

# MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDY SESSION: INCREASING PATHWAYS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION NOVEMBER 20, 2013

---

**Present:** Chair Clarence Hightower; Trustees Ann Anaya, Margaret Anderson Kelliher; Duane Benson, Alexander Cirillo, Dawn Erlandson, Philip Krinkie, Alfredo Oliveira, Thomas Renier, Elise Ristau, Louise Sundin, Michael Vekich and Chancellor Steven Rosenstone

**Absent:** Cheryl Dickson, Maria Peluso

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees held a study session on November 20, 2013 at Wells Fargo Place, 4th Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7th Street in St. Paul. Chair Hightower called the session to order at 11:10 am.

### **Increasing Pathways to Postsecondary Education**

#### **Presenters:**

Brenda Cassellius, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education  
Karen Hynick, Chancellor's Fellow and System Director of P-20 and College Readiness  
Paula Palmer, Director of College and Career Success, Minnesota Department of Education

Minnesota Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius appeared before the Board of Trustees in June 2012 to report on a *Vision for Redesigning Grades 11-14 in Minnesota*. She provided an update on the steps and progress that has been made to transition students from secondary to postsecondary education. By 2020, it is estimated that 74 percent of all jobs in Minnesota will require some postsecondary education and about half of those jobs will require four or more years of college, Commissioner Cassellius said. That is why it is necessary for today's academic leaders to think differently about how to educate and create viable career pathways for students. Local, customized innovations to achieve these goals must be supported and allowed to flourish.

World's Best Workforce Legislation, passed in the 2013 Minnesota legislative session, will be important to building a relevant, well-educated workforce in the future, she said. This transformative legislation emphasizes important targets in student achievement:

- All students meeting school readiness goals
- All third grade students achieving grade-level literacy
- All students graduating from high school on time
- All students attaining college and career preparedness
- Closing the achievement gap and creating equity.

Commissioner Cassellius reviewed the four-point plan that is being implemented to help ensure students meet these targets.

#### **1) Alignment of assessments**

- All 11th graders will take a nationally normed college entrance examination.

- Beginning in grade 8, all students are required to take a predictive exam aligned to the national college entrance exam, including a career interest inventory. Students in Grade 10 also will take predictive exam aligned to the national college entrance exam.
- If students are on track to reach college readiness benchmarks, they will be strongly encouraged to take college credit options.
- If students in grade 10 or 11 are not on track to reach the college readiness benchmarks, they will be required to take a college placement diagnostic tool to identify areas where interventions should be targeted.

**2) Expand opportunities for college ready students to earn college credits**

- Key studies on the benefits of early college options
- Aligned assessments allowing for earlier identification of students who are ready for college level learning
- Leveraging the range of ways to earn early college credit, including PSEO, concurrent enrollment, national challenge exams and technical skill national assessments.

Karen Hynick spoke about several existing programs which work well to expand the opportunities for students, such as an applied learning institute on the Iron Range where students can earn credits toward an engineering degree and a new partnership between Irondale High School and Anoka-Ramsey Community College which allows students to earn up to their associate's degree while still in high school.

The Perkins consortium model can be used to enhance the connections needed to expand career technical education pathways. This is achieved through the use of rigorous programs of study, joint academic programming, technical skill attainment and the creation of more opportunities for students to earn college credit.

**3) Deploy targeted interventions to improve college readiness**

- Aligning assessment measures in secondary and adult basic education (ABE) to college placement diagnostics can lead to earlier identification of specific skills or competencies students need to master.
- Shared learner outcomes in developmental education should be determined by discipline to the college level and these should be shared with K-12 and ABE.
- Recommendations are being developed to improve the transferability of developmental education and defining targeted interventions to waive college placement testing.

**4) Post-secondary career plan for every student**

- All school districts will be required to assist students in creating a post-secondary/career plan beginning no later than grade 9.
- The plan will promote finding the right fit for the student for their chosen postsecondary institutions and career pathway.

- Searchable, up-to-date labor market information will be available to students.
- Secondary students will be helped with the selection of courses to promote postsecondary degree attainment.
- Career pathways and technical education advisory taskforces will guide recommendations around career planning and the transitions between secondary and post-secondary education. This plan will be personalized and modifiable.

Commissioner Cassellius said the next steps in this overall process will be six regional summits in December and January focused on pathways to postsecondary education. Input from educators and administrators from throughout the state will be gathered and used to help in these efforts.

The ultimate goals of the four-point plan include more students graduating from high school ready for postsecondary education and their careers; more students graduating from high school with college credit, making higher education more affordable; and more students being on career pathways aligned to their aspirations.

Chancellor Rosenstone said Minnesota is unique in its aggressive approach to enhancing pathways to postsecondary education. He added that this effort will be crucial to the success of Minnesota students, crucial to the mission of the system's colleges and universities and crucial to the economic growth and vitality of the state as a whole.

The meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margie Takash, Recorder