	67.6%	67.2%	66.4%	66.7%	69.1%	59.0%	64.5%	66.7%	60.6%	-6.5
DE Reading-SOC & AI	55.9%	56.7%	58.3%	59.0%	57.4%	56.3%	51.1%	50.7%	55.6%	54.4%	-1.5
DE Math-No Pell	47.1%	48.4%	49.7%	50.7%	51.6%	55.9%	47.4%	47.4%	44.6%	40.1%	-7.0
DE Math-Pell	37.0%	38.5%	39.5%	39.1%	40.7%	43.7%	38.0%	36.6%	32.2%	30.6%	-6.4
DE Writing-No Pell	68.0%	69.4%	68.5%	69.0%	68.7%	70.4%	64.6%	61.6%	55.5%	56.9%	-11.1
DE Writing-Pell	57.9%	59.1%	61.4%	61.1%	63.1%	63.9%	55.3%	52.4%	55.0%	52.9%	-5.0
DE Reading-No Pell	67.2%	67.7%	65.6%	67.0%	63.6%	65.5%	56.9%	62.9%	63.0%	58.0%	-9.2
DE Reading-Pell	57.9%	58.2%	60.3%	59.6%	59.0%	57.3%	52.4%	51.7%	57.0%	54.4%	-3.5

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The developmental education course completion rates for students of color and American Indian students remain lower overall than those for white and U.S. nonresident students. For developmental courses in math, the gap between students of color and American Indian students and white and U.S. nonresident students declined year over year; while both groups declined year over year, the completion rate of white and U.S. nonresident students declined further. In writing courses, the percentage completion rates were 0.1 points higher in Fall 2023 than they were in Fall 2022 for white/U.S. nonresident students, compared to 0.2 points lower over the same period for students of color/American Indian students. White and U.S. nonresident students completed developmental reading courses at a rate 6.1 points lower in Fall 2023 than in Fall 2022, compared to a decline of 1.2 percentage points for students of color and American Indian students.

For students eligible for Pell grants and those not eligible, completion of developmental math courses declined over the ten-year period; Pell eligible students declined 6.4 percentage points compared to 7 points among their non-Pell eligible peers. Pell eligible students completed developmental reading courses at a rate 3.5 percentage points lower in Fall 2023 than they did in Fall 2014 compared to 9.2 lower for their non-Pell eligible peers. The completion of developmental writing courses decreased 5.0 percentage points for Pell-eligible students and 11.1 percentage points among non-Pell eligible students over the ten-year period.

As mentioned earlier, the window between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 reflects a substantial shift in the approach to course placement across Minnesota State, which resulted in a lower percentage of students being placed in developmental courses. As the multiple measures approach was informed by national best practice findings for improving placement accuracy and addressing equity gaps in placement, the declines in completion rate in this period reflect not just the challenges of the pandemic, but also a reduction in under placement in courses across the system.

As indicated in the *College Level Completion Rate* data presented in the following section, as fewer students were placed into developmental education, the college-level outcomes were generally steady

or improved. One explanation for the decline in developmental education first-year completion rates is that placement accuracy improved from the multiple measures pilot approach, so the students who were placed into developmental courses after its adoption were more likely to be those with greater academic support needs. However, there is still work to be done to improve these outcomes, and there is still potential for inequitable outcomes in the measures included in even the most robust multiple measures approaches, so ongoing evaluation is needed.

Campuses will continue to examine how programs, practices, and initiatives impact students traditionally underrepresented in higher education and scale the programs that have resulted in narrowing or eliminating the gaps in academic achievement.

College Level Course Completion Rate

Student completion of college level gateway courses was measured by the rate of students passing a college level mathematics or English course during the first year. College level mathematics and English courses were identified by their Classification of Instructional Programs code. The college level course completion rate is reported for full and part-time fall entering undergraduate degree, diploma and certificate seeking students.

**Table 8: First Year College Level (CL) Course Completion Rate by Subject
Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**

Subject	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change
CL Math	23.5%	24.4%	24.6%	24.5%	25.5%	26.1%	26.1%	26.9%	27.9%	27.3%	+3.8
CL Writing	40.0%	39.8%	39.3%	39.0%	39.9%	38.7%	38.6%	39.1%	40.4%	39.9%	-0.1

The percentage of students completing a college level math or writing course in their first year increased between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024. As shown in Table 8, the percentage of students completing college-level mathematics in their first year was 27.3 percent for those entering in Fall 2024 as compared to 23.5 percent for those entering in Fall 2015. This rate is 3.8 percentage points higher than those entering in Fall 2015 and the second highest mark within the period this metric has been tracked.

Although Fall 2023 also represented a decline from the previous year's high point for the period in which this metric has been tracked, it matched the third highest rate, recorded in Fall 2019, of 39.9 percent. This percentage continues the reversal of the 2020-to-2021 slide of college level writing course completion in the first year.

The still-lower completion rates for college level mathematics compared to college level writing courses are likely due to several factors. Some students are still enrolled and are completing their developmental mathematics courses in their first year. Other students opt not to take college level mathematics courses in the first year of college. The Math Pathways work undertaken across system colleges and universities in the last few years directly address both of these factors, first by incorporating co-requisite developmental support courses instead of standalone developmental sequences, and secondly by focusing on curricular alignment such that students are taking the math courses that are best tailored to their program needs. It is important to note also that students at the

state colleges may be enrolled in career or technical programs that do not require a college level mathematics course for certificate, diploma, or degree completion.

Table 9: First Year College Level (CL) Course Completion Rate by Student Group and Subject Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Subject and Student Group	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change
CL Math-White/NR	26.8%	27.8%	28.2%	28.2%	29.2%	28.9%	29.9%	30.6%	31.5%	30.8%	+4.0
CL Math-SOC & AI	15.9%	17.0%	16.8%	17.4%	18.6%	20.8%	19.3%	20.6%	22.3%	22.0%	+6.1
CL Writing-White/NR	42.2%	41.7%	41.0%	40.5%	41.2%	39.9%	40.1%	40.6%	42.5%	41.8%	-0.4
CL Writing-SOC & AI	35.0%	35.6%	36.0%	36.2%	37.7%	36.4%	35.9%	36.4%	37.1%	37.2%	+2.2
CL Math-No Pell	30.2%	30.3%	31.2%	30.8%	32.0%	32.2%	32.7%	33.6%	34.5%	35.2%	+5.0
CL Math-Pell	18.1%	19.2%	19.5%	19.8%	20.6%	21.6%	20.8%	21.7%	23.2%	23.1%	+5.0
CL Writing-No Pell	45.3%	44.0%	43.3%	42.0%	43.8%	42.7%	42.3%	42.8%	44.3%	44.1%	-1.2
CL Writing-Pell	36.8%	37.1%	37.6%	38.1%	38.9%	37.7%	37.1%	37.2%	38.4%	38.6%	+1.8

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The percentage of students of color and American Indian students and the percentage of Pell grant eligible students who completed a college level course in their first year has increased in both math and writing since Fall 2015. Both groups, however, had lower college level course completion rates relative to the comparison groups of white and U.S. nonresident students and students who are not eligible for Pell grants. The gaps between the completion rates between these groups have generally narrowed in the decade measured. Although there was some decline for across several groups between Fall 2023, the college-level writing completion rates for students of color and American Indian students and Pell-eligible students and the college-level Math completion rate for non-Pell eligible students increased year over year.

For students entering in Fall 2024, 22.0 percent of students of color and American Indian students completed a college level math course in the first year compared to 30.8 percent of white and U.S. nonresident students, as shown in Table 9. Pell eligible students completed a college level math course at a rate of 23.1 percent compared to 35.2 percent for students who were not eligible for a Pell grant. Both of these equity gaps widened somewhat since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Fall 2023 brought the gap for college level math completion back under ten percentage points for students of color and American Indian students, and that narrowing continued in Fall 2024.

The college level completion rates for writing courses increased between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024 for students of color and American Indian students and Pell-eligible students. The reduction in gaps for completion of college level writing has been due both to gains made by students of color and American Indian students (2.2 percentage points over the decade in completion of college level writing) and by students eligible for Pell grants (1.8 percentage point gain) compared to declines or flat performance among their reference group.

Credit Completion Rate

Student completion of semester credits was measured by the total number of credits completed during the first year. Credit completion means that the student received a passing grade and earned the credits for the course. The first-year credit completion rate is reported for full-time fall entering undergraduate degree, diploma and certificate seeking students. Part-time students are not included in this measure, since by virtue of their credit load, few of them could complete 30 credits in their first year.

Table 10: Twenty and Thirty Credit Completion Rates
Full-Time Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate-Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Credit Category	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change
20 credits	66.6%	66.4%	65.9%	66.4%	67.4%	64.4%	65.0%	66.8%	68.5%	68.5%	+1.8
30 credits	30.3%	30.7%	31.6%	31.9%	34.0%	33.2%	33.2%	34.9%	36.8%	36.7%	+6.4

The percentage of students who completed 30 semester credits during their first year increased between Fall 2015 and Fall 2023, with a slight drop in Fall 2024. The percentage of students who completed 20 credits grew less but also recovered from a steeper pandemic-years loss that was seen after Fall 2019. Both percentages are at nor near historic highs for the period the metrics have been tracked. Among Fall 2024 entrants, 68.5 percent of students completed 20 credits in their first year, matching the previous high recorded in Fall 2023, as shown in Table 10. Over thirty-six percent of Fall 2024 entering students completed 30 credits in the first year, up from 30.3 percent for Fall 2015 students.

Although some researchers and practitioners have suggested that one of the ways to increase student success and degree completion is to encourage more students to take a full load of courses, students across our 2-year and 4-year institutions often have financial constraints or external commitments such as work and family which impact their ability to take a full load of courses each semester. Moreover, the rate at which many students are able to take courses is in opposition to credit intensity research, which reflects and benefits ‘traditional’ student activity. In response, some colleges within the system are engaged in planning and curriculum design that promote credit momentum (e.g., intentional scaffolding of programmatic coursework) to meet the educational needs of students as they navigate work-life balance.

Table 11: Twenty and Thirty Credit Completion Rates by Student Group
Full-Time Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Student Group	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Change
20 Credits-White/NR	70.9%	70.5%	70.4%	71.3%	72.4%	69.2%	70.9%	73.2%	74.8%	74.4%	+3.5
20 Credits-SOC & AI	54.4%	55.2%	54.9%	54.9%	56.0%	53.1%	51.9%	53.8%	56.1%	57.7%	+3.3
20 Credits-No Pell	73.5%	72.6%	72.4%	72.9%	73.3%	71.1%	71.8%	74.4%	75.8%	76.3%	+2.8
20 Credits-Pell	59.6%	59.7%	59.2%	59.7%	60.9%	56.7%	56.8%	57.8%	59.8%	61.9%	+2.3
30 Credits-White/NR	34.6%	35.1%	36.2%	36.8%	39.2%	37.7%	38.1%	40.6%	42.5%	41.8%	+7.2
30 Credits-SOC & AI	17.7%	18.8%	20.1%	20.4%	22.1%	22.7%	21.9%	23.5%	25.5%	27.1%	+9.4
30 Credits-No Pell	35.6%	36.5%	36.5%	37.2%	39.7%	38.8%	38.2%	40.8%	42.8%	43.2%	+7.6
30 Credits-Pell	24.1%	24.4%	26.4%	26.6%	28.0%	26.4%	26.8%	27.6%	30.0%	31.6%	+7.5

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The percentage of Pell-eligible students and students of color and American Indian students that earned twenty and thirty credits in their first year increased between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024, as shown in Table 11. Both groups had lower percentages for credit completion than their comparison groups of white and U.S. nonresident students and students who were not eligible for the Pell grant.

All disaggregated groups except white students and U.S. nonresident students showed historic high levels of credit completion across the ten years. More than 57 percent of Fall 2024 entering students of color and American Indian students earned 20 credits in their first year, up 3.3 points from the rate for Fall 2015 entering students. The Fall 2024 entering cohort continued the trend of improvement following a drop in Fall 2020.

All student groups disaggregated by race/ethnicity have strongly recovered the pandemic-years decline in percent completing thirty credits in the first year; this rate was 41.8 percent of white and U.S. nonresident students in the entering Fall 2024 cohort, compared to 27.1 percent of students of color and American Indian students. The percentage of Pell eligible students who earned 30 credits in their first year grew by 7.5 percentage points between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024.

Although overall credit completion rates have increased, outcome equity gaps have remained stubbornly similar with the exception of the gap in the completion rate of 30 credits between white and nonresident students and students of color and American Indian students, which decreased 2.2 percentage points for Fall 2024 compared to Fall 2015.

Student Persistence and Completion Rate

The student persistence and completion rate (persistence rate) was reported for Fall entering full-time undergraduate degree, diploma and certificate seeking students and includes students who were retained, transferred or graduated. The rate is measured one year after entry (at the student's second Fall semester). National, state and system standards call for reporting persistence and completion rates for full-time entering students.

Table 12: Second Fall Persistence and Completion Rate by Student Group
Full-Time Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Student Group	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Change
Total	77.0%	76.8%	76.8%	76.2%	76.7%	75.8%	75.6%	76.0%	77.7%	78.5%	+1.5
White/NR	79.6%	79.7%	79.4%	79.0%	79.8%	78.8%	78.4%	79.2%	81.1%	81.8%	+2.2
SOC & AI	69.3%	68.6%	70.2%	69.4%	69.6%	69.0%	69.4%	68.7%	70.9%	72.0%	+2.7
No Pell	82.6%	82.5%	81.9%	81.3%	82.1%	81.1%	80.5%	80.6%	82.7%	83.8%	+1.2
PELL	71.3%	70.6%	71.2%	70.6%	71.2%	70.2%	69.8%	70.3%	72.0%	72.5%	+1.2

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The second fall persistence and completion rate for Fall 2023 entering students was 1.5 percentage points higher than for those entering Fall 2014; this continues the reversal of a pandemic-years series of small declines and sets a historic high benchmark (78.5 percent) for this rate. The increase was 0.5 percentage points higher for students of color and American Indian students than white and U.S. nonresident students, and the gap fell to 9.8 percentage points.

The Fall 2023 gap between Pell eligible and non-Pell eligible students with regard to second-Fall persistence and completion is unchanged from Fall 2014, although the rate for both groups increased overall.

Although efforts have been aimed to address the opportunity gaps and increase students of color and American Indian and Pell eligible students' persistence rates, and gaps in these rates have improved, it is evident that there is still much work to do. In addition to expanding evidence-based programs, practices, and initiatives, campuses are focusing on increasing student engagement and sense of belonging and creating positive campus climates as well as new student support services. Much of the federal CARES/HEERF funding received by Minnesota State colleges and universities was directed toward basic needs and student support. Currently, several campuses have adopted and incorporated high-touch student support practices which were initiated by COVID relief and supported by Higher Education Relief Federal (HEERF) funds. Practices include increased access to technologies (e.g., computer loan and Wi-fi Hot Spot programs) and academic support mechanisms such as extended virtual tutoring, and extended hours for on-campus and virtual computer center assistance. Each of these practices has seen increases in access.

Student success (i.e., retention, transfer and graduation) is the primary focus of all Minnesota State colleges and universities. As highlighted in the previous section on ongoing completion efforts, student success efforts have been implemented throughout Minnesota State campuses to ensure that students are making effective progress and meeting their educational goals. Minnesota State campuses have been actively working to improve persistence and completion rates through a variety of initiatives that have demonstrated promising outcomes. More work remains, including increased efforts to eliminate gaps in persistence and completion.

Completion Rate

Time to complete a degree or certificate was measured as a completion rate, which is the percentage of Fall entering full-time undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate seeking students that complete within 150 percent of “normal” time. National, state and system standards call for reporting persistence and completion rates for full-time entering students. Completion is measured at the state colleges three years after entry and includes students who graduate or transfer. Completion is measured at the state universities six years after entry and includes students who graduate. The rates are reported separately for colleges and universities because of the difference in timeframe.

Table 13: Completion Rate by Sector and Student Group
Full-Time Fall Entering Undergraduate Degree, Diploma and Certificate Seeking Students
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Sector and Student Group	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Change
Colleges: Completion Rate	50.9%	52.4%	53.6%	53.9%	54.1%	54.4%	55.1%	54.1%	57.4%	58.9%	+8.0
Colleges: Completion-White/NR	54.8%	56.6%	58.0%	58.2%	58.3%	59.5%	60.0%	59.6%	62.5%	63.9%	+9.1
Colleges: Completion-SOC & AI	40.3%	41.5%	43.0%	44.1%	45.1%	44.2%	45.8%	44.1%	47.6%	49.9%	+9.6
Colleges: Completion-No Pell	58.8%	60.8%	61.1%	61.2%	60.3%	61.6%	62.0%	61.0%	63.3%	65.5%	+6.7
Colleges: Completion-Pell	44.6%	45.5%	47.2%	47.5%	48.5%	48.2%	49.3%	47.7%	50.6%	51.9%	+7.3
Universities: Completion Rate	54.8%	55.1%	55.7%	56.5%	55.9%	57.4%	56.1%				+1.3
Universities: Completion-White/NR	56.8%	57.2%	58.1%	59.2%	58.7%	60.2%	58.9%				+2.1
Universities: Completion-SOC & AI	43.9%	44.2%	44.8%	45.1%	44.1%	47.0%	46.1%				+2.2
Universities: Completion-No Pell	58.7%	58.2%	58.5%	60.6%	59.9%	61.7%	59.7%				+1.0
Universities: Completion-Pell	48.2%	48.5%	50.0%	48.2%	47.8%	50.3%	49.1%				+0.9

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The 3-year completion rate for the state colleges increased year-over-year, with the rate for full-time students entering Fall 2021 1.5 points higher than for Fall 2020, and 8 percentage points higher than Fall 2012 (58.9 percent as compared to 50.9 percent) as shown in Table 13. The Fall 2021 completion rate for the colleges stands at the historic high for this metric.

The state college (3-year) completion rate for students of color and American Indian students has increased most steeply of all the disaggregated comparisons (gain of 9.6 percentage points) since the results of the Fall 2012 cohort, but remains lower than the rate for white and U.S. nonresident students, and the gap remains larger than ten percentage points. The completion rate for students who were eligible for Pell grants increased by 7.3 percentage points between the Fall 2012 and Fall 2021 entering cohorts; the rate for non-Pell eligible students increased by 6.7 percentage points during the same period, and a substantial gap remains.

The 6-year completion rate for the state universities increased from 54.8 percent for Fall 2012 entering students to 56.1 percent for those entering Fall 2018 (a 1.3% decline from the prior year) as shown in Table 13. All groups in the disaggregation saw declines from the prior year, with the smallest decline registered by students of color and American Indian students. Even with gains in the 6-year state university completion rates for students of color and American Indian students and Pell eligible students, the gaps between both populations and their comparison groups remain substantial.

Credential completion continues to be an imperative and a primary commitment of Minnesota State. Eliminating the gaps between students of color and American Indian student completion rates and white and U.S. nonresident student completion rates, as well as the gaps between Pell eligible students and students who are not Pell eligible, is one of the most important priorities of Minnesota State. The strategies and approaches listed previously will need to be applied strategically, systemically, and comprehensively to ensure that students' completion rates increase, and Minnesota State addresses these critical gaps.

Credits Earned at Graduation

Credits earned at graduation was measured by averaging graduates' total number of credits earned and transfer credits accepted at the time a degree or certificate was awarded. The measure is reported for graduates that earn certificates and associate degrees at the state colleges and for graduates that earn bachelor's degrees at the state universities.

The average cumulative credits at graduation are shown by the student's entering cohort. As additional students graduate over time, the average credits earned may change. Data are not shown for more recent cohorts as that data would only include students who completed in a shorter time frame and likely with fewer credits; this would understate the total credits earned and overstate changes over time.

**Table 14: Average Credits Earned at Graduation by Award and Student Group
By Fall Entering Cohort
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**

Sector and Student Group	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Change
Colleges: Certificate	42.3	43.0	43.8	42.8	42.4	40.7	43.7	42.3	40.4	44.4	+2.1
Colleges: Certificate-White/NR	42.7	44.0	44.3	44.0	43.6	40.5	45.3	42.8	40.8	47.3	+4.6
Colleges: Certificate-SOC & AI	41.6	41.1	42.8	41.1	40.4	41.1	41.3	41.7	39.7	39.7	-1.9
Colleges: Certificate-No Pell	49.7	51.7	49.3	48.3	47.5	44.4	48.4	47.9	44.0	44.2	-5.5
Colleges: Certificate-Pell	40.9	40.5	41.8	41.3	40.8	40.0	41.9	41.4	38.3	37.5	-3.4
Colleges: Associate	79.7	80.5	80.6	80.3	80.0	78.9	79.8	78.7	78.2	76.8	-2.9
Colleges: Associate-White/NR	79.6	80.7	80.9	80.7	80.5	79.2	80.0	79.4	79.1	77.7	-1.9
Colleges: Associate-SOC & AI	80.2	79.9	79.9	78.8	78.9	78.4	79.2	77.1	76.0	74.5	-5.7
Colleges: Associate-No Pell	80.3	81.3	82.1	81.6	81.4	79.9	81.3	79.7	79.5	78.4	-1.9
Colleges: Associate-Pell	78.8	79.2	78.8	78.5	77.8	77.5	77.2	76.8	75.4	74.4	-4.4
Universities: Bachelor's	139.0	138.1	138.4	138.7	138.6	137.7	138.1				-0.9
Universities: Bachelor's-White/NR	139.1	138.5	138.8	138.8	138.7	137.9	138.5				-0.6
Universities: Bachelor's-SOC & AI	139.0	135.8	136.5	138.5	138.5	137.0	136.6				-2.4
Universities: Bachelor's-No Pell	138.6	137.7	138.4	138.3	137.8	137.1	137.6				-1.0
Universities: Bachelor's-Pell	138.6	136.7	136.9	138.1	138.2	137.3	137.0				-1.6

SOC & AI: Students of color and American Indian students

White/NR: White and U.S. nonresident students

Pell: Pell eligible students

No Pell: Not Pell eligible

The average cumulative credits at graduation has increased overall for students earning certificates and decreased overall for associate and bachelor's degrees.

The average cumulative credits for state college certificate graduates increased from 42.3 credits for Fall 2012 entering students to 44.4 credits for Fall 2021 entering students, as shown in Table 14. Average cumulative credits for state college associate degree graduates decreased from 79.7 credits for Fall 2012 entering students to 76.8 credits for Fall 2021 entering students. Average cumulative credits for state university bachelor's degree graduates decreased from 139.0 credits for Fall 2012 entering students to 138.1 credits for Fall 2018 entering students.

Students of color and American Indian students who earn Minnesota State certificates, associate or bachelor's degrees complete them with fewer credits than their comparison group of white and U.S. nonresident students; for certificates, students of color and American Indian students average 7.6 fewer credits, and for associate degree earners, students of color and American Indian students average 3.2 fewer credits. This pattern also holds true for Pell eligible students at state colleges and universities as compared to students who are not eligible for Pell grants. At the bachelor's degree level, these patterns held true but to a smaller degree relative to the number of credits needed at graduation.

The declining number of credits at graduation reflects, at least in part, credit caps Minnesota State implemented for the vast majority of its programs during the last decade. The Minnesota Legislature enacted language in 2007 that required the Minnesota State system to implement credit caps of 60 for associate degrees and 120 for bachelor's degrees. The legislation granted the Board of Trustees the authority to grant waivers to the caps for specific programs. The vast majority of the college and university associate and bachelor's degree programs comply with the credit caps. There are many other factors that may also impact cumulative credits at graduation, including students taking additional courses due to personal interest and changing their major, and having to meet new major or degree program requirements.

While this type of exploration can be a valuable part of a students' experience, efforts to support students' efficient completion of their programs of choice are in place across the system as well. These include the overall Guided Learning Pathways efforts to help students identify areas of interest early and take courses that could apply to a range of programs within such an area. Additionally, the work around Math Pathways and co-requisite developmental education is helping to streamline students' paths towards graduation and could allow for more exploratory course taking if desired within max time frame and financial aid availability limitations.

Institution Level Data

Data on the seven measures for each college and university are presented in Appendix B. The data are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Pell Grant eligibility, and age. Trends for up to five years are reported for the measures.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2015 Higher Education Appropriations Act (2015 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 3, Article 3, Section 16) requires the Minnesota State Board of Trustees, beginning in January of 2018, to submit a report on its activities and achievements related to improving timely completion, including reporting on seven specific completion measures. This report provides an update to reports submitted each January to the legislature starting in January 2018.

Completion Measures

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities have made progress on the completion measures presented in this report, but more work remains, particularly to address gaps in educational outcomes across student groups.

Students of color and American Indian students are compared throughout the report to white and U.S. nonresident students. Students who are eligible for federal Pell grants are compared to students who completed the FAFSA but were found not eligible for Pell grants. Data on the seven measures for each college and university are presented in Appendix B. The data are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, Pell Grant eligibility, and age. Trends for up to five years are reported for the measures.

We attribute much of the developmental education enrollment decline to curricular and support innovations that have been implemented across our campuses. In particular, the most recent years of data reflect systemic changes in placement procedures and philosophy, emergency support structures put in place by our institutions to address the challenges presented to students by the COVID-19 pandemic and other difficulties students might encounter, as well as the possible normalization of how the COVID-19 pandemic affected student college readiness. As institutions continue to implement, evaluate and refine their DESR strategic plans, it is anticipated that Minnesota State will maintain reduced overall enrollment in developmental education courses. At some point it may be that the most recent classes of students entering Minnesota State institutions and attending courses at all levels are materially different, and therefore less comparable, from those at the beginning of the decade encompassed by this study.

The percentage of students of color and American Indian students and of Pell grant eligible students who took developmental courses has decreased substantially since Fall 2014, but both groups continue to have higher developmental course taking rates relative to their comparison groups.

Developmental Completion Rate: The percentage of students completing their developmental education requirements in their first year declined by 6.1 points in math, 5.1 points in writing, and 4.6 points in reading between Fall 2014 and Fall 2023. This decline follows a general pattern of increased success rates up to the beginning of the pandemic, at which point the multiple measures pilot was implemented. As the college-level completion rates have generally held steady or increased across this same period with a smaller proportion of students taking developmental courses, it may be that the placement pilot has reduced underplacement, and those currently placed into developmental courses are more consistently students with greater academic support needs than prior to the pilot.

Across Minnesota State, faculty members, departments, and academic and student affairs divisions have been innovating both within and beyond the classroom to better support students enrolled in developmental education. As campuses improve, scale, and/or add new innovative practices and programs across campuses, it is anticipated that there will be increases in student completion of developmental education courses by the end of their first year.

Gaps between students of color and American Indian students relative to white and U.S. nonresident students in developmental course completion have narrowed in reading but grown in writing and math since Fall 2014, and significant gaps remain.

College Level Course Completion Rate: The percentage of students completing college-level mathematics in their first year was 27.3 for those entering Fall 2024 as compared to 23.5 percent for those entering Fall 2015. The most recent completion rate is 3.8 percentage points higher than for those entering in Fall 2015.

For college level writing in the first year, 39.9 percent of Fall 2024 entrants completed a college level writing course in their first year compared to the 40.0 percent rate observed for Fall 2015 entering students. The college-level completion rates for writing increased between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024 for students of color and American Indian students and for Pell eligible students, and the observed gaps have narrowed.

As co-requisite developmental education is implemented more broadly across the system, more students will have direct access to college-level courses in combination with co-requisite support courses. This could impact the college-level course completion rate as access increases.

Completion rates for college level writing have varied somewhat by sector and institution. System office institutional research will work with campus staff to explore the data related to the recent decreases observed in some student populations in order to more clearly understand the changes and to identify the extent to which the observed decreases may be reflecting issues with coding college writing coursework, changes in enrollment patterns or changes in program requirements.

Credit Completion Rate: The percentage of fall full-time entering students who completed 30 semester credits during their first year increased by 6.4 points between Fall 2015 and Fall 2024 and the measure of students who completed 20 credits also increased, by 1.8 points. All groups increased their course completion throughout the decade. Although the overall credit completion rates have increased for student groups examined in this report and the gap between students of color and American Indian students and white and U.S. nonresident students completing 30 credit hours narrowed slightly, educational outcome gaps remain a significant issue.

Student Persistence and Completion Rate: The second fall persistence and completion rate for Fall 2023 entering full-time undergraduate students was 1.5 percentage points higher than for those entering Fall 2014. All disaggregated groups showed gains over this period.

Minnesota State campuses have been actively working to improve persistence and completion rates through a variety of initiatives that have demonstrated promising outcomes. More work remains, however, including increased efforts to eliminate gaps among student groups.

Completion Rate: The 3-year completion rate for full-time entering students at state colleges is 58.9 percent for Fall 2021 entrants, setting a historic high benchmark. The 6-year completion rate for the state universities increased from 54.8 percent for Fall 2012 entering students to 56.1 percent for those entering Fall 2018.

Educational equity gaps remain stubborn in this metric. In this most recent cohort, students of color and American Indian students as well as Pell eligible students at state colleges showed a stronger rate of improvement than their white and U.S. nonresident and non-Pell eligible peers. Equity gaps between disaggregated groups at the universities show very minor changes, and rates of change between disaggregated groups are very similar.

Credits Earned at Graduation: The average cumulative credits at graduation increased for certificates and declined for associate and bachelor's degree graduates. The increase in the average credits for certificates was localized to the white and U.S. nonresident student population; this measure declined across all other groups and award types.

Students of color and American Indian students who earn Minnesota State certificates or associate degrees at system colleges complete with fewer credits than their comparison group of white and U.S. nonresident students. This pattern also holds true for Pell eligible students as compared to students who are not eligible for Pell grants. At the bachelor's degree level overall, in comparison by race/ethnicity group and Pell status, there were more modest declines in credits earned at graduation.

Equity 2030

To ensure continued progress in increasing student success and to address critical educational equity gaps, the types of strategies and approaches discussed in this report will need to be applied strategically, systemically, and comprehensively.

Minnesota State is committed to eliminating, together with our partners, educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by the year 2030. This is both a moral imperative and Minnesota's economic imperative. The approach to eliminate the educational equity gaps will include:

- Enhanced Access to a higher education by strengthening partnerships and collaboration with K-12, business and industry, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners to expand and grow current programming and identify new ways to support students.
- Student Academic Success by establishing guided learning pathways that focus on academic preparation, progression, and accomplishment within an area of study and career.
- Student Engagement and Support within the institution, both academic and non-academic, including supporting basic needs.
- Data-Guided Decision Making by building a technology infrastructure and expanding capacity for deeper data analytics.
- Financial Resources and Support for students and growing the financial resource base for campuses.
- Workforce Diversity/Strategic Talent Management by incorporating the local and national context with the changing student and employee demographics and needs - focusing on cultural competence development, inclusive hiring practices, and improved campus climate.

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APPENDIX A: RELATED LEGISLATION

2015 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 69, Senate File 5, Article 3, Section 23

Section 1. COLLEGE COMPLETION; MINNESOTA STATE.

The Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall develop a comprehensive plan to encourage students to complete degrees, diplomas, or certificates in their fields of study. The board must consult with students, faculty, and administrators of the state colleges and universities and the Office of Higher Education to create a plan that would increase program completion at each state college or university. Components of this plan may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) replacing developmental or remedial courses, when appropriate, with co-requisite courses in which students with academic deficiencies are placed into introductory credit-bearing coursework while receiving supplemental academic instruction on the same subject and during the same term;
- (2) expanding intrusive advising, including the use of early alert systems or requiring the approval of an advisor or counselor to register for certain classes;
- (3) developing meta-majors in broad academic disciplines as an alternative to undecided majors;
- (4) making available alternative mathematics curriculum, including curriculum most relevant to the student's chosen area of study;
- (5) implementing "opt-out scheduling" by automatically enrolling students in a schedule of courses chosen by the student's department but allowing students to disenroll from such courses if they wish;
- (6) facilitating the transfer of credits between state colleges and universities; and
- (7) strategies to encourage students to enroll full time, including the use of financial assistance to reduce a student's need to work.

The development of the plan required under this section shall not discourage the development or delay the implementation or expansion of existing programs to encourage college completion.

The Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall submit a report describing the plan developed under this section and an implementation schedule to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education policy no later than January 15, 2016. This report must include identification of the financial and other resources needed by state colleges or universities to implement the plan.

2017 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 89, Article 2, Section 25

Sec. 25. DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION REFORM.

(a) The Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall create a plan to reform developmental education offerings on system campuses aimed at reducing the number of students placed into developmental education. The plan must include, but is not limited to:

- (1) a systemwide multiple measures placement plan to guide campuses in placement of students into developmental education courses;
- (2) uniform cut scores for student placement, where appropriate, which will lead to fewer students being placed into developmental education courses;
- (3) other identified system policy changes, including an appeals process, that will decrease the number of students being placed into developmental education courses;
- (4) accelerated pathways in mathematics, reading, and composition to ensure students can complete developmental education work in no more than one year, including allowing for students to complete college-level gateway courses in one year whenever possible;
- (5) a comprehensive examination of the cost structure of developmental education, including potential financial incentives for students or other mechanisms to lower the cost of developmental offerings for students; and
- (6) identified best practices and targeted support strategies such as the use of supplemental instruction, that may be used on every system campus around developmental education offerings.

(b) The plan must include deadlines for implementation of proposed changes and must be submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education finance and policy by February 15, 2018.

(c) The plan, in its entirety, shall be implemented by the start of the 2020-2021 academic term, with individual provisions being implemented earlier as dictated by the plan.

2023 Minnesota Session Law Chapter 41, Article 2, Section 34

REPORT ON MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES COURSE PLACEMENT PRACTICES.

Subdivision 1. Review.

(a) The Office of Higher Education shall document, review, and analyze college admission and course placement policies, practices, and assessments used by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The review shall seek to determine if policies, practices, and assessments used have:

- (1) adverse consequences for a student and their family, including burdensome economic and related costs of delaying their degree plans;

- (2) hindered the participation of students;
- (3) hindered the placement, retention, or timely college graduation of students; and
- (4) excluded students from admission thereby hindering their full participation in higher education.

(b) The review must consider impacts for various student communities, including but not limited to Indigenous students, English as a second language (ESL) students, and students of color.

Subd. 2. Determination. Utilizing the review conducted under subdivision 1, the commissioner shall determine whether:

(1) students, including Indigenous students, ESL students, and students of color, are:

- (i) denied admission;
- (ii) disproportionately assigned to enroll in developmental courses; or
- (iii) delayed or deterred in their educational progress; and

(2) policies, practices, and instruments:

- (i) are disproportionately reliant on test scores;
- (ii) impose barriers for students in terms of enrollment, retention, and completion; and
- (iii) may be culturally biased.

Subd. 3. Recommendation. The commissioner shall recommend changes based on the information obtained in subdivisions 1 and 2 to existing measures, instruments, and placement practices. By February 1, 2024, the commissioner shall provide a preliminary report and by February 1, 2025, report the recommendations and findings to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education. The commissioner shall seek external advice and expertise to address the above reviews, determinations, findings, and recommendations.

APPENDIX B: COMPLETION MEASURE REPORT BY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

See separate Appendix B document.



MINNESOTA STATE

30 East 7th Street, Suite 350 | St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

651-201-1800 | 888-667-2848

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