Minnesota Education Equity Partnership
Advancing Race Equity & Excellence

TOOLKIT by MnEEP.org

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Make Racial Equity Central to Minnesota's Next Attainment Goal

A narrative toolkit for shaping policy and public investment in educational attainment

What we're asking legislators to do

MnEEP supports the **Minnesota P–20 Education Partnership**'s proposal to update the state's educational attainment goal. **We call on Minnesota legislators to build MnEEP's Six Racial Equity Commitments into that goal**.

Minnesota's attainment goal sets expectations for students. **The six commitments establishes what students and communities should expect from Minnesota's leaders.**

The legislative opportunity is to make racial equity in higher ed a measurable, funded, and publicly accountable responsibility.

That means investing in the work of removing barriers and showing the public whether those investments are narrowing racial disparities and expanding educational opportunity for every learner.

The commitments give students, communities, educators, and policymakers a shared framework for removing barriers and building educational pathways that reflect the needs and aspirations of students of color and Indigenous students.

Read MnEEP's full policy brief

Minnesota has made progress. Why do we need a stronger goal?

In 2015, Minnesota set a goal in statute for at least **70%** of residents ages 25–44 to hold a postsecondary or industry-recognized credential by 2025. The P–20 Partnership has proposed updating the goal to **75% of residents ages 24–55 by 2040.** Legislators have yet to adopt the update.

Higher-ed attainment has increased since 2015. But deep racial disparities persist.

57.5%	63.3%	27.3 pts
2015 statewide attainment estimate	**October 2026 statewide attainment estimate**	**2026 Black–White student gap in higher-ed attainment**

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education's (OHE) October 2026 report puts statewide attainment among adults ages 25–44 at **63.3%**, up from **57.5%** in 2015. For the first time, every broad racial and ethnic group in the report surpassed the state's **30%** benchmark.

Those gains matter. So do the differences within that progress. OHE estimates that **69.2% o**f White adults in this age group hold a credential, compared with **41.9%** of Black adults, **39.4%** of Hispanic or Latino adults, and **30.2%** of American Indian adults. The estimated difference between Black and White attainment remains about **27** percentage points.

Minnesota's first attainment law required the state to report progress by race and ethnicity. Those estimates show where attainment has increased and where disparities persist. **Understanding why requires more evidence.** *Which investments helped students finish? Which policies added time or cost to earning a credential? What were barriers to attendance?*

Minnesota's next goal should make clear who is responsible for answering those questions and how the findings will guide policy and funding.

When Minnesota identifies persistent racial inequities, how will that evidence shape institutional decisions, public investment, and accountability?

What is MnEEP asking legislators to support?

MnEEP supports a higher statewide attainment goal **that makes narrowing racial disparities a condition of success.** Our proposed equity standard establishes that expectation, and the six commitments guide how Minnesota measures progress, invests public dollars, and ensures accountability.

Minnesota's educational attainment goal should be considered successful only if statewide attainment increases and racial disparities in access, persistence, completion, affordability, debt, credential value, and post-completion outcomes narrow over time.

Six Commitments for an Equity-Centered Attainment Framework

01 **Make racial equity an explicit purpose and condition of success.**
Ensure racial equity shapes the goal itself, the measures of progress, and the state's expectations for educational outcomes.

02 **Adopt and implement a statewide equity standard.**
Establish clear expectations for increased attainment, improved outcomes across communities, and narrowing racial disparities.

03 **Build disaggregated evidence that guides action.**
Strengthen the evidence needed to understand where disparities emerge, what contributes to them, and which changes improve educational opportunities.

04 **Create transparency and accountability for remedies.**
Establish clear responsibilities for addressing inequities and publicly evaluating policies, investments, institutional changes, and results.

05 **Fund implementation capacity and infrastructure.**
Invest in the research, coordination, institutional capacity, student supports, and community participation necessary to achieve equitable outcomes.

06 **Ensure attainment expands real educational opportunity.**
Examine whether educational pathways and credentials expand affordability, quality, continued learning, economic security, civic participation, and students' opportunities to pursue their unique aspirations.

What does it take to put racial equity commitments into practice?

Minnesota's attainment goal should expand student opportunity.

When a college develops a credential program, it should ask more than how many students will graduate. Can students afford it? Will the credits count toward further education? Does it open opportunities students actually want? **Centering racial equity means bringing students of color and Indigenous students into decisions about programs, costs, and supports that shape their futures.**

Institutions need the funding and capacity to build more racially just education systems.

Consider a student whose transfer credits count as electives but do little to advance their degree. **The student bears the cost of another semester. The institutions decide which credits count.**

Changing that requires faculty and staff with the knowledge and training to identify inequities, the time and resources to work with students across campuses, and the institutional support and authority to change policies. **Public commitments must be backed by the investments and institutional capacity needed to address barriers, change practices, and build better pathways for students.**

The public should be able to see how policies and practices changed and who benefited.

Did transfer policies change? Are students spending less time and money completing their degrees? Which students benefited, and where do barriers and racial disparities remain?

Public accountability means showing what institutions changed, how public investments supported that work, and whether students' opportunities improved. That evidence should guide what Minnesota sustains, strengthens, or changes next.

Bringing MnEEP's Six Commitments into policy conversations

As Minnesota sets its next attainment goal, what should students and communities be able to count on from the state?

We invite you to use adapt these talking points to advocate for racial equity in Minnesota's attainment goal with legislators, college and university leaders, and your communities.

On the statewide attainment goal

A higher statewide attainment rate alone doesn't tell us whose opportunities have improved or what barriers still persist.

How will Minnesota make narrowing racial disparities and expanding access to affordable, high-quality education for students of color and Indigenous students central to what counts as success?

On public investment & responsibility

Public dollars should do more than help institutions meet an attainment target. Public investment is part of Minnesota's responsibility to build a more racially just future.

How will Minnesota invest in students' access to affordable, high-quality education and the supports they need to succeed, while ensuring institutions have the knowledge, resources, and authority to remove barriers and change policies that sustain racial inequities?

On public accountability

When racial disparities persist, reporting them is not enough.

Who is responsible for addressing them? What policies and investments changed, who benefited, and where do inequities remain? Public accountability means making those answers visible—and using them to guide what Minnesota funds, strengthens, or changes next.

A question for legislators

As you consider Minnesota's next attainment goal, how will the state connect higher attainment to the public investments and institutional responsibilities needed to narrow racial disparities and expand educational opportunity?

Shaping the goal together

MnEEP invites students, families, educators, advocates, and policymakers to bring their experiences, evidence, and priorities into decisions shaping Minnesota's next attainment goal.

State agencies also have a distinct government-to-government responsibility to consult with Tribal Nations on legislative and fiscal proposals affecting Tribal governments or their members. Minnesota Statutes §10.65

To learn more or get involved, check out the links below.

MnEEP policy brief · **OHE attainment report** · **House bill summary** · **Connect with MnEEP**