



2018-19 Combined World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Summary and Achievement and Integration (A&I) Progress Report

District or Charter Name: STEP Academy

Grades Served: K-12

WBWF Contact: Traci Moore

A and I Contact:

Title: Assistant Director of Academics

Title:

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Did you have an MDE approved Achievement and Integration plan implemented in the 2018-19 school year?

☐ Yes ☒ No

[List of districts with an MDE approved Achievement and Integration plan during the 2018-19 SY.](#)

This report has three parts:

WBWF: Required for all districts/charters.

Achievement and Integration: Required for districts that were implementing an MDE approved Achievement and Integration plan during the 2018-19 SY. No charter schools should complete Part B.

Racially Isolated School: Required for districts that were implementing an MDE approved Achievement and Integration plan for Racially Identifiable Schools during the 2018-19 SY. No charter schools should complete Part B.

Please ensure the World's Best Workforce leadership and the Achievement and Integration leadership collaborate within your district when completing this report.

World's Best Workforce

Annual Report

WBWF Requirement: For each school year, the school board must publish a report in the local newspaper, by mail or by electronic means on the district website.

Annual Public Meeting

WBWF Requirement: School boards are to hold an annual public meeting to communicate plans for the upcoming school year based on a review of goals, outcomes and strategies from the previous year. Stakeholders should be meaningfully involved, and this meeting is to occur separately from a regularly scheduled school board meeting.

District Advisory Committee

WBWF Requirement: The district advisory committee must reflect the diversity of the district and its school sites. It must include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents. Parents and other community residents are to comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members, when possible. The district advisory committee makes recommendations to the school board.

Complete the list of your district advisory committee members for the 2018-19 school year. Expand the table to include all committee members. Ensure roles are clear (teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents).

District Advisory Committee Members	Role in District	Are they part of the Achievement and Integration leadership team? (Mark X if Yes)
Traci Moore	Assistant Director of Academics	
Keeley Tholen	Teacher	
Debbie Bartlett	Teacher	
Sadiq Mohamud	Support Staff	
Mursal Dayib	Student	
Ahmed Mursal	Parent	
Awil Omar	Parent	

District Advisory Committee Members	Role in District	Are they part of the Achievement and Integration leadership team? (Mark X if Yes)
Sahra Abdisalan	Parent	
	Community Member	

Equitable Access to Excellent and Diverse Educators

WBWF Requirement: WBWF requires districts and charters to have a process in place to ensure students from low income families, students of color, and American Indian students are not taught at disproportionate rates by inexperienced, out-of-field, and ineffective teachers. The legislation also requires that districts have strategies to increase access to teachers who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of students.

While districts/charters may have their own local definitions, please note the definitions developed by Minnesota stakeholders during the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan development process:

- An **ineffective teacher** is defined as a teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards, as defined in local teacher development and evaluation (TDE) systems.
- An **inexperienced teacher** is defined as a licensed teacher who has taught for three or fewer years.
- An **out-of-field teacher** is defined as a licensed teacher who is providing instruction in an area which he or she is not licensed.

The term “equitable access gap” refers to the difference between the rate(s) at which students from low income families, students of color, and American Indian students are taught by inexperienced, out-of-field, or ineffective teachers and the rate at which other students are taught by the same teacher types. This is not to be confused with the “achievement gap” (how groups of students perform academically); rather, “equitable access gap” is about which student groups have privileged or limited access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers.

Districts/charters are encouraged to monitor the distribution of teachers and identify equitable access gaps between and within schools, but they may also make comparisons to the state averages or to similar schools. It is important to note that some of the most significant equitable access gaps occur at the school and classroom level.

Districts/charters may also use other indicators of “effectiveness” such as teachers receiving stronger evaluations overall, teachers with strengths in particular dimensions of practice (e.g., culturally responsive practices), teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or teachers with demonstrated student growth and achievement results.

Respond to the questions below. Limit response to 400 words.

- Describe your process for ensuring students of color, American Indian students and students from low income families have equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers.
 - How did the district examine equitable access data? What data did you look at? How frequently do you review the data?
 - Who was included in conversations to review equitable access data?

- What equitable access gaps has the district found?
- What are the root causes contributing to your equitable access gaps?
- What strategies has the district initiated to improve student equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers?
- What goal(s) do you have to reduce and eventually eliminate equitable access gaps?

Annually, the STEP Academy Academic Leadership Team examines equitable access data. This team looks at the licensing (in-field and out-of-field) and years of experience of teachers employed by the academy. They also look at evaluation data for returning teachers. They identify gaps and examine the processes that affect the hiring of experienced, licensed teachers including attracting and retaining opportunities. This group has also surveyed teachers regarding attractiveness of the school and retention issues.

Almost all students (99.4%) at STEP Academy are African American and more than 90% of students receive Free or Reduced-Price Meals. So, STEP Academy looks at comparing the school to state averages rather than classrooms or programs within the school. STEP Academy has 90.11% of its teachers fully licensed in their content areas in comparison to the 87.19% state average for schools serving similar populations. In addition, 81.48% of STEP Academy teachers are beyond the first three years of their teaching career and considered experienced with the state comparison group recording 78.35%. So, in both categories, STEP Academy is doing better than the state average. However, when we look at data on Low Poverty Schools, STEP Academy is not in line with them by 6-7% (Licensed 96.04% and Experienced 88.76%).

In examining root causes for this difference, one deterrent that has been identified is the salary offerings being lower than traditional school districts and the unpredictability of salary increases. In response to this concern, the STEP Academy School Board built a salary schedule and introduced it into practice leading into the 2019-2020 school year. In addition, the Board evaluated the financial state of the school and markedly increased teacher salaries during the same transition.

It should be noted that the school also identified a shortage of applicants as an issue in particular areas including Special Education and science.

WBWF also requires districts and charters to examine student access to licensed teachers who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of students. A growing body of research has demonstrated that all students benefit when they are taught by racially and ethnically diverse staff throughout their career, and students of color and indigenous students benefit even more. Consequently, working to increase teacher racial diversity is beneficial to all schools.

- Describe your efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers in your district. Limit your response to 400 words.
 - Which racial and ethnic student groups are present in your district that are not yet represented in your licensed teacher staff?
 - How many additional teachers of color and American Indian teachers would you need in order to reflect your student population?
 - What are the root causes contributing to a lack of student access to teachers of color and American Indian teachers?
 - What strategies has the district initiated to increase and retain teachers of color and American Indian teachers in the district? What goal(s) are you pursuing?

STEP Academy's students are almost all Somali Americans (99.4%). STEP Academy is dedicated to attracting and growing Somali American educators to work with its students. During the 2017-2018 school year, STEP Academy had very few Somali educators (6 out of 44). The main road block to filling the school with Somali

educators is the low number of licensed Somali teachers who are looking for employment. The school has hired a few Somali teachers who have come to the school as licensed applicants, but the school has had more teachers move from educational assistants into teacher positions in the school after enrolling in teacher preparation programs and completing student teaching and field experiences within the school.

The school is still a long way from having 100% of teacher be Somali American, but the school has begun building partnerships with colleges (Metro State and Concordia) in order to support more and more Somali adults in their path as aspiring teachers. In addition, the school prioritizes hiring educational assistants and support staff from the Somali American community and encourages those employees to build their careers so that there are more Somali teachers entering the workforce.

Local Reporting of Teacher Equitable Access to Excellent and Diverse Educators Data

Districts are required to publicly report data on an annual basis related to student equitable access to teachers, including data on access for low-income students, students of color, and American Indian students to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers *and* data on all student access to racially and ethnically diverse teachers.

For this 2018-19 WBWF summary report submission, please check the boxes to confirm that your district publicly reported this data.

☒ District/charter publicly reports data on an annual basis related to equitable teacher distribution, including data on access for low-income students, students of color, and American Indian students to effective, experienced, and in-field teachers.

☒ District/charter publicly reports data on an annual basis related to student access to racially and ethnically diverse teachers.

Goals and Results

SMART goals are: specific and strategic, measurable, attainable (yet rigorous), results-based and time-based. Districts may choose to use the data profiles provided by MDE in reporting goals and results or other locally determined measures.

All Students Ready for School

Goal	Result	Goal Status
75% of enrolled kindergarten families will attend one of two kindergarten readiness parent information meetings in May or June. Of those students that attend, 25% will increase their scores on the STEP Academy kindergarten readiness assessment.	40% of enrolled kindergarten families attended a kindergarten readiness parent information meeting. Of those that attended 10% increased their scores on the STEP Academy kindergarten readiness assessment.	Check one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in kindergarten

Narrative is required; 200-word limit.

- What data have you used to identify needs in this goal area? How is this data disaggregated by student groups?
- What strategies are in place to support this goal area?
- How well are you implementing your strategies?
- How do you know whether it is or is not helping you make progress toward your goal?

This goal was set in an effort to raise parent awareness of kindergarten readiness skills and ultimately impact students' abilities at kindergarten entry. The school used data on the previous kindergarten as well as information that is known about the Somali community the school serves to determine this goal. This was a new process used to provide information to parents of new kindergarten students. The school believes that this process will grow in its success the more years it is conducted. Parents did not have a context for a meeting at this time of year. The school plans to increase information shared with families educating them on this process and the responsibilities they have to follow through on the suggested learning activities to increase the success of their children in their first year of school. The school believes that an increase in communication and a celebratory focus for the meeting (Welcome to Kindergarten) will help increase the success in the future.

All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

Goal	Result	Goal Status
41% of STEP Academy third grade students will meet or exceed state standards on the MCA's in reading.	33.3% of third grade students met or exceeded state standards on the MCA's in reading.	Check one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal)

Goal	Result	Goal Status
		<input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in grade 3

Narrative is required; 200-word limit.

- What data have you used to identify needs in this goal area? How is this data disaggregated by student groups?
- What strategies are in place to support this goal area?
- How well are you implementing your strategies?
- How do you know whether it is or is not helping you make progress toward your goal?

The data that was used to identify needs in the goal area was MCA results from the first year of the elementary program at STEP Academy and data on individual student needs collected from students as second graders. STEP Academy uses two curriculums to meet students' needs: Core Knowledge and Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading. Teachers teach whole group lessons and small group lessons targeted to student needs. STEP Academy employs a Literacy Coordinator who oversees the quality and fidelity of lessons and observes and coaches teachers on their literacy teaching. Finally, STEP Academy uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model to address students' intervention needs. In 2018-2019, STEP Academy needed to put extra support into place for this third grade group due to the high needs of some of the students. Intervention teachers were added to co-teach in reading in order to further strengthen students' literacy skills.

Being only the second year of the elementary program, strategies that were new in 2017-2018 are being strengthened as the school refines and improves practices. In order to inform goal progress, the school uses multiple measures, including: MCA, Fastbridge, and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessments.

Close the Achievement Gap(s) Between Student Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
In 2017-2018 41.3% of male students at STEP Academy in grades 7-12 met or exceeded standards on the MCA Science Test. Only 26.2% of females in the same group met or exceeded standards on the test. In 2018-2019, 42% of males in grades 7-12 will meet or exceed standards on the MCA Science test. 30% of females in grades 7-12 will meet or exceed standards on the MCA Science test.	<i>In 2018-2019, 32% of females in grades 7-12 met or exceeded standards on the MCA Science Test, and 52% of males met or exceeded standards on the MCA Science Test.</i>	<i>Check one of the following:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)

Narrative is required; 200-word limit.

- What data have you used to identify needs in this goal area? How is this data disaggregated by student groups?
- What strategies are in place to support this goal area?
- How well are you implementing your strategies?
- How do you know whether it is or is not helping you make progress toward your goal?

Disaggregated MCA student data in the areas of Gender, ELL, and Special Education in all content areas was reviewed in order to identify goal options. A marked discrepancy was identified in the area of Gender in Science and was chosen as a focus area for this goal. Science teachers met in their Professional Learning Communities to discuss gender and learning in science. They identified strategies to use in classes to impact female students' engagement and achievement.

Passing rates for both males and females increased, so technically, the goal was met. At least 30% of females met or exceeded and at least 42% of males met or exceeded. However, the percent of males increased more substantially than females, leading to an even larger achievement gap (20%) that last year's (15.1%). It is to be noted that the comparison groups for 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 were actually different groups of students, so the actual gap may have been larger in the 2018-2019 class, and the teachers may actually have had an impact with this group of students over the course of the school year. There is still work to be done in this area.

All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal	Result	Goal Status
50% of eleventh and twelfth grade students will attend PSEO during the 2017-2018 school year.	<i>51 out of 86 juniors and seniors attended PSEO. This equates to 59%.</i>	<i>Check one of the following:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)
100% of graduating seniors will be accepted into a post-secondary education program.	<i>100% of STEP Academy seniors were accepted into a post-secondary program. This work was completed in their Senior English class.</i>	<i>Check one of the following:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)

Narrative is required; 200 word limit.

- What data have you used to identify needs in this goal area? How is this data disaggregated by student groups?
- What strategies are in place to support this goal area?
- How well are you implementing your strategies?
- How do you know whether it is or is not helping you make progress toward your goal?

STEP Academy uses its own longitudinal data related to PSEO participation and post graduate program participation to monitor students' college and career readiness. The school also conducts surveys of graduates and seeks anecdotal information from current PSEO students and graduates related to the school's strengths and weaknesses in preparation. In 2018-2019, the school supported 59% of its eleventh and twelfth graders in PSEO classes. Some of these students are English Language Learners. Almost all of them come from families living below the poverty line. STEP Academy students are challenging the markers that identify them as being affected by the achievement gap. They are crushing the barriers placed on them by statistics that say they cannot gain college entrance and pursue a degree before their aged peers. This commitment to providing opportunity is a piece that STEP Academy prides itself on. From the moment a student enters the doors at STEP Academy, they are nurtured and chosen as worthy of the high academic track. This strategy, along with a continuous commitment to increasing our Somali students' academic achievement comes together to form STEP Academy's strategy to impact these goals.

Data on graduating seniors is looked at individually since we have had approximately 38 students to review. Strategies that are in place to support this goal area are the on-going check ins and support offered from our Assistant Director of Academics, our Assistant Academic Dean and senior ELA teacher's commitment to working with all seniors until the last one has been accepted into a post secondary program. These strategies have been well received and successful. STEP Academy believes that all of our students must leave high school with the confidence that they are capable and worthy of post secondary education, even if enrollment is not their choice immediately after graduation. That is why this goal continues to be a priority for the school.

All Students Graduate

Goal	Result	Goal Status
100% of twelfth graders will graduate in four years.	<i>STEP Academy did not meet this goal. There was at least one student who did not graduate.</i>	<i>Check one of the following:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal) <input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in grade 12

Narrative is required; 200-word limit.

- What data have you used to identify needs in this goal area? How is this data disaggregated by student groups?
- What strategies are in place to support this goal area?
- How well are you implementing your strategies?
- How do you know whether it is or is not helping you make progress toward your goal?

STEP Academy sets a high goal in this area each year because the real intention is that we will support 100% of our students through their four years to graduation. The strategies that are in place include checking in with students regularly, intervening, and providing academic counseling for students who have low achievement and low grades, and providing students with opportunities for credit recovery and academic support. The strategies are always volatile because each students' situation is different. One solution does not work for all students. One of the strengths of the STEP Academy secondary program is that each student is supported as an individual and helped to problem solve through barriers to academic success. We know that our strategies help us maintain a higher graduation rate because we see students who are on our "red zone" (danger of not graduating) list in tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade walk across the stage for their diploma after receiving support from our system and working hard to earn their credits.