

STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

MINNESOTA PERKINS CONSORTIUM ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (SFY22)

Version 8/29/2022

Each year, Minnesota Perkins consortia must submit an annual performance report (APR) which details the progress and results of the previous year's local application for Perkins funding. **For the purposes of this report, the reporting year is July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.**

The annual performance report serves to answer two questions for the reporting year:

1. **How specifically did the consortium spend Perkins funding during the reporting year?**
2. **Did Perkins funding make a difference in improving student achievement and consortium operations, and how does the consortium know?**

Listed below are questions for the annual performance report. Responses should include specific evidence of the impact Perkins funding had on student achievement or the consortium operations. As an example, evidence may include the number of students enrolled in new courses, the number of teachers participating in professional development, or the percentage decrease in achievement gaps.

Process for completing the APR:

1. Use this Word document to respond to each question. Enter your responses following each question below.
2. Email the completed MS Word document to Jared Reise (jared.reise@minnstate.edu) as an attachment.

FY22 APR Questions:

1. For the programs of study funded by Perkins in your approved local application, address the following for the reporting year (July 2021-June 2022):
 - Were projects implemented as planned or did they need to be revised? If Perkins funding was not used as planned in the consortium's local application, explain what changes were made. What drove the change?
 - [The Geometry in Construction project was intended to be a collaborative project with several consortia from southern Minnesota. The only teachers interested in the training at the time](#)

were from the MN West Consortium. Teachers from Virginia and Oregon also attended, but with so few attendees, the cost per teacher was higher than planned.

- The Career Expo was the first large event held after schools returned from the pandemic. In a typical year, approximately 1800 students attend the two locations. Since an entire sophomore grade missed out on attending in 2020, both sophomores and juniors were invited to attend in 2021. That brought the total number of students registered to 2362. The larger numbers and need to maintain social distancing required a modification to our schedule. We eliminated the Game Show and Campus Tours and strictly focused on the Interactive Exhibits. The number of exhibitors was less than in a typical year.
- Plans to reimburse registration costs and one-time instruction technology for student teams to compete in the FirstTech Challenge robotics competition were unsuccessful. The regional meet was canceled due to low participation. An effort will be made again in 2022-23 to hold a regional competition.
- Overall, at the postsecondary level, projects were implemented as planned with a couple of changes. The most significant changes came in activities related to reserve funds. The consortium did not utilize reserve funds for integrated academics, Transfr Virtual Reality software or all funds appropriated for Lower Sioux. Instead, Minnesota West chose to focus on innovation in our Solar Program. The Solar Program has struggled to get off the ground, yet it is a career in high demand. We also have credentialed faculty, industry donated equipment, and solid curriculum for the program. Minnesota West chose to highlight and invest in the program by offering a free pilot Solar Certificate. The curriculum was arranged in a hybrid format in which students completed introductory coursework online in the spring semester while completing all of the lab work in a highly intense 3-week camp immediately following spring semester.
- The Career Advising Workshop planned for school counselors and career course instructors wasn't held as planned since school staff were returning for their first regular school year post-pandemic. Hopefully, it will be held in 2022-23.

- What accomplishments/outcomes resulted from this spending? What evidence do you have to support this? Include any relevant accomplishments on the following topics:
 - Collaboration with stakeholders

Youth Committees are multi-sector local partnerships involved in shared decision-making, community education and awareness, resource mapping, youth-centered planning, program development, and capacity building. The Southwest Minnesota Youth Committee is a sub-committee to the local workforce development board (LWDB) known as the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board per WIOA Final Rule. The mission of the Youth Committee is "To guide the coordination of services that fully develops the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota." Its purpose is to recommend policy direction to the LWDB for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth, including; recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth; recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth; provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs; assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth; and other youth program oversight responsibilities.

When Perkins was reauthorized, local Perkins Consortia Leaders approached the LWDB to determine whether the Youth Committee could act as the local Perkins Advisory Committee. This strategy was the most effective means of coordinating those that we needed and wanted to be on the local Perkins advisory committee. Rather than creating one more meeting for all of our partners, there was consensus that it would align nicely to include Perkins as a standing agenda item on the local Youth Committee.

The Youth Committee Membership (per Sec. 681.110 in WIOA Final Rules) strongly encourages that members include the following as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Chaired by a member of the LWDB and including members with special interest or expertise in youth policy; members of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth and other individuals with appropriate expertise and experience who are not members of the Local Board; the Committee must reflect the needs of the local area. Members represent agencies such as secondary and postsecondary education, training, health, disability, mental health, housing, public assistance, justice, philanthropy, economic and community development organizations, and employers. The committee from time to time will include parents and youth.

The members of the youth committee are extraordinary stakeholders that come together to collaborate for the good of students and their future success. The integration of the advisory committees provides increased scope and quality of programs of study funded by Perkins in our approved local applications. The accomplishments and outcomes are increased through this community of collaborative stakeholders cooperatively engaging. For more specific examples, use the following link to read more: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-committee-guide_tcm1045-222605.pdf (Page 14)

The Career Expo Planning Committee is composed of staff from multiple agencies and colleges. 350 staff and volunteers from the following partners work together to make the two-day event a success: • Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium • Southwest Initiative Foundation • Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board • Minnesota West Community and Technical College • Southwest Minnesota State University • Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council • Southwest Regional Development Commission • SWWC Service Cooperative • SWWC Foundation for Innovation in Education • Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce • Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce • Marshall, Montevideo and Worthington CareerForce • Department of Employment and Economic Development • Many regional businesses and service agencies. Additionally, 130+ exhibitors from a wide variety of career fields share information about the careers offered at their companies.

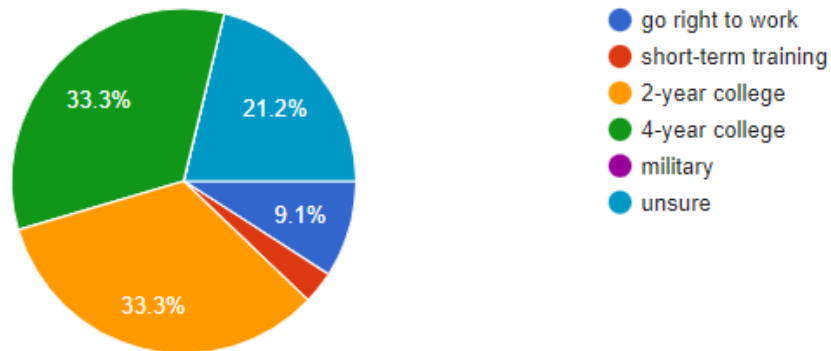
Major Madness. This was the first of hopefully an annual event for junior and senior English Language students and first-generation college students to learn about career and academic opportunities after high school. The goal of the event was to help students discover how college can prepare them for a range of career paths while connecting them with area professionals of diverse backgrounds. Presentations were given by local professionals and current Minnesota West and SMSU students that focused on the experiences that helped develop their careers. Financial Aid and Admissions staff from Minnesota West and SMSU shared information about options to pay for college and campus extracurricular opportunities and answered questions about their college experiences. 56 students from 7 schools registered for the event.

Additional Partners involved in planning the conference include: Southwest Minnesota State University, Minnesota West, Southwest ABE, SW MN Private Industry Council, and SWWC Service Cooperative

Below are a few snapshots from the student survey:
100% of attendees rated the event positively.

5. What are your current plans for after high school?

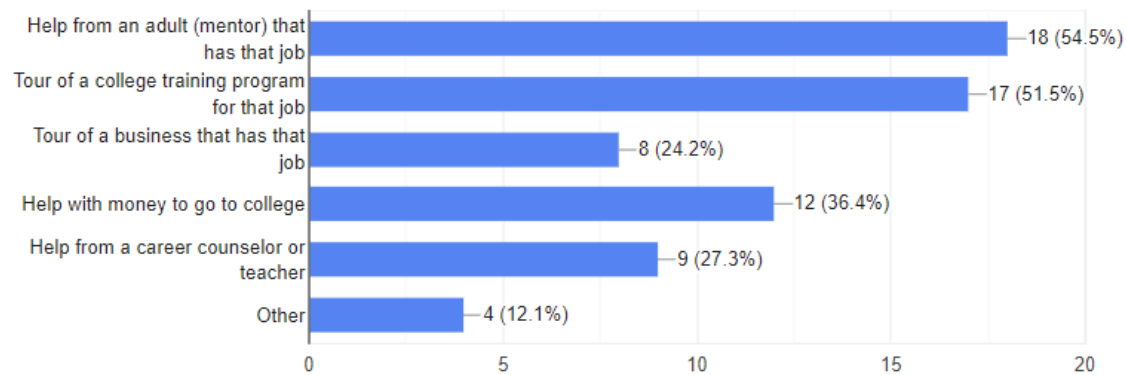
33 responses



7. What would help you get the job you want most? (check your top 2 answers)

[Copy](#)

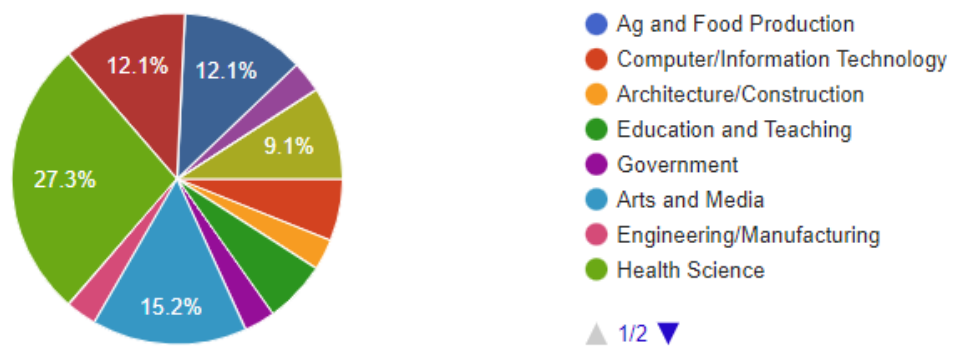
33 responses



7. What career area are you MOST interested in?



33 responses



▲ 1/2 ▼

Teachers were appreciative of the attempt to create an event specific to their student's unique needs. "Everyone I brought, with the exception of 1, is now considering continuing their education post-high school."

7. Do you feel this event changed or influenced your students' post-high school choices?

4 responses



- LYFT- Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding CTE in southwest and west central Minnesota. The goal of LYFT Pathways is for every student in grades 7-12 in the region to gain marketable skills through meaningful CTE courses and opportunities which lead to further education and careers that match our region's labor market needs. The SWWC initiated the Rural CTE Advisory Committee (now the LYFT Pathways Advisory Committee), and began meeting on November 21, 2017 and have met 3-4 times per year since that time. Complete meeting notes and member information can be found at <https://www.lyftpathways.org/domain/37>. The purpose of the committee has been to: provide oversight of the initiative, develop the grant application process, brand the CTE initiative (Launch Your Future Today - LYFT Career Pathways), coordinate efforts and resources to avoid duplication of services, determine website content, determine communication strategies, review the progress of the initiative, assist in marketing LYFT Career Pathways to their colleagues and customers, assist in the development and marketing of local and regional workshops, review and approve partnership application for LYFT Pathways grant funding, assist in connecting organizations, school districts and businesses to CTE project opportunities. **In FY22, a total of 51 projects were funded impacting a total of 8,849 students. Descriptions of those projects can be found here: <https://www.lyftpathways.org/domain/41>**
- The Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Collaborative (MRVCTEC) is a group of five school districts—Lakeview, MACCRAY, Montevideo, Renville County West, and Yellow Medicine East. These schools work cooperatively with their partners—Minnesota West Community and Technical College, the SWWC Service Co-op, the Minnesota River Valley Educational District, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. These entities also formed a steering committee to provide project management and oversight of the collaborative's goals and objectives. The group meets quarterly to discuss registration, scheduling, recruiting, connecting, and whatever else needs to be discussed to ensure the MRVCTEC is operating at its fullest potential.

This collaborative provides opportunities for students to gain skills, knowledge, and experience in technical careers. Career and technical education provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners while exploring and being exposed to various career and technical education career paths found right here in the Minnesota River Valley. In FY22, the MRVCTEC served 80 students from those school districts listed above. Courses offered include: Intro to Medical Careers (18), Nursing Assistant (19), Intro Manufacturing (9), Welding (12) and CDL (22). Forty-nine (49) students received college credit and nineteen (19) students received an industry-recognized credential (Minnesota Nursing Assistant License). Minnesota West Community and Technical College provides space and instructors for these courses, resulting in students receiving college credit directly and gaining applicable technical skills.

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) is a private, nonprofit organization that offers customized training and employment services for individuals and businesses in a 14-county area of Southwest Minnesota through three regional CareerForce locations. They provide youth career navigator services to the collaborative by supporting employers and schools through work-based learning and career education programs (i.e. job shadowing, internships, guest speakers, industry tours, career fairs). They prepare and support students with career exploration and preparation and workplace skills training that aligns the needs of local employees and ultimately provides job placement opportunities for students participating in the MRVCTEC courses. These are just two partners mentioned, for more information check out the MRVCTEC Partners page: <https://mrvctec.com/about/ourpartners/#1510626946593-79fbef85-45e2> Lastly, these results are just for one year. The MRVCTEC implemented its first course in 2017 and has grown the number of courses and students since that point and all of this is due to the collaboration of local stakeholders.

- Recently in our region, Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) courses have been popping up throughout the region. Our local business community partners with area schools to create project-based experiences for students by providing funding, expertise, meeting space, business tours, and one-on-one mentoring. Students visit area businesses, learn from guest speakers, participate in a class business, write business plans, and start and operate their own businesses.

Business concepts learned through the experiential CEO class are critical; the 21st-century skills of problem-solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility, higher-order thinking, communication, and inquiry are at the heart of a student's development throughout the course. Currently, in southwest Minnesota, we have 3 classes taking place in over 30 communities in southwest Minnesota. We anticipate 2 more CEO courses to begin soon.

According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, 94% of all Minnesota businesses employ less than 50 employees. Small business start-ups are critical to the economic vitality of southwest Minnesota. SMSU, local high schools, and regional businesses are working together to create an entrepreneurial culture in southwest Minnesota. Students are being mentored by local business owners and working toward launching their own businesses.

Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) has created a Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) for their students which promotes developing the entrepreneurial mindset through experiential learning and community outreach with a goal to enhance the economic viability of the 18-county area of the MN Southwest Region. The CEO facilitators, SWWC, and CIE facilitators and students connect to intentionally network regularly creating a CEO/CIE Network meeting. From that was born a Student Entrepreneurship Conference. High

school (18) and college entrepreneurs (40) convened at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) in Marshall, MN on Friday, March 25, 2022 to network with one another, pitch business ideas, get feedback from seasoned entrepreneurs, and tour local businesses. Several groups partnered to plan and host this event: SMSU Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce (The largest professional business membership organization in Lyon County that supports the interests of 580+ members and advocates for a strong community.), Midland CEO Chapters (Southwest and West Central) - A year-long high school course designed to utilize business partnerships to teach business development and the entrepreneurial processes, Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) Pathways - A 18 county career and technical education initiative to help high school students find meaningful careers that match our regional economic needs, and the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative (Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium).

- Breaking Traditions is an annual event designed to encourage high school students to consider a variety of career paths. Initially, when the event kicked off 28 years ago, the purpose was to expose students to non-traditional careers and training programs. Several years later, Breaking Traditions evolved into focusing on non-traditional careers AND first-generation students, students facing disparities, and more. The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, in partnership with several Minnesota West Community and Technical College campuses (Granite Falls, Pipestone, Jackson, and Canby) hosted the 2022 Breaking Traditions events in partnership with several secondary school districts across southwest and west central Minnesota.

One hundred forty-eight (148) students in grades 10-12 engaged throughout the days in hands-on experiences in training programs including Computer Support, Powerline, Small Engines, Electrical, Dental Assistant, Wind Energy, Diesel Tech, Medical Assistant, Surgical Tech, and more. They had a very positive reaction to working 1:1 with college students in each of the training programs. For example, in the Electrical program, they wired a light bulb fixture. The attendees also had fun learning to braid hair in the Cosmetology program. It was fascinating for the students to tour the newly opened power line technician training facility as well. The students were able to equip themselves with the uniform and equipment necessary to climb the poles. The Medical Lab Tech program worked through the process taken by a Medical Lab Technician to administer an influenza test. All the students were provided with an influenza test kit and administered one on themselves. The Wind Energy program worked through building a 3-foot Wind Turbine. The instructor was also able to provide them with a view from the top of a Wind Turbine. Much behind-the-scenes collaboration between partners and schools to ensure students have access to these opportunities takes place amongst several collaborative stakeholders including and not mentioned are the Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium and Southwest West Central Service Cooperative.

- Minnesota West best practice and policy requires that each division form advisory committees to provide guidance and advice concerning design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and revision of technical/occupational and liberal arts programs. In addition, advisory committees may assist with marketing, recruitment, placement, and financial support of programs. Committee membership consists of business/industry representatives that share their viewpoints of all segments served by the program. College faculty members, current students, secondary and university partners, administrative representatives, government agency representatives, also serve. In FY22, 19 programs and divisions reported advisory board minutes. Industry partners that participate on advisory boards are critical to the success of Minnesota West. Not only do they provide support through consultation, but they regularly

donate equipment and technology. Equipment donations exceeded \$95,000 in FY 22, from Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, Cross Roads Care Center, AGCO, Cantel, Border States Electric Supply, Ziegler CAT. <https://www.mnwest.edu/about/reports/advisory-committee-minutes>

- In 2019, Minnesota West, Worthington School District 518, Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) and the Southwest Initiative Foundation embarked on a collaboration to grow our own education program. This partnership aims to increase the diverse pool of quality teacher candidates in the region. It is also focused on what it takes to support students who want to teach, especially students of color who aren't often seeing teachers who look like them in their classrooms. The result has been an SMSU education instructor housed on the Worthington campus providing students the opportunity to complete their 4-year education degree and licensure in the Worthington community. In FY 23, the Southwest Teacher Preparation Partnership (SWTPP) program received a Grow Your Own grant for over \$650,000 for the next 5 years. This grant allows SWTPP to cover the tuition/fees, books, licensing and testing fees, etc. (beyond financial aid/scholarships) for any candidates in this program. It can also cover lost wages for time taken off to complete field experience requirements, including student teaching.
 - Integrating academic and technical skills into CTE courses and programs
- The Minnesota West Consortium hosted a four-day summer workshop for high school Math and Construction teachers to learn how to integrate math into construction courses using Contextual Concept's Geometry in Construction curriculum. The goals of implementing Contextualizing Math and Career & Technical Education are to:
 - Implement an innovative approach to math instruction while closing the achievement gap in mathematics education
 - Greatly improve math results on all forms of assessments, pass/fail rates, and student engagement
 - Strategically integrate math concepts into technology laboratory instruction and boost rigor in CTE
 - Bring real-world relevance to math by engaging students in hands-on challenges which apply the geometry concepts they are learning (aligned with Common Core Mathematical Practices)
 - Provide students the opportunity to explore math in context, thereby opening the potential to pursue STEM or CTE graduation diploma pathways
 - Provide the full curriculum to teachers including: activities, assessments, student problem banks, unit planners – Common Core aligned

13 teachers from 6 schools registered for the workshop. One district had their math and Ag teacher resign a couple of weeks before the training so they did not attend. Two teachers from Oregon and two teachers from Virginia joined teachers and administrators from Martin County West, Pipestone, and Jackson County Central schools. In an attempt to offer support to the teachers as they spend the 2022-23 school year preparing to offer the class in 2023-24, SWWC will facilitate quarterly meetings to help keep the course on track and allow the teachers to collaborate.

- The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Minnesota West Community and Technical College (MN West), Southwest Adult Basic Education (ABE-Worthington, Marshall, and Granite Falls), and local school districts including Worthington High School,

Worthington Area Education Learning Center, Minnesota River Valley Alternative Learning Center, Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Center (MRVCTEC), and Marshall Area Technical Education Center (MATEC) partner to provide Nursing Assistant and Welding courses integrating wrap-around services, work-readiness skills, and career planning. Ultimately, the goal of our Career Pathway courses are to create career pathways for participants while creating systems change in strengthening partnerships locally to better support individuals to increase employability and provide employers with skilled workers.

MN West provides the instructor and curriculum for courses. The instructor schedules clinicals for the students. During this course, clinicals are held on location of local healthcare facilities. MN West works very closely with ABE and PIC to ensure students are successful from inception to the end. MN West provides in-kind meeting space, equipment, and access to labs. ABE provides a teacher whose role it is to deliver one on one and group study lessons reinforcing the content taught by MN West the previous day, and also provides wrap-around services during the course. PIC provides Career Pathway Navigators whose role is to support the students during the courses to be proactive about their success in the end. Ongoing support is a vital component for participants. Many are entering the workforce for the first time, some have had unsuccessful attempts at jobs, others may be reaching beyond what they have ever considered possible for themselves before.

For this reason, the Navigators are available on an ongoing basis to provide a connection, encouragement, and/or to serve as a general resource. In addition, the Career Pathway Navigator's job is to work towards connecting these students to local job opportunities with local employers. The local school districts assist and support with marketing and recruitment of students to participate in these classes.

We were able to run a CNA class in February of 2022 and had 1 student start a Community Health Work program at Minnesota West. We started a Community Interpreter training in April of 2022. For the students in the Marshall area, their class was held in July. After attending this class, they needed to complete their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) certifications. Even though we had 22 people in this training, no one completed it by the end of June 2022.

Career Pathway programs held 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022: Sixty (60) students were served, forty-one (41) were exited from the program, of those students exited 61% of them exited successfully meaning they earned an industry-recognized credential resulting in college credit and/or obtained employment. Additionally, these secondary students also received high school credit toward high school graduation. Twenty-nine (29) students received an occupational certificate and more than eight (8) obtained employment earning an average wage of \$14.83. Our outcomes will increase as we start to work on placement from the Community Interpreter class and the welding class held in July. Between our two programs, the goal was to have 97 students exit by June 2023, and we anticipate we will reach this goal.

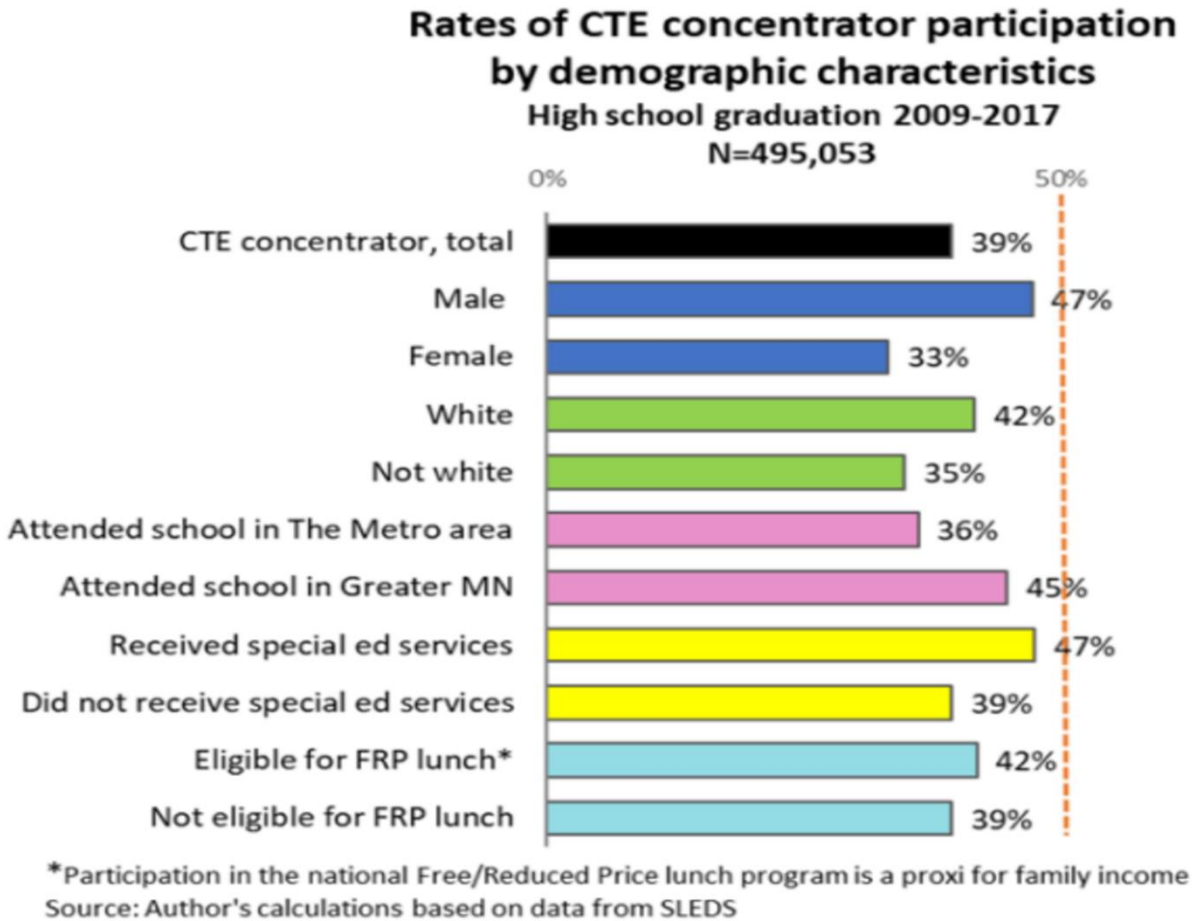
- NextUp- One of the goals of the Minnesota West Perkins Consortium is to expand the transition curriculum options for our districts. Seven districts (74 teachers) used the NextUp Transition Curriculum during the 2021-21 school year. NextUp offers weekly online video lessons and classroom materials, customizable lesson plans, and teachers

can assign work through Google Classroom, Canvas, Schoology, and other online platforms. The curriculum can be used in regular, special education, and EL classrooms.

- Expansion of Student Organizations- 1651 students participated in FFA, FCCLA, BPA, and other student organizations in 2021-22. Consortium funds are available for any districts interested in starting a FCCLA, BPA, FFA, or Skills USA program. Lakeview High School started an FCCLA program, and consortium funds were used to pay the advisor salary and for prospective members to attend the state leadership conference.
 - Providing greater access to CTE programs for special populations students
- Project Discovery- Project Discovery is a State-Approved Transition Disabled Program providing career exploration and assessments for special population high school students. Year-in and year-out Project Discovery has been rated as delivering excellent transition planning services to students and special education teachers. Project Discovery empowers students and special education teachers. Over 140 students from 22 high schools participated in the career exploration lab in Marshall with an opportunity to explore more than 40 careers. According to our regional Labor Market data, manufacturing careers are high-demand and high-wage. To introduce students to these possible career options, a welding unit was added to the Project Discovery lab.
- Project Search- Our transition high school served 7 students from 6 schools during the 2021-2022 school year. Due to COVID, the classroom at the hospital became unavailable so space was made available at SWWC. The class also experienced internship restrictions due to COVID (they were not allowed to have internships in patient areas.) New internship sites had to be secured for the students.
- Major Madness will be an annual event for junior and senior English Language Learners, BIPOC, and first-generation students to learn about career and academic opportunities after high school. Students learned how college can prepare them for a range of career paths while interacting with area professionals and college students from diverse backgrounds. 56 students from 7 schools registered and attended the event in Fall 2021. The Lower Sioux Community was invited to participate in Major Madness 2022.
- Marshall schools invested in a PAES lab for their Middle and High School students. Perkins funds were used to support the purchase. Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES,) is a simulated work assessment and hands-on curriculum lab. Students explore five career field areas: business/marketing, computer/technology, construction/industrial, processing/production, and consumer service. Students complete tasks using real tools and equipment. The lab simulates a real-world work environment The PAES lab allows students to experience and practice job skills that help prepare them for the world of work as well as assist them in finding direction for their desired career paths. Career Pathways (PIC)
- LAUNCH YOUR FUTURE TODAY (LYFT) Career Pathways is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding CTE in southwest and west central Minnesota. The goal of LYFT Pathways is for every student in grades 7-12 in

the region to gain marketable skills through meaningful CTE courses and opportunities which lead to further education and careers that match our region's labor market needs. LYFT is funded through a state-wide Rural Career and Technical Education (CTE) Consortium Grant, which was passed by the Minnesota Legislature. This funding provides flexibility to school districts to be innovative to provide great access to CTE opportunities for special populations of students.

According to a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) article called *High School Career and Technical Education as a Workforce Development and Retention Strategy* released in June of 2002, “students who took more hours in CTE (concentrators) were also slightly more likely to belong to categories who face potential barriers to access to post-secondary education, such as being from a low-income family and needing special education services (Figure 1).



These students rely on CTE more than others as a way of boosting their employability prospects right after high school. Approximately 60 LYFT projects & 68 local schools and partnering organizations were funded between 2017-2022. Nearly 20,000 students in southwest and west central Minnesota were impacted by these projects, and 40 of the projects were new CTE courses. In FY22 alone, 8,846 students were impacted by over 51 projects.

- 2362 students from 33 schools registered for the Career Expo at Southwest Minnesota State University and Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Students from

the southeast corner of the consortium attend a similar event that is supported by Perkins called ACE (Area Career Exploration). Eleven schools and 549 sophomores attended. Businesses stayed after the career fair for a job fair that 225 students attended.

- The goal of our Career Pathways project with our native nation the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC) is to implement customized career pathway approaches to invest in our indigenous persons, in this instance specifically our native youth and young adults to acquire career-specific skills, master work readiness and connect to long term career opportunities in their local community.

Leaders of the LSIC identified several needs for their community. These included a lack of career skills for young adult community members who were not in school as well as deteriorating infrastructure within the Community. Leaders partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Minnesota West Community and Technical College, and the Southwest West Central Service Coop (SWWC) to provide an opportunity for their members to gain career skills and industry-recognized credentials.

The Cankuya (Pathways) Program was developed. In partnership, the program was designed in cooperation with LSIC rather than for its members. Construction projects within the community were selected to master the curriculum and support the improvement of the Community including sheds and patios for their elders. The LSIC was awarded a HUD grant with the goal to build 10 green homes in the Community. To date, nine (9) students fully participated in the education program at the Lower Sioux Community and successfully received a Carpentry Certificate (19 college credits) from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. This project went so well, a Plumbing program was offered with 8 individuals to participate in the Plumbing Cankuya Program. Pioneer Public TV prepared a video about the project. Here is a link to it - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ifqm2m3XcvI>. The Cankuya program is considering an IT pathway due to a broadband grant their community has received to install and maintain broadband installation and development.

- The Work-Based Learning Coordinator works with SWWC Educational Learning Centers and Alternative Learning Centers, businesses, and agencies to form partnerships that support the development and sustainability of career and technical education programs and other enrichment experiences. The Coordinator supports SWWC and partnership staff in organizing, implementing, and evaluating a wide variety of enrichment projects that help students discover their interests, abilities, future careers, and educational opportunities.

Following a work-based learning and career development continuum, students learn about career awareness, exploration, and preparation for a career. Within the continuum, the students are also able to gain valuable work experience by either applying for and getting employment or working with a community partner for job placement. Students can also attend a work-based learning seminar class to earn elective credit for their work experience to meet graduation requirements. Starting in the spring of 2022, thirty-six students were referred to the work-based learning program from our Educational Learning Centers and Alternative Learning Centers. As a result, thirteen students were referred to community partnerships outside of the school for transitional and job placement services. Three students were able to complete the work-

based learning seminar class and earned credit to graduate, with three other special education students graduating by meeting their transitional needs goals. One of those students was accepted into our Project Search program.

- Breaking Traditions is an annual event designed to encourage high school students to consider a variety of career paths. Initially, when the event kicked off 28 years ago, the purpose was to expose students to non-traditional careers and training programs. Several years later, Breaking Traditions evolved into focusing on non-traditional careers AND first-generation students, students facing disparities, and more.

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, in partnership with several Minnesota West Community and Technical College campuses (Granite Falls, Pipestone, Jackson, and Canby) hosted the 2022 Breaking Traditions events in partnership with several secondary school districts across southwest and west central Minnesota. One hundred forty-eight (148) students in grades 10-12 engaged throughout the days in hands-on experiences in training programs including Computer Support, Powerline, Small Engines, Electrical, Dental Assistant, Wind Energy, Diesel Tech, Medical Assistant, Surgical Tech and more. They had a very positive reaction to working 1:1 with college students in each of the training programs. For example, in the Electrical program, they wired a light bulb fixture. The attendees also had fun learning to braid hair in the Cosmetology program. It was fascinating for the students to tour the newly opened power line technician training facility as well. The students were able to equip themselves with the uniform and equipment necessary to climb the poles. The Medical Lab Tech program worked through the process taken by a Medical Lab Technician to administer an influenza test. All the students were provided with an influenza test kit and administered one on themselves. The Wind Energy program worked through building a 3-foot Wind Turbine. The instructor was also able to provide them with a view from the top of a Wind Turbine. Much behind-the-scenes collaboration between partners and schools to ensure students have access to these opportunities takes place amongst several collaborative stakeholders including and not mentioned are the Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium and Southwest West Central Service Cooperative.

- Minnesota West provides a combination of in-person and virtual advising, registration, and orientation sessions to all incoming students to ensure they are ready to start their semester and understand the expectations of new college students. Every fall semester the college holds Blue Jay Days, an avenue for students to connect with one another, staff, and faculty, as well as community members. <https://www.mnwest.edu/student-life/bluejaydays>
 - Expanding access to postsecondary credit for secondary students
- Articulated College Credit- High school and college faculty attend articulation review meetings for Graphics and Medical agreements.,167 students from 10 schools registered for Articulated College Credit in 2021-22.
- The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Minnesota West Community and Technical College (MN West), Southwest Adult Basic Education (ABE-Worthington, Marshall, and Granite Falls), and local school districts including Worthington High School,

Worthington Area Education Learning Center, Minnesota River Valley Alternative Learning Center, Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Center (MRVCTEC), and Marshall Area Technical Education Center (MATEC) partner to provide Nursing Assistant and Welding courses integrating wrap-around services, work-readiness skills, and career planning. Ultimately, the goal of our Career Pathway courses is to create career pathways for participants while creating systems change in strengthening partnerships locally to better support individuals to increase employability and provide employers with skilled workers.

MN West provides the instructor and curriculum for courses. The instructor schedules clinicals for the students. During this course, clinicals are held on location of local healthcare facilities. MN West works very closely with ABE and PIC to ensure students are successful from inception to the end. MN West provides in-kind meeting space, equipment, and access to labs. ABE provides a teacher whose role it is to deliver one on one and group study lessons reinforcing the content taught by MN West the previous day, and also provides wrap-around services during the course. PIC provides Career Pathway Navigators whose role is to support the students during the courses to be proactive about their success in the end.

Ongoing support is a vital component for participants. Many are entering the workforce for the first time, some have had unsuccessful attempts at jobs, and others may be reaching beyond what they have ever considered possible for themselves before. For this reason, the Navigators are available on an ongoing basis to provide a connection, encouragement, and/or to serve as a general resource. In addition, the Career Pathway Navigator's job is to work towards connecting these students to local job opportunities with local employers.

The local school districts assist and support with marketing and recruitment of students to participate in these classes. We were able to run a CNA class in February of 2022 and had 1 student start a Community Health Work program at Minnesota West. We started a Community Interpreter training in April of 2022. For the students in the Marshall area, their class was held in July. After attending this class, they needed to complete their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) certifications. Even though we had 22 people in this training, no one completed it by the end of June 2022. Career Pathway programs held 7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022: Sixty (60) students were served, forty-one (41) were exited from the program, of those students exited 61% of them exited successfully meaning they earned an industry-recognized credential resulting in college credit and/or obtained employment. Additionally, these secondary students also received high school credit toward high school graduation. Twenty-nine (29) students received an occupational certificate and more than eight (8) obtained employment earning an average wage of \$14.83. Our outcomes will increase as we start to work on placement from the Community Interpreter class and the welding class held in July. Between our two programs, the goal was to have 97 students exit by June 2023 and we anticipate we will reach this goal.

The Minnesota River Valley Career and Technical Education Collaborative (MRVCTEC) is a group of five school districts—Lakeview, MACCRAY, Montevideo, Renville County West, and Yellow Medicine East.

These schools work cooperatively with their partners—Minnesota West Community and Technical College, the SWWC Service Co-op, the Minnesota River Valley Educational District, the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. These entities also formed a steering committee to provide project management and oversight of the collaborative’s goals and objectives. The group meets quarterly to discuss registration, scheduling, recruiting, connecting, and whatever else needs to be discussed to ensure the MRVCTEC is operating at its fullest potential.

This collaborative provides opportunities for students to gain skills, knowledge, and experience in technical careers. Career and technical education provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners while exploring and being exposed to various career and technical education career paths found right here in the Minnesota River Valley. In FY22, the MRVCTEC served 80 students from those school districts listed above. Courses offered include: Intro to Medical Careers (18), Nursing Assistant (19), Intro Manufacturing (9), Welding (12) and CDL (22). Forty-nine (49) students received college credit and nineteen (19) students received an industry-recognized credential (Minnesota Nursing Assistant License).

LAUNCH YOUR FUTURE TODAY (LYFT) Career Pathways is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding CTE in southwest and west central Minnesota. The goal of LYFT Pathways is for every student in grades 7-12 in the region to gain marketable skills through meaningful CTE courses and opportunities which lead to further education and careers that match our region's labor market needs. LYFT is funded through a state-wide Rural Career and Technical Education (CTE) Consortium Grant, which was passed by the Minnesota Legislature. Approximately 60 LYFT projects & 68 local schools and partnering organizations were funded between 2017-2022. Nearly 20,000 students in southwest and west central Minnesota were impacted by these projects, and 40 of the projects were new CTE courses. In FY22 alone, 8,846 students were impacted by over 51 projects, with over 730 college credits earned by 292 students.

Minnesota West continues to have a robust concurrent and PSEO enrollment. These included:

Students Participating in PSEO		
	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
Students	643	752
Enrollments	1392	1613

Students participating in REACH		
	Fall 2021	Spring 2022
Students	696	605
Enrollments	1108	849

PSEO students represented 67 high schools including home school. Nineteen area high schools participated in REACH, our concurrent enrollment program. PSEO students participated in 244 courses. High schools provided 54 course options to their students.

- Advances in recruitment, retention, and training of teachers and other education professionals

The MN West Consortium holds teacher meetings by discipline for Business, Family Consumer Science, and Trades teachers and post-secondary faculty. The meeting agendas include visits from MDE specialists, industry tours, presentations by teachers highlighting new units or creative teaching techniques, networking, and mentoring opportunities.

Professional development is a consortium priority so teachers can request Perkins funds to attend. Examples of trainings teachers attend include: MAAE conferences, BPA Leadership conference, CTEWorks, FACS to the Max, ISTE membership (International Society for Technology in Education)

Teacher Externships- Teachers are encouraged to step out of the classroom and spend a day in business. Two Business teachers took advantage of the opportunity. One teacher visited businesses in Fairmont including Preferred Capital Management, Fairmont Foods, Day Plumbing, Zierke Manufacturing, and Kahler Automation. Her goals were to learn what computer systems each business used, the job opportunities available at their business, the key skills they are looking for in their employees, and the employee benefits (including internships and college reimbursement.) The other teacher worked with a local Extension Educator and the Murray County Economic Development Coordinator to start an interactive event called Reality Check for seniors from Murray County Central and Fulda High Schools. The event pulls local business leaders in to help students learn the cost of housing, insurance, daycare, etc. so students understand whether their chosen career will allow them to live the lifestyle they've chosen.

SWWC Mentoring Program- SWWC implemented a complete Mentoring Program for non-CTE and CTE teachers. The purpose of the program is to:

- Provide information to help new employees integrate smoothly and quickly into SWWC
- Introduce new employees to SWWC as a whole – its structure, mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities, etc.
- Help new employees identify the importance of their role within SWWC and how what they do affects others
- Introduce new employees to their division/department goals and their role in helping meet those goals
- Promote communication between new employees and management
- Make new employees feel welcome and assure them they made the right decision in joining SWWC
- Provide a mentor to new employees who is in a like position, if possible, to be able to address specific skills sets for given disciplines and to help establish a sense of belonging
- Get new employees excited about being a part of SWWC and motivated to do the best job possible

A Community of Practice was established for teachers who attended the Geometry in Construction workshop. Three groups of teachers from the Minnesota West Consortium will meet quarterly to maintain momentum in preparation to implement the GIC course in their districts in Fall 2023.

Information is shared with teachers and principals to encourage new teachers to participate in the statewide professional development program for new CTE teachers.

Recruitment, retention, and training of CTE faculty and staff were difficult prior to COVID but since there has been a mass exodus of staff and faculty at Minnesota West. As an institution, we have done approximately 50 searches over the last 18 months. We find that our aging workforce is transitioning into retirement and COVID and telework have presented challenges and opportunities for others to work remotely resulting in small numbers leaving the workforce for other opportunities. To date, we have been able to fill all positions with the exception of one faculty position in a technical program. We are using social media (in large part) for recruitment, reaching out to our advisory boards, direct contacts with potential applicants as well as direct mailings to former students in particular technical programs.

We expect recruiting challenges to intensify over the next several years as salaries in private industry have increased significantly. While we were once on the higher end of the wage scale, we find that we've lost some of that foothold. The ability to be flexible and quickly respond to salary challenges is somewhat out of our control since the faculty work under a bargaining unit that negotiates every two years and often takes a bit longer to arrive at settlements. We have some challenges in our future relative to technical program faculty hiring. It will take a collective effort to seek out and find the next generation of talent who are ready to take on the challenging but rewarding work of educating future technicians and leaders in their respective fields.

The college continues to provide mentors and monthly training sessions for their new faculty and mentors. As best practice, we have also implemented mentorship opportunities for all new staff. The college also maintains the Center for Teaching and Learning model of professional growth and development for faculty and staff. Through this model, 2 face to face development days were offered as well as a number of college-wide Zoom sessions. Topics included but were not limited to course design/redesign, book reviews, academic technology, culturally responsive pedagogy, applying quality matter, and humanizing your course.

- Changes to your consortium structure or processes

This was the first year the consortium leaders implemented our new application and equipment request process. The updated application helped guide the teachers to ensure they were making requests that aligned with the consortium Programs of Study and consortium priorities. Teachers who have been utilizing Perkins for a while have been frustrated with some restrictions to how funds can be spent and feel their creativity is stifled because of the narrow focus of the Programs of Study. The new forms gave the committee the information needed to ensure requests met the goals and Programs Of Study. Feedback from the Private Industry Council's Youth Committee, the Secondary Perkins Advisory Committee, the Minnesota River Valley CTE advisory committee, and the LYFT Advisory board help shape the Programs of Study and consortium priorities.

2. For Reserve funding, what projects were completed or accomplishments achieved during the reporting year? If Reserve funding was not used as planned in the application, explain what changes were made. What drove the change?

- The consortium is working hard to expose students to careers at a younger age. The Big Ideas Trailer is a mobile learning lab that educates students about career paths and the skilled trades. 1079 students in grades 5-12 got to experience careers through simulation activities. This was one of our first attempts to get career exploration activities into the middle schools.
- The LYFT Pathways 3E's Career Course was developed to complement the [LYFT Pathways 3E's Roadmap](#) and [What's Next After High School video](#). Course lessons incorporate regional and statewide resources and are designed to be taught as a full course or incorporated as individual lessons within an existing course. The 15 lessons include:
 1. Why Career Planning
 2. Interests, Skills, and Talents
 3. Discovering Personal Values
 4. Discovering Workplace Values
 5. Learning Styles
 6. Workplace Styles
 7. Workplace Culture
 8. Skills Employers Want
 9. Workplace Ethics – Etiquette
 10. Matching Skills & Interests with Careers
 11. Exposure: Gaining Insights & Connections
 12. Reality Check: Lifestyle and Finances
 13. Real-world Skills – Work-based Learning
 14. Building Your Brand
 15. Job Searching & Interviews

During FY22, there were 2 schools that fully piloted 3Es for a total of 237 students that were impacted by the course. Testimonials from teachers include: “The career landscape has changed and a one-size-fits-all approach to career planning just isn’t appropriate in the 2020s. By emphasizing discovery and exposure, these new “3Es” tools will help guide our students, and their parents, through a strategy that will help them find their niche in today’s evolving workforce. A way for them to use their unique combination of strengths to make their own mark.” AND “I truly think this resource can be a game changer for our youth/young adults making plans for their futures!”

Of our 38 school districts, we still have 7 who state that they do not offer a careers course in their high school. 3Es could be a simple and affordable way to start the conversation about careers for their students.

- Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) – see above. For more information on CEO projects check out their websites here: West Central CEO (<https://www.westcentralmnceo.com/>) and Southwest CEO (<https://www.southwestminnesotaceo.com/>).
- A Geometry in Construction four-day summer workshop was held on the Minnesota West Pipestone campus which houses the Construction program for the college. 12 math and construction teachers and administrators attended the training. The training cost more per participant than planned, but LYFT funds were utilized to help offset the additional expenses. Consortium leaders decided to hold the training even with a smaller number of participants so some schools could pilot the project. Waiting another year for

a summer workshop would actually mean the implementation of a course would take two years since the schools use the first year for planning and to get the course into the school course catalog.

- Major Madness- the success of the first Major Madness event prompted organizers to expand to two locations. The event will be held in Worthington and Marshall in November 2022.
- First Tech Challenge is a robotics program that helps students learn computer science, engineering, manufacturing, teamwork, problem-solving, communications skills, and more. A Demo Day is being planned for 2022-23 to encourage new teams and support existing teams.
- *FutureForward* is an online tool created to connect Minnesota students and classrooms with local employers to positively impact future workforce and post-secondary decisions. As a business, you have a variety of ways you can choose to help youth build confidence in career choices, expand their network, ask key questions, and practice employability skills. It's free to join the employer directory, and you adjust your level of involvement based on expertise, interest, and internal capacity. As a student, whether it's touring a business that has been on their list of places to work, job shadowing someone in a position which interests them or just looking into things further with some questions over coffee, FutureForward™ is a great tool to help them connect with the local employers that have joined the directory. FutureForward™ offers 16 Career Cluster paths in which all careers fall. By pursuing opportunities presented through FutureForward™, students can explore careers that can offer great happiness and job satisfaction. Educators and guidance counselors can play a vital role in encouraging and helping students use FutureForward™ to explore career options and discover what they enjoy prior to investing in a post-secondary career path.
- Learning Blade is a supplemental curriculum that includes online lessons, projects, and activities to expose students to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. 1000 students from 14 districts were exposed to careers and strengthened their problem-solving and math skills by using Learning Blade.
- In 2021, Minnesota West adopted Appreciative Advising as our advising model. We trained over 30 staff and faculty in the model in both FY21 and FY22. In FY22, we have continued to work towards enhancing advising techniques and enrollment. Reserve funding assisted us in training in appreciative advising, implementing a new CRM, and marketing campaigns geared towards special populations in CTE.
- NextUp Transition Curriculum- see information above
- The Work and Learn Coordinator serves as a single point of contact for employers and schools, encouraging a sequential, purposeful continuum of Career Exploration, Career Exposure and Career Experience activities for students. Our local workforce development boards, or the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training, provide these services. Students increase their knowledge of career opportunities, gain marketable experiences and skills, and build social capital that leads to higher wages and lower student debt. Local employers benefit from the development of an essential worker pipeline. Ultimately students will be prepared for career decisions and employment, connected with local employers, and build skills through work-based

learning opportunities. Work and Learn Coordinators serve as connectors between high schools and businesses to expand the number of work-based learning opportunities for students and to make sure they are developing the skills most desired by industry. The Work and Learn Coordinators are instrumental in helping employers develop meaningful work-based learning experiences for students.

- Minnesota West budgeted approximately \$60,000 for innovation in equipment. This included equipment for our Lower Sioux partnership. Other equipment was purchased in the areas of Solar, Surgical Technology, and Occupational Therapy to ensure students are working with equipment that compares to industry equipment.
- The goal of our Career Pathways project with our native nation the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC) is to implement customized career pathway approaches to invest in our indigenous persons, in this instance specifically our native youth and young adults to acquire career-specific skills, master work readiness and connect to long term career opportunities in their local community. Leaders of the LSIC identified several needs for their community. These included a lack of career skills for young adult community members who were not in school as well as deteriorating infrastructure within the Community. Leaders partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC), Minnesota West Community and Technical College, and the Southwest West Central Service Coop (SWWC) to provide an opportunity for their members to gain career skills and industry-recognized credentials.

The Cankuya (Pathways) Program was developed. In partnership, the program was designed in cooperation with LSIC rather than for its members. Construction projects within the community were selected to master the curriculum and support the improvement of the Community including sheds and patios for their elders. The LSIC was awarded a HUD grant with the goal to build 10 green homes in the Community.

To date, nine (9) students fully participated in the education program at the Lower Sioux Community and successfully received a Carpentry Certificate (19 college credits) from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. This project went so well, a Plumbing program was offered with 8 individuals to participate in the Plumbing Cankuya Program. Pioneer Public TV prepared a video about the project. Here is a link to it - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfqm2m3Xcvi>. The Cankuya program is considering an IT pathway due to a broadband grant their community has received to install and maintain broadband installation and development.

- Minnesota West did not utilize reserve funds for integrated academics, Transfr VR software or all funds appropriated for Lower Sioux. Instead, Minnesota West chose to focus on innovation in our Solar Program. The Solar Program has struggled to get off the ground yet it is a career in high demand. We also have credentialed faculty, industry donated equipment and solid curriculum for the program. Minnesota West chose to highlight and invest in the program offering a free pilot Solar Certificate. The curriculum was arranged in a hybrid format in which students completed introductory coursework online in the spring semester while completing all of the lab work in a highly intense 3 week camp immediately following spring semester.
- Reallocation Projects

1. Minnesota West secured reallocated funds to assist our new Occupational Therapy Assistant program with outfitting the apartment/lab. OTA's first cohort of students will begin in May 2023 and has been identified as a program of study. Also, to provide better access, Minnesota West utilized reallocated funds to translate, in Spanish, and purchase roll-up marketing banners for our CTE programs.
2. PAES Lab for Marshall - see information above
3. MCIS Junior- Most high schools in the Minnesota West Perkins Consortium use the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) system for career planning. It was decided to offer the MCIS Junior for middle school students to help improve career decision-making by introducing students to the career exploration software earlier with a seamless transition to the high school version.
4. Students who participate in Project Discovery's career exploration program benefited from a new assessment that matched the region's high-demand careers. A welding simulator was purchased so students can safely explore welding careers. The simulator will also be used at the Career Expo events.

Work-based learning: What activities did the consortium complete during the reporting year to expand access to work experiences in excess of 40 hours to secondary students? What were the results?

Minnesota West continues to offer several opportunities for our students to experience work-based learning. Some programs have required externships/internships and clinicals while others informally work with students to participate in work-based learning. Over 400 work-based learning internships, practicums, and clinicals were provided in 14 subject areas.

1089 secondary students participated in Job Shadow experiences. 463 students participated in Workplace Internships.

The Work and Learn Coordinator serves as a single point of contact for employers and schools, encouraging a sequential, purposeful continuum of Career Exploration, Career Exposure and Career Experience activities for students. Our local workforce development boards, or the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training, provide these services. Students increase their knowledge of career opportunities, gain marketable experiences and skills, and build social capital that leads to higher wages and lower student debt. Local employers benefit from the development of an essential worker pipeline. Ultimately students will be prepared for career decisions and employment, connected with local employers, and build skills through work-based learning opportunities. Work and Learn Coordinators serve as connectors between high schools and businesses to expand the number of work-based learning opportunities for students and to make sure they are developing the skills most desired by industry. The Work and Learn Coordinators are instrumental in helping employers develop meaningful work-based learning experiences for students. Twenty-nine (29) schools and 3,695 students were impacted by these services whose sole focus is work-based learning including job shadowing, work experience, internships, and more.

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) – see above

3. What initiatives or projects are you especially proud of within the reporting year? What do you consider most successful? Why?

Major Madness was a cooperative effort between SWWC, Minnesota West, Southwest Minnesota State, Adult Basic Education, and the Southwest Regional Development Commission. It was a direct result of the findings from focus groups that were conducted by the University of Minnesota Extension through the Equity grant the consortium received several years ago. Students and teachers rated the event positively and encouraged organizers to hold it again. A second session will allow schools to attend without the long bus rides early in the morning. Schools drove over two hours to attend. The additional location means no school should have to travel more than one hour.

Minnesota West has had a Solar Certificate for a number of years. We have attempted to implement the program in a number of ways but until FY 22 had not had a lot of success. This year working with the Minnesota Energy Center of Excellence, Minnesota West Foundation, and a number of industry partners, we were able to offer the certificate in a highly flexible schedule. Students were able to complete theory coursework in the spring semester and follow up with their lab work immediately following spring semester. Students completed the intensive lab work over a 3-week period, on campus, with a housing option, all for free. Twelve students completed the Solar Certificate. Several students returned this fall to complete their electrical degrees, however, 2 students were offered immediate employment from our partners in this collaboration. The format worked well and will be offered again in Spring 2023. Also, the project helped to solidify partnerships with industry partners who participated in the camp, offered financial support through lunch and learns, and donated equipment and supplies.

Project Discovery expanded its opportunities for students based on regional labor market needs. New units included construction, electrical, plumbing, food service, and welding.

Geometry in Construction- see above

Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) courses- see above

4. What challenges did you encounter when implementing your local plan during the reporting year? How did you respond to them?

One challenge this reporting year was the timeliness of the reallocated funds. Typically these funds are approved and available by mid-February, but this year they were not approved until late March making expenditure difficult.

- Transfr is virtual reality creating classroom-to-career pathways. Transfr's hands-on simulation training provides an immersive learning environment that gives trainees real-world experience in the skills they need for well-paying jobs. With limited exposure to work-based learning experiences to local employers during COVID, the consortium considered bringing this technology to the region to support student immersion in industry during limiting times. It was ultimately decided that the budget needed to implement Transfr's VR was much more than all of our partners could afford. And, ultimately we want our students in the real facilities that exist in southwest Minnesota. Fortunately, partnerships with Big Ideas, Transportation Center of Excellence, and

Sanford's Mobile Trailer enabled students to engage with Virtual Reality equipment as a means of exploring careers.

- The consortium held a Career Advising Workshop in 2019. The intent was to make it an annual workshop to provide school counselors and career course instructors with information and resources to connect their students with post-secondary opportunities. The workshop couldn't be held in 2020 and school counselors had more pressing issues in 2021. It's our intent to hold the workshop again during the 2022-23 school year.
- The Cankuya program, with the Lower Sioux Indian Community is considering an IT pathway due to a broadband grant their community has received to install and maintain broadband installation and development. Since our last meeting during the Spring of 2022, it was determined that perhaps due to the change of leadership at LSIC, the focus may have shifted. The consortium is working to continue connecting with new leadership and see if any collaborative efforts could be mutually beneficial between the partners.
- Career Expo- COVID response caused the cancellation of the 2020 Expo. The committee was excited to bring the event back in some form. It was decided to revise the schedule so only the exhibitor portion of the event was held. That allowed us to minimize the crossing of students from multiple districts and hold the event in a larger area to give a little more distance between students and exhibitors. Sophomores and juniors who missed the opportunity in 2020 were invited. That increased the number of students by about 550.

5. How can State staff (Minnesota State, MDE) best help you meet the goals of your plan?

Clear and concise communication regarding our POS, CLNA, and application. We were told varying expectations about the amount of POS we could have. In the end, we revised our POS multiple times which also led to multiple revisions in our application leading to a delay in approval of our biennial application.

On the other hand, we appreciate the straightforward APR this year. There is less redundancy in this year's APR making for more efficient reporting.

6. If your consortium completed monitoring by State staff during the past year, please include information requested in the monitoring report with this APR.
7. If you were required to submit an improvement plan for any performance indicator in your FY23-24 application for funding that you submitted May 1, 2022, please provide a description of the progress you have made in implementing your action plan for that indicator.
8. (Optional) As part of the APR submission, you may request changes to your consortium performance levels for one or more of the performance indicators (1S1, 2S1, 2S2, 3S1, 4S1, 5S3, 1P1, 2P1, 3P1). However, if the consortium is on an improvement plan for an indicator, you cannot request a change for that indicator. If requesting a change, a consortium must provide sufficient rationale/justification for the proposed change.

Note: Technical assistance will be provided for Special Populations and Performance Gaps when the data is available later in the fall.