

# Minnesota Annual Performance Report (APR) FY20

FY20 Lakes Country Consortium  
Lakes Country 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.

During the transition year, the consortium's effort was focused on the comprehensive local needs assessment, which was began in August of 2019 and wrapped up in May. As a result of the CLNA and all the consultation and data analysis of available labor market information, the consortium landed on the following seven programs of study for the consortium:

1. Accounting
2. Construction
3. Teaching/Training
4. Web & Digital Communications
5. Transportation Operations
6. Power, Structural, & Technical Systems
7. Therapeutic Services

Once the programs of study were identified, consortium leadership completed a program/course inventory with all secondary approved programs aligned to the postsecondary programs and will use that inventory as the catalyst for conversation and further program development in FY21.

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

Considering size, scope, and quality in relation to the entire consortium juxtaposed over how the consortium spent Perkins funds over the course of FY20 (even in the context of COVID in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year), the programs and focus was explicitly on what was well within the confines of the definitions - and frankly, was not out of line of past practice from previous iterations of Perkins. Perkins dollars in our consortium, specifically at the secondary level, are spent on active programs that either fall under the federal definition of program of study or would be an eligible expense under reserve funds (and are identified in our local plan), so therefore have already been vetted through the lens of size, scope, and quality.

## 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 a consortium that consists of 26 independent school districts (for a total of over 120 approved secondary programs) and three college campuses, the consortium itself does not have the resources or ability to direct many resources to CTSOs at the local level. Most secondary programs are well connected to business and industry already and those programs that have the ability to provide CTSO's have those student opportunities in place. Barriers oftentimes exist based simply on the fact that additional CTSO opportunities in small schools only pilfer students from existing CTSOs as adding opportunities doesn't manufacture students.

## 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?

When comparing all M State students to students in CTE programs there was no notable or obvious representation gap across the racial demographic. However, there was disparities noted in historical fall-to-fall success rates (e.g. persistence) and overall program completion rates within our special population students, specifically students of color (SOC).

Our ongoing work with the CLNA in FY20 led the college to take an acute look at the services and supports offered to career and technical students, and specifically those in the special populations demographic. These comprehensive efforts will continue to guide the evaluation of our services and aid in further discovery of areas that the college could bolster in order better support our SOC in academic persistence and completion.

Executive college leadership, academic deans and student services in collaboration with the Perkins team will continue the work of identifying students needing attention that is more specialized and developing interventions to serve them in their postsecondary pursuits.

### 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?

From a student's initial interaction with the college, until they walk the stages of graduation, M State's priority is to serve all students with a robust and individualized experience. These approaches extend to all students, on all four campuses and online.

Students within special populations work with their assigned academic advisor, counselor and career services department to select and pursue a meaningful academic program and career. M State is committed to helping students discover their strengths and interests and help them to understand labor market trends so that they can make informed decisions about their college and career goals.

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

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Services, outreach, support and community is an essential component to the college's foundation. Many students, including special population students, have needs that transcend academic support and resources. This is why M State is committed to serving students holistically. During the FY20 academic year, M State served CTE students, including students within the special populations demographic, with a diverse and comprehensive suite of resources and supports including academic advising, Accessibility Resources, campus safety, Career Services, Computer Help Center, counseling services, English Language Learners, libraries support, social workers, Spartan Centers, Steps to Success program, student life, student-led clubs/support groups and Veterans Services.

#### **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)**

During FY20 M State proudly operated the Steps to Success program. This program provides education and support services to women in business, engineering and technology programs on M State's Moorhead campus. The program supports women of color and women who are first-generation college students, English Language Learners or Pell Grant-eligible as they work to complete their degrees and train for nontraditional high-wage, high-demand careers in business, engineering and technology. Students in the program received assistance overcoming challenges and achieving success through:

Individualized support in advising, mentoring, accessing resources, careers and student success

Free laptop

Free one-credit student success course

Weekly study table

Weekly gas card

Leadership opportunities

Opportunities to connect with other women in business, engineering and technology

NOTE: The Steps to Success program is solely operational through grant funding and subject to modification as a result of funding changes.

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

Institutional successes are acknowledged through the proactive and effective delivery of high quality, accessible, academic and non-academic services and supports to our diverse body of students. Challenges exist when there is a lack of institutional awareness or influence surrounding students that experience academic or non-academic barriers or hardships.

M State's commitment to students - all students - is the very foundation for existence. Our vision is a success story for every student. We strongly affirm students must have equitable access and holistic supports in order to live their M State success story.

The college will continue efforts to bridge these gaps and remove the persistence and completion barriers in order to support our students and see them achieve their goals.

#### **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.**

The consortium continues to facilitate access and negotiation to opportunities for secondary teachers and students to articulation agreements at both a regional level and directly with our college partner. The secondary consortium membership made a concerted determination to first attempt to only enter into agreements that were regional (and therefore more utilitarian for students) before even considering negotiating any singular agreements with any specific colleges. This has proven generally successful in most programs. Fundamental barriers continue to exist, however, in the fact that the locus of control with articulation agreements can be traced to the whim of an individual faculty member. Without systemic student safeguards, it is very difficult to invest resources in bolstering articulated college credit opportunities when they can easily disappear for students. There are limited additional opportunities for early-college credit within the consortium for career and technical education students. Students that attend Red River Alternative Learning Center in Moorhead have access to the Early/Middle College program, however that program has seen a decrease in enrollment in the past two years due to a staffing change at RRALC that has de-incentivized student enrollment in the program. There are some CTE course offerings with M State's eCampus in the High School (eCHS) that some secondary partners participate in, as well as in Online College in the High School (OCHS). Currently consortium leadership is aware of only a very few concurrent enrollment options across the consortium within career and technical education, and that is primarily due to the archaic and fundamentally inequitable minimum qualifications requirements that are held in state policy that are oftentimes unattainable for secondary instructors to obtain while maintaining their teaching positions. Until there is a fundamental mental model shift that schools (secondary and postsecondary) are for students and not for the pleasure of adults and the policies align to that mental model, there will be no significant progress in Minnesota on this question.

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

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At the secondary level, the consortium is not able to track student participation rates as they are generally available only at the district level, and not at the consortium level. The consortium provides opportunities for access for which the districts participate and track. Previously the consortium had access to the student-level data, however it is not necessarily appropriate to have access to that as it is personally identifiable.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, M State's Concurrent Enrollment Program delivered 16 career and technical course sections, spanning 6 unique disciplines, resulting in 180 student/course registrations. While eCampus in the High School processed 45 CTE student/course registrations, spanning 5 career and technical disciplines, from 12 partner high school districts.

## 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 Lakes Country Consortia does bold work on an everyday basis in a variety of different ways, sometimes it is seen, sometimes it is not:

- Consortium leadership is committed to racial justice and works on behalf of that commitment every minute of every day, whether we are doing our Perkins work or not. This also means that we are forced to face the frustration with colleagues that do not have the same commitment, which is a barrier.
- Consortium leadership has made bold moves around teacher preparation and teacher licensure, which has forced significant mental model shifts in not only secondary but also postsecondary around what is considered "qualified."
- Consortium leadership continues to be bold in the focus on policy and advocacy around career and technical education in Minnesota and beyond. If there is not a better understanding of the basic tenets of CTE, even amongst its own conspirators, we will continue to lose site of the larger picture.
- Consortium leadership sees career and technical education, even in the context of a global pandemic, as a leverage point to a more equitable and just system of education for each and every student. We can continue to poise ourselves as leaders within our system to break the current mold that continues to perpetuate historically consistent unacceptable outcomes. How much more bold can we get than that?

## 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?

Secondary Perkins-funded PD Investment for FY20 was \$55,582.31.

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

Professional development benefitted consortium leadership, teachers, counselors, district and high school administrators, alternative learning center staff, and staff from West Central Regional Juvenile Center.

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

Professional development activities and areas that were supported included: technical skill areas around power, structural and technical systems, leadership, ASE certification, Perkins V implementation, intersection of career counseling and career and technical education, transitions from secondary to postsecondary, technology in career and technical education, small engine training, agriculture education, policy and advocacy in career and technical education, work based learning, Child Development Associate Certification, and a variety of other areas.

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

See above for topics. Outcomes vary depending on the topics, but generally speaking, the results for teachers include higher level of content expertise, growing awareness of career and technical education amongst all levels of the consortium (including students), ultimately increased access to CTE programming to students in ALCs and at the WCRJC as more people are aware of the power of CTE, and a higher level of understanding of CTE policy across the consortium.

## 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.

Secondary consortium leadership is actively involved in the local WIOA grantee's (Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program) Youth Council. Through that work, the consortia is able to provide guidance and opportunity to RMCEP in accessing opportunities for students for work, for entry points in educational opportunities, and to navigate barriers from ages 16 through 24. In addition, the consortium works with the alternative programs in our consortium to provide their students with opportunities to a variety of different programming when traditional educational settings have failed them. Finally, our consortium has entered into a partnership with West Central Regional Juvenile Center to provide expanded opportunities for their clients in career and technical education. Although those opportunities are in their infancy, (COVID has certainly slowed down progress) the minor successes we have had have already proven fruitful simply around career awareness and career development.

## 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?

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It is well known that Lakes Country Service Cooperative was the first alternative teacher preparation provider approved in Minnesota in 2018 and subsequently have had programs approved in Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation (and corresponding CTE Core) and Work-Based Learning. LCSC has been piloting programs in FY20 in all areas with the expectation of recommending its first set of candidates for licensure before the end of the 2020 calendar year. Consortium leadership consistently assists CTE teachers from across the state in advocating for them around licensure on a daily basis, providing them with guidance on pathways towards licensure. While all of this has proved to be successful in both temporary and permanent employment for CTE instructors (depending on individual circumstances), there is only so much capacity one person has. LCSC is working to increase capacity in the teacher preparation realm, but further work needs to be done to increase capacity across the state around policy and advocacy in understanding teacher licensure in general; particularly as it relates to the nuances of career and technical education. History also tells us that the field cannot rely on the licensing agency to provide this guidance, particularly in the current political climate as that same agency is actively attempting to dismantle some of the exact policies that allow successful entry into the profession for career and technical educators.

## **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?**

Through the CLNA process, the consortium completed an inventory of secondary programs, and within that inventory gaps were identified at the district level that showed that there were school districts that did not provide authentic work based learning opportunities for students. It is also apparent there is further nuance to that data that merits further exploration. Many of the school districts have WBL opportunities for students with disabilities, but limited or no opportunities for non-SPED students, some districts have program-specific (AFNR) WBL opportunities, and some districts have Diversified Occupations programs which allow for a large range of placement opportunities. The consortium goal is to expand opportunities to all students, therefore to be as utilitarian as possible, which often means examining the licensure endorsement type that the incumbent teacher has or finding a teacher that has the capacity or interest in obtaining the endorsement. In FY20, LCSC had grant funds to pilot four teachers from across the consortium to obtain the WBL endorsement through its alternative teacher preparation program. The four teachers include one from an alternative learning center, one special education teacher, and two career and technical education teachers - all teachers from focus and high needs areas as identified in the CLNA. While the four teachers began the program in FY20, they persist into FY21 with the anticipated completion of the endorsement (and subsequent program approval) in FY21.

## **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.**

The language around the integration of academic and technical content in the reauthorized ACT is blaringly important, therefore thoughtful consideration is integral to its implementation. In the past all too often "workshops" have been provided to CTE teachers that have ultimately proven to be ineffective and felt as if the CTE teachers were to teach reading and math in addition to their technical content. The academic content was presented as if it was of ultimate hierarchical importance and the technical component was just simply a secondary side effect. The ultimate impact was nil. Any focus in FY20 on even entering a space of professional development for teachers around this topic without first finding the appropriate approach would have set the consortium up for failure - and the same is true for FY21. It is the role of consortium leadership to find expertise in this area (as outlined in our FY21 plan) to design and implement truly impactful and robust professional development that can move teachers to understand the intersection of academic and technical content rather than the hierarchy of academic and technical content. That will likely not come from a reading specialist professing how important reading is to a group of CTE teachers or a math specialist explaining the theories around sine, cosine, and tangent; it might actually be the converse.

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

Consortium leadership feels strongly about the collaborative effort to complete the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment as required by the ACT. The collaborative effort across the five consortia made it possible for the CLNA to be successful for the Lakes Country Perkins Consortium. The ability to tackle the project as a collective as well as chip away at data sets along with being able to bounce consultation ideas back and forth was invaluable.