Board Meeting Date: 2/18/2025

Title: Edina Virtual Pathway (EVP) Update

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): Nate Swenson, Assistant Superintendent; and Steven Cullison, EVP Coordinator

Description: This board report is intended to provide a status update on the development and management of the Edina Virtual Pathway Program. The report provides background information, a success metrics update, a description of some recent changes, and the next steps.

Recommendation: No recommendation is being made at this time. This item has been prepared for board discussion.

Desired Outcome(s) from the Board: Please be prepared with the initial reactions and questions you might have.

Attachment(s):
- See report below

The EVP update includes the following sections:
- Background Information
- Success Metrics
- Recent Changes
- Next Steps

Background Information

EVP, like all schools in the district, exists to support the district's Mission and Vision and to further its Strategic Plan. The program uniquely contributes by providing instruction in a different setting and different modality than in-person schools, resulting in:

- Opportunities to advance critical thinking and student engagement to appropriately challenge every student (Strategy A).
- A differentiated educational experience (Strategy A).
- A learning environment that supports equity by eliminating structural barriers to success (Strategy B).
- Development of skills for students for healthy lifestyles including living effectively with technology and assured access to wellness programs (Strategy C).
- An environment that is conducive to learning (Strategy C).
- Responsiveness to enrollment trends while retaining current students (Strategy D).
- Strong financial stewardship through careful spending and student retention (Strategy E).

EVP serves fully online high school students who are seeking flexibility in their learning schedule combined with access to rigorous coursework. Whereas EVP previously also served EHS students seeking to take one or more online classes alongside their in-person studies, those classes are now provided under the Edina High School umbrella.

Success Metrics

A number of metrics have been identified to evaluate the degree to which the Edina Virtual Pathway is providing a rigorous and engaging learning experience.

1. Retention of learners as monitored through enrollment patterns.
2. Academic achievement measured using grades, graduation rates, FastBridge assessments, and MCA scores
3. Satisfaction of stakeholders including students, families, and staff.
4. Fiscal responsibility.

Enrollment
For the 2024-2025 school year, the secondary level has averaged about 72 comprehensive (full-time) students this year, an increase of about 25% year-over-year.

Of the 71 students enrolled at the end of semester one:
- 23% are district residents
- 77% are open enrolled
- 48% are returning EVP students
- 58% previously attended EHS. The opportunity to switch to EVP has helped the district to retain these 41 students.
- 30 of EVP's fully online students are new to the district

A high percentage of EVP's student body last year was comprised of seniors, who graduated. Rebuilding and expanding upon last year's numbers is a success story for EVP. Additionally, the classes are more balanced this year, which bodes well for further growth in 25-26.

Second semester enrollment is expected to grow to about 85 students.

Academic Measures

Grades serve as perhaps the strongest predictor of success in post-secondary coursework. Research shows that graduation from high school correlates positively with nearly all measures of post-secondary success and well-being. Test score data helps educators and programs customize instruction and make adjustments in their work. Strong results, and constant improvement, in these areas are valuable indicators of a school's success in furthering the district's strategic plan.

<u>Grades</u>
Students achieving passing grades in courses will have demonstrated proficiency in the associated graduation standards.

    Grades:
- 2022-2023
  - Passing grades S1: 85% ; Passing grades S2: 95%
- 2023-2024
  - Passing grades S1: 93.6%; Passing grades S2: 92.9%
- 2024-2025
  - Passing grades S1: 83.4%

Note: Grades for the first two years included supplemental students from EHS, as they were enrolled in EVP for their individual classes. As these classes are now built into their EHS

schedules and fall under the EHS umbrella, the 2024-2025 data draws entirely from the fully online student population of EVP.

Graduation Rates
EVP's reported graduation rate for Spring of 2023 was 62% (The n value of students has been excluded due to small cell size and being potentially identifiable.)

In the spring of 2024, the graduation rate improved to 81.8% (n=33) All students who entered EVP with sufficient credits to potentially qualify for commencement completed sufficient credits to do so.

Looking forward to June of 2025, EVP expects to have a senior class of 21 students. Its goal for the year is a grad rate of 90% or better, and we're confident of attaining better than 85%.

MCAs
Rates of participation in the MCA test have historically been too low to provide a meaningful evaluation of student proficiency, and so it was a stated goal for EVP to increase participation rates. The number of tests administered was increased from 3 to 14, with a participation rate of 51.85%. Anecdotally, this appears to be a higher rate of participation than for many online programs. No individual test had more than 7 participants. Increasing the number of test administrations with an eye toward drawing useful data from MCAs will require not only continued efforts to increase participation rates, but also to increase enrollment overall.

FastBridge
FastBridge aReading has been administered for students in English 9 and English 10. A low number of tests administered reduces the usefulness of the data on a programmatic level. In the recently concluded winter testing window, 7 out of 13 assessed students were at or exceeding the pace needed to meet their progress goals. Of those who are at risk of not meeting their goal, most demonstrated growth. Currently, where appropriate, results are shared with EL and SPED teachers to aid in their support of learners and are used to inform interventions for those students who are not making typical or aggressive growth. As EVP grows and the number of test participants grows, the data drawn from FastBridge testing will provide a greater understanding for any necessary programmatic changes to support the overall reading of our online readers.

Satisfaction of Stakeholders
It is vital that programs incorporate stakeholder voices, and no measurement of Edina Virtual Pathway's progress or success could be complete without asking the students, families, and teachers for their perspectives.

In January 2025, 100% of EVP students communicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experiences in EVP (n=9). Families reported at rates of 100% that they felt

their child's online education was rigorous and that they were satisfied with their child's online education, but participation numbers in the survey were low (n=6.)

In December of 2024, 89% of EVP staff reported that EVP successfully established a sense of belongingness for its staff. In the spring of 2024, 100% of staff indicated that they were provided with sufficient resources to do their work.

Financial Responsibility

Edina Virtual Pathway contributes to the financial wellness of the district by attracting new enrollments and by helping to retain the enrollment of students who might otherwise leave the district to learn online elsewhere.

In the 2023-2024 school year, $488,955 was spent on EVP. This is less than the amount which was budgeted, $510,000. The school generated about $903,707.00 in revenue. Overall, last year EVP contributed a significant amount toward the district's overall financial health.

For the 2024-2025 school year, $578,967 has been allocated to EVP in the budget. Due to an increase in enrollment, revenue generation is projected at about $976,000.00, once again leading to the significant contribution toward the district's overall financial health.

Recent Changes

In the summer of 2024, EVP offered summer courses for the first time. In collaboration with EHS, EVP offered some of those classes that students most requested from outside online providers in previous summers, all in math and sciences. 24 students took coursework to advance to the next level in the fall, with 20 completing an entire year's worth of work in their selected course.

This year EVP and EHS have collaborated around transfer of responsibility for online courses for in-person students. Currently, these classes are considered EHS classes which are taught in an online modality. Students no longer require split enrollment between EHS and EVP to take an Edina online class. This was made possible by a change in guidance from MDE and provides numerous benefits, including cleaner reporting and easier tracking of student performance. With EHS' increased oversight of its online students, the EVP team has been able to focus its efforts on growing the program for fully online students, and on serving those students.

EHS and EVP have also collaborated around improved processes related to transfers of students between schools, ensuring that families who consider moving online are making fully informed decisions that lead to the best possible educational outcomes.

EVP has begun offering live, synchronous, study sessions for select classes. These offerings are, currently, optional, but serve as a pilot for potentially required online sessions in the future, while also providing additional support to aid in student learning.

In the spring of 2024, EVP hosted the first annual MN Online Educators Summit. Over 100 educators from 21 school districts participated. This year, the initiative is expected to grow. The Summit now also serves as the sponsor of the Minnesota Online Educator of the Year award, whose winner will be announced in February. The EVP Supervisor was also selected in 2024 to the Executive Committee which runs the Minnesota Online Educator Association and will present at several education conferences in 2025. EVP's prominent positioning as a leader in professional development for online educators serves a marketing purpose, helping to raise the profile and name recognition of the school.

Next Steps

EVP is in discussions with neighboring districts around potential partnerships. Through tuition agreements, partner districts that lack online programs or whose online schools are closing would refer their fully online students to EVP. Such partnerships would aid in the school's efforts at growth and contribute to the district's financial health.

In the 25-26 school year, EVP will increase the number of live, synchronous, learning opportunities for fully online students. This is an opportunity that is expected to increase student learning and increase the desirability of EVP as a destination for learners while still maintaining flexibility.

EVP is in talks with a local college to offer dual credit (college and high school) courses that leverage virtual reality to provide career training. Most likely this would be an option beginning in the 26-27 school year.

Measurable goals for the future include the following:
1. Increased passing rates for classes to a minimum of 95%.
2. Increased graduation rate to 90% for 2025 and 1% increases each year following.
3. Increased test administration rates for MCA tests to at least 70% for each test.
4. Increased test administration rates for FastBridge assessments to at least 90% for each test.
5. Enrollment of at least 100 full-time students in 25-26 and at least 125 for 26-27.

EVP is well-positioned to meet these measures. Increased support for learners contributes to improved passing rates for classes, which in turn helps to drive a strong graduation rate. Increasing participation rates in assessments is challenging for all schools, but progress has been made, and increased enrollment will help in this area as well.

As is true for any school, Edina Virtual Pathway has an obligation to grow its ability to serve each and every student. That hard work continues. Successes over the past year give reason for excitement around the progress that will be realized in the coming school year.