

KnowledgeWorks Proposal
Collaborative Policy Research and Action Planning Project
April 11, 2023

KnowledgeWorks proposes a collaborative project to support Minnesota stakeholders in 1) identifying the key policy changes needed to advance student-centered learning in communities across the state and 2) developing a plan to advocate for that change. This project will utilize AMSD's Reimagine Minnesota framework and KnowledgeWorks State Policy Framework for Personalized Learning.

Introduction

In 2016, metro area superintendents initiated development of the Reimagine Minnesota framework to create lasting equity and excellence in education for all Minnesota students. This work quickly expanded to include a broader group of stakeholders, including local school board members and district-level staff, foundations, and the University of Minnesota, among others. The final co-created document included core strategies like *shared understanding*, *personalized education*, and *student voice* to help achieve the framework's goals. To continue moving Reimagine Minnesota's vision forward, Minnesota stakeholders could now benefit from a deep dive into the state-level policy structures that can either help or hinder this work. Additionally, stakeholders in the state could benefit from collectively creating an action plan to support advocating for needed policy changes.

KnowledgeWorks is well positioned to support Minnesota stakeholders to accomplish these objectives. The organization has extensive experience facilitating groups of stakeholders in these types of discussions and in conducting policy research to identify state-specific opportunities for policy change. Additionally, KnowledgeWorks is dedicated to working alongside stakeholders to accomplish goals. In Minnesota, this priority is evident through current and prior partnerships with MSBA, AMSD, St. Thomas University, Education Evolving and multiple school districts in the state.

Proposed Project

This proposal outlines a set of strategies that could be used in Minnesota to build the capacity of organizational and practitioner advocates to create policy change. Completion of this project would provide advocates with a deep set of possible state-level policy changes and potential next steps. KnowledgeWorks envisions the following four phases of work:

Phase One: Discovery (May 2023)

Prior to beginning a research process, KnowledgeWorks would engage with stakeholders to identify the policy areas Minnesotans believe have the greatest impact the ability to make education more student-centered. KnowledgeWorks suggests beginning with a written survey, sent to a diverse and wide-ranging group of stakeholders, to gather initial data related to this question. This survey would be aligned to the conditions set forth in KnowledgeWorks' [State Policy Framework for Personalized Learning](#).

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Phase Two: Conditions Overview Workshops (May - August 2023)

KnowledgeWorks would hold a series of virtual and/or in-person workshops in collaboration with AMSD and other partners to help stakeholders examine trends in the phase one survey data. The first workshop would allow participants to review and solidify the priority areas identified in the survey and would allow stakeholders an opportunity to vision together.

Subsequent workshops would provide overviews of each priority area identified through the survey results. These workshops would be designed to build participants' capacity to understand how individual policies impact student-centered learning and highlight best practices from across the country. The workshops would lay the groundwork for future phases of this project by offering an opportunity for participants to hear about different policy contexts from experts from around the country. KnowledgeWorks would also begin an overview of current MN laws to inform the workshops during this phase of work, with a deep dive into policies anticipated in phase three.

Phase Three: Key Areas Policy Analysis (September - November 2023)

Following the workshops, KnowledgeWorks would undertake an aligned state policy analysis to identify state policies that would need to be addressed as the state, districts and school communities seek to advance equitable, student-centered learning practices. This analysis would focus on policies in those areas identified as priorities in phases one and two. KnowledgeWorks would engage stakeholders in focus groups to contextualize the insights that result from the policy analysis and refine the subsequent recommendations for policy change.

KnowledgeWorks would conclude this phase by generating and presenting recommendations to stakeholders for feedback. At this point in the process, KnowledgeWorks would prioritize feedback on possible short-term policy recommendations to help inform partner organizations' legislative agenda development for the 2024 session.

Phase Four: Action Planning (Winter/Spring 2024)

Once stakeholders have reviewed initial recommendations, phase four would focus on crafting a long-term advocacy action plan for use by Minnesota stakeholders. This plan would build on the Collective Education Roadmap for Action released under Reimagine Minnesota in April 2018 and would identify key steps for change. KnowledgeWorks would co-create the final product along with Minnesota stakeholders. Potential deliverables could include some or all of the following: a report aligned to research findings, presented at the AMSD Fall Conference; facilitating a series of action planning sessions in partnership with statewide advocacy organizations; or facilitating a series of conversations with MDE, legislators, and the governor's office to share the findings from phase three.

Proposed Partners and Stakeholders

KnowledgeWorks proposes working in partnership with AMSD for this project. AMSD has the knowledge experience in both policy advocacy and stakeholder engagement in the metro region, as well as the historical experience from facilitating the creation of the Reimagine Minnesota roadmap.

KnowledgeWorks also proposes intentionally recruiting and engaging new stakeholder groups in each phase of the process to ensure equitable representation in the metro region and throughout greater Minnesota. Examples of potential partner organizations and stakeholder groups include the following: MASA, MREA, EdMN, Education Evolving, the Minnesota Learner Centered Network, Bridgemakers (a youth-led advocacy organization), Elevate Teaching, and any other equity-driven organizations.

KnowledgeWorks also recommends attempting to engage MDE in this work to the extent practicable.