

The Minnesota Supporting Youth Success Policy Framework Message Mapping – GENERAL AUDIENCES

Message mapping is a scientifically-based process for developing the core statements that define an organization and assembling those statements in a framework that can be used to guide all public discussions (media interviews, speeches, presentations) as well as printed and electronic collateral (publications, websites, emails).

The process is based on decades of research, including findings that the brain processes information in series of threes (maybe fives if we are particularly gifted, with little stressors and competition for our attention). By focusing on key concepts and soundbites, we take messaging from a laundry list of bullet points with no particular order and break it down into three key communications streams that align with the goals and work of the organization.

This process was originally developed by the public health industry as a way to effectively relay complex information to a wide range of stakeholders. It has since been adopted by a number of industries, and Collaborative Communications Group currently uses it to provide structure, organization and a sense of priority to message development.

An effective message map consists of several key components:

- **Core Statement** – This is your defining message, better known as the first sentence of your “elevator speech.” When someone asks what the Minnesota Supporting Youth Success Policy Framework is, the Core Statement is the declarative on the framework, identifying what this is, why it is credible and what you hope people will do with the findings.
- **Key Messages** – When you offer your Core Statement, the likely question is, “What does that mean?” The three Key Messages are designed to support the Core Statement. One (or all) of these three messages should be in all future Minnesota Supporting Youth Success Policy Framework communication vehicles. These are how you explain how the Framework vision translates into real action.
- **Support Points** – When one delivers a Key Message, there can be pushback for specific proof that the message is true. The three support points under each Key Message are designed to support the Message. Ideally, these Support Points are statistics, case studies or stories from the field. As the Framework’s communications progresses, these Support Points will change to reflect new data and new developments in the field. These are only used when necessary to illustrate a point or support a statement.

As originally intentioned, the Map is designed to be read from top-to-bottom, left-to-right. For these purposes, the left-to-right construction isn’t as important, as we have constructed a triad of Key Messages that all feed the Core Statement. Supporting Points are ordered in place of importance, so a user of the Map knows that Support Point 1-1 is the first to deliver if pushed on Key Message 1.

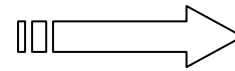
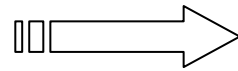
The structure is intentional. The boxes are designed to keep the messages short and of useful value. As currently proposed, some of our messages run a little long. We have allowed that because we recognize this is a major shift in approach, and the messaging process will be evolutionary over the short term. As new research data or recommendations become available, for instance, that would be reflected in the Map. So please consider this an organic platform on which future communications would be rooted. We don't have to follow it word-for-word in every instance, but the key intentions should be followed so all audiences see and hear the primary messages in all vehicles, whether they be in person, in print or online.

This map is intended for a general audience, meaning was developed to have some appeal for most stakeholders. As the Minnesota SYS Initiative progresses in its communications work, we recommend develop a series of stakeholder audience-specific Message Maps, which would address the specific needs and viewpoints of priority audiences (federal policymakers, state policymakers, parents and families, funders, educators, OST community, etc.). These audience-specific Maps would be tailored from the general Map, and would reflect the same key messaging, with adjustments for specific audience needs.

As the Framework evolves, we may also consider Maps on specific issues, such as funding, OST developments or other key concepts that will trigger public interest or stakeholder questioning. The map is a tool, providing a visual blueprint for effective messaging. This is not only true of the message as a whole; it also applies to the key issues or priorities for the Initiative moving forward. Ultimately, Message Maps demonstrate priorities and flow, and can be successfully used by speakers, writers and intermediaries to carry the Minnesota Supporting Youth Success Policy Framework message forward.

If you are curious, many organizations will train their senior personnel on Message Maps (think of government offices dealing with multiple issues and multiple stakeholders) so the message is consistent regardless of who is delivering it. When used properly, the Core Statement and three Key Messages can be delivered to a reporter or to a stakeholder in less than 30 seconds. But that takes a little practice.

CORE STATEMENT: Developed by a diverse group of stakeholders, the Minnesota Supporting Youth Success Policy Framework provides recommendations and strategies to create comprehensive learning systems to improve youth outcomes in communities throughout Minnesota.



KEY MESSAGE 1

To best support the development of young people in Minnesota, we must create **comprehensive learning systems** that include formal and non-formal learning opportunities.

KEY MESSAGE 2

The Framework outlines **recommendations** on how to best shape comprehensive learning systems to encompass formal and non-formal learning opportunities.

KEY MESSAGE 3

The framework provides specific **strategies** that state and local leaders can make to begin to develop comprehensive learning systems.

Broadening the Definition

SUPPORT POINT 1-1

As demonstrated by the 2008 report *A New Day for Learning*, learning can no longer be defined by school hours – neither formal nor non-formal learning alone is enough.

SUPPORT POINT 2-1

The Framework recommends that communities broaden the definition of success for youth through formal and non-formal education.

SUPPORT POINT 3-1

Communities can conduct an analysis for gaps in access to opportunities for formal and non-formal learning experiences.

Developing a Plan

SUPPORT POINT 1-2

Due to siloed systems of formal and non-formal learning opportunities, Minnesota’s communities must work collectively to create coordinated comprehensive learning systems across public and private sectors.

SUPPORT POINT 2-2

The Framework encourages communities to adopt a plan that articulates how the community will work collectively to achieve a clear set of youth outcomes.

SUPPORT POINT 3-2

Communities can articulate clear roles for the stakeholders involved in the learning system, and can develop clear indicators to measure success.

Aligning the System

SUPPORT POINT 1-3

An aligned, comprehensive learning system will provide access to a broad array of high-quality formal and non-formal learning opportunities, which will create better outcomes for Minnesota youth.

SUPPORT POINT 2-3

The Framework highlights the need for schools and communities to identify strategies and mechanisms to better serve youth and align outcomes.

SUPPORT POINT 3-3

Communities can reach out to local and state agencies to align decision-making bodies in order to limit competition and to leverage shared resources.