Building Equitable Postsecondary Pathways for BIPOC Students

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CONTEXT

Problem:

Despite efforts by Minneapolis College and Saint Paul College to create equitable and inclusive learning environments, significant challenges persist in transitioning high school graduates to postsecondary education and achieving successful outcomes.

There's a need to **identify and implement strategies to improve postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and attainment**, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students.

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Issues Contributing to the Problem

- **Persistent Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities**
- **Trauma and Adversity**
- **Limited Access to Supportive Services**
- **Ineffective Postsecondary Transitions**
- **Systemic Barriers**

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MN CONTEXT: ASSETS

1. **State: Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS)**
   a. Minnesota created a system called SLEDS that tracks students from pre-K through college and into their careers.
   b. This allows the state to see how well education programs are working and how students move between different stages of learning and employment.
2. **Regional: Generation Next**
   a. Works to improve education for all students in Minneapolis and Saint Paul
   b. Focused on closing achievement gaps and opportunity gaps between different racial and economic groups.
   c. Uses data and community input to decide what works best to make sure all students are prepared for college completion.
3. **Local: Minneapolis College & Saint Paul College**
   a. Community Colleges
   b. Anti Racist & Trauma-Informed
4. **Programs: BTEG (Bridging the Equity Gap) Scholarship Program and iLEAD (Identity, Leadership, Excellence, Accountability, and Dedication) Fellowship Program, among others.**

State:
Minnesota SLEDS

Regional:
Generation Next

Local:
Minneapolis &
St. Paul Colleges

Programs:
BTEG & iLEAD

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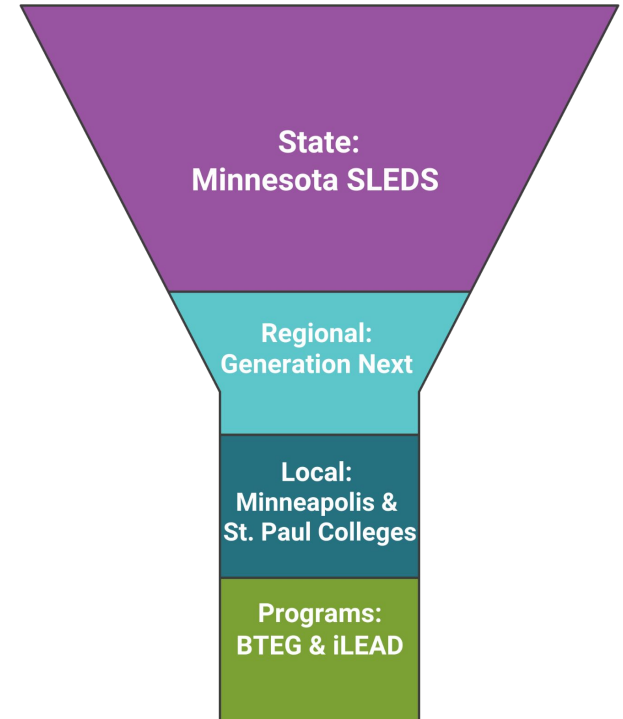
MSP Unique Attributes

- **Strong Commitment to Equity and Data:** The state's focus on equity and the availability of data through SLEDS provide a solid foundation for addressing disparities.
- **Collaborative Ecosystem:** The presence of organizations like Generation Next fosters collaboration and resource sharing among stakeholders along the learner life span.
- **Urban Context:** The specific challenges faced by students in urban environments, such as poverty, crime, and limited access to opportunities, require tailored solutions.
- **Focus on Community Colleges:** A significant portion of postsecondary students attend public two-year colleges, presenting unique challenges and opportunities for intervention.

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General Functions: Minneapolis & Saint Paul Colleges

Direct Student Impact: As institutions directly serving a large number of students, they provide essential educational opportunities and support services.

Ground-Level Insights: Being in direct contact with students, they offer invaluable insights into student needs, challenges, and aspirations.

Program Implementation: They are responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating equity-minded programs and strategies.

Data Collection: They contribute student-level data to SLEDS, aiding in system-wide analysis.

Community Engagement: Both colleges are actively involved in their respective communities, fostering partnerships and collaborations.

Minneapolis College: 9,577 students
Saint Paul College: 7,652 students

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The Why:
Minneapolis & Saint Paul Colleges

Both Saint Paul College and Minneapolis College have faced similar challenges in terms of male student retention and completion, particularly among marginalized groups.

While both colleges have implemented various initiatives to address these issues, there is still room for improvement and further exploration. Key areas of focus include fostering inclusion and belonging, providing targeted support for students on academic warning, and leveraging data to inform decision-making.

BTEG & iLEAD Programs

These culturally sustaining practices are being used across the colleges' strategies

BTEG (Bridging the Equity Gap) Scholarship Program

Minneapolis College

BTEG is an opportunity for Black and Indigenous male students to be a part of a community engaged in experiential learning, mentorship and leadership. Through academic, social and cultural support, students will be equipped with a quality education and the tools to see greatness in themselves, others and the greater community.

iLEAD (Identity, Leadership, Excellence, Accountability, and Dedication) Fellowship Program

Saint Paul College

iLEAD is a dynamic community-building initiative designed to provide comprehensive support and empower BIPOC male students on their educational journey. iLEAD is committed to enhancing retention, persistence, and completion rates, ultimately paving the way for successful careers and thriving wages.

BTEG & iLEAD Programs: Students Served

BTEG (Bridging the Equity Gap) Scholarship Program

Minneapolis College

Since the inception of BTEG, the program has admitted a total of 34 students. Of those admitted, 24 have successfully matriculated into the program and the college. The program maintains a 100% fall to fall retention rate through its first 3 cohorts. To date, the overall program GPA is 2.98, with an overall program completion rate of 76%. Through 3 cohorts, BTEG has seen 4 students graduate from Minneapolis College and another 6 students transfer to a 4-year institution.

Building on the strategies that Generation Next have supported, Minneapolis College has incorporated the learnings and practices into the [STAR Scholars Program](#). This program is similar to BTEG, with the exception of the targeted audience being undocumented and mixed immigration status students. This program serves roughly 25 students per year.

iLEAD (Identity, Leadership, Excellence, Accountability, and Dedication) Fellowship Program

Saint Paul College

iLEAD has served 38 students and are on track to add 15 new students to the program this fall. In the fall 2023 semester cohort, among the 27 program participants, 5 graduated or transferred, and 22 were eligible to return in the spring. Of those 22, 19 were retained to spring 2024, achieving an impressive retention rate of 86%, which is higher than the college-wide retention rate of 54% in 2022 (the 2023 rate is not yet available). The average participant GPA has remained steady at 2.9 for the past three semesters.

Building on the strategies that Generation Next have supported, Saint Paul College has incorporated the learnings and practices into the We Thrive program, which is designed to support students who identify as BIPOC women/gender expansive individuals.

We Thrive has served 18 students since its launch last spring, and the 2024 summer cohort for Four Directions bridge program served 9 students. Currently, 2 students are enrolled at SPC and two are attending other institutions after completing our program. Annually, we provide low-touch services to about 200 students through various programs, including the Native American College Fair, SPC college visits, family nights, and community events in collaboration with our program partners.

BTEG & iLEAD Students

Co-creation of solutions: Provide invaluable feedback on program design and implementation.

Living examples of equity: Share their experiences to inform program improvements and advocacy efforts.

Beneficiaries of change: Ultimately drive the impact of equity-minded programs.

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About Generation Next

Generation Next impacts over 75,000 students through the direct engagement with both Superintendents from Minneapolis Public Schools and Saint Paul Public Schools. The only cradle-to-career backbone organization addressing systemic disparities in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Generation Next convenes a coalition of partners to create collective impact to close the opportunity and achievement gaps facing students of color and lower-income students. Generation Next was founded to unify cross-sector leaders around shared goals. To that end, our collective impact approach uses the nationally recognized StriveTogether model, with our partners agreeing on common goals, analyzing data to track progress, and directing resources toward what works best for kids.

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Generation Next

Strategic Leadership: As a coalition of leaders, we provide strategic direction and advocacy for equity in education.

Data Analysis and Insights: leverage SLEDS data to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.
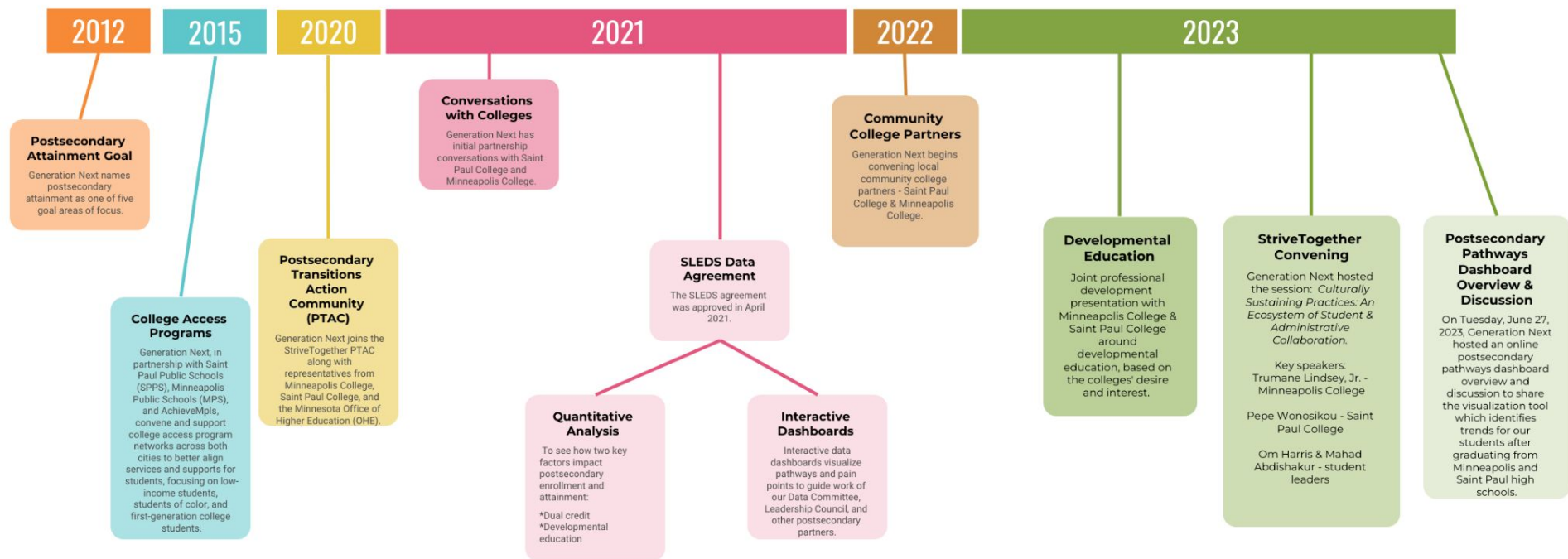
Resource Mobilization: bring together resources from various sectors to support equity initiatives.

Collaboration and Partnership Building: foster collaboration among different stakeholders to achieve shared goals.

Policy Influence: advocate for policies that support equity and student success.

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Postsecondary Work Timeline

2012 | **2015** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023**

Postsecondary Attainment Goal
Generation Next names postsecondary attainment as one of five goal areas of focus.

College Access Programs
Generation Next, in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), and AchieveMpls, convene and support college access program networks across both cities to better align services and supports for students, focusing on low-income students, students of color, and first-generation college students.

Postsecondary Transitions Action Community (PTAC)
Generation Next joins the StriveTogether PTAC along with representatives from Minneapolis College, Saint Paul College, and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE).

Conversations with Colleges
Generation Next has initial partnership conversations with Saint Paul College and Minneapolis College.

SLEDS Data Agreement
The SLEDS agreement was approved in April 2021.

Quantitative Analysis
To see how two key factors impact postsecondary enrollment and attainment:

*Dual credit
*Developmental education

Interactive Dashboards
Interactive data dashboards visualize pathways and pain points to guide work of our Data Committee, Leadership Council, and other postsecondary partners.

Community College Partners
Generation Next begins convening local community college partners - Saint Paul College & Minneapolis College.

Developmental Education
Joint professional development presentation with Minneapolis College & Saint Paul College around developmental education, based on the colleges' desire and interest.

StriveTogether Convening
Generation Next hosted the session: *Culturally Sustaining Practices: An Ecosystem of Student & Administrative Collaboration.*

Key speakers:
Trumane Lindsey, Jr. - Minneapolis College

Pepe Wonosikou - Saint Paul College

Om Harris & Mahad Abdishakur - student leaders

Postsecondary Pathways Dashboard Overview & Discussion
On Tuesday, June 27, 2023, Generation Next hosted an online postsecondary pathways dashboard overview and discussion to share the visualization tool which identifies trends for our students after graduating from Minneapolis and Saint Paul high schools.

Full-size timeline available HERE.

Generation Next - College Access Programs

On-Track Program
Improved monitoring of student data informs effective supports to keep students on track for graduation

BACKGROUND

SPOTLIGHT

College Access Programs
College Access Programs linked to higher college enrollment, lower developmental education course loads

BACKGROUND
Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), with AchieveMpls, convene and support college access program networks across both cities to better align services and supports for students, focusing on low-income students, students of color, and first-generation college students. These programs provide personal and social emotional, academic, college admissions, financial, and career readiness, to ensure that students successfully navigate the post-secondary application and matriculation process. While programming mostly happens in 11th and 12th grade, some services begin as early as 6th grade.

SPPS COLLEGE ACCESS EVALUATION
SPOTLIGHT
With Generation Next support, SPPS completed comprehensive program evaluations of the collective impact of college access programs. The collection and use of data gives a better picture of which students are and are not accessing programs, student reflections on programming, and the impact of programming on college enrollment and developmental (remedial) education course taking.

"When you join multiple programs, you get more doors and more opportunities so your awareness of getting ready for college is a lot more. I started Breakthrough Twin Cities and before I got to high school, I understand what FAFSA means already. I understand what applying to college was already. It's that state of awareness that you're ahead of the game."
- SPPS Student

Generation Next has facilitated and supported several initiatives over the years that have informed the current work in postsecondary transitions. Two notable examples are OnTrack (to high school graduation) and College Access Programs.

Full OnTrack one pager on Generation Next website

Full College Access Programs one pager on Generation Next website

Minneapolis College & Saint Paul College
Why Generation Next Supports These Institutions

- **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion**: Both colleges are dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students. They aim to remove barriers and promote diversity within their institutions.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach**: Both colleges acknowledge the presence of trauma and its impact on students. They are committed to becoming trauma-informed institutions by building safe and supportive learning environments.
- **Public Two-Year Colleges**: Both are public institutions offering two-year programs. They are funded by the state and offer associate degrees, certificates, and transfer pathways to four-year universities.
- **Focus on Student Success:** Both colleges prioritize student success. They emphasize empowering students to achieve their goals and build successful careers.
- **Supportive Services:** Both colleges offer various support services to students, such as advising, resources, and flexible learning options.

Institutional Culturally Sustaining Practices

PLAYBOOK

# GOAL: Increase college enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates for students of color

1. Increase college enrollment and postsecondary persistence rates for BIPOC students.
2. Develop a model for successful postsecondary transitions that addresses the needs of BIPOC communities.
3. Identify and address barriers faced by students transitioning from high school through college

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Component: Interactive Data Dashboards

1. Develop dashboards using data like SLEDS to visualize trends in postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion for your target student population.
2. Consider dashboards focused on specific areas like dual credit programs or developmental education.

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Component: Interactive Data Dashboards
EXAMPLES
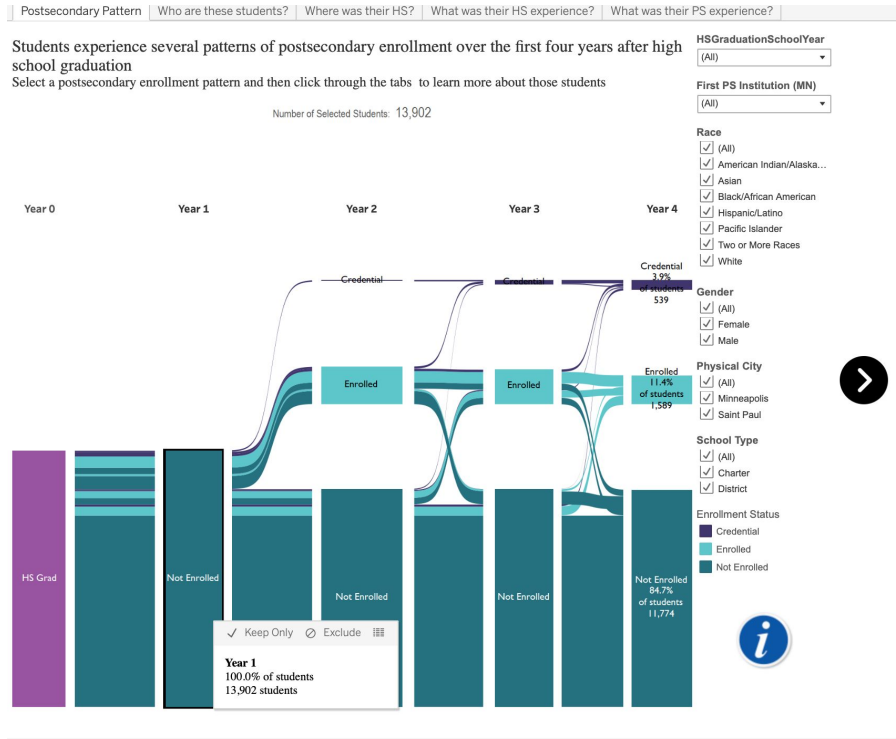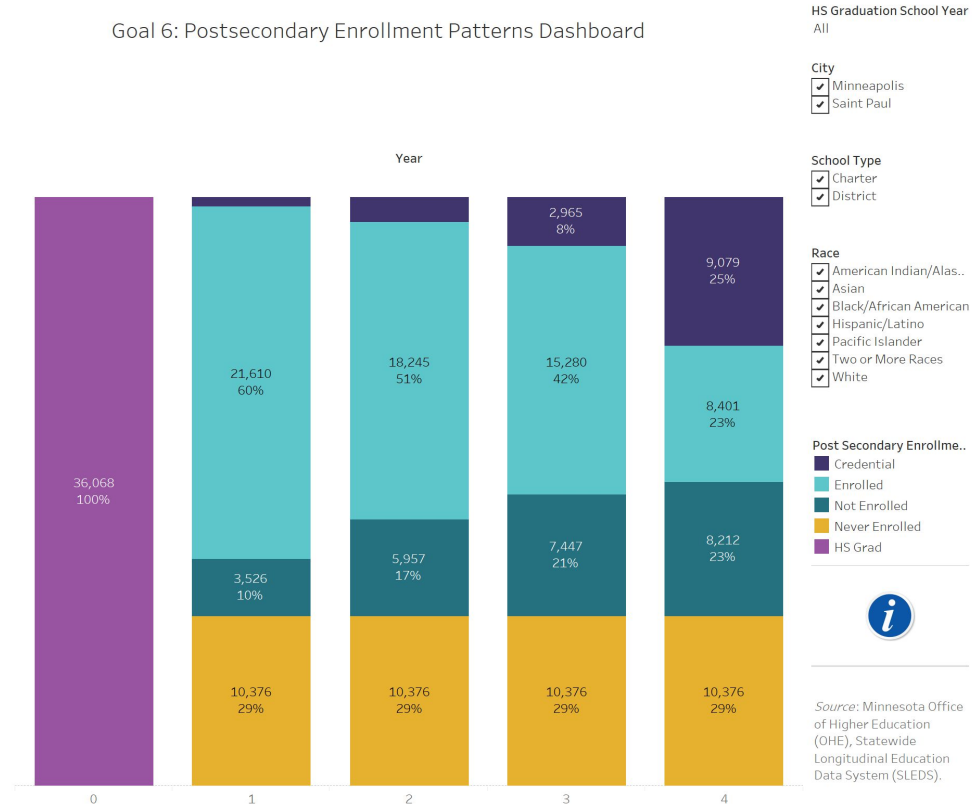
Component: Postsecondary Transition Model

1. Identify an existing student success framework like Bean's Model*.
2. Gather data (e.g., student experiences, local initiatives) to adapt the framework to your community's context.
3. Consider factors beyond student preparedness and include institutional practices that support student success (e.g., culturally relevant curriculum, support services)

*Bean's conceptual model of dropout syndrome
In Bean's model, academic, social-psychological, and environmental factors are expected to impact the three factors of the socialization/selection process: (a) academic, (b) social, and (c) personal. In turn, these factors are expected to influence dropout syndrome. Adapted from " Interaction effects based on class level in an explanatory model of college students dropout syndrome " by J. P. Bean, 1985, American Educational Research Journal, 22 , p. 37.

Component: Analysis and Recommendations

1. To build on and supplement the data from the dashboard, Generation Next conducted research on specific challenges faced by students, like:
    a. Dual credit/early college programs
    b. Developmental education requirements
2. Analyze data and student experiences to identify patterns and areas for improvement.
3. Develop evidence-based recommendations aimed at creating equitable access and success for students of color.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Why These Recommendations Matter

Data-driven decision making: The use of SLEDS and data visualization aligns with the principle of using data to inform decisions. It ensures that decisions are based on evidence rather than assumptions.

Equity lens: By focusing on student transitions, particularly for marginalized groups, and using a trauma-informed approach, the recommendations directly address equity concerns.

Collective impact: Partnering with schools, colleges, and community organizations reflects the collective impact approach. It leverages the strengths of multiple stakeholders to achieve shared goals.

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Why These Recommendations Matter

Culturally sustaining practices: The emphasis on student experiences and the adaptation of models to local needs aligns with culturally sustaining practices. It respects and builds upon the assets and strengths of the community.

Leadership commitment: Successful implementation requires strong leadership committed to equity and improvement. This aligns with the need for actionable and improvement-minded leadership.

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Recommended Steps for Intermediaries

1. Data Collection and Collaboration
2. Visualize and Analyze Data
3. Develop a model and advocate for recommendations
4. Dissemination and Refinement

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Why Others Intermediaries Should Implement This Approach

Stronger Community Partnerships: Collaboration with schools, colleges, and community organizations can build a stronger support system for students.

Enhanced Equity: By focusing on equity and inclusion, this approach can help to close achievement gaps and create more equitable opportunities for all students.

Data-Informed Decision Making: Using data to inform decisions ensures that resources are allocated effectively and that programs are producing the desired results.

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Step 1: Data Collection and Collaboration

1. **Leverage Existing Data:** Partnering with local school districts and colleges to access student data (SLEDS) provides a rich dataset to analyze student pathways and identify areas for improvement.

2. **Engage Stakeholders:** Convening discussions with administrators, educators, and students ensures that the data is interpreted through a lens of lived experience and that recommendations are grounded in the needs of the community.

3. **Learn from Successful Programs:** Studying existing programs like BTEG and iLEAD can provide valuable insights into effective strategies for supporting student success.

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SLEDS Data Sharing

Aligns with the need for cross-departmental data to define the problem and inform solutions

Source: Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data System (SLEDS)


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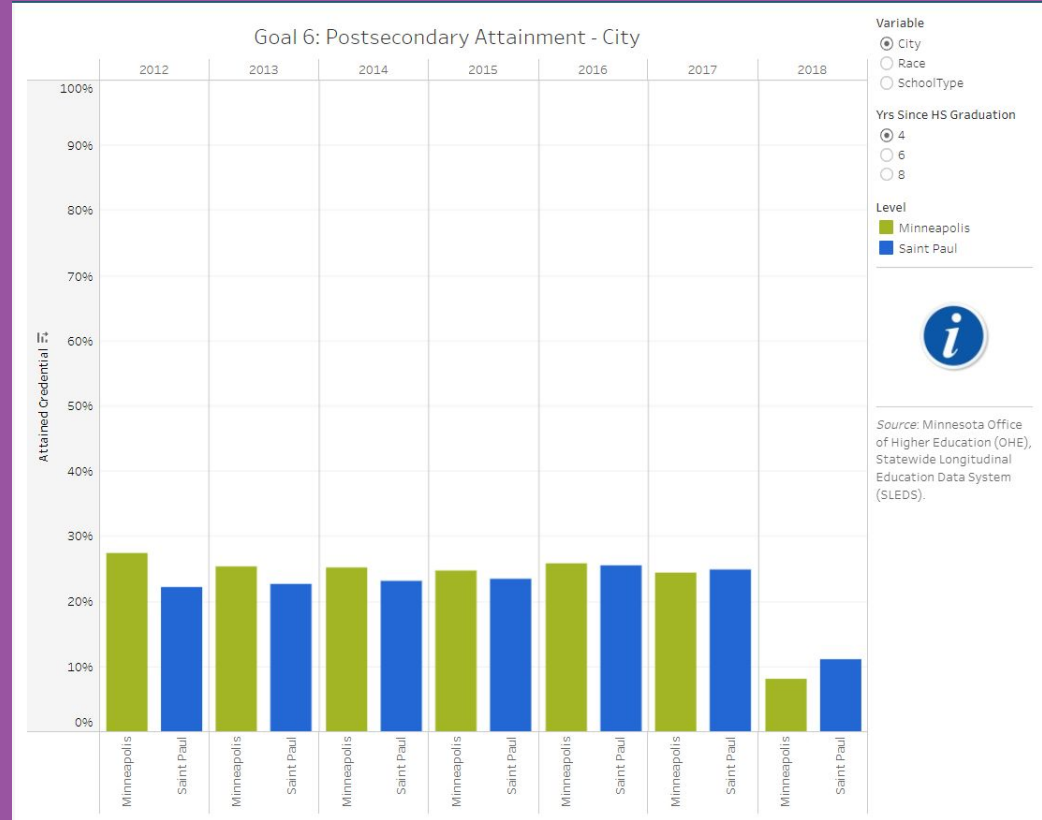
Step 2: Visualize and Analyze Data

1. **Create Accessible Dashboards:** Developing user-friendly dashboards enables stakeholders to easily understand complex data and identify trends.
2. **Analyze Student Transitions:** Examining student transitions, including dual credit enrollment, developmental education placement, and employment outcomes, provides a comprehensive picture of student pathways.
3. **Identify Patterns and Trends:** Analyzing the data to identify patterns and trends can help pinpoint areas where targeted interventions are needed.

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Data visualization

Helps to make complex data accessible to a wider audience, fostering collaboration and shared understanding.
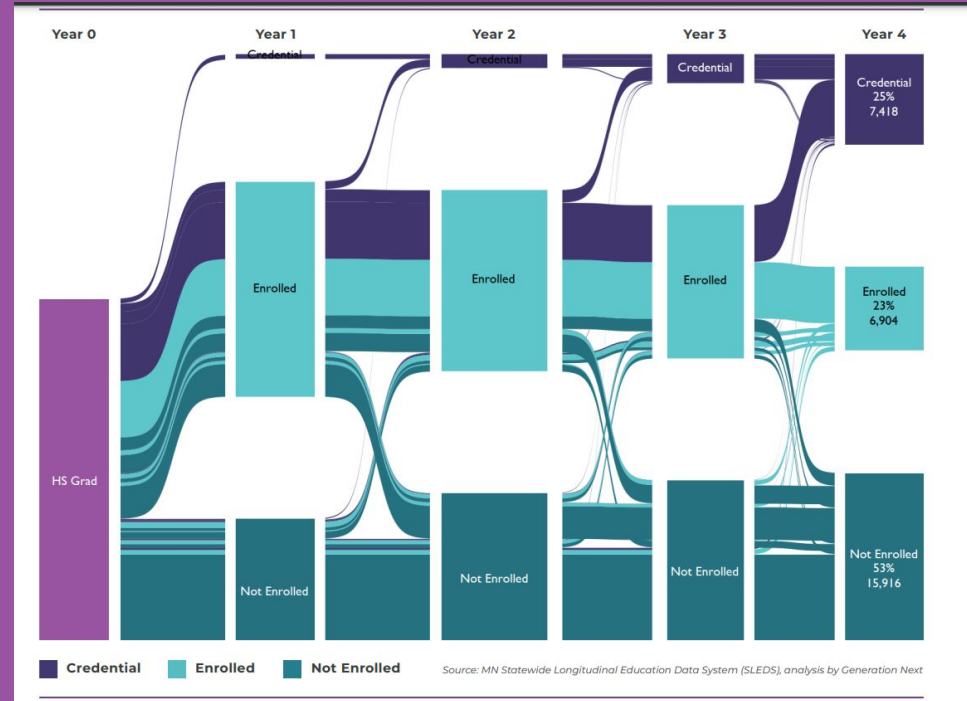
Step 3: Develop a model and advocate for recommendations

1. **Adapt Existing Models:** Building upon existing models ensures that the approach is grounded in research and best practices.
2. **Integrate Student Experiences:** Incorporating student experiences into model development ensures that the model is relevant and responsive to student needs.
3. **Emphasize Student-Ready Institutions:** Recognizing that institutions must also be prepared to support students is crucial for creating a seamless transition.
4. **Advocate for Change:** Using data and research to advocate for policy and practice changes within colleges can drive systemic improvements.

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Model adaptation

Demonstrates the importance of learning from previous efforts and tailoring solutions to local needs.

POSTSECONDARY TRANSITIONS & PERSISTENCE MODEL | WORKING DRAFT

	SITUATIONS/CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
ACADEMIC	· Gap between minimum requirements to graduate high school and minimum requirements for postsecondary success · Lacking study skills needed for postsecondary success · Availability of pre-college coursework	· Exposure to postsecondary education while in high school (dual credit) · Enhanced developmental eduation · Intrusive advising, coaching, and general support services · Gather student feedback to inform program improvement · Incorporate qualitative data collection methods to understand student experiences and program impact · Track student progress (retention, GPA, graduation rates)	· Postsecondary enrollment rates · Credential attainment / course completion · Relationship between persistence and developmental education proposed enhancements
SOCIAL	· Role models and family history · Representation and identity in institutions (e.g., peer/affinity groups) · Race and gender bias regarding "who should be in college" · Natural support group perceptions of value of college · Economic conditions (cost of tuition and employment rates)	· Cohorts of students that create a sense of shared experience and belonging · Mentorship from program staff, faculty, and community partners and peers who reflect the diversity of students · Trauma-informed and person-centered mentorship from program staff, faculty, and community partners	· Alignment of staff and student representation · Student perspectives of representation
PERSONAL	· Awareness of available programs · Ability to build relationships with mentors (personal history contributing to mistrust), and connect and build relationships with faculty and institutional staff · Perceived utility of postsecondary education · Ability to meet basic needs	· Scholarships, grants, and emergency aid to address basic needs and financial barriers · Workshops and other opportunities to develop leadership skills · Help students explore their cultural background and develop a strong sense of self	· Persistence (remaining enrolled) · Participation in campus activities · Participation in leadership programs and roles · Credential attainment
INSTITUTIONAL	· Ability to gather and use student input · School success based on student success (how many students remain enrolled after the first year) · Differentiated learning / catch-up opportunities can delay credential attainment · Operating on anti-racist, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive values	· Offer culturally relevant programming and incorporate our 6 culturally sustaining practices · Implement a two-person leadership model with a strategic advisor (administrative focus) and student success specialist (student experience focus) · Explore funding options like endowments, grants, donations, and student fees · Evaluate factors contributing to student exits to adjust programs and build persistence · Enroll students in classes earlier (early enrollment is a strong indicator of remaining enrolled)	· Composition of staff · Budget allocations for affiliated practices (DEI, ARTI, and professional development) · Teacher performance evaluations aligned with student persistence measures · Participation in cohorts and individual supports

Adapted from Bean's Model of Student Attrition

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Step 4: Dissemination and Refinement

1. **Share Findings:** Broadly disseminating findings and recommendations through events and presentations can build support for the initiative.
2. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly refining the model and recommendations based on ongoing data and feedback ensures that the approach remains relevant and effective.
3. **Collaborate with Others:** Partnering with other organizations working towards similar goals can amplify the impact of the initiative.

Dissemination

The sharing of findings through events and presentations, as well as the ongoing refinement of the model, demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Teams from both colleges (pictured on right) attended the annual StriveTogether national convening in San Francisco in September 2023.

Along with Minneapolis College Vice President of Equity and Inclusion Trumanue Lindsey, Jr. and Saint Paul College Dean of Student Success Pepe Wonosikou, we hosted a breakout room on Culturally Sustaining Practices: An Ecosystem of Student & Administrative Collaboration. Joining Lindsey and Wonosikou were Om Harris and Mahad Abdishakur, student leaders taking part in Saint Paul College's iLEAD Fellowship Program and Minneapolis College's Bridging the Equity Gap (BTEG) Bridge Scholarship Program.

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Future Analysis of Employment Outcomes

- **Deepen Analysis of SLEDS Data:** Conduct more in-depth analyses of SLEDS data to identify specific trends and patterns related to employment outcomes, particularly for BIPOC students and disadvantaged populations.
- **Collaborate with Partners:** Strengthen partnerships with Minneapolis College, Saint Paul College, Elevate Teaching, CAREI, and other relevant organizations to leverage their expertise and resources.
- **Develop Common Metrics**: Establish a set of common metrics to measure employment outcomes and progress towards achieving community-level goals. This could involve further exploration of the FSLW, ALICE, and Self-Sufficiency Index.
- **Implement Evidence-Based Interventions:** Based on the data analysis, implement targeted interventions to address identified challenges and improve employment outcomes for BIPOC students and other disadvantaged populations.

GENERATION NEXT

Reference **Links**

[Minneapolis College BTEG](#)

[Saint Paul College I-LEAD](#)

[Culturally Sustaining Practices](#)

[Analysis of College Access Programs](#)

[2023 StriveTogether Convening: Postsecondary Pathways Session](#)

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