



## Introduction | A Regional Scan of Individualized Learning

101 Fifth Street East  
Suite 2400  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

651-227-0891 *phone*  
651-297-6485 *fax*  
BushFoundation.org

Dear Friends in Education,

The Bush Foundation is very excited to share the findings of a regional scan of individualized learning in our region. This broad scan was an undertaking the first of its kind in this region, and the findings will inform the work of the Foundation in supporting efforts to provide individualized learning to more students.

The guiding goal for the Bush Foundation's education initiative is to make our region the national leader in individualized education that meets the needs and ambitions of all students. We believe this work requires a shift in the culture of education to a more personal, more relevant approach that takes into account who students are, how they learn, and where they aspire to go. We refer to these areas as the three dimensions of relevancy – cultural, instructional and career.

The Foundation engaged Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) in 2017 to conduct a scan of individualized learning in our region, which includes Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. Specifically, the research gathered baseline data on the state of awareness, understanding and implementation of various forms of individualized learning in schools across the region. The research included interviews with field leaders and partner organizations in education, both locally and nationally. We also sent a survey to public, private, charter and tribal schools in the region.

### Highlights from the Findings:

We are energized by the findings and opportunities identified in this research. We look forward to working together with our partners to use these insights to support individualized learning. Highlights include:

- There is genuine interest and excitement for the principles underlying individualized learning.
- Except for a handful of schools and practices, true individualized learning is largely absent in schools in the region and/or in its early stages.
- There are many definitions and terminology used to describe this way of learning, and there are even more ways in which schools are experiencing and implementing this approach to learning.
- While there is currently several challenges to implementation, there is a growing demand to build the necessary skills and infrastructure support to do individualized learning well.

We invite you to explore our executive summary and the full report, and to use the information to enhance your own thinking and work in education.

Finally, we deeply appreciate the work of the Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) team, who conducted the research and prepared the report. We also want to personally thank everyone who participated in the interviews and/or survey. Your insights are extremely valuable and contribute to our fuller understanding of the state of individualized learning in our region.

Thank you for your interest in this research and your partnership to make education more relevant for all students. We invite you to be in touch.

Sincerely,  
The Bush Foundation Education Team