



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 4, 2012

The Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach
President of the Senate
226 State Capitol
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Madam President:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 281, Senate File 1656, a bill which would require legislative approval of state academic standards and graduation requirements.

Minnesota's existing standards review and revision process is carefully designed and thorough. It has successfully produced rigorous academic standards in math, science, English, language arts, social studies, and the arts. Even when issues of a controversial nature emerge in specific subject areas, the current process has produced standards, which have been widely accepted by stakeholders and held in high esteem nationally. This bill would delay the academic standards process by inserting it into the legislative arena.

This bill would seriously undermine the existing standards review and revision process. Under current law, the process seeks to maximize the input of people with content knowledge and teaching expertise, as well as various stakeholders, while providing multiple opportunities for public input and opinion. It would be very difficult to recruit highly qualified people to serve on the standards committee if they knew the Legislature would then review, approve, or change the standards they worked so diligently to create.

I am also concerned about the additional delays this bill would force upon standards development and implementation timelines, which could cause losses of federal funding and additional costs to school districts. Applications for federal funds typically require a state to commit to a standards and assessment revision timeline. Districts align their curriculum adoption calendars to the state's standard schedule under Minn. Stat. 120B.023. The timeline is very tight. Adding an additional review process could considerably lengthen the amount of time it would take to develop the standards, which in turn would make it difficult for districts to align, purchase, or create new curriculum to train their teachers and to implement the standards.

The Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach
May 4, 2012
Page 2

Finally, this bill would disrupt the efficient functioning of state government, by assigning a role to the Legislative Branch which is the responsibility of the Executive Branch. Academic standards are numerous and detailed. They can take a year or more to discuss, consider, and review by a committee of experts, including teachers, academics, and business leaders. The process culminates in a detailed administrative rulemaking process that provides further opportunities for input by everyone concerned about the outcome. It would be non-productive at best, and counter-productive at worst, to overlay a legislative review process on top of this process, which has been carefully designed and fine-tuned by legislators and administrations from both parties.

Sincerely,

Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator David H. Senjem, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Thomas M. Bakk, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Carla Nelson
Representative Kurt Zellers, Speaker of the House
Representative Paul Thissen, House Minority Leader
Representative Sondra Erickson
The Honorable Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State
Mr. Cal R. Ludeman, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Albin A. Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives