



**YOU**  
are college ready!

## Direct Admissions Minnesota

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**mn** OFFICE OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# Why Direct Admissions?

- We have not solved the college access problem.
  - Gaps in exist by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and geography .. Insert your state’s data here
  - Gaps exist based on a student perception’s of their ability – they self-select out of education and training
- Getting to college is complex. We don’t make it easy.
  - Aspire to go – Research your options – Apply with all required materials – Finance - Enroll
- Applying to college is not “simple.” It’s a GAUNTLET.
  - Everyone follows a different path. Simplifying college admissions is not just creating a single application. “Build it and they will come” is not an option.
- Instead, let’s send college to the student. After all, most colleges admit most students who apply. Why not leverage that aspect in a positive way?
- Colleges want to do this ... MN has fewer college students this fall than in 1995 (30 year low!)

The image is a collage of college planning resources. At the top right is a 'College Plan Checklist' with a 'GET TOGETHER' logo. Below it is a large graphic with the word 'GAUNTLET' in red, bold letters. To the left of the 'GAUNTLET' graphic is a 'Timeline for Applying to College' with a red header. The timeline lists tasks for each month from Fall of Junior Year to Spring of Senior Year. In the center, there are three numbered circles: 2 'Online College Application (consists of)', 3 'Recommendation Letters', and 7 'Supplemental Essay Responses (some colleges ask for them; others don't)'. To the right of the 'GAUNTLET' graphic is a 'Klasik, 2012' calendar grid. At the bottom, there is a 'NEED IN ORDER TO APPLY TO COLLEGE?' graphic with numbered steps: 5 'Transcript (this is a record of all of your final grades of every year in high school – your counselor sends it to colleges, not you)', 6 'Standardized Test Scores (this includes SAT/ACT and AP/IB scores – colleges have diff. requirements)', and 7 'Supplemental Essay Responses (some colleges ask for them; others don't)'. There are also social media icons and a 'road\_to\_uni' logo.

# What does Direct Admissions do?

Direct admissions eliminates traditional college applications and processes so that students are proactively admitted to college.

- Leverages existing state, system, or school data systems to connect K-12 to higher ed
- Students may be universally admitted, or admitted by meeting known academic thresholds (GPA)
- Once admitted, students need to “claim their place” (simplified, fee-free applications)

Direct admissions increases college applications and enrollments.

- Increased the likelihood of (1) applying to college and (2) applying to more colleges (Common App)
- Idaho reported an 88% increase in applications; 3.1% increase in FTE enrollments within one year.
- Impacts were highest among Black, Latinx, and first-gen students.
- More students attending in-state colleges; Largest gains were at open-access, 2-year institutions.

# Direct Admissions MN

## Project goals:

- Increase the number of students enrolling in college immediately after high school
- Increase the number of students staying in Minnesota for college
- Reduce anxiety around “will I get in?”
- Increase FAFSA completion among high school seniors
- Close attainment gaps

## Minnesota has a decentralized model of Direct Admissions:

- MN Dept of Education doesn't collect information needed to complete an academic review or send letters directly to students
- Multiple postsecondary systems (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, University of Minnesota, private colleges, tribal colleges)
- No universal high school transcript, no universal college admissions app
- Existing student information systems at each high school review academics, match to pre-set college admissions criteria, create a personalized letter for each student, send the letter, and record the college selections made by each student.
- The only data transferred to the state and then to the colleges are basic student information (Name, state ID, email), GPA & academic tier, and the colleges selected.
- High schools send the student's transcript to fill in specific course or academic info.

# 2022-2023, 2023-2024 Academic Tiers

Academic Tier	Unweighted GPA (4.0 scale)	Qualifier	Course Grades in 10th and 11th Grade in Math, English, and Science	Number of Colleges accepting Direct Admissions	Total Colleges appearing on the Student's Notification
1	Less than 2.50	n/a	n/a	29	29
2	2.50-2.74	n/a	n/a	3	32
3	2.75-2.99	n/a	n/a	4	36
4	2.75-2.99	AND	C average or higher in all 3 course areas	6	42
5	3.00+	n/a	n/a	10	52
6	3.50+	AND	C average or higher in all 3 course areas	3	55
<b>Total</b>	all	n/a	n/a	55	55

All Minnesota colleges remain test-optional.

# Minnesota's Program

## Pilot Year (2022-2023)

- Approved and funded by Legislature in 2021 (budget of \$1M dollars; actual spending <\$500k; uncertainty about tech costs, lower than expected staff costs)
- 51 participating colleges and universities
- 40 high schools
- 7,000 students (10% of HS seniors)

## Year 2 (2023-2024)

- Approved and funded by Legislature in 2023 (budget of \$575,000 per year)
- 1 new FTE staff
- 55 participating colleges and universities
- 128 high schools
- 25,000 students (36% of HS seniors)
- Assistance from TRiO, College Possible (college prep orgs)
- Pilot testing eliminating the admissions application

# Year 1 Results

## Wins

- Hit diversity targets organically in year one (47% BIPOC students, 29% FRL eligible, 44 of 87 counties represented)
- Strong working groups for both k-12 and higher education partners
- Student/parent focus groups for communications
- No budget concerns in year one
- Positive coverage, Great student stories
- Interest from non-participating schools

## Challenges

- Staffing in year one: this was an “add on” for Director of Research and Asst. Commissioner
- Decentralized model= so many contracts
- K-12 student info vendors weren’t interested in engaging (conflicts with Ed-Fi timelines)
- Protecting against project focus creep
- Unexpected questions (Pass/No Pass grades, delayed timelines, and concerns around “senior slump”)
- Inconsistent implementation at school level
- Student engagement with colleges after Direct Admissions (no one is opening email!)

# Thank you!

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