

Supporting Youth Success Initiative Operating Assumptions

1. The working title for Minnesota's effort is Supporting Youth Success, rather than Supporting Student Success, because we believe this better embodies the reality that young people learn and develop throughout the day, the year, and across settings—not just in schools during the school day.
2. The development of this framework will stem from a rich history of innovation in educational and youth development policy and practice in Minnesota. The framework will honor the history and progress in these disciplines.
3. This framework will focus on youth across Minnesota (urban, suburban, and rural), between the ages of 5 and 21.
4. Young people have a right to be consulted about decisions that will affect their lives. The recommendations included in this framework will promote the authentic inclusion of youth voice.
5. The primary audience for this framework is state and local policy makers; the secondary audience is leaders of non-formal learning and formal education systems and institutions.
6. Learning occurs in a continuum. It happens everywhere, every day, all the time.
7. We will use a common set of terms to guide and define our work
 - a. *Informal learning*: Unstructured learning in everyday life. Opportunities may or may not be intentional. Participation by the learner is generally voluntary (e.g., family activities).
 - b. *Non-formal learning*: Structured and intentional learning opportunities that may (but are not required to) result in certification. Participation by the learner is voluntary. Personal development is emphasized. (e.g., community-based learning initiatives).
 - c. *Formal education*: Intentional instruction in a structured, institutional environment intended to produce academic development and result in some form of certification. Participation by the learner is compulsory (e.g., school participation).
8. Family is the first learning institution in a child's life and the informal learning that takes place within the family is critical to youth success. However, this framework will not focus on learning within the family system. It will focus on non-formal and formal learning and the systems or institutions that support these types of learning experiences.
9. High quality learning opportunities (programs, networks, policies) exist across Minnesota and should be used to illustrate key elements of the framework as it evolves.

This framework will be available online in a flexible format to allow policymakers at the local and state levels, and leaders of non-formal learning and formal education systems or institutions easy and equal access.