



# **Promising Practices Intra- and Interdistrict Integration**

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**For more information about the promising practices listed in this document, contact the integration program staff at the Department of Education (651-582-8616) or the appropriate district or community collaboration person listed on the back page.**

## **Promising integration practices for schools and districts statewide**

**Summer and weekend learning experiences with integrated student groups.** These experiences may vary greatly according to community and district needs. An example is the Starbase U program through the **East Metro Integration Program**, which provides middle school students from 10 districts an opportunity to learn about rockets and airplanes through a seven-day summer learning experience on the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Air National Guard base. The West Metro Education Program also has a summer enrichment program that has extensive offerings.

**Classroom partnerships.** Classroom partnerships pair classrooms from an identified school or isolated districts with adjoining sites. Students share some common curriculum units. They come together across school and/or district lines regularly for project-based learning that is interactive enough and frequent enough for the students to form friendships. **East Metro Integration District (EMID)**, which includes 10 Saint Paul area districts, relies heavily on classroom partnerships as an integration strategy with its racially isolated district, Saint Paul Public Schools. For example, classroom partnerships between **Stillwater Area Schools** and **Saint Paul Public Schools** include an elementary book club at every grade level that allows students to explore diversity issues through reading and a video connections partnership where students from Stillwater and Saint Paul develop school web pages, produce school newscasts and chronicle school happenings.

**Staff development that prepares faculty for upcoming student integration experiences.** Staff training in areas such as differentiated instruction and cultural awareness is helpful and allowable when it directly ties to upcoming integration activities for students such as expanded school choice options and classroom partnerships. For example, a number of districts have provided staff with cultural competency evaluations and ongoing support to bolster their effectiveness in reaching diverse student populations and maintaining classroom discipline: **East Metro Integration Program**, which offers joint training to 10 Saint Paul area districts. **West Metro Education Program**, which serves 11 Minneapolis area districts. **Northwest Suburban Education Program**, which serves five Minneapolis suburban districts.

**Expansion of gifted/talented, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) opportunities, with aggressive identification of lower-income and protected class students.** Expansion of services and learning opportunities for high-ability students may be an appropriate use of integration funds when a partnership component with the identified site is built and innovative strategies planned to attract and retain lower-income and protected class students. A good example is work in **Saint Paul Public Schools**.

**World language programs.** World language programs may be appropriate integration strategies and tend to work well in a variety of geographic settings. Although the academic

value is clear, care in marketing, student retention and program planning must be taken into account so that the language strategy also has strong integration value. Promising practices include:

**Classes taught in students’ usual schools but enrichment and language camps with others.**

This strategy starts with joint world language curriculum development across district or school lines. Language teachers in different sites continue to collaborate. Classes are taught in students’ regularly assigned schools but are enriched by cross-district or cross-school activities such as summer immersion camps or field trips throughout the school year that pair the same groups of students. Many integration districts in southwestern Minnesota are using this strategy to provide elementary Spanish instruction. One example is the **West Central Integration Collaborative** (includes school districts of Atwater, Cosmos, Grove City, New London, Spicer, Maynard, Clara City, Raymond and Willmar).

**World language magnet schools.** Examples include **Emerson and Windom Immersion Schools in Minneapolis** that offer intensive Spanish instruction for majority students and, concurrently, intensive English instruction for Latino students. Other language immersion schools that are helping districts advance desegregation goals include, but are not limited to: **Adams Spanish Immersion** and **L’Etoile Du Nord French Immersion**, both in Saint Paul, **Park Spanish Immersion** in St. Louis Park, and **Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion** in Robbinsdale. Some magnet programs attract students from beyond their normal attendance borders by offering language instruction but not language immersion, often in less-commonly-taught languages. Examples are **Hall Elementary in Minneapolis** and **Highland Park High School in Saint Paul**, which offer Mandarin Chinese.

**Origami— Oriental paper folding — helps to build math skills.** Lessons on this art where students not only learn another culture, but gain in academic skill are being taught in **Fergus Falls School District**. A program that started with lesson plans developed for grades K-4 has been expanded and is now being introduced on a larger scale by partnering with the community-wide reading event. Skills learned through this fine art are tactile learning, measuring, recognition of basic shapes, spatial reasoning, symmetry, fractions, sequence, and geometry. In addition to these skills the district has noticed enhanced listening skills. This project has been so successful that the district is also teaching lessons on the art of cutting paper called Kirigami.

## **Promising integration practices for schools and districts in the Twin Cities, Duluth & Rochester**

**Expanded enrollment options within district lines and marketed open enrollment out-of-district, with free bus transportation.** One of the best examples of this is the **West Metro Education Program’s The Choice is Yours Program** which serves students who qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch and reside in Minneapolis. These students receive priority access to their resident district’s citywide magnet schools but can also choose, with transportation provided, the regular public schools in nine suburban Minneapolis districts. Both **Minneapolis Public Schools** and **Saint Paul Public Schools** have well-developed school choice programs.

**Magnet Schools.** Magnet schools are a promising practice for both inter- and intradistrict desegregation. When using integration aid, they must draw students from both the identified school and the larger district or from the isolated school district and its adjoining districts, with both populations represented significantly so that the school is cost effective for the integration value it provides. Magnet schools often work well when they have a popular theme for adjoining areas but are the default school for students in the racially identifiable site or are located in or near the borders of a racially isolated school district. Magnet schools that are designed to serve cross-district populations may access Interdistrict Integration Transportation Aid to offset bussing expenses.

**Examples of cross-district magnet schools are:**

**Harambee Community Cultures/Environmental Science School**, sponsored by the East Metro Integration District and located in Saint Paul.

**Crosswinds Middle School**, sponsored by the East Metro Integration District and located in Woodbury.

**Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource (FAIR) School**, sponsored by the West Metro Education Program and located in Crystal.

**Interdistrict Downtown School**, sponsored by the West Metro Education Program and located downtown Minneapolis.

**Magnet school startups in the Northwest Suburban Integration District** that focus on a variety of themes.

**Examples of intradistrict magnet schools are:**

**Parkview Center** in Roseville, **Garlough Elementary** in West Saint Paul (a racially identifiable school that is in the process of converting to an environmental magnet),

**Capitol Hill** (for gifted & talented) in Saint Paul, **Barton Open** in Minneapolis, and **Lowell, Grant and Nettleton Magnets** in Duluth.

**Promising integration practices for racially identifiable school sites**

**Change boundaries.** Examination and modification of school district boundaries where current ones are illogical and/or present equity concerns. **Rochester** and **Robbinsdale** Public Schools are good resources and examples. Rochester worked with Olmstead County on using computerized mapping tied to Census data to help guide decision-making.

**Offer more intradistrict open enrollment** with transportation provided and strong marketing to families who are less likely to make pro-active school choices. Both **Minneapolis and Saint Paul Public Schools** offer extensive internal choice programs.

**Promising integration practices for districts with small student populations and large geographic spreads, such as much of Greater Minnesota**

**Summer athletic or academic programming that serves cross-district populations.** Examples include the **West Central Integration and Cottonwood River Integration Collaboratives.**

**Teen drop-in centers** that allow a meeting space for students from small towns to gather, such as developed in **Sleepy Eye** through the **Cottonwood River Collaborative**.

**ACT/SAT preparation courses and parent information meetings on college access and financial aid issues**, such as being offered through the **Rochester Area Interdistrict Collaborative**.

## **Minnesota Department of Education contacts**

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- **Minneapolis Public Schools**, Jackie Turner, 612-668-1840, [jturner@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:jturner@mpls.k12.mn.us).
- **Northwest Suburban Integration District**, Marcia Moore-Foster, 763-416-3080, [mmfoster@nws.k12.mn.us](mailto:mmfoster@nws.k12.mn.us)
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- **Rochester Public Schools**, Zelda Collins-Moore, 507-287-1985, [zcollins-mo@rochester.k12.mn.us](mailto:zcollins-mo@rochester.k12.mn.us)
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- **West Central Integration Collaborative**, Idalia Leuze, 320-231-8571, [idalia.leuze@swsc.org](mailto:idalia.leuze@swsc.org)
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