



Direct Admissions Minnesota Report

February 1, 2025

Authors

Aaron Salasek

Coordinator of Direct Admissions Minnesota

Tel: 651-259-3915

aaron.salasek@state.mn.us

Wendy Robinson

Assistant Commissioner for Programs,
Policy, and Grants

Tel: 651-259-3903

wendy.robinson@state.mn.us

Sally Krager-Constantine

Research Analyst

sally.krager@state.mn.us

About the Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding more than \$224 million annually in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

About This Report

This is a legislative-mandated report. As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197, this report cost approximately \$6,842.16 to prepare, including staff time.

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350

Saint Paul, MN 55108-5227

Tel: 651.642.0567 or 800.657.3866

TTY Relay: 800.627.3529

Fax: 651.642.0675

Email: info.ohe@state.mn.us

Contents

Executive Summary 2

Introduction and Program Design 3

Implementation in Minnesota 5

Program Outcomes..... 15

Understanding Participation and Impact of Direct Admissions 17

Challenges and Recommendations 28

Appendix A. Direct Admissions’ Participating High Schools, Community-based Partner Direct Service High Schools, and Colleges’ Tables..... 33

Appendix B. Direct Admissions Student Letters Tiers 1 through 6..... 44

Appendix C. Legislation for Direct Admissions Minnesota 50

Executive Summary

All students graduating from Minnesota high schools are “college material.” This core belief drives the Office of Higher Education's Direct Admissions program. Direct Admissions ensures that students from participating high schools will receive a notification early in the fall of their senior year to inform them that there are multiple colleges and universities committed to admitting them based on their academic performance through their junior year and anticipated high school graduation date. Through a personalized communication, co-signed by their high school and the Office of Higher Education, this program allows students to apply with confidence, knowing that the “*will I get in?*” question has already been answered with a “*YES!*”

Direct Admissions Minnesota has great potential to reduce equity gaps by ensuring that all students get timely information about financial aid and a personal message that affirms their readiness for post-secondary education. Direct Admissions Minnesota is a partnership project between K-12 and higher education, led by the Office of Higher Education. Minnesota is leading the way with this growing national higher education approach and public policy movement and has firmly situated the program as a common good benefit to students and families in the state.

The challenges and recommendations highlighted in the following report represent important lessons learned so far in the development and implementation of the program. With planning and assistance from K-12 and postsecondary partners, the Office of Higher Education anticipates evolving Direct Admissions into a more effective and successful program with each successive year. It is possible to expand Direct Admissions to all 800 of Minnesota's public high schools, and the agency recommends scaling the program on a voluntary basis over the next three to five years due to the set-up work required at the local level.

This report fulfills the legislative reporting mandate included in the legislation. By February 1, 2025, the Office of Higher Education shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education finance and policy, and higher education on activities occurring. The report must include but is not limited to information about the program design, implementation challenges and recommendations, outcomes, and the feasibility of scaling the program to all public high schools. The full text of the legislation is included in the appendices.

Introduction and Program Design

The process of applying for college can be one filled with stress and anxiety, especially for first generation, low income, and historically underserved and excluded populations. Some students self-select out of the process due to perceived barriers, lack of information, or the complexity of the college search process. Students and families may not be aware that they have multiple college options within the state of Minnesota or about the financial aid resources that may be available to them. Direct Admissions seeks to change this by shifting the paradigm of college admissions to empower students with the knowledge that they are college material and that multiple institutions are ready to admit them. Through a personalized communication, co-signed by their high school and the Office of Higher Education, students are given a list of no less than 28 higher education institutions (and up to 55) that have affirmed that they will admit the student upon application and will waive any application fees. This program allows students to apply for free with confidence to their participating college selections of choice, knowing that the *"will I get in?"* question has already been answered with a *"YES!"*.

Direct Admissions Minnesota aims to reduce self-selection bias in college admissions' practices while reducing equity gaps in college enrollment using four strategies:

- Promoting a college-going culture throughout the state;
- Connecting students, families, and schools with colleges and universities earlier, giving families time to consider their options and plan;
- Promoting awareness of financial aid and the importance of completing the FAFSA or the MN DREAM Act application; and
- Showing students that they have access to a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree if they choose to further their education.

The work of Direct Admissions is conducted collaboratively by high schools, OHE, and colleges via seven critical steps, described below:

1. High schools and colleges/universities opt-in to participating in the Direct Admissions program on an annual basis. High schools complete mandatory Data Sharing and Joint Powers Agreements, and colleges/universities complete mandatory Data Sharing Agreements.
2. High schools notify families of the school's participation in the program and give a Tennessee/FERPA notice to opt-out, per local directory/data processes. Excluding students whose families choose to opt-out, high school counselors review end of junior year unweighted cumulative GPA and course grades in three core areas (math, science, and English) to assign participating students to one of the six admission tiers.
3. High schools notify students and their parents or guardians by formal letter, email, and/or portal notification of their "acceptance" for Direct Admissions and available college options.
4. Students respond to the notification and choose the institution(s) they wish to be directly admitted to as a next step in the admissions process.
5. Responses are collected at the high school level, and high schools securely transmit that data to OHE (many do so through their Student Information System).

6. OHE compiles and securely transmits the data and the student's program-calculated GPA to their college selections of choice. If a student chooses to supply optional supplemental information, that gets transferred as well.
7. Colleges contact the student as soon as possible to inform them of next steps in the process. Students are not required to apply to any of the colleges listed on their Direct Admissions letter, nor are students limited to applying to just those colleges they qualify to through Direct Admissions. The program does not limit student choices or minimize the importance of maintaining academic success in the senior year. As such, Direct Admissions materials communicate the following expectations:
 - Students are expected to maintain their academic performance level during their senior year;
 - Students are expected to graduate in late spring or early summer 2025;
 - Students must complete admissions applications and submit any requested additional materials for colleges they are interested in according to the college's application deadlines; and,
 - Students should complete the FAFSA or MN DREAM Act application for financial aid consideration.

Upon applying, Direct Admissions students then move through the same enrollment, financial aid, and orientation processes as any other students at the college of their choice.

Implementation in Minnesota

The goal of the Direct Admissions program is to continue to scale until all public high schools are participating. Adding new schools while continuing the participation of current schools requires annual coordination of several key participant groups: (1) K-12 secondary high schools; (2) postsecondary colleges and universities; (3) MDE-approved K-12 technology Student Information Systems (SIS) platforms; and (4) Office of Higher Education.

The 2023-2024 program year had 120 high schools representing 42 counties throughout the state who notified the Office of Higher Education of their desire to participate in Direct Admissions. In assessing work required, staff availability, and timing, nine high schools either chose to delay or were encouraged to delay participation until the 2024-2025 school year. The 120 participating high schools enrolled an estimated 22,505 students with almost half of enrolled seniors (46%) at participating schools identifying as Black, Indigenous, and students of color. Over a third of enrolled seniors (35%) were eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The program year also had 55 colleges and universities participating.

For the current 2024-2025 program year, the Office of Higher Education issued a call to high schools to participate in Direct Admissions Minnesota in February 2024. While nominations were encouraged from guidance counseling offices locally or at the district level, with the support of an administrator, any staff member could complete an application for consideration. For high schools, OHE assured there would be no cost to participate. OHE also offered additional funding to offset costs for high school staff time, e-transcript costs, high school technology changes, and/or related program expenses. OHE's interest form garnered 73 prospective new high schools, and throughout March of 2024, four information sessions hosted 112 secondary community members and college access professionals (with 218 overall RSVPs to the sessions, which were recorded and posted for those unable to attend in real time). Applications ended up totaling 63 new high schools opting into the 2024-2025 program cohort.

While two additional universities inquired this past year, they ultimately chose not to join, yielding the same number of postsecondary participants as the prior year. Direct Admissions postsecondary institutions were asked to waive all applications fees regardless of the date of application and to choose a specific academic tier for which they would directly admit students. Colleges were also asked to proactively follow-up with students shortly after receiving data from the agency, to build early relationships and capacity with students and families. Figure A1 in the Appendices details the organization schema and interplay for the program. This includes:

- The college and K-12 advisory workgroups recommendations and decisions for program implementation to OHE (membership of which is comprised of partners from each sector);
- OHE's recruitment of new, as well as support to existing, high schools and colleges around technical implementation within local SIS platforms (Infinite Campus, jmc, Synergy/Edupoint, Skyward, and PowerSchool); assisting staff with academic review criteria and questions; creating and disseminating communication and marketing material that supports the program; shaping the timeline for survey/letter notifications being sent; the overall transfer of data between high schools/SIS systems and college and university partners; and distributing funding to high schools and districts;
- Districts and high schools coordinating necessary Data Sharing and Joint Powers contractual agreements; staffing and coordinating the program's FERPA notification to families, the academic review

and letter notification processes; following up with colleges and universities on behalf of students regarding transcripts or additional admissions' materials requests; and providing feedback to OHE;

- Public, tribal, and private colleges, universities, and higher education system offices promoting new membership and supporting existent institutions in the work; coordinating necessary Data Sharing agreements; selecting a respective academic tier; staffing and coordinating the program's data retrieval and follow-up communication to students and families; and providing feedback to OHE;
- All the above is to the benefit of students and families, who receive the program notifications and letter surveys; select colleges and universities of choice; and complete any necessary admissions requirements prior to ultimately enrolling in an institution of choice.

Each partner group's primary goals are detailed in the following sections, with OHE serving as the primary collaborator and organizer of program logistics and execution.

Advisory Working Groups – K-12 and Postsecondary

At the outset of the 2024 school year, OHE reconvened two working groups of subject matter experts to continue to assist with program design, anticipate barriers and challenges, and provide on-going feedback about the Direct Admissions program. Volunteers agreed to serve on one of two working advisory groups, one K-12 and the other postsecondary, depending on the area of expertise. These two groups met every other month or on an as-needed basis (if an immediate need arose) to help Direct Admissions be successful, innovative, partner-balanced, and student-centered.

Implementation work group representation includes volunteers from the agency, Minnesota State institutions and the system office, University of Minnesota institutions, the Minnesota Private College Council and member institutions, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota School Boards Association, and SIS technology partners. A full list of K-12 advisory committee representatives can be found in Table A1 and the Postsecondary advisory committee in Table A2.

The K-12 Working Group primarily focused on the following tasks:

- Identifying measures of success;
- Augmenting outreach activities of the agency and capacity-building with newly joining high schools and districts;
- Integrating the Direct Admissions program with other college preparation and planning activities; and,
- Documenting the work required for participating schools and districts.

The Postsecondary Working Group primarily addressed the following tasks:

- Identifying measures of success;
- Integrating and advancing the Direct Admissions program with existing admissions processes and data systems' optimization; and,
- Documenting the work required for participating colleges.

Identifying Target Students and High Schools for Direct Admissions

This program seeks to facilitate the transition of high school seniors, particularly students of color, American Indian students, lower-income students, and students utilizing disability services, to a postsecondary program by creating a direct admissions pathway. Per the legislation, the participating high schools should be geographically and demographically diverse. In the information sent to high schools, OHE noted that should more high schools be interested in participating than could be financially supported by the program, preference would be given to schools that are above 30% for free and reduced lunch participation and/or have 30% or more students who were Black, Indigenous, and persons of color. To date, no high school that has had interest in participating has been turned away in any program year. The goal of Direct Admissions includes eliminating disparities in college admissions and enrollment resulting from college knowledge, parent educational attainment, and other factors. Therefore, the program's target student population includes demographic groups with a lower-than-average college-going rate. Direct Admissions is designed to spark and supplement other college exploration activities offered by a high school and is not designed to tell students which college or university they should attend. The program's participating high schools include schools with a significant number of students of color, low-income students, and English language learners from across the state to achieve statewide representation.

Participating high schools were asked to complete six tasks:

1. Review end of junior year unweighted GPA and course grades to see if the student meets the admission criteria of the participating colleges and universities.
2. Notify high school seniors and their parents or guardians of their "acceptance" and encourage them to learn more about the programs offered throughout the participating colleges.
3. Prompt students to respond to the notification and choose the institutions to which they wish to be directly admitted to. Students can choose one or more of Minnesota's colleges or universities, or an "I am not interested in Direct Admissions" option. Once colleges are selected, the specified institutions are to reach out with admissions information post data retrieval and request that students complete the next required step. If a student opts not to make any selections, their information is never shared and they face no adverse impact.
4. Collect the student responses and securely transfer that data to the Office of Higher Education.
5. Send each student's transcript to each college they selected.
6. Collaborate with and provide feedback to OHE regarding implementation, student experience, and opportunities for process and program improvement.

OHE is currently building the 2025-2026 Direct Admissions high school cohort. In addition to those schools choosing to delay or unable to implement in the current 2024-2025 fiscal year but wanting to remain in consideration for the program for the next, the current waitlist for the program includes another 36 high schools who plan to nominate for 2025-2026 fiscal year's start, bringing the initial interest for schools up to 41.

2024-2025 Participating High Schools and Community-based Organizations – Geographic and Demographic Representation

At the beginning of the current program year of 2024-2025 the Office of Higher Education had 187 high schools who had indicated interest in conducting the program, detailed in Table A3 of the Appendix. By the end of August 2024, four schools had failed to complete the mandatory contracts with the agency, and one charter high school had closed over the summer, bringing the total to 182 high schools in the cohort. There was attrition of an additional five high schools, all having either unexpected staffing or technology prioritization changes for the year, bringing the total number of high schools who could potentially deliver on the program to 177. These five high schools have chosen to defer participation until the 2025-2026 cohort year. As of mid-January of 2025, 165 high schools have reported data for this cohort year. Thirteen are still in progress as of submission of this report, and data will continue to be collected through the end of June. For reporting purposes, OHE is using the 182 high schools with a contract in place at the school year's start and who could potentially fulfill the program to discuss outcomes for the program year.

The agency's partnership with the nonprofit college access organization College Possible Minnesota continued from the prior program year. The organization amplified the reach of the program to students in 32 of their direct service high schools that were not already participating in Direct Admissions. Through their use of technology, their organization's coaches communicated with students about their Direct Admissions status, built out college lists, and completed other features of the college search process. These College Possible-serving high schools are detailed in Table A4 of the Appendix.

Sudent Demographics

The 182 participating high schools enroll an estimated 31,172 senior students. Almost half of enrolled seniors (43%, detailed in Table 1) at participating schools are Black, Indigenous, and/or students of color. Over a third of enrolled seniors (36%, detailed in Table 2) at participating schools were eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Of the 182 participating high schools, 100 are located in the seven county Twin Cities region of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. 53% of the students in the 2024-2025 cohort come from this region.

High schools who indicated interest at the outset of summer came from 56 counties across the state. Anticipated and current participation by county is detailed in Figure 1. This data is outlined in Table A3's Participating High Schools for 2024-25.

Figure 1. Participating Schools by County for Academic Year 2024-2025

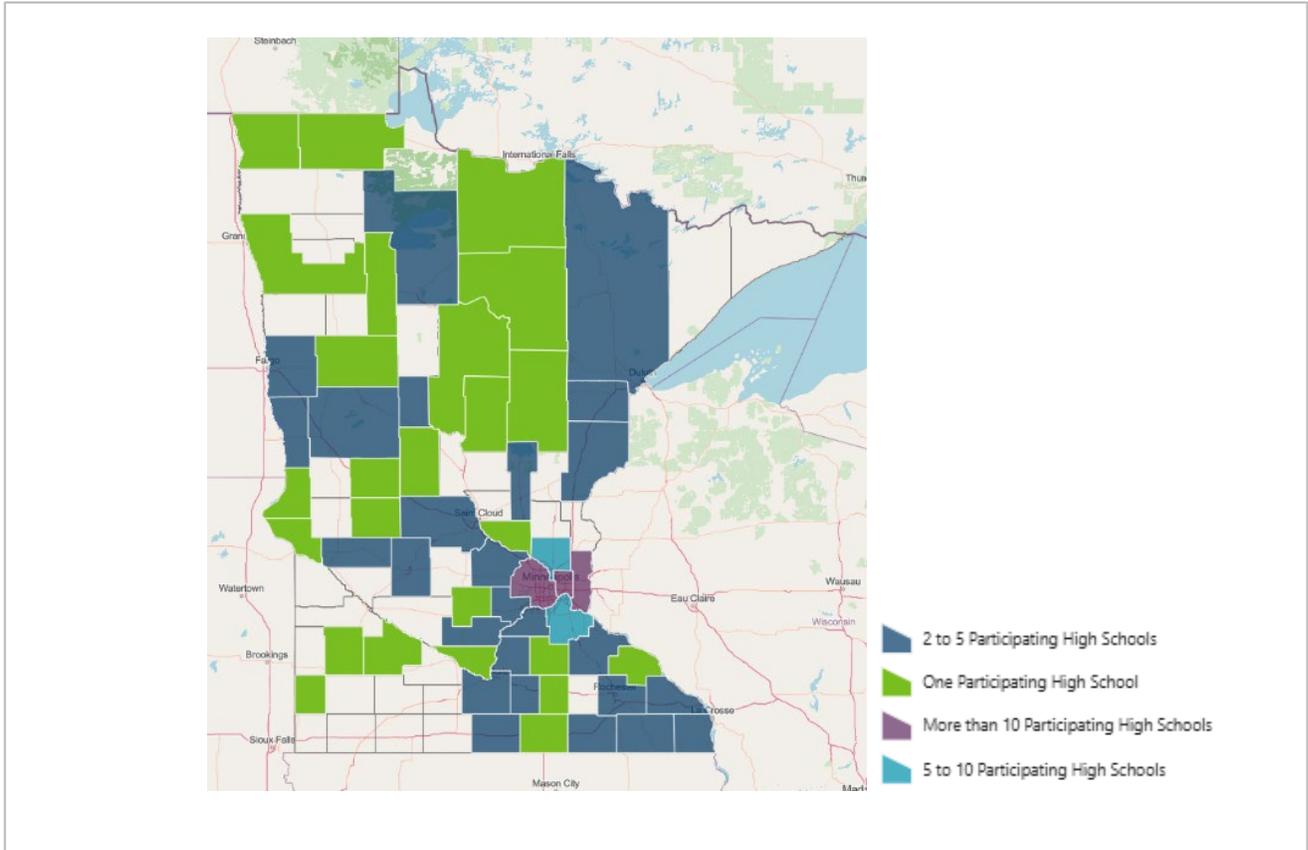


Table 1. Number of Enrolled Seniors at Direct Admissions Participating High Schools by Race and Ethnicity, 2024-2025

| Race and Ethnicity | Count of Enrolled Seniors | Percent of Total Enrolled Seniors |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Black or African American | 4,229 | 14% |
| American Indian or Native American (Federal Definition) | 902 | 3% |
| Asian | 2,932 | 10% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3,972 | 13% |
| White | 17,449 | 56% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 36 | 0% |
| Two or More Races | 1,473 | 5% |
| Unreported | 179 | 1% |
| Total | 31,172 | 100% |

Note: Counts based on reported enrollment at end of students’ junior year in June 2024 provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

Table 2. Number of Enrolled Seniors at Direct Admissions Participating High Schools by Free and Reduced-Price Meals, 2024-2025

| Free and Reduced-Price Meals | Count of Enrolled Seniors | Percent of Total Enrolled Seniors |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| No | 19,914 | 64% |
| Yes | 11,258 | 36% |
| Total | 31,172 | 100% |

Note: Counts based on reported enrollment at end of students' junior year in June 2024 provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

Requests for Direct Admissions

As of January 17, 2025, 165 high schools reported 47,158 individual requests for Direct Admissions by 7,225 students (approximately 23% of students receiving info about the program).

Of those requests, nearly 60% were requests for admissions to a Minnesota State college (38%) or university (20%). The remaining 42% were distributed to private non-profit colleges and universities (29%), the University of Minnesota (12%, including the Crookston, Duluth, Morris, or Rochester campuses), and tribal colleges (1%), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Student Admissions Requests via Direct Admissions by Sector, 2024-2025

| Sector | Count of Admissions Requests | Percent of Admissions Requests |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Minnesota State 2-Year Colleges | 17,850 | 38% |
| Minnesota State Universities | 9,427 | 20% |
| University of Minnesota | 5,526 | 12% |
| Private Colleges and Universities | 13,481 | 29% |
| Tribal Colleges | 621 | 1% |
| I am not interested in direct admissions | 253 | 0% |
| Total | 47,158 | 100% |

Based on an academic review, students could be eligible for direct admissions to up to 55 colleges (postsecondary participants are detailed in Table A5 of the Appendix). Each participating college opted into one of six academic tiers that best aligns with their admissions standards and enrollment goals.

The percentage of student distribution requesting information by tier is detailed in Table 4. The process for establishing these academic tiers is described in the next section. A little over 40% of students requesting direct admissions at one or more participating colleges were in Tier 6 (cumulative unweighted grade point average of 3.50 or higher and a C average in all math, English, and science core courses taken in 10th and 11th grades) as

shown in Table 4. The next largest group was students in Tier 5 (27%, cumulative unweighted grade point average of 3.0 or higher), followed by the open-access Tier 1 (17%, cumulative unweighted grade point average lower than 2.50).

Table 4. Number of Students Requesting Direct Admissions by Academic Tier, 2024-2025

| Academic Tier | Unweighted Grade Point Average (4.0 scale; must include Pass/No Pass Grades) | Course Grades: Math, English, and Science Courses Taken in 10 th and 11 th Grades | Number of Colleges Selecting this Academic Tier | Unduplicated Count of Students Requesting Direct Admissions | Percent of Total Students Requesting Direct Admissions |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Less than 2.50 GPA | No course grade requirements | 28 | 1,204 | 17% |
| 2 | 2.50-2.74 | No course grade requirements | 8 | 493 | 7% |
| 3 | 2.75-2.99 | No course grade requirements | 5 | 306 | 4% |
| 4 | 2.75-2.99 | C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas | 1 | 335 | 5% |
| 5 | 3.00-4.00 | No course grade requirements | 13 | 1,950 | 27% |
| 6 | 3.50-4.00 | C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas | 1 | 2,938 | 41% |
| All | n/a | n/a | 55 | 7,226 | 100% |

Participating Direct Admissions Postsecondary Partners

Each year, public and private non-profit colleges and universities are eligible to participate in Direct Admissions. Participation was stable at 55 this year, with no colleges or universities withdrawing from the program and no additional institutions joining the program.

To participate, postsecondary institutions are required to complete six tasks:

1. Waive all application fees for all Direct Admissions students, regardless of the date of application.
2. Choose a specific academic tier for which they would directly admit students.
3. Receive data from OHE identifying the students choosing to be directly admitted to their institution.
4. Follow-up with the student in a timely manner with information regarding completion of the institution’s application. To minimize the amount of data each high school needs to share with OHE and the participating colleges, students were asked to complete the institution’s application for admissions or additional information requested via forms by published deadlines to secure their spot.

5. Work with the student and their high school counselor should unusual circumstances occur. Should a college have concerns regarding the admissibility of a Direct Admissions student, the college would work with OHE, the high school, and student to address unusual circumstances and challenges to the best of their ability.
6. Collaborate with and provide feedback to OHE regarding implementation, student experience, and opportunities for process and program improvement.

Colleges were not asked to admit the student into a specific academic program or to lower their academic standards. In addition to the annual program kick-off, college partners had monthly best practices sessions, opportunities for staff trainings conducted by the agency, and materials to support their individuated community outreach.

Academic Measures

The academic tiers remained the same as the prior two years. Participating colleges were required to “opt into” one of the academic tiers or groupings as shown in Table 5. The percentage of admissions requests and of total students requesting Direct Admissions to institutions has remained nearly proportional by tiers and to institutional types over the three cohorts so far.

Table 5. Direct Admissions Academic Tiers, 2024-2025

| Academic Tier | Unweighted Grade Point Average (4.0 scale; Must Include Pass/No Pass Grades) | Course Grades: Math, English, and Science Courses Taken in 10 th and 11 th Grades | Number of Colleges Selecting this Academic Tier | Total Colleges Appearing on the Student’s Notification |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | Less than 2.50 GPA | No course grade requirements | 28 | 28 |
| 2 | 2.50-2.74 | No course grade requirements | 8 | 36 |
| 3 | 2.75-2.99 | No course grade requirements | 5 | 41 |
| 4 | 2.75-2.99 | C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas | 1 | 42 |
| 5 | 3.00-4.00 | No course grade requirements | 13 | 55 |
| 6 | 3.50-4.00 | C average or higher in all 3 course subject areas | 1 | 55* |

Note: *Bethel University and Bethel Online are in different tiers for the current program year.

K-12 Technology Infrastructure

One of the goals of Direct Admissions has been to use technology to ease the burden on K-12 and college staff. High schools were encouraged to leverage their existing Student Information System (SIS) vendor if possible. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) currently lists five approved SIS vendors that are compliant with

the requirements of technology from the U.S. Department of Education, referred to as “Ed-Fi”. Ed-Fi data submission involves uploading student-level data from a district, high school, or charter school's SIS directly to MDE's Ed-Fi servers. The steps to complete this process are unique to each SIS vendor. SIS vendors provide specific set-up guidance to their districts and charters on uploading data. The five vendors include: Infinite Campus, jmc, PowerSchool, Skyward, and Synergy/Edupoint. Building this functionality into existing K-12 SIS technologies minimizes the need for additional data sharing while also allowing the program to leverage existing K-12 communications through functionality in the SIS platforms.

At the year’s outset, OHE contacted the five SIS vendors and discussed compatibility of their SIS system and the school needs for Direct Admissions. The distribution of schools across the five platforms is detailed in Table 6.

Table 6. Participating High Schools in Direct Admissions by Student Information System, 2024-2025

| Student Information System | Number of Direct Admissions High Schools |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Infinite Campus | 103 |
| Jmc | 21 |
| PowerSchool | 14 |
| Skyward | 14 |
| Synergy/Edupoint | 30 |
| Total | 182 |

The Direct Admissions program within the Infinite Campus (103) and jmc (21) SIS platforms were operational for the current program year. PowerSchool worked with OHE’s data team on an SIS-specific internal report and training, and successfully launched at the outset of fall 2024. Skyward is in initial design phase for building the program within the SIS for the fall of 2025. Synergy/Edupoint has been unresponsive to repeated agency outreach attempts. OHE staff provided the technical specifications required for the project to all SIS vendors, who in turn identified or are working on identifying existing functionality within their system to meet the requirements as well as functionality that would need to be developed. The technology developed was integrated into their software platform and made available to all their contracted high schools who participate in the program, at no cost to the schools.

In the event the high school felt they were unable to utilize their SIS due to staffing or other mitigating factors, an alternative process is maintained by the agency. OHE worked with school and district staff to first identify similar functionality within their local SIS, usually a report or query that had the data needed to execute the program’s academic review. Schools were then given the option of completing the academic review via use of an Excel spreadsheet that OHE created, or by manual review. Notifications to students were also distributed via a Google Forms survey which collected student responses. Data files were created as part of the SIS software for transfer to OHE. OHE provided templates and instructions for creating the data file and uploading their student responses via secure web portal. The secure data portal served as the main hub for the exchange of data between high schools, OHE, and colleges. OHE monitored program activity via the data uploads to ensure fidelity

of implementation and to troubleshoot participation at a student or school level as needed. Figure A2 in the Appendices details the overall Direct Admissions data flow for the program, including the transitions between the various program partners:

- OHE has Joint Powers and Data Sharing Agreements in place for high schools, as well as Data Sharing Agreements with colleges, to securely transfer the data received via the student selection process;
- Districts and high schools use local technology to send a FERPA template notification to families to opt-out of the program;
- Districts and high schools use their local SIS platform or OHE-managed technology to produce a Direct Admissions report to conduct the academic review for student tier placement; generate the electronic student survey notification (printed letters are optional); and encourage students to respond within the platform or technology used to select institution(s) of preference;
- Districts and high schools use local technologies to send transcripts or work with students in submitting additional admissions' materials requested;
- Public, tribal, and private colleges and universities securely retrieve transferred student data in a timely manner and contact students through local communication and follow-up efforts regarding any specific next steps or applications needs.

Program Outcomes

Measures of Success: Implementation in the 2024-2025 Program Year

Success for Direct Admissions in 2024-2025 is measured by fidelity of implementation as well as student outcomes. Success in implementation of the program is achieved when the milestones shown in Table 7 are met. The program was successfully implemented for 2024-2025, with the exception of the number of participating high schools, which fell just short of the goal.

Table 7. Milestones of Successful Implementation and Results for 2024-2025

| Milestone | Success Threshold | Results |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| College Participation | Continued participation by 50 or more Minnesota colleges | 55 colleges participated in 2024-2025 |
| High School Participation | 200 or more high schools agree to participate | 187 high schools sought to participate; 182 participated and 178 have the potential to fulfill program outcomes (with 165 schools reporting data as of submission of this report) |
| High School Participation | Geographic distribution achieved | High schools who indicated interest at the outset of summer comprised 56 counties across the state. Among students enrolled in grade 12 at a participating high school in 2024-2025, 53% of students attended a school in the 7-county Twin Cities region, and 47% were from among the remaining 49 counties. |
| High School Participation | More than 30% of students enrolled in 12 th grade at a participating high school are: 1) Eligible for free and reduced-price meals, OR 2) Are students from historically underserved populations | Of students enrolled in 12th grade at a participating high school, 43% identify as Black, Indigenous, and students of color, and 36% are eligible for free and reduced-price meals |
| Academic Tiers | Academic tiers are agreed to by all colleges and understood by participating high schools | Tiers agreed to by colleges opting in, and academic tier distribution results remained statistically proportional to the past two years. College survey data to follow in early Spring 2025 |
| Academic Tiers | Academic tiers understood by participating high schools | Academic tier distribution results remained statistically proportional to past two years. High school survey data to follow in Spring 2025 |
| Work Required | Work required of participating high schools and colleges is reasonable | High school survey data to follow in Spring 2025 |

| Milestone | Success Threshold | Results |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Launch date | First letters go to students in October 2024 | First letters went out in August 2024 |

While this table is a point-in-time update on deliverables and student impact, there are numerous components the agency is gauging. OHE annually surveys both high school and college staff participating in the program to determine if the program met its implementation goals in the areas of academic tier thresholds, the reasonableness of work required, responsiveness of the agency and third parties, and program launch timing. In terms of program awareness and development as outcomes, 2024-2025 also saw a good deal of collaboration within the working groups for both K-12 and higher education partners, national media coverage highlighting the program and sharing phenomenal student stories, and continued progress with SIS technology vendors for future program development.

Understanding Participation and Impact of Direct Admissions

Measures of Success: Student Outcomes for 2023-2024 Program Year

The success of Direct Admissions is measured by the following student outcome indicators:

- Number of admissions inquiries between October through July of the program year,
- FAFSA completion rate (indirect outcome),
- High school completion rate of seniors (indirect outcome),
- Immediate college enrollment rate of seniors, and
- Immediate in-state college enrollment rate of seniors.

When possible and appropriate, outcome indicators will be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, gender, free and reduced-price meals eligibility, school and district, and geography.

The following section presents data on two outcome metrics for Direct Admissions. These outcome metrics are:

- Percent of students that filed the FAFSA,
- Enrollment in a Minnesota college or university in fall after high school (preliminary data).

To evaluate the impact of the Direct Admissions program, outcome metrics are shown for participating 12th grade students as compared to non-participating 12th grade students at participating high schools in 2023-2024. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on high school enrollment, high school graduation, and college enrollment, it should be noted that these outcomes do not control for all other forces potentially impacting the outcomes measured during this period.

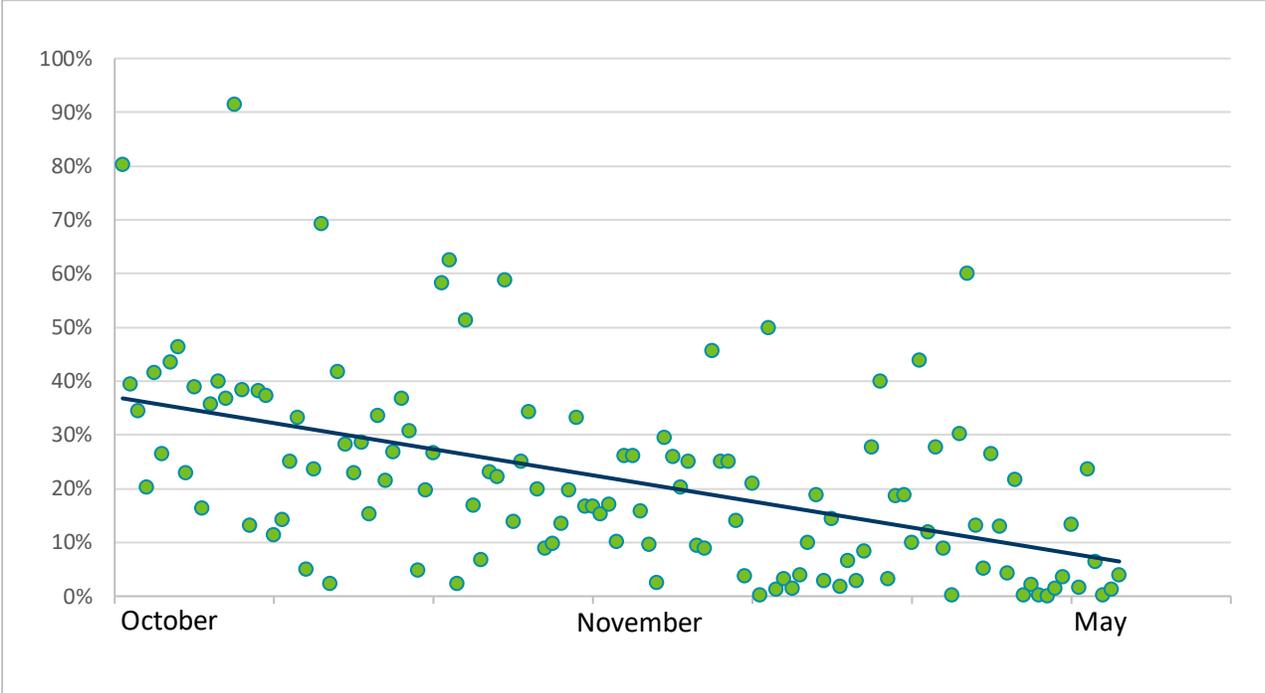
Summary of Outcomes

Overall, students participating in Direct Admissions generally had higher FAFSA filing rates and higher college enrollment rates as compared to non-participants. This remained largely true when data was disaggregated by sex, race and ethnicity, and eligibility for free or reduced-price meals. In addition, high schools participating in Direct Admissions during the 2023-2024 academic year had higher FAFSA filing rates and higher college enrollment rates as compared to the two years immediately preceding participation in Direct Admissions.

In the 2023-2024 school year 120 high schools participated in Direct Admissions and over 20,000 students received a personalized Direct Admissions letter. Of those students, 4,858 students requested Direct Admissions to a participating college or university. The 4,858 students represent 22% of 12th grade students enrolled in participating high schools in 2023-2024. Participation rates varied by timing of the student notification. The program year ended with 34,712 total inquiries from 120 reporting high schools. On average, students participating in Direct Admissions selected four institutions they wished to request proactive admissions from. Of all students responding, 85% chose ten or less institutions to request proactive admission to, and 18% chose only one institution.

As more schools participate in Direct Admissions, and as schools participate longer, it is expected that the participation rate will increase due to better awareness of the program; earlier set-up and implementation of the program; and improved integration with district-sponsored college and career exploration activities. Statistics about participation by school can be found on Figure 2.

Figure 2 Percent of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions at Participating High Schools by Date Survey First Sent, 2023-2024



Note: OHE received a greater number of data transmissions between October and November than between November and May. X axis does not reflect a consistent distribution of time.

Data Sources

Data to determine outcomes of students participating in Direct Admissions comes from the following sources:

- Direct Admissions student participation data was collected by OHE from the student’s high school.
- Enrollment data for all 12th graders enrolled at a Minnesota public or charter school and their demographics was provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. This is the same file used by OHE for Minnesota’s FAFSA Completion Goal reporting.
- FAFSA information was provided by the U.S. Department of Education to the Office of Higher Education for all Minnesota residents. OHE receives this file in order to administer state financial aid programs.
- Data on preliminary college enrollment was drawn from the Office of Higher Education’s MN Aid system which includes all students enrolled in college between July 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024 and eligible for a Minnesota State Grant by having enrolled in a Minnesota institution participating in state financial aid and completing the FAFSA or other state aid application.

- Data on college enrollment in Minnesota is drawn from the Office of Higher Education’s student-level enrollment database. This data is submitted by colleges following the end of each academic term. Fall term data is not yet available for students enrolled in grade 12 in 2023-2024.
- Data on college enrollments outside of Minnesota will be drawn from Minnesota’s Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) which receives data on Minnesota students enrolling in college outside of Minnesota from the National Student Clearinghouse. This data is not yet available for students enrolled in grade 12 in 2023-2024.

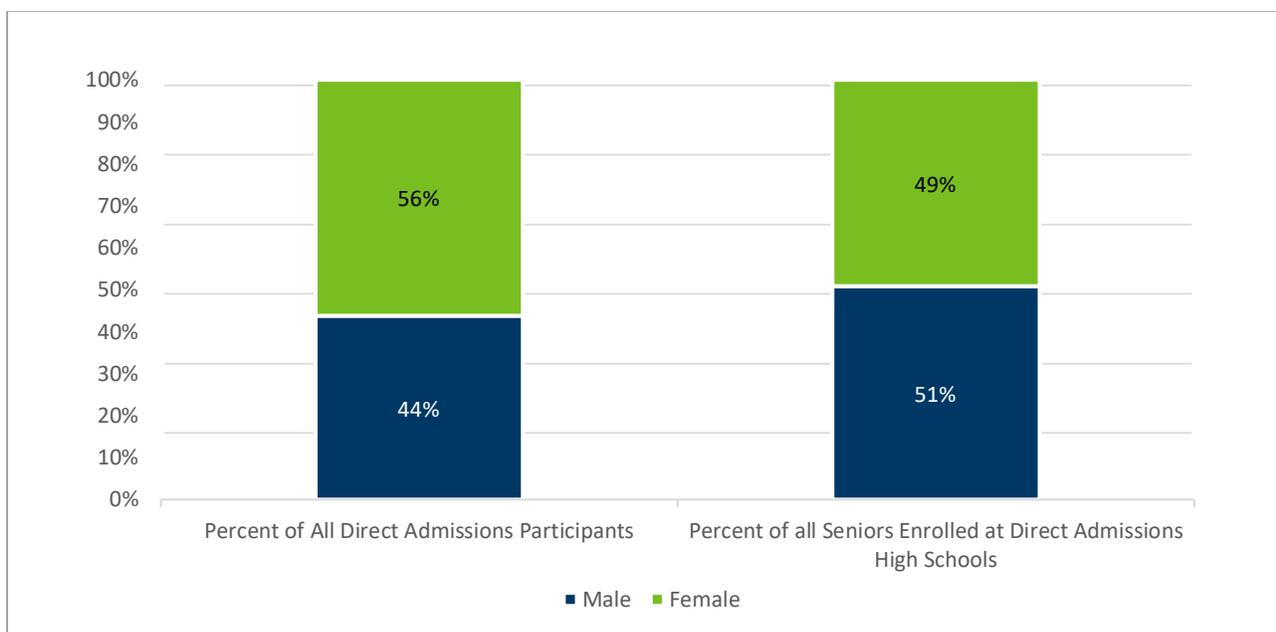
Demographics of Participants

The following section presents data on the demographics of 12th grade students participating in Direct Admissions.

Gender

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 56% identified as female, and 44% as male as shown in figure 3. This distribution varies from all enrolled 12th grade students, of whom 49% identified as female and 51% as male. As a result, the participation rate in Direct Admissions was lower for students identifying as male (16%) as compared to those students identifying as female (22%).

Figure 3 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Sex 2023-2024

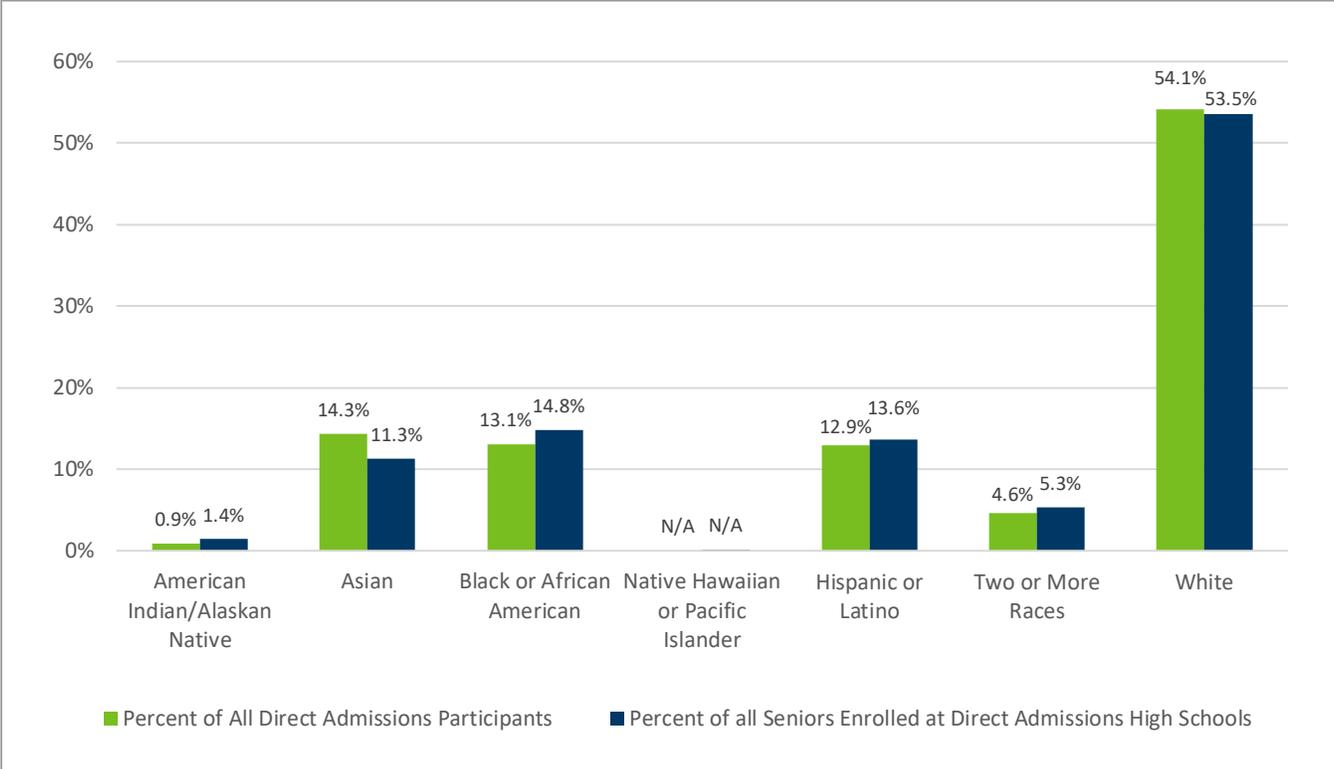


Race and Ethnicity

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 54% identified as White, 13% as Hispanic or Latino, 13% as Black, 14% as Asian, 5% as two or more races, and <1% as American Indian or Alaskan Native (per federal definitions of American Indian and Alaskan Native). Fewer than 10 students identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

This distribution varies from all 12th grade students at participating high schools of whom 54% identified as White. The slight over-representation of students identifying as White or Asian compares to underrepresentation of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino (14%), Black or African American (15%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (1%) as illustrated in figure 4. As a result, the participation rate in Direct Admissions was lower for students identifying as Hispanic or Latino (18%), Black or African American (17%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (12%) as compared to those students identifying as White (19%).

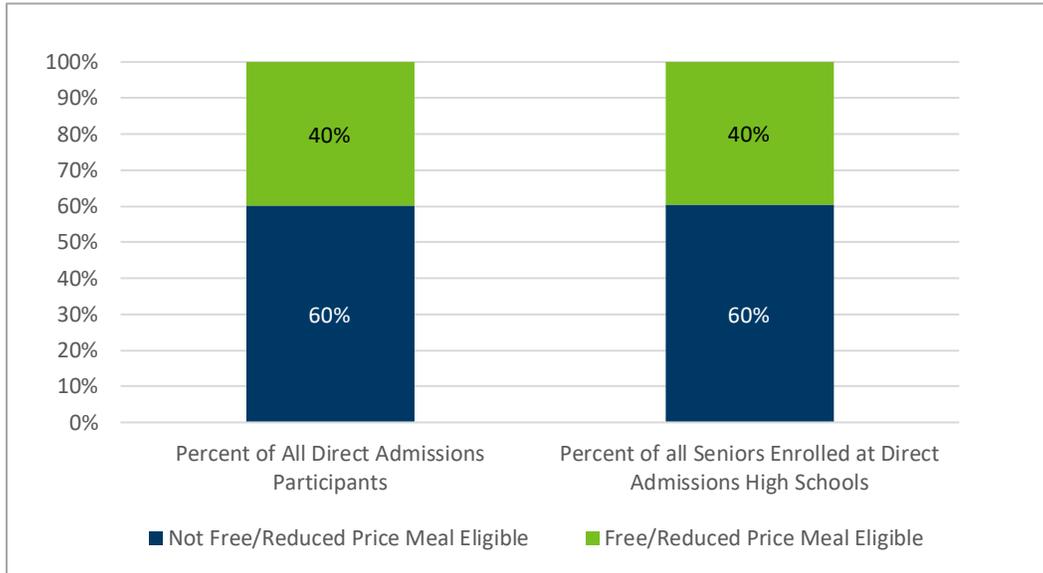
Figure 4 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Race and Ethnicity 2023-2024



Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 40% were eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits, and 60% were not eligible. This distribution mirrors the distributions for all 12th grade students at participating high schools as illustrated by Figure 5. As a result, the participation in Direct Admissions is similar for eligible students (19%) as compared to ineligible students (19%).

Figure 5 Percentage of 12th Grade Students Participating in Direct Admissions by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility 2023-2024



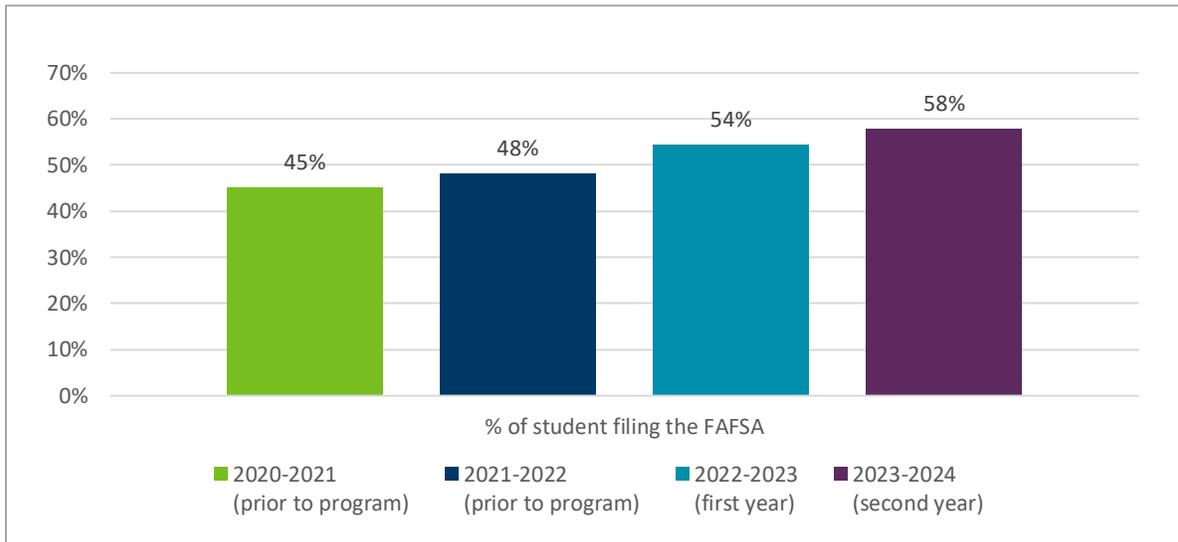
Filed the FAFSA

One measure of intent to enroll in college is student completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or state aid application. While not all students complete the FAFSA or state aid application, it is a requirement to be eligible for federal and state financial aid. It may also be required by the college to receive institutional grants and scholarships. To allow appropriate comparisons given the limitations discussed, data from the three preceding years is included in this analysis.

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 76% filed a FAFSA as compared to 50% of all 12th grade high school graduates. Overall, the portion of 12th grade students at a participating high school who filed a FAFSA increased steadily from 45% in 2020-2021 (prior to DA program) to 58% in 2023-2024 (the second year of the program), illustrated in figure 6. It should be noted that this increase in FAFSA completion is particularly significant given that there were well documented delays in the launch of the FAFSA application due to challenges with the federal implementation of the FAFSA Simplification Act. According to the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) which tracks FAFSA completion rates for graduating high school seniors, there was an overall decrease of -7.4% nationally in FAFSA completion rates for 2023-2024 cohort. According to NCAN estimates, Minnesota overall had a decrease of -6.3% for the class of 2024 cohort, making it even more noteworthy that the Direct Admissions schools saw increases in FAFSA completion¹.

¹ National College Attainment Network. (2024, February 2). NCAN's FAFSA tracker - 2024-25 FAFSA cycle. National College Attainment Network. Retrieved February 13, 2024, from <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/bill.debaun.national.college.access.network/viz/NCANsFAFSATracker-2024-25FAFSACycle/HomePage>

Figure 6 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time

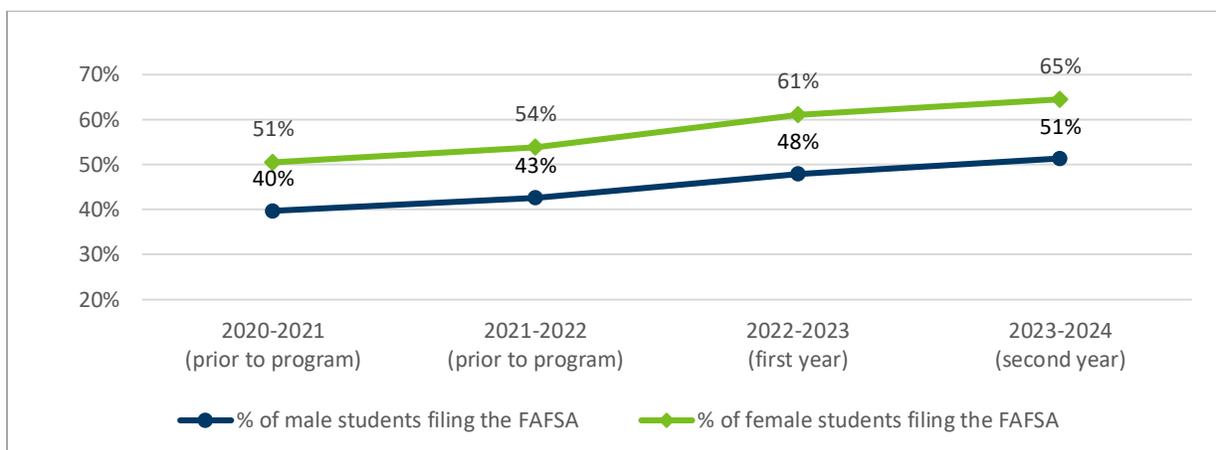


FAFSA Filing by Sex

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 70% of students identifying as male and participating in Direct Admissions filed a FAFSA as compared to 48% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as male at a participating high school. This compares to 80% of 12th grade students identifying as female and participating in Direct Admissions as compared to 60% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as female at a participating high school.

Overall, 51% of 12th grade students identifying as male at a participating high school in 2023-2024 filed a FAFSA, which compares to 48%, 43% and 40% in the preceding three years, as shown in Figure 7. In comparison, 65% of 12th grade students identifying as female at a participating high school in 2023-2024 filed a FAFSA, which compares to 61%, 54% and 51% in the preceding three years.

Figure 7 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time by Sex

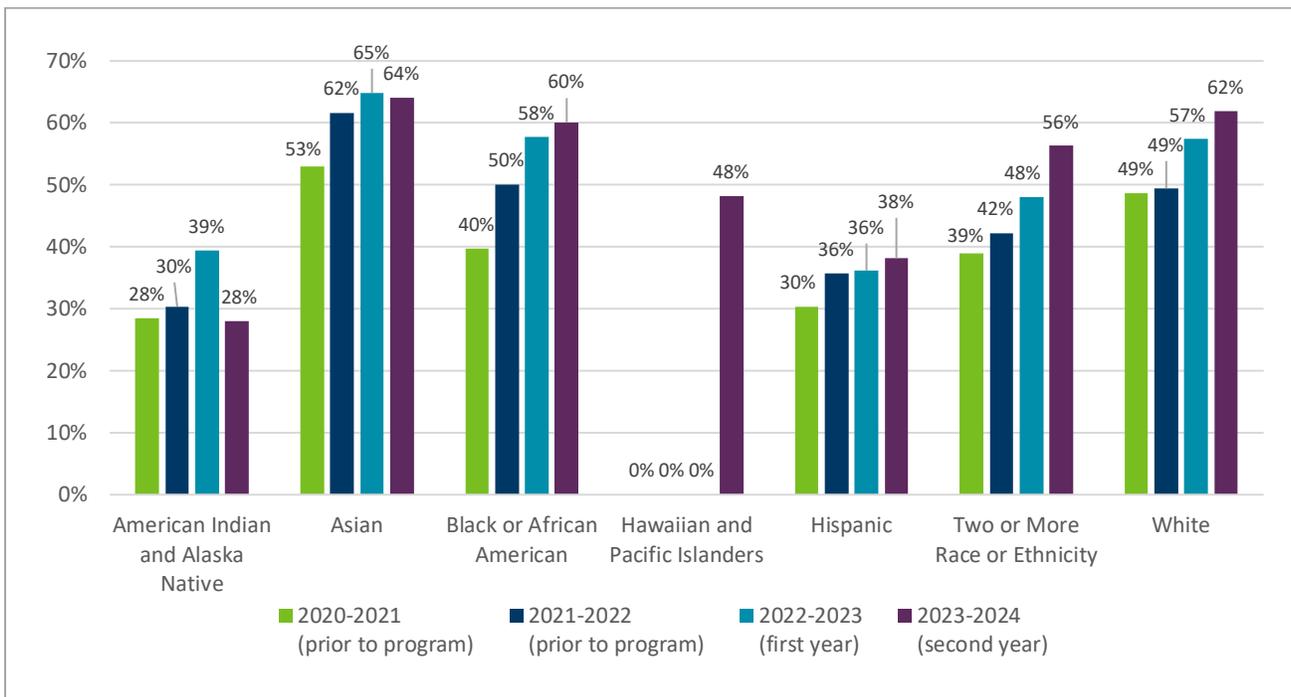


FAFSA Filing by Race and Ethnicity

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 77% of students identifying as Asian filed a FAFSA, as compared to 60% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as Asian at a participating high school. Higher completion rates were found across all race and ethnicity groups among participants as compared to non-participants. Participants identifying as White, Black or African American, two or more races or Hispanic or Latino also had FAFSA filing rates (77%, 83%, 76%, and 60% respectively) that exceeded those of their non-participating peers (58%, 55%, 52%, and 33% respectively).

Overall, 64% of 12th grade students, both participants and non-participants, identifying as Asian at participating high school in 2023-2024 filed a FAFSA, which compares to 65%, 62%, and 53% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 8. In comparison, the increase over time in FAFSA filing rates is seen for all race and ethnicity groups except for American Indian and Alaska Native students, for whom the rates decreased during 2023-2024.

Figure 8 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time by Race and Ethnicity

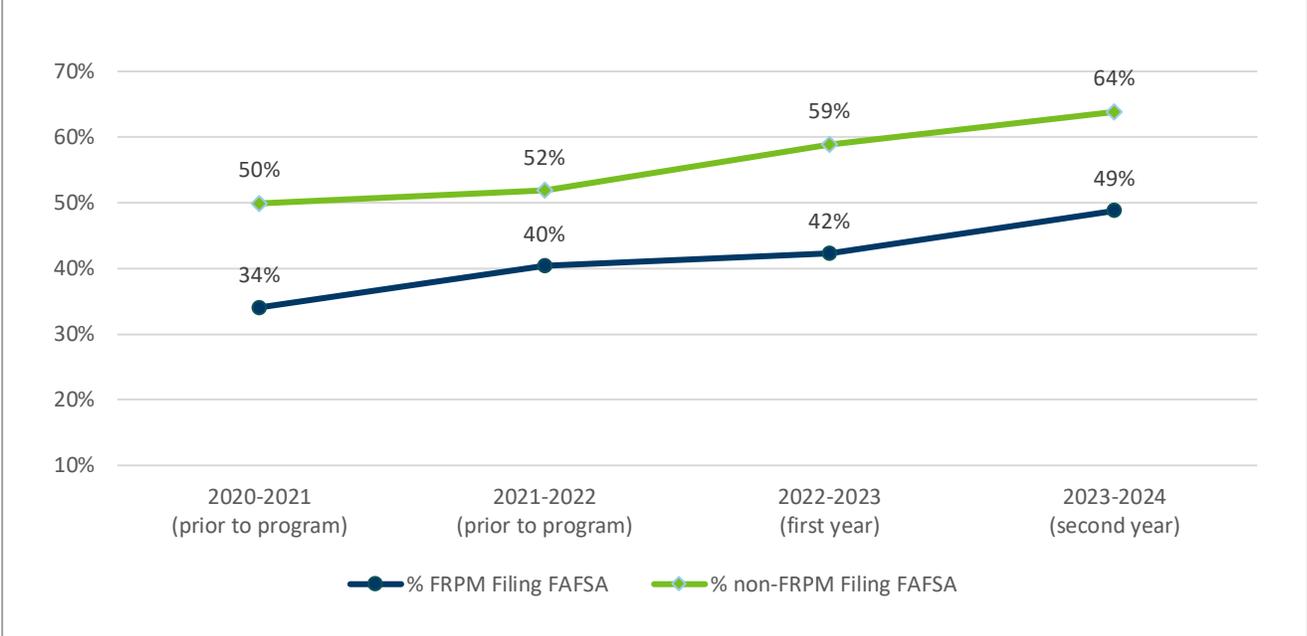


FAFSA Filing by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 72% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals filed a FAFSA, as compared to 43% of non-participating 12th grade students eligible for free or reduced-price meals at a participating high school. This compares to 78% of 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals and participating in Direct Admissions, as compared to 61% of non-participating 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals at a participating high school.

Both students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and those not eligible showed increases in FAFSA filing rates over the most recent three years. Overall, 64% of 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals at participating high school in 2022-2023 filed a FAFSA, which compares to 59%, 52%, and 50% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 9. In comparison, 49% of 12th grade students eligible for free or reduced-price meals at participating high school in 2023-2024 filed a FAFSA, which compares to 42%, 40%, and 34% in the preceding three years.

Figure 9 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Filing a FAFSA Over Time by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility

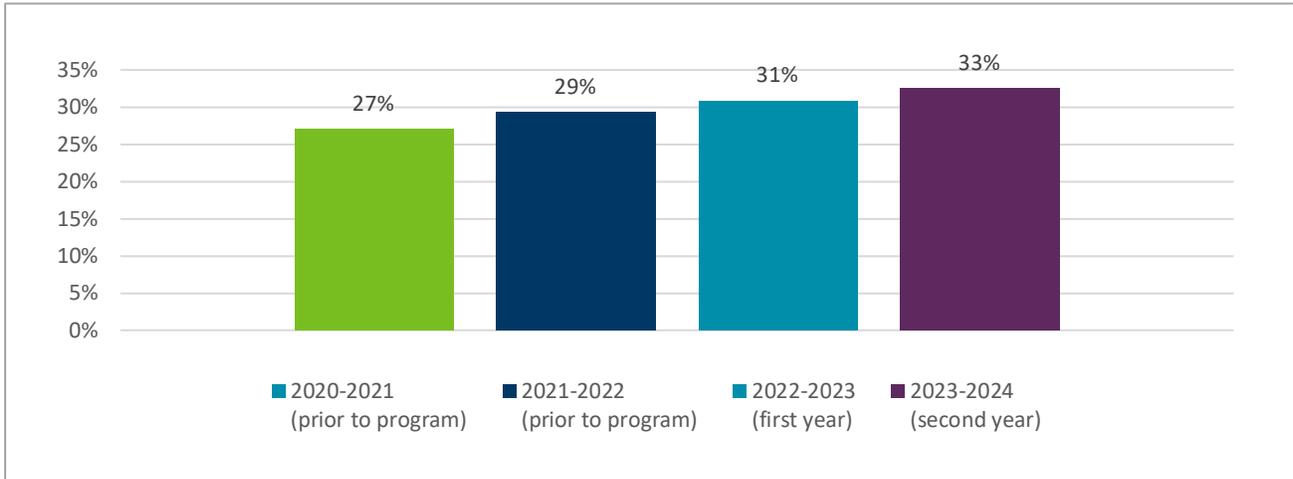


Enrollment in a Minnesota College in Fall after High School (preliminary data)

Preliminary fall enrollment in college is measured by presence of a State Grant record for the student. All Minnesota high school graduates who are Minnesota residents and whose families meet income requirements are eligible for a Minnesota State Grant if enrolling at a participating college. This number would not include students who choose to enroll in college in another state, students who enroll in college but did not apply for state financial aid using the FAFSA or state aid application, or students who do not file the FAFSA by choice due to family income and perceived aid. These numbers will likely only increase as final data becomes available throughout the year, a metric that will be reflected in next year’s annual report.

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 46% were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation as compared to 28% of non-participating 12th grade students at a participating high school. Overall, 33% of 12th grade students at participating high school in 2023-2024 were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, which compares to 31%, 29%, and 27% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 10.

Figure 10 Percentage of Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College Following High School Graduation (Preliminary Data) Over Time

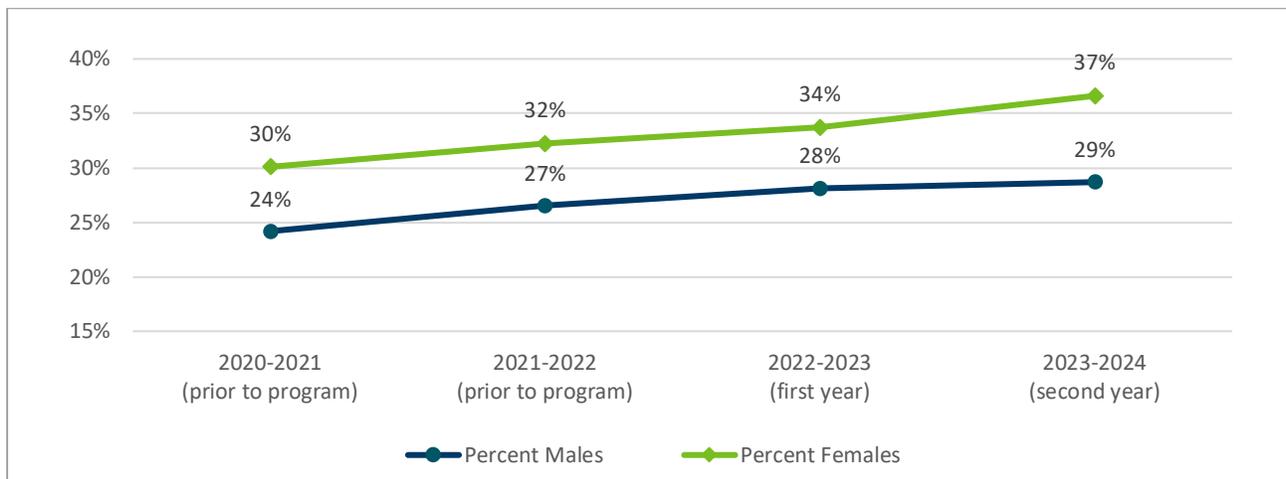


Enrollment in a Minnesota College in Fall after High School (preliminary data) by Sex

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 47% of students identifying as male were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation as compared to 25% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as male at a participating high school. This compares to 53% of 12th grade students identifying as female and participating in Direct Admissions as compared to 32% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as female at a participating high school.

Overall, 29% of 12th grade students identifying as male at a participating high school in 2023-2024 were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, this compares to 28%, 27%, and 24% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 11. In comparison, 37% of 12th grade students identifying as female at a participating high school in 2023-2024 were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, which compares to 34%, 32%, and 30% in the preceding two years.

Figure 11 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Sex

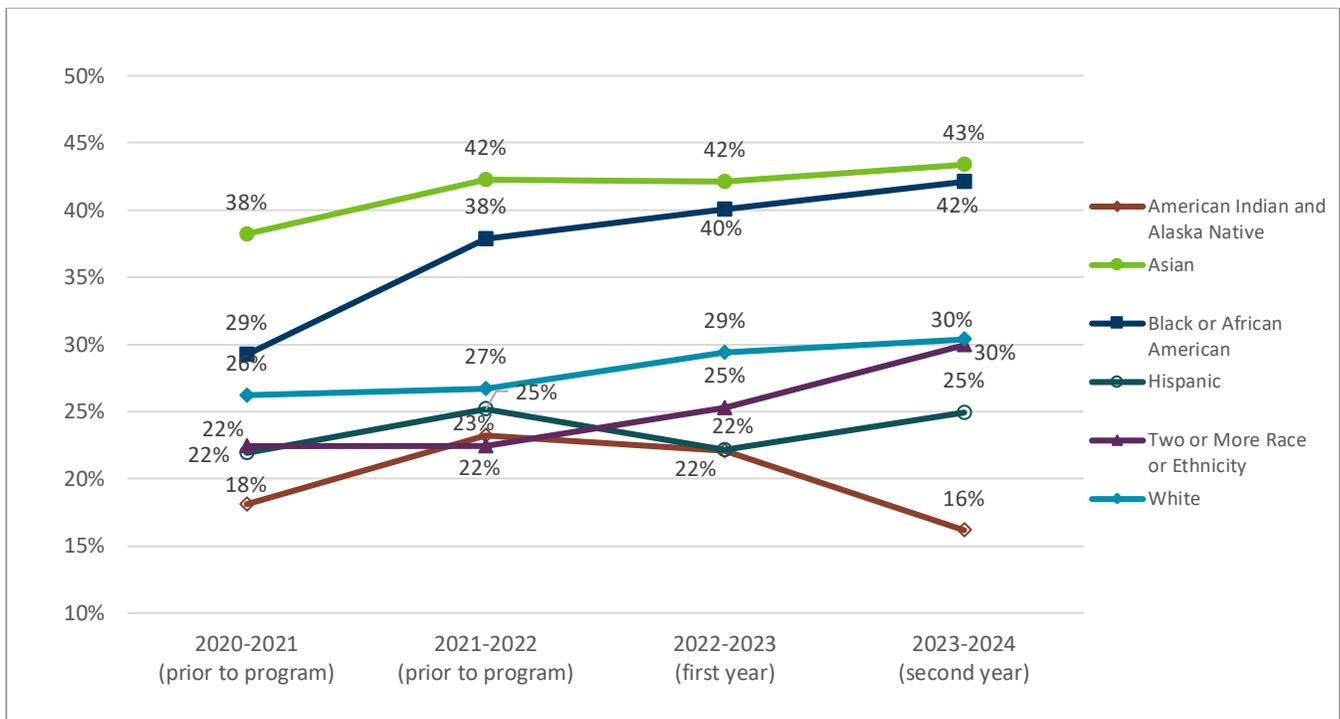


Enrollment in a Minnesota College in Fall after High School (preliminary data) by Race and Ethnicity

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 63% of students identifying as Black or African American were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation as compared to 38% of non-participating 12th grade students identifying as Black or African American. Higher preliminary enrollment rates were found across all race and ethnicity groups among participants as compared to non-participants. Participants identifying as White, Asian, two or more races or Hispanic or Latino also had preliminary enrollment rates (46%, 57%, 47%, and 47% respectively) that exceeded those of their non-participating peers (27%, 39%, 27%, and 20% respectively).

Overall, 42% of 12th grade students, both participants and non-participants, identifying as Black or African American at participating high school in 2023-2024 were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, which compares to 40%, 38%, and 29% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 12. In comparison, the increase over time in preliminary enrollment rates is seen for all races and ethnicity groups except students identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native for whom the rates decreased for the last two years.

Figure 12 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Race and Ethnicity



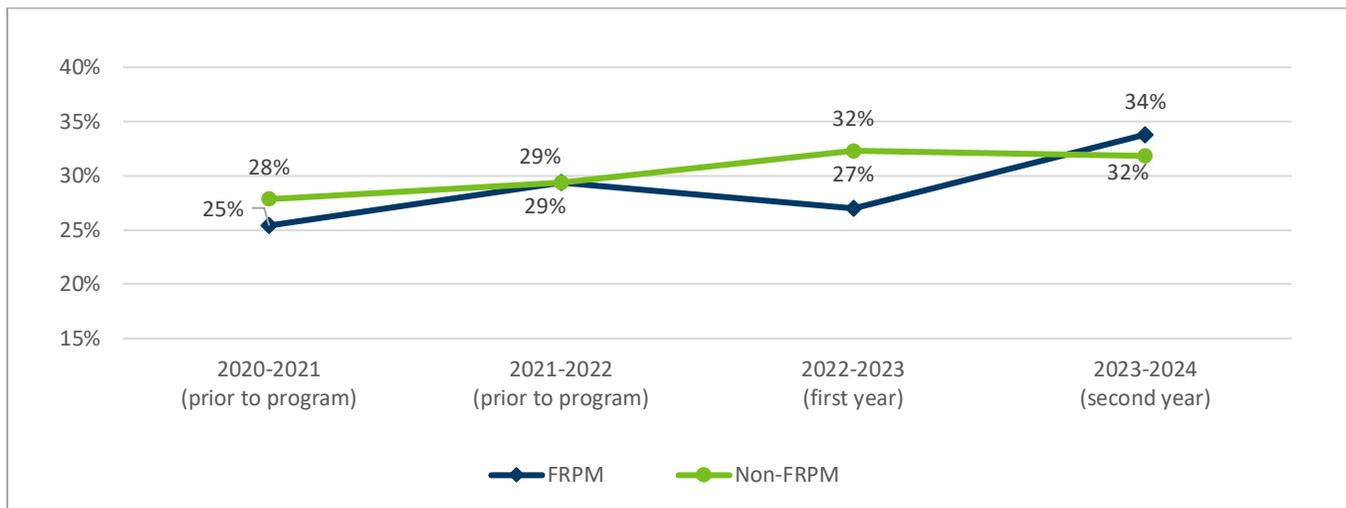
Note: As the program continues to expand, OHE will continue to assess and identify possible areas for intervention when there are disparate outcomes for particular student populations. While the overall trends identified in this year's report are positive for almost all categories of students, the findings for Native American students indicate a need for further study for this population. An important disclaimer is the number of students in the program's overall cohort. In terms of Native American students by year, the 2022-2023 program cohort had 99 students (1%); 2023-2024 had 579 students (3%); and the current program year of 2024-2025 has 902 students (3%), a sizable increase over the course of the last two program years.

Enrollment in a Minnesota College in Fall after High School (preliminary data) by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility

Of 2023-2024 Direct Admissions participants, 54% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation as compared to 29% of non-participating 12th grade students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. This compares to 48% of 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals and participating in Direct Admissions and 28% of non-participating 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals at a participating high school.

Both students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and those not eligible showed increases in preliminary enrollment over the most recent four years. Overall, 32% of 12th grade students not eligible for free or reduced-price meals at participating high school in 2023-2024 enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, which compares to 32%, 29% and 28% in the preceding three years, as shown in figure 13. In comparison, 34% of 12th grade students eligible for free or reduced-price meals at participating high school in 2023-2024 were found enrolled in a Minnesota college in fall after high school graduation, which compares to 27%, 29% and 25% in the preceding three years.

Figure 13 Percentage of 12th Grade Students at a Direct Admissions Participating High School Enrolling in a Minnesota College (Preliminary Data) Over Time by Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Eligibility



Future Research

Additional data elements will be added as the identified data sources are made available to OHE. These future additional indicators will include:

- High school completion rate of seniors (indirect outcome),
- Immediate college enrollment rate of seniors (final data), and
- Immediate in-state college enrollment rate of seniors (final data).

In addition, OHE will add data disaggregated by school/district and geography when possible and appropriate.

Challenges and Recommendations

The Direct Admissions program grew substantially from the pilot year of 2022-2023 and the second cohort of 2023-2024. This growth afforded thousands more students the opportunity to benefit from the program but also required significant resources of time and staff capacity for OHE to ensure successful expansion of the model.

OHE is committed to learning as the program grows and to continuous improvement of the program delivery model so that all partners (students, high schools, and participating colleges and universities) continue to benefit. A critical component to scaling the program is to be transparent about the challenges encountered in the early years as well as identification for strategies to address those challenges.

Based on the student outcome data, Direct Admissions continues to be a successful state initiative with significant promise to improve the college admissions experience for Minnesota high school students. That promise will only be enhanced as OHE continues to make process improvements in the following four areas: administration, communications with students, technology, and fidelity of implementation.

Administration

One of the greatest challenges in administering the program remains K-12 staffing. Direct Admissions is not an expensive program to administer, but its success relies on high school counselors and related staff allocating approximately 40 to 80 hours to set up and execute the program. Implementation of Direct Admissions requires that high schools complete their assessment of each student's on-track for graduation status as well as the assignment of each student to an academic tier between June and mid-October. In addition, staff ensure FERPA notifications/Tennessee warnings are sent to families prior to testing and calibrating the software used in notifying students. Given that most staff are contracted through June of the academic calendar year, and then do not return until August, some of this work must occur either at the end of the school year or immediately at the outset of the next. For schools with limited staffing, finding the hours needed can be a challenge. Schools have the option of contracting for work in July, but not all staff are available. Funding provided by the state can be utilized for reimbursing schools for some of the hours required of staff. Once a school has completed its first year in the program, the need for staff time is reduced in subsequent years as set-up tasks only need to be maintained. However, time is still required to complete the assessment of students' on-track for graduation status, as well as the assignment and quality assurance of each student to an academic tier. In addition, unplanned staff outages or turnover set back a few schools or districts that were otherwise initially on track to meet the preferred October notification sending timeline.

To address some of the abovementioned staffing challenges from the prior program year, the building of a "team roster" at the local level was created through the program application process for newly joining high schools. In the event a staff member went on leave or took a new role elsewhere, additional contacts were already known to the agency. More frequent and consistent trainings were also offered for newly joining high schools. All trainings were recorded and posted to various agency channels. A robust mentor cohort was established this year, with a dozen mentors from veteran high school participants connecting with new high schools to share best practices and tips at monthly virtual sessions. Colleges also had crossover sessions

established throughout the year which ensured consistent messaging and insight into any staff changes that may have occurred.

Another administrative challenge was delay in completing the necessary contracts to allow for data sharing and fund transfers. Both Joint Powers and Data Sharing Agreements are needed to ensure secure data transfer and compliance are met, in addition to remuneration for program costs. For this year, three high schools were discontinued for not fulfilling the contracts in enough time to successfully launch the program.. The sheer number and volume of contracts for the program requires a great deal of agency time. Streamlining these processes will be critical as the program scales. Efforts to streamline continued this past year as the contracts were combined into a single document for the primary school signatory, as well as sent in the month preceding the summer break.

A final administrative challenge is the sending of student transcripts to college postsecondary partners. Unlike for our SIS partners, there is no universally approved slate of e-transcript vendors for high school or district partners to utilize, and with numerous vendors in the space, there are also varying costs, practices, and processes for students to obtain and route their official transcript to Direct Admissions postsecondary partners of their choice. Some high school partners choose to utilize their program funding for an e-transcript vendor service, though the costs usually exceed the program funding allocated to high schools.

Communications with Students

The success of Direct Admissions relies on strategically timed and easily understood communication for students and their parents. In this area, several challenges occurred, largely around getting the Direct Admissions notifications and information to students prior to November. Numerous web-based, print, and social media assets were created and translated to support the initial Direct Admissions communication to students. Despite these tools, and even with program staff support, several high schools and districts were late in getting their communications out to students.. This was largely due to understanding the technology involved in sending out initial communications, and occasionally to staffing changes or unavailability on a short-term basis. Other times, this staffing unavailability was due to loss of key staff in technology or communications' areas of the secondary schools.

One of the ongoing goals for the program is ensuring that students understand what the Direct Admissions program offers and what their next steps should be. Behavioral “nudging” of students to act in a timely manner to select their colleges of choice remains key. Overall, the agency has started to build out better brand awareness and has expanded program outreach efforts broadly. Additionally, specific resources have been developed for earlier grades, particularly with tools around types of participating higher education institutions and ways to pay for college. This year, the most successful high schools leveraged every channel available to them, including print and social media, advisory meetings for seniors, press releases, and more. Earlier introduction and awareness of the program will continue as it grows and becomes imbedded in the college-going fabric of the high schools.

There's also more work to do in collaborating on the college side of communications with students. High school staff have requested that communications following the initial notification be standardized on a set timeline (e.g., prompts 3-5 days after sending the initial notification). Anecdotal reports from some high school

counselors reported that some students were confused about institution-specific next steps, ranging from applying for free to the college with a promo code to confirming their data in a college-specific portal. On the college side of communications with students, there remains a need to continue to build out more resources to aid students and families in understanding the program and its nuances across institutions. As such, the agency built out or enhanced several resources. New communication vehicles included a student center for the program, piloting podcasts on college search and fit factoring, new video content on the program and financial aid, and sustaining the junior year marketing campaign for participating high schools.

Technology

Direct Admissions uses local SIS platforms and data sharing agreements with high schools and districts to assess and share the data needed to ensure students get their program survey notifications in a timely fashion. The success of the program is dependent on high schools having implemented and being aware of information, software updates, and processes within their local SIS technology to complete the academic review and send notifications to students. Without the ability to produce these reports, alternatively maintained technology and manual review are needed at the high school. Thus, another anticipated challenge is for the Office of Higher Education to onboard and create additional training manuals for the remaining SIS vendors who will be rolling out the program in the next school year. This set-up can be quite substantial at the outset as there are multiple steps involved. First, a school must assess if the student is on-track for graduation through the academic planner tool. The academic planner details the graduation requirements for the district, the courses that meet those requirements, and the student's course enrollments and grade information. Once set up, on-track for graduation is assessed via a report. Next is the assignment to academic tiers for Direct Admissions. The system should have a pre-programmed report that reviews the students unweighted cumulative GPA and course grades in English, math, and science to assign the academic tiers. Both of these reports are then reviewed and quality assured by counselors for accuracy and student placement. Without the ability to produce these reports, high school counselors must manually review the on-track for graduation status, likely in an Excel spreadsheet, and manually review the unweighted grade point average and course grades to assign tiers. The manual review process increases the time needed for staff to set-up the program prior to the start of each academic year. For the current program year, two of the five MDE-approved SIS vendors have built Direct Admissions into their technology platforms, and a third has the report component of the academic review completed. A fourth has begun production. The remaining SIS vendor has been largely unresponsive to the agency's attempts to connect and engage in dialogue. The hope is that by the start of the fall semester, four of the five SIS partners will have the program built within their technology platforms, and there will also be a simplified, streamlined tier structure for the academic review as well.

The sheer amount of program data is immense, and the agency continuously evaluates how to leverage economies of scale. We are working on streamlined efficiencies for our SIS partners and OHE-managed tools and have plans to centralize several operations and processes that should reduce the program onus on SIS and high school partners while ensuring student selections and survey data make their way to college partners as quickly as possible.

Fidelity of Implementation

The final area of program challenges involves fidelity of implementation. For Direct Admissions to be successful, it is critical that the program provide information to the student as soon as possible once the student begins their senior year. Ideally, seniors in the 2024-2025 academic year should have received their Direct Admissions notifications between August and October. These notifications were sometimes delayed when schools were not able to complete set up tasks during the summer. Additionally, several schools did not complete the initial contractual steps, and several more failed to implement the sending of communications altogether in the program year. A goal for future years will be to ensure that all notifications are sent to students and parents by October 31st at the latest to build on existing College Knowledge month activities and to take full advantage of program benefits (including application fee waivers and connecting to college staff early in senior year). This also ensures that students have the program information prior to participating in events planned at or by their school in early fall. This is essential given the admissions' profession's landscape of the fall, when college fairs, large-scale college access events, and external vendor timelines go into effect. One unanticipated challenge of the program is that of changing the paradigm of college admissions and student skepticism and disbelief about the ease of the process. On occasion the agency or high school partners field questions around the veracity of the program, namely that it seems too good to be true. As students learn more and engage in the program, their enthusiasm only grows.

Recommendations

The challenges discussed in the prior section are not insurmountable, and with planning and assistance from K-12 staff, SIS technology vendors, and postsecondary partners, OHE anticipates evolving Direct Admissions into a more effective and successful program each year. Recommendations to address these challenges include the following:

- Add 100 additional high schools to the upcoming year's cohort of participants, bringing the number of participating high schools to around 300 in 2025-2026, and continue to incorporate private/parochial high schools who have interest in the program. Broaden alternative learning centers/program, online high school, tribal affiliated, and competency-based high schools' participation;
- Through efforts to centralize the survey sending process, the agency intends to explore summary data reporting available to high schools and college partners;
- The agency also intends to implement a simplified, streamlined tier structure for the academic review, one that supports fidelity of implementation and communication with the public as the program continues to scale;
- Continue to work with high schools earlier in the year to ensure key benchmarks and deliverables are met for initial program set-up and academic survey delivery prior to November 1st;
- Continue to work with schools to ensure full use of existing SIS technology to support Direct Admissions, including on-boarding additional SIS vendors and leveraging manuals and supplemental tools to actualize the program;
- Continue to standardize student communications and communication timelines with regards to initial prompts for follow-up at specified times from high school staff; initial contact from colleges; and

integrated follow-up messaging with FAFSA, MN DREAM Act, North Star Promise, Pell Grant, and State Grant information;

- Continue to expand upon and create new marketing content to augment program partner needs;
- Continue to sustain communities of practice for secondary partners that support the work and allow for organic best practices' sharing. These communities also serve as a "mentor program" for newly joining high schools to connect with veteran high school participants;
- Integrate more intentional crossover time between the two working advisory groups, in addition to a few optional all-participant virtual gatherings throughout fall months;
- In terms of prospective program partners, continue to expand to include longstanding community-based college-access organizations (CBOs), including Get Ready, Achieve, Blandin Foundation, and MN TRIO (more particularly for TRIO programs, Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search partners);
- For calendar outreach events and avenues (both virtual and off-site), continue to establish an OHE Direct Admissions' presence and brand-awareness at the following hallmarks of the admissions' calendar year: the fall's Minnesota School Counselors Association annual conference; Minnesota's National College Fair in October; the Minnesota Association for College Admissions Counseling's fall and spring Minnesota Education Fairs; and the Minnesota Association for Counselors of Color fall and spring college fairs;
- Collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Education in College Knowledge Month/Minnesota Goes to College Efforts throughout October.

Scaling Direct Admissions Statewide

It is possible to scale Direct Admissions to all 800+ of Minnesota's public high schools (approximately 70,000 high school seniors). The Office of Higher Education recommends scaling the program over three to five years to all high schools due to the set-up work required and maintaining it as a voluntary program for schools to opt into. Faster scaling may be possible but would require increasing the Direct Admissions budget to support additional agency staff needed to run the program and to ensure fidelity of operation, appropriate use of data, and technology enhancements.

Next Report

The next report on Direct Admissions Minnesota is due to the Legislature by February 1, 2026.

Appendix A. Direct Admissions' Participating High Schools, Community-based Partner Direct Service High Schools, and Colleges' Tables

Figure A1. Direct Admissions Minnesota – Organizational Structures Diagram 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

Direct Admissions Minnesota – Organizational Structures Diagram

updated: 08/01/2023

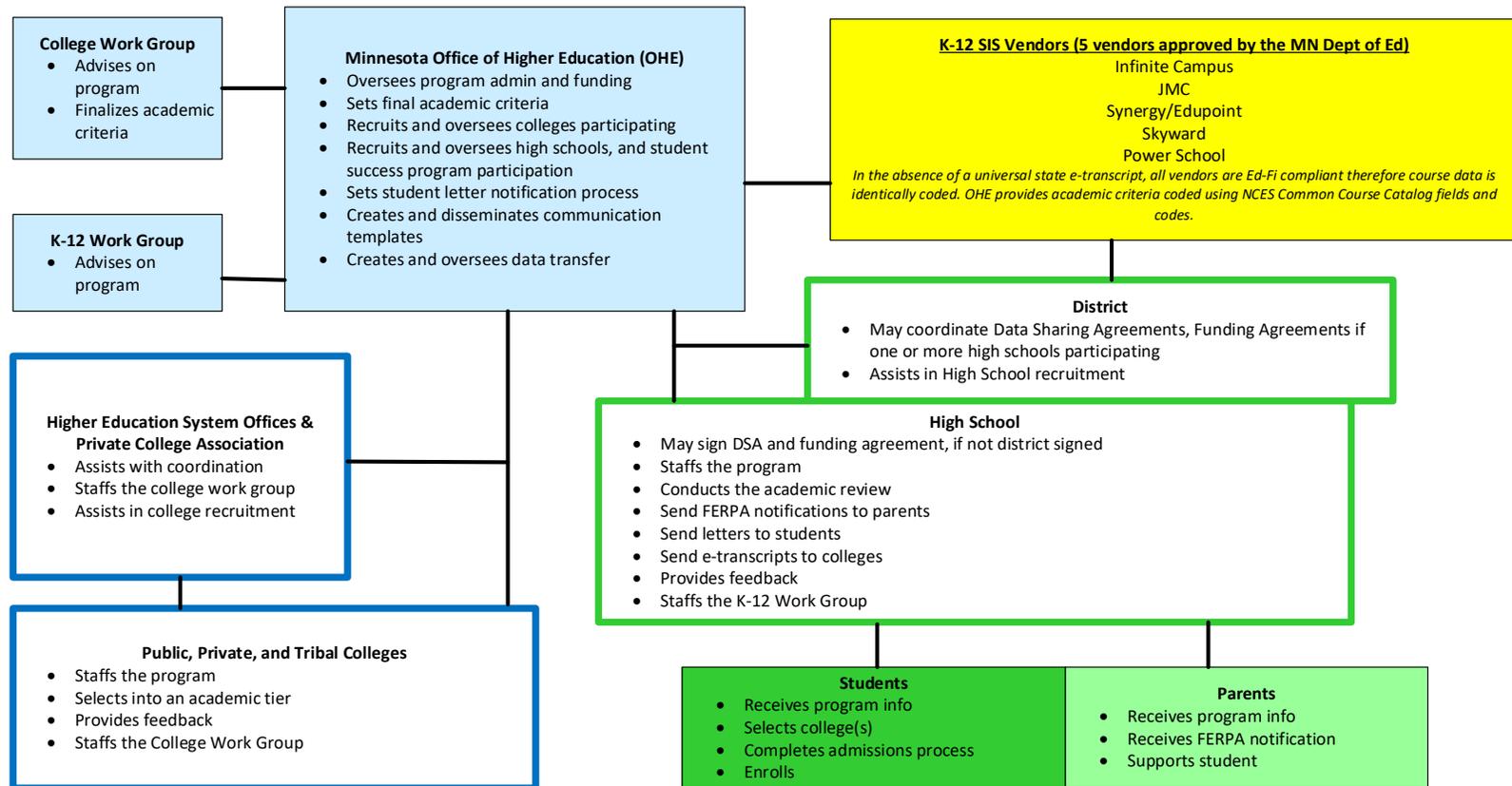


Figure A2. Direct Admissions Minnesota – Data Flow Diagram 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

Direct Admissions Minnesota Data Flow Diagram

updated: 08/14/2023

OHE Has Contract for software module development with K12 SIS Vendor
OHE Sends Specification to SIS Vendor For Academic Tier Placement

K-12 SIS Vendors (5 vendors approved by the MN Dept of Ed)
Infinite Campus -- JMC-- Synergy/Edupoint-- Skyward-- Power School

K12 SIS Vendor has Contract with District for SIS Services

Software Module / Technical Assistance made available to Districts and High Schools

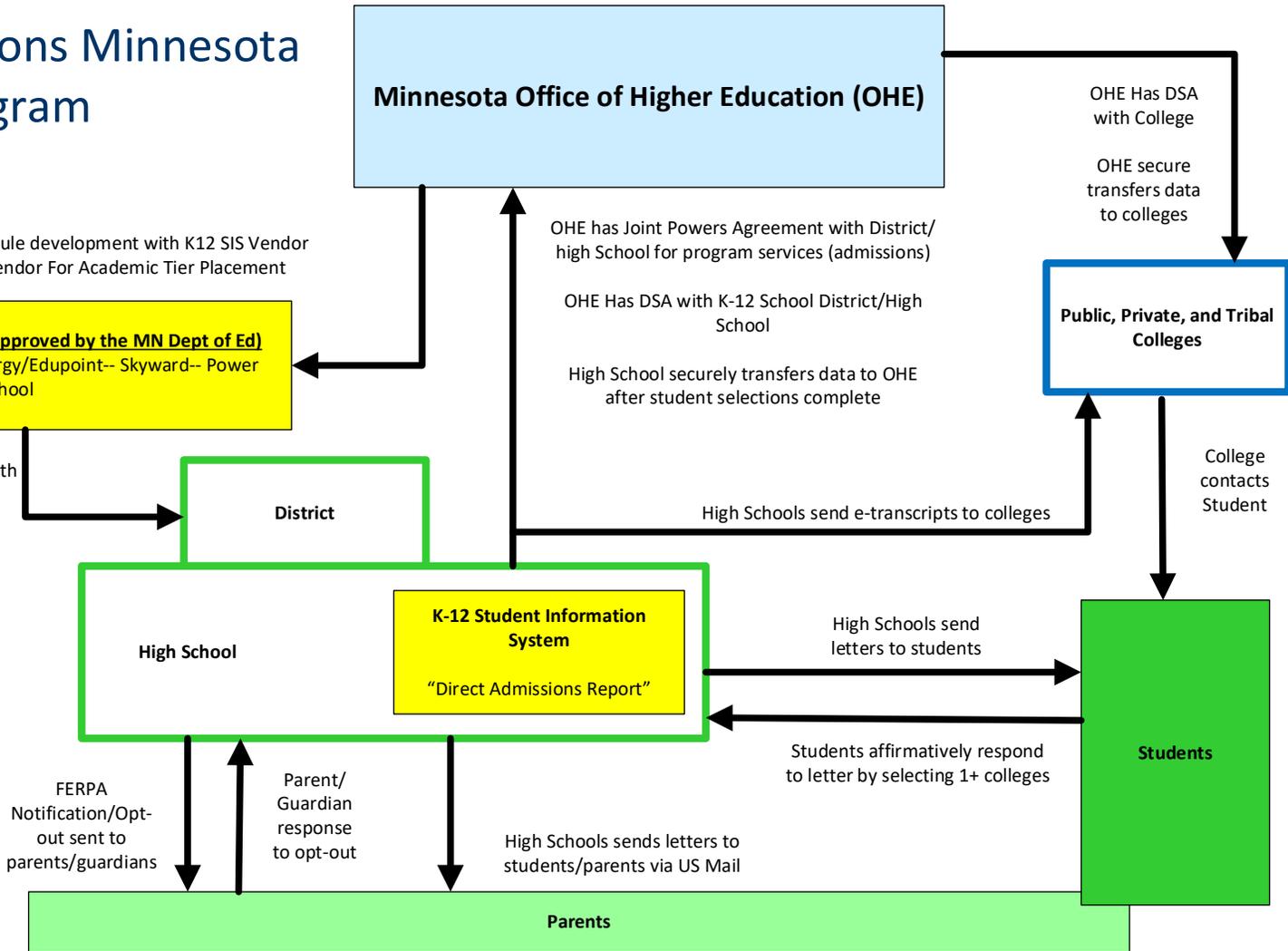


Table A1. Members of K-12 Secondary Advisory Workgroup of Direct Admissions, 2024-2025

| Member | Affiliation |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Joshua Omang | Detroit Lakes Senior High |
| Paul Marlin | Waseca Public Schools |
| Hannah Ramsey | Banaadir Academy |
| Emily Owens | Venture Academy High School |
| Brooke McGuire | Waseca Public Schools |
| Eric Gordee | Infinite Campus |
| Tiffany Gustin | Minnesota School Boards Association |
| Beth Barsness | Minnesota Department of Education |
| Jessica Cabeen | Austin Online Academy |
| Elizabeth (Lizzie) McNamara | Minneapolis Public Schools |
| BG Tucker | College Possible |
| Lindsay Pluger | College Possible |
| John Eschenbacher | Saint Paul Public Schools |
| Libby Fahrenkamp | Outreach & Marketing, Office of Higher Education |
| Aaron Salasek | Direct Admissions Coordinator, Office of Higher Education |

Table A2. Members of Postsecondary Advisory Workgroup of Direct Admissions, 2024-2025

| Member | Affiliation |
|---------------------|---|
| Robert Gould | Augsburg University |
| Stephanie Ruckel | Augsburg University |
| Jeff Lemke | Bethany Lutheran College |
| Christine Barnhouse | University of Saint Thomas |
| John Manning | Minnesota Private College Council |
| Ali Pickens-Opoku | Minnesota State System Office |
| Cynthia McDonald | Dunwoody College of Technology |
| Jennifer Hewardine | Ridgewater College |
| Bib Lo | Saint Paul College |
| Alicia Zeone | Rochester Community and Technical College |
| John Brown | Saint Cloud State University |
| Tracy Diefenbach | White Earth Tribal and Community College |
| Ben Groff | Bethel University |
| Jen Rancour | Pine Technical College |
| Melissa Bert | University of Minnesota Morris |
| Libby Fahrenkamp | Outreach & Marketing, Office of Higher Education |
| Aaron Salasek | Direct Admissions Coordinator, Office of Higher Education |

Table A3. Participating High Schools for 2024-2025 (county indicated, alpha order by high school)

| County Name | School Name | Direct Admissions Status |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Ramsey | 622 Online High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | A. G. A. P. E. Teen Parent | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | Access | Participating 2024-25 |
| Freeborn | Albert Lea Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | ALC Gateway to College | Participating 2024-25 |
| Stearns | Apollo Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mower | Austin Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mower | Austin Online Academy | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mower | Austin Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Banaadir Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Clay | Barnesville Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Beacon ALP | Participating 2024-25 |
| Sherburne | Becker Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Swift | Benson Area Learning Center | OHE Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Swift | Benson Secondary | OHE Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Faribault | Blue Earth Area Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | BlueSky Charter School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Douglas | Brandon-Evansville High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wilkin | Breckenridge Area Learning Program | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wilkin | Breckenridge Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Brooklyn Center Early College Academy | OHE Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Hennepin | Brooklyn Center High School | OHE Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Wright | Buffalo Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | Burnsville High School | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 before launch |
| Hennepin | Camden High School (formerly Henry High) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Goodhue | Cannon Falls Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Anoka | Centennial Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Anoka | Centennial High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Central Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Olmsted | Century Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Carver | Chanhassen High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Carver | Chaska High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Saint Louis | Chisholm Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Choice Academy | Participating 2024-25 |
| Clearwater | Clearbrook-Gonvick Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Carlton | Cloquet Area ALC | Participating 2024-25 |
| Carlton | Cloquet Senior | Participating 2024-25 |
| Anoka | Columbia Heights Senior High | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 after launch |
| Ramsey | Community of Peace Academy High School | Participating 2024-25 |

| County Name | School Name | Direct Admissions Status |
|-------------|--|---|
| Ramsey | Community School of Excellence High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Como Park Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Creative Arts Secondary School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Pine | Crossroads Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | CVA Fusion High School (9-12) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | CVA PASCAL Middle & High School (6-12) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Becker | Detroit Lakes Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Eagle Ridge Academy Charter School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Pine | East Central Senior Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | East Ridge High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Eden Prairie Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Edina Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Edison High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | FAIR High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Rice | Faribault Senior High | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 after launch |
| Polk | Fertile-Beltrami Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | Forest Lake Area High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Sibley | GFW High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| McLeod | Glencoe-Silver Lake Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Goodhue | Goodhue Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Gordon Parks High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Itasca | Grand Rapids Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Harding Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | Hastings Alternative Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | Hastings High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Clay | Hawley Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Otter Tail | Henning Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Heritage Academy High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | High School for Recording Arts | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Highland Park Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Hill-Murray | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Hmong College Prep Academy HS | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | HOA High School (Hastings Online) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | HOPE Community Academy High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Hopkins Senior High | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 after launch |
| Houston | Houston Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Humboldt High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Insight School of Minnesota | OHE Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Carver | Integrated Arts Academy | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Jefferson Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Olmsted | John Marshall Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |

| County Name | School Name | Direct Admissions Status |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Ramsey | Johnson Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Scott | Jordan High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Otter Tail | Kennedy High School (Fergus Falls) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Kennedy Senior High (Bloomington) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Fillmore | Kingsland Junior/Senior High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Kittson | Kittson Central Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | Lakes International Language Academy Upper School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Sibley | Le Sueur - Alternative Learning Cooperative | Participating 2024-25 |
| Le Sueur | Le Sueur-Henderson High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | LEAP High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Winona | Lewiston-Altura Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Koochiching | Littlefork-Big Falls Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Blue Earth | Mankato East Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Blue Earth | Mankato West Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Lyon | Marshall High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Olmsted | Mayo Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Aitkin | McGregor Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Steele | Medford Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Saint Louis | Mesabi East Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mille Lacs | Milaca 7-12 Online | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mille Lacs | Milaca Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Mille Lacs | Milaca Secondary High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Minnesota Online High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Houston | Minnesota Virtual Academy High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Minnetonka Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Pope | Minnewaska Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Olmsted | MNSync Online Secondary (formerly RPS Online High School) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Clay | Moorhead High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | MPS Online 6-12 | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | MTS High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | New Code Academy High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Kandiyohi | New London Alternative School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Kandiyohi | New London-Spicer Sr. | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | North High (Minneapolis) | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | North Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Cass | Northland Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Open World Learning Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Big Stone | Ortonville Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Anoka | PACT Charter Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |

| County Name | School Name | Direct Admissions Status |
|-------------|--|--|
| Washington | Park High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Otter Tail | Parkers Prairie Secondary | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 before launch |
| Crow Wing | Pequot Lakes Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wright | Phoenix Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | PIM Arts High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Pipestone | Pipestone Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wabasha | Plainview-Elgin-Millville High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Prairie Seeds High School Academy | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 before launch |
| Scott | Prior Lake High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Saint Louis | Proctor Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Beltrami | Red Lake Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Redwood | Red Rock Central Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Richfield Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Winona | Riverway Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Robbinsdale Armstrong Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Robbinsdale Cooper Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Robbinsdale Virtual Academy | Participating 2024-25 |
| Olmsted | Rochester Alternative Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Rockford Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Roosevelt High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Roseville Area Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Fillmore | Rushford-Peterson Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Saint Paul Online High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Scott | Shakopee High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | Simley Senior High | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 after launch |
| Anoka | SLP Schools Online Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | South High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Dakota | South St. Paul High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | South Washington Alternative High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Southwest High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | SoWashCo Online 9-12 | Participating 2024-25 |
| Houston | Spring Grove Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Anoka | Spring Lake Park Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | St Croix Valley Area Learning Cntr. | Participating 2024-25 |
| Stearns | St. Cloud Area Learning Center | District Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Anoka | St. Francis High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | St. Louis Park Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wright | St. Michael-Albertville Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Nicollet | St. Peter High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Todd | Staples-Motley Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | Stillwater Area High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Houston | Summit Learning Program | Participating 2024-25 |

| County Name | School Name | Direct Admissions Status |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Carver | SWMetro ALC | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 after launch |
| Hennepin | Takoda Prep | District Deferred start to 2025-2026 |
| Washington | Tartan Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Stearns | Technical Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wright | Terra Nova School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Beltrami | TrekNorth High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Le Sueur | Tri-City United High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Ubah Academy | Participating 2024-25 |
| Faribault | United South Central High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Venture Academy High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wadena | Verndale Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Carver | Waconia High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Wadena | Wadena-Deer Creek Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Roseau | Warroad High School | HS Deferred start to 2025-2026 before launch |
| Waseca | Waseca Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Waseca | Waseca Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Washburn High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | Washington Technology Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Watershed High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Hennepin | Wellstone International High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Traverse | Wheaton Secondary | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | White Bear Area Learning Center | Participating 2024-25 |
| Ramsey | White Bear Area Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Winona | Winona Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |
| Washington | Woodbury High School | Participating 2024-25 |
| Goodhue | Zumbrota-Mazeppa Senior High | Participating 2024-25 |

Table A4. Participating College Possible-serving High Schools 2024-2025 Academic Year

- Champlin Park
- Park Center
- Aim Academy
- Battle Lake High School
- Blaine High School
- Blooming Prairie High School
- Cambridge-Isanti High school
- Columbia Heights
- Coon Rapids High School
- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
- Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton High School
- Eveleth-Gilbert Senior High
- Farmington High School

- Frazee High School
- Fridley High School
- Lakeville North
- Lakeville Pathways Academy
- Lakeville South
- Le Roy-Ostrander High School
- Metro Schools
- Mt. Iron-Buhl High School
- Orono High School
- New Prague High School
- Perham High School
- Red Wing High School
- RTR High School
- Sartell High School
- St. Charles High School
- Tower View Alternative High School
- Triton High School
- Virtual Heights Secondary
- Wayzata High School
- Worthington High School

**Table A5. Participating Colleges and Universities 2024-2025 Academic Year
(Fall 2025 Admissions) Sorted by Sector and Name**

| Sector | Institution |
|---|--|
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Alexandria Technical & Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Anoka Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Anoka-Ramsey Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Bemidji State University |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Central Lakes College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Century College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Dakota County Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Hennepin Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Inver Hills Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Lake Superior College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Metropolitan State University |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minneapolis College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota North College |

| Sector | Institution |
|---|---|
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota State College Southeast |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota State Community and Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota State University, Moorhead |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota State University, Mankato |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Minnesota West Community & Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Normandale Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | North Hennepin Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Northland Community & Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Northwest Technical College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Pine Technical & Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Ridgewater College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Riverland Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Rochester Community and Technical |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Saint Paul College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | South Central College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Southwest Minnesota State University |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | St. Cloud State University |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | St. Cloud Technical & Community College |
| Minnesota State Colleges and Universities | Winona State University |
| Private College | Augsburg University |
| Private College | Bethany Lutheran College |
| Private College | Bethel University |
| Private College | College of Saint Benedict |
| Private College | College of St. Scholastica, The |
| Private College | Concordia College |
| Private College | Concordia University, St. Paul |
| Private College | Dunwoody College of Technology |
| Private College | Gustavus Adolphus College |
| Private College | Hamline University |
| Private College | Minneapolis College of Art and Design |
| Private College | Saint John's University |
| Private College | Saint Mary's University of Minnesota |
| Private College | St. Catherine University |
| Private College | University of St. Thomas |

| Sector | Institution |
|-------------------------|---|
| Private College | Northwestern Health Sciences University |
| Tribal College | Red Lake Nation College |
| Tribal College | White Earth Tribal & Community College |
| University of Minnesota | University of Minnesota, Crookston |
| University of Minnesota | University of Minnesota, Duluth |
| University of Minnesota | University of Minnesota, Morris |
| University of Minnesota | University of Minnesota, Rochester |

Appendix B. Direct Admissions Student Letters Tiers 1 through 6

Direct Admissions Student Letter Text

Dear [Name],

Congratulations! Based on a review of your high school transcript, you are on track to graduate in 2024-2025 and are eligible to participate in the Minnesota Direct Admissions* program! We want to make sure that you know **all Minnesota high school graduates are college material**. As you begin planning for your future, you should know that you have already met the admissions criteria for many colleges and universities in Minnesota. This letter contains a list of colleges and universities that want you to know that the answer will be "YES!" if you decide to apply.

The Direct Admissions program has taken the worry out of knowing where you stand. You can choose to apply to one or more of the schools listed on this letter and know that you'll be granted admission. You have a couple of next steps:

- Review your personalized list of colleges and universities below and confirm that you would like to learn more about one or more of the colleges and universities to which you have been directly admitted. After you confirm your interest, each college or university that you select will email you information about your next steps. You don't have to decide where you want to go yet – this step just lets the colleges know you are considering them as an option.
- Review your institution's application deadlines and be sure to respond to the college or university's email to finalize your FREE application and interest of enrollment. If a college or university requires submission of additional materials (i.e. essay, test scores, or letters of reference), you must submit the required materials by their process. Please note: Although your application fees will be waived, **you must still meet the application deadlines**, even if you are applying through Direct Admissions.
- You can speed up the FREE application process by **completing the optional survey** after you have made your college and university selections.
- Check out the **Direct Admissions Student Center** at <https://www.myhighered.mn.gov/direct-admissions-student-center> to find more guidance on each college and university's next steps. You can also explore and compare your many options with the College Search Tool, create a student account to save your information, and hear from other students about their experience with the program.
- **Get help paying for college!** You can apply for both state and federal financial aid by completing your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the MN Dream Act application. Remember to fill out the FAFSA when it opens or check out our FAQ for more information!

You can also look into the other great higher education options in Minnesota if the college or university you are most interested in doesn't appear on this list.

*Please see website and program FAQ for more information. Some restrictions may apply, or additional information may be required for admission into specific majors or programs.

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Community and Technical College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ St. Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Public Four-Year Universities

- ✓ Bemidji State University
- ✓ Metropolitan State University
- ✓ Minnesota State University Mankato
- ✓ Minnesota State University Moorhead
- ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University
- ✓ St. Cloud State University
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Crookston
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Duluth
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Morris
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Rochester
- ✓ Winona State University

Private Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Augsburg University
- ✓ Bethany Lutheran College
- ✓ Bethel University
- ✓ College of Saint Benedict
- ✓ The College of St. Scholastica
- ✓ Concordia University St. Paul
- ✓ Concordia College
- ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology
- ✓ Gustavus Adolphus College
- ✓ Hamline University
- ✓ Minneapolis College of Art and Design
- ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University
- ✓ Saint John's University
- ✓ Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
- ✓ St. Catherine University
- ✓ University of St. Thomas

Your future is bright and on behalf of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, we congratulate you for being on the right track for college in the fall of 2025!

Sincerely,

Dennis W. Olson, Commissioner, Office of Higher Education

School Official Name & Title

Tier 1 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota North College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Northwest Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College
- ✓ Riverland Community College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College
- ✓ Saint Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Tier 2 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota North College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Northwest Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College
- ✓ Riverland Community College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College
- ✓ Saint Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Public Four-Year Universities

- ✓ Saint Cloud State University
- ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University

Private Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Bethany Lutheran College
- ✓ Concordia University St. Paul
- ✓ Bethel University Online
- ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology
- ✓ The College of St. Scholastica
- ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University

Tier 3 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota North College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Northwest Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College
- ✓ Riverland Community College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College
- ✓ Saint Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Public Four-Year Universities

- ✓ Bemidji State University
- ✓ Metropolitan State University
- ✓ Minnesota State University Moorhead
- ✓ Saint Cloud State University
- ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Crookston
- ✓ Winona State University

Private Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Bethany Lutheran College
- ✓ Bethel University Online
- ✓ The College of St. Scholastica
- ✓ Concordia University St. Paul
- ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology
- ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University

Tier 4 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota North College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Northwest Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College

- ✓ Riverland Community College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College

- ✓ Saint Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Public Four-Year Universities

- ✓ Bemidji State University
- ✓ Metropolitan State University
- ✓ Minnesota State University Moorhead
- ✓ Saint Cloud State University

- ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Crookston
- ✓ Winona State University

Private Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Bethany Lutheran College
- ✓ Bethel University Online
- ✓ The College of St. Scholastica
- ✓ Concordia University St. Paul

- ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology
- ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University
- ✓ Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

Tier 5 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College
- ✓ Anoka Technical College
- ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- ✓ Central Lakes College
- ✓ Century College
- ✓ Dakota County Technical College
- ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- ✓ Hennepin Technical College
- ✓ Inver Hills Community College
- ✓ Lake Superior College
- ✓ Minneapolis College
- ✓ Minnesota North College
- ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast
- ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College

- ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- ✓ Normandale Community College
- ✓ North Hennepin Community College
- ✓ Northland Community and Technical College
- ✓ Northwest Technical College
- ✓ Pine Technical and Community College
- ✓ Red Lake Nation College
- ✓ Ridgewater College
- ✓ Riverland Community College
- ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College
- ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College
- ✓ Saint Paul College
- ✓ South Central College
- ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College

Public Four-Year Universities

- ✓ Bemidji State University
- ✓ Metropolitan State University
- ✓ Minnesota State University Mankato
- ✓ Minnesota State University Moorhead
- ✓ Saint Cloud State University
- ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University

- ✓ University of Minnesota, Crookston
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Duluth
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Morris
- ✓ University of Minnesota, Rochester
- ✓ Winona State University

Private Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Augsburg University

- ✓ Bethany Lutheran College

- ✓ Bethel University
- ✓ Bethel University Online
- ✓ College of Saint Benedict
- ✓ The College of St. Scholastica
- ✓ Concordia College
- ✓ Concordia University St. Paul
- ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology

- ✓ Gustavus Adolphus College
- ✓ Hamline University
- ✓ Minneapolis College of Art and Design
- ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University
- ✓ Saint John's University
- ✓ Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
- ✓ St. Catherine University

Tier 6 Letter

Based on your academic record, you qualify for Direct Admissions at the following colleges and universities:

Public and Tribal Two-Year Colleges

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alexandria Technical and Community College ✓ Anoka Technical College ✓ Anoka-Ramsey Community College ✓ Central Lakes College ✓ Century College ✓ Dakota County Technical College ✓ Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College ✓ Hennepin Technical College ✓ Inver Hills Community College ✓ Lake Superior College ✓ Minneapolis College ✓ Minnesota North College ✓ Minnesota State College Southeast ✓ Minnesota State Community and Technical College | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Minnesota West Community and Technical College ✓ Normandale Community College ✓ North Hennepin Community College ✓ Northland Community and Technical College ✓ Northwest Technical College ✓ Pine Technical and Community College ✓ Red Lake Nation College ✓ Ridgewater College ✓ Riverland Community College ✓ Rochester Community and Technical College ✓ Saint Cloud Technical and Community College ✓ Saint Paul College ✓ South Central College ✓ White Earth Tribal and Community College |
|--|---|

Public Four-Year Universities

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bemidji State University ✓ Metropolitan State University ✓ Minnesota State University Mankato ✓ Minnesota State University Moorhead ✓ Saint Cloud State University ✓ Southwest Minnesota State University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ University of Minnesota, Crookston ✓ University of Minnesota, Duluth ✓ University of Minnesota, Morris ✓ University of Minnesota, Rochester ✓ Winona State University |
|--|---|

Private Colleges and Universities

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Augsburg University ✓ Bethany Lutheran College ✓ Bethel University ✓ Bethel University Online ✓ College of Saint Benedict ✓ The College of St. Scholastica ✓ Concordia College ✓ Concordia University St. Paul ✓ Dunwoody College of Technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gustavus Adolphus College ✓ Hamline University ✓ Minneapolis College of Art and Design ✓ Northwestern Health Sciences University ✓ Saint John's University ✓ Saint Mary's University of Minnesota ✓ St. Catherine University ✓ University of St. Thomas |
|---|--|

Appendix C. Legislation for Direct Admissions Minnesota

136A.84 DIRECT ADMISSIONS PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** The commissioner shall administer the direct admissions program in consultation with stakeholders, including Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota, the Student Advisory Council under section 136A.031, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Minnesota School Board Association, to automatically offer conditional admission into an eligible public or nonprofit institution as defined under section 136A.103, paragraph (a), located in Minnesota, to Minnesota high school seniors based on a student's high school grade point average, high school and college transcript information, standardized tests, statewide assessments, and other measures as determined by stakeholders.

Subd. 2. **Implementation.** The program shall establish and, to the extent feasible, implement a process for leveraging existing kindergarten through grade 12 and higher education student information systems to automate the admissions process for students. The program must specifically evaluate the impact this process has on outcomes for students with lower levels of college knowledge, low-income students, and students from populations underserved in higher education. The office shall attempt to achieve statewide representation and may prioritize program participants to include high schools with a significant number of students of color, low-income students, or both.

Subd. 3. **Information.** The commissioner shall provide information about the Minnesota state grant program and the North Star Promise and encourage students to determine their eligibility for financial aid based on FAFSA and state financial aid application completion.

Subd. 4. **Report.** Annually, by February 1, the Office of Higher Education shall report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education finance and policy and higher education on activities occurring under this section. The report must include but is not limited to information about implementation, recommendations, and outcomes.

History: 2023 c 41 art 2 s 25



OFFICE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

2025