

PROJECT SUCCESS™

Where students connect
to their purpose

Project Success HF2637: A bill for an act appropriating money for Project Success to expand into Mankato Area Public Schools with its proven experiential learning programming for 6th-12th grade students.

Authors: Frederick; Sencer-Mura; Pursell

The State of Our Young People in Minnesota

According to the CDC in an April 2022 report, more than one in three high school students have experienced “poor mental health” during the pandemic, and the U.S. Surgeon General has issued an urgent warning about a youth mental health crisis. **Families of color, low-income students and students with disabilities have borne the brunt of the decline.**

The CDC has declared that students need our support now more than ever, by making sure that their schools are inclusive and safe and providing opportunities to engage in their communities and be mentored by supportive adults. **It also reported that teens who felt connected to others at school felt better about themselves.**

Minnesota faces very real inequities between students’ access to developmental opportunities and relationships over time that can address their mental wellness, connect them to their community and prepare them for future success. Project Success closes that gap for more than 15,000 students each year - and is poised to do much more.

A Bold Vision

We believe the key to success exists within each student if empowered to unlock it.

Project Success’ new 3-year strategic plan calls for leveraging our partnerships, resources and expertise to innovate and build on the strength of current programs with Minneapolis students and create an adaptive and scalable model that can be expanded into other districts. We have the infrastructure and partnerships needed to act quickly for maximum impact. **The time is now to expand beyond the Minneapolis district and bring these needed programs to more students across Minnesota.**



Contact Adrienne Diercks at 612-868-8510 or adrienned@projectsuccess.org for more information.
Visit our website at www.projectsuccess.org

[Project Success - Our Program](#)

Since 1994, Project Success has helped more than **200,000 opportunity youth** plan and prepare for their futures, find support and inspiration in their communities, and dig deep into discovering their potential through a proven model of experience learning. **From 6th grade through 12th grade**, our **professional staff** support and engage students inside and outside their classrooms with the following program components:

- **CURRICULUM** – Clear, **whole child development and future planning objectives** are built into our curriculum, **are incorporated into all PS activities** and are delivered by professional and diverse, culturally competent staff called “Facilitators.” They lead monthly activities called “workshops” for each grade level in every English, Special Ed, and English Learner classroom for each student in 6th-12th grade.
- **EXPEDITIONS** – **College tours** to local and regional campuses and national locations, **career tours** at workplaces, **global experiences** in places like Washington D.C., Boston and Mexico City, and **outdoor adventures** such as river adventure day field trips, winter activity days for families, and 7-day wilderness experiences to the BWCA inspire growth and discovery, expand worldviews and open doors to possibility.
- **CERTIFICATES** – through the PS Institute, high school students earn **certificates of learning** in computer coding, money management, the arts, cooking, bike tech and other subjects. The **10-week courses** give students dedicated time after school to build **explore potential career paths and build skills and connections** that prepare them to enter adulthood and the workforce successfully.
- **ARTS** – The NEA reports that **arts engagement can help set students up for greater academic achievement and employment opportunities**. PS’ ARTS programming — including evening and weekend theater experiences at no cost to students and families, theater field trips and residencies, and full-scale musicals at middle schools — inspire, build community, act as a springboard for discussion and encourage students to tell their own stories.



Contact Adrienne Diercks at 612-868-8510 or adrienned@projectsuccess.org for more information.
Visit our website at www.projectsuccess.org

Uniquely Positioned for Greater Impact

- 29 years of experience
 - Statistically significant proven results
 - Access to each student in every school
 - Longitudinal 7-year model
 - Strong relationships and partnerships
 - Demand for program expansion
 - High quality, effective operations
 - Highly developed access services for equity
 - Award-winning leadership
 - Ready to quickly activate, innovate and expand
- **METHODOLOGY** – PS has developed an innovative and culturally responsive experience learning model that is proven to help **students increase their academic engagement and develop important essential hard and soft skills. Over the course of 7 years** our students engage in- and outside of class with PS program experiences and build trusting relationships with professional and diverse staff who are thoughtfully hired and highly trained. In many instances **PS has maintained consistent relationships with individual students and families for six and seven years or more.**
 - **SCALE** – PS has developed strong school partnerships that allow us to currently work with **EACH 6th-12th grade student** attending Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), totaling more than 15,000 students. PS is the only MPS community partner given class time on a regular monthly basis (our goal-setting workshops) with each student in every English, SPED (Special Education), and EL (English Learner) classroom.
 - **ACCESS** – While other programs are available, barriers to access them have made it more challenging for students to participate. Nearly EVERY program activity is offered at no cost to students, families and schools. We provide transportation, childcare, food, language translation, individualized support, culturally relevant content and much more to ensure each student can fully experience our programs as part of the learning community. **We specialize in dismantling barriers that hold inequities in place so students are more likely to show up, and we reach students other programs may not.** Our participants have told us so.



Contact Adrienne Diercks at 612-868-8510 or adrienned@projectsuccess.org for more information.
Visit our website at www.projectsuccess.org

“Project Success Works”

Using **clear objectives** built into our **published curriculum** over the **seven-year continuum** a student participates in Project Success, we build each developmental experience offered to students using our curriculum objectives, inspiring students to dream big, ignite possibilities and grow into inspired individuals ready for success.

"Project Success works. It helps support our efforts in closing the achievement gaps. We see statistically significant positive gains in on-time graduation rates, attendance, and most importantly grade point average, which is the greatest predictor of future success." **

- Eric Moore, Senior Advisor to the Superintendent, Minneapolis Public Schools (Formerly Senior Accountability, Research and Equity Officer)

Through Project Success (PS), students build and increase*:

Goal setting and future planning skills:

- 90% of students report that PS helps them set goals and create a plan for after graduation.
- 96% of teachers report that PS helps students set goals for the future.

Identity development:

- 96% of teachers report that PS helps students be more self-aware of their strengths.

Learning strategies:

- 96% of teachers report that PS helps students be better problem solvers.
- 95% of teachers report that PS helps students be more knowledgeable about themselves as learners.

School engagement

- 92% of teachers report that PS helps students be more engaged in school
- 88% of teachers report that PS helps student be more motivated to succeed in school.

Team building

- 80% of students report that PS "helped me to better understand classmates who have different perspectives and experiences."
- 94% of teachers report that PS helps students work more collaboratively in groups.

* Our program has been independently measured in three comprehensive evaluations, conducted by the [University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement \(CAREI\)](#), demonstrating statistically significantly higher results for students of color and for students from school located in the neighborhoods with the greatest disparities.

**Based on analysis conducted by Mr. Moore of nine years of Project Success student participation data, linking student participation in Project Success activities to better in-school outcomes. Mr. Moore considers these results extremely promising. Upon further analysis, he expects to see a correlation between higher “dosage” (more depth and breadth of student exposure to Project Success) and more marked improvements in GPA and graduation rates. Mr. Moore also expects engagement (social-emotional learning) questions on survey results to show higher scores in effort, persistence and motivation for students who participated in Project Success, again with higher dosage correlated to bigger gains.

Contact Adrienne Diercks at 612-868-8510 or adrienned@projectsuccess.org for more information.
Visit our website at www.projectsuccess.org

SCHOOL PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

“Project Success is one of those programs that has all the components needed to support students and their learning. I think that what Project Success has done is that it's really elevated the importance of giving opportunities and experiences to our kids. Once that happens for our students, they then begin to realize that they are successful, they are leaders, they are important, and that people are willing to not only invest in them, but acknowledge that they have the skills to be successful.”

– Ed Graff, Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent 2016-2022

“Following every PS field trip, we engage in essential conversations about subjects such as identity, community, and overcoming adversity. As a result, my students are more engaged in their learning.”

– Kaytie, MPS Partner Teacher

“I value our partnership and the impact it has had over the years for students. Class time is precious and valuable, and Project Success adds value to our classrooms with trained, culturally competent staff who build meaningful relationships with students, help them plan for their futures, and encourage them to participate in high-quality opportunities designed to inspire exploration, discussion, and future possibilities.”

– Yusuf Abdullah, Principal at Patrick Henry High School 2015-2022 and current Associate Superintendent, MPS

EDUCATION LEADERS TESTIMONIALS

*“I've had the opportunity to travel across the globe and visit thousands of schools and districts and see amazing schools and programs and action. **And there's nothing that compares to Project Success.** Project Success focuses on the whole student, the whole child. There are not programs that you see across this country that really take the entire student and give them both the hope and the dreams, but also an action plan to be able to really figure out who they are and where they want to go in this life and that is Project Success.”*

– Jamie Candee, CEO, Edmentum (leading provider of K-12 digital curriculum, assessments, and services to 43,000 schools in all 50 states and over 100 countries worldwide)

ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

“Project Success showed me a new future. They took time to ask the question, ‘What's next?’ They helped me to think about my future in a new way, combining my interests with real, tangible opportunities. I wouldn't be in college today if it wasn't for Project Success.” – Antonio, PS Alum

“When I first entered high school, I hated school, actually got an F and had no intention of going to college whatsoever. I thought because my parents were so poor, and nobody had been to college before, that I couldn't even get in. When I received an F in math, I told one of the Project Success leaders, and she helped me raise my grade the following semester. From then on, I received A's in high school. You guys seriously made me feel like I could do anything I wanted.” – Christina, PS Alum

“I have a lot of respect for Project Success. They continued to provide endless opportunities. Project Success always seemed to be there, no matter what.” – Brittany, PS Alum

“I developed life skills like communication, making connections and networking. I am who I am today because of the traits Project Success instilled in me.” – Temi, PS Alum

Contact Adrienne Diercks at 612-868-8510 or adrienned@projectsuccess.org for more information.
Visit our website at www.projectsuccess.org