Rural-Urban Connections and Job Readiness: Education and Workforce Development

Kate Searls
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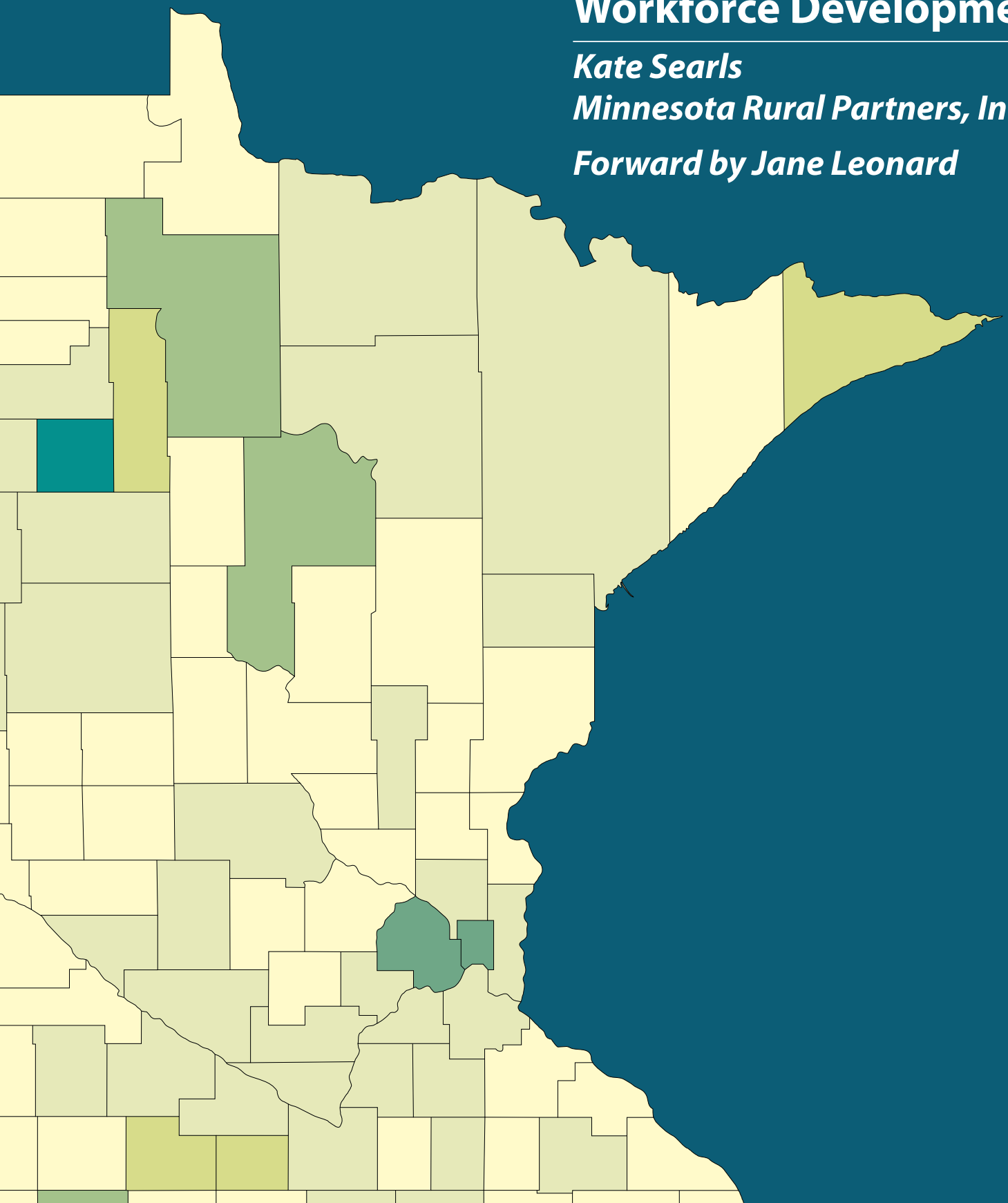
Forward by Jane Leonard



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Forward:
A Rural-Urban Partnering Framework

Whether the focus is on rural or urban development, in a highly integrated world economy, the limits of one are the limits of the other. There is thus a need to begin to promote the synergies between rural and urban development rather than to continue to treat them as autonomous sectors in policy and planning.

Rural-Urban Linkages: An Emerging Policy Priority, ***The United Nations Development Programme, Bureau of Development Policy, September 2000 p. 7***

Since October 2009, Minnesota Rural Partners Inc. (MRP) has managed a national pilot initiative, with USDA Rural Development Rural Business—Cooperative Service, to document and showcase the power of rural-urban connections as a framework for fostering increased innovation and wealth creation for the state as a whole. This pilot project, which concluded in April 2011, builds on years of efforts that MRP has organized in resource coordination and sharing, rural entrepreneurship development and community informatics across Minnesota, working originally as Minnesota's state rural development council beginning in the mid 1990s.

Rural-Urban Connections and Job Readiness: Education and Workforce Development is one component of this multi-faceted pilot initiative, known as "The Rural-Urban Interdependencies Initiative" (or "RURB"), which identifies and maps rural-urban networks and highlights areas of connection between rural and urban people, businesses, markets, and institutions. RURB activities have highlighted policy and planning considerations that are more visible when seen through a framework of rural-urban interdependencies, rather than through assumptions of distinct, or even competing, interests. An earlier report, *Pilot Study: Estimating Rural and Urban Minnesota's Interdependencies,* quantitatively illustrated the influence of rural Minnesota's economic well-being on urban Minnesota's businesses and jobs. The report is particularly successful in showing how urban Minnesota benefits or loses as rural Minnesota prospers or declines.

In addition to these two reports, the RURB pilot initiative has spurred:

- Minnesotans talking and thinking about the interdependence between rural and urban areas, as well as future opportunities arising from stronger rural-urban partnerships. This was accomplished through a series of video conferences connecting every region of the state from January to April 2010, followed by a face-to-face Rural-Urban Gathering held in June, 2010, alongside the Symposium on Small Towns hosted in Morris, Minnesota. This outreach was supported by our project blog, Rurb.Mn, organized with assistance from MinnPost.com;

- An interactive map of existing rural-urban linkages developed with the help of individual Minnesotans, businesses, agencies, nonprofits, economic development groups, academic institutions, foundations, associations and related groups. The map provides the beginnings of an online inventory and mapping of the partnering already occurring to show its strength, breadth and depth, and the economic, demographic and cultural factors at work, and spotlight opportunities for other helpful collaborations and partnering;

- Renewal of a framework for rural-urban partnerships that can lead to new relationships and coordination to benefit the state. This includes the formation of a Rural-Urban Partnering Steering Committee to further develop the evolution and governance of a Rural-Urban Partnering Framework that intentionally leverages rural-urban connections to help Minnesota thrive.

We are grateful to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development for their support of the Minnesota rural-urban partnering project. We are particularly thankful for support and encouragement we received early on and throughout this project from USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Victor Vasquez, and USDA's Minnesota State Director of Rural Development, Colleen Landkamer. Our thanks go, as well, to the Blandin Foundation for their support in the production of this document.

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Jane Leonard, former president of Minnesota Rural Partners, Inc. and instigator of the Rural-Urban Connections project
April, 2011

Overview

This white paper makes two points about the impact of rural-urban connections on Job Readiness in Minnesota. First, using an example from the world of K-12 education (on-time graduation from high school), we demonstrate that examining rural-urban relationships offers significant untapped opportunity for bootstrapping innovative solutions to important statewide problems. By comparing and contrasting rural and urban success rates for educational achievement, particularly for students of color, we identify centers of excellence that provide concrete insights for improving outcomes in less successful communities. Often the center of excellence is in a rural county whereas the most important opportunities for improvement lie in urban counties.

Our approach is inspired by Eric Von Hippel's work at MIT's Innovation Lab, studying "Lead Users"[1]. In terms of student achievement, lead users are the schools and counties that have experienced resource constraints and significant demographic shifts well ahead of the general (urban) markets and developed successful and innovative solutions to these challenges. By examining these successful rural schools and communities, urban areas now encountering some of the same resource pressures, as well as continued demographic shifts, can learn how to replicate the goodness of fit between students, communities and schools that results in substantially improved graduation rates for students, especially students of color.

Second, by examining state-funded workforce development programs (Minnesota's Jobs Skills Partnerships Programs), we demonstrate that rural-urban connections often do not organically arise in a funding environment where this priority is only implicit. Adding rural-urban connections to the goals for funding portfolios offers a natural extension of regional development frameworks for resource identification and investment.

We describe five "Opportunities" or areas of future activity that we believe offer considerable promise for expanding rural-urban collaboration. We hope to see these activities extended as they will benefit our state and its citizens

By comparing and contrasting rural and urban success rates for educational achievement, particularly for students of color, we are able to identify Lead Users, schools and counties that have experienced resource constraints well ahead of the general urban markets and developed successful and innovative solutions to that problem.

To reap the maximum benefit from rural-urban relationships, these connections require deliberate emphasis in resource allocations. Although rural-urban interdependencies naturally exist, particularly in regard to economic and trading relationships, their ability to nurture statewide wealth creation and quality of life will continue to be underexploited without being included in the state's strategic portfolio.

Acknowledgements

RURB has benefitted from the insights of many people across rural and urban Minnesota, including representatives of rural communities of color, business leaders, decision makers at various philanthropies, professionals with educational institutions and key staff with local, tribal and state government agencies. We particularly would like to thank the following individuals (listed in alphabetical order):

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Executive Summary

Our previous white paper demonstrated rural-urban relationships as a feature of state-of-the-art economic development strategies. In the present white paper we demonstrate how leveraging the power of these relationships will require a deliberate and strategic focus.

Rural-Urban Connections and Job Readiness: Education and Workforce Development is the second of two RURB reports analyzing opportunities for wealth creation through rural-urban linkages across Minnesota. The first white paper, *Pilot Study: Estimating Rural and Urban Minnesota's Interdependencies,* was a feasibility study. It tested a hybrid method for demonstrating how fluctuations in business output in rural Minnesota impact jobs and revenue in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. This two-stage study successfully combined regional cluster research methods with input-output analytics to illuminate industry cluster-specific rural-urban trading networks. This paper offered an early step towards describing when and how many urban jobs are created when rural economies prosper. In that respect, RURB's first report described the rural-urban factor in Minnesota's demand for skilled workers.

This second report looks at how rural-urban connections and collaborations offer a natural and profitable framework for improving our statewide supply of skilled workers. However, this report also makes it clear that rural-urban connections will require a deliberate focus and dedicated investment, if we hope to derive the greatest benefits from their potential.

We begin by reviewing key components of a rural-urban connections framework. In the next section, "Minnesota's Job Readiness Gaps," we first describe some of the most relevant demographic trends and cultural features influencing Minnesota's workforce readiness. Next, we apply a rural-urban connections framework to the analysis of one educational achievement gap. This gap, measured in the increasing number of young Minnesotans who fail to achieve high school graduation, is especially relevant among students of color and forms a critical barrier to statewide workforce readiness. We see that this gap is also particularly puzzling in light of Minnesota's amazing wealth of educational alternatives.

By targeting on-time high school graduation rates, RURB's observations focus upstream, on the preparation of future workers, rather than downstream, on programs aimed at individuals currently of working age. In this aspect, RURB's focus is different from, but certainly compatible with those of Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) and their network of partners whose focus is primarily on those members of the current workforce known as "working learners."

RURB is concerned that by the time rural and urban citizens are 18, or older, the state has missed its most cost-effective window of opportunity for impacting job readiness, the influential years spanning pre-kindergarten through high school. If planners miss the relatively lower cost opportunities to prevent gaps in skills and credentials, public and private organizations will have to marshal even more taxpayer and philanthropic resources for more expensive interventions aimed at correcting existing skills and credentials deficiencies among working-age people later, when they are already juggling family and work.

By examining on-time graduation rates for White students, we see that, in many counties, even if we were to close the achievement gap between White students and students of color, we would still lose too large a percentage of our potential workforce to high-school dropout status. Closing the racial disparities gap in educational achievement is urgent and necessary, but it is not sufficient for meeting the needs of Minnesota's employers. In many counties, graduation rates for all students must improve.

Additionally, the cultural competency and expertise that must be embedded in programming that succeeds in reducing high school dropout rates could also be leveraged to support successful engagements with individuals who dropped out previously and are now attempting to be working learners in one of Minnesota's workforce development programs. Given that 79 percent of Hennepin County's White students graduated on-time in 2009 and only 41 percent of the students of color did the same, it's clear that working learners of color represent a significant portion of the current workforce tagetted by Minnesota's workforce development initiatives.

High school graduation is a necessary requirement for getting on the path to a living wage job. Failure to graduate (labeled "The Silent Epidemic" [2] in a recent Gates Foundation report) is an expensive problem for both individuals and their communities. Conservatively estimated, ***each high school dropout represents a loss of about $750,000.***[3] Correcting this social problem warrants the best possible use of resources, and we describe how leveraging rural-urban collaborations is an example of best practices.

The route to prosperity for both rural and urban counties is through better workforce readiness, which is most efficiently realized via improved student outcomes. In the interest of capitalizing on our state's many areas of innovation, RURB points to pockets of expertise revealed by looking at graduation rates in both rural and urban counties.

Using rural-urban relationships to identify and diffuse best practices would drive better graduation rates, better returns on taxpayer and non-profit investment and better-served students. RURB recommends further study of the pockets of success located throughout the state, with the ultimate goal of creating a school-to-school/community-to-community success network.

After describing the gaps in on-time graduation rates, we offer a brief overview of the impressive range of K-12 public educational resources available here in Minnesota. While this is not a complete inventory, there is enough detail to show that there are adequate leading-edge educational resources in place to support the development of a world-class workforce here in Minnesota. The core problems are getting and keeping students connected with these resources.

RURB's second gap assesses the degree to which rural-urban connections appear in Minnesota's present resource allocations. A publicly available data set expresses a "natural" (unemphasized) rate at which rural-urban linkages are funded in the work force development investments in one particular jobs skills partnership program for a specific time interval. Having demonstrated in RURB's earlier white paper that rural-urban connections are an economic development asset and a target for creating statewide wealth, this second gap analysis makes clear that there is ample room for improvement in strategically using funding to further extend such partnerships.

We then offer a brief overview of Minnesota's workforce development activities, emphasizing a few of the more innovative job readiness initiatives. We offer enough detail to show that when it comes to leading-edge skilled worker development programs, Minnesota is usually an innovator or an early adopter. This propensity for innovation recommends Minnesota as a likely candidate for successfully integrating a rural-urban interdependency and collaboration strategic approach.

In our final section, we describe five opportunities to improve Minnesota's workforce readiness outcomes while improving rural-urban partnering practice.

We recognize that rural students may be functioning at the "bleeding edge" of educational practice and currently experiencing the impacts of resource constraints that are coming to suburban and urban students in the near future. For this reason, the first opportunity we describe is a re-energized inquiry into the relationship between school closings and district consolidation on graduation rates. The positive general correlation between increased distance between home and school and failure to graduate is well established.

Because some rural communities have continued to demonstrate superior graduation rates, RURB urges a renewed investigation focusing on identifying the student, community

and school characteristics, and how they interact, to arrive at the tipping point where expanding distances may result in failure to graduate. Deeper study of the most successful rural communities can lead to major insights regarding features that scale to urban and suburban settings. Rural, urban and suburban students all stand to benefit from a deeper understanding of which planning and programming practices support better student outcomes.

RURB's second opportunity is aimed at broadening communities' abilities to hold themselves accountable for student outcomes and return on taxpayer investment. RURB recommends that the Minnesota Department of Education reassess its policy regarding the cell size at which graduation data is suppressed. Balancing students' rights to privacy against students' rights to education and taxpayer rights to accountability would be supported at a lower number than 40 students.

Our third opportunity is identified based on Minnesota's currently available graduation data, which both illustrates racial disparities in educational outcomes and showcases one of the benefits of rural-urban relationship building via pooling talents and expertise across geographies. High school graduation rates vary across Minnesota, with some rural counties offering better outcomes than found in the urban counties. This is particularly true when looking at students of color.

For example, a Native American student is three times as likely to fail to graduate in Hennepin County as to successfully achieve a high school degree. In contrast, a Native American student in Becker County is three times more likely to graduate on-time than to dropout. A key opportunity for using rural-urban linkages to improve workforce readiness lies in understanding the elements that support Becker County's goodness of fit for their students, then identifying ways of modeling and scaling those successful practices in other counties. Partnering more successful rural schools with less successful urban schools is an obvious component of this approach. These steps – inquiry and relationship building – offer positive momentum towards both addressing a critical skilled worker supply gap and leveraging rural-urban connections to support wealth creation in Minnesotan.

The fourth opportunity is expressed as a recommendation to assume a policy emphasis that values rural-urban partnerships explicitly and to implement this priority during funding allocations.

The fifth opportunity is related to future rural-urban research. In this section we offer a number of recommendations for improvement in future rural-urban relationship studies.

By concentrating on two pressing gaps— high school graduation rates, and the funding rate of rural urban linkages in programs to improve worker qualifications — we add valuable insights to existing job readiness discussions and we extend the current boundaries of a rural-urban connections emphasis.

A Rural-Urban Connections Approach

Rural-urban tensions have a long-standing history in our country. Over 40 years ago, then-Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman voiced his concerns in an address to business leaders, titled, "Rural/Urban Balance—Whose Responsibility?"[4], when he said:

> *It is almost as if we were two Nations: one rural, one urban, with separate problems, separate solutions, separate destinies. But in fact … we are still one Nation, indivisible, with indivisible problems, indivisible solutions; with but one destiny. And unless we recognize this, we shall never overcome the terrible strains that threaten to rend the social fabric of our land.*

RURB's past year of interviews and conferences have underscored that rural and urban Minnesotans continue to face indivisible strains. Both rural and urban families struggle to take care of their elders and prepare their children for the future. Both rural and urban businesses vie for success in highly competitive global markets. And crime, poverty, and unemployment flow between rural or urban areas as though in the suitcases of the people who travel between these areas. Quality of life (as measured by employment rates and high school graduation rates) in one area directly influences quality of life in the other area.

Sometimes stressors first appear in the countryside, surfacing in the cities much later. For instance, depopulation, an established facet of Minnesota's rural areas, is now a concern for a growing number of the Twin Cities first-tier suburbs. The 2010 Census revealed population losses among 26 suburbs in the seven-county metro area.[5] Sometimes the most significant difference between the pressures impacting rural and urban areas is in severity. This is the case with shrinking education budgets, where rural students are likely to experience the most damaging consequences, such as school district consolidations and the subsequent inflated distance between home and school, which is correlated with shrinking graduation rates and community disintegration.

Just as these indivisible challenges are shared across rural-urban networks, so too are the potential opportunities and centers of excellence. By leveraging rural-urban networks for benchmarking, continuous improvement and expertise sharing, education and workforce development advocates gain access to previously hidden, but potentially critical, proven models for success and seasoned partners. By identifying communities that are solving problems ahead of the general market, observing the most salient aspects of their solutions and implementing broad rollout of the most relevant parts of these innovative approaches, Minnesota extends its reputation as a source of innovation.

Over a decade ago, the United Nations published *Rural-Urban Linkages: An Emerging Priority*, [6] a report emphasizing the concerns of developing nations, whose types of stresses tend to mirror those of the developed world, even though they often differ in outcome severity. This report concludes that:

> *Urban and rural problems are part and parcel of the same phenomenon. One has causal links to the other. Categorizing one issue as urban only and the other exclusively as rural, ignores their interdependencies and can exacerbate problems. … Instead of only treating the effects, a joint move will facilitate looking into the cause and devise ways to counter the issue in a complementing manner.*[7]

Rather than letting market forces decide the nature of urban impacts on rural areas, or vice versa, the United Nations and other researchers sought to invest in "...strengthening of local rural-urban linkages in a complementary manner that benefits both rural as well as urban populations, thus supporting a sustainable and socially just development process."[8]

Both the United Nations and the Rural Policy Research Institute have stressed that strengthening rural-urban connections is not an economically or politically neutral process, and therefore it will take commitment on the part of leadership to enact as a planning and policy framework.

More recently, The Brookings Institution published Brian Dabson's rural-urban analysis as a counterpoint in their Metropolitan Policy Program. Dabson, now the Director of the Rural Policy Research Institute's (RUPRI) Rural Futures Lab, also emphasized the importance of applying a rural-urban interdependency framework.[9]

A number of non-economic benefits have been tied to rural-urban connections thinking. However, both this RURB report and the report that precedes it are focused on Wealth Creation as measured through employment. These two RURB white papers are focused on creating jobs and fostering a job-ready workforce. In both reports RURB suggests using a rural-urban connections framework for investments in economic development, education and workforce development to achieve:

- **Breaking rural to urban poverty cycles**—Rural poor people often head to cities in search of economic opportunities. Rather than being relieved of their poverty, rural poor often simply bring their poverty to the new setting. Investing in job readiness initiatives (education and workforce development programs) that reach rural and urban, future and current workers is fundamental to breaking the troubling parallel cycles of rural to urban poverty and urban to rural incarceration.[10]

- **Vibrant and resilient local, regional and national economies**—By approaching economic development through a portfolio approach, and distributing investment "eggs" across many, diverse regional and rural-urban collaboration baskets, policymakers improve security and support stable and robust regional, state and national economies. With increased access to credit, rural and small town households, farms, businesses and entrepreneurs are able to support output levels that directly benefit urban dwellers. By strengthening small towns, value-added and multiplier effects from rural production remain closer to home. By recognizing innovation in local clusters and investing in the new technologies and infrastructure that boost their competitiveness, living wage jobs become more available throughout the state.

RURB uses the terms "rural" and "urban" to suggest opposite poles along a continuum, an approach emphasizing linkages to and through Minnesota's suburbs, small towns and mid-sized cities as well as quintessentially rural habitations and urban centers. We see rural-urban connections in terms of economic interdependencies, joint future challenges, shared strengths and

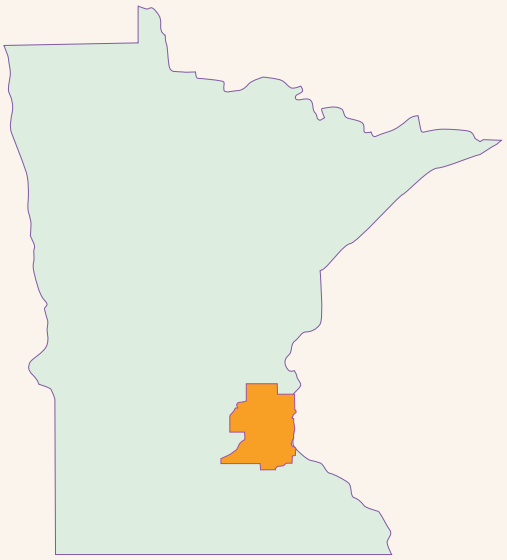
weaknesses and as a source for collaborative partners in identifying optimal strategies for future prosperity.

However, in keeping with our practice in RURB's earlier job creation white paper, we operationalize the terms using a binary working definition when we present empirical data regarding "rural" and "urban" Minnesota, as shown in Map A.

The upside of using this greatly simplified definition is that it brings the key insights into sharp relief. In particular this includes the great educational outcomes achieved outside the Twin Cities and the disproportionate (based on regional unemployment rates and the locations of potential employers) allocation of jobs skills partnership resources to Twin Cities businesses and academic institutions.

The downside of this definition is that Rochester, Duluth, St. Cloud, Moorhead, Mankato and other urban areas are not recognized as such. Future research efforts can and should employ more complex definitions of rural, suburban and urban.

Map A: Rural and Urban Minnesota



RURB uses the simplest possible definition of "urban" and "rural" Minnesota: The well-known division between counties belonging to the Metropolitan Planning Commission's seven-county Twin Cities region (also known as Region 11)and the remaining 80 Minnesota counties that do not belong to this legislatively defined entity. The seven-county urban area contains over half of the state's entire population.

Urban Minnesota:
Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Dakota
Washington, Carver, and Scott counties

Rural Minnesota:
The remaining 80 counties

One limitation of this definition is that cities such as Rochester, Duluth and St. Cloud, as well as smaller municipalities, are considered "rural." One extension for future funded research should be to employ a more nuanced definition.

Minnesota's Job Readiness Gaps

More parents, teachers, and leaders need to recognize the reality that other high-achieving nations are both out-educating us and out-competing us. Our educational system has a long way to go to fulfill the American promise of education as the great equalizer.

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan[11]

Education and workforce development play critical roles in any region's prosperity by supporting innovation, improving productivity and increasing national and state wealth. A recent Joint Economic Committee Study found that educational advances account for 10 to 25 percent of economic growth.[12] On average, individuals with an associate's degree earn 29 percent more than those with only a high school degree, and those with a bachelor's degree earn 62 percent more than a high school graduate. [13]

Minnesota's rural and urban employers seek a globally competitive workforce, the kind that results from an inclusive and rigorous K-12 educational system integrated with a portfolio of leading-edge, post-secondary training opportunities, accessible to a wide range of potential employees. Employers know that Minnesota is a well-resourced environment, offering plenty of avenues for connecting young people with one of the best educations (from kindergarten through college) the United States has to offer. But Minnesota's employers are concerned about the wasted labor potential represented by a growing percentage of Minnesotans who appear unable to get on and stay on one of those many educational/training paths long enough to arrive at living wage jobs.

Minnesota has a diverse economy in both rural and urban areas, supporting employment in a robust distribution of industry sectors. Entrepreneurship is a valued activity across our state, with small businesses particularly likely to surface in rural Minnesota. In the Great Recession, Minnesota fared better than many states (such as Florida and Michigan) and not as well as some others (most notably our neighbors North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa).

Compared with other states, Minnesota has an impressive and diverse array of governmental, educational and non-profit organizations committed to supporting quality of life efforts. Minnesota will need to leverage this resource collaborative as it faces the same population shifts confronting the rest of the United States. Minnesota's relatively higher educated, predominantly white Baby Boomers are reaching retirement age at a time when their potential successors are fewer in number, more ethnically diverse, less educated and more likely to be first or second generation immigrants.

Between 2005 and 2035, elders (ages 60 and older) will represent the single fastest growing age group in Minnesota. By 2020, Minnesotans over the age of 65 will represent 18 percent of the total population. This is a 50 percent increase compared with 1990.[14] A much smaller spike will be found among Minnesota's children and young adults. The one age group that will actually shrink is working people between the ages of 35 and 50.[15]

The percent of Minnesota's population that is non-white or Latino is projected to grow from 14 percent in 2005 to 25 percent in 2035. The numbers of Latino, black, and Asian Minnesotans are projected to more than double over the next 30 years. The white population is projected to grow slowly and will decline in some parts of the state.

Minnesota's taxpayer base is shrinking and the entire state is facing a future that is increasingly diverse in ethnicity, language, education, religion and country of origin. Creating a world-class competitive workforce will require a world-class effort, which RURB posits would be invaluably aided by harnessing the power of rural-urban connections. One example is on-time high school graduation rates in rural and urban Minnesota.

As this rise in elderly people occurs, the dependency ratio – the ratio of the number of children and elderly to the number of working-age people – also will begin to go up. A relatively small number of workers will have to support a large number of retirees and children, increasing the potential for intergenerational conflict.

Minnesota State Demographers Office 2005 [16]

Overall, the white population is projected to grow nine percent over 30 years, compared to 112 percent for the total minority population. The proportion of the population that is white alone, not Latino, is projected to fall from 86 percent in 2005 to 75 percent in 2035.

Minnesota Department of Administration 2009[17]

Gap 1 – On-time High School Graduation Rates

While there are multiple ways to approach educational gaps, we've selected on-time graduation rates as a key metric, because it is a commonly referenced measure of public school success, and the data is easily available in a format that supports rural-urban comparisons and policy discussions.

High school graduation is a pressing issue for Minnesota. The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that, "Dropouts from the class of 2008 **cost Minnesota almost $4 billion** in lost wages over their lifetimes [emphasis original]."[18]

High school graduation, by itself, provides economic benefits to the individual graduates and to the communities in which they live. The average high school graduate's lifetime earnings are estimated to be $476,000 greater than the income of a comparable high school dropout.[19] The community in which the high school graduate lives is estimated to gain $251,900 in increased tax revenues and reduced health, crime and welfare costs, by virtue of that individual remaining in school through graduation.[20] This means that, conservatively measured, each high school dropout represents a loss of almost three-quarters of a million dollars.

In compliance with Federal No Child Left Behind regulations, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) currently provides 2008-2009 graduation rates downloadable from its website in a variety of formats.[21] We selected to analyze on-time graduation rates by county, for students of various ethnic and/or racial categories. "On-time" graduation refers to whether students graduate within four years after entering ninth grade. We chose to look at the data by county to emphasize the notion that children's school success is a community asset, rather than simply the responsibility of district personnel or MDE staff. Ethnic and racial categories are not the only variables of interest when conducting rural-urban comparisons and collaborative strategies. Future rural-urban studies might examine graduation rates in light of English language status, Free or Reduced Lunch status (an indicator of economic status) or school district.

Increasing diversity is a feature common to Minnesota's rural, suburban and urban communities. All parts of the state are expected to become racially and ethnically more diverse, as natural population growth will be highest among communities of color and immigrants. [22]

> ***The state expects the minority percentage of the population to approximately double in Central, Southwest, and Southeast regions of the state and to increase by approximately 50 percent in the Northeast...***
>
> ***Center for Rural Policy 2009*** [23]

According to interviews with MDE staff, No Child Left Behind regulations support MDE's policy of suppressing actual graduation data when a cell's size is less than forty students. Since there are four categories of ethnicity (Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black and Hispanic), a county might have 136 students of color and yet be without a record of overall on-time graduation rates for all students of color (or for any of the four tracked ethnic categories). Such a county would therefore be unable to address racial disparities in a empirically grounded manner. In fact, one county (Traverse) is unable to report on any graduation rates (including White students) because it had only 34 students in that student graduation cohort.

A reporting minimum of forty students means that many of the counties with experience educating students of color cannot provide data reflecting the percentage that graduated on-time. For each category of ethnicity (other than White) about 72 percent of Minnesota's counties had between 1 and 39 students and therefore offered no reported measure for the on-time graduation rate for that ethnicity.

Balancing students' rights to privacy with students' rights to education and community rights to resource expenditure accountability supports a lower number than 40 at which point data would be suppressed. For instance, selecting a cut point of 20 students per cohort would allow:

- 1 more county to report on the graduation success of White students
- 7 more counties to report on the graduation rates of Native American students
- 8 more counties to report on the graduation success of Asian students
- 10 more counties to report on the graduation success of African American/Black students, and
- 11 more counties to report on the graduation success of Hispanic/Latino students.

Even given the high volume of suppressed data, RURB's observations regarding graduation rates result in two conclusions:

First, on-time graduation rates for all students (including White students) are unacceptably low in a number of rural and urban counties.

Second, graduation rates for students of color are alarmingly low in an even larger number of rural and urban counties.

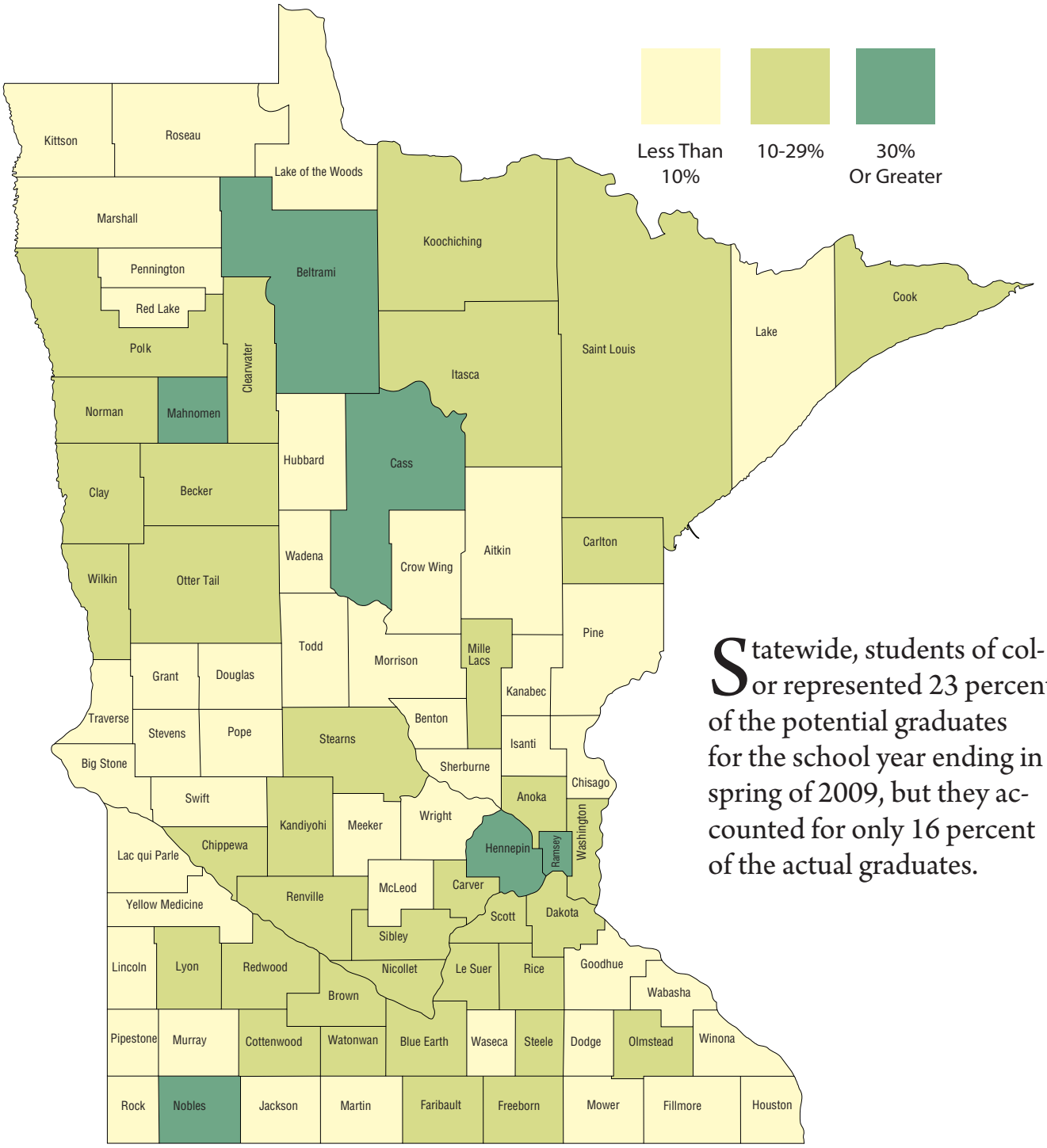
RURB suggests that those counties demonstrating superior outcomes warrant additional study as potential "centers of innovation" for benchmarking, modeling practices and school-to-school partnerships with less accomplished communities.

Some readers may object to comparing on-time graduation rates for students of color (or other classifications) in urban counties with those in rural counties, which are serving smaller numbers of every type of student. The argument that the sheer number of students attending their schools swamps Hennepin and Ramsey County resources merits discussion, but it neither excuses the poor return on taxpayer investment nor does it ameliorate the opportunities lost for a frighteningly large number of potential workers. Instead, those arguments increase the urgency of identifying and applying more successful models, leveraging insights from successful communities elsewhere in the state, and fostering productive mentoring and collaborating relationships.

Where are Minnesota's students of color?

Map B illustrates the concentrations of potential graduates of color by county for Minnesota's Class of 2009. In almost half of Minnesota's counties, from 10 percent to 70 percent of the cohort eligible for graduation were students of color. St. Paul's Ramsey County (49 percent students of color) and Minneapolis' Hennepin County (42 percent students of color) served the largest student bodies. Mahnomen County had the highest percentage of non-white students (70 percent of the class), all of whom were Native Americans.

Map B : Concentration of Students of Color By County



Statewide, students of color represented 23 percent of the potential graduates for the school year ending in spring of 2009, but they accounted for only 16 percent of the actual graduates.

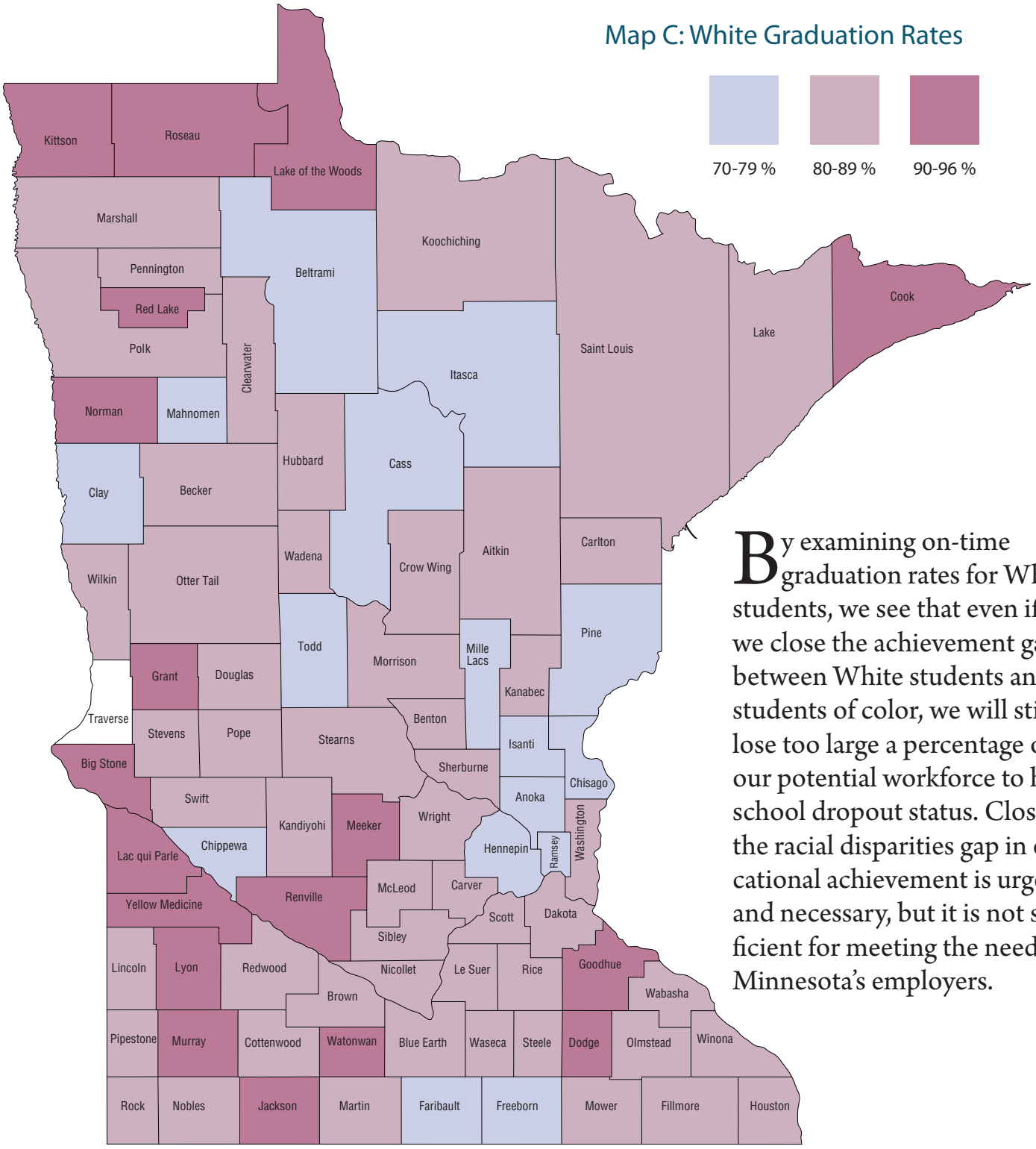
Racial Disparities in Graduation Rates by County

Despite the large number of data-suppressed counties, when we look at the available data depicted in Maps C, D, E, F and G we see that racial disparities in graduation rates fluctuate across the state and that differing specific rural and urban counties appear to provide the most successful educational experiences for students identified as belonging to a particular ethnicity.

RURB suggests that these rural and urban communities, students and schools merit further study to identify how they have achieved their relative success and how those best practices can be scaled to other communities. These Lead User schools, students, and communities would then be employed as benchmarking and best practice models and could provide mentoring for schools and communities with relatively less successful graduation rates for students of particular categories.

White students

Not surprisingly, White students show the highest rates of on-time graduation across Minnesota. On-time graduation rates for White students ranged from 96 percent in Kittson County to 70 percent in Isanti County. Map C shows that only 75 percent of Minnesota's counties graduated more than 80 percent of their eligible White students.



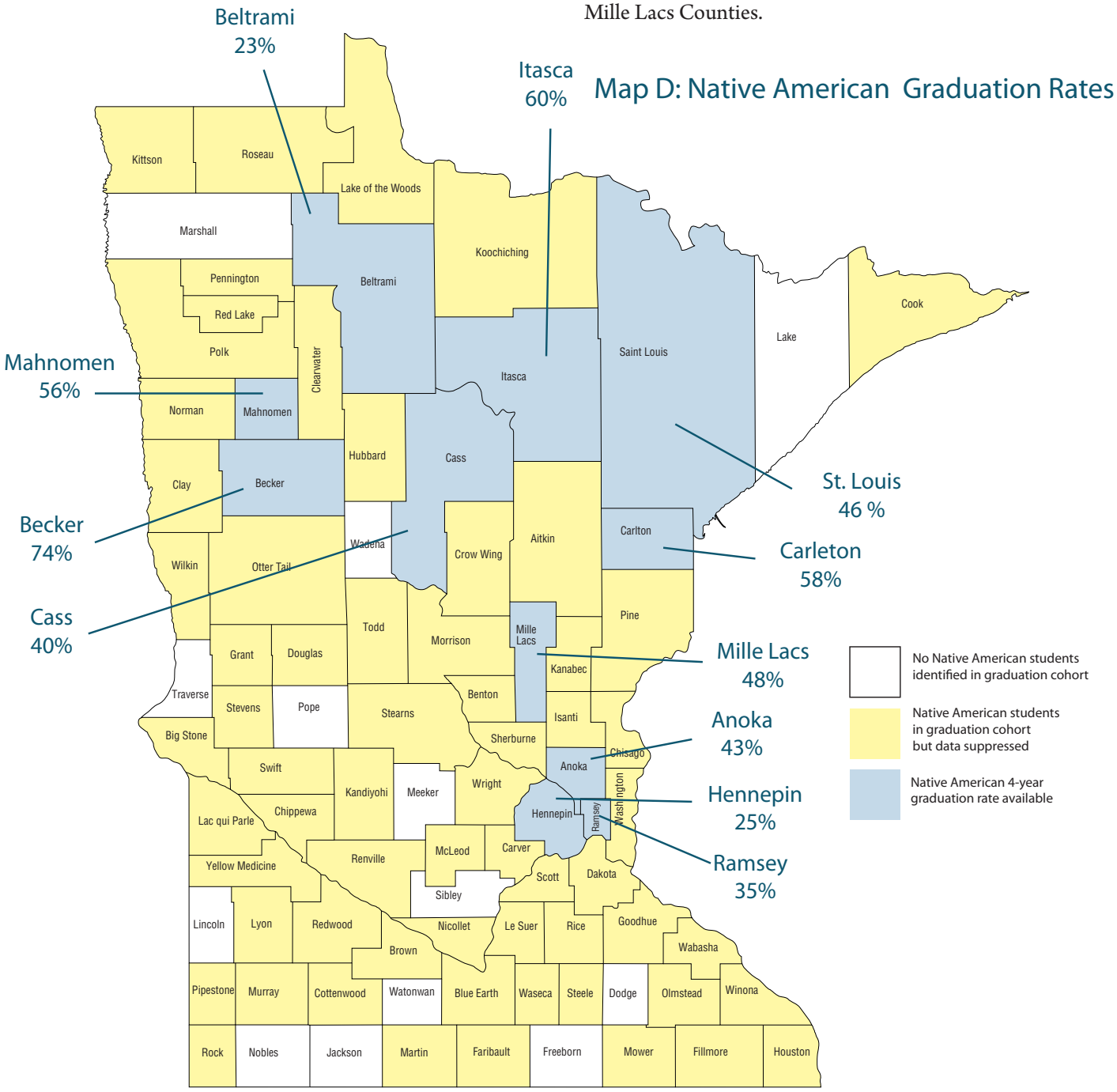
By examining on-time graduation rates for White students, we see that even if we close the achievement gap between White students and students of color, we will still lose too large a percentage of our potential workforce to high-school dropout status. Closing the racial disparities gap in educational achievement is urgent and necessary, but it is not sufficient for meeting the needs of Minnesota's employers.

Map D demonstrates that among Native American students, Hennepin County had a 25 percent on-time graduation rate associated with its 339 Native students that year. In contrast, Mahnomen County, which had an eligible cohort of 88 Native students that year, graduated 56 percent of them. Becker County, which had an eligible cohort of 46 Native students, graduated 74 percent of them.

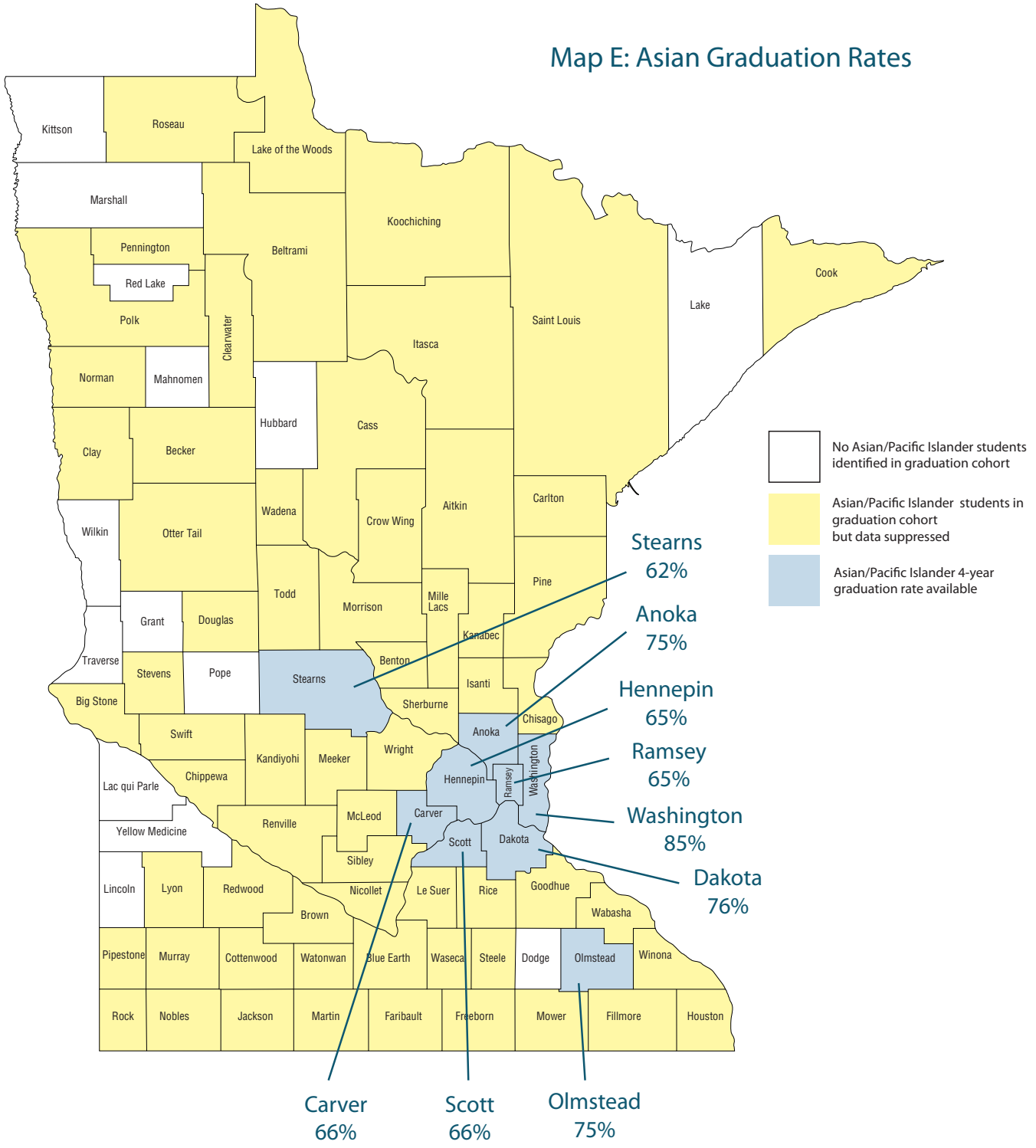
Individuals familiar with culturally competent learning models may not find the latter two graduation rates surprising, given the involvement of tribal educators in both cases. However, Mille Lacs County, another area with tribal educators, only graduated 48percent of its cohort that year, suggesting that there is more involved than "simply" engaging tribal educators in driving better Native American graduation rates.

In addition, matching counties by the number of students educated does not explain the difference in graduation rates. Returning to Minnesota's Native American youth, we find that in 2009, Becker County had about the same number of Native American potential graduates as Mille Lacs County did. But, there is a 26 point gap in the graduation rates for Becker and Mille Lacs Counties.

Map D: Native American Graduation Rates

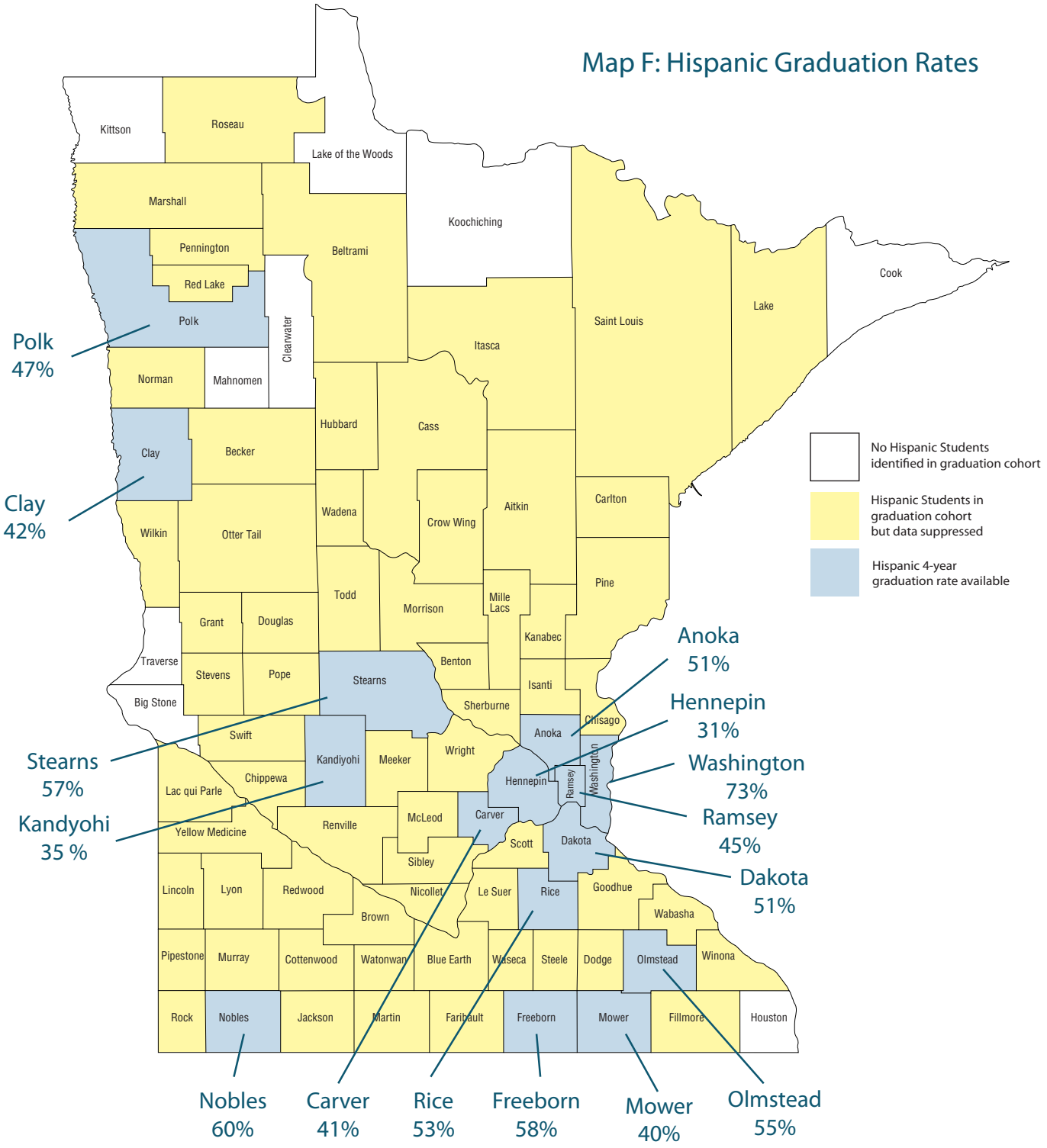


Map E indicates that although 73 of Minnesota's counties were educating and attempting to graduate Asian students at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, due to data suppression we are only able to observe the on-time graduation rates for Asian students in 9 of those counties. Based on the data available, we find that Asian students tend to have higher on-time graduation rates than other students of color, although their rates also tend to be lower than White students. Three urban counties (Washington, Anoka and Dakota) and one rural county (Olmsted) graduated 75 percent or more of the Asian students in that year's cohort. Four urban counties (Hennepin, Ramsey, Carver and Scott) and one rural county (Stearns) graduated between 62 percent and 66 percent of their eligible Asian students.



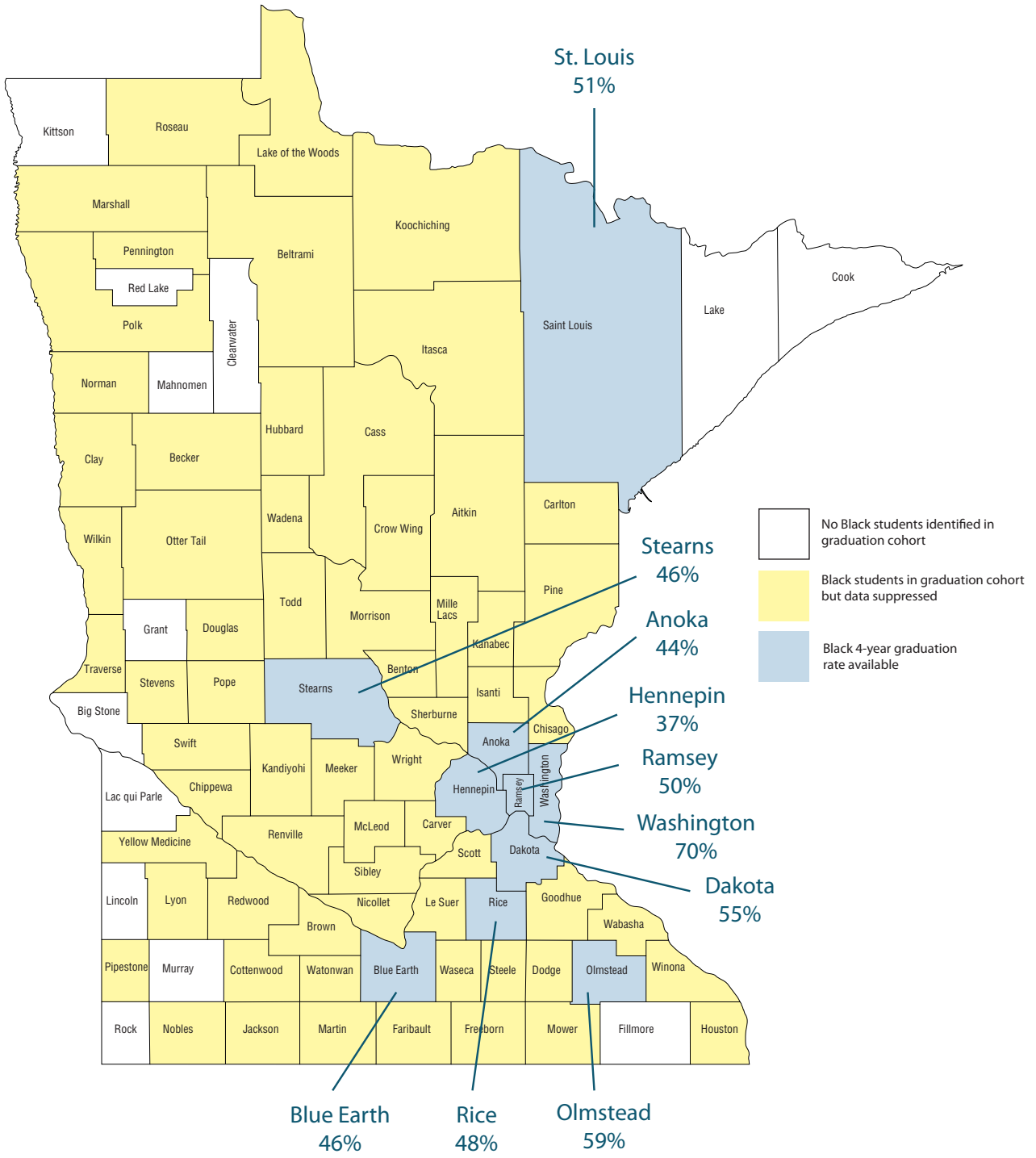
Ninety percent of Minnesota's 87 counties had Hispanic students in their 2009 potential graduation cohort. However, due to data suppression, we are able to examine graduation success in only about 20 percent of those counties. Map F presents the information about Minnesota's counties with 40 or more Hispanic/Latino students in their graduation cohort for 2009. Washington County, an urban area, presented the highest graduation rate with 73 percent of these students graduating on time. The next five most successful counties were rural. These are Nobles, Freeborn, Stearns, Olmsted and Rice Counties.

Map F: Hispanic Graduation Rates



MAP G illustrates that 11 percent of Minnesota's counties had 40 or more Black students (African Americans and not of Hispanic origin) in their on-time graduation cohort. Washington, Olmsted and Stearns counties all educated about the same number of Black students during the four years leading up to 2009, but they presented very different on-time graduation rates. Washington County saw 70 percent of its eligible Black students graduate that year; whereas in Olmsted County, 59 percent of eligible Black students graduated on time. Stearns County graduated only 46 percent of its eligible Black students during the same time period. Hennepin County, with the largest number of Black students in the state, presented the lowest graduation rate that year (37 percent of the eligible cohort graduated on time in 2009).

Map G: Black Graduation Rates



Within the seven-county Twin Cities metro area, Washington County clearly offers a center of excellence, while Hennepin County, where almost a third of the state's potential graduates of color are enrolled, has the greatest opportunity to improve.

For more detailed data regarding graduation rates by race, please see Appendix 1 or visit the Minnesota Department of Education website at *http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/Data_Downloads/Student/Graduation_Rates/index.html* and download the 2008-2009 Graduation Indicators by State, County, School or District.

It's really challenging to comprehend how Minnesota's dropout rates are so high in light of the abundance of resources aimed at supporting student choice, engagement and commitment. In the next several pages, we describe some of these statewide assets, highlighting rural-urban links where appropriate.

Context: Existing Education Resources

Even though Minnesota's educational system occasionally gets negative press,[24] our state is most often lauded for offering a first-class array of educational alternatives, and our students are more likely to be commended for taking the plunge and performing well.[25] Furthermore, Minnesota provides these benefits in a cost-effective way. Among the 50 states, Minnesota ranked 23rd in per-pupil expenditures for fiscal year 2008.[26]

Table 1[27] illustrates the impressive array of educational options for Minnesota's children. In addition to our historic public and private school options, our children may be educated in charter, on-line, magnet and alternative schools. They may be homeschooled or enrolled in a non-resident district. Students may graduate from high school having earned "double credits" by taking college classes either at their high school or on campus (through the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options program), by taking Advanced Placement classes, by earning an International Baccalaureate degree, or by engaging in a career and technical education program.

Table 1
Minnesota Department of Education Statistics Summary for 2009-2010

Public School Districts	
Public Operating Elementary & Secondary Independant School Districts	333
Special School Districts	2
Intermediate School Districts	3
Integration Districts	5
Charter Schools	154
State Schools/Academies	2
Education Districts	13
Miscellaneous Cooperative Districts	18
Special Education &/or Vocational Cooperative Districts	16

Public Schools	
Number of schools as of July 1	1992
Area Learning Centers	251
Distance Learning Programs (state approved)	28
K-12 Schools	24
Elementary Schools PK-6	943
Middle Schools 5 – 8	191
Secondary Schools 7-12	484

Enrollments 2009-2010	
PreK and Early Childhood Enrollment	13,933
K-12	823,826
Public school previous year graduates (2008-2009)	59,386
Native American	2.30%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.30%
Hispanic	6.70%
Black	9.70%
White	75.00%

% of enrolled students 2009-2010	
Receiving Special Ed Services	14.80%
English Language Learners	7.50%
Free and Reduced Lunch Eligible	36.10%
Enrolled in Charter Schools K-12	4.30%
Open Enrolled to non-resident district K-12	6.30%
Fulltime Enrollment in Alternative Learning	1.60%

Non-Public Schools Enrollment	
Enrollment in Non-Public Schools as of Oct 1, 2009	77,202
Homeschooled 2008-2009	15,653
Non-public previous year graduates (2008-2009)	4,464

Rural Urban Access to Educational Programs

Since more than one-third of Minnesota's children live in rural school districts,[28] it's worthwhile inquiring how access to the programs and the funding that supports them varies between rural and urban families.

To the extent that distance between home and school determines "access," it's clear that urban students are more likely to have a shorter distance between home and school and therefore have access to a wider range of educational options. Two educational options that are disproportionately accessible to urban and suburban students are Minnesota's Adult Basic Education program and Minnesota's network of magnet schools.

- Minnesota's **Adult Basic Education** (ABE) program provides free assessment, classes and tutoring to prepare for the GED. In this capacity it serves as a critical element in helping high school dropouts move forward along a career path. ABE is a program that disproportionately benefits urban participants. During FY 2010 only 15 percent of ABE participants were rural enrollees.[29]

- **Magnet schools**, public schools that offer a curricular emphasis (arts and environmental concentrations are two examples) and serve students from across district boundaries, are also a disproportionately urban educational option. Three-quarters of the districts hosting Minnesota's magnet schools are located within the seven country Twin Cities metro region.[30]

Online schools, while challenging to analyze based on lack of definitional or record keeping standards, appear to be gaining enrollments in Minnesota. Minnesota was recently cited as one of the top seven states in numbers of full-time online students enrolled, the other states being Arizona, Ohio, Colorado, Washington, California and Pennsylvania.[31] One national survey depicts Minnesota as showing about 16 percent growth in total online course enrollments between the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years.[32]

While the features of the students who benefit most and the features of the schools that deliver the greatest value continues to be debated, it's not clear that online schools have fully realized their potential to support rural-urban educational alliances. RURB's interview data points to the majority of online students being urban and suburban young people.

Minnesota Virtual Academy (MNVA) is a multi-district online school "success story" with rural roots and urban connections. One of the fastest growing public schools in Minnesota today, MNVA is also the largest provider of public education delivered via the Internet in our state, serving 16,000 young Minnesotans, the majority of whom live in urban and suburban areas. MNVA's program was developed by Houston Public Schools (Independent School District 294), located in a town with about 1000 residents, situated in the southeastern part of our state. The MNVA began as "an entrepreneurial initiative" in 2002, when the district had stabilized at an enrollment of 450 local kids, and district administrators were concerned about the consolidation/school closing pressures that had distressed other rural communities. In 2002 they started the first online learning school with 75 kids enrolled. By 2009, they served students in 84 of Minnesota's 87 counties.

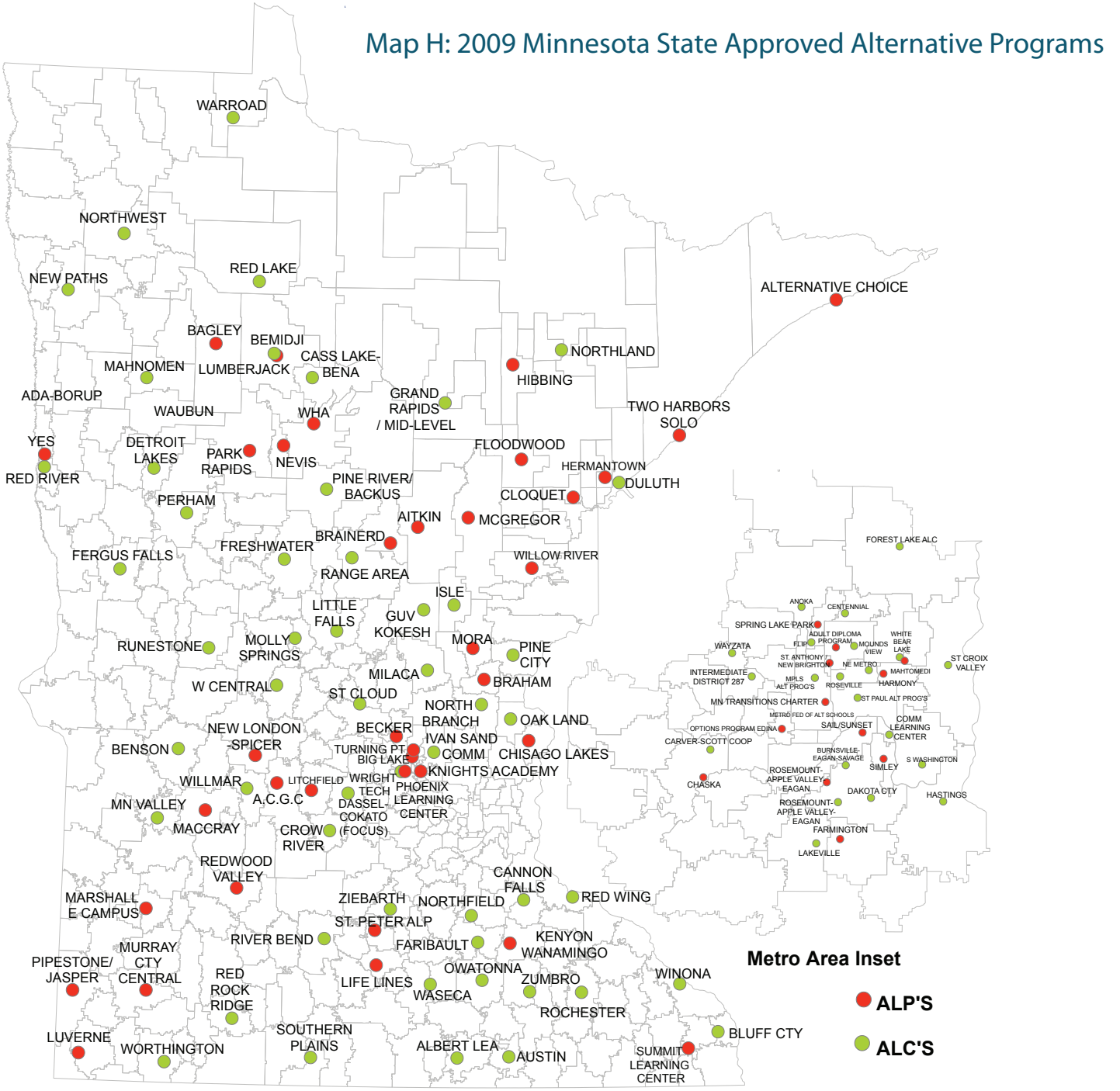
When asked about the outcomes of their online experience, the administrators from Houston replied, *"Our online offering has kept kids in our physical schools! We've kept our own school district stable and we're able to move our (online) expertise to our physical school. It benefits our district's children. The most challenging part continues to be transforming our physical schools."*

One example of a highly successful educational option that benefits both rural and urban students is Minnesota's Alternative Education programs, which first became a legislated option in 1988. Alternative Education programs are designed for students (from Kindergarten to age 21) who are challenged by the "traditional system" and are at risk of educational failure.[33]

About 17 percent of Minnesota public school students enroll in alternative education programs of one kind or another each year across the state.[34] Of these students: 14 percent received special education services, 54 percent received free or reduced lunch and 42 percent are students of color.

Part-time participation in Alternative Education programs is positively correlated with high school graduation.[35] Map H[36] illustrates the broad statewide distribution of these programs, which are delivered through area learning centers (ALCs), alternative learning programs (ALPs) and contract alternative schools.

Map H: 2009 Minnesota State Approved Alternative Programs



Gap 2 – Rural-Urban Connections Reflected in Minnesota's Training Grant Program Investments

Gap 1: Minnesota's Graduation Rates shows that strong rural-urban partnerships offer significant potential for improving statewide job readiness by increasing graduation rates, particularly among children of color. In this section, we use data reflecting recent state workforce training grants to offer an example of the current rate of investment in rural-urban partnerships. We use this data because it is publicly available and can be evaluated for the presence of rural-urban collaborations. We are aware that there are other strategic initiatives aimed at economic development and workforce development in Minnesota that might have offered different results. Some of those programs are described later. However, data identifying the location of every partner funded in those programs was not publicly available at the time of our analysis.

We conducted a review of the 128 DEED Training Grants/ Minnesota Job Skills Partnership projects funded between June, 2008 and August, 2010. For a detailed listing of these projects, please see Appendix 2 or visit the DEED website at *http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Minnesota_Job_Skills_Partnership_Program/Our_Training_Grant_Programs/index.aspx.*

During this period, Minnesota's Training Grant programs invested in three different types of collaborations: The Partnership Program, the Pathways Program, and the Low Income Worker Program. Other than the Low Income Worker Training Program, all of the training projects included at least one business and at least one public or private accredited Minnesota educational institution.

1. **The Partnership Program** – This was the main training grant option focused on training new hires and incumbent workers for participating businesses. Grants of up to $400,00 were made to the educational institution to underwrite training program development and delivery. Participating businesses had to provide matching funds in cash or in-kind contribution on a one-to-one basis. This program also offered a Short Form application process for grants of up to $50,000.

2. **The Pathways Program** – This program supports business-educational institution partnerships that provide training opportunities for people with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line or those who are transitioning from public assistance to work. Grants of up to $400,000 per project may be awarded to a Minnesota educational institution to develop and deliver training specific to business needs. Matching cash or in-kind contributions, on at least a one-half-to-one ratio, are required from the participating businesses.

3. **The Low-Income Worker Training Program** – Grants of up to $200,000 are awarded to Minnesota public, private and non-profit organizations to provide employment services to individuals whose income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. No matching funds are required of the grant recipients. These grants are aimed at delivering short-term training for full-time employment in targeted sectors of Minnesota's economy that have been pre-identified by DEED. This program aims to provide prospective workers with new skills necessary to gain employment or move up the career ladder to higher paying jobs and greater economic self-sufficiency.

Because there was only one Pathways award made during this period, we group that project with the Low-Income Worker Training projects in our tables below. As we present our review of the 128 Job Skills Awards, we recognize that funding rural and urban partnerships was likely not to have been among the funding body's guidelines.

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Among the 128 projects funded during the interval under study, 73 percent of the projects were funded under the Partnership and Partnership Short Form programs.

As Table 2 illustrates, among the 93 Partnership and Partnership Short Form awards made, 74 percent brought together academic partners and businesses that were "within region," meaning both the academic partner and the business partner were rural, or both were urban. In these cases the award did not support a rural-urban collaboration.

Table 2
Partnership Programs: Rural-Urban Distribution of Grants Awarded

Training Grantees	Business Partners			
	Rural	Urban	Both	Total
Rural	36	8	NONE	44
Urban	5	33	5	43
Both	3	3	NONE	6
Total	44	44	5	93

In the remaining 26 percent of the awards, rural-urban partnerships were supported either between single entities (e.g. one urban college and one rural business) or among a mix of rural and urban partners (for instance, a consortium of rural and urban colleges collaborating to train workers at a rural business).

Table 3 shows that of the 20,467 workers trained in these 93 projects, 32 percent were served via rural-urban collaborations. Incumbent workers constituted the vast majority of the individuals trained.

Table 3
Partnership Programs: Workers Trained*

Training Grantee	Business Partners		
	Rural	Urban	Both
Rural	5012	1062	NONE
Urban	1032	8827	3195
Both	953	386	NONE

* "Workers Trained" includes: Incumbent Workers, New Hires, Returning Hires & Potential Hires

As Table 4 shows, of the almost 14 million dollars spent on Partnership and Partnership Short Form programs, 79 percent of the money was invested in within-region projects (either rural-rural or urban-urban). In particular, 49 percent of all statewide dollars were spent on urban-urban projects, 30 percent were spent on rural- rural projects, and the remaining 21 percent of statewide dollars were spent on rural-urban collaborations.

Table 4
Partnership Programs: Dollars Awarded

Training Grantees	Business Partners		
	Rural	Urban	Both
Rural	$4,113,147	$653,946	NONE
Urban	$1,030,049	$6,668,571	$1,241,144
Both	$674,752	$557,674	NONE

Table 5 indicates that among the 35 Low Income Worker and Pathways awards, 97 percent (all but one award) were exclusively within region. Furthermore, 71 percent of the awards went to urban projects.

Table 5
Low income Worker and Pathways Programs:
Rural-Urban Distribution of Grants Awarded

Training Grantees	Training Partner		
	Rural	Urban	Both
Rural	9	0	0
Urban	0	25	1
Both	0	0	0

In summary, among the 93 Partnership projects funded, 26 percent of the awards supported rural-urban collaborations. These projects trained 32 percent of the total workers and used only 21 percent of the total dollars allocated statewide. Among the programs aimed serving low-income workers, rural-urban collaborations were almost entirely absent. These findings support RURB's interviews which indicated that collaborations between rural and urban businesses and training partners are an underfunded area of opportunity.

Context: Existing Workforce Development Resources

Although rural-urban collaborations do not appear to have been emphasized in the data used to exemplify Minnesota's current workforce development approach, Minnesota's strategic portfolio is nonetheless relatively comprehensive and innovative. Minnesota has workforce development assets located across the state, even if they tend not to leverage rural-urban connections.

Minnesota's statewide network of 49 Workforce Centers (WFC's), with hundreds of career counseling professionals, offers services to rural and urban job-seeking Minnesotans. Minnesota has a regional network of sixteen Workforce Service Areas (WSA's). Each region has its own local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) that governs a locally responsive operation. The WIB's are required to direct training resources to specific industries identified by DEED's Labor Market Information Office as being the best regional investment targets.[37] The WIB's also work with local youth councils and various public and non-profit organizations to coordinate a locally targeted response to the workforce readiness and employment needs of local youth, particularly "at risk" youth (those living away from home through involvement in foster care or juvenile justice, or those whose families rely on various forms of public assistance to make ends meet).

As Minnesota's Workforce Investment Act Annual Report for 2009 shows, Minnesota has met or exceeded its federal targets for mandated workforce programs and embarked on several remarkable job readiness initiatives. DEED, the GWDC, Minnesota's post-secondary educational institutions and a number of regional non-profit organizations have become seasoned and robust collaborators offering programs that serve job seekers, incumbent workers, businesses and local governments through a variety of regional, state and federal programs.

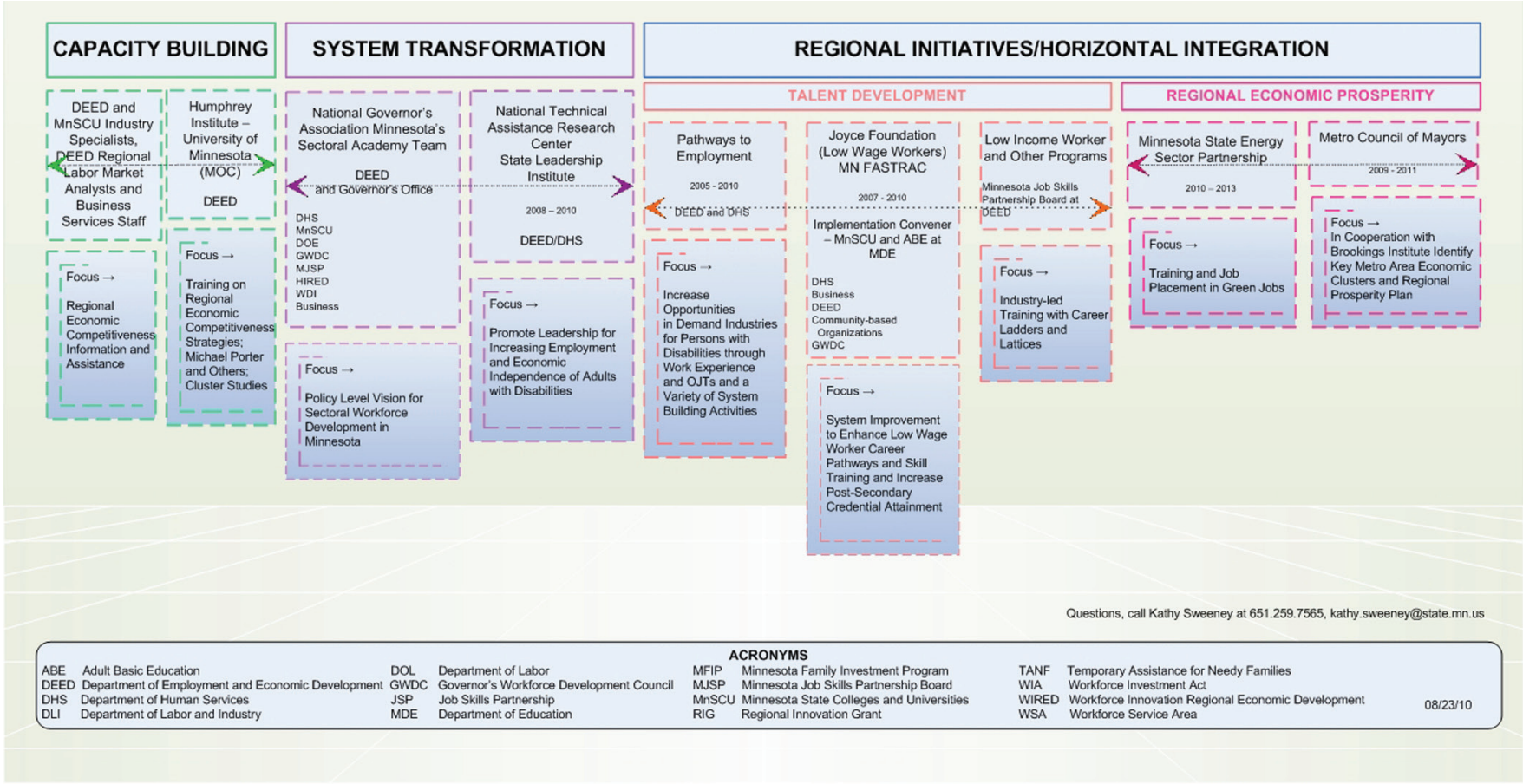
Graphic A on page 32 depicts the array of partners collaborating to form Minnesota's multi-faceted wealth creation initiative aimed at "21st Century Regional Prosperity."[38] By creating a cross-functional network of education, workforce development and economic development efforts and distributing resources to regionally defined priorities, Minnesota's strategy aims to maximize results while distributing ownership and benefits.

Minnesota's institutions of higher education are key partners in the state's innovative workforce development strategies. These institutions include:

- 14 private liberal arts colleges
- 16 other private colleges and universities
- 2 major public college and university systems
  - University of Minnesota
  - Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU)

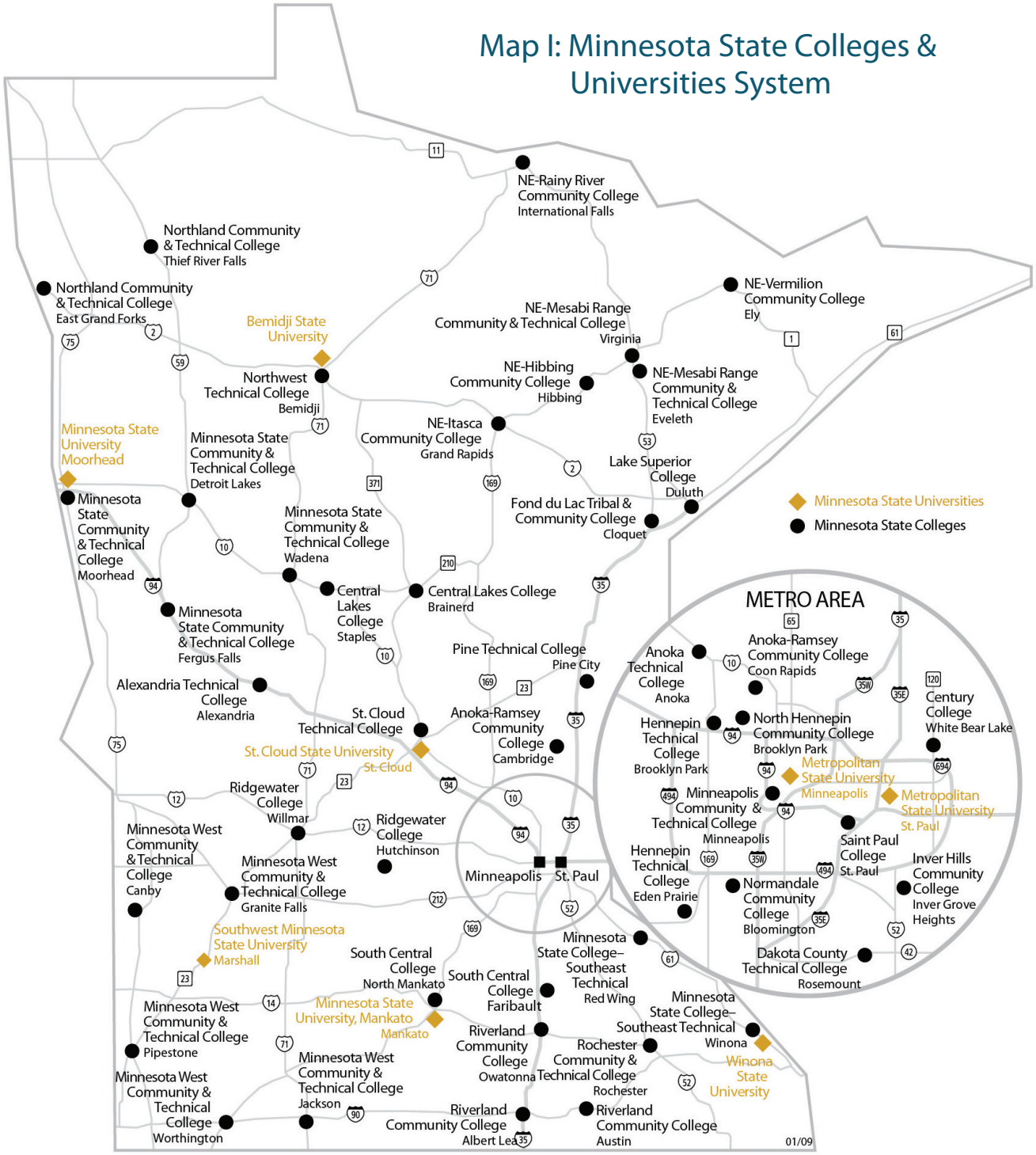
Graphic A: 21st Century Regional Prosperity

Transforming Workforce, Education, and Economic Development at the Regional Level to Increase Individual Business and Community Prosperity



The University of Minnesota serves about 68,000 students at its 5 campuses across the state. MnSCU, which has 7 four-year state universities and 25 two-year colleges, is an active leader in enhancing job readiness across the state through its K-12 initiatives, its associate's and bachelor's degree programs and its involvement in a large and far-reaching number of workforce development programs involving certificates and other credentials. MnSCU is the largest provider of higher education in Minnesota, serving 277,000 students in credit-based courses and another 157,000 students in non-credit courses. Map I[39] shows the 54 campuses that are part of this system. MnSCU campuses are a major provider of customized training, serving the employees of about 6,000 Minnesota businesses annually[40].

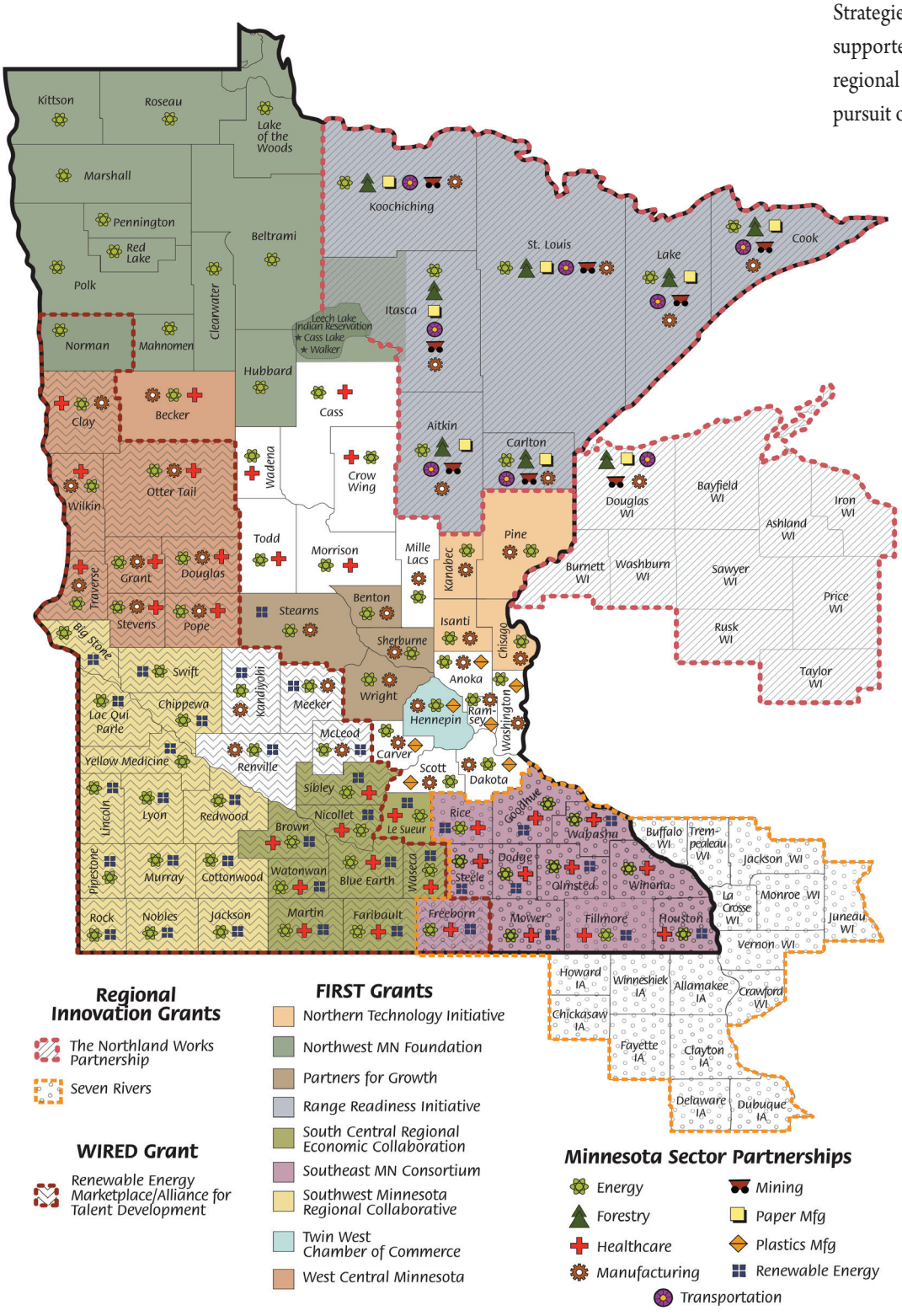
Map I: Minnesota State Colleges & Universities System



Map J: 2009 Minnesota Regional Prosperity Initiatives

In 2008, Minnesota began using discretionary Workforce Investment Act (WIA) money to fund Framework for Integrated Regional Strategies (FIRST) grants. These programs supported sustainable, industry-driven regional partnerships in the simultaneous pursuit of job creation and job readiness.

As Map J[41] illustrates, these investments appear across Minnesota and are often implemented as a result of collaboration between partners within a region. This regional focus began a sustained and successful effort to use local expertise to maximize state allocations of resources.



For more information visit **www.deed.state.mn.us/workforce/prosperity** *or contact Kathy Sweeney at:* **Kathy.Sweeney@state.mn.us** *or call:* 651.259.7565

I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma.

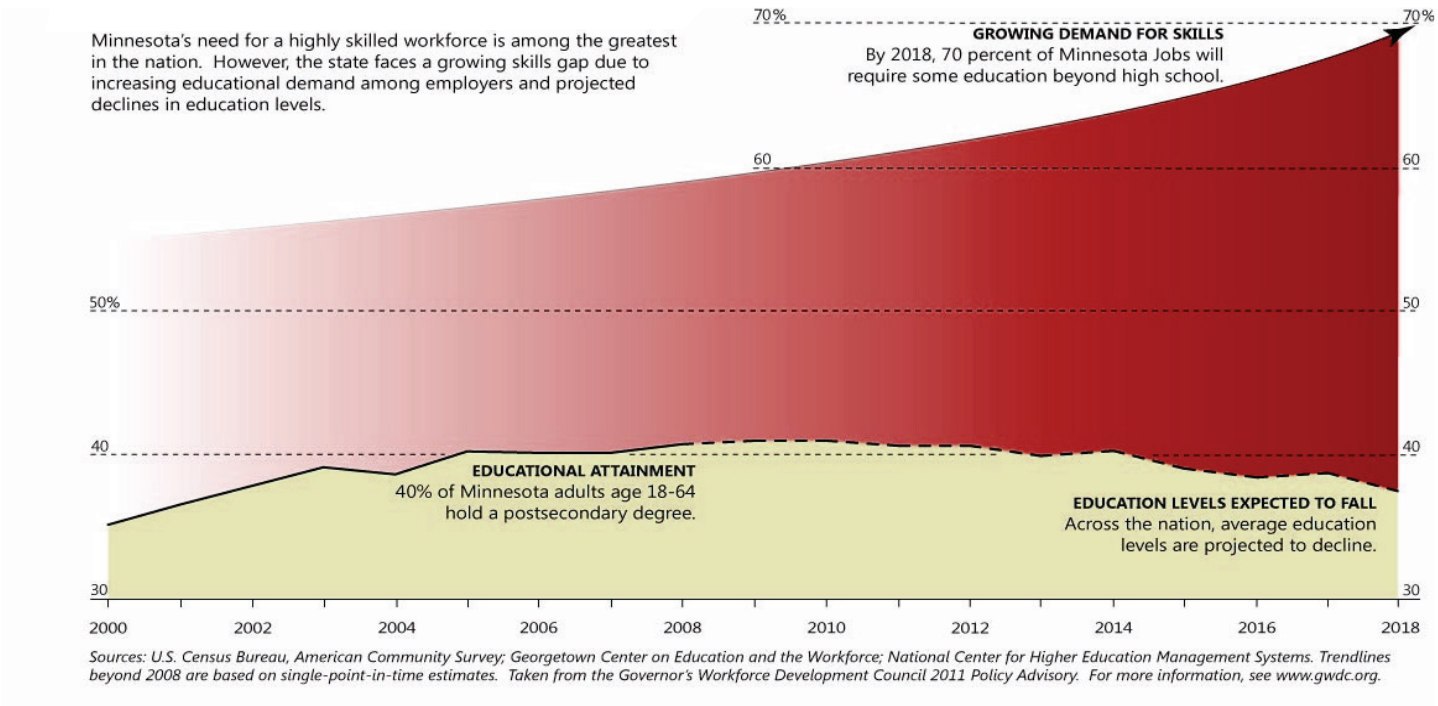
President Barack Obama, Feb. 24, 2009, speech to a Joint Session of Congress

Working Learners

According to the June 2010 report from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, the Great Recession and continued rapid technological evolution have combined to support a nation-wide accelerated shift toward jobs requiring post-secondary training. Low-wage and low-skill jobs are predicted to represent an ever-shrinking part of the job market, especially in Minnesota .[42]

Minnesota's prevailing workforce development strategy is focused on serving working learners in the current labor force. One-third of the state's 2035 labor force is already 18 years of age or older. [43]There are well over a million potential working learners in Minnesota – working people without post-secondary credentials seeking living-wage jobs in an environment that increasingly demands advanced training.[44]

Graphic B Minnesota's Growing Skills Gap



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce; National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. Trendlines beyond 2008 are based on single-point-in-time estimates. Taken from the Governor's Workforce Development Council 2011 Policy Advisory. For more information, see www.gwdc.org.

Graphic B[45] shows that by 2018, 70 percent of jobs in Minnesota (2.1 million jobs) are anticipated to require post-secondary education. This is 7 percentage points above the national average. Minnesota ties with North Dakota for second in post-secondary education intensity for 2018, with 70 percent of its 2018 jobs predicted to require postsecondary education. Washington, D.C. is first nationally, with 71 percent.[46] Minnesota also ranks 5th nationally in terms of the proportion of its 2018 jobs that will require a Bachelors' degree and is 48th in numbers of jobs suitable for high school dropouts.[47] Graphic B illustrates that simultaneous with the increase in credentials required by employers, Minnesota is facing a downward trend in educational achievement. The already substantial gap between what Minnesota's employers want and what job seekers have to offer is predicted to get much larger.

The overarching theme of Minnesota's workforce development strategy is to assist these working learners in pursuing "stackable" credentials, advancing their skill sets in an integrated, cumulative fashion over an extended period of time. To achieve these goals, DEED, working in conjunction with MDE, GWDC and MnSCU, leverages federal resources (WIA Discretionary and Incentive Funds, National Emergency Grants and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds), as well as state resources (for instance, Minnesota's Dislocated Worker funding) and various philanthropic partners to remove barriers and increase access to credential attainment by working-age people in both rural and urban areas.

Minnesota's working learners are an economically, ethnically and linguistically diverse group. Being a working learner is often an enormous challenge, requiring rare balancing skills, even among high school graduates without language challenges or families to care for. Minnesota already has several remarkable programs in place to assist workers pursuing advanced credentials. The Minnesota FastTRAC (Training, Resources and Credentials) program and other initiatives assist working learners to acquire stackable credentials in areas of high demand and adequate wage jobs.[48] The GWDC has established a goal of working within a collaborative joined by DEED, MnSCU, MDE –Adult Basic Education and regional community-based organizations to provide a FastTRAC program at each of the 25 Minnesota State Colleges across the state. This program extension, in conjunction with a success-based tuition loan forgiveness program would extend training benefits and valuable credentials to potential working learners in more rural areas.

Regional Knowledge Clusters

Minnesota is in the forefront of another internationally recognized regional competitiveness approach that builds on the economic activities of industry clusters that define a region's unique competitive advantage. This approach to economic development played a crucial role in RURB's earlier white paper, *Pilot Study: Estimating Rural and Urban Minnesota's Interdependencies*. Cluster studies offer an empirical footing for tightly coordinating resource investments in regional workforce development, infrastructure construction and economic development. The Regional Knowledge Clusters research and planning program is a result of collaboration between DEED and the State and Local Policy Program in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus.

The regional cluster investigations result in cluster identification, workforce development and economic development goals refinement and determining the steps that will lead to cluster strengthening and expansion. The results not only benefit Minnesota businesses and workers, but also contribute data and insights to Michael Porter's National Cluster Mapping Project at Harvard University.

Clusters are best thought of as "economic ecosystems." Graphic C[49] shows how this initiative weaves between research and public investments, examining biomes (geographic areas characterized by unique pairings of topography, climate trends and native plants and animals) and distributions of businesses by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to identify the state's core competitive industry clusters and the workforce characteristics and occupational categories required to grow them.

Graphic C: Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters & Pathways

Renewable Energy

One regional cluster study, focused on renewable energy, helped to support Minnesota's successful application for a three-year, $6 million U. S. Department of Labor WIRED (Workforce Innovation Regional Economic Development) Grant known as the "Minnesota State Energy Sector Partnership." The Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace (MNREM)[50] manages this public-private sector collaboration for the GWDC. The Partnership awarded grants directed at training rural and urban workers for employment in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. Partnership members include individuals representing energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, state government, non-profits, educational institutions and various labor organizations.

Minnesota is a windy place with plenty of open land for wind turbines, and it has a high percentage of acreage in agriculture, which means plenty of biomass. Investing in both a highly skilled workforce and plenty of green businesses makes sense. Investments so far have been predominantly in jobs training and placement programs in the energy-efficient building, construction and retrofit industries, the renewable electric power industry, and the biofuels industry. Unfortunately, according to interviews with various leaders in this field, it is difficult to see where all those workers are going to find employment without a similar initiative aimed at job creation in renewable energy industries.

Rural-Urban Job Readiness Opportunities

Employers in both rural and urban companies wonder how they can retain their competiveness and remain in Minnesota. We submit that policy and planning activities that strengthen rural-urban connections provide critical support for improving Minnesota's workforce preparedness.

We identify five opportunities to assist with arriving at better job readiness outcomes while improving rural-urban partnering practice. The first three opportunities appear as recommendations aimed at enhancing the state's ability to prevent failure to graduate among high school students. High school graduation rates must improve, across the board, for all students. At the same time, the racial disproportionality in graduation rates for White students and students of color must be reduced. The fourth opportunity is expressed as a recommendation to enact a policy emphasis during funding allocations that values rural-urban partnerships explicitly. The fifth opportunity relates to future rural-urban research.

Opportunity 1: Revisit the impact of school closings and district consolidations on graduation rates and leverage rural success stories for urban innovation.

In agreement with the Center for Rural Policy and Development's report, *A Region Apart: A look at challenges and strategies for rural K-12 schools,* we urge more investigation into the impact of school closings and district consolidation on graduation. School closings, whether rural or urban, increase distance between school and home, as well as threatening the social fabric of communities. School buildings are the sites for numerous after school and community activities.

While rural families have so far primarily experienced these impacts, it is clear that the resource pressures behind these decisions are becoming more common in suburban and urban school districts. Because of this, school closings and district consolidations are areas in which educators in the city and suburbs can leverage rural expertise, derived from rural successes and lessons learned the hard way.

Understanding which features of rural school closings yield the least negative impacts on educational outcomes and building on those insights to provide leadership to suburban and urban schools offers an important opportunity to reap the highest yield from Minnesotans' expertise and talent.

Opportunity 2: Refine MDE graduation rate reporting.

By setting the reporting minimum at 40 students, the experiences of most of Minnesota's counties in graduating students of color are not reported. For each category of ethnicity (other than White) about 70 percent of Minnesota's counties had between 1 and 39 students and therefore had no reported measure for the on-time graduation rate for that ethnicity.

RURB recommends revisiting this 40-student minimum graduation-reporting requirement. Balancing students' rights to privacy with students' rights to education and community rights to resource expenditure accountability supports using a number less than 40 as the cut point at which data is suppressed. For instance, selecting a cut point of 20 students per cohort would allow:

- 1 more county to report on the graduation success of White students
- 7 more counties to report on the graduation success of Native American students
- 8 more counties to report on the graduation success of Asian students
- 10 more counties to report on the graduation success of African American/Black students, and
- 11 more counties to report on the graduationsuccess of Hispanic/Latino students.

By obtaining better data, rural and urban schools' success in retaining students of color all the way through graduation can be better understood and improved.

Opportunity 3: Use rural-urban relationships to create a statewide graduation success network

RURB recommends a multi-organizational research program that would delve more deeply into community, school and student characteristics that combine to result in higher student retention and better graduation rates. The research results would establish benchmarking programs that link lead user communities, those whose school districts offer "pockets of excellence" or relatively greater success in graduating students of color, with communities whose schools are not yet experiencing that level of success. After identifying key elements of "goodness of fit" for successful high schools, the program would then leverage these insights by brokering conversations and interactions among community members, administrators and teachers at the more successful schools and their counterparts at the districts that have the most opportunity to improve.

Pairing successful schools with those most motivated to improve is an excellent example of how rural-urban partnerships benefit all Minnesotans. Matching schools based on opportunities, rather than geography, will allow, for instance, schools in Becker County or Mahnomen County to model more successful practices for retaining Native American students to high school graduation.

Opportunity 4: Target rural-urban links as a network supporting improved job readiness statewide.

In this white paper, rural-urban linkages come into sharp relief as a means of recognizing indivisible challenges and as a way of building shared solutions. By evaluating characteristics of the partnerships funded, we see that rural-urban collaborations are not proportionally supported. Investing in rural-urban connections will take deliberate effort.

Investments in job readiness are often evaluated in terms of regional resource sharing and distributed decision-making. While respecting the importance of regional self-determination, and the local value attached to meeting the training needs of low-income people, RURB recommends additional effort in considering when rural-urban collaborations (both within regions and between regions) can provide specialized expertise and access to stronger networks that better serve community, regional and statewide interests. Based on the analysis in both of our Wealth Creation white papers, RURB advocates adding nurturing rural-urban networks as a funding allocation criterion.

Opportunity 5: Future explorations of rural-urban links

Future research efforts would extend the existing research platform to assist with developing a more robust understanding of rural-urban interconnectedness.

Additional investigations of rural urban linkages and graduation rates

Ethnic and racial categories are not the only variables of interest when conducting rural-urban comparisons and collaborative strategies. Future rural-urban studies might examine graduation rates in light of English language status, Free or Reduced Lunch status (an indicator of economic status) or school district.

Improved articulations of geography

Refining definitions of "urban" and "rural." Our study used a grossly defined measure of urban and rural Minnesota. Rochester, Duluth, St. Cloud, Mankato and Moorhead clearly merit treatment as non-rural areas, even if they are not included in the same category as Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Employing more expressive units of study. Using counties as our unit of analysis might not be ideal. Minnesota's counties vary greatly in size, uniformity and population density.

Conclusion

We have explored how rural-urban connections and collaborations offer a natural and profitable framework for improving our statewide supply of skilled workers. We have also shown how rural-urban connections will require a deliberate focus and dedicated investment, if we hope to derive the greatest benefits from their potential. Based on our research, we described two "Gaps," or areas in Minnesota's education and workforce development outcomes where the difference between the actual and the ideal is large and potentially costly. We described five "Opportunities" or areas of future activity that we believe offer considerable promise to help close those gaps. We hope to see these activities extended as they will benefit our state and its citizens.

End Notes

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Appendix A: Summary of 2009 High School Graduation Rates by Economic Development Region and County

Region 1

	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Kittson	71	1%	96%	?/ 1	? / 1	0	0	0	Hallock
Marshall	129	5%	87%	? / 6	0	0	?/ 4	? / 2	Warren
Red Lake	62	6%	93%	?/ 4	? / 3	0	?/ 1	0	Red Lake Falls
Pennington	177	8%	87%	?/ 15	? / 2	? / 3	? / 7	? / 3	Thief River Falls
Roseau	260	9%	94%	? / 24	? / 15	? / 7	? / 1	? / 1	Roseau
Norman	111	16%	91%	?/ 18	? / 7	? / 2	? / 8	? / 1	Ada
Polk	496	16%	87%	?/78	? / 21	? / 5	47% 23/49	? / 3	East Grand Forks

Region 2

	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Hubbard	195	8%	81%	? / 15	? / 7	0	? / 6	? / 2	Park Rapids
Lake of the Woods	50	8%	93%	? / 4	? / 1	? / 2	0	? / 1	Baudette
Clearwater	130	25%	88%	? / 32	? / 31	? / 1	0	0	Bagley
Beltrami	733	35%	76%	? / 259	23% 55/240	? / 4	? / 9	? / 6	Bemidji
Mahnomen	125	70%	78% 29/37	56% 49/88	56% 49/88	0	0	0	Mahnomen

Region 3									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Lake	140	3%	85%	? / 4	0	0	? / 4	0	Two Harbors
Aitkin	190	7%	83%	?/ 13	? / 9	? / 2	? /1	? / 1	Aitkin
St. Louis	2277	11%	82%	? / 258	46% 55/120	?/ 32	? / 29	51% 39/77	Duluth
Carlton	584	14%	83%	? / 81	58% 33/57	? / 9	? / 11	? / 4	Cloquet
Itasca	687	16%	78%	? / 107	60% 47/78	? / 11	? / 9	? / 9	Grand Rapids
Koochiching	186	18%	87%	? / 33	? / 29	? / 1	0	? / 3	International Falls
Cook	54	24%	90%	? / 13	? / 11	? / 2	0	0	Grand Marais

Region 4									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Pope	101	2%	88%	? / 2	0	0	? / 1	? / 1	Glenwood
Douglas	482	3%	86%	? / 13	? / 1	? / 3	? / 4	? / 5	Alexandria
Traverse	34	3%	? / 34	? / 1	0	0	0	? / 1	Wheaton
Grant	102	5%	92%	? / 5	? / 1	0	? / 4	0	Elbow Lake
Stevens	129	5%	89%	? / 7	? / 1	? / 1	? / 3	? / 2	Morris
Otter Tail	718	10%	83%	? / 69	? / 10	? / 15	? /25	? / 19	Fergus Falls
Wilkin	102	10%	86%	? / 10	? / 3	0	? / 6	? / 1	Breckenridge
Clay	724	13%	78%	? / 95	? / 24	? / 6	42% 22/52	? / 13	Moorhead
Becker	394	17%	85%	? / 66	74% 34/46	? / 6	? / 8	? / 6	Detroit Lakes

Region 5									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Morrison	507	2%	83%	? / 11	? / 2	? / 3	? / 5	? / 1	Little Falls
Wadena	258	2%	84%	? / 5	0	? / 3	? / 1	? / 1	Wadena
Crow Wing	842	4%	83%	? / 3?	? / 12	? / 5	? / 8	? / 5	Brainard
Todd	466	8%	74%	? / 39	? / 3	? / 11	? / 2?	? / 5	Long Prairie
Cass	450	34%	77%	? / 153	40% 57/143	? / 3	? / 5	? / 2	East Gull Lake

Region 6									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
EAST									
Meeker	253	5%	92%	? / 12	0	? / 3	?/ 8	? / 1	Litchfield
McLeod	515	9%	82%	? / 45	? / 2	? / 7	? / 31	? / 5	Hutchinson
Renville	195	11%	90%	? / 21	? / 1	? / 2	? / 17	? / 1	Olivia
Kandiyohi	564	24%	81%	? / 136	? / 6	? / 7	35% 36 /103	? / 2?	Willmar
WEST									
Lac qui Parle	130	5%	90%	? / 6	? / 1	0	? / 5	0	Madison
Swift	161	7%	85%	? / 12	?/ 2	? / 4	? / 5	? / 1	Benson
Big Stone	88	7%	95%	? / 6	? /4	? / 2	0	0	Ortonville
Yellow Medicine	145	8%	90%	? / 11	? / 3	0	? / 7	? / 1	Granite Falls
Chippewa	237	10%	73%	? / 23	? / 4	? / 1	? / 16	? / 2	Montevideo

Region 7									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
EAST									
Kanabec	218	3%	84%	? / 6	? / 2	? / 2	? / 1	? / 1	Mora
Isanti	568	6%	70%	? / 32	? / 5	? / 1?	? / 9	? / 8	Cambridge
Chisago	753	6%	78%	? / 42	? / 4	? / 18	? / 11	? / 9	North Branch
Pine	353	8%	79%	? / 28	? / 14	? / 4	? / 6	? / 4	Pine City
Mille Lacs	612	14%	79%	? / 88	48% 22/ 46	? / 6	? / 5	? / 11	Princeton
WEST									
Wright	1816	4%	88%	? / 64	? / 11	? / 22	? / 31	? / 35	St. Michael
Benton	481	5%	85%	? / 26	? / 5	? / 1?	? / 5	? / 6	Sauk Rapids
Sherburne	1083	8%	89%	? / 85	? / 17	? / 23	? / 23	? / 22	Elk River
Stearns	2015	13%	83%	? / 266	? / 13	62% 26/42	57% 28/49	46% 74/162	St. Cloud

Region 8									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Lincoln	79	1%	81%	?/1	0	0	? / 1	0	Tyler
Murray	121	5%	91.3	? / 6	? / 1	? / 3	? / 2	0	Slayton
Jackson	123	6%	90%	? / 7	0	? / 3	? / 3	? / 1	Jackson
Rock	147	7%	82%	? / 1?	? / 4	? / 4	? / 2	0	Luverne
Pipestone	115	7%	84%	? / 8	? / 2	? / 2	? / 3	? / 1	Pipestone
Redwood	238	13%	89%	? / 32	? / 21	? / 4	? / 6	? / 1	Redwood Falls
Lyon	403	14%	90%	? / 56	? / 3	? / 23	? / 24	? / 6	Marshall
Cottonwood	199	22%	84%	? / 43	? / 1	? / 28	? / 11	? / 3	Windom
Nobles	278	30%	87%	? / 81	0	? / 21	60% 32/53	? / 7	Worthington

Region 9

	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Martin	312	5%	80%	? / 16	? / 1	? / 3	? / 9	? / 3	Fairmont
Waseca	294	6%	86%	? /17	? / 1	? / 1	? / 12	? / 3	Waseca
LeSueur	403	10%	85%	? / 41	? / 1	? / 6	? / 28	? / 6	Mankato
Brown	362	10%	87%	? / 35	? / 2	? / 6	? / 24	? / 3	New Ulm
Faribault	179	11%	79%	? / 19	? / 4	? / 3	? / 11	? / 1	Blue Earth
Nicollet	200	11%	85%	? / 22	? / 3	? / 3	? / 1?	? /6	North Mankato
Blue Earth	842	12%	80%	? / 99	? / 1	? / 25	? / 32	46% 19/41	Mankato
Sibley	200	13%	83%	? / 26	0	? / 6	?/ 18	? / 2	Gaylord
Watonwan	159	26%	92%	? / 41	0	? / 2	? / 37	? / 2	St. James

Region 10

	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Fillmore	280	2%	88%	? / 5	? / 1	? / 2	? / 2	0	Spring Valley
Houston	434	3%	82%	? / 12	? /1	? / 3	0	? / 8	La Cresent
Dodge	290	3%	92%	? / 10	0	0	? / 8	? / 2	Kasson
Wabasha	337	5%	88%	? / 18	? /1	?/2	? / 12	? / 3	Lake City
Goodhue	671	8%	90%	? / 55	? / 14	? / 14	? / 16	? / 11	Red Wing
Mower	495	8%	84%	? / 64	? / 2	? / 12	40% 17/42	? / 8	Austin
Winona	560	9%	86%	? / 48	? / 4	? / 16	? / 12	? / 16	Winona
Steele	555	13%	85%	? / 73	? / 1	? / 8	? / 36	? / 28	Owatonna
Freeborn	364	15%	77%	? / 55	0	? / 8	58% 25/43	? / 4	Albert Lea
Olmsted	1927	19%	83%	? /371	? / 13	75% 85/113	55% 43/78	59% 98/167	Rochester
Rice	781	19%	82%	? / 148	? / 6	? / 21	53% 42/79	48% 20/42	Faribault

Region 11									
	Total # of Students	% MInority	4 Year Grad Rate White	4 Year Grad Rate Minority	Native	Asian	Hispanic	Black	County's Largest City
Scott	1,383	12%	86%	? / 161	? / 13	66% 51/77	? / 39	? /32	Shakopee
Carver	1,300	14%	82%	? / 178	? / 11	66% 31/47	41% 33/81	? / 39	Chaska
Washington	3,469	14%	88%	? / 500	? / 24	85% 179/210	73% 69/95	70% 119/171	Woodbury
Dakota	6,113	18%	85%	? / 1115	? / 35	76% 214/283	51% 162/320	55% 263 / 477	Eagan
Anoka	4,655	18%	79%	53% 449/ 840	43% 38/89	75% 168/225	51% 91 /179	44% 152/347	Coon Rapids
Hennepin	16,149	42%	79%	41% 2754 / 6780	25% 85/339	65% 814/1259	31% 382/1233	37% 1473/3949	Minneapolis
Ramsey	7,542	49%	75%	57% 2110 / 3674	35% 38/109	65% 1104/1686	45% 263/579	50% 705/1409	St. Paul

Appendix B: Summary of 128 Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Projects

A. Summary Table - Partnership Programs

1. Rural Training Partners and Rural Business Partners

	Training Topics	# of workers*	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
1.	Manufacturing Workplace Issues	105 I & 15 NH	Ridgewater College , Alexandra Technical College	Parker Hannifin, Inc. – New Ulm, Brown County	$135,000
2.	IT Infrastructure	300 I	Rochester Community & Technical College	IBM – Rochester –	$321,853
3.	Health Care front office	150 I	Rochester Community & Technical College	Mayo Clinic, Rochester (St. Mary's Hospital & Rochester Methodist Hospital)	$220,000
4.	Manufacturing & Succession	170 I	MN State Community & Technical College	Marvin Windows & Doors, Warroad	$193,859
5.	Six Sigma & Black, Green and Yellow Belt certification programs	762 I	Minnesota West Comm.& Technical College, St. Cloud State University	Electrolux Home Products, St. Cloud	$286,150
6.	Machining, automation training via expansion of Long Wire training platform, = computer-based lessons utilizing Rockwell Automation's RS Trainer services	282 I	Alexandria Technical College	Douglas Machine, Inc. Alexandria	$276,329
7.	Lean Healthcare, Health Care Services	857 I	Central Lakes College, Alexandria Tech. College, St. Cloud Tech. College	Lakewood Health System, Staples/Central Minnesota	$273,991
8.	CNC (Computerized Numeric Controls) Operation, CNC set up, CNC programming & continuous improvement & TQM	80 I	Alexandria Technical College	Alexandria PRO-FAB Co., Inc., Alexandria	$164,224
9.	Manufacturing automation and processes and supervision	80 NH & 22 I	Minnesota West Comm. & Technical College, St. Cloud State University, Ridgewater College	Case New Holland, Benson Plant	$120,708
10.	Lean Six Sigma and other manufacturing engineering training	10 NH & 310 I	Minnesota West Comm. &Technical College, St. Cloud State University	Manufacturing Consortium, 4 companies in Southwest Minnesota	$330,340
11.	Quick Response Manufacturing	50 I	Pine Technical College	Sunrise Fiberglass Corporation, Wyoming MN, Chisago County,	$76,722

*** I = Incumbent Workers, NH = New Hires, RH = Returning Hires, PH = Potential Hires**

12.	Lean Health Care Services	240 I	Itasca Comm. College, Grand Rapids MN, Coalition for Continuous Improvement (Northland Comm. &Tech. College) Thief River Falls,	Deer River Healthcare Center, Itasca and Cass Counties	$171,713
13.	Die Casting, metal melting and handling	131 I	MN State College – South-east Technical - North Ameri-can Die Casters Association (Illinois)	Technical Die Castings, Inc., Stockton, Winona County	$277,462
14.	Lean Construction	75 I	Lake Superior College –	Jamar Company, Duluth	$155,951
15.	Advanced Technology& Quick Response Manufacturing	185 I	Alexandria Technical College	Alexandria Extrusion, Company, Alexandria	$271,765

2. Rural Training Partners and Urban Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
16.	Green/Sustainability services (consulting) build sales, leadership & environmentally focused skill capacity	298 I	Pine Technical College – Greater MN	Bonestroo, Roseville - METRO	$250,000
17.	Green Manufacturing, eliminate waste, conserve energy & natural resources, improve processes & product quality, shorten cycle times, develop pull manufacturing	64 I	Pine Technical College	Gopher Motor Rebuilding, Inc., Brooklyn Center - Metro	$135,618

3. Urban Training Partners and Rural Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
18.	Manufacturing (Lean & Green)	270 I	Enterprise Minnesota, Change Management Associates U. of MN's Tech Assistance Program.	Metal Casting Industry Consortium – 5 companies Across MN	$230,000
19.	Wind Energy Safety, OSHA, Mechatronics & Green Manufacturing	354 I	Dakota County Technical College -	Capital Safety Group, Red Wing	$300,000
20.	Manufacturing, Continuous Improvement	218 I	Enterprise Minnesota	Statewide Manufacturing Consortium 5 companies	$192,444
21.	Training in regulator, automation systems, org capacity, technical and train-the-trainer Machining	58 NH & 122 I	Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Metro	Ultra Machining Company, Monticello, Wright County, Greater MN	$269,088

4. Urban Training Partners and BOTH Rural and Urban Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
22.	Food Processing - increases skill levels of maintenance mechanics & provide career path thru apprenticeship program for machine operators	575 I	Dakota County Technical College - Metro	ConAgra Foods, Inc., Maple Grove, Hastings and Lakeville, Metro and Greater	$383,181
23.	Editorial, advertising, web skills, training in editorial, advertising, new content, video, flash	325 I	University of Minnesota – Metro	St. Paul Pioneer Press & Duluth News Tribune Metro and Greater MN	$228,623
24.	Lean manufacturing/Lean Enterprise trained via on-line Lean Enterprise Certification program	155 I	Enterprise Minnesota – Metro	3 companies Manufacturing Consortium rural and urban	$288,439
25.	Predevelopment – training model Eventually 321 Incumbent journalism employees		Pre-development grant U. of MN School of Journalism & Mass Communications	St. Paul Pioneer Press, Duluth News Tribune, MN Newspaper Guild – Metro and Greater Minnesota	$10,901
26	Energy safety training, hazard avoidance	2140 I	Inver Hills Community College, Metro	Xcel Energy, MPLS, training at six sites across the state	$330,000

5. BOTH Rural and Urban Training Partners and Urban Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
27.	Lean and Green, ESL, Contextual English, Marketing, Sales& Services horticulture	20 NH & 160 I	Anoka-Ramsey Comm. College, Univ. of Minn.-Crookston	Len Busch Roses, Plymouth	$300,000
28.	Manufacturer partners & Exhibit Design	160 I	Anoka-Ramsey Comm. College, Bemidji State University	Sign-Zone, Inc., Anoka	$225,175

6. BOTH Rural and Urban Training Partners and Rural Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
29.	Complementary & alternative Medicine training	700 I	Minnesota State College, Southeast Technical, Anoka-Ramsey Community College	Fairview Red Wing Health Services, Red Wing	$275,000
30.	Lean Manufacturing/Lean Six Sigma, Electrochromic Glass	90 I & 133 NH	MN State Univ. Mankato, South Central Comm. College, Normandale Community College	SAGE Electrochromics, Inc., Faribault	$350,000

7. Urban Training Partners and Urban Businesses

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
31.	Hybrid Nursing, Assistant/Acute Care , Nursing Assistant	359 I	Minneapolis Community & Technical College	Park Nicollet Health Services, MPLS	$225,000
32.	5S, Lean manufacturing, 5S, Wasted ID and reduction & ESL	195 I & 13 NH	No. Hennepin Community College, Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program	Teleflex Medical OEM, Plymouth	$260,000
33.	Energy, Lean/Green manufacturing, ISO training	151 I & 10 NH	Century College, Hennepin Technical College,	Wilbert Plastic Services, White Bear Lake	$217,646
34.	Pre-development curriculum - CM's process improvement model Capability Maturity model integration (CMII)	100 I	Hennepin Technical College Carnegie Mellon	Honeywell International, Golden Valley	$37,800
35.	HVAC fabrication, technical wiring, EPA certification, ERP software, quality initiatives Green Facilities	190 I	Minneapolis Community and Technical College	Innovent Air Handling Equipment, MPLS	$230,779
36.	Manufacturing Process improvement, training to become an ambidextrous org, business strategies	398 I	Normandale Community College	H.B. Fuller Company, St. Paul	$300,000
37.	Training in Quality Management and ISO certification	345 I	Enterprise Minnesota, AQS Management Systems,	Stratasys, Eden Prairie	$204,062
38.	Lean Manufacturing/process improvement & ESL4 Lean/6 Sigma	393 I	North Hennepin Community College, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Osseo ABE, Robbinsdale ABE	Accelent, Inc. Brooklyn Park	$300,000
39.	Food processing, new facilities & equipment	257 I	Dakota County Tech College	Michael Foods, Inc/ Northern Star Co	$287,112
40.	Manufacturing, OJT rapid learning Techniques, Operation Management, Quality Programs, Safety	650 I	Anoka-Ramsey Community College	Minco Products, Inc., Fridley	$150,000
41.	Green printing, Security, Loss prevention, preventative maintenance, writing work instructions & train the trainer	20 I & 50 RW & 50 NH	St. Paul College	UV Color, Inc., Roseville - Metro	$121,690
42.	Surgical instrument processing advanced training & certification program 4 sterile processing workers	298 I	Anoka Technical College, Metro	Fairview Health Services, Metro	$178,530
43.	Oracle implementation/training. Manage complex merchandising system& maximize technological applications	165 I	Minneapolis Community and Technical College Metro	Advance Auto Parts, Inc, /Store Support Center, Minneapolis.	$314,055

44.	Health Care, training 4 mandated certification in both basic life support and advanced cardiac life support	450 I	Inver Hills Community College	Fairview Ridges Hospital, Burnesville	$192,291
45.	Production Processes, Math and Measurements, Metal Fabrication, Automated (Robotic) Equipment & CNC Programming welding, machining	128 I	Minneapolis Community & Technical College	SICO America, Inc., Edina	$320,000
46.	Business skills	1103 I	Normandale Community College	Deluxe Corporation, Shoreview	$393,837
47.	Soldering certification/ manufacturing	511 I	Dakota County Technical College	4 Metro co.'s Electronics Consortium	$389,849
48.	Fire Safety engineering, Integrated Management Systems, proactive tech skills, multi-cultural leadership	425 I	Dakota County Technical College	Uponor Corp, Apple Valley	$298,841
49.	Holistic Team Model, applied Medical Health Skills& Applied Behavioral Health Skills,	357 I	Normandale Community College	CIGNA HealthCare, Eden Prairie -	$267,502
50.	Develop tools for a multi-cultural continuous improvement effort & help them adapt to a new, high tech environment biomedical manufacturing	266 I	North Hennepin Community College, Anoka Ramsey. Community College	Gyrus Medical, Inc. Maple Grove	$280,000
51.	Lean Flow for Health Care	280 I	St. Paul College	St. John's Hospital, Maplewood -	$260,000
52.	Manufacturing (Welding, Metal Fabrication)	64 NH & 126 I	St. Paul College, Anoka Technical College, local workforce service areas & several Adult Basic Education consortiums	Consortium of 21 Precision Metal Forming Manufacturers in East and North Twin Cities Metro area	$354,665
53.	Geriatric Health Care, memory loss, comprehensive certification program, improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover& pilot this model for possible future statewide training & meet anticipated state regulatory requirements.	400 I	Inver Hills Community College - Metro	Ebenezer, two metro location with state wide rollout possible later	$286,041
54.	Food Merchandising, marketing, management	500 I	Concordia University -	SUPERVALU, Inc. / SUPERVALU University, Metro location	$398,095

B. Summary Table - Partnership Short Form

1. Rural Training Partners and Rural Businessess

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
55.	Certificate programs in Gerontology & Advanced Care Giver	232 I	Central Lakes College,	Good Samaritan Society & Oakridge Woodview – both Brainerd	$48,200
56.	Manufacturing - add marketable skills, reduce non-productive time, overtime and rework & expand expertise in repair diagnosis	39 I	Pine Technical College Greater MN, Builds on prev MJSP grant	Jungclaus Implement, Inc. , Glencoe, McCloud Country,	$49,842
57.	Printing- employees transition to new org structure process improvements, restructure organization,	45 I	Rochester Community & Technical College, Olmstead County	Schmidt Printing, Byron, Olmstead Cnty,	$39,489
58.	8. Food Processing - a competency-based workforce development program for the entire workforce	??? I	Rochester Community & Technical College, Olmstead County, South Central College, Mankato	Pinnacle Foods Group, LLC Waseca, Waseca county	$30,000
59.	On-line Lean A3 manufacturing	16 I	So. Central College, Mankato	Jones Metal Products, Mankato	$22,301
60.	Lean Manufacturing Workplace Lean Curriculum, Lean for Manufacturing, Lean for Admin, Lean Launch	67 I	South Central College, Mankato	CalAmp – Waseca, Waseca county,	$24,194
61.	Health Care Process improvement	58 I	Rochester Community & Technical College	Olmsted Medical Center, Rochester & Harmony Enterprises, Harmony	$48,813
62.	ISO 9001 Certification requirements training, Lean/6 Sigma Manufacturing	30 I	MN State University Mankato	Winnebago Manufacturing Company, Blue Earth	$36,000
63.	Manufacturing – shop skills; Rebuild of Hydraulic cylinders, pumps & motors & trouble shooting electrical & electronic systems	7 I & 55 NH	Hibbing Community College	Minnesota Twist Drill, Chisolm	$37,200
64.	Lean office, procurement, CNC and Set up Reduction	62 I	MN State Community & Tech College - Courses in Alexandria and Fergus Falls	9 Greater MN company Diverse Manufacturing Consortium -	$42,806
65.	Complex Care training (IV therapy, feed tubes, continuous positive airway pressure, etc	55 I	Rochester Community & Technical College – greater MN	Spring Valley Senior Living & Adams Health Care Center, both in rural southeaster MN	$43,096
66.	Lean training, strategic business planning facilitation, quality improvement metrics identification and leadership performance coaching	32 I	Northland Community & Technical College – Greater MN	C&M Ford Sales, Inc., Hallock & Roseau County Ford, Roseau; Both rural Northeastern MN	$41,303

67.	Manufacturing –safe& successful operation of extrusion machines	80 I	Pine Technical College Greater MN	Andersen Corporation, North Branch, Chisago county –	$49,670
68.	Dealership operations -overall understanding of interrelatedness of company's financial activities & more specific training	36 I	Pine Technical College – Greater MN	Jungclaus Implement, Inc., Glencoe	$49,845
69.	Health Care services, Training in Respiratory therapy program director	19 I	Northland Community and Technical College, NorthWestern MN	Riverview Health Care Association, St. Joseph's Hospital, LifeCare Medical Center, North Country Hospital	$18,825
70.	Health Care services, Therapy in Home Care Program	40 I	Rochester Community and Technical College	Madonna Towers of Rochester, Stanley Jones & Assoc, Rochester	$46,880
71.	Management Overview, Introduction to Quality Organization & Process Documentation	61 I	Bemidji State University, Northland Community and Technical College	North Central Door Company, LLS, Bemidji	$44,054
72.	Manufacturing automation, programming, machine operation, mechanical maintenance, & automated inventory & process controls & Lean manufacturing process	28 I & 14 NH	MN West Community & Technical College, Greater MN	Future Products, Inc., Benson MN Greater MN	$49,896
73.	Human resource/talent management program	78 I	Rochester Community & Technical College – Greater	Cardinal of Minnesota, LTD, Rochester; Ability Building Center, Inc., Rochester; F&M Community Bank, Preston	$39,790
74.	Project Management & Systems Analysis training Project Management Professional exam preparation	60 I	Rochester Community and Technical – Greater MN	Mayo Clinic, Rochester Greater MN	$45,413
75.	Multilingual Manufacturing Safety & other initiatives via videos in English & Spanish	73 I	South Central College – Greater MN	Mars Pet Care, LeSeur – Greater MN	$29,463

2. Rural Training Partners and Urban Businesses					
	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
76.	Manufacturing - systematic & cost effective production planning	51 I	Pine Technical College, Pine City in Pine County	Metal-Matic, Inc. Minneapolis	$49,921
77.	Manufacturing, continuous rapid improvements	100 I	Pine Technical College – Greater MN	Assurance Manufacturing, Inc., Coon Rapids	$49,980
78.	Culturally focused program combines on-the-job educational sessions & on-line learning	447 I	Rochester Community and Technical College – Greater MN	Circle of Life Home Health / HealthStar Home Health, Maplewood	$47,342
79.	Asbestos Hazard Awareness, Machine Guarding, Fall Protection, Basic Respiratory and Fire Safety	14 I	South Central College – Greater MN	Dem-Con Companies, Shakopee	$22,109
80	Builds earlier MJSP grant to expand company's Lean Manufacturing skills w/ an introduction of "Management in a Lean Environment".	41 I	Pine Technical College	Mid-Continent Engineering, Inc., Minneapolis	$49,395
81.	Manufacturing Sales Forecasting, Demand Management, Sales Compensation Management, Supply Management, & Sales & Operations Plan Development	47 I	Pine Technical College – Greater MN	Metal-Matic, Inc., Minneapolis	$49,581

3. Urban Training Partner and Rural Business					
	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
82.	Lean Product Design & development	70 I	Enterprise Minnesota - Metro MN	Syngenta (? Grantee?), Stanton MN, Goodhue County,	$38,517

4. BOTH Rural and Urban Training Partners and Urban Businesses					
	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
83.	Using real-life situations in a simulated hospital/clinic setting to learn critical care & upgrade existing skills.	30 I	Alexandria Tech. College, Hennepin Technical College, Ridgewater College	Knute Nelson, Alexandria – Greater MN	$49,752
84.	Food processing, Operations management, leadership, customer service, forklift safety	46 I	North Hennepin Community College, Moorhead State	Next Day Gourmet, Plymouth	$32,499

5. Urban Training Partners and Urban Businesses					
	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
85	Printing Flexographic training for press operations-related employees	47 I	Dunwoody College of Technology, Flexographic Tech Assoc	Hood Packaging – Arden Hills, Metro & Walter G. Anderson – Hamel Metro	$40,845
86.	Manufacturing (Electronics & Biomedical) Upgrade skills (Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerancing)	57 I & 22 PH	Dakota Co. Technical College	AbelConn, LLC, Rosemount, Metro	$49,376
87.	Manufacturing	31 I	Anoka Technical College,	Firestone Metal Products, LLC, Anoka	$44,000
88.	Update mechanical, troubleshooting & repair skills	120 I	Dakota County Technical College - Metro	Andersen Corporation, Bayport – Washington County, Metro	$49,995
89	Telecom manufacturing- RF communications, circuit analysis, circuit board repair, soldering, lean methodology & process controls	51 I	Dakota Co. Technical College	Advanced Wireless Communications, Lakeville-	$48,993
90.	Lean Manufacturing- A Lean Flow Basics & Lean Flow Events	33 I	St. Paul College Metro	Interscapes, Minneapolis - metro	$37,428
91.	Lean Manufacturing methodologies & progression toward a more visual management system	45 I	St. Paul College	St. Paul Stamp Works, St. Paul	$39,329
92.	Manufacturing – automation	43 I	Dakota County Tech College	Pepsi Bottling Group, Burnsville & Teamsters	$49,860
93.	Green Process manufacturing - maximize efficient use of machines & equipment, reduce set-up & changeover time, increase quality & reduce cost	80 I	Anoka Technical College - Metro MN	Dayton Rogers Manufacturing, Anoka - Metro MN	$41,000

C. Summary Table - Pathways Program

1. Urban Social Service Agencies and Urban Businesses					
	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
94.	Green Roofing Installation	70 PH & 80 NH	Summit Academy OIC, American Indian OIC, Mortenson Construction	Stock Roofing - Fridley	$139,629

D. Summary Table - Low Income Worker Program

1. Rural Social Service Agencies and Rural Training Partners

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
95.	Blended worker program, Environmental, food Services technician, CNA Environmental, Food Services, Health Care	45 PH	Northwest Indian OIC, Bemidji	Northwest Technical College-Bemidji	$85,050
96.	Financial Office Worker, Medical Office Worker, Health unit Coordinator, Bookkeeper	54 PH	SOAR Career Solutions, Duluth	MRC Duluth & Lake Superior College, Duluth	$87,450
97.	Certified Nursing Assistant w/ Food handling& infection control	53 PH	Northwest Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Bemidji	Northwest Technical College/NW Indian OIC – Greater MN	$99,680
98.	Office works	36 PH	Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, North Eastern MN	Minnesota Resource Center – greater MN, OFFICE WORKS training offered in Hibbing and Virginia	$63,360
99.	Health Insurance & Billing, Phlebotomy, Information Tech Specialist, Computer Literacy PC Tech, Health Unit Coordinator, Certified Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, & Medical Office Worker.	38 PH	SOAR Career Solutions, NorthEastern MN	Lake Superior College and MRC Duluth	$76,452
100.	Health Care Workers – Certified Nursing Assistants	180 PH	Workforce Development, Inc.	MN State College-SE Technical, Rochester Community & Technical College, Riverland Community College, Southeast MN locations	$199,175
101.	Welders & Metal Fabricators	80 PH	SW MN Private Industry Council	MN West Comm. & Technical College, Southeast MN Locations	$145,376
102.	Workers continuation of training in office skills or healthcare	36 PH	Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency-AEOA	MN Resource Center, Northern St. Louis County	$80,080
103.	Certified Nursing Assistants or Welders	55 PH	Community Action Center of Northfield, Inc.	South Central College, Northfield, Latino Enterprise Center &Workforce Development	$81,439

2. Urban Social Service Agency and BOTH Rural and Urban Training Partners

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
104.	Automotive skills, financial operations, banking, customer service	46 PH	Goodwill/Easter Seals MN, St. Paul	Goodwill/Easter Seals MN St. Paul and St. Cloud	$98,919

3. Urban Social Service Agency and Urban Training Partner

	Training Topics	# of workers	Training Partners	Business Partners	Award
1.	Health Care Medical Careers program	45 PH	International Institute of Minnesota, St. Paul	International Institute of Minnesota, St. Paul	$99,287
2.	Health Care– CNA training	67PH	Workforce Solutions, North St. Paul	Century College, Metro	$99,133
3.	Health Care fields – CNA, Home Health Aide, Trained Medical Aide, Central Services Technician	94 PH	African Assistance Program, Brooklyn Center	North American Medical Academy- Minneapolis, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, The Accelerated School of Nursing Assistant – Brooklyn Center /Home Health Aide Community Healthcare Academy	$98,596
4.	Certified Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aide, Trained Med Aide, First Aide & CPR	59 PH	American Indian OIC, MPLS	American Indian OIC, MPLS	$98,793
5.	Health Care Services– Universal Health Care Worker for Older Adult Service, CAN & Home Health Aide	60 PH	Anoka Co. Job Training Center, Metro	Anoka Technical College,	$99,000
6.	Medical Clerical, Advancement for CNA, Banking/Finance	100 PH	Project for Pride in Living, Twin Cities	Project for Pride in Living Twin Cities	$95,104
7.	Customer Service Training, Computer Training, Sales Techniques, Supervisory & Management topics	107 PH	Lifetrack Resources, Twin Cities	Lifetrack Resources Metro & Century College,	$99,535
8.	Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide, Trained Medication Aide, 1st Aid & CPR	120 PH	American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center,	American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center	$200,000
9.	ESNS to expand 60-hour Personal & Home Care Aide training 4 ESL	68 PH	East Side Neighborhood Services, Minneapolis	East Side Neighborhood Services, Hispanic, Somali & Hmong -where primary language is NOT English	$51,462
10.	Goodwill Easter Seals = 6-wk Bank Skills training & DCTC = IPC Soldering Certification (7 wks) & Customer Services training (1 wk).	156 PH	Dakota-Scott Workforce Services, West St. Paul	Dakota County Technical College Goodwill/Easter Seals/MN	$160,692
11.	Health Care Services- Certified Nursing Assistant program	35 PH	Workforce Solutions, North St. Paul /Ramsey County	Century College Metro (MFIP& Diversionary Work Program participants)	$64,796
12.	70. Health Care Field, Nursing Assistants/Home Health Aide	91 PH	African Assistance Program, Brooklyn Center	Accelerated School of Nursing Assistant/Home Health Aide, Minneapolis. Community & Technical College, North American Medical Academy	$101,211

13.	100 Hard Hats training program - pre-apprentice carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical, sheet metal working, welding, weatherization & heavy construction.	100 PH	Summit Academy OIC - Metro	Summit Academy OIC Minneapolis Dunwoody College of Technology, Veit Companies, M.A. Mortenson, Minneapolis Community & Technical College	$85,690
14.	Automotive repair, banking, construction	42 PH	Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota (Twin Cities)	Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota	$95,636
15.	Manufacturing, structural building skills in Welding	60 PH	MPLS Employment & Training Program, MPLS Workforce Centers	Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minneapolis	$189,520
16.	Healthcare Office Support, Maintenance/ Custodial Skills, & Welding & Metal Fabrication	43 PH	Employment Action Center/ RESOURCE Inc, Hennepin. Technical College	Minnesota Resource Center - Metro	$150,997
17.	Steps to Success program computer, office applications & customer service skills	38 PH	Anoka County Job Training Center	Anoka Ramsey Community College, Anoka Technical College, Twin Cities locations	$90,376
18.	Health Care Services	113 PH	Project for Pride in Living - Metro	Project for Pride in Living/ Minneapolis Community& Technical College,	$74,878
19.	Office Specialist, Healthcare Office Support, Maintenance/ Custodial Skills & entry-level Welding.	52 PH	Employment Action Center - Metro MN	Minnesota Resource Center, Metro location	$111,706
20.	Healthcare (CAN, RN, LPN)	82 PH	International Institute of Minnesota	International Institute of MN, St. Paul - Metro	$181,770
21.	Universal Health Care Worker for Older Adult Services training program	85 PH	Anoka County Job Training Center	Anoka Technical College, Anoka & Anoka Ramsey Community College –	$153,533
22.	Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)	100 PH	Somali Success School	Somali Success School & Dakota Co. Technical College	$148,500
23.	Materials Handler/Forklift Operator training	90 PH	East Side Neighborhood Services	East Side Neighborhood Services, Minneapolis,	$122,484
24.	Entry-level customer service reps, general office clerks/ receptionists	105 PH	Lifetrack Resources - Metro MN	Lifetrack Resources & Century College, St. Paul Metro MN	$134,759