



# MN JOURNAL

Expanding the Civic Imagination



## Immigrant students are a necessary part of Minnesota's future economic prosperity

To insure their success, we need to remove barriers to high school graduation and higher education

by Annie Levenson-Falk

Minnesota has long been recognized for its well-educated, high-quality workforce, but current trends threaten that reputation. Minnesota's workforce, relative to the size of its population, is shrinking and too few Minnesota students are graduating from higher education to fill the gap. To maintain its strength in the national and world economy, Minnesota needs more of its students to complete some form of higher education.

In order to meet the coming economic demand, Minnesota must ensure that more students complete higher education and are prepared to participate in the workforce.

A look at the data shows that while Minnesota's need for skilled workers is increasing, the number of Minnesotans prepared to fill those jobs is decreasing.

- Between 2002 and 2010, the number of jobs in Minnesota requiring some higher education and providing a living wage is projected to grow by 21 percent.
- The number of college graduates retiring from the Minnesota workforce will increase as members of the baby boom generation begin to retire; and by 2020, [Minnesota's population will include more retirees than schoolchildren](#) for the first time in its history.
- During the same period, the number of high school graduates in Minnesota is expected to decline by 10.3 percent—a significantly greater drop than the

national average of 4 percent—and the number of college graduates in Minnesota is expected to decline by 12 percent.

If current trends continue, Minnesota will soon have too few qualified workers to fill the jobs available. In order to meet the coming economic demand, Minnesota must ensure that more students complete higher education and are prepared to participate in the workforce.

### IMMIGRANT STUDENTS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF MINNESOTA'S HUMAN RESOURCES

While the number of high school graduates is projected to decline, the increasing number of immigrants in Minnesota of childbearing age strongly suggests that the immigrant student population is growing. In Minnesota, the number of Hispanic graduates alone is projected to [increase by 173 percent](#) between 2003 and 2013—and while we do not know how many are immigrants, general demographic information suggests that many of these students will come from immigrant families.

What is clear is that in order to meet its future employment needs, Minnesota needs to ensure that more immigrant students complete higher education and are prepared to participate in the workforce.

Beyond the economic arguments, there is also a compelling moral imperative to ensure that immigrant students are prepared to be successful in higher education. Public schools have always served as an introduction to American culture and citizenship for new immigrants—

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# CONNECTIONS

Building a League of Citizens

## MEMBER PROFILES

### DIANNE KRIZAN

Managing Director for Development,  
Minnesota Public Radio

Involved in the Citizens League: 4 years

**Citizens League involvement:** Co-chair, Water Policy Study Committee; co-chaired the Standards and Practices Working Group and the Policy Open House planning committee.

#### Why did you join the Citizens League?

I was looking for an opportunity to become involved and make a difference in our community. Through serendipity, I stumbled upon the Citizens League and was immediately drawn to the mission of common good, tackling public problems from a common ground approach.

#### How do you practice civic engagement at your workplace, at home, at your place of worship or in the larger community?

The Citizen League has provided the impetus for me to move beyond taking information in, motivating me to take action. Sometimes the action has been contacting my legislators—as I did when the transportation study report came out; sometimes it is serving on a board—as I do with a charter school; sometimes it is sharing knowledge with friends and family so others can consider problems and solution more deeply—as I do whenever I learn new facts and insights through the Citizen League.



### DIANE TRAN

Project Coordinator,  
East Metro Medical Society

Involved in the Citizens League: 4 years

**Citizens League involvement:** Board of Directors, Policy Advisory Committee; Poverty & Public Leadership Action Group; MAP150 Citizen Jury; Students Speak Out

#### Why did you join the Citizens League?

I joined the Citizens League after attending a breakfast meeting where the state demographer and economist presented about the aging and diversification of the state population. The relevance of the speakers' information and the urgency of their message indicated there was work to be done. The quality of the questions asked by the Citizens League membership demonstrated the depth of their intelligence and their readiness for action.

#### How do you practice civic engagement at your workplace, at home, at your place of worship or in the larger community?

I worked with the Citizens League Poverty and Public Leadership Action Group in 2007 to respond to the question, "How can young people in the Twin Cities learn about meaningful opportunities to contribute to community and social change?" Our response, inspired by something I had learned about from nonprofit colleagues, was a February 2008 speed-matching event entitled, "Connect for a Cause." We described it in this way: "Connect for a Cause is a speed-matching and networking event bringing together area non-profits needing volunteers with young leaders looking to contribute civically."



## New members, recruiters, and volunteers

### New and rejoining members

Sharon and Roger Anderson  
John and Nina Archabal  
Laura Merriam and Peter Armstrong  
David Barton  
D&D Blake  
James and Sara Bonneville  
Richard P Braun  
Robert A Schroeder and Karen A Brooks  
Bill and Pat Burns  
Morgan and Anna Burns  
Sally Burns  
Teresa Callies  
Nikki Carlson  
Dennis M. Cavanaugh  
Dexy and Thomas Chacko  
Christine Chadwick  
Kim and David Christopher  
Cristine Olseen and Isaac Combs

Eugenie De Rosier  
Margaret Donohue  
Dennis Donovan  
Keith & Stacey Draz  
Elizabeth Starling and Kevin Dutcher  
Peter Eigenfeld  
Jean Erickson  
Kevin Featherly  
Jennifer Fogg  
Jennifer Peterson and Bill Forsberg  
Anne Carroll and Bruno Frank  
Joe Friedrich  
Mohannad Ghawanmeh  
Eric Gustafson  
Bryce and Donna Hamilton  
Robert Hayden  
Roger Heegaard  
Michael Herman  
Mark Hinds  
Gregory Hines  
Amanda Horner  
Christopher Horner  
Kevin Horner  
Rachel Jarosh

David Kaplan  
Shirley and Arnold Kaplan  
Brianna Keeney  
Karen Kurt  
Albert Lehman  
Irvin and Gwen Lerner  
Trout Lowen  
Ben Marcy  
Ryan Marthaler  
Stephanie Warne and Joe Maternowski  
Niara Aisha Nadra  
Joseph and Jo Ann Nathan  
Tom Newland  
Brad Von Bank & Kristine Pardue  
Daniel and Janet Parker  
Neil Peterson  
Steve Piekarski  
Nancy Powell  
Adam Preston  
Margot Seely and Ian Rapson  
Jennifer and Chris Reedy  
Michael Reif

Ken and Sandra Reine  
Greg Richardson  
Peter Ries  
David & Arline Ringstad  
Jennifer Robbins  
John and Anne Roberts  
Emily Robinson  
Donald Roden  
Larry and Barb Romanko  
Stacy Rooney  
Noah Rouen  
Lori Schaefer  
Chris Scheeman  
Karen Brooks & Robert Schroeder  
Jennifer Sommerfeld  
Katherine Steiner  
Patrick and Susan Stevens  
Nick Swenson  
Kristen Tharaldson  
Peg Brown and Aaron Van Dyke  
Kim and Jan Reedy  
Justine Ware

Dawne Brown  
White  
Eloise Wilkensen  
Craig and Teresa Wood

### Firms and organizations

Capella University  
Courage Center  
Care Providers of Minnesota  
Saint Therese Inc  
Care Center  
Ecumen  
Himle Horner  
Advanced Consulting  
Roger Meyer Consulting  
Minnesota Homecare Association  
Target  
St. John's McCarthy Center  
Fredrickson & Byron  
Portico Healthnet  
Blue Cross Blue Shield

SRF Consulting  
Volunteers of America  
Whalen Family Fund  
Health Partners  
Presbyterian Homes & Services  
Medica  
University of Minnesota  
Aging Services of Minnesota  
M&I Bank  
Alzheimer's Association  
UCare  
US Bank  
Dorsey and Whitney Foundation  
FR Bigelow Foundation  
Ecolab  
McKnight Foundation  
Pohlad Foundation  
St. Paul Public Housing  
Target  
St. Jude Medical

St. Paul Area Council of Churches  
DeCare Dental  
Keystone Search  
Bush Foundation  
General Mills

### Volunteers

Pam Carter  
Sheila Graham  
Kelly Schultz  
Chris Orr  
Rob Nygaard  
Jennifer Leise  
Jeff Stoebner  
Rebecca Lahr



## Redefining public works

Rebuilding our civic infrastructure is the key to solving our public policy problems

by Sean Kershaw

Our representatives in Washington are busy spending trillions of our children's dollars to rescue our economy and improve our deteriorating physical infrastructure. And at home and around the country, genuine interest on the part of citizens to get engaged and to express their voices in civic affairs is off the charts. "Change" has moved from effective political slogan to political and economic necessity.

But the best-laid plans for rebuilding our physical infrastructure and reforming our public policies won't succeed unless we rebuild our *civic* infrastructure: our ability to govern and solve problems together and to *implement* these reform plans. Without this civic infrastructure we will be condemned to a future filled with increasingly partisan arguments and prolonged-but-unsuccessful policy reforms. Unless we rethink how to engage individuals and institutions as citizens, we will create a lot of "civic busywork" and noise and kill this once-in-a-generation opportunity to renew our democracy.

We need a new and effective model for civic engagement and policy-making that translates the civic energy that is evident everywhere into the real-world political, economic, and policy outcomes that our democracy demands. The Citizens League is ready to deliver on this mandate.

### A NEW CIVIC MODEL

Building a base of active citizens is the starting point. We represent the interests and potential of more than 2,100 Minnesotans (300 more than last year) who can engage in addressing Minnesota's policy concerns. But engagement for engagement's sake won't fulfill our mission, keep your interest, or solve Minnesota's policy dilemmas. The point isn't to "look busy" (civically), but to govern and address our problems together.

Over the next year we will develop and test new models for civic engagement that can help to break the logjam of partisanship

and inaction, and produce both better policy proposals and the capacity to implement good ideas that are already on the table.

Continuing to grow our membership is essential to achieving this organizing goal. The Citizens League must represent the diverse interests and common goals of all Minnesotans. Please continue to reach out to friends, peers, and foes and invite them to join.

The point isn't to "look busy" (civically), but to govern and address our problems together.

We will intentionally develop more opportunities for members to work together on our civic policy agenda. We will clarify the roles and engagement opportunities of our ongoing committees (policy, membership/engagement, and communications). We will continue to evolve our study committee process—already adept at creating effective and innovative policy strategies—to improve the civic capacity of members and institutional partners to help implement the strategies developed by these committees.

Events will be more numerous, and organized to help us achieve our mission and policy goals. We'll continue the Policy and a Pint® series, and add new events that explore themes of innovation and intergenerational renewal as they relate to our mission. The morning Mind Openers return, focusing on policy issues such as water, regionalism, and poverty. Our first Mind Opener in February looks at immigration and higher education.

We will use technology to build relationships and supplement face-to-face meetings. Expect the launch of the first-ever online policy organizing platform, *CitiZing!*, in March. *CitiZing!* will combine social networking opportunities (member

profiles, for example), with common web tools (wikis, videos, etc.) and structure this work around our time-tested policy analysis process.

### EDUCATING TO ORGANIZE

We know that one of the primary benefits of membership is that you trust us to be a good source of information on public policy. Facts matter, and we will continue our commitment to provide thorough, accurate information in the *Minnesota Journal*, at our events, and through our in-depth reports.

But this is just part of our education mandate. This information and this integrity is the byproduct of a civic engagement process that works. We also need new civic leadership training and education that helps build the civic imagination, skills, and expertise of our members to produce these ideas. You can surf the net to get "facts"—it takes a different set of skills (listening, analyzing, arguing, influencing, and asking open-ended questions, for example) to play the role of an active citizen and actually help address policy problems.

We are developing a series of civic leadership programs, from lunchtime sessions to half-day seminars to multi-session courses, to build the capacity of our members and partners to become active citizens and civic organizers.

### A NEW "PUBLIC WORKS"

We face enormous problems in Washington, in our state, and in our local communities, but our interest and capacity to do something about them remains amazingly high. Accomplishing bold policy reforms and rebuilding our traditional public works, our physical infrastructure, now depends on rebuilding our civic infrastructure. We offer a new definition of and model for public works: a public that works. ●

Sean Kershaw is the Executive Director of the Citizens League. He can be reached at [skershaw@citizensleague.org](mailto:skershaw@citizensleague.org).

# TAKE NOTE

## Innovation Spotlight

### SAFE WATER FOR THE WORLD

"Chocolate water" may sound like the newest thing in soft drinks, but for residents of the Honduran Department of Colon, chocolate is the color of water muddied by contaminants. And for a third of the population there, and for millions of people around the world, chocolate water is the only drinking water they have.

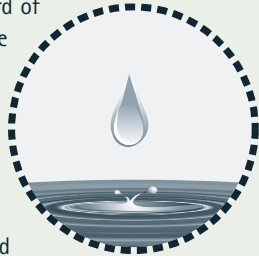
That may soon change, thanks to a \$4.6 million partnership between the Pentair Foundation and Water Missions International to create sustainable, safe water access and sanitation for the residents of Colon. The goal of Project SafeWater-Colon is to demonstrate scientifically that communities around the world can have safe, accessible water that's also cost effective.

Phase one of the project, which began in 2007, involves face-to-face interviews to document water access and hygiene practices, and the collection of water samples to establish baseline statistics on water quality.

Phases two and three focus on designing, fabricating, and installing drinking water systems that fit the unique needs of each community.

The project also includes a community development component; each community has to establish a leadership group to ensure that everyone in the community has access to the water system; to operate and maintain the water system; and to participate in, and later conduct, basic hygiene and health training.

For more on Project SafeWater, visit go to [www.pentair.com](http://www.pentair.com) and click on the foundation link.



### WHAT'S ON TAP?

In an effort to raise the cool quotient of tap water, the city of London launched a contest last May to design a carafe that restaurants and bars could use to serve up the city's tap water. The winning design was selected in December.

"Tap Top," the winning carafe has four drip-free pour spouts and a narrow neck to

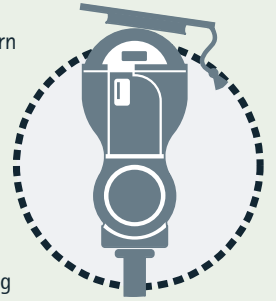
trap ice. The carafe will be sold to bars, restaurants, and hotels throughout the city. Profits from the sale of the carafe will go to the nonprofit organization WaterAid, which provides water to some of the world's poorest people. Check out the winner and other top designs at [London on Tap](#).

### SMARTER PARKING METERS

Wouldn't it be great if your parking meter could alert your blackberry when it was about to expire. We may not be there yet, but the city of Minneapolis is asking drivers for their feedback on six new types of parking meters, including programmable meters that allow for different parking rates at

different times of day, and meters that can warn drivers of peak period "tow away" zones.

Six vendors have been selected to install different types of test meters in separate areas around the city, including the Warehouse District, St. Anthony Main and Uptown. Most of the meters being tested can also use the city's new wireless network to transmit data on parking meter usage to the traffic and parking engineers in real time. The meters will run through June. Drivers are asked to fill out a short survey [online](#) or call 311 with comments.



### IS COST CONTAINMENT INFECTIOUS?

A study released in January by the [Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council](#) (PHC4) shows that a policy requiring individual hospitals to publicly disclose infection rates is saving lives and money. The study found that hospital-acquired infection rates at the state's 165 acute care hospitals dropped 7.8 percent, from 19.2 per 1,000 patients in 2006 to 17.7 per 1,000 in 2007, after the new reporting policy was put into place. Not only does the policy save lives, it saves scarce health care dollars. Care for patients that contract hospital-acquired infections costs on average five times more than for than patients who do not contract such infections. For more information, go to [www.phc4.org](http://www.phc4.org)



### STILL NOT No. 1

Despite some gains, the European Union (EU) continues to lag behind the U.S. and Japan when it comes to innovation, according to a report by the [European Commission](#). According to the report, the U.S. out-performed the 27-member EU by 33 percent in six key areas of innovation.

On the positive side, the eighth edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) shows that the EU has seen a strong increase in the number of graduates in areas such as science and engineering, as well as increases in internet broadband availability and private capital spent on innovation. Germany, Denmark and the U.K. are considered the EU's "innovation leaders," according to the report, with more firms in those countries introducing innovations into the market.

### SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

It's no surprise that budgets top Governing Magazine's list of top 10 things state legislatures will be debating this session. Spending, or the reduction in it, is likely to dominate the discussion of cash-strapped states across the nation. Other hot topics included in the magazine's special report on state legislatures are the high cost of college tuition, gun control, transportation, global warming, the social safety net, corrections, energy, controlling health care costs and redistricting.

To read more, go to [www.governing.com/articles/0901issues.htm](http://www.governing.com/articles/0901issues.htm)



## How we define our communities of interest

When congressional and legislative district boundaries are redrawn in 2012, will citizens have a voice in the process?

by Erin Sapp

Minnesota is gaining population, but not as fast as most of the rest of the nation. As a result, the state could lose one of its eight congressional seats after the 2010 census by a margin of fewer than 2,000 people. If that happens, the redrawing of district boundaries in 2012, always controversial, could be particularly contentious. How congressional and legislative district boundaries are drawn affects who wins and who loses, and whether voters believe their votes count. With that in mind, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs initiated a project in 2007 to reform the redistricting process in Minnesota. The Citizens League organized and executed a complementary citizen-directed effort as part of its Minnesota Anniversary Project (MAP 150) last year, and asked the public to weigh in. With plans to increase competition, change who draws the lines, and amend the constitution all on the table at the state Legislature, we wanted to know what regular Minnesotans thought about how redistricting should be done. What characteristics should districts have? Who should draw the lines? Our aim was threefold: to raise awareness about the importance and implications of redistricting principles and procedures; to engage Minnesotans in a discussion on the topic and offer them a platform for their input; and to move their citizen-backed views into the formal policy discussion.

### REACHING OUT TO CITIZENS

We solicited input from citizens through meetings, an online survey, and tabling at the State Fair. We reached more than 750 Minnesotans, a clear indication to us that citizens do indeed care about the issue of redistricting. The in-person meetings alone reached about 600 people, and were conducted with groups from Americorps, corporations, nonprofits, and Citizens League members.

At those meetings we outlined the importance and relevance of redistricting and walked audience members through the major principles of redistricting, and the possible ways to do it. During the presentation, audience members used interactive devices (like those used at the Citizens League annual meeting) to “vote” on questions and view the group’s responses in real time.

In addition, we conducted brief videotaped interviews with some of the major policymakers involved in Minnesota’s redistricting process, including former Secretary of State Joan Growe, former Governor Al Quie, and others. These interviews revealed that even those most involved with the redistricting process are not clear on Minnesotan’s priorities. They also illustrated the complexity of the process and underscored the need for meaningful public involvement during the next redistricting cycle. View the interviews at [www.map150.org](http://www.map150.org).

### IDENTIFYING PRINCIPLES AND PLAYERS

The work was completed in two phases. In the first phase we focused on identifying Minnesotans’ values and priorities for redistricting by asking several questions: Which principles or rules should be used to guide redistricting? Who should be tasked with the job? What outcomes do Minnesotans want in their district plan?

We also asked which principles people thought were used to guide the makeup of their current districts. A full 30 percent said that their districts are drawn to be compact, 27 percent said they are drawn to be safe for one party or another, and 24 percent said their districts respect a community of interest.



Minnesotans feel somewhat differently about their state legislative and federal congressional districts and the rules they want applied to each. As Figure 1 shows, participants said respecting communities of interest was slightly more important for legislative districts than congressional districts.

Figure 1. Guiding principles for redistricting

Which principles should guide	Legislative districts	Congressional districts
Compactness	24%	25%
Competitiveness	30%	32%
Safety	6%	4%
Minority representation	14%	16%
Communities of interest	26%	22%

At the Citizens League annual meeting in 2007, we posed a slightly different set of questions. One question focused on competitiveness. Of the 350 respondents at the meeting, 68 percent said that they wanted to be in a competitive district, 8 percent wanted to be in a safe district, and nearly one-quarter (24%) said that competitiveness was not an important issue.

During the process we also walked citizens through the major options for governing bodies that could be used to carry out redistricting. We combined processes already used elsewhere in the country. In Minnesota, all redistricting plans drawn up in recent memory (except one, which was only passed into law because the governor didn’t veto the plan in time) have been drawn by the courts after the Legislature failed to come up with a viable plan signed by the governor. We also floated two new ideas: a panel of retired judges and a shadow commission. (See the Potential Redistricting Processes sidebar for a fuller explanation of the options.) Figure 2 illustrates who the participants most want to carry out redistricting.

Figure 2. Who should oversee the redistricting process?

Legislature	9%
Courts (sitting)	12%
Panel of retired judges	18%
Iowa Plan/panel of nonpartisan legislative staffers	28%
Citizen commission	21%
Shadow commission	12%

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# Redistricting

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While it is not clear who Minnesotans would choose to redraw their district map, it is clear that the Legislature is their last choice. These results do, however, illustrate some of the priorities Minnesotans have for the body that is ultimately responsible: the group should be nonpartisan or equally bipartisan, and should include members of the public. It is also worth noting that the concept of the shadow commission was not introduced and offered as an option until approximately two-thirds of the outreach had been completed and the results were not weighted to account for that.

## DEFINING COMMUNITY

As the principles and process Minnesotans want became clearer, we sought to better understand how Minnesotans define their communities in Phase 2 of our work. Respecting “communities of interest” has been an integral part of each Minnesota redistricting plan, and about one-quarter of the respondents identified it as the primary principle for how lines should be drawn. When asked, “How much does the geography of your district—that is, which communities are included and where the lines are

## POTENTIAL REDISTRICTING PROCESSES

BODY	PROCESS	PROS	CONS
<b>Legislature</b> (Minnesota's current system)	The state legislature creates a new district map; the plan becomes a bill, and once passed, goes on to the governor for signature or veto.	If different parties control each chamber, the parties must work together to create an acceptable plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislators choose their voters.</li> <li>All plans produced by the legislature in recent memory have been contested in and redrawn by the courts.</li> <li>If both chambers are controlled by the same party, the lines might be drawn to bias the results in that party's favor.</li> <li>The minority and third parties are effectively barred from participation.</li> </ul>
<b>Courts</b>	The sitting court draws the map according to the rules and guidelines set forth in the state constitution and/or statute, typically after failure of the legislature to create a successful plan.	(The assumption is that) A nonpartisan judiciary shouldn't be influenced by partisan politics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal law tasks the legislature with drawing the lines.</li> <li>Minnesota judges can declare a party affiliation when running for office.</li> </ul>
<b>Panel of retired judges</b>	A bipartisan process is used to appoint a panel of retired appellate and supreme court judges to draw the lines.	Panel would be selected on a bipartisan basis, ensuring equal partisan representation from both major parties. Provisions could be made to include third parties.	Because most retired appellate court judges are currently older, white men, there would likely be little female or minority representation.
<b>Panel of non-partisan legislative staffers</b> (Iowa Plan)	A board comprised of nonpartisan legislative staffers draws the lines with only population information; no information about party, demographics, etc.	The panel is not given access to political data, resulting in districts drawn solely by population.	The absence of any political or demographic data makes drawing lines to account for competitiveness or minority representation impossible.
<b>Citizen commission</b>	A group of citizens with no stake in the process, partisan or otherwise, draw the lines.	Voters could draw their own lines, and everyday citizens could execute the set rules without partisan influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because redistricting is so complicated, citizens may not fully understand the laws or the impact of how the lines are drawn.</li> <li>Most citizens who would be interested in serving on the commission likely would have his/her own political bias.</li> </ul>
<b>Shadow commission</b>	A nonpartisan third party puts together and facilitates a panel that creates its own nonbinding redistricting plan and lobbies for its adoption.	Nonpartisan sponsor and bipartisan or multi-partisan body ensures that all perspectives are represented equally, and the resulting plan reflects stated rules and public interests.	The plan is nonbinding and the panel has no legal authority.

drawn—influence your feelings of how well you are represented by your elected officials?,” 73 percent of respondents said that it influenced it a lot or some, and just 9 percent said it did not influence their feelings at all.

To find out how Minnesotans define their communities, we posed two questions, one about their bond with particular communities, and a second on how they self-identify. Figure 3 shows the responses.

**Figure 3. With which communities do you feel the strongest bond?**

Church	9%
School	10%
Race, ethnicity or culture	4%
Geographic proximity	15%
Profession / colleagues	15%
Family	18%
Peers in the same age group	16%
Friends from childhood	7%
Recreational (like from a club or team)	6%

**How do you most closely identify yourself?**

Where in the state you live	12%
The kind of community you live in (urban, rural, etc.)	42%
Your race, ethnicity or culture	6%
Your profession	21%
Your religion	5%
Your age	10%
Your gender or sexual orientation	5%

The findings confirmed our assumptions: Different demographic groups identify community in different ways. For instance, on the community bond question, nonwhite participants reported a much higher bond with communities of the same race, ethnicity, or culture than white participants (10% *vs.* 2%). Nonwhite participants also reported a stronger bond with family (21%) and friends from childhood (12%) than white participants (15% and 2%, respectively). Nonwhite participants were more likely to identify by race, ethnicity, or culture (18% *vs.* 2%), and where in the state they live (21% *vs.* 10%). Conversely, white participants identify most closely by the kind of community they live in (47% *vs.* 35%), their profession (18% *vs.* 9%), and age, (15% *vs.* 3%).

As we strive to define “communities of interest,” this kind of information can be helpful in understanding how different communities in Minnesota define their communities, and in guiding the creation of a new district map that better reflects the true communities of interest in the state.

## NEXT STEPS

A subcommittee dedicated to redistricting oversaw the work. As we conducted meetings and poured over findings, this group recommended ways to move citizens’ wishes for redistricting into

## REDISTRICTING TIMELINE: CURRENT SYSTEM

- Nov. 2008:** General election
- Jan. 2009:** Budget for hardware and software must be ready
- 2009–2010:** Redistricting workshops for legislators and staff
- Apr. 2010:** Census
- Nov. 2010:** General election
- Mar. 2011:** Census and redistricting data delivered to state legislature
- Spring**
- 2011–2012:** Legislature forms a bipartisan committee to create a redistricting plan. Plan must be passed by both houses and signed by the governor 25 weeks prior to the 2012 primary (March 2012).
- Summer**
- 2011–2012:** If it seems possible that the Legislature will not be able to create and adopt a plan in time, the Minnesota Supreme Court may appoint a special panel to create its own plan. If the Legislature does not prevail, the court’s plan becomes law.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT REDISTRICTING

- Take the online survey and view the video at [www.map150.org](http://www.map150.org)
- Play the redistricting game ([www.RedistrictingGame.org](http://www.RedistrictingGame.org)) and see how even a slight manipulation of the lines can drastically change who wins and who loses in an election.
- Map your community ([www.CommonCensus.org](http://www.CommonCensus.org)). This tool maps communities based upon where residents think their natural community boundaries are, rather than by arbitrary political lines. (And there’s a fun optional teams feature for sports fans!)

the policy sector (See the **Redistricting Recommendations sidebar on page 10**). These are not formal recommendations of the Citizens League, but they do provide a good foundation for us to consider how to move this work forward.

The Citizens League is currently pursuing partnerships and funding that will enable us to carry the public’s wishes for redistricting forward into the formal policy discussion.

Minnesotans want to have a stake in the redistricting processes. With nearly 750 responses collected and more steadily coming through our online survey, it seems clear that citizens view redistricting as an important issue. When asked “How much of an impact do you think redistricting makes on your representation?” an impressive 84 percent reported that it made a substantial impact. Minnesotans want and deserve to be heard on this issue. ●

*Erin Sapp is a Citizens League member and project manager for the redistricting project.*

# Immigration

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and one of the fundamental roles of public education is to develop the capacity of citizens to self-govern and participate in our workforce and our democracy. We have an obligation to ensure that our schools are prepared to serve all students, including immigrant students.

In addition, we have a particular responsibility to refugees who make up a significant proportion of Minnesota's immigrant population and who are often resettled in Minnesota with little say in the matter.

To address this need, the Citizens League, in partnership with the [MACC Alliance of Connected Communities](#) and [Marnita's Table](#), initiated a study in 2006 to examine the question "How can Minnesota increase immigrant student readiness for and success in higher education?"

In the [first phase](#) of the study, completed in 2007, a study committee identified the key policy questions. In the [second phase](#), another committee drew up recommendations based on those findings.

The study identified policy questions, drew conclusions and offered recommendations in four key areas related to immigrant students and education: information, culture, cost, and language preparation. What follows is a summary of that work. The full report will be released in February.

## INFORMATION

**Key question:** How are information and services about K-12 and higher education best delivered to immigrant students and their families?

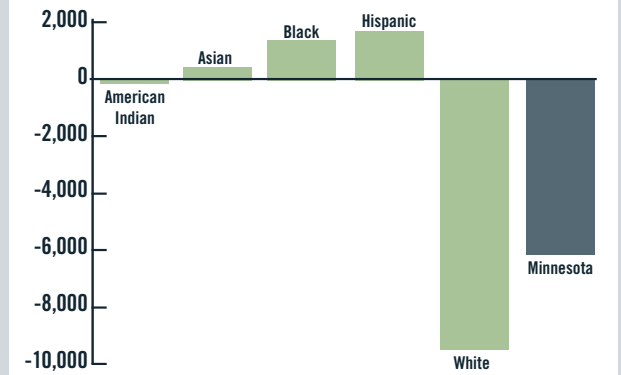
**Findings:** Immigrant families do not always communicate and engage with schools in the same ways as native-born families. In many cases, immigrants have grown up in a culture where they are expected to defer educational authority to teachers and school systems. Therefore, in some cases, community-based organizations or places of worship provide a more consistent mechanism for communicating with immigrant families than schools themselves. Rather than just investing more in school-based systems of communication, Minnesota should explore opportunities to partner with outside organizations and develop new systems for delivering educational information and services to immigrant families.

**Conclusion:** Minnesota should evaluate and explore both the school- and community-based efforts to deliver information and services to immigrant families and students.

### Recommendations:

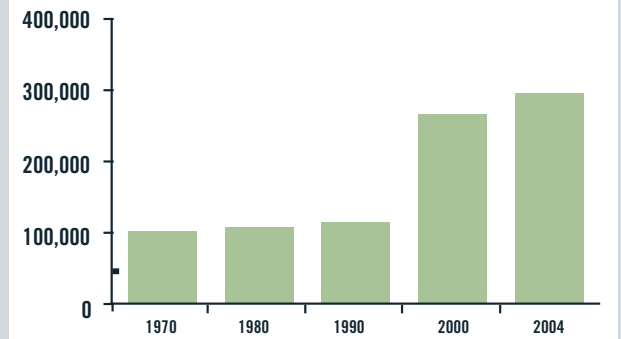
- Develop a statewide online "higher education platform" that all students are required to complete before graduation from high school.
  - Increase and improve mentoring and advising services available to immigrant students by tapping into nontraditional but trusted community resources.
- > Encourage college and universities to create programs through which immigrant college students serve immigrant high school students.

### Change in Minnesota high school graduates 2003-2013



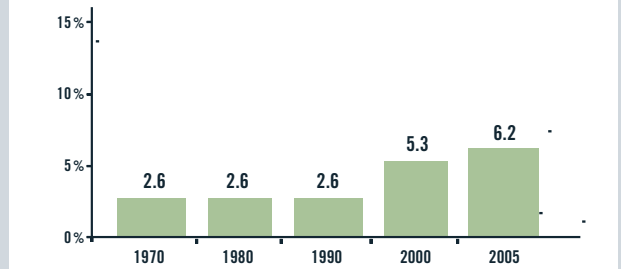
Source: Minnesota Private College Council, "Economic Diversity: Why Enrollment of Lower-Income Students Matters," February 2008.

### Minnesota's foreign born population has been growing since 1970



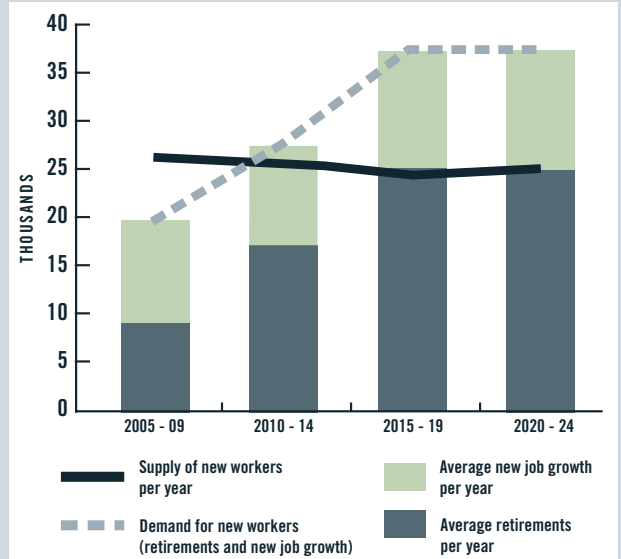
Data: Census, 2004 ACS. Analysis: Minnesota State Demographer

### Percent of Minnesota's population born in another country



Data: Census, 2005 ACS. Analysis: Minnesota State Demographer

### Minnesota's college-educated workforce 2005-2024



Source: Minnesota Private College Council, "Economic Diversity: Why Enrollment of Lower-Income Students Matters," February 2008.

- > Encourage immigrant students at colleges and universities to mentor and advise immigrant high school students.
- > Create a network of mentors and advisors who assist immigrant students in navigating the college process.
- > Create a new position within school districts responsible for coordinating resources available to immigrant students.

## CULTURE

**Key question:** How can educational institutions and individual educators learn to adapt to the changing cultural makeup of their student populations?

**Findings:** The increase in the number of immigrant students has introduced school districts and individual teachers to new challenges. Even with the best of intentions, it is difficult for teachers and other school staff to become familiar with all of the languages, cultural backgrounds, and experiences that their immigrant students bring with them to the classroom. This lack of familiarity can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between schools, teachers, students, and parents, but much of this conflict would be avoidable if Minnesota's immigrant communities and educational systems had better avenues for understanding each other.

**Conclusion:** Minnesota's education systems need to improve their capacity to adapt to the changing cultural makeup of student populations.

### Recommendations:

- Create new mechanisms to prepare teachers, advisors, and school administrators to effectively educate immigrant students.
  - > Require continuing education on multicultural issues for all teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators.
  - > Add content to current urban education programs to prepare new teachers to serve immigrant students.
  - > Create new centers for excellence in teaching and advising immigrant students.
- Increase opportunities for immigrants to become teachers, counselors, and school administrators, especially through nontraditional avenues.

## COST

**Key question:** What do immigrant families need to overcome the financial challenges related to higher education?

**Findings:** Most of the barriers related to the cost of higher education actually come down to factors that fall under the other categories. Some students don't understand the financial aid application process, for example, so they do not receive all the scholarships for which they might be eligible. Others may have finished high school unprepared for college-level course work and need to use their financial aid and their savings to pay for remedial classes.

The most significant area where cost alone plays a factor is among students who do not qualify for scholarships, financial aid, or in-state tuition, either because they attend part time, or because of their immigration status, or because they did not enter higher education directly after high school.

## WHO IS AN IMMIGRANT STUDENT?

Throughout the report, the committee uses the term "immigrant student" to refer to both first- and second-generation immigrant students. The definition includes any student whose parents are foreign-born, whether the student was born abroad or in the United States, or any students who come from an immigrant family.

There is no typical immigrant student in Minnesota; immigrants in Minnesota come from all around the world and from all kinds of family backgrounds.

## WHO IS A CITIZEN?

The word citizen in Citizens League refers to a democratic, rather than legal, definition of citizenship. A "citizen," in this case, is an obligated, governing member of a community—whether that community is a team of co-workers, a congregation or a state. You are a citizen of the neighborhood, city, and state in which you reside regardless of your legal citizenship status.

## WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION?

In this report, as in other recent Citizens League studies on education, the definition of higher education includes two- and four-year liberal arts and technical colleges and universities.

**Conclusion:** Minnesota should be at the forefront of exploring and developing mechanisms that allow immigrant students to finance higher education in ways that are consistent with their culture, family obligations, and immigration status.

### Recommendations:

- Equalize eligibility of part-time and older students for scholarships and grants.
- Pass state legislation that would allow all students who meet residency requirements to pay in-state tuition rates, regardless of immigration status.
- Make state higher education aid available to all students who meet residency requirements, regardless of immigration status.
- Develop a standardized financial aid application that can be used to obtain state financial aid and institution-specific scholarships.

## LANGUAGE PREPARATION

**Key question:** What is the best way to prepare immigrant students for the requirements of college-level English?

**Findings:** Learning English has always been a challenge for new immigrants. Today's students face an even greater challenge than earlier generations of immigrants. To be successful in Minnesota's information economy they must be proficient in rigorous academic English—something that was rarely expected of earlier immigrants. The English Language Learner (ELL) systems in Minnesota were built to an earlier standard of basic proficiency, and too often these systems do not adequately prepare students for higher education or professional careers.

**Conclusion:** The ultimate goal must be a system that prepares immigrant students not just for basic proficiency in English but helps them acquire the college-level English skills required for success in higher education.

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# Immigration

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## Recommendation:

- Provide additional support to students identified as English Language Learners in the form of longer school days, a longer school year, or programs outside of school.
  - > Develop a standardized process for use by all Minnesota school districts to identify and assess English Language Learners.
  - > Identify and expand best practices to deliver high-quality English instruction to English Language Learners at all levels.
  - > Set aggressive goals for individual English Language Learner student progress and proficiency.

## THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

With the study completed, the next phase of this work will seek to identify opportunities to advance the recommendations presented

here. Some of the recommendations in this study require legislative policy change. More, however, can be done right now by the people who work with immigrant students. Many individuals and organizations across the state are already involved in work along the lines of our recommendations to help more immigrant students be prepared for and successful in higher education.

The Citizens League is seeking opportunities to recognize and support those efforts that improve the education of immigrant students, to help replicate good examples, and to work with others to make legislative change possible. Anyone interested in working with the Citizens League in these efforts should contact Annie Levenson-Falk by email at the address listed below. ●

Annie Levenson-Falk is the policy coordinator of the Citizens League. She can be reached at [alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org](mailto:alevensonfalk@citizensleague.org).

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## REDISTRICTING PROPOSAL

**Convene a group of civic and community leaders to determine the makeup of the commission, and create a collaborative process for the plan's adoption.**

Many groups and organizations are interested in working on redistricting, and even more have a stake in the process. The group's work should be twofold. First, it should create the specific policy proposal for redistricting reform, including the principles by which redistricting should be done, as well as the makeup of a commission. Second, groups should work together to create and enact a comprehensive plan to ensure adoption of the policy proposal. The proposal should include grassroots outreach and organizing, advocacy and lobbying efforts at the Legislature, and PR and media activities.

**Conduct further public input activities to further clarify Minnesotan's priorities for redistricting.**

In order to formulate a policy proposal that is truly the will of the people, more work needs to be done to understand by what principles redistricting should be done, and who should be in charge of drawing the lines. In this framework of aiming to create a policy proposal for adoption at the Legislature, citizens could respond to more specific questions about who should be on the commission, and under which circumstances which rules should be applied. The groundwork has been laid and the responses are informative, but there is further information to ascertain.

**Formulate a policy proposal for redistricting that tasks a commission to do redistricting.**

It is clear that the Legislature is the least favorite

choice of citizens to carry out redistricting. This is likely due to the combination of factors, such as seeing the process of legislators picking their own voters as a conflict of interest, and the Legislature's historic inability to create a viable plan. While the makeup of this new commission needs to be determined, it should:

- **Be politically balanced.** The number one characteristic that citizens reported a redistricting commission should have is partisan balance.
- **Include experts.** The second feature that citizens want is for the commission to include experts, or those with experience redistricting in the past. While it is not necessary for them to make up the entire commission, historical knowledge and technical expertise in the area is important to ensuring an efficient process.
- **Include citizens.** Nearly one-quarter of respondents reported wanting redistricting to be done by a citizen commission. Members of communities are their own best experts on their communities, lending powerful knowledge to grappling with the "communities of interest" principle. Populating some of the commission spots with ordinary citizens would ensure that true citizen and community concerns, and not just political concerns, would be addressed.
- **Be open and transparent.** Redistricting currently takes place largely behind closed doors. Holding open public meetings, publishing regular updates on the progress on a dedicated website or webpage, and providing the same information (data, legislative testimony, etc.) in an open manor would help to make the process more transparent, foster greater trust in the

process, and greater understanding of and support for the resulting plan.

- **Involve citizens meaningfully.** While many "ordinary" citizens provided input on the redistricting plan in 2002, the majority of the comments were made by "super citizens," like city planners and other highly civically involved citizens. Providing their input on their communities was invaluable to drawing the lines, but didn't afford them a meaningful stake or role in the process. Citizens could be given the tools to draw their own redistricting plans for review, or could collaborate to hold community meetings on where lines should be drawn in their area.

**Run the policy proposal under the auspices of a shadow commission should the proposal not prevail in the Legislature.**

The success of redistricting reform cannot be entirely dependent upon the Legislature's adoption of a new plan. The challenges around this are obvious; the legislature will not easily and voluntarily strip themselves of their power to control redistricting. However, Minnesotans need a plan that is reflective of their wishes. Should the proposal not prevail in the Legislature, the group should run their commission as a shadow to the Legislature, and use media, PR, and intense lobbying pressure to ensure adoption of their plan. After the 2012 round, the group could use an evaluation of their process and lessons from their experience to formulate another policy proposal. This cycle would benefit from a track record of results and lessons learned, and a large cushion of time before legislators need to be concerned with the impact of a new redistricting process.

# Replicate rather than restrict Minnesota's most successful charters

Some changes to the charter law are needed, but not those suggested by long time opponents

by Eric Mahmoud and Joe Nathan

How ironic. President Barack Obama has proposed doubling federal support for expanding successful chartered public schools. According to the White House website, the President's proposal would provide funding "only to states that improve accountability for charter schools, allow for interventions in struggling charter schools and have a clear process for closing down chronically underperforming charter schools. Obama ... will also prioritize supporting states that help the most successful charter schools to expand to serve more students."

A January 10, 2009 front page *New York Times* story praised several Minneapolis charters for, as one authority put it, "modeling for kids the story of acculturation and how it works."

Meanwhile, some Minnesota education groups (opposed to the charter idea from the beginning) are trying to eliminate any growth of charters, eliminate outstanding directors at some of Minnesota's most successful charters, and place unwise restrictions on existing chartered public schools. Some charter law changes are needed, but not those suggested by long time opponents.

The chartered school strategy, first developed in Minnesota with Citizens League leadership, has spread to 40 states. We've gone from one chartered public school in Saint Paul serving fewer than 100 students in 1992, to more than 1,400 nationally, serving more than 1.3 million students.

Based on the success of many charters, and the failures of a few, we recommend:

- Judging schools on students' performance, not their race
- Promoting state policies that replicate outstanding chartered and district public schools
- Clarifying charter oversight, and continuing to close charters and reorganize district public schools that are not improving student achievement

Let's start with successes, which surprised several Minnesota state legislators when presented at the Capitol late in 2008. A Center for School Change study several years ago studied the progress chartered schools were making in Minneapolis, compared to the Minneapolis Public School district. Over one year, six of eight, and over two years, five of seven chartered schools made more progress in reading or math, or both, than the district average. But averages can hide excellence in both district and chartered schools. Schools vary in philosophy, curriculum, and procedures. Because they vary widely, comparing district and chartered schools is as meaningful as comparing the gas mileage of leased and newly purchased cars. Instead, we should replicate the best of each.

One of the most successful chartered schools is Harvest Prep, which made more progress in reading and math than the district average. Figure 1 uses 2007-08 data from the Minnesota Department of Education to show the percentage of sixth-grade Black students that are proficient in reading and math. At Harvest Prep, which co-author Eric Mahmoud co-founded, a higher



percentage of Black students are proficient in reading and math than Black students in either the Minneapolis or St Paul school districts. Harvest Prep also has a higher percentage of sixth grade Black students proficient in reading and math than Black students in Eden Prairie or Minnetonka. Ninety-nine percent of Harvest Prep students are Black, and 86 percent are from low-income families. Other grade levels show similar results.

Figure 1. Percentage of sixth grade Black students (2007-08) proficient in reading and math by district.

District	Proficient in reading	Proficient in math
Harvest Prep	70%	53%
Minneapolis	31%	21%
St. Paul	44%	34%
Eden Prairie	35%	19%
Minnetonka	63%	44%
State	44%	33%

<http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/index.do>

Higher Ground, a St. Paul charter with a 99 percent black student enrollment is another success story. It enrolls recent immigrants and students whose families are long-time residents. Bill Wilson, the first African American city council chair in St. Paul, founded and directs the school. A higher percentage of Black students at Higher Ground are proficient on state reading and math tests than Black students in Minneapolis, St Paul or many suburban districts.

Both schools acknowledge they still have work to do.

Harvest Prep, Higher Ground and other mostly minority schools share important characteristics with schools praised in a November 2006 *New York Times Magazine* article by Paul Tough in which he described U.S. schools that are the most successful in reducing or eliminating racial achievement gaps. These schools (like Harvest Prep and Higher Ground) share common characteristics:

- A longer school day and year
- Strong emphasis on development of character, along with academic skills
- Measurable goals for each year and month
- Principals empowered to select and remove faculty
- Constant assessment and refinement of instruction, based on student performance

Most of the roughly 70 schools that Tough praised "have only one or two white children enrolled or none at all."

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## Charter schools

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Some criticize schools like Harvest Prep and Higher Ground as segregated. Higher Ground founder Bill Wilson responded, testifying before the legislature late in 2008:

“When I was a child in Indiana, I was bused past three schools, to a fourth, inferior school, because of my color. My family had no choice. *That* was segregation. When families have many options, including our schools, that is *not* segregation.”

We want to be very clear. Families should have choices among strong public schools—whether district or chartered. Let’s judge schools by students’ results, not students’ race.

Charter opponents are pushing state certification for all charter directors. But neither Mahmoud nor Wilson is a certified administrator, nor is the director of the very successful Woodbury Math and Science Academy. The director of City Academy, the nation’s first charter school that was praised by President Bill Clinton, is not certified, nor are the majority of the directors of the KIPP charter schools. Instead of requiring certification, why not give districts greater flexibility of leadership, building on the success of non-certified leaders in outstanding charters and some school districts?

Minnesota’s charter movement has produced many successful innovative schools, such as the first Chinese immersion school and the first public secondary Montessori schools in the state, schools that have helped dropouts graduate and enter higher education, and a whole new approach to teacher professionalism. Minnesota’s New Country School (MNCS) was a pioneer in giving teachers leadership opportunities similar to attorneys and physicians. A comparison of MNCS and district students found MNCS has helped promote greater responsibility, independence, and confidence.

We agree with State Representative Mindy Greiling about Tiza, a charter recently challenged by the ACLU. Greiling and Nathan have visited Tiza, agree on the importance of separating church and state, and agree, as Greiling concluded “this is a fine school that is following the law.”

Some chartered schools have not done well. More than 20 have been closed since 1992.

Evaluation is vital for district and chartered public schools. We should clarify expectations for school boards, universities, and social service agencies that supervise charters. Schools should have consequences, including ultimately closure, if they don’t produce high achievement or significant progress.

As legislators refine the charter option, we hope they also examine the Choice is Yours (CIY) program that sends low income and minority students from Minneapolis to suburbs. The most recent [CIY evaluation](#) found:

- In reading, at every grade level studied (3-7), students who stayed in Minneapolis made more progress than students who went to the suburbs

- In math, there was no difference overall in progress between the students who left and those who stayed in Minneapolis.

- “During the program’s first six years, 62 percent of the students ever enrolled in the suburban choice withdrew before the end of the year.”

Dr. Elisabeth, Palmer, the outside CIY evaluator hired by Minnesota Department of Education, told one of us, “It is absolutely inappropriate to call CIY a success or failure. The results are inconclusive.”

Given these mixed results, we urge caution in making blanket statements about either CIY or chartered public schools.

Given the success that Tough notes in replicating outstanding schools, this should be a high priority for Minnesota.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is helping to replicate the outstanding Minnesota New Country School based in Henderson. The Carlson, Pohlad and General Mills Foundation, working with state officials, helped to replicate KIPP, a group of schools that Tough praised.

We suggest reallocating existing state funding (about \$3 million over the last two years) that is being used to help start charters. Why not use that money instead to help replicate outstanding district and chartered public schools? With help from the Carolyn Foundation, Hope Collaborative has identified outstanding inner city district and chartered public schools around the country.

But replication of outstanding charters would be blocked by the moratorium proposed by Education Minnesota, the state’s teacher union. Other opponents, citing Minnesota’s budget problems, recommend prohibiting charters in any community where the district is considering closing a school. Replicating success is a far better idea.

A moratorium is not the only challenge to chartered schools. Some want to eliminate or dramatically reduce state funds designated to help charters lease buildings. Unlike districts, charters may not levy taxes for buildings (and some districts can tax for construction without voter approval).

Charter building “lease aid” funds have produced ecologically wise space decisions, including schools sharing space with social service agencies, leasing closed school buildings (when districts agree), and converting closed or under-utilized buildings into schools in some growing areas.

Unfortunately charter lease aid is being considered for reduction or elimination.

More than \$100 million has come to Minnesota from federal and outside Minnesota foundations explicitly because of our charter law. Even more important, some charters have produced excellent results. We should follow President Obama’s advice, expanding excellence, and terminating failure. ●

Minnesota’s charter movement  
has produced many successful  
innovative schools.



# The 2009 Citizens League Policy Engagement and Advancement Plan

There are a number of ways to become an active citizen and several policy areas from which to choose

by Bob DeBoer

As the Citizens League base of policy engagement has expanded, our organization's capacity to engage in a variety of policies and settings has grown. In 2009, the Citizens League expects to be active in a number of policy areas, including those outlined below.

It is important to note that the policy work is not always best explained through a specific topic area. More and more policy efforts intertwine. One obvious example is regional policy, which by its nature intersects with any number of other policy areas.

In 2009, we will have at least three distinct policy processes in place and we will continue to develop and refine those processes based on what we learned from the Minnesota Anniversary Project (MAP 150) and other efforts.

## POLICY REVIEW GROUPS

Policy review groups are commencing in February 2009 in three areas:

- charter schools
- aging services
- energy efficiency and CO2 emissions

These groups are designed to look at existing Citizens League policy proposals and apply them to today's environment. These three areas were chosen by the Policy Advisory Committee and 54 people have expressed interest in serving on these groups. Participants will be introduced to the Citizens League mission and guidelines and will organize their own specific approaches to the work. They will connect with Citizens League staff and leadership as they review Citizens League policy history with an eye to its application today.

## WATER

The Water Policy Study Committee, formed in mid-2008, will complete its work in mid-2009. After working hard to identify a focus that will produce useful policy solutions, they are now looking at ways to improve the way that we govern water in Minnesota to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The committee's primary task is not to make recommendations of practices that reduce pollution, but rather to use this issue to illuminate the appropriate roles and responsibilities for government, business, nonprofits, citizens, and all water users.

Minnesota and the nation have made great progress since the 1970s in curbing water pollution from point sources (such as factories and wastewater treatment plants). However, we haven't made great progress on combating the nonpoint source pollution that comes from thousands and thousands of small sources throughout the state. Today, nonpoint source pollution is the primary cause of pollution in 86 percent of Minnesota's polluted water bodies. The threat we face has changed and our methods of governance need to change to confront it. Reducing water pollution today will likely require an "all of the above" approach, a combination of regulation, voluntary practices by business and industry, behavior change by

the public, and a much greater level of involvement by many people in many organizations.

By looking at governance through a case study in nonpoint source pollution, the committee expects to not only make specific recommendations, but also draw up core principles to more broadly guide collaborative water management.



## POVERTY

We begin our second round of poverty discussions in January 2009 and will follow that by convening a group to produce recommendations for advancement. The first round of discussions produced a number of findings but did not fulfill our guidelines as they relate to this project. The second round will more directly engage those who experience the effects of our current policies related to poverty. The Citizens League will test ideas for policy solutions in these conversations to hear what participants think.

In some respects, poverty is the symptom that is produced by various systems and incentives in our society, and it interacts with a number of other policy areas, such as health care, education, and the health of our regional economy.

## REGIONAL POLICY/ECONOMIC PLAN

The September 2008 Regional Policy Workshop identified a critical need: to build a regional vision based on competitive advantage. Three-fourths of the participants in the workshop believe that the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area has lost ground compared to other regional economies. Our regional economy must be strong for the state to have a sustainable economic future. In light of the current budget crisis, the Citizens League is employing what we call Design Principles for Better Value to start discussions of common purpose and mutual support around key policy areas (education, health care, social services, etc.).

Participants at the Regional Policy Workshop also identified a second critical need: to identify "the groups of entitlement we form and the fiscal claims we place on each other." This touches on many things we currently have in place, not just what we spend, but what we have imbedded in the tax and subsidy structure, how we deliver services, and the resources we use. We need to look at major restructuring and changes that can create a sustainable economic future.

## AGING SERVICES, PHASE II

The second phase of our Aging Services work will draw on new things that we discovered about policy processes during the Minnesota Mental Health Action Group and the Minnesota Anniversary Project (MAP 150). It will build on and integrate the work from the June 2008 Aging Services Workshop and the

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# Policy Agenda 2009

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Communities for a Lifetime session from the Regional Policy Workshop. For the second phase, we will convene major stakeholders to develop solutions for financing aging services in Minnesota.

## IMMIGRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The Immigration and Higher Education Study Committee will release its report in early 2009 and seek opportunities to advance its recommendations. (Read a synopsis of their findings in our cover story this issue.) This is a policy area where the Citizens League will initially apply the principles and recommendations developed by the committee to increase the value of other efforts rather than seek to be the overall convener of policy advancement.

## REDISTRICTING

We continue to pursue opportunities to further the MAP 150 redistricting work and to consider and advance changes for 2010. (Read more about the results of MAP 150 redistricting project on page 5 of this issue.)

## TRANSPORTATION

The Citizens League was instrumental in securing funding for the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) to examine funding of transportation infrastructure with different methods of value capture. This was a major recommendation from the 2005 study committee report "Driving Blind". We will continue to advance pricing of solo driving tied to funding of other transportation choices, as we did with the Urban Partnership Agreement, which will be implemented in 2009 and 2010.

## MEDICAL CARE

We will continue to push for measures that support providing citizens with transparent information in an attempt to create functional markets in medical care. Our efforts will include evaluating the results of the work ordered by the Legislature last year, continued participation in citizen engagement efforts with the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI), and others.

## TAX STUDIES

We will continue to publish annual reviews of property taxes on residential homesteads and tax increment financing (TIF). Fiscal disparities (regional tax base sharing) data will be published every three to five years. The property tax review now includes 343 communities throughout Minnesota. See the results of the most recent review online at [www.citizensleague.org](http://www.citizensleague.org).

## ACTION GROUPS

We are organizing three action groups for young people (in the areas of poverty, education, and financial literacy) to create opportunities for them to build civic leadership skills and work on projects they believe in. These are self-led groups; participants pick an issue to focus on within their policy area, make contacts and do research, and then draw up their own project with support from experienced Citizens League members and staff.

This is the second year we've utilized action groups. Last year participants found it was a good way to build both their civic organizing skills and their networks, and many of them have become more involved with the Citizens League or

similar work as a result. Last year's action groups produced a speed-networking event to connect young citizens with community organizations in need of volunteers, and built a rain garden with a local school group. Participants from those groups can now be found on the Water Policy Study Committee and the Citizens League Board of Directors and staff.

## EVENTS

Mind Opener breakfasts return this year in February. Expect five to seven Mind Openers in 2009 related to the policy issues outlined above. The first, on immigration and higher education, will take place on February 27.

Bob DeBoer is the Citizens League's Director of Policy Development. He can be reached at 651-293-0575 ext. 13 or [bdeboer@citizensleague.org](mailto:bdeboer@citizensleague.org).



Daniel Getahun participates in the February 2008 speed-matching and networking event, *Connect for a Cause*, which brought nonprofit organizations in need of volunteers together with young leaders interested in contributing to their communities.

# PERSPECTIVES

Expanding Minnesota's Conversation



## Job losses could be a good thing for retiring boomers

We need to restructure the U.S. workforce to accommodate the needs of the 21 century economy

by Linda J. Camp

Like most Minnesotans, I've experienced a bit of trepidation as I've followed the stock market's recent zigs and zags. Despite the admonishments that "this too shall pass," I rarely look at my monthly investment statements any more. It's just too painful. Employment reports are a different matter, though. When I recently read that some 5.5 million jobs are projected to be lost in the current recession, my reaction was quite different. Just maybe, I thought, it would be a good thing if we didn't get them back. Let me clarify and tell you why and how retiring boomers can lead the way to a new economy.

Jobs are such a fixture within the modern economy that it is easy to forget that the whole notion of a "job" is relatively new. One of the best discussions of how the job came into existence is in William's Bridges 1994 book *Jobshift*. Bridges points out that the jobs were first created in the early 19th century as a way to organize the available work in the factories and bureaucracies of the industrializing nations. Before then, we just had work, which Bridges describes as "shifting clusters of tasks, in a variety of locations, on a schedule set by the sun, the weather, and the needs of the day."

Jobs have served us well in a U.S. economy that revolved largely around the production of goods. Assigning relatively fixed groups of tasks to individuals was an effective way to accomplish things within a mass production environment. With technological improvements and globalization all that has changed. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of January 2008, more people are employed in the business and professional services sector than in manufacturing (18 million and 13.7 million, respectively).

What is noteworthy here is that the tasks—and thus core skills—associated with providing services work are different from the tasks associated with traditional production work. Consequently, the way that

we hire and structure work must also change. Unfortunately, many organizations still use some variation of the industrial era human resources infrastructure to find and manage people. Everyone loses

continued learning. Just as they have in past, these boomers are ready to plow new ground and help both for-profit and non-profit organizations to try out new ways of work. Ultimately, these new work models

Fortunately, a great opportunity to experiment with alternative work structures is emerging with the pending retirement of the baby boomer generation.

out with this focus on "slots" (jobs) and tasks instead of competencies and results.

This isn't just a matter of semantics. It is about our ability to build a healthy and thriving economy. A 2004 *Rand Corporation study* on the future of work found that rapid technological change and increased international competition have underscored the need for agile, flexible organizations with workers who can easily respond and adapt to changing circumstances. Similarly, the *Gartner* research firm has suggested that the amount of work driven by tacit knowledge—complex interactions which require people to deal with ambiguity and solve problems based on past experience—is on the rise and will likely double between 2006 and 2010. The challenge then is to create more modular organizations staffed by modular people.

Fortunately, a great opportunity to experiment with alternative work structures is emerging with the pending retirement of the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964). Though the earliest boomers are approaching retirement age, a combination of economic circumstance and personal preference will likely keep many in the workforce in some capacity. Recent studies by *AARP*, *Merrill Lynch*, and the *Vanguard Group* have found that boomers want to keep working, but would prefer to combine part time, flexible work with personal activities and

will benefit all of us because younger workers want greater flexibility as well.

Part of the experimentation process must include shedding outdated views of older and younger workers, such as the belief that experienced workers will demand high salaries, or that only younger workers can innovate. Studies show that most boomers are very interested in learning new skills and want the chance to make a contribution. An additional challenge we face in creating flexible work opportunities is the need to retool the many public policies that envelope the employment landscape. The *Pension Protection Act of 2006* offered an important first step by making it possible for some employers to offer "phased" retirements that combine salary with payouts under defined benefit plans. Other creative thinking is needed, though, on issues such as what constitutes an employee versus an independent contractor under IRS regulations.

Satisfying and flexible work is important to all of us for personal and economic reasons. It is, however, absolutely critical to our nation's future. Jobs are disappearing as we take apart the current economy. Let's hope that we replace these jobs with something better when we put it all back together again. ●

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# 02/27

## Return of the Mind Opener: Immigrant Students and Higher Education

Minnesota's workforce is shrinking relative to the size of its population, and too few Minnesota students are graduating from higher education to fill projected openings due to the gap left by retiring baby boomers. The number of immigrant students in Minnesota, however, is growing. To meet the economic demand, Minnesota will need more immigrant students to complete some form of higher education.

Join us to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Study Committee on Immigration and Higher Education. With:

**Matt Musel**, member of the study committee, development officer for the University of Minnesota, and volunteer who works with college-age Latino students

**Kyle Uphoff**, Regional Analysis and Outreach Manager at the Department of Employment and Economic Development

**Juventino Meza**, student at Augsburg College

**James Worlobah**, co-chair of the study committee and budget analyst at Augsburg College

**Amanda Ziebell-Finley**, member of the study committee and membership and events manager at the Minnesota College Access Network

**Registration 7 a.m.; Program 7:30-9 a.m.**

*For more information or to register, visit [www.citizensleague.org](http://www.citizensleague.org)*

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