

Date/time: September 19, 2024, 2:00-4:30pm

Location: Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 1450 Energy Park Dr., St. Paul

Attendees: Paul Cerkvenik, Nathan Coulter, Scott Croonquist, Jessica Espinosa, Nancy Floyd, Sheila Hoffman, Krystle Igbo-Ogbanna, Jennifer Kunzie, Josiah Litant, Angela Mansfield, Jesse Mason, Katie McClelland, Joe Munnich, Dennis Olson, Maureen Ramirez, Sally Reynolds, Maira Rosas-Lee, Raj Singh, Jen Verbrugge

Notes:

1. Welcome and introductions

Commissioner Olson thanked everyone for being here and talked about the work that we have been doing to move the P-20 forward. He remarks that he is excited to continue to fold this group into that work today and beyond, as we keep moving the work forward together.

Josiah Litant welcomed the group. He commented that many members had intended to come today but couldn't be here because they are sick and/or their families are sick. Josiah asks folks to go around the room, introduce themselves, and tell us about what their organization is and does.

2. Mission, Vision, Commitments Presentation

Josiah Litant and Jen Verbrugge presented about the new Mission, Vision, Commitments statement for MNP20. Though this group gave input on the last draft and the final version was emailed out, he comments that we wanted to take some time to unpack the statements a bit so that members have a solid understanding of what they entail. Josiah and Jen walk through the statements and highlight key phrases, words, and decisions that were made in the writing and editing process. *See meeting slide deck slides 4-12 for more information.*

Members comment that the new statements resonate. There was appreciation expressed for the commitment to specifically naming equity as a core commitment of the partnership. Someone commented that they appreciate that the statements ground us in action and provide clarity about what MNP20 does and what we are trying to achieve. It was also suggested that we want to be sure that we are not only focusing on gaps and areas of improvement, but that we make space and time to celebrate the things that are working well and the successes that are happening across MN's education landscape.

3. Legislative Session: 2024 to 2025

Commissioner Olson opened the discussion by saying that we've had a lot of exciting sessions over the course of the last few years. They've been unique sessions. We're lucky to be in the position that we've been in the last few years to support budget recommendations on behalf of the Governor and many of the organizations represented here in the room. Even in the policy year after the budget has been set, we've had the opportunity to have conversations around how to spend supplementary budgets. We were able to accomplish a lot in the 2023 session, and last year was a smaller and more targeted year. It was a bit of a relief, because we had plenty to implement and stand up as a result of 2023 session. We are waiting to see what the forecasts bring for the upcoming budget session.

Josiah welcomed Adosh Unni, Director of Government Relations for MDE. Adosh presented on actions taken in the 2024 legislative session related to early childhood and K-12. *See meeting slide deck slides 17-32 for more information.*

Josiah welcomed Nekey Oliver, Director of Government Relations for OHE. Nekey presented on actions taken in the 2024 legislative session related to higher education.

- There was a lot that happened in higher ed mostly on the policy side not in terms of supplemental spending.
- There was a target of \$500,000 in higher ed for a kids on campus initiative and funded a position at Minnstate to work on ways to expand childcare on campus.
- Higher ed was mostly focused on changes to things that passed in 2023—modifications to the North Star Promise Program, for example. Made sure that funding they got for books, tools, childcare grants, etc. don't count against students applying for North Star.
- Policy was put in place to offer protections for pregnant and parenting students for public institutions. Also required campuses to designate someone on campus to be the point person for those students to go to.
- Lots of focus on affordability. Issues with fostering independence grants—there was additional funding in 2023. Program covers up to cost of attendance for students who were in foster care. That program saw a significant increase in eligible applicants but it was a fixed appropriation so there was a deficit. There was a reallocation from North Star Promise to cover the gap during 2024. That may be a predictor of a topic that will come up again in 2025 with regard to needing to see more money in this program. There was also a change to the policy of the program that established a priority waitlist for the program.
- There was some policy work around Dept. of Corrections to help incarcerated students with loan debt, for example.
- There was other legislation to focus on certain populations such as DREAMers, basic needs, pregnant and parenting students, etc.

- Aspiring teachers of color program was ending and got a one-time appropriation of \$1m to continue. OHE is currently awarding those funds. There is push from some coalitions to continue funding the effort more beyond that this next biennium.
- OHE is involved with MDE and PELSB in looking at all of the programs around teacher workforce—there are many and they are looking at the full landscape of programs and their structures/funding/success/etc.
- A question was asked about if a bonding bill was passed. It was not.

Members were asked to take a moment to reflect on one or two things they are anticipating, hoping to see, or planning to work to move forward during 2025 session. The group then had an open discussion, which included the following comments:

- Minnesota State is desperately need of some technology money. This tech project Minnstate is going through has drawn the line under the fact that it has been decades since they have had real technology funding. This question came up with the bonding bill: Can we regard technology as a “facility” especially if schools are doing so much online?
- It’s so hard to get technology prioritized for funding—so many places are operating on old systems and equipment. Something has to be done.
- The reality of writing proposals for the legislature is really about considering what both sides of the legislature want to hear, especially with an election happening. How do we minimize the need for so many revisions etc.?
- Even if party leadership doesn’t change, there will be lots of leadership changes. In the House, for example, there will be a new ed policy chair, new higher ed chair, and new ed finance chair most likely. It’s worth thinking about partisan differences but also people differences depending on who is in various leadership positions.
- The failure to pass a bonding bill was a huge disappointment last session. Every time Minnstate, the U, and OHE come to talk about these costs, they keep going up and yet still no bill was passed. Will there be a bonding bill in 2025?
- There may be discussions about expanding on the North Star Promise. For example, the hard cutoff of \$80,000 is just above the median income, so there are a number of middle class folks who are “stuck” still.
- There will be a push for more action on childcare affordability.
- Josiah mentions a new [Basic Needs report](#) that the Legislature commissioned last session. This recently published set of recommendations includes early childhood strategies and a challenge to the Legislature encouraging them to consider being the first state in the nation to fund free universal 0-5 childcare.
- There are so many things that are being pushed out further and further without being funded or dealt with and the situations get worse and cost more.
- We need to deal with student transfer. We do not have a seamless system for students to move between our systems. It would be great if Minnesota could become the first place to solve this problem. And how do we do this inclusive of dual

enrollment, CTE, workforce development—not just between HS and College. We need solutions that look at all of this.

- We need to deal with roadblocks around teacher credentialing. We can't keep talking about educator workforce if we don't deal with the issues related to the credentialing of those who will teach them.
- Discussion about the Governor's Workforce Development Board's (GWDB) education committee—is there an opportunity here for this committee to help address this issue and be a true partner in this work? Could GWDB and MNP20 be co-collaborators in this space?
- Highlighting the misalignment of the credentialing standards for CTE high school teachers and CTE college faculty is critical—how will we create the thriving workforce when students don't have access to CTE pathways when we can't get instructors. There are structural barriers prohibiting students from accessing these pathways.
- There are so many efforts going on around teacher workforce—but they are decentralized. How could these different efforts happening across agencies and organizations be grounds for collaboration and/or collective action? How is it accessible to the average Minnesotan and to those who are responsible for licensing and training them when the offerings are so many and so convoluted?
- Lots of folks in the room are having these kinds of conversations, but separately. Can MNP20 become a place to talk about this topic more since we have all the folks at the table and figure out how we can help move educator workforce ahead with some intention? Commissioner Olson comments that we need to stay on this thread and the enthusiasm at the table on this topic. Josiah says he will add it to the agenda for some further discussion at our November meeting.

4. Executive Director Progress Updates

Josiah Litant provides updates on progress for 2024 MNP20 workplan items as well as some other projects he has been working on and/or will complete by year's end. He highlights the upcoming expiration of the state's postsecondary attainment goal, and opportunities for MNP20 to be more integral and involved in the next version of this; could it be a P-20 goal, with benchmarks in early childhood, K-12, higher ed, and workforce development? We will discuss this more at our November meeting. *See meeting slide deck slides 36-40 for more information.*

5. Announcements and Closing

Katie McClelland shares that Governor's Workforce Development Board is hiring someone at DEED to help accelerate the work they are doing to collaborate with other agencies and organizations, like MNP20. She asks people to look at and please share the position posting. Josiah thanks everyone for coming and invites them to stay for snacks and conversation.

Meeting adjournment at 4:15pm.