



21st century skills for all 21-year-olds

What's working

Organizations are working together to create opportunities for young people.

- Educational institutions, businesses and government are all working together to help young people. We have an amazing community that makes these relationships possible.
- Organizations are being more creative about partnering because they recognize that we're all in this together.
- The foundation world is recognizing the important role it plays. It no longer thinks that education is an issue that only the schools should deal with; it sees education as key to everything.
- The great partnership between Achieve Minneapolis and local companies is helping students make life plans.
- Public/private partnerships are working. Businesses supporting programs like the robotic teams and corporations funding legal aid mentorships are just a few examples.
- Minneapolis Community Technical College's strategic plan focuses on working with the City of Minneapolis and providing programs to serve the kids who live in the city.
- The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Schools and the City of Minneapolis are working on a youth entrepreneurial workshop.

- The Minneapolis School District's partnership with the Itasca Project, the mayor and the Police Department are just a few more examples of very successful partnerships.

We're promoting life planning, careers and post-secondary education.

- The mayor and the school district are making kids aware of opportunities and helping them believe college really is attainable.
- All ninth graders are required to do a "my life" plan.
- There are College & Career Resource Centers in every high school.
- STEP-UP offers young people quality work experiences.
- Special programs are helping pay for some or all of a student's tuition.

Police are providing assistance to schools.

- The school district has made a successful transition from the Park Police to the Minneapolis Police for its school officers.
- We're doing better on dealing with truancy. Thanks to recent efforts, there are 300 fewer juveniles on the street and that has resulted in a drop in crime.

What isn't working

Young people lack practical skills.

- Kids lack work readiness and social skills.
- A lot of practical skills aren't being taught by parents or the schools. Even entry-level jobs need organizational, communication and problem-solving skills.
- Many students lack good role models.

High schools are not preparing students adequately for the future.

- Because of the No Child Left Behind testing requirements, we lose the opportunity for kids to integrate learning by working on multi-level projects. Fifty minutes of math and 50 minutes of science isn't the real world.
- Too many high school graduates aren't ready for higher learning.

Young people face hopelessness and hurdles to success.

- Too many young people feel there's nothing out there for them.
- It's a hard road when you don't have a social network. At Edison, one out of every nine kids is either homeless or highly mobile.
- When child care is cut back or there is no child care, some of our students can't go to school because they're caring for siblings or their own children.
- High school students can't take advantage of the opportunity to take classes at Minneapolis Community Technical College (MCTC) because they don't have the money for transportation between the high school and MCTC.
- Students' financial and social situations can undo them. If students are homeless or close to homeless, how can they meet the demands of a professor?

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What isn't working *continued from previous page*

- Putting non-English speakers in class at age 16 and telling them they have to pass a test to graduate is a disservice to the immigrant population.
- Students with limited English proficiency can float for months or years after they leave public school because they lack a community.

Teachers need more support.

- Not all teachers are prepared for the 21st century classroom. There's a generational disconnect with the digital world; some teachers are using Smart Boards as if they're overhead projectors.
- There aren't enough mentors for teachers.

Forty-eight percent of new teachers leave within the first five years of their careers.

There's no alignment of governmental entities.

- Minneapolis has two different police systems.
- There's a lot of good work being done, but there's no alignment between the Park and Recreation Board, the Board of Education and the City of Minneapolis. You can't manage a strategic effort or go after resources when each entity has its own powers, governing board and agenda. This is a critical barrier that wastes resources.
- Minneapolis governmental entities are like cats – too independent. When everyone is in charge, no one is in charge.

What should be done next

Help students envision and prepare for careers and college.

- Talk to young children about college so they see themselves in the careers that require post-secondary education.
- When talking with students, speak broadly about post-secondary education. Make it clear that post-secondary education can mean technical training as well as college.
- Use project-based learning to teach job and social skills.
- Integrate math and science into language and social studies lessons so kids see the connections.
- Change the design of high school so it better prepares kids for college.
- Increase the number of career and technical education opportunities in high schools.
- Offer job shadowing and internship opportunities.
- Make more employment opportunities available to young kids.
- Require every kid to have some kind of job experience as a requirement for graduation.

Help students overcome barriers to post-secondary education.

- Continue child care for student moms attending college. If a student gets pregnant in her junior or senior year, allow her to keep bringing her baby to the high school child care program as long as she is enrolled in college. That way, she can get a college education and the school district can help prepare the baby for kindergarten.
- Develop a pilot transportation program so high school students can take classes at area colleges.
- Create a community for students with limited English proficiency so they have a support system to help them make the transition to college.

Help teachers succeed.

- Reward the successful teachers who want to keep learning. Get rid of the “coasters” who are just waiting to retire.
- Increase teacher peer-to-peer programs or mentoring initiatives.
- Encourage the State to invest in teacher quality and training, instead of just testing.

“Fifty minutes of math and 50 minutes of science isn't the real world.

- School support agency employee
