



Opportunity Gaps & Greater Minnesota

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Invest Early, Itasca County

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Graduation 2019

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The state of early childhood

- Northeastern Minnesota is short 4,500 licensed child care slots
- 20% of NE providers dropped out of the market between 2011 and 2018

Wilder Research



Early childhood data

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Census planning, Worthington



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Community Pow Wow, Deer River



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Telepresence Classrooms



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Broadband in Greater Minnesota

- 80% have: 25/3 mpbs
 - Enough to download research
- 60% have 100/20 mpbs
 - Enough to upload a big homework assignment



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Who has broadband?

- 56% of those with household incomes of less than \$20,000 have it
- 95% of those with household income of \$75k or more have it



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Ground Floor Youth Center, Grand Rapids, Minn.

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Not regularly participating in afterschool programs

- 1/3 of Greater Minnesota students



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- Half of low-income youth



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- 1/3 of Greater Minnesota students
- Half of low-income youth
- Youth of color, varying by race and region

Minnesota Student Survey 2017



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Pelican Rapids

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Bigfork



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Grand Rapids



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Not enough teachers who reflect the community

- 7 percent of educators in the 7-county metro area were people of color
- The rest of Minnesota is 2 percent or less

- Wilder Research



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Pelican Rapids

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Investment in early childhood narrows opportunity gaps.

- Rural communities have proven it. Most communities, though, are facing serious provider shortages.
- Rural places are ripe for forging relationships and trust needed to break down silos.
- Experiences of inequity look different from community to community.
- Child care availability remains a limitation in rural places, especially those that are not regional economic centers.

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Schools play an outsized role in rural Minnesota communities

- Capacity for change is there, even in the smallest places; it must be locally relevant and owned to work.
- Schools provide that stable hub that communities count on, even when everything around them seems to be changing.
- Schools and students often are the essential bridge in rural communities experiencing significant change.

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Access to affordable broadband, and the ability to use it

- The gap between Minnesota's broadband haves and have-nots is widening
- iPads and tech are great at school, but don't always work at home
- Students' ability to work from home is a limiting factor, especially considering current health threats

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Boot-strapping afterschool opportunities

- Skilled, passionate leaders are abundant; and they are wearing many hats.
- Minnesota's quality youth programming supports in Greater Minnesota are spread thin.

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Cost issues are real

- It costs about the same to educate students in small places and the cost is shared across a smaller tax base.
- Rural communities are both hopeful and concerned, both ambitious and fiscally cautious.
- Job and economic concerns overshadow others.

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