



**United Way  
of Steele County**

**Identifying Disparities in Income, Health and  
Education:**

**A Community Needs Assessment  
in Steele County, MN**

Prepared by:  
Rainbow Research  
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## **Introduction**

In 2012 United Way of Steele County requested and received a generous grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation. The purpose of the award was to conduct an inclusive community-wide needs assessment that would identify the nature, extent and consequences of income, education and health disparities in Steele County and how/where these disparities intersect. The information collected will be used to design a collaborative, multi-sector strategic initiative that will result in the reduction of key disparities and their impact on Steele County communities.

This report outlines the data collection process and analysis, focusing on how data was used to identify disparities in these three areas. By their nature, disparities weigh the heaviest on those who lack a voice in the political and social arena, those who are the most isolated and removed from the mainstream. A complementary mix of data collection methods was used to ensure that every resident had the opportunity to be heard through interviews, group discussions, an online survey, a CEO roundtable and a town meeting. Interpreter services were provided and documents were translated so both Somali and Spanish speaking residents could fully participate. Over 700 Steele County residents shared their experiences, beliefs, perspectives and dreams in support of this needs assessment.

An important outcome of this first year's effort has been the start of a community- wide discussion that has brought people together, many for the first time. Corporate executives have facilitated focus group discussions with people living from paycheck to paycheck struggling to make ends meet. Farmers, executives, newcomers, and long term residents have sat across the table and discussed candidly what their community can do to make a difference in peoples' lives. These discussions, and the relationships that are now starting to grow from them, provide a much deeper and nuanced understanding of the results spelled out in this report and are key to the success of this initiative.

The majority of Steele County residents have a good quality of life. On aggregate, the county surpasses most Minnesota counties and the United States overall in key rates of employment, education and health. It is a tribute to Steele County's residents that they have not settled for this, but have committed to this process of identifying and addressing these disparities that are holding an important segment of the community back:

### **Income**

- Limited number of living wage jobs
- Lack of employee benefits
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Lack of affordable low cost housing
- Limited access to health insurance
- Fears surrounding immigration status

**Health**

- Obesity
- Lack of access to healthy foods
- Lack of physical activity
- Chronic disease
- Lack of health insurance
- Lack of access to culturally appropriate health care
- Mental health issues

**Education**

- Limited access to early childhood education
- Gaps in academic performance by race and poverty
- Access to mental health services
- Racial/ethnic composition of school staff
- Parent involvement in their children's education
- Perceived disparities in how schools respond to parental concerns
- Lack of transportation
- Poverty and lack of economic opportunities
- Limited access to out of school time programs
- Challenges enrolling in college
- Economic opportunity and immigration status

## Data Collection

A wealth of data, information and knowledge has been collected from a variety of sources, to inform this needs assessment.

<b>Data Collection Methods and Sources</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Literature review of documents from government, private sector, academic, nonprofit and other sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect quantitative data (i.e., demographics, income, health, education, etc.) specific to Steele County and for comparison with Minnesota and the United States.</li> <li>Identify how public and private systems function in Steele County, including public assistance, employment, etc.</li> </ul>
Three focus groups with 11 Steele County health/social service professionals, academics, educators, administrators and religious leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify gaps in services and resources available to Steele County residents.</li> </ul>
Three focus groups with 25 members of United Way's Income, Education and Health Steering Committee members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand United Way's vision and the Steering Committees' perspectives on disparities in Steele County.</li> </ul>
13 focus groups with 106 community members covering health, education and income. Four of the focus groups were held in English, 3 in Spanish and 3 in Somali.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain a firsthand perspective from individuals who are living with the consequences of the disparities.</li> </ul>
Online 78-question survey, responded to by 480 employees and individuals seeking jobs in Steele County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand community attitudes, practices and behaviors about health, education and income.</li> </ul>

After completing this initial set of data collection activities, Rainbow Research staff analyzed the data collected to date by identifying common themes across the various data sources and grouping them into a set of disparities. Then the process changed from pure data collection over to one of sharing what had been learned and soliciting feedback on which disparities should be prioritized.

<b>Data Collection Methods and Sources</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Roundtable Event attended by 25 local CEOs and other community leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share results collected to date.</li> <li>Vote on which disparities this initiative should focus on.</li> </ul>
Town meeting attended by 81 community members.	

## Income

Steele County is home to 36,500 individuals.<sup>1</sup> Its low income residents face a gap between their household income and the cost of meeting their most basic needs for safe housing, healthy food, quality child care, consistent transportation, education and affordable health care. Growing disparities between their standard of living and that of the County's larger more affluent population, while not widely visible, have serious consequences for residents, their families and their institutions.

### How much income does a family need to get by in Steele County?

A family of four living in Steele County with two working parents and two children needs to earn \$4,300 per month to cover its basic expenses. A single parent family with two children still needs a monthly income of \$3,300 to get by.<sup>2</sup>

**Minimum Monthly Cost of Sustaining a Family in Steele County (2013)**

Expense	1 Parent & 2 Children	2 Parents & 2 Children
Child Care	\$729	\$729
Housing	\$692	\$871
Transportation	\$571	\$803
Food	\$497	\$690
Health Care	\$400	\$454
Clothing/Misc.	\$284	\$317
Net Taxes	\$135	\$423
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$3,308</b>	<b>\$4,287</b>
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$39,695</b>	<b>\$51,447</b>

### How are families impacted by the income gaps?

Steele County's median household income is \$57,290, which is above both state and national rates. Yet, 11% of households have an annual income of less than \$15,000 per year<sup>3</sup> and 9% of the County's population falls below the Federal poverty line.<sup>4</sup> In addition, 10% of the population participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps); 39% of school aged children receive free or subsidized lunches; and 4% of families receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

This population includes:

- The working poor whose job(s) do not pay a living wage or provide basic benefits, yet their income disqualifies them from receiving public assistance.
- Single parent, female-headed households
- Short and long term unemployed, including those newly entering the job market following school
- The under-employed
- Refugees, immigrants and seasonal migrants new to Steele County
- Individuals recently released from incarceration
- New entrants to the job market.

Families earning just above the eligibility criteria for public nutrition and welfare-to-work programs face the most difficulty. The recession and slow recovery have left salaries flat and resulted in cuts in benefits, especially for the unskilled workforce. For example, Steele County families ineligible for Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) have to get by on an income approximately half that needed to meet their basic needs. Concurrently, the 'social safety net,' which used to help people through times of crisis, has significantly diminished. In the past ten years funding for public assistance programs has either plateaued or been reduced, despite the increased need resulting from the recent recession.

### **How is the community impacted by the income gaps?**

Income disparities can create and exacerbate divisions within communities, even in those with a strong tradition of neighbors working together to help each other. People who have to spend all their time focused on meeting basic needs have little time and energy to give back to their community and fully engage its religious institutions, fraternal associations, schools and volunteer supported organizations. This is further complicated by differences in culture and language experienced by new arrivals to the community.

- The voluntary sector, including faith-based organizations, is overwhelmed. They lack the resources to meet the demand for housing assistance, utility assistance and temporary shelter. Supplemental food assistance they provide is inadequate to meet the growing demand.
- Unemployment and underemployment reduce tax revenues necessary to sustain essential public services and the social safety net described above.
- Delayed medical care by the uninsured results in overuse of more costly emergency room services, which in turn increase the costs of medical insurance coverage overall.
- Lack of affordable quality housing, child care, jobs paying a living wage, and food contributes to a less reliable, healthy and productive workforce.

### **Disparities in Income**

**Limited number of living wage jobs:** While the unemployment rate for Steele County is relatively low by national standards (5.7%),<sup>5</sup> respondents to a 2009 survey stated that the biggest problems facing Steele County families are unemployment (57%), lack of affordable child care (39%) and low paying jobs (38%). Low income has a ripple effect impacting all the other basic needs of low income families described above. Many local entry level manufacturing jobs have changed over from permanent, full-time to temporary, part-time positions. This has disproportionately affected the 'working poor,' people with criminal records, immigrants and refugees, and others who are seeking first time or supplemental employment. As a consequence, many have to take on multiple jobs to make ends meet. Employers report that many of the new jobs paying over minimum wage that are starting to open up require specific vocational training, for instance machinists, welding, etc.<sup>6</sup>

**Lack of Employee Benefits:** Many of the new 'post-recession' jobs are being filled through temporary agencies, resulting in longer probationary periods, lower wages, and a larger percentage of part-time positions.<sup>7</sup> Few of these jobs provide benefits for the employee or his or her dependents. As a consequence, individuals often work multiple jobs to cover their expenses. Reductions in public assistance programs lead to lower qualification thresholds, leaving many individuals without basic benefits, resulting in a growing population of 'working poor.'

**Lack of transportation:** Transportation represents a major expense for Steele County residents, costing the average family of four approximately \$800 per month. Over 90% of Steele County employees use their own car to go to and from work. This is due to a combination of factors. Steele County's population density is relatively low at 85 residents per square mile, with one in three living in the most rural parts of the County. Public transport options are limited within Owatonna and between Owatonna and other destinations in southeastern Minnesota. Steele County Area Transit does not operate after 6 PM on weekdays and service is further limited on the weekends.<sup>8</sup> This leaves residents who work 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift jobs, and those living in the more rural parts of the County, to their own devices. For the 'working poor' this means having to juggle multiple demands on the single family car. Given the area's climate, distances and travel time, vehicle failure can mean missing school, going without essentials or not getting to work.

**Lack of affordable childcare:** Child care is one of the top three expenses for Steele County families. Child care for a single parent family with two children averages \$8,748 per year, but can reach over \$10,000 per year for care of one infant at a licensed child care facility. Steele County Human Services licenses and monitors 190 day care homes and notes that options are especially limited for children whose parents work 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> shift jobs and for children of newly arrived immigrant and refugee families from cultures that are underrepresented in the daycare provider community.<sup>9</sup>

**Lack of affordable low cost housing:** There is a significant gap between the demand for and availability of suitable and affordable housing for Steele County residents living in poverty and on low incomes. Steele County has 14,330 housing units. In 2010 the Minnesota Housing Partnership estimated that 4,109 low income families had an unmet need for affordable housing. Over half of households living in rental housing pay 30% or more of their income towards rent – defined as 'rent burden.'<sup>10</sup> Average monthly rents in Steele County range from \$474 for a single bedroom apartment up to \$754 for a three bedroom.<sup>11</sup> Over one third of individuals surveyed in Steele County had lost their housing in the past twelve months or knew someone else who had.<sup>12</sup> This left many to "couch surf" (i.e. temporarily moving in with others from one household to the next) or live out of their cars.<sup>13</sup>

Availability of temporary housing is also of concern for the homeless population. Steele County has only two homeless shelters, both located in Owatonna. One shelter serves 15 men and the other serves up to a dozen women and children. None are available for two parent families or fathers with children.

At the same time, both public and private 'safety nets' that traditionally helped those in need of housing assistance have been scaled back. Homelessness and life in substandard housing takes a significant toll on individuals and families. Exposure to hazardous building materials (lead, asbestos, etc.), unsafe housing conditions and cramped living situations can pose lifelong consequences for the health of

#### **Overlapping Consequences for Health and Education**

It is important to point out that there is significant overlap. This is particularly true for income disparities. For low income households, employment, housing, transportation, food and child care are interdependent. A problem with one can affect the others. If the family car won't start the parents can't get to work, the supermarket or a medical appointment. If the child wakes up with a fever, a parent has to stay home from work, losing a day of pay. Cutbacks in wages or benefits can lead to switching to cheaper less healthy food choices, falling behind on monthly bills, and/or going into high cost short term debt.

children and adults. For the homeless these problems are compounded by stigma and an increased risk of exposure to harsh climates, illness, crime, and injury as well as the disruption of school, employment and social networks.

**Limited access to health insurance:** Lack of health insurance not only affects the individual; its economic and social impact is amplified throughout the County in the form of higher health care costs, inappropriate use of expensive emergency room services, and lost opportunities to prevent illness, to name a few. People with chronic health conditions and disabilities, as well as those who have experienced unexpected medical crises are particularly at risk for unnecessary hospitalizations, death from treatable and preventable conditions and debt for uncompensated care.

**Fears surrounding immigration status:** Each of these disparities is further exacerbated by fear of deportation experienced by the undocumented Latino community, whom to keep a low profile, avoid contact with public authorities and service providers. Hence, many go without needed services or care or enrollment in programs that would be of benefit in order to avoid identification and arrest.

#### **Feedback on the Income Disparities from the CEO Roundtable and Town Meeting**

There was agreement on the ranking of income disparities across the two voting exercises at the CEO Roundtable and the Town Meeting. The availability of living wage jobs ranked the highest in both meetings, followed up by the most costly expenses low income families face every month: housing, childcare, transportation and health insurance. ‘Fears Surrounding Immigration Status’ only received one ‘vote’ across the two meetings, which does not reflect the nature or severity of the issues that were raised in the focus group discussions with the immigrants and the social service and health care providers that work most directly with them. One possible explanation is the reticence of immigrants to raise these issues in these two very public forums, one of which lacked representation from the immigrant community.

Disparities	CEO Roundtable		Town Meeting	
	Vote Count	Ranking	Vote Count	Ranking
Limited Number of Living Wage Jobs	6	1	32	1
Lack of Affordable Low Cost Housing	3	2	31	2
Lack of Childcare <sup>14</sup>			24	3
Lack of Transportation	2	3	17	4
Limited Access to Health Insurance	1	4	6	5
Lack of Employee Benefits	0	5	5	6
Fears Surrounding Immigration Status	1	4	0	7

## Health

Steele County is ranked by County Health Rankings and Roadmaps as the second healthiest county in the State, with only 5% of residents reporting fair or poor health.<sup>15</sup> However, there are disparities in who experiences good health drawn along lines of income, race/ethnicity and education. The 'working poor' and recent immigrants to the United States tend to fare worse than other Steele County residents when it comes to health. In a survey of Steele County residents, 70% of individuals reporting an annual household income of \$100,000 or more felt they were in very good or excellent health, compared to 45% of people who reported a household income of \$25,000 or less.<sup>16</sup> People in low income families are: less likely to have insurance; less likely to regularly eat fruits and vegetables; and more likely to experience frequent anxiety or depression compared to people in higher income families.<sup>17</sup>

### Disparities in Health

**Obesity:** Obesity represents a pervasive health problem across all age groups and income levels in Steele County. Thirty percent of adults are clinically obese (BMI  $\geq 30$ ), and 25% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders are overweight or obese (BMI  $\geq 25$ ).<sup>18 19</sup> Twenty-nine percent of children in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program are overweight, obese, or very obese.<sup>20</sup> The consequences of being overweight or obese include type-2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and other serious health problems.<sup>21</sup> For many people with limited resources the cost of healthy foods and the time it takes to exercise and prepare fresh foods is a significant barrier to maintaining a healthy weight.<sup>22</sup>

**Access to and Consumption of Healthy Foods:** Access to nutritious foods is problematic for many Steele County residents. Seventy percent of residents earning \$100,000 or more reported eating green vegetables five days in the past week, contrasting with only 29% of residents earning \$25,000 or less.<sup>23</sup> In multiple focus group discussions lower income residents noted that store bought fruits and vegetables were unaffordable and the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables at food shelves was limited.<sup>24</sup>  
<sup>25 26 27 28</sup> Further, the local farmers markets are not equipped to accept EBT or WIC<sup>29 30 31 32</sup> and legal status precludes enrollment of undocumented immigrants in food assistance programs.<sup>33 34</sup> Other barriers limit access as well. Many employed residents said they do not have time to prepare healthy meals for their families because they work long hours and have childcare responsibilities. As a result many resort to fast food, which is readily available and relatively inexpensive.<sup>35 36 37 38</sup>

**Lack of Physical Activity:** The Minnesota Department of Health reports that a greater proportion of Steele County adults report no leisure time physical activity (22%) compared to state population overall (16%).<sup>39</sup> A larger proportion of high school students are meeting physical activity guidelines than adults, but still only 40% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported being physically active for at least 30 minutes per day for five days a week.<sup>40</sup> While 72% of respondents to the United Way Steele County Survey said they did not exercise enough, almost half of surveyed employees in Steele County said they did not have time to increase their level of physical activity.<sup>41</sup> Other barriers reported included lack of energy and motivation,<sup>42</sup> as well as the limited number of exercise facilities in Steele County (8 per 100,000 residents).<sup>43 44 45</sup>

**Chronic Disease:** Together, obesity, poor diet, and lack of physical activity are leading contributors to chronic diseases. Rates of diabetes and hospitalizations due to heart attack are slightly higher in Steele County compared to statewide averages, while incidence of all diagnosed cancers is slightly lower in Steele County.<sup>46</sup> Health care providers and residents experiencing poverty both reported that chronic diseases are a growing concern.<sup>47 48 49 50</sup>

**Lack of Health Insurance:** The uninsured have limited access to preventative health care and may be forced to delay or forgo treatment for illness, injury or chronic disease. This can result in increased use of emergency medical services, more costly medical interventions, and poor health outcomes.<sup>51</sup> As of 2013 and prior to the full initiation of the Affordable Care Act, 9% of residents under the age of 65 were uninsured<sup>52</sup> and an estimated 12% of residents had chosen not to see a doctor in the past year due to cost.<sup>53</sup> The Statewide uninsurance rate for those who are foreign born, whether or not they are in the country legally, is estimated to be three times higher than for those who are born in the United States.<sup>54</sup>

**Lack of Access to Culturally Competent Health Care:** Immigrants, refugees and others new to America – estimated conservatively at 3% of Steele County’s population – experience an additional set of barriers to accessing health care.<sup>55</sup> Diversity in language and cultural beliefs, as well as the lack of health care providers who share a common life experience with those new to the community, combined with the cost and complexity we all face to make accessing care even more daunting. Somali and Spanish speaking residents reported difficulty finding culturally appropriate health care<sup>56 57</sup> and health care services that include live interpreter services.<sup>58 59</sup>

**Mental Health Issues:** Steele County health care providers report that many Steele County residents struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.<sup>60</sup> Eight percent of respondents to United Way’s employee survey said they were often bothered by feelings of depression or anxiety most commonly caused by work, parenting and health problems.<sup>61</sup> The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps found that 13% of Steele County residents reported having inadequate social support and feelings of isolation.<sup>62</sup> While some report receiving treatment, many who face these issues do not know where to go for help.<sup>63 64 65 66</sup>

### **Feedback on the Health Disparities from the CEO Roundtable and Town Meeting**

There was broad consensus on the leading health disparities facing Steele County residents across the CEO Roundtable and the Town Meeting. Both ranked ‘Lack of Physical Activity’ the highest, with the related disparities ‘Obesity’ and ‘Lack of Access to Healthy Food’ ranked in the top three. ‘Mental Health Issues’ was also voiced as a serious concern at both events.

Disparities	CEO Roundtable		Town Meeting	
	Vote Count	Ranking	Vote Count	Ranking
Lack of Physical Activity	5	1	32	1
Mental Health Issues	4	2	32	1
Obesity	5	1	16	2
Lack of Access to Healthy Foods	1	3	15	3
Lack of Access to Culturally Appropriate Health Care	0	0	14	4
Lack of Health Insurance	0	0	13	5
Chronic Disease	0	0	2	6

## Education

Educational statistics for Steele County are overall very positive when compared to state wide averages. Steele County surpassed the State of Minnesota in its graduation rates for 2012.<sup>67</sup> MCA proficiency rates in math, reading and science also were above statewide averages. There are, however, educational disparities between school age youth of different race/ethnicity and income including achievement gaps, lack of opportunities for parental involvement, emotional and behavioral issues and lack of accommodation for students with special needs.

Educational disparities disproportionately affect those who lack the means and skills for securing necessary resources and supports to succeed in school, including:

- Families and children living in poverty
- Immigrant and refugee children and families, especially where limited English skills is a factor
- Students of color
- Students with special needs including those facing behavioral and emotional issues.

### **Disparities in Education**

**Limited Access to Early Childhood Education:** Low income and immigrant families face barriers to enrolling their children in early childhood education programs including high tuition fees,<sup>68</sup> limited options for Somali children who are practicing Muslims,<sup>69</sup> lack of transportation,<sup>70</sup> and limited awareness about the availability of these programs and the steps required to enroll.<sup>71</sup>

**Gaps in Academic Performance by Race and Poverty:** Steele County residents who lack a GED or high school diploma are limited to entry level jobs that do not provide health care benefits. Even if they choose to get a GED, some cannot afford the \$120 testing fee.<sup>72</sup> In 2012, 86% of Steele County students graduated from high school within four years, well above the 76% rate for Minnesota. However, the graduation rate for students of color in Steele County was 67% compared to 89% for white students.<sup>73</sup> There is also a relationship between poverty and academic achievement in Steele County as shown in the following table. Free/Reduced Price Lunch recipients scored below the overall average in each of the three school districts and graduated at a lower rate in Owatonna.<sup>74</sup>

### 2013 Selected Academic Performance Measures<sup>75</sup>

School District/ Program Participation/ Race Ethnicity	AYP Math Proficiency Index	AYP Reading Proficiency Index	Graduation Rate
<b>Blooming Prairie - All</b>	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>86.4%</b>
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	62.5%	53.5%	-
English Language	-	-	-
Special Education	46.3%	33.6%	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	-	-
Hispanic	43.9%	43.9%	-
Black	-	-	-
White	79.8%	68.4%	90.2%
<b>Medford – All</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>67.2%</b>	<b>98.2%</b>
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	56.8%	55.4%	-
English Language	43.8%	33.3%	-
Special Education	40.0%	41.1%	-
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	-	-
Hispanic	46.2%	54.6%	-
Black	-	-	-
White	70.0%	68.4%	98.2%
<b>Owatonna – All</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>84.0%</b>
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	56.9%	51.1%	67.0%
English Language	41.9%	34.6%	-
Special Education	44.9%	44.3%	63.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	83.3%	79.4%	-
Hispanic	46.1%	38.4%	65.0%
Black	49.4%	45.0%	-
White	75.8%	70.0%	86.8%

**Access to mental health services:** Emotional and behavioral health problems can impede academic performance and increase enrollments in mandated Special Education classes. Steele County has seen a significant rise in the need for mental health care services for 5 to 12 year olds, evidenced in an increase in referrals for mental health care and counseling.<sup>76</sup> In addition, low income and immigrant parents report academic difficulties among their children stemming from diagnoses of ADD, ADHD, or OCD.<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, County resources have not been able to keep up with the need<sup>78</sup> and low income and immigrant parents lack the financial resources to secure these services privately.

**Racial/Ethnic Composition of School Staff:** Eighteen percent of students in Steele County are students of color. However, the school staff is predominantly white.<sup>79</sup> This puts an added burden on staff from communities of color, who are looked to for support by children and families from their respective communities during and outside of school.

**Parent Involvement in their Children's Education:** Education is highly valued in the refugee and immigrant communities. However, many refugee and immigrant parents face barriers to participating actively in their children's education.

Parent teacher conferences help communicate to parents where their children are excelling and give them specific ideas on how their children might improve performance. Some low income parents and parents of color miss these conferences, reportedly due to not receiving the notices,<sup>80</sup> limited computer access/proficiency,<sup>81</sup> and difficulty understanding English.<sup>82</sup>

For Hispanic/Latino parents these factors are compounded by lack of transportation, lack of trust in the quality of Spanish language interpretation, and schedule conflicts with church obligations and multiple jobs.<sup>83</sup> For Somali parents, their lack of familiarity with technical academic subjects such as math limit their ability to help their children with their homework, so older siblings often take on the role of tutor, or Somali parents take their children to places where homework help is available.<sup>84</sup>

**Perceived Disparities in How Schools Respond to Parent Concerns:** While Steele County parents overwhelmingly express very positive feelings about their involvement in their children's education, a small but consistent group of parents reported challenges. Some low income parents and parents of color assert that the schools are unresponsive to their concerns, the services they request, and the problems they report. The extent to which these reports are valid is uncertain, but such perceptions can contribute to mistrust, frustration, ill will and disputes. Examples shared by parents include school suspension for incidents in which their child was the victim, bullying, fear of repercussions from reporting problems to teachers, and being discouraged by teachers from speaking their first language (e.g., a teacher insisted that a child be called only by the English equivalent of his first name).<sup>85</sup> Hispanic/Latino students reportedly feel that Somali students get more privileges than they do, and that the school system is very reactive to Hispanic/Latino students but not so with Somali students.<sup>86</sup>

Although small in number, the majority of respondents to the United Way Steele County survey who said that the following were moderate or serious problems reported their race/ethnicity as Black/African American (which could include Somali immigrants): limited English skills, lack of interpreters, feeling uncomfortable visiting the school, not understanding how the school system works, and not having had enough education.<sup>87</sup>

**Limited Access to Out of School Time (OST) Programs:** Steele County has a limited number of affordable and accessible Out of School Time (OST) programs providing homework help, reading programs and a safe place to socialize with peers and connect with caring adults.<sup>88</sup> Barriers include cost,<sup>89</sup> lack of transportation,<sup>90</sup> time limitations,<sup>91</sup> and cultural differences.<sup>92</sup>

**Challenges in Enrolling in College:** Students of color face barriers to entering college, including low grade point averages, limited study and English language skills, lack of financial aid, limited understanding of the financial aid system, and for Spanish speaking students, fear of applying if they or their family are undocumented. While the Minnesota Dream Act affords undocumented students access to in-state tuition fees and financial aid, the filing fees under the Act can be costly, especially when legal help is needed to file the necessary forms and documents.<sup>93</sup>

**Adult Education:** Steele County enrolls over 300 adult education students each year, most of whom are low income and students of color. Many Somalis and Hispanics/Latinos enroll in Certified Nursing

Assistant (CNA) training but face language barriers. The classes are taught in English, which can be difficult for adult learners for whom English is a second language.<sup>94</sup>

**Lack of Transportation:** Transportation is a barrier to parental involvement and support including attendance at school events or taking their children to activities after school, on weekends and in the summer.

- Parents cannot afford to buy cars, afford the cost of fuel, and/or obtain a drivers license because of their immigration status.
- Low income parents including Somalis cannot take their children to extracurricular activities.<sup>95</sup>
- Since Head Start cut its bus service, low income people find it difficult to get their children to school because public transportation does not always work out.<sup>96</sup>

**Economic Opportunity and Immigration Status:** There is higher unemployment and underemployment in the immigrant and migrant communities.

- Steele County has lost entry-level jobs for people with limited English proficiency so non-native speakers of English are leaving the county for the metro area.
- Many educated Somalis are finding work with temp agencies. Immigrants with a Masters degree are working in factory jobs.<sup>97</sup>

#### **Feedback on the Education Disparities from the CEO Roundtable and Town Meeting**

At both the CEO Roundtable and the Town Meeting there was agreement on the leading educational disparity, 'Barriers to Parent Involvement in their Children's Education.' There was also general consensus on the need for more educational services and programs ('Limited Access to Early Childhood Education,' 'Limited Access to Out of School Time Programs'), and increased 'Access to Mental Health Services for Children.' 'Gaps in Academic Performance' associated with race and/or poverty was also identified as an important issue.

Disparities	CEO Roundtable		Town Meeting	
	Vote Count	Ranking	Vote Count	Ranking
Barriers to Parent Involvement in their Children's Education	8	1	26	1
Gaps in Academic Performance Associated With Poverty <sup>98</sup>	2	4	26	1
Limited Access to Early Childhood Education	7	2	20	2
Limited Access to Out of School Time Programs	1	5	16	3
Gaps in Academic Performance Associated with Race/Ethnicity	2	4	12	4
Access to Mental Health Services for Children	2	4	8	5
Lack of Transportation to Engage in Conferences and School Activities	0	6	7	6
Disparities in College Enrollment by Income and Race	0	6	5	7
Social/Ethnic Composition of School Staff	0	6	4	8
Perceived Disparities in How Schools Respond to Parental Concerns	0	6	1	9
Immigration Status and College Enrollment	0	6	0	10
Adult Education <sup>99</sup>	0	6		
Economic Opportunity and Immigration Status	0	6		
Motivating Students <sup>100</sup>	4	3		

### Next Steps

In April 2014, the United Way of Steele County will convene a special meeting of the Board of Directors. Board members will use the results of this community assessment and the plans developed by the United Way Sub Committees on Income, Health and Education to identify an initiative that will contribute to reducing or eliminating disparities. The next step will be the coordination of a single multi-sector collaborative initiative to develop and implement data driven evidence-based strategies<sup>101</sup> that will reduce disparities in income, education and health across the population.

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- <sup>1</sup> US Census 2010
- <sup>2</sup> 2013 estimate based on the Jobs Now Coalition Family Wage & Budget Calculator.  
<http://www.jobsnowcoalition.org/calculator/calculator.html>
- <sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau. Selected Economic Characteristics.  
[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_5YR\\_DP03](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP03)
- <sup>4</sup> Steele County QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27/27147.html>
- <sup>5</sup> Minnesota Unemployment Statistics for February 2013.  
<http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/laus/detail.aspx?geog=2704000147&adjust=0&graph=1>
- <sup>6</sup> United Way of Steele County, CEO Roundtable, November 21, 2013
- <sup>7</sup> United Way of Steele County Income Committee
- <sup>8</sup> Steele County. [http://www.co.steele.mn.us/steele\\_county\\_area\\_transit\\_scat.html](http://www.co.steele.mn.us/steele_county_area_transit_scat.html)
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.minnesotahelp.info/Public/details.aspx?qlink=CQuau37WGkuFWlguUuYeMQ>
- <sup>10</sup> 1,054/2,896 or 36%.  
[Factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_5YR\\_DP04](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP04)
- <sup>11</sup> [www.city-data.com/county/steele\\_county-MN.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/steele_county-MN.html)
- <sup>12</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013.
- <sup>13</sup> United Way of Steele County Income Committee interview January 24, 2013.
- <sup>14</sup> 'Lack of childcare' was added to the list of disparities between the CEO Roundtable and the Town Meeting.
- <sup>15</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>16</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013
- <sup>17</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013
- <sup>18</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>19</sup> 2010 Minnesota Student Survey
- <sup>20</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>21</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013
- <sup>22</sup> Health Focus Groups, 2013
- <sup>23</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013.
- <sup>24</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013
- <sup>25</sup> Health Focus Group, English (1), May 17, 2013
- <sup>26</sup> Health Focus Group, English (2), May 20, 2013
- <sup>27</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013
- <sup>28</sup> Health Focus Group, Spanish, May 23, 2013
- <sup>29</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013
- <sup>30</sup> Health Focus Group, English (1), May 17, 2013
- <sup>31</sup> Health Focus Group, English (2), May 20, 2013
- <sup>32</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013
- <sup>33</sup> Health Focus Group, Spanish, May 23, 2013
- <sup>34</sup> Minnesota House of Representatives Information Brief (2011). Eligibility of Noncitizens for Health Care and Cash Assistance Programs.
- <sup>35</sup> Health Focus Group, English (1), May 17, 2013
- <sup>36</sup> Health Focus Group, English (2), May 20, 2013
- <sup>37</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013
- <sup>38</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>39</sup> <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/countytables/profiles2012/index.html>
- <sup>40</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>41</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013.
- <sup>42</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013.
- <sup>43</sup> Health Focus Group, Spanish, May 23, 2013
- <sup>44</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013
- <sup>45</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>46</sup> <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/countytables/profiles2012/index.html>

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<sup>47</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013  
<sup>48</sup> Health Focus Group, English (1), May 17, 2013  
<sup>49</sup> Health Focus Group, English (2), May 20, 2013  
<sup>50</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013  
<sup>51</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013  
<sup>52</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013  
<sup>53</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013  
<sup>54</sup> State Health Access Data Assistance Center. Uninsurance Rates for Minnesota in 2011 and 2012.  
<sup>55</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Steele County, Minnesota  
<sup>56</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013  
<sup>57</sup> Health Focus Group, Spanish, May 23, 2013  
<sup>58</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013  
<sup>59</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013  
<sup>60</sup> Key Informant Interview: Health Committee, January 23, 2013  
<sup>61</sup> United Way of Steele County Employee Survey 2013.  
<sup>62</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013  
<sup>63</sup> Health Focus Group, English (1), May 17, 2013  
<sup>64</sup> Health Focus Group, English (2), May 20, 2013  
<sup>65</sup> Health Focus Group, Somali, June 1, 2013  
<sup>66</sup> Health Focus Group, Spanish, May 23, 2013  
<sup>67</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center, Data for Parents and Educators  
[<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Reports.jsp>]  
<sup>68</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>69</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>70</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013  
<sup>71</sup> Key Informant Interview: Faith Leaders, March 21, 2013.  
<sup>72</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.  
<sup>73</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center, Data Reports and Analytics  
[<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>]  
<sup>74</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>75</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center, Data for Parents and Educators  
[<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Reports.jsp>]  
<sup>76</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>77</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013; English (2), May 29, 2013; Somali, June 7, 2013.  
<sup>78</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>79</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.  
<sup>80</sup> Education Focus Group, English (2), May 29, 2013 and Spanish, June 5, 2013.  
<sup>81</sup> Education Focus Group, Spanish, June 5, 2013 and Somali, June 7, 2013.  
<sup>82</sup> Education Focus Group, Spanish, June 5, 2013 and Somali, June 7, 2013.  
<sup>83</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013  
<sup>84</sup> Education Focus Group, Somali, June 7, 2013.  
<sup>85</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013.  
<sup>86</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.  
<sup>87</sup> 2013 Employee Survey.  
<sup>88</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013 and School System, March 22, 2013 and  
Education Focus Group, Somali, June 7, 2013  
<sup>89</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013, Spanish, June 5, 2013, and Somali, June 7, 2013; Key  
Informant Interview: Faith Leaders, March 21, 2013.  
<sup>90</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013; English (2), May 29, 2013; Somali, June 7, 2013.  
<sup>91</sup> Education Focus Group, Spanish, June 5, 2013.  
<sup>92</sup> Education Focus Group, English (2), May 29, 2013.

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<sup>93</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013 and School System, March 22, 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Income Committee, January 24, 2013.

<sup>95</sup> Education Focus Group, English (1), May 21, 2013 and Somali, June 7, 2013.

<sup>96</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.

<sup>97</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Income Committee, January 24, 2013.

<sup>98</sup> The disparity that associated gaps in academic performance with poverty and race for the CEO Roundtable was split up in the Town Meeting into two separate disparities, one focusing on the association with poverty and the other focused on the association with race.

<sup>99</sup> 'Adult education' and 'Economic Opportunity and Immigration Status' were dropped from the list of disparities due to lack of support.

<sup>100</sup> 'Motivating Students' was dropped from the list of disparities after the CEO Roundtable due to its close association with parent involvement, which is already the highest ranked disparity.

<sup>101</sup> Providing Information; Building Skills; Providing Social Support; Enhancing Access and Reducing Barriers; Changing Consequences (incenting and disincenting behaviors) Changing the Physical Design of the Environment; and Changing Rules and Policies. (*Seven Strategies for Community Change*; SAMHSA)

# **APPENDIX**

## Summary Analysis Table

April 10, 2014

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data		
	Focus Groups			Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search	CEO Roundtable		Town Meeting	
	English Speaking	Somali Speaking	Spanish Speaking							
Income										
Limited number of living wage jobs							X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seventy-two percent of Steele County's population over 16 years of age is in the labor force, with 68% employed and 4% unemployed.<sup>1</sup></li><li>Of those employed, 25% work in manufacturing, 22% work in educational services/health care/social assistance, 10% work in retail trade, and 10% work in finance, insurance and real estate.<sup>2</sup></li></ul>
Lack of Employee Benefits	X						X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fewer new jobs are offering benefits, at the same time there has been a decline in the state and federal funding that supports many of Steele County's social service programs.</li></ul>
Limited access to health insurance	X	X	X							<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working poor earn too much to get medicaid; people delay getting health care until it becomes an emergency</li></ul>

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data	
	Focus Groups		Employee Survey						Town Meeting
			Expert Interviews						
			Literature Search						
			CEO Roundtable						
	Spanish Speaking					X			
	Somali Speaking								
English Speaking									
Lack of transportation		X	X	X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public transport is limited within Owatonna and between Owatonna and the other cities in Southeastern Minnesota. Steele County Area Transit does not operate after 6 pm on weekdays and weekend service is further limited.<sup>3</sup></li><li>Steele County spans 430 square miles with a population density of 85 people per square mile. Over one third of the population lives in the counties most rural areas.</li><li>Transportation represents a major expense for residents, with the average family of four needing approximately \$800 per month for vehicles.</li><li>Over 90% of Steele County employees depend on cars to get to/from work and less than one percent use public transportation<sup>4</sup></li></ul>	
Lack of childcare				X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>One of the top three expenses for families<sup>5</sup> ranging from \$5,700 per year for a preschool child at a family-based childcare facility up to \$10,000 per year for an infant at a licensed child care facility.</li><li>Greatest need in families where parents work 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> shifts; and communities of color who are underrepresented in the provider community.<sup>6</sup></li></ul>	

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data		
	Focus Groups				Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search		CEO Roundtable	Town Meeting
	English Speaking	Somali Speaking	Spanish Speaking							
Lack of affordable low cost housing	X				X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Steele County Transitional Housing reported receiving calls from 387 families in 2012: a 32% increase from the 2007 total of 264 but a 32% drop from the high of 573 families at the height of the recession in 2010.<sup>7</sup> 47% of Steele County Residents said lack of affordable housing was the leading problem facing low income families.<sup>8</sup></li><li>Except for 12 units at one facility, all of Steele County’s 419 subsidized rental units are in Owatonna. The waiting list for Section 8 housing has been closed since October 31, 2010, limiting the potential for any increase in availability in the near term<sup>9</sup></li></ul>
Fears surrounding immigration status			X			X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many Spanish speaking immigrants and even children of immigrants avoid seeking assistance out of a fear of being deported by the authorities, regardless of their own legal status.</li></ul>
Health										
Obesity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>30% of adults are obese (with Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 30).<sup>10</sup></li><li>27% of 9th graders, and 25% of 12th graders are overweight or obese (with Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 25).<sup>11</sup></li></ul>

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data		
	Focus Groups				Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search		CEO Roundtable	Town Meeting
English Speaking	Somali Speaking	Spanish Speaking								
Lack of access to healthy foods	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5% of population has limited access to healthy foods (are low income and live more than 10 miles away from a grocery store).<sup>12</sup></li><li>16% of 12th graders, 17% of 9th graders, and 16% of 6th graders reported eating the recommended 5 servings of fruit or vegetables on the preceding day.<sup>13</sup></li></ul>
Lack of physical activity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>22% of adults report no recreation-time physical activity.<sup>14</sup></li><li>In Steele County there are 8 recreational facilities per 100,000 people.<sup>15</sup></li></ul>
Chronic Disease	X	X	X			X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>7.2% of adults aged 20 and older report being diagnosed with diabetes.<sup>16</sup></li><li>An estimated 28% of adults have hypertension.<sup>17</sup></li><li>The age adjusted rate of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is 32.4 per 10,000 adults age 45 and older.<sup>18</sup></li></ul>
Lack of health insurance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>8.9% of the population under 65 is uninsured.<sup>19</sup></li><li>An estimated 12% of Steele County residents could not see a doctor in the past year due to cost.<sup>20</sup></li></ul>
Lack of access to culturally appropriate health care		X	X			X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An estimated 7% of Steele County residents speak a language other than English at home.<sup>21</sup></li><li>9.6% of students enrolled in the Owatonna School District are English Language Learners.<sup>22</sup></li></ul>

Disparities		Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data		
		Focus Groups				Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search		CEO Roundtable	Town Meeting
		English Speaking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>13% of people report inadequate social support, or social isolation.<sup>23</sup></li></ul>	
Education											
Limited access to early childhood education							X		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Average annual cost of early childhood education in licensed facilities in Steele County in 2011: enter-based infant care=\$10,150, family-based infant care=\$6,138, center-based toddler care=\$8,632, family-based toddler care=\$5,964, center-based preschool care, \$7,561, family-based preschool care=\$5,770<sup>24</sup></li></ul>	
Gaps in academic performance by race and poverty							X		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2012 Graduation rate for students of color in Steele County was 67%. Graduation rate for white students was 89%.<sup>25</sup></li></ul>	
Access to mental health services	X						X		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Action School in Owatonna has the highest proportion of students with social emotional needs<sup>26</sup></li><li>The district has seen a significant rise in the mental health needs of 5-12 year olds. Among students, there has been an increase in the rate of referrals to medications or counseling.<sup>27</sup></li></ul>	
Racial/ethnic composition of school staff	X		X				X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In 2012, non-white students in Minnesota made up 26% of the population and yet non-white teachers were only 4% of all teachers.<sup>28</sup></li></ul>	
Parent involvement in their children's education	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Approximately 50% of Hispanic students are undocumented, one reason why they don't attend school events.<sup>29</sup></li><li>Parent participation in elementary school conferences is 93%, and then declines in middle and high schools due to different conference formats<sup>30</sup></li></ul>	

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data
	Focus Groups			Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search	CEO Roundtable	
	English Speaking	Somali Speaking	Spanish Speaking					
							Town Meeting	
Perceived disparities in how schools respond to parental concerns	X	X	X	X	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were more Black/African Americans (includes Somalis) among those who reported the following as moderate or serious problems in getting more involved in their children's education:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited English=7/9 or 78%</li> <li>Lack of interpreter=6/8 or 75%</li> <li>Haven't had enough education to help child at school = 6/9 or 67%</li> <li>Feel uncomfortable going to school=4/7 or 57%</li> <li>Don't understand how school system works=7/13 or 54%</li> <li>Lack of transportation=7/24 or 29% (2<sup>nd</sup> to Whites)</li> <li>Lack of time = 8/92 or 9% (2<sup>nd</sup> to Whites)</li> <li>Timing of school activities conflicts with work schedule = 7/102 or 7% (2<sup>nd</sup> to Whites)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Percent of population that uses public transportation or walk to work: 3.1% in Steele County and 6.5% for state of Minnesota<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>
Lack of transportation	X	X	X		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children receiving free/reduced price lunch in Steele County: 30.1% (2008), 33.8% (2009), 32.3% (2010), 36.6% (2011), 39.0% (2012)<sup>32</sup></li> <li>Children in poverty in Steele County: 9.3% (2007), 10.0% (2008), 10.9% (2009), 13.6% (2010), 13.6% (2011)<sup>33</sup></li> </ul>
Poverty and lack of economic opportunities	X	X	X		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>62% of students are highly engaged in enrichment activities.<sup>34</sup></li> <li>Steele County has a lack of affordable and accessible out of school time programs that provide academic support and enrichment in a safe and supervised environment.<sup>35</sup></li> </ul>
Limited access to out of school time programs	X	X	X		X		X	

Disparities	Groups That Identify Disparities (per data collection methods)							Summary Supporting Data			
	Focus Groups			Employee Survey	Expert Interviews	Literature Search	CEO Roundtable		Town Meeting		
				English Speaking	Somali Speaking	Spanish Speaking					
Enrolling in college					X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Around half of Hispanic students are undocumented, and do not qualify for many college financial aid programs.<sup>36</sup></li><li>• One barrier to college that many students in Steele County encounter is limited English language skills. In 2012 58% of non-Hispanic White students at Owatonna Senior High School were ‘on track’ in math, compared to only 35% of English language learners.<sup>37 38 39</sup></li></ul>			
Economic opportunity and immigration status					X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is difficult and cost prohibitive to transfer degrees and credentials from other countries, like Somalia and Mexico.<sup>40</sup></li></ul>			

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau. Selected Economic Characteristics.

[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_11\\_5YR\\_DP03](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_5YR_DP03)

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Unemployment Statistics for February 2013.

<http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/Imi/laus/detail.aspx?geog=2704000147&adjust=0&graph=1>

<sup>3</sup> Steele County. [http://www.co.steele.mn.us/steele\\_county\\_area\\_transit\\_scat.html](http://www.co.steele.mn.us/steele_county_area_transit_scat.html)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.city-data.com/county/Steele\\_County-MN.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Steele_County-MN.html)

<sup>5</sup> Jobs Now Coalition Family Wage & Budget Calculator 2013 estimate

<sup>6</sup> Steele County Human Services

<sup>7</sup> Steele County Transitional Housing

<sup>8</sup> UW Survey of Steele County Residents

<sup>9</sup> City of Owatonna Housing and Redevelopment Authority - Section 8 Rental Assistance. <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/node/5642>

<sup>10</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013

<sup>11</sup> 2010 Minnesota Student Survey

<sup>12</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013

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- <sup>13</sup> 2010 Minnesota Student Survey
- <sup>14</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>15</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>16</sup> 2012 Minnesota County Health Tables, Minnesota Department of Health
- <sup>17</sup> 2012 Minnesota County Health Tables, Minnesota Department of Health
- <sup>18</sup> 2012 Minnesota County Health Tables, Minnesota Department of Health
- <sup>19</sup> 2012 Minnesota County Health Tables, Minnesota Department of Health
- <sup>20</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>21</sup> US Census, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2008-2012.
- <sup>22</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Report Card, 2014
- <sup>23</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2013
- <sup>24</sup> Children's Defense Fund Minnesota (2012). Kids Count Minnesota 2012 Fact Sheet. Retrieved from [http://www.cdf-mn.org/sites/2012\\_publications/kc/counties/Steele-2012.pdf](http://www.cdf-mn.org/sites/2012_publications/kc/counties/Steele-2012.pdf)
- <sup>25</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center, Data Reports and Analytics [<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>]
- <sup>26</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.
- <sup>27</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.
- <sup>28</sup> Yuen, L. Teachers facing achievement gap try cross-race connections (2013, March 20). *Minnesota Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2013/03/20/education/classroom-culture>
- <sup>29</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.
- <sup>30</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.
- <sup>31</sup> US Census 2010.
- <sup>32</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center [<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/index.html>]
- <sup>33</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Data Center [<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/index.html>]
- <sup>34</sup> Minnesota Compass, 2010
- <sup>35</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.
- <sup>36</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.
- <sup>37</sup> Key Informant Interviews: School System, March 22, 2013.
- <sup>38</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.
- <sup>39</sup> Minnesota Department of Education Report Card, 2012
- <sup>40</sup> Key Informant Interviews: Education Committee, January 23, 2013.