

Minnesota Annual Performance Report (APR) FY20

FY20 Itasca County Consortium
Itasca County Consortium

NOTE: This APR is reporting on the Perkins V transition year, FY20, 1 July 2019-30 June 2020 and corresponds to the funding opportunity FY20 Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) in Amplifund.

1. Describe the consortium's efforts to design, implement, and/or improve programs of study during the Perkins V transition year.

FY 2020 ICC had the following POS: 1-Natural Resources/Agriculture, 2-Teaching, 3-Engineering/solid works, 4-Accounting, 5-Therapeutic Services/Nursing, 6- Manufacturing/welding, 7- Information Technology/graphic design.

Regionally, East Range, Hibbing/Chisholm, and Itasca Consortia came together to form the "True North Stars". After meeting regionally multiple times, we established the CLNA process to include regional meetings where we invited local stakeholders from high schools, colleges, and industry. We also surveyed local students, faculty, administration, and business & industry. Using the six career clusters, ICC with the help of the True North Stars partners have identified all programs of study that are currently in place in all three consortia. Moving forward in FY 21-22, the True North Stars will identify which 6 POS represent the region centered around our redefinition of the concept of career pathways to career fields.

We focused efforts and local funds to support these programs of study by:

At a secondary level, we updated equipment in Automotive, Construction, Welding, Agriculture, Print Technologies, Accounting, and Work Based Learning. For post-secondary we updated equipment in Natural Resources, Healthcare and Engineering.

Investing in Professional development of our CTE teachers and supporting student organizations and leadership growth opportunities are another way our local consortium improves programs of study; see question #7 below for a complete list of professional development opportunities funded, and question # 3 for student organizations.

To get students excited in CTE programs, classes, post-secondary opportunities and long-term career options we ensure all 7 school districts in IASC can attend our hands-on Career Fair with different activities, demonstrations, speakers and various modes of engagement. Last year we spent \$1750 for all districts to attend. Also, to continue to grow our POS enrollment, we purchased Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) for each of our districts to share with student's information about CTE programs and explore occupations. Once students are enrolled in a CTE course, our consortium strongly believes in hands on experiences and collaboration with local industry. In FY20 we budgeted \$7,346.40 on CTE related field trips.

2.Explain how size, scope, and quality informed your data-determined decisions concerning programs of study and local uses of funds.

Size in rural areas can look lower than metro areas because of geographical setting. But even with lower numbers of students and instructors, one of our greatest strengths are the fact that we have teachers that are not only qualified but have a passion for teaching in different CTE disciplines. Being new to my position, I conducted listening sessions with many local CTE teachers and it was very clear their love of teaching, working with students, knowledge of industry and wanting to make their community stronger by supporting and encouraging the next generation of workers. However, with that said, a gap would be that recruiting CTE teachers to our region is difficult in that many don't want to relocate to rural areas. CTE teachers are often recruited into industry as their earning potential is often much greater. That opens up the possibility for rapid turnover which disrupts continuity within a program. A statewide initiative for CTE teacher recruitment would benefit all consortiums. To help alleviate both CTE license shortage and lack of equipment, districts collaborate with each other to offer a variety of programs. Schools that are close enough in proximity, transport students between districts by bus. One example last year was equipment purchased and curriculum developed for a class that was to be hosted between Hill City and Remer. Mark Gravelle in Remer worked to develop a manufacturing class where a bus was going to bring over Hill City students. There was a lot of energy and excitement about providing this opportunity to Hill City students, but due to Covid-19 this opportunity has been put on pause. We are also going to provide this sharing of students and teachers between Hill City and Remer for a CNA course as well once Covid-19 restrictions lift.

The scope of this work focuses around programs of study aligning with local workforce needs and skills. By staying within this scope, it allows our consortium to connect secondary, post-secondary and industry to develop our programs of study. One example of scope alignment is Perkins' close partnership with Career Pathways. Last year Perkins supported Career Pathways expansion of its pathways because of their joint effort with the Blandin Foundation. Career Pathways applied for a 2.5M over 5 years grant that allowed them to expand from 3 schools to all 7 IASC school. In addition, the expansion includes expanding the opportunities provided from 2 (manufacturing and health care) to 7 total (the 5 new pathways are natural resources, teaching, informational technology, business, and construction). Some of these pathways Perkins has been partnering with for years, but some are new to Perkins and will allow for new programs of study to develop.

When talking about quality of our program, our criteria focuses on (1) high skilled, (2) high wage and (3) in-demand occupations. According to DEED information 6 out of our 7 programs of study cover at least 2 of the criteria above. Next year, with the combining to form the True North Stars, we will prioritize programs of study in all 6 clusters that meet 2 or more criteria for quality of programs.

Program quality will be measured by certified CTE instruction, which is not always the case in very small rural districts. In order to maintain quality, we need greater participation from schools offering CTE credentials and flexibility in licensing individuals who may otherwise be accomplished in her or his field but lack the CTE licensing to be considered quality programming.

3.Describe the consortium's efforts to partner with business, industry, and local communities and to provide CTSO experiences to students. What were your successes and challenges?

In FY20 Itasca Consortium budgeted \$16,910 through CTSO experiences in the following:

•FFA at Deer River, Greenway, and Grand Rapids. These three districts often collaborate on events, activity and sharing best practices. The 3

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ag. teachers work closely on curriculum, equipment ideas, industry partners and student experiences. FFA support our program of study 1-Natural Resources. Also, this year's region 2 president and secretary come from Grand Rapids chapter of FFA!

- BPA at Grand Rapids—supports program of study-4 Accounting
- Supermilage at Hill City and Remer—supports program of study 3 Engineering/soildworks

One example of business, industry, and local communities' partnership was through IASC Career Pathways manufacturing careers summit and celebration of receiving the Blandin grant. It was an event held in November 2019 for secondary, post-secondary and industry partners that over 100 guests attended, and from there the Career Pathways Manufacturing advisory committee was formed to move forward ideas and initiatives from the summit and to have industry influence education at both secondary and post-secondary.

Strengths

- leveraging partnerships between Perkins, Career Pathways and ALI (Applied Learning Institution)
- collaboration between secondary, post-secondary and industry
- college and career readiness skills
- selection of post-secondary institutions
- dedicated and knowledgably counselors that work individually with students on college and career readiness
- CTE related clubs and organizations
- many CTE courses offered for students

Weakness

- develop career exploration activities to grades 5 and older
- confusion of funding streams and requirements; Perkins is often viewed as the funding opportunity that has too many strings attached
- marketing of CTE and Perkins. What is CTE? Materials are needed (this will be accomplished in FY21). Also, what is Perkins' identity compared to other funding streams in the area.

oWe do not expose students to really what is available in the workforce, the same old tracks are being reported. New and different opportunities will be important for future course offerings and modifications of the programs in existence. Consider modifying the career pathways to showcase myriad possibilities - multiple possibilities to complete a pathway - customization of a coherent sequence of courses that may not traditionally be in line with the current way in which things have been done.

- recruitment and retention of qualified CTE faculty
- the need for work-based learning experiences
- school does not always have equipment for the programs of interest
- method of bringing the newer equipment to secondary from post-secondary
- class schedules, class offerings, state requirements conflict, causing students from completing a coherent program of study
- project based learning limited by class duration
- influencers at the secondary side may have lack of knowledge as it pertains to CTE - language of Perkins, procedures, needs specific to CTE.
- Industries are asking for entry-level workers and are willing to train hire themselves.
- Rural education vs. urban education, the disadvantage of rural CTE.
- Regulations in industry and busing inhibiting CTE participation (policies, procedures).

4. Describe successes and challenges in your efforts to improve service to special populations during the transition year.

4a. Based on the data, what student group(s) did you identify as needing specific attention. What resources were applied to address these concerns?

We identified that the Native American population at some of our high schools has significant number of students enrolled and needs a tailored approach. The two high schools that border a local reservation are Deer River district 317 and Remer/Northland district 118. At Deer River 50.32% are white, 31.09% Native American and 14.39% are two or more races (need to confirm an assumption, but I am presuming the two or more races also include Native American.) At Remer/Northland, 58.69 are white, and 36.75% are Native American and 2.85% are two or more races. Last year Deer River students attended a rally brining awareness to "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women" in Bemidji to learn, hear stories of why missing and murdered indigenous women is the third leading cause for death for indigenous women ages 10-24; four out of five of Native American women are affected by violence.

4b. How did your consortium provide support to students in special populations to ensure equitable access to programs leading to high-skill, high-wage and in-demand occupations?

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The Itasca Consortium will continue to work and collaborate with Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search along with others to promote our CTE Programs for special populations at secondary schools. For post-secondary, we work with our Student Support Services, to ensure special populations and first-generation students receive the support they need. Our Student Support Services offers students one on one support with academic planning, enrollment and registration assistance, career/goal setting, tutoring and study groups, disability advocacy, Cultural Enrichment Activities and Training in Study Skills. They have been a great partner on campus.

At the post-secondary level, we made intentional efforts to include Native American Students to our Natural Resources Exploration Event last fall. Natural resources programs lead to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations in our area. We invited students from the Cass Lake High School, Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shing the school on Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe reservation, Deer River and Remer/Northland districts all of which have large Native American Students. Students rotated through hands-on learning about firefighting, forestry, wildlife management, etc. We invited industry partners to attend and lead these sessions as well. Students contact information was collected and we followed up with a survey about the experience and shared information about how they can get more involved in Natural Resources and next steps. We had a meeting to plan what this year's event could look like due to covid-19. We are considering hosting several mini events for several weeks where schools could send small groups of 10-15 students to ICC to explore Natural Resources careers hands on!

4c. How did your consortium provide academic support ensuring all CTE students made meaningful progress in performance, including subgroups of students?

Post-secondary will use a large portion of their funds to pay for two College Lab Assistants in the areas of Nursing and Natural Resources. The college's management team have been discussing their plan to move the two CLA's salaries from the Perkins budget to their general funds. This will be completed by the end of FY22. Besides supporting students directly through tutoring, and lab assistance, the two CLA also work to partner with local high schools to build partnerships and outreach about CTE programs.

4d. How did your consortium support non-traditional (by gender) students (For example, women in traditionally male-dominated careers and men in traditionally female-dominated careers)

Last year Perkins worked with post-secondary to host 3 nontraditional gender in specific program events. ICC partnered with local high schools and industries to host, women in Natural Resources, women in Engineering and males in Nursing. For the women in Natural resources, there were 150 students in attendance for the fall 2019 event. The event worked with the DNR to engage women in hands-on projects based on different activities for the students. This event was successful last year, and we were looking to grow it even more this year; this year is it TBD based on Covid-19. For the women in engineering event, we partnered with industry leader Boston Scientific to tour and talk with women engineers directly in the field. It was a wonderful event, but one key learning is to develop a project of looping back and keeping the students engaged in engineering as a program of study and be a post-secondary institution to help answer questions and co-set career goals.

This year our goal areas include but are not limited to - females and students of color in welding, females and students of color in construction trades, experiences in manufacturing and or allied health for homeless or in-transition populations.

4e. As you reflect on your service to special populations, what strategies were successful? What strategies were not successful and why?

For the males in nursing event, this was a first-time event that we learned a lot to adjust for next year. Flyers were made and distributed, but the event needs more outreach, partnership with secondary schools and industries. This year's event is TBD due to Covid-19.

5. Describe successes and challenges in the consortium's efforts to improve transitions for students from high-school to college and/or career.

5a. Examples should include articulation, early-college credit, career and college readiness activities, transition of adult learners into the workforce, and brokering with other consortia.

IASC Career Pathways work has a great model of supporting students in the transition between secondary, post-secondary and industry. It creates a clear roadmap for students to get them from point A to point B. It provides experiences around career exploration, gaining a foundation of knowledge through core classes and then a capstone at the end that is work based learning, hands on with industry partners. Being the new Director of Perkins, I have been spending 70% of my time on Perkins and the other 30% will be with Career Pathways to better align and leverage the programs. During this time, I have been spending the first 2 months learning more about each program to understand its strengths and weakness and opportunities to strengthen both together all awhile strengthening programs with CTE teachers and staff. I have been meeting with teachers at both secondary and post-secondary to learn about their past engagement with Perkins and how we can partner together going forward; it has been a great time to learn what is working and what needs improvement.

At Itasca Community College, all three programs that Perkins works with, Natural Resource, Nursing, and Engineering all operate with an advisory council that works with industry leaders to influence curriculum and provide learning experience outside the classroom with clinical or projects with local businesses.

5b. In addition to the narrative, please provide numbers of students participating in these categories.

Another example of transition of student was, last year at Itasca Community College in the Fall 2019 there were 155 concurrent students, 147 PSEO students, and 762 Non-Concurrent/PSEO students for a total of 1,064 students.

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6. Describe the consortium's efforts to BE BOLD during the transition year and beyond. What innovation took place during the reporting year and what was the impact? What were the barriers or challenges to innovation?

The East Range Partnership, Hibbing/Chisholm and Itasca Consortiums have undertaken a BOLD plan to merge into one consortium under the name the True North Stars. This process began in May 2019 and has involved countless meetings with education, community and business partners in the greater geographic region. We completed our CLNA as one group last year and are now working toward a common calendar, standard operating procedures and a new board structure.

Last year, a new way to provide career exploration was executed at Deer River High School. Many of our high schools provide career exploration days prior to signing up for classes for the following year. However, many of those school's target students and share opportunities in fields they already know about; such as providing career exploration about tech fields in the tech classroom. While it is important to provide this service to the students who have shown an interest in the field, you are missing a lot of people who don't even know about tech as a career field. We should be making sure that people in a math class, or health class, or gym, etc. all know about tech options, versus just talking to tech interested students about tech programs. What Deer River did to cast a wider net was they had 6 career cultures host their own station and they rotated all students through all sessions. Even if a student might not be interested in tech, they participated in that station during their rotation and they now know about the tech career field options even if it isn't a fit. This day was all hands-on learning for students to see firsthand what career options would be, and if it was something they were interested in. They also brought in guest speakers from post-secondary professors, and local industry to share about their careers, some of whom were graduates from Deer River high school. For example, the Healthcare program of study had the department head from nursing at ICC talking to students and their hands-on activity was blood pressure screenings. Because of that event a local student's interest was piqued, and signed up for a health care class in the fall. Local media WDIO came to provide media coverage of the event: <https://www.wdio.com/news/deer-river-career-pathways-training-school/5664819/>

The hardest thing that many of us felt was the start of Covid-19 and moving the school model to full distance learning. There was a lot of uncertainty and fear. This caused many events, professional development, and student activities to be put on hold. One thing we were really excited about offering was going to be a high school work-based learning opportunity for those in the health care program of study to work at local nursing homes and hospitals. Obviously due to Covid-19, this didn't happen, nor can it for this fall. We have been in conversation with HR at the nursing home and hospital to provide other ways to expose students to hands on learning and career exploration.

7. Describe Perkins-funded professional development (PD) that took place in the consortium during FY20.

7a. What was the total Perkins-funded investment in PD for the year?

\$15,618.27 for both secondary and post-secondary together

7b. Who (positions, not specific names) benefited from professional development?

1. Work Experience Coordinator
2. Special Education
3. Secondary Counselors
4. Secondary Tech ed teachers
5. Secondary Agriculture teachers
6. Secondary Business teachers
7. Post-Secondary ALL Nursing instructors
8. Perkins Coordinator

7c. What professional development activities were conducted/sponsored?

1. MDE Work base Learning Summit
2. CTE Conference
3. MnACTE
4. ACTE Conference
5. TIES Convention
6. health educator conference—canceled due to Covid-19

7d. What topics were addressed and what were the related outcomes?

- When Ann Carlson from Grand Rapids High School attended the MDE Work base Learning Summit she walked away with applicable ideas on how to support her special population of students with disabilities. From the conference and networking, she learned about the Education Associate company that provides hands on educational tools, resources and material for career awareness, exploration, and developed curriculum that is all adapted to opening doors for students that have a disability. From that conference we used Perkins funding to purchase kits to support students in learning skills in maintenance work, which is a high need job in the arrowhead region. The wage range is average, but is viable employment for people with cognitive disabilities like autism. Each kit comes with video modeling, assessments, hands on tools, digital instructions, and a certificate of accomplishment.
- The Department Head for Nursing, Lynette How, at ICC has always spoken highly of the Health Educator Conference and was disappointed that it was canceled last year. She prioritizes this professional development for her staff and they plan their schedule around it each year. This year Lynette has also joined the planning committee for the conference and it is TBD due to Covid-19. If it is canceled or moved to virtual we are already in discussion to provide other professional development opportunities for her staff.

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8. Recognizing that some students need multiple entry and exit points to CTE programs, describe how your consortium has helped students return to the education system to complete their GED or secondary school education, or to learn a new skill following job loss.

Both secondary and post-secondary teachers work together as one unit to ensure all learners have opportunities at any given point in their educational career. One way we provide this opportunity is layering on education, and offering different certification options. Last year, Perkins worked with the Grand Rapids Natural Resources/Ag. teachers to provide TSA to his students. This is still the plan this year. Outside of Perkins funding but still in alignment of programs of study and opportunities for students, CNA certification was offered from ICC facility to students at Greenway and Deer River. With their CNA they may enter the workforce or enroll into post-secondary at ICC or at another institution to complete their Practical Nursing licensure. Also new last year, OSHA10 was offered for students in the manufacturing pathway through Career Pathways. OSHA10 is a baseline industry standard that was offered up to students to get familiar with those testing and learning opportunities; when talking with industry leaders about what course to offer they recommended OSHA10 because after that so many companies require other certifications based on their onboarding program.

9. What actions did the consortium take to advance teacher recruitment, retention, training, and education? What were your successes and challenges? What would you change in the future?

Individual high schools and colleges work hard to recruit and retain qualified staff. When new staff are hired, retention is important and is often done by making connections to other teachers in the same discipline across different districts. Perkins is considering focusing to create affinity groups or mentorship program to retain new teachers. In Ag. alone, 2 of the 3 teachers are new within the last 1.5 years. Perkins helped support each new Ag. teacher with building their labs from scratch or upgrading outdated existing lab equipment. Last year Perkins funded \$9,925 towards the Greenway Ag. program, \$10,817.92 towards Grand Rapids Ag. and FFA, and \$2617.23 towards Deer River Ag. and FFA. Informally these 3 Ag. teachers work together on FFA and other initiatives, but to create and stipend a more formal program would be beneficial.

Thinking about teacher recruitment, a partnership will be created and strengthened this year with current post-secondary faculty who lead our Class Act/Education program. Letting current faculty know about the need and benefits of being a CTE teacher will be important so they can share this opportunity with their students. Then we will look at creating partnerships with secondary school teachers that are in the education program of study, and who lead exploration seminars, to help them understand the needs of CTE and be able to highlight to their students. An idea is to bring in current CTE faculty to talk with the students about why they got into CTE and why they stay. It would be great to find an Alumni to lead this conversation.

10. What actions did the consortium take to expand equitable access and opportunities for work-based learning for all students? How were students made aware of these opportunities?

The Quest program launched for students with cognitive and developmental disabilities developed a partnership with Minnesota Diversified Industries within the Grand Rapids school district. Students work hands on to learn skills in manufacturing and product assembly while being employed at a local company. This provides students with skills to access employment after high school. Peter McDermott, President and CEO of MDI said in a February press release that the type of training to be offered by the new Quest program is “desperately needed” and is “reflected by the high unemployment rate for people with disabilities.” “This new partnership and program,” he said, “will ensure that our students with special needs have the opportunity to fully participate in our community and engage in meaningful employment.” https://www.grandrapidsmn.com/free_press/quest-transition-program-to-host-open-house/article_8ccc5ae4-62ba-11e9-88bf-479ced08ac56.html Last year Perkins invested in \$5,116.60 for Work Based Learning for this special populations through equipment and teacher professional development. For FY21 conversations have began to continue to support the growth of the program and provide professional development opportunities for their staff and funds for equipment.

Another program that was new last year was within the Career Pathways Program that offered a capstone class a final element to students in the manufacturing pathway. This capstone class was offered at Nashwauk-Keewatin, but was offered and had students from Grand Rapids and Greenway. There were 15 students that work with 9 different companies: ISCO, L&M Radiator, Midwest Manufacturing, Zakobe, ASV, Swan Machine, Rox Speed FX, Dakota Fluid Power, and Northland Machine. These capstone classes were shared with students who were finishing their career pathways program, and was also included in the three district's course enrollment catalog. More conversations will be had this year to ensure enrollment for this capstone class meets enrollment numbers in order for the class to be held. We have already started having conversations with those principals and school counselors. We are working with a branding agency to help develop Career Pathway material to be used for marketing as well.

11. What actions did the consortium take to improve integration of academic and technical skills in CTE programs? Please provide specific examples in your response.

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Changes instituted by the Higher Learning Commission have eliminated the ability for students to receive college credit through the Applied Learning Institute unless the instructor has at least 18 master's credits in the field. However, students are still able to gain college credit by taking the courses as a PSEO student. It is also hard for students to become concentrators in tech programs as their course load is often filled with academic and required courses leaving little hours for electives/tech classes.

Our Career Pathway program has made huge strides in the integration of academics and technical skills into their pathway programs. As part of their core curriculum they outline both elective classes that fall under the pathway, but also required classes that support the pathway. For example, if the student is in a health care pathway the core curriculum recommends what science course to take that would fulfill the requirement but also be beneficial to the pathway. Next year, Perkins can do work to support these classes that are both required by and are applicable to technical skills. Already this year, conversation has been happening with Grand Rapids school district that would like to offer an applied math class and physically host the class down the tech wing.

12. Reflecting on your FY20 work, what "points of pride" or highlights would you like to share?

Like many others last year, Itasca Consortium had thousands of dollars to spend down and needed to be nimble in order to change their plans. One way of thinking forward was to prepare for the next school year and create Natural Resource kits for each student in a forestry class. Especially with covid-19 we knew that we would need equipment to be sanitized or specific to each student. ICC created 30 kits for total of \$9000 that provide hands on learning activities in the career of forestry. Each kit has an angle gauge, compass, prism, clinometer, and logger's tape that can be used for mapping a forest, sample plotting and measuring trees. We are now exploring the idea of additional kits to be used for career exploration in secondary education. We are in the works of creating kits that will rotate between the 7 district high schools, middle schools and elementary schools to provide hands on learning activities and curriculum.

The consortium also thought creatively and strategically when the director of Perkins last year took a position with a different consortium. When planning for a new director they decided to combine the position with their Career Pathways program. This new join position will work to create synergy and opportunities between Career Pathways and Perkins. This will also help with leveraging different funding streams both programs access and provide end users (secondary and post-secondary) with resources to grow their program. We hear from teachers that they are often confused by the similarities and differences between Career Pathways and Perkins, so work will be done this year in the area to clearly and consistently communicate.

FFA students at Greenway high school saw a need in their district around access to food due to unemployment rising because of Covid-19. They applied for a grant through FFA and were awarded funds to support the work of providing 3000 boxes of produce. These distributions were held once a month during June-August when students were out of school and needed additional support. Each box had apples, oranges, celery, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes and other seasonal food. This initiative was facilitated by Ag. teacher and FFA facility member, Natasha Maninga. Last year Perkins was instrumental in elevating their program and providing support to a new teacher fresh out of college. In the beginning of the year, Perkins funded \$5038 towards equipment, \$4,000 for FFA and fieldtrips, and then \$887 at the end of the school year for a spend down. Total investment for Greenways Ag. program last year was \$9,925.