



# MIDWEST Comprehensive Center

at American Institutes for Research ■

## Minnesota

The **Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC)**, funded through a U.S. Department of Education grant, provides technical assistance to the state education agencies of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. MWCC services focus on building capacity and providing support to state education agencies, districts, and schools to improve student outcomes. MWCC provides support across a number of areas, including school improvement, educator development and effectiveness, college and career readiness, and standards and assessments. MWCC brings experience in engaging stakeholders in policy design and implementation, providing research and content expertise to inform initiatives, and planning for high-quality implementation and sustainability.



**Stakeholder Engagement**—MWCC provides expertise in bringing together internal and external stakeholders to give input on the design and implementation of policies. MWCC has extensive experience with facilitating groups to achieve desired outcomes and synthesizing stakeholder input into clear and actionable recommendations. MWCC has helped state education agencies convene task forces, advisory groups, and cross-division teams in a number of content areas.



**Research and Content Expertise**—MWCC offers expertise in identifying and compiling relevant data and information, as well as in translating complex information into accessible resources. MWCC's extensive experience with applying evidence and research to inform decision making and deep content knowledge allow MWCC to provide strategic guidance in the development of initiatives.



**Implementation and Sustainability**—MWCC supports initiative or policy implementation through the development of a course of action. MWCC has extensive experience with leading processes to help state education agencies, districts, and schools achieve specific tasks and outcomes outlined in the course of action, assess progress, and document lessons learned to inform sustainability. MWCC provides support in developing guidance, trainings, tools, and other resources that are key to the successful implementation and sustainability of initiatives.

## Year 7 (October 2018–September 2019) Projects

### INTENSIVE PROJECT 1 | District Career & College Readiness Supports

**Goal** | To provide guidance on dissemination, implementation, and continuous improvement of a career and college readiness toolkit with an emphasis on equitable and inclusive practices.

**Activities** | MWCC is working with MDE to cocreate a plan to provide ongoing technical assistance to districts and schools; codevelop a process for soliciting, analyzing, and synthesizing stakeholder feedback; and cocreate a virtual platform where stakeholders can access the toolkit.

### INTENSIVE PROJECT 2 | Standards Portal

**Goal** | To help complete MDE's online standards portal, identify cross-content best practices, and gather and analyze stakeholder feedback.

**Activities** | MWCC is working with MDE to provide thought partnership and content expertise, support implementing MDE's continuous improvement plan, gather and analyze stakeholder feedback, and support the development of new standards portal content.

### INTENSIVE PROJECT 3 | Evidence-Based Practices

**Goal** | To provide intensive support to build MDE's capacity to review and classify evidence-based practices.

**Activities** | MWCC is engaging with MDE staff to determine ESSA evidence tiers for the department's proposed list of practices, facilitate a virtual training on ESSA evidence tiers and their applications, and provide a webinar series on evidence for districts.

### FAST RESPONSE PROJECT 1 | Addressing Disproportionate Discipline

**Goal** | To provide content expertise and thought partnership to MDE in its efforts to decrease disproportionalities in suspension and expulsion.

**Activities** | MWCC is scanning district/charter plans to address this issue to identify common needs, strategies, and processes; develop a summary report; and codesign webinars for districts.

### FAST RESPONSE PROJECT 2 | Charter School Quality

**Goal** | To monitor the quality of charter school authorizers using MDE's Minnesota Authorizer Performance Evaluation System (MAPES) and provide content expertise and research synthesis.

**Activities** | MWCC is scanning practices related to authorizer evaluation systems and charter applications, codeveloping a school performance indicator recommendation to revise MAPES, and serving as a thought partner to strengthen MDE stakeholder engagement and resource dissemination.

### REGIONAL PROJECT 1 | American Indian Education Community of Practice

**Goal** | To lead the State Education Agency American Indian Education Community of Practice and participants in discussions of current work and best practices in four areas: language and culture, academic achievement, educator recruitment and retention, and youth development and wellness.

**Activities** | MWCC is scheduling and facilitating regular conversations among the community of practice participants and pursuing partnerships with other organizations, such as the National Indian Education Association and Council of Chief State School Officers.

### REGIONAL PROJECT 2 | Social and Emotional Learning

**Goal** | To support SEAs in Minnesota and Iowa as they develop social-emotional learning (SEL) tools and resources and to engage with districts around SEL implementation.

**Activities** | MWCC is codeveloping SEL tools and resources with SEAs, pilot testing the tools and resources, and providing thought partnership and content expertise on resource creation and collection of feedback.

### REGIONAL PROJECT 3 | Civic Performance Assessment Item Bank

**Goal** | To collaborate with the Center on Standards & Assessment Implementation and the McCormick Foundation to support Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin SEAs in creating a performance-based assessment item bank for teachers.

**Activities** | MWCC is providing thought partnership and content expertise and participating in cross-state meetings focused on creating and implementing a strategic plan for the database.

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