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Orig. 1998
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618 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to institute a process for the establishment and revision of assessments to measure achievement toward meeting the Minnesota Academic Standards, track academic progress over time, and provide Minnesota graduates information related to career and college readiness.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school district has established a procedure by which students shall complete Graduation Requirements. This procedure includes the adoption of performance assessment methods to be used in measuring student performance. The school district strives to continually enhance student achievement of Graduation Requirements.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Academic standard" means a summary description of student learning in a required content area or elective content area.

B. "Benchmark" means the specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band.

C. "Career and college ready," for purposes of statewide accountability, means a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills, and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.

D. "Cultural competence," "cultural competency," or "culturally competent," for purposes of statewide accountability, means the ability of families and educators to interact effectively with people of different cultures, native languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

E. "Elective standards" means a locally adopted expectation for student learning in career and technical education and world languages.

F. "Experiential learning" means learning for students that includes career exploration through a specific class or course or through work-based experiences such as job shadowing, mentoring, entrepreneurship, service learning, volunteering, internships, other cooperative work experience, youth apprenticeship, or employment.

G. "Required standard" means a statewide adopted expectation for student learning in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, health, and the arts. Locally developed academic standards in health apply until statewide rules implementing statewide health standards are required to be implemented in the classroom.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

A. The **[school board/superintendent/director of instruction]** shall establish criteria by which student performance of local academic standards and elective standards are to be evaluated and approved. The criteria will be submitted to the school board for approval. Upon approval by the school board, the criteria shall be deemed part of this policy.

B. The superintendent shall ensure that students and parents or guardians are provided with notice of the process by which academic standards will be assessed.

C. Staff members will be expected to utilize staff development opportunities to the extent necessary to ensure effective implementation and continued improvement of the implementation of assessments under the Minnesota Academic Standards.

V. STANDARDS FOR MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A. Benchmarks

The school district will offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard.

[NOTE: School districts are required to formally establish a periodic review cycle for academic standards and related benchmarks in world languages and career and technical education.]

B. Statewide Academic Standards Testing

1. The school district will utilize statewide assessments developed from and aligned with the state's required academic standards as these tests become available to evaluate student progress toward career and college readiness in the context of the state's academic standards.

2. The school district will administer annually, in accordance with the process determined by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the state-constructed tests aligned with state standards to all students in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level as follows:

   a. computer-adaptive reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8;

   b. state-developed high school reading and mathematics tests aligned with state academic standards;

   c. a high school writing test aligned with state standards when it becomes available; and

   d. science assessments. Annual science assessments are required in one (1) grade in the grades 3 through 5 span, the grades 6 through 8 span, and a life science assessment in the grades 9 through 12 span (a passing score on high school science assessments is not a condition of receiving a diploma).

3. The school district will develop and administer locally constructed tests in social studies, health and physical education, and the arts to determine if a student

has met the required academic standards in these areas.

4. The school district may use a student's performance on a statewide assessment as one of multiple criteria to determine grade promotion or retention. The school district may use a high school student's performance on a statewide assessment as a percentage of the student's final grade in a course, or place a student's assessment score on the student's transcript.

5. The school district must record on the high school transcript a student's progress toward career and college readiness. For other students, this record of progress must be made as soon as practicable. In addition, the school district may include a notation of high achievement on the high school diplomas of those graduating seniors who, according to established school board criteria, demonstrate exemplary academic achievement during high school.

6. Students who do not meet or exceed the Minnesota academic standards, as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments administered during high school, shall be informed that admission to a public school is free and available to any resident under twenty-one (21) years of age or who meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20, subdivision 1, paragraph (c). The school district will determine how this notice is given.

C. Student Participation

1. The MDE Commissioner must create and publish a form for parents and guardians that:

   a. explains the need for state academic standards;

   b. identifies the state assessments that are aligned with state standards;

   c. identifies the consequences, if any, the school or student may face if a student does not participate in state or locally required standardized assessments;

   d. states that students who receive a college ready benchmark on the high school Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment are not required to take a remedial, noncredit course at a Minnesota state college or university in the corresponding subject area;

   e. summarizes the provisions in Minnesota Statutes section 120B.306, subdivision 1; and

   f. notifies a parent of the right to not have the parent's child participate in the state and locally required assessments, and asks a parent that chooses to not have a child participate in the assessments the basis for the decision.

2. The school district must post the form created by the Commissioner on the school district website and include it in the school district's student handbook.

3. The school district may provide a student's parent access to the student's individual student performance data and achievement report that is made available under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.305, paragraph (b), clause (1), when the performance data and report is available to the school district.

VI. RIGOROUS COURSE OF STUDY WAIVER

A. Upon receiving a student's application signed by the student's parent or guardian, the school district must declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation if the school board determines that the student:

1. is participating in a course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program; a learning opportunity outside the curriculum of the school district; or an approved preparatory program for employment or postsecondary education that is equally or more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the school district;

2. would be precluded from participating in the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity, or preparatory employment or postsecondary education program if the student were required to achieve the academic standard to be waived; and

3. satisfactorily completes the requirements for the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity, or preparatory employment or postsecondary education program.

B. The school board also may formally determine other circumstances in which to declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation.

C. A student who satisfactorily completes a postsecondary enrollment options course or program or an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program is not required to complete other requirements of the academic standards corresponding to that specific rigorous course of study.

VII. CAREER EXPLORATION ASSESSMENT

A. Student assessments, in alignment with state academic standards, shall include clearly defined career and college readiness benchmarks and satisfy Minnesota's postsecondary admissions requirements. Achievement and career and college readiness in mathematics, reading, and writing must also be assessed.

When administering formative or summative assessments used to measure the academic progress, including the oral academic development, of English learners and inform their instruction, schools must ensure that the assessments are accessible to the students and students have the modifications and supports they need to sufficiently understand the assessments.

B. On an annual basis, the school district must use the career exploration elements to help students, beginning no later than grade 9, and their families explore and plan for postsecondary education or careers based on the students' interests, aptitudes, and aspirations. The school district must use timely regional labor market information and partnerships, among other resources, to help students and their families successfully develop, pursue, review, and revise an individualized plan for postsecondary education or a career. This process must help increase students' engagement in and connection to school, improve students' knowledge and skills, and deepen students' understanding of career pathways as a sequence of academic and career courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree and are available to all students, whatever their interests and career goals.

C. Though not a high school graduation requirement, all students, except those eligible for alternative assessments, are encouraged to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam.

D. A student who demonstrates attainment of required state academic standards, which include career and college readiness benchmarks, on high school assessments, is academically ready for a career or college and is encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students. Such courses and programs may include sequential courses of study within broad career areas and technical skill assessments that extend beyond course grades.

To the extent state funding for college entrance exam fees is available, the school district must pay the cost, one time, for an interested student in grade 11 or 12 who is eligible for a free or reduced-priced meal, to take a nationally recognized college entrance exam before graduating. The school district may require a student who is not eligible for a free or reduced-priced meal to pay the cost of taking a nationally recognized college entrance exam. The school district must waive the cost for a student who is unable to pay.

E. As appropriate, students through grade 12 must continue to participate in targeted instruction, intervention, or remediation and be encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students.

F. In developing, supporting, and improving students' academic readiness for a career or college, the school district must have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on students' attainment of knowledge and skills so that students, their parents, and teachers know how well students must perform to have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without need for postsecondary remediation.

Legal References:
Minn. Stat. § 120B.018 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 (Educational Expectations and Graduation Requirements for Minnesota's Students)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.021 (Required Academic Standards)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.022 (Elective Standards)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.023 (Benchmarks)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process for Reviewing Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement Goals; Striving for Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 (General Requirements; Statewide Assessments)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.302 (General Requirements; Test Design)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.305 (Assessment Reporting Requirements)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.306 (District Assessment Requirements)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.307 (College and Career Readiness)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.31 (System Accountability and Statistical Adjustments)
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0660 (Academic Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 12 [Language Arts])
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.07 (Academic Standards for Mathematics)
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0820 (Academic Arts Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 12)
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0960 (Academic Science Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 12)
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1350 (Academic Standards for Social Studies)
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1400-3501.1410 (Academic Standards for Physical Education)
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (Every Student Succeeds Act)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 104 (School District Mission Statement)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 601 (School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 613 (Graduation Requirements)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 614 (School District Testing Plan and Procedure)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 615 (Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 616 (School District System Accountability)