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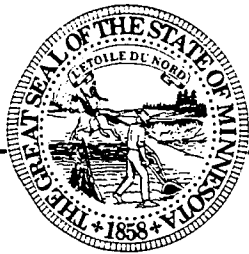
Report on Graduation Standards

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Minnesota State Board of Education

714 Capitol Square Building, 550 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
OFFICE: (612) 297-1925 • FAX: (612) 297-7201

January 12, 1998

TO: House Education Committee Members and Staff
Senate Education Committee Members and Staff

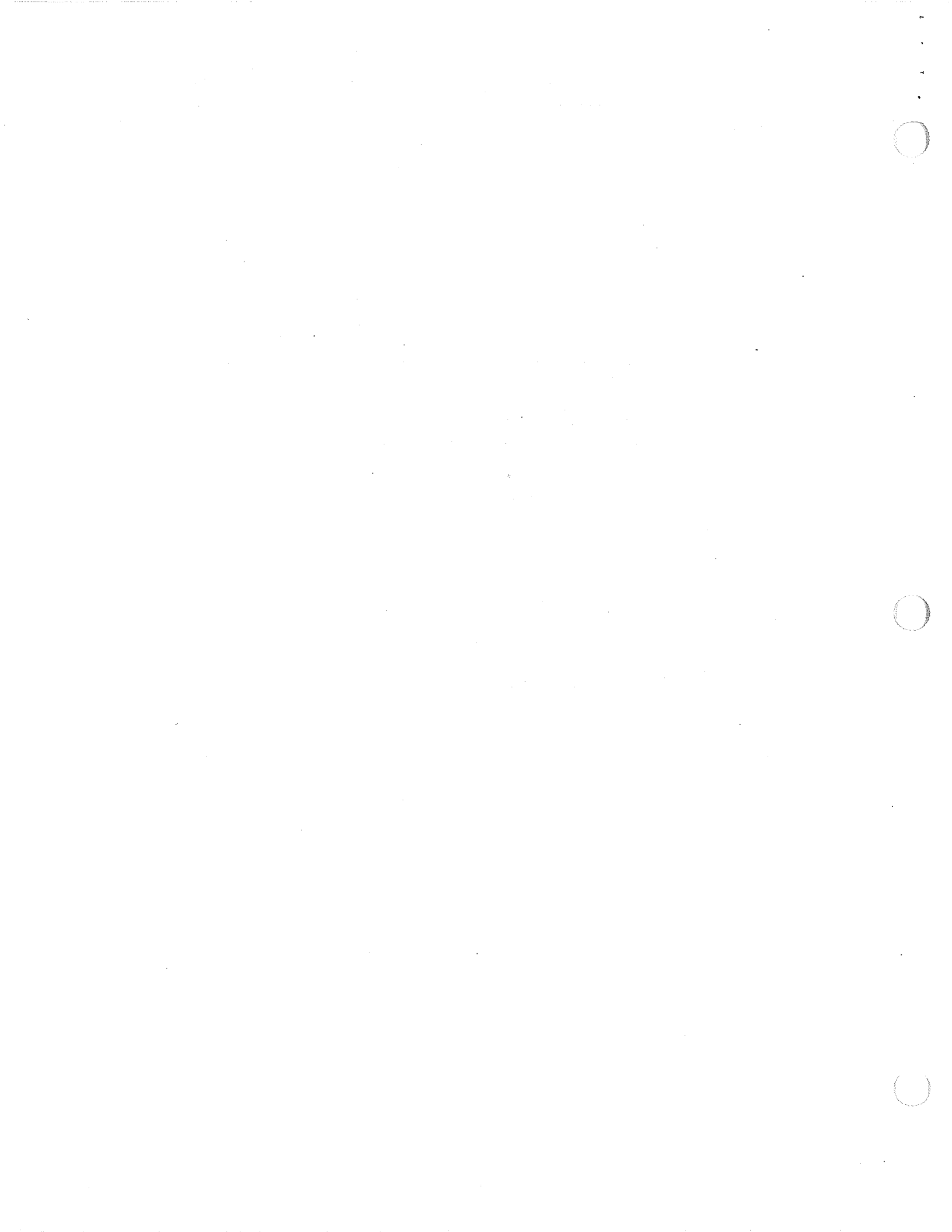
FROM: Jeanne Kling, Acting President
Minnesota State Board of Education

RE: 1998 Report to the Legislature on Graduation
Standards

The enclosed report provides an update on the progress of the development and implementation of Graduation Standards as required in M.S. 121.11, subd. 7C.

The report was unanimously approved by the State Board of Education at its January 12, 1998, regular meeting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Kling".



1998 Legislative Report: Estimated Cost of Preparation

The following provides estimated costs incurred in the preparation of this report.

This report provides information which the agency already collects as part of its normal business functions. Therefore, the cost information below does not include the cost of gathering and analyzing the data but rather is limited to the estimated costs of actually preparing the report document.

Special funding was not appropriated to cover the costs of preparing this report.

Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning Costs:

The following is an estimate of the cost incurred by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning:

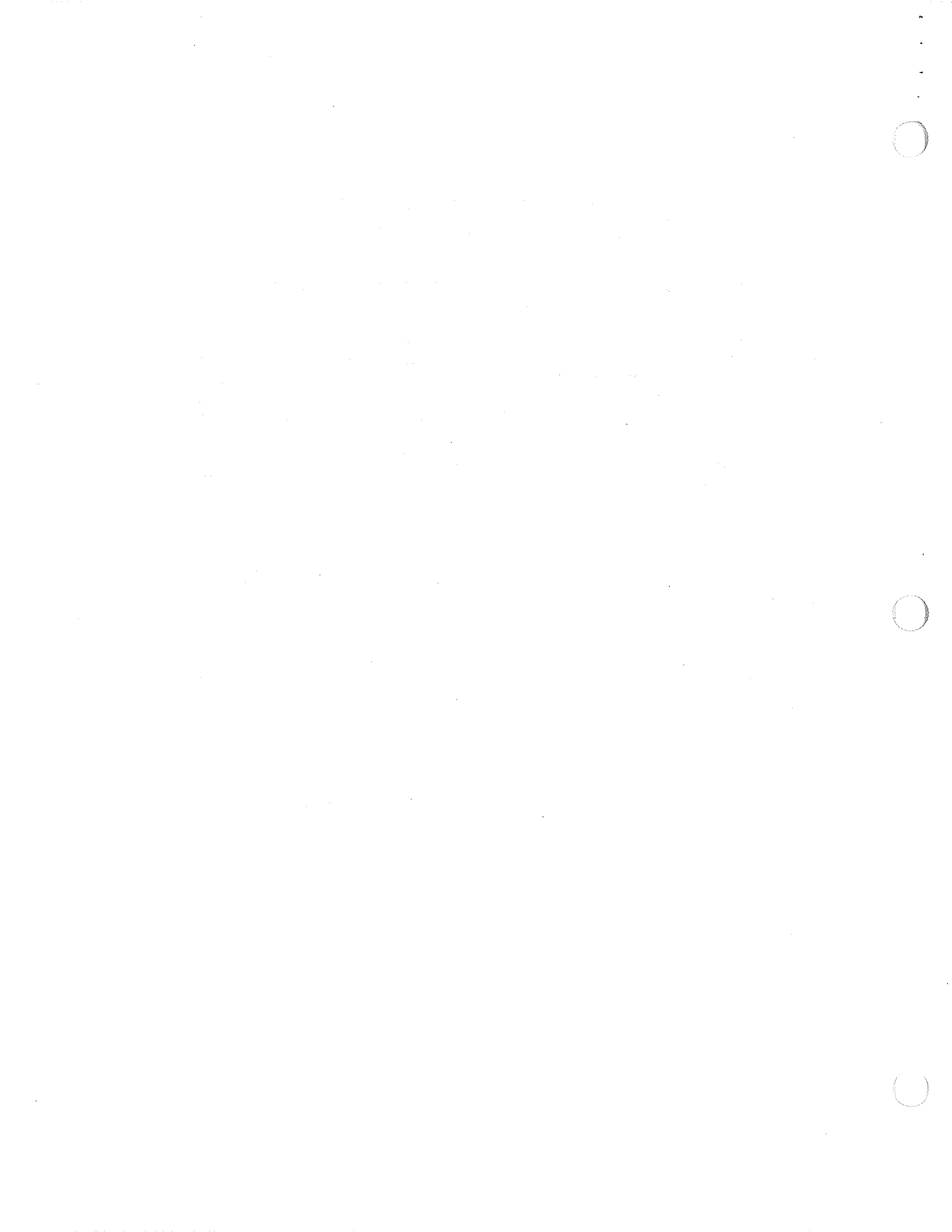
\$1247.80

Other Agency Costs:

None

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR PREPARING THIS REPORT:

\$1247.80



The Graduation Standards

January 15, 1998 Annual Report
to the Minnesota State Legislature
as required in M.S. 121.11, subd. 7c.

As required by law, this progress report is filed by the State Board of Education to summarize for the Minnesota Legislature the development and implementation of the Minnesota Graduation Standards since last year's annual report, filed on January 15, 1997. This report, then, summarizes progress from January 15, 1997, to January 15, 1998.

THE BASIC STANDARDS: READING AND MATHEMATICS

In late January, 1997, over 79,000 Minnesota public school students took the Minnesota Basic Skills Tests in reading and mathematics. Of the 65,366 students enrolled in eighth grade in Minnesota public schools, 50,386 took the reading test and 51,292 took the mathematics test. Minnesota Education Rules 3501.0010 to 3501.0190 require that students who entered ninth grade during the 1996-97 school year [the current ninth and tenth graders] must pass the tests before they can receive high school diplomas.

Of the eighth graders tested in 1997, 59% earned a score of 75% or higher on their first attempt at the reading test, up from 53% in 1996. 70% of the eighth graders earned scores of 75% or



higher on the mathematics test, up from 69% in 1996. [Appendix A of this report summarizes the most recent basic reading and mathematics test results.]

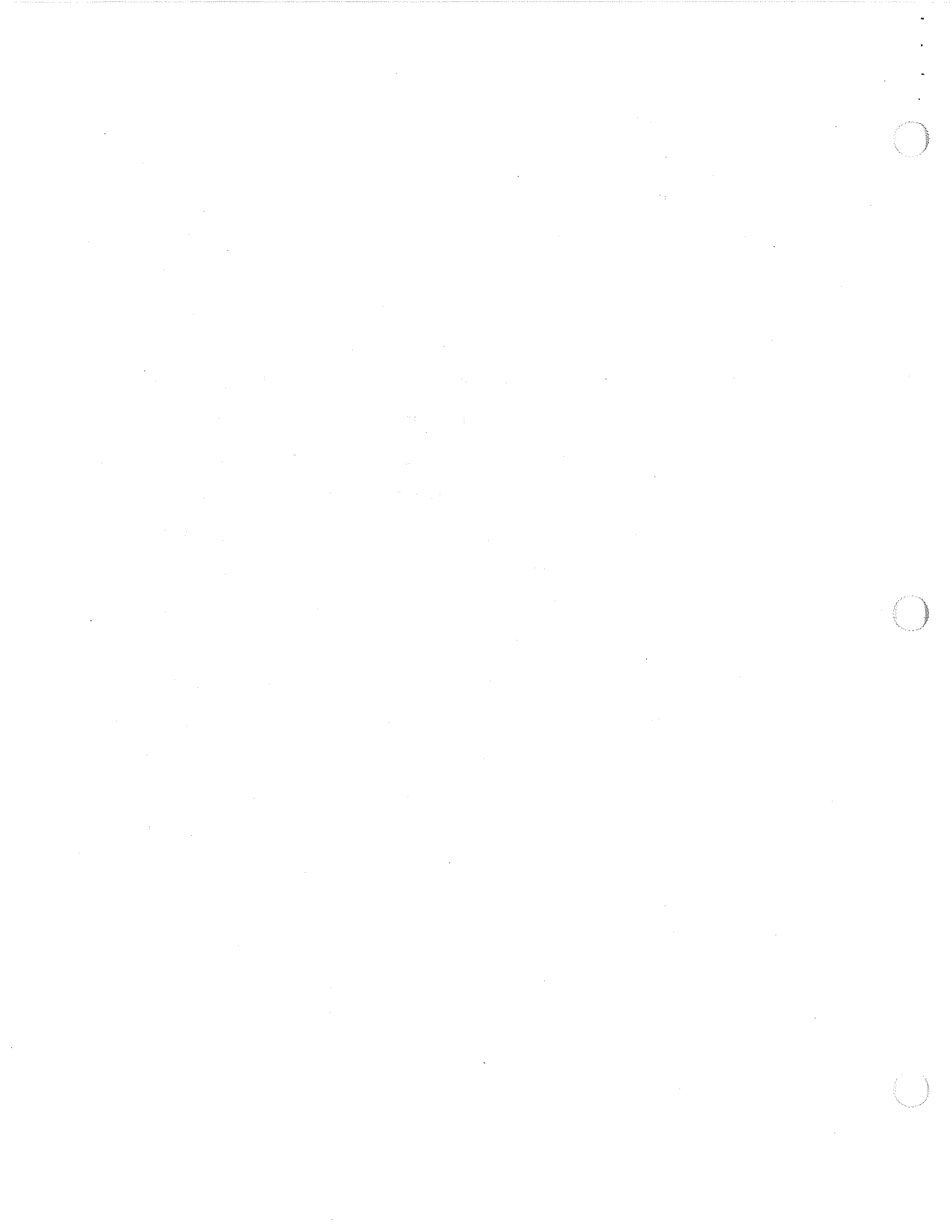
For students who entered ninth grade in 1996, the passing score on each test is 70%. Students who enter ninth grade in a subsequent year must earn a score of 75% or higher. Districts are allowed to establish higher local passing scores.

The 1998 administration of the test is scheduled for the first week in February this year, with all public school eighth graders required to take the test as part of the statewide testing program. Results of that testing are expected in late April.

The Department has provided to all districts copies of test specifications, sample tests, and suggestions for preparation and remediation. Rules provide that districts must report this year the number of ninth and tenth graders who have and have not passed the reading and mathematics tests and that remediation plans must be developed for students who have not passed the tests by the end of tenth grade. Test formats for students who need special accommodations are provided by the state, as is a list of approved alternative tests which may be used for retesting students in grades nine through twelve who have not yet passed.

THE BASIC STANDARDS: WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Since January 15, 1997, the Basic Standards for Written Composition [Minnesota Education Rules 3501.0200 - 3501.0290] have been approved through the rulemaking process and adopted by the State Board of Education. These rules provide that districts must



test tenth graders (with yearly subsequent testing for those who do not pass in tenth grade) and that the written composition requirement must be passed by all students entering ninth grade in the fall of 1997 and beyond.

The Department has provided a handbook regarding testing procedures, scoring, rubrics for scoring, and samples to all districts. *[Appendix B is a copy of the Handbook on Written Composition and the results of the 1997 voluntary testing opportunity in written composition.]*

Because the first students affected by these rules will be tenth graders in the 1998-99 school year, no written composition basic testing is scheduled for the current school year. Schools were invited to participate in a preliminary testing opportunity last year and, while participation was not extensive, 80% of the students who took the examination earned passing scores.

THE PROFILE OF LEARNING STANDARDS

Since the 1997 Report, a complete review and revision of standards for the Profile of Learning has been accomplished, proposed for adoption, moved to the public comment and hearing process, and published to schools and citizens throughout the state for final consideration. The public hearing is scheduled for February 5, 1998, at the Capitol View Conference Center.

The rules propose that students entering ninth grade in 1998 and subsequent years be required to complete the work of twenty-four high school content standards, including both required and elective standards, before they graduate from high school.



Preparatory standards for primary grades (K-3), intermediate grades (4-5), and middle level (6-8) are also provided.

[Appendix C includes the proposed Profile of Learning rules, and the Statement of Need and Reasonableness which has been submitted to the administrative law judge.]

THE PROFILE OF LEARNING PERFORMANCE PACKAGES

Since January 15, 1997, the Department has completed and updated performance packages (sets of assignments including application learning activities) which schools may use as models for the packages they adopt in their local curricula to elicit student demonstration of the Profile of Learning standards. At least one model performance package is available for each high school and preparatory standard. These packages have been made available to every district in hard copy and have been placed on a World Wide Web Site for access by school personnel and citizens throughout the state.

Performance packages have been developed through collaboration of content areas, teachers, assessment personnel, multicultural review teams, and citizens throughout the state. All districts have had opportunities to receive training in adapting these packages to local programs and teacher training for delivery of these packages has been scheduled at regional sites for all districts. Over 1500 teachers received training in delivering packages in Learning Area Five: Inquiry during the summer of 1996. Ten thousand more teachers were trained during the summer of 1997 at regional training sessions on packages in



Mathematical Applications, Scientific Applications, Decision-Making, People and Cultures, and Resource Management. Training for teachers delivering packages in Reading/Listening/Viewing, Writing and Speaking, Literature and the Arts, and World Languages is scheduled for the summer of 1998.

Student work produced from these performance packages has been collected and analyzed to develop rubrics and example performances to be used for training teachers to score student work consistently.

STATEWIDE TESTS: GRADES THREE and FIVE

The Department developed benchmark tests for grades three and five to provide information regarding student progress toward high standard achievement. Originally developed under a federal grant to assist schools in monitoring the progress of their elementary students toward high (preparatory Profile of Learning) standards, the tests were selected to be used in the newly mandated statewide testing program.

Benchmarked against the high standards, these tests will provide schools with opportunities to assess student progress and to identify students' learning needs early. Reading and mathematics will be included on the third grade test and reading, mathematics, and writing will be included on the fifth grade test. Both tests were field-tested during the 1996-97 school year and will be administered to all third and fifth graders this winter.

In addition to these benchmark tests and the basic requirements tests, the agency has worked with a statewide



advisory committee and national consultants to develop a design for high school tests which will be administered for the first time in the 1999-2000, as prescribed in statute. This high school testing will provide information regarding implementation and student achievement under the Profile of Learning and will help track school progress with student academic achievement.

IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICTS

Through its regional delivery system, the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) continues to conduct regular update, information, training, and input sessions for Superintendents, Principals, Graduation Standards Technicians, and other school personnel throughout the state. Special training sessions have also been conducted for educators from alternative schools, area learning centers, and charter schools.

In addition, special programs and information for school boards, parent and student groups, and other citizens have been enhanced during this year.

Currently, every district in the state has a designated Graduation Standards Technician who attends regular training sessions, and each district has completed a Graduation Standards Implementation Manual. Training for developing local processes to embed the Profile of Learning standards into each district's curriculum has also been provided. All districts have been invited to train local performance assessment facilitators as well.



The Department is finalizing recordkeeping models for districts to record and report student accomplishment of standards, and software vendors have been involved directly in the planning of what data schools will need to maintain, record on transcripts, and communicate to other districts when students transfer.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Department has continued to provide updated information to schools, policymakers, and citizens. Video tapes have been created which explain the standards, provide information about, for example, the connections between Graduation Standards and School-To-Work programs, and give examples of materials being used for the Profile of Learning. A statewide teleconference on Graduation Standards implementation (also provided to all schools on video format with accompanying discussion materials) was conducted in late August, 1997.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Standards of Distinction

Special "pathways" to professional level work are being designed for students with unique focus and dedication. Currently, the work in the areas of geography, the arts, science, and mathematics are being completed and readied for piloting to expand opportunities even beyond the Profile of Learning.



On-Going Review and Research

The Graduation Standards Team maintains on-going communication with national leaders in standards and has worked with the State Board to develop a process for continuous research and analysis of standards and student achievement to keep the standards dynamic and effective.

Best Practice Networks

Regionally organized networks of teachers continue to provide assistance to schools. Currently, there are Best Practice Networks in reading, mathematics, science, and writing.



STAFF CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Kate Foate Trewick , Assistant Commissioner	297-4806
Mary Pfeifer , Manager, Policy Development and Reporting	297-7204
Marsha Gronseth , State Board of Education	297-1925
Michael Tillmann , Coordinator, Graduation Standards	282-6279
•Policies •Graduation Standards Executive Committee	
•Budget •Standards/Requirements •Rule Development	
Catherine Wagner , Graduation Standards	282-6281
•Basic Standards Tests •Statewide Testing	
Mary Lynne McAlonie , Graduation Standards	282-6480
•Rulemaking	
Carol Quest , Graduation Standards	297-1929
•Graduation Standards & Students with Limited English Proficiency	
RoAnne Elliott , Graduation Standards	282-6090
John Pikala , Graduation Standards	282-6089
•Performance Packages	
Cheryll Ostrom , Graduation Standards	282-6088
•Performance Assessment Training	
Mary Lillesve , Manager, System Services	297-4679
Diane Cirksena , Team Leader, MEEP	282-5987
•Regional Delivery System •District Training	
General Information	296-1447



FISCAL YEAR 98 BUDGET

Graduation Standards Team

GRADUATION RULE STAFF	\$ 702,000.00
Includes staff and office operations	
DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT	400,000.00
Includes materials for schools to support local implementation of both Basic and Profile of Learning requirements	
GRADUATION RULE DEVELOPMENT	300,000.00
Includes costs of rulemaking as well as materials for public participation in the rulemaking process	
STANDARDS OF DISTINCTION	300,000.00
Includes development of materials and processes for achievement and recognition of expert performance by students	
BASIC STANDARDS TESTING AND REPORTING	600,000.00
Includes development of retesting for reading and mathematics basic requirements as well as testing for written composition basic requirements	
DISTRICT TRAINING	1,010,000.00
Includes materials, programs, and training for school personnel	
COMMUNICATIONS	250,000.00
Includes development and distribution of materials for public information	
 TOTAL	 \$ 3,562,000*

*Source: Agency funds. This is the first year in which the Graduation Standards Team is funded totally within the Agency budget.



GRADUATION STANDARDS AND STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	BASIC STANDARDS Reading Mathematics Written Composition	MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS Aligned with the Profile of Learning	PROFILE OF LEARNING High Standards
Dates	Reading 1998 Grades 8-12 Mathematics 1998 Grades 8-12 Written Composition 1999 Grade 10	Grade 3 1997-1998 Grade 5 1997-1998	Primary, Intermediate, Middle and High School Levels as released
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure minimum competence in essential skills for graduates • Fulfill Statewide Testing requirements in grade 8 (Reading and Mathematics ONLY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfill Statewide Testing requirements at grades 3 and 5 • One aspect of Statewide Educational Accountability System • Provide information about instruction in the Profile of Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate individual student progress towards High Standards (K-12) at the classroom level • Allow for flexibility in classroom instruction and assessment • Provide outlines for instruction and assessment
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine eligibility for graduation • Fulfill statewide testing requirements in grade 8 (Reading and Math only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide district / building information • Provide individual student information • Provide national comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine eligibility for graduation • Evaluated by classroom teachers
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Scale Reading and Math: multiple choice Written Composition: writing sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large Scale Multiple choice Open response Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Packages Used as produced by state, modified to fit local needs or, created by local teachers Include a mixture of performance tasks and traditional assessments



APPENDIX A

1997

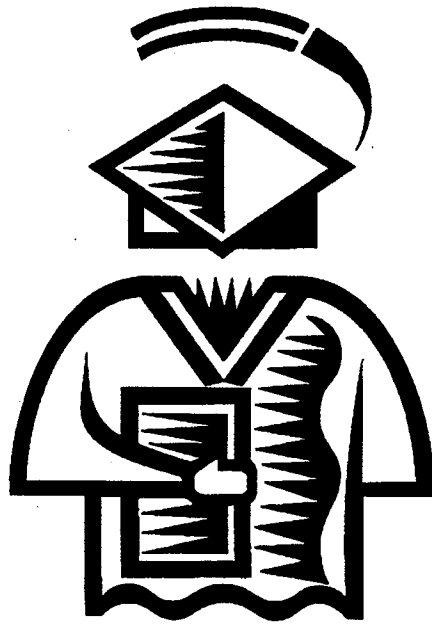
Basic

Reading and Mathematics

Test Results

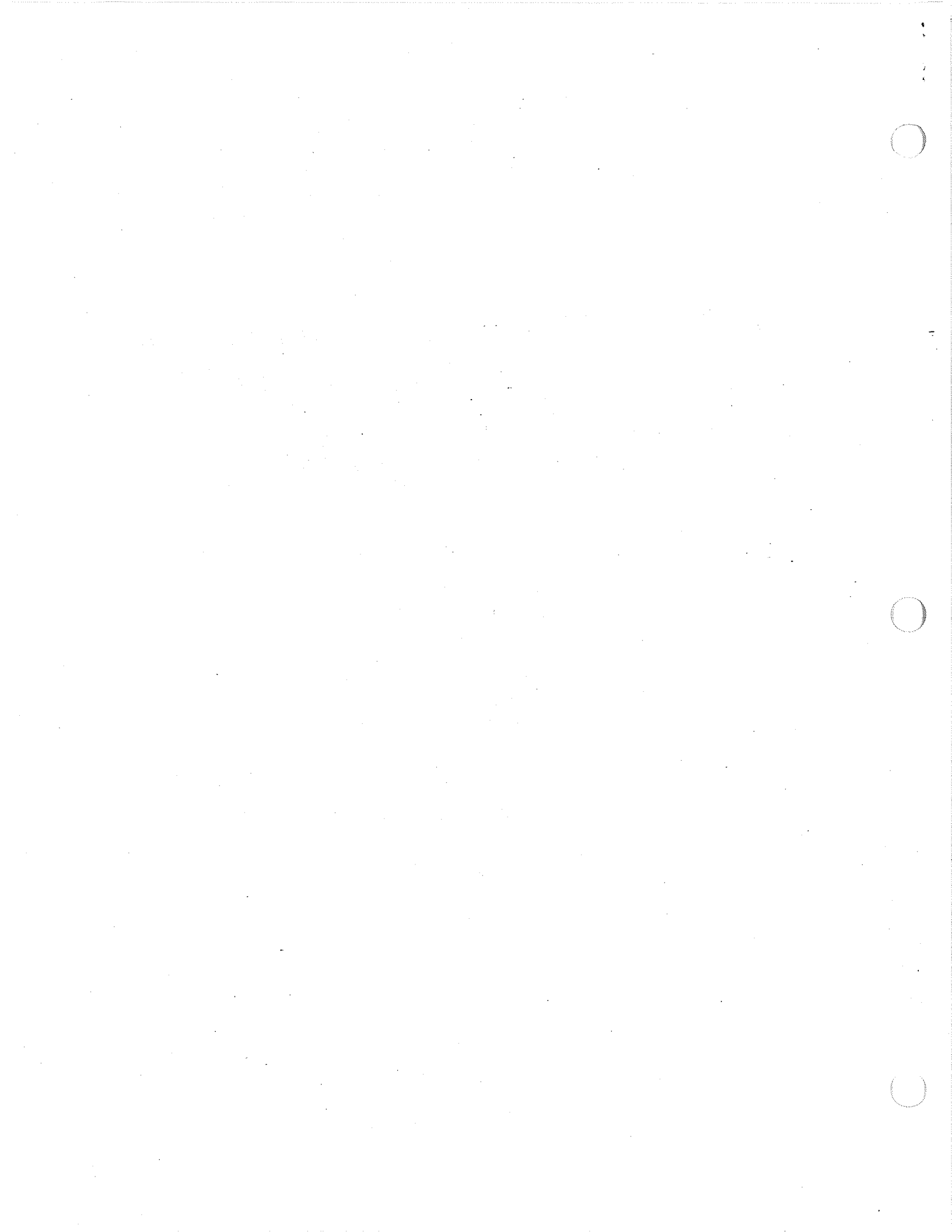
State Profile Reports
public and non-public schools

1997 Basic Standards Reading and Math Test Results



Minnesota Children
Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning

State and district summary results can be found on our Web page at:
<http://children.state.mn.us>





Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1) ABOUT THE TEST SCORES

Approximately 92,000 students took the state's basic skills tests in reading and mathematics the week of January 27, 1997. The vast majority of students taking the tests were eighth graders.

Students in ninth grade this school year are the first students to be required to pass the state math and reading tests, or other tests deemed equivalent, prior to graduation.

Comparisons across districts should be made carefully and with specific information about the number and proportion of students tested in each district. Included in this information is eighth grade enrollment data that will allow you to estimate roughly what percentage of kids took the test in eighth grade. For more specific information, consult the district.

Comparisons across districts are best made for the eighth grade only. Comparing test results for other grades could lead to unfair comparisons for a variety of reasons.

School districts have the option to use or not use the state test. Some districts show no results because they may have opted to use a different test.

School districts have the option to test any grade from eighth to 12th, and have some discretion over which students in each grade are tested.

Prior to drawing conclusions about the performance of a specific district, please contact the district for unique information about their results.

2) ABOUT THE DISTRICT PROFILE, SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

Expenditures per Pupil Unit: Source; *Minnesota School District Profiles*-1994-95 edition. Includes all day-to-day expenditures incurred for the benefit of elementary and secondary education during the 1994-95 school year; excludes expenditures for Capital Outlay, Building Construction and Debt Service. Data for districts which consolidated between 1994-95 and 1996-97 were statistically aggregated to the new geography.

Annual Dropout Rate: Source: MARSS database; the proportion of students in grades 7-12 who, during the 1995-96 school year and within the district, drop out. Annual percentages are computed by totaling the district's dropouts for the particular year and dividing that total by the district's October 1 enrollment for that year. (Dropouts/October Enrollment x 100 = Annual Dropout Percentage)

Districts associated with an Alternative or Area Learning Center school will have two annual dropout rates.

The first rate includes these alternative schools. The second rate, *Adjusted Dropout Rate* excludes them. Districts who serve significant numbers of nonresident students at these schools may wish to use the adjusted rate, as alternative school students tend to have significantly higher dropout rates than pupils in regular schools.

AFDC Count: Source: Minnesota Department of Human Services. The number of pupils, as of October 1, 1995, from families who received AFDC payments during the 1995-96 school year.

Mobility Rates: Source; MARSS database; 1995-96 school year mobility rates are defined as a ratio (expressed as a percent) of the number of *mid-year transfers to the district's October 1 enrollment*.

$$\frac{(\text{Transfers in} + \text{Transfers between schools} + \text{Transfers out}) \times 100}{\text{October Enrollment}}$$

Students transferring into the district include students who were in some other educational setting during the 1995-96 school year. Students transferring between schools, within a district, after the school year begins are also included in the totals. Students transferring out include students who are continuing their education in some other setting but outside of the district.

Students transferring to a different grade within the same school are not included in the totals. Also not included are summer transfers, adults, summer dropouts, shared-time students and early childhood students

Districts associated with an Area Learning Center in a neighboring district may show a relatively high number of student transfers as an Area Learning Center begins the school year in June while a typical district begins their school year in September. Thus, students who attend the neighboring Area Learning Center during the summer are recorded as a mid-year transfer when they return to their home district in September.

LEP (Limited English Proficient): Source; MARSS database. The number of pupils enrolled in the district who received LEP services during the 1995-96 school year.

Special Education: Source; MARSS Database; The number of pupils enrolled in the district as of October 1, 1996, who had a Special Education Evaluation Status of 4.

Free and Reduced Meal: Source; MARSS database; The number of pupils, as of October 1, 1996, who (1) have applied and are approved for a free meal program, (2) met Federal guidelines, and (3) had access to a free meal program.

Eighth Grade Enrollment: Source; MARSS database; The number of eighth grade pupils enrolled as of October 1, 1996.

Ninth through Twelfth Grade Enrollment: Source; MARSS database; The number of pupils enrolled in grades nine through twelve as of October 1, 1996.

March 18, 1997



Minnesota Basic Standards Tests State Profile Report Public Schools

Date of Test: January 1997

Student Testing Information

Reading

BASED ON TOTAL STUDENTS TESTED

PERCENT RANGE	GRADE 8		GRADES 9 - 12	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
70 - 100 %	63%	68%	71%	54%
75 - 100 %	53%	59%	63%	43%
80 - 100 %	42%	48%	53%	31%

Total Students Tested Grade 8 (1997) 50,386
Total Students Tested Grade 9-12 (1997) 28,643

Mathematics

PERCENT RANGE	GRADE 8		GRADES 9 - 12	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
70 - 100 %	76%	76%	83%	56%
75 - 100 %	69%	70%	77%	45%
80 - 100 %	57%	58%	66%	32%

Total Students Tested Grade 8 (1997) 51,929
Total Students Tested Grade 9-12 (1997) 22,725

Districts can begin testing between grades 8 and 10. Most districts begin in grade 8. Grades 9-12 include students retesting, students transferring from outside Minnesota and districts who delay testing.

Bold represents an increase from 1996 to 1997.

Public Schools State Profile Data

Profile Comparison Items

LEP	3.0%
Special Education	10.6%
Free/Reduced Lunch	25.7%
AFDC	9.2%
Mobility Index	16.4%
Drop Out Rate	3.5%
Per Pupil Expenditure	\$4,955
Total Students Enrolled Grade 8 (1997)	65,366
Total Students Enrolled Grade 9-12 (1997)	252,186

Source: Data provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning. Data compiled (1994-1996). Data is based on all students enrolled in the district. Basic Standards Tests testing group may not represent the total student population.



Minnesota Basic Standards Tests State Profile Report Non-Public Schools

Date of Test: January 1997

Student Testing Information

Reading PERCENT RANGE	BASED ON TOTAL STUDENTS TESTED			
	GRADE 8		GRADES 9 - 12	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
70 - 100 %	77%	82%	NA	81%
75 - 100 %	67%	73%	NA	73%
80 - 100 %	55%	61%	NA	64%
Total Students Tested Grade 8 (1997)			3,316	
Total Students Tested Grade 9-12 (1997)			781	

Mathematics PERCENT RANGE	BASED ON TOTAL STUDENTS TESTED			
	GRADE 8		GRADES 9 - 12	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
70 - 100 %	86%	86%	NA	81%
75 - 100 %	78%	79%	NA	74%
80 - 100 %	66%	66%	NA	62%
Total Students Tested Grade 8 (1997)			3,323	
Total Students Tested Grade 9-12 (1997)			698	

Districts can begin testing between grades 8 and 10. Most districts begin in grade 8. Grades 9-12 include students retesting, students transferring from outside Minnesota and districts who delay testing.

Bold represents an increase from 1996 to 1997.

Non-Public Schools State Profile Data

Profile Comparison Items

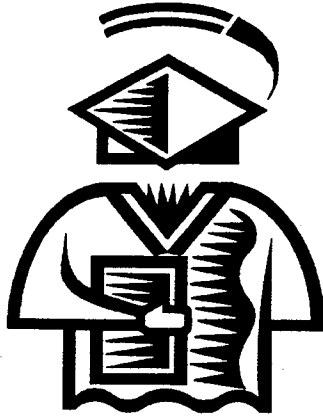
LEP	NA
Special Education	NA
Free/Reduced Lunch	NA
AFDC	NA
Mobility Index	NA
Drop Out Rate	NA
Per Pupil Expenditure	NA
Total Students Enrolled Grade 8 (1997)	NA
Total Students Enrolled Grade 9-12 (1997)	NA

Source: Data provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning. Data compiled (1994-1996). Data is based on all students enrolled in the district. Basic Standards Tests testing group may not represent the total student population.

APPENDIX B

**Basic
Written Composition Handbook**

**MINNESOTA
BASIC STANDARD TEST OF WRITTEN
COMPOSITION**



Handbook

**February 1997 and March 1996
Test Administration**



The Legislature, in 1993, 1994, and 1995, enacted into law (M.S. 121.11 Subd. 7c.) a commitment “to establishing a rigorous, results-oriented graduation rule for Minnesota’s public school students. . . . starting with students beginning ninth grade in the 1996–1997 school year.”

The State Board of Education has completed rulemaking procedures for the adoption of graduation standards in mathematics, reading, and written composition. The new rule for mathematics and reading, Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0010 to 3501.0180, became effective in April 1996. The new rule for written composition, Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0200–3501.0290, became effective in February 1997.

The State Board of Education is in the process of developing the rules for the Profile of Learning, proposed Minn. Rules 3501.0200–3501.0280. It is anticipated that the State Board will propose to adopt this rule in the fall of 1997 to be in effect in the spring of 1998. Therefore, this manual is subject to revision based on the permanent adoption of the proposed rule.

FEBRUARY 1997 ADMINISTRATION HANDBOOK MINNESOTA BASIC STANDARD TEST OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION

WHAT ARE THE GRADUATION STANDARDS?

Minnesota's Graduation Standards are a series of rigorous, consistent expectations for all schools and students throughout the state. In the past, graduation requirements were based largely upon the number of hours a student spent in class. The new Graduation Standards require, instead, that students pass specific tests and demonstrate what they know and are able to do in various academic subject areas before they receive high school diplomas. All students will need to demonstrate knowledge in the High Standards as well as the Basic Standards before they graduate.

High Standards

The High Standards in the Profile of Learning are rigorous academic goals in ten broad areas of learning. For each standard they select, students must complete a series of tasks and activities to demonstrate what they know, understand, and are able to do. Achievement is measured by classroom teachers in local schools. It is proposed that students be required to complete 24 standards at the high school level in order to qualify for graduation.

High Standards Profile of Learning

Grade Levels	Areas of Learning
<p>Primary (11 Standards)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read, Listen, View ● Writing, Speaking ● Arts ● Mathematics ● Inquiry ● Sciences ● People and Cultures ● Decision Making ● Managing Resources ● Languages
<p>Intermediate (15 Standards)</p>	
<p>Middle Level (28 Standards)</p>	
<p>High School (48 Standards)</p>	

Basic Standards

The Basic Standards guarantee that all high school graduates have essential literacy skills in order to live and work in today's society. Students achieve the Basic Standards by passing basic skills tests in reading, mathematics, and written composition. They may begin this series of tests at the grade levels indicated on page 2. The grade level for the first testing opportunity in each subject is based on developmental levels of the students as well as the sequencing of curriculum and instruction.



Basic Standards Testing

Subject	First Enter 9th Grade	First Anticipated Graduating Class	Begin Testing
Reading	1996	Class of 2000	Grade 8, Grade 9, or Grade 10
Mathematics	1996	Class of 2000	Grade 8, Grade 9, or Grade 10
Written Composition	1997	Class of 2001	Grade 10

Students who do not pass Basic Standards must be given appropriate remediation. At least one additional testing opportunity must be offered each year in the subject area(s) they have not yet passed. Seniors who have not passed must be given two testing opportunities per subject area during the school year.

WHAT IS THE MINNESOTA BASIC STANDARD OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION?

In response to a single prompt, students must create a written composition in English for an adult reader. This composition must be clearly focused, organized, developed, and coherent. It must adequately demonstrate the characteristics of the Basic Standard of Written Composition as described below in criteria A-E. Compositions will be scored by trained readers using a focused holistic score scale developed with the guidance of Minnesota educators. The Minnesota Standard for Written Composition is based on the definition of expository writing developed in the 1992 NAEP Writing Framework.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Written composition is the composite act of formulating and preparing, in English, a focused, organized, developed, coherent, and clearly expressed message to be communicated to an adult reader in a written format.

A **prompt** is a statement of a writing task or topic. Included with the prompt are reminders of the important elements students should consider in constructing their written responses.

The **scoring criteria** are the five characteristics of written composition defined below. They form the general guidelines used by trained readers to determine whether or not a composition meets the standard.

- A. **Clarity of central idea** means the composition has a clearly stated message in direct response to the prompt.
- B. **Coherent focus** means that the supporting ideas expressed in the composition relate directly to the central idea and that there is a clear connection among ideas. This may be accomplished through transitional devices, parallel structure, or other unifying devices.
- C. **Organization** means that the ideas are expressed in an order which is logical and clear and that the composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The student may choose one of a variety of organizational strategies such as cause/effect, problem/solution, chronological sequence, topical order, or spatial organization.
- D. **Detailed support or elaboration of ideas** means that the composition includes information, verbal illustrations, explanations, and/or examples which sufficiently clarify and expand the central idea for the reader. (These details should also be logically connected to the central idea.)



- E. **Language conventions** are features of language which cause written communication to be acceptable in standard discourse. Their correct use is important to ensure that the meaning of the written composition is not impaired. The writer should apply rules of sentence formation, vocabulary, word order, and language mechanics including punctuation, capitalization, and spelling of standard written English.

A **rubric** is a set of criteria or scoring rules based on the definitions of the five characteristics of written composition. The rubric for the Minnesota Basic Standard of Written Composition uses a four-point scale to describe a student's demonstrated control of these characteristics.

A **scoring guide** consists of the rubric and sample student compositions that illustrate each score point. The guide is used to train readers to apply the rubric correctly when assessing student compositions. Each sample composition is accompanied by an annotation which explains why the paper received that particular score. The guide becomes the readers' constant reference during the scoring process. After student papers have been scored and returned, this information will be made available to districts in the annual Test of Written Composition Handbook.

HOW DOES THE BASIC STANDARD TEST OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION DIFFER FROM COMPOSITION AND INSTRUCTION AT THE CLASSROOM LEVEL?

Classroom composition instruction frequently focuses on assisting students in developing effective writing strategies and processes such as mind-mapping, brainstorming, and drafting so that they may become successful writers. **While students are encouraged to use any familiar strategy or process as they prepare their compositions, only their final drafts will be scored.**

The Basic Standard Test of Written Composition is a large-scale assessment given in a secure testing environment. It is intended to measure the writing skills a student demonstrates at a given point in time.

HOW CAN TEACHERS HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THIS TEST?

Based on extensive research in composition instruction, the Best Practices Network in Writing recommends that teachers emphasize or increase these instructional practices in daily classroom instruction:

- give students ownership of their writing
- allow class time for all of the stages of the writing process
- model writing themselves
- teach grammar and mechanics in context
- design assignments for real audiences
- set up a workshop atmosphere
- use writing in all subject areas
- provide for a variety of forms of feedback
- allow students to select their own topics
- promote multiple drafts of composition
- provide focused feedback on ideas as well as mechanics



WHEN WILL THE STATE TEST OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION BE AVAILABLE?

Students who enter ninth grade in 1997 (the class of 2001) are the first group who must meet the Basic Standard of Written Composition to be eligible for diplomas. Beginning in 1998, tenth graders may take the test to qualify for graduation. The next test of written composition will be offered to these students during the 1998-99 school year.

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WITH IEPs OR 504 PLANS?

Accommodations, modifications, or exemptions are permitted for students with IEPs or 504 plans.

Accommodations are any changes in testing conditions which do not compromise the validity, reliability, or security of the state standard. Accommodations should be consistent with the student's IEP or 504 plan and are typically changes in the presentation, setting, timing, and/or response format for the test.

For the Test of Written Composition, accommodations might include extended testing time, small group administration, special settings, or the use of a word processor or a scribe.

Students who pass the Basic Standards Tests with accommodations will receive the notation "Pass-State" on their records of progress.

Modifications are adjustments to the standard, the test, or the testing conditions which are significant enough to change the level of the test's difficulty. Modified standards are created through an IEP or 504 accommodation process. The IEP or 504 team determines if the student passes the individual modified standard.

An example of a modification for the Test of Written Composition might be the use of a different scoring scale that considers the student's educational goals as defined in the IEP or 504 plan.

Students who pass the Basic Standards Tests with modifications will receive the notation "Pass-Individual" on their records of progress.

Exemptions are for those very few students whose IEP or 504 teams determine that any sort of work in this subject area is inappropriate. **Students who are exempted will receive the notation "Exempt" on their records of progress.**

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY?

Language accommodations and/or testing considerations are permitted for students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) through local district processes.

Translations of the test directions or the writing prompt may be provided for LEP students. The students' compositions, however, must be written in English without the use of reference materials.

If only the test directions are translated, students may receive the notation "**Pass-State**" on their records of progress.

Students who take the Test of Written Composition with translated prompts will receive the notation "**Pass-Translate**" on their records of progress.



The designation "Pass-LEP" is available upon the request of a student or parent for twelfth-grade students who have been identified as Limited English Proficient. This designation indicates that, after an analytic review by the scoring contractor, it is determined that the student's composition did not receive a passing score because errors in language conventions were frequent and serious enough to detract from the overall quality. The composition must display adequate skill in clarity of central idea, coherent focus, organization, and detailed support or elaboration of ideas (criteria A-D, pages 2-3). It must also be written in English without the use of reference materials.

When this determination is made, students will receive the notation "**Pass-LEP**" on their records of progress. No LEP student will be required to accept this designation in place of further instruction or further opportunities to achieve a "Pass-State" designation.

WHAT KINDS OF WRITING PROMPTS WILL BE USED?

The writing prompts will direct students to write on a specific topic. Students are also directed to write for an adult reader. The topic will not require students to have specialized knowledge, nor will students be required to use a specific writing strategy or mode of discourse (expository versus narrative, etc.).

The following prompts are similar to those that will be used:

1997 PROMPT

Your teacher has asked you to write about **one** person you would choose to be if you could be someone else for one day.

Name that person and give specific reasons **why** you would like to be that person for one day. Give enough details so your teacher will understand your ideas.

1996 PROMPT

Name one goal you would like to accomplish and give specific reasons why. Give enough details so that your teacher will understand your ideas.

HOW LONG DO STUDENTS HAVE TO COMPLETE THE TEST?

The test is untimed, but schools will be directed to schedule a testing period of at least 120 minutes. Students who are making progress should be allowed to continue beyond the suggested time limit.

ARE SHORT COMPOSITIONS ACCEPTABLE?

There is no minimum length requirement. Scores will be based on the overall quality of the written response according to the scoring criteria. Passing compositions must fully address the task presented by the prompt and satisfy the general scoring criteria described in the definitions for criteria A-E on pages 2-3.



HOW IS SCORING DONE?

The focused holistic scoring rubric below will be used to score student compositions. Scores are based on the overall quality of the composition.

PASS

Score point 4 = A more than adequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- is well developed with supporting details.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- demonstrates a control of language that enhances the overall quality of the response.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 3 = An adequate response; the passing score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- has some supporting details and sufficient development.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- may present minor obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 2 = A less than adequate response score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- may be somewhat focused.
- may lack a beginning, a middle, or an end.
- may present obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Score point 1 = A very inadequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- is very difficult to follow.
- may lack a coherent focus.
- is disorganized.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.

Not Scorable = Responses that cannot be evaluated

The composition:

- is not related to the topic (off topic). (OT)
- is not readable because it is wholly illegible or incoherent. (UR)
- is written largely or entirely in a language other than English. (NE)
- contains an insufficient amount of writing to evaluate. (IN)
- is non-existent. (BL)

NOT PASS



Each composition is scored independently by two readers who assign a 1-4 rating or one of the non-scoreable designations. Only whole number ratings are assigned. The ratings from both readers are then compared. If the ratings are different, they are averaged. For example, ratings of 1 and 2 become a final score of 1.5 (see chart below).

There are two reasons that a composition could require a third rating:

- readers assign scores which differ by more than one point (1/3, 2/4 etc.)
- readers disagree on whether a paper should pass or not pass (2/3)

The third reader is a scoring leader and considered an expert reader. This person will read the paper and independently assign a rating. Only the two ratings on the same side of the passing line are averaged (see chart below).

A final score of NS, 1, 1.5, 2, 3, 3.5, or 4 is assigned to the composition. A final score of at least 3.0 is required to pass the Test of Written Composition. The tables below show how a variety of score possibilities are resolved when readers disagree.

Score Possibilities

Adjacent Ratings	Final Average Score of Two Readers	
1 / 2	1.5	Not Passed
3 / 4	3.5	Passed

Non-Adjacent Ratings	Third Rating by Expert Reader	Final Score	
1 / 3	2	Final Score of 1.5	Not Passed
1 / 4	2	Final Score of 1.5	Not Passed
1 / 4	3	Final Score of 3.5	Passed
2 / 4	3	Final Score of 3.5	Passed

Discrepant Rating at the Passing Line	Third Rating by Expert Reader	Final Score	
2 / 3	1	Final Score of 1.5	Not Passed
2 / 3	2	Final score of 2	Not Passed
2 / 3	3	Final Score of 3	Passed
2 / 3	4	Final score of 3.5	Passed

WHO SCORES THE PAPERS?

The state has contracted an independent vendor, Data Recognition Corporation, chosen for its experience in managing large-scale statewide assessment programs, to train readers and monitor performance for the scoring of the compositions. Readers must have at least a bachelor's degree in the subject area they are scoring.

HOW ARE THE READERS TRAINED?

Each reader is trained on the specific prompt to be scored. To qualify to score Minnesota student compositions, readers must go through intensive training to learn to apply the scoring criteria



accurately and consistently. In addition to numerous practice sets, readers must demonstrate at least a 90 percent rate of agreement with scores pre-assigned by members of the state writing committee on a set of 40 qualifying papers. Daily reader performance and production reports will be generated during the scoring process as well as summary reports on each reader's reliability compared to all other readers.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY DURING SCORING?

Strict security guidelines are observed during the scoring process. For this reason, readers must sign a confidentiality statement, wear an identification badge at all times while in the scoring area, and leave all scoring materials in the scoring rooms. Student names and school identification are concealed on individual papers. Thus readers cannot be influenced by factors such as geographic location. Scoring center personnel monitor compliance with all security guidelines.

WHAT IF THE HANDWRITING IS POOR?

While students are encouraged to write as neatly as they can, there is no penalty for poor handwriting. Handwriting must be decipherable; papers that are legible will be scored.

HOW DO SCHOOLS RECEIVE RESULTS?

All compositions will be returned to districts after scoring is completed so that schools, teachers, and students have the opportunity to review them for diagnosis of student writing proficiency and identification of needs for further instruction. Each year a handbook will be published that contains the rubric with example compositions written to the current prompt. Each example composition is accompanied by an annotation which explains why the paper received that particular score. If districts would like clarification of a student's score, they may (at the district's expense) request a written explanation of the assigned score. The contractor will then provide a short description of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.

MAY ALTERNATIVE TESTS BE USED?

A district may choose to administer a test of written composition from the list of approved tests that have been submitted, reviewed, and approved by the Department of Children, Families, and Learning according to Minn. Rules 3501.002 - 3501.0290.

HOW CAN DISTRICTS USE TEST RESULTS TO HELP STUDENTS?

Test results are a rich source of information for the improvement of writing instruction. Teachers in the Best Practice Network in Writing could be contacted to provide inservice opportunities. Some areas that could be addressed include:

- strengths and weaknesses in a district's writing program
- typical problems of student writers
- strategies to help students become fluent writers

For more information, contact:

Mary Dalbotten
Best Practice Network in Writing
Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning
(612) 296-2207



WHAT DOES THE TEST BOOKLET LOOK LIKE?

The test booklet contains a Writer's Checklist, the writing prompt, space for prewriting, and pages for the final draft.

The Writer's Checklist includes reminders for students to write clearly about the central idea or focus, use supporting details, organize their writing logically, use correct spelling and capitalization, and write neatly.

Students may use the prewriting space for mind-mapping, drafting, or any familiar prewriting strategy. These pages are not scored.

Only text which appears on pages noted "FINAL" will be scored.

SAMPLE TEST BOOKLET PAGES

<p>WRITER'S CHECKLIST</p> <p>Remember to consider the following as you write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Write clearly about central idea or focus.<input type="checkbox"/> Use supporting details.<input type="checkbox"/> Organize your writing logically.<input type="checkbox"/> Use correct spelling and capitalization.<input type="checkbox"/> Write as neatly as you can.
<p>PREWRITING</p> <p>THIS PAGE <u>WILL NOT BE SCORED.</u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

<p>PREWRITING</p> <p>THIS PAGE <u>WILL NOT BE SCORED.</u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p>FINAL</p> <p>THIS PAGE <u>WILL BE SCORED.</u></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

STUDENT COMPOSITIONS

The student compositions which appear on the following pages are taken from the February 1997 preliminary administration as well as the May 1996 Field Test. Examples at each score point with explanations for the assigned score are included.

- Note:** To protect the identity of the students, compositions do not appear in the original handwriting, and names and proper nouns have been changed.



FEBRUARY 1997 COMPOSITION

Your teacher has asked you to write about **one** person you would choose to be if you could be someone else for one day.

Name that person and give specific reasons **why** you would like to be that person for one day. Give enough details so your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 13-15 received a score of four based on the criteria below.

Score Point 4 = A more than adequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- is well developed with supporting details.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- demonstrates a control of language that enhances the overall quality of the response.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 4 - Sample Paper A

What would it be like to see the expanse of the universe close up? That's what I ask myself when I gaze up at the stars. That's why if I could be one person for a day, I would choose to be an astronaut. I could explore other planets, discover new life forms, and bravely go where no one has gone before.

The first thing I would do if I were an astronaut would be to travel and explore other planets. I would enjoy hiking across the rugged terrain of Mars, or playing soccer on the moon. I could discover what Jupiter's red spot is.

Another thing I would do if I were an astronaut would be discovering new life forms. I could discover that there is life on Mars. I might experiment to see if any of the planets could support plant life. Uncovering the ancient ruins of an extinct civilization would be thrilling.

Finally, if I could be an astronaut, I would go where no one has gone before. I might be the first to set foot on Pluto. Traveling to distant galaxies would be exciting. I could even land on one of Jupiter's moons.

In conclusion, I would choose to be an astronaut if I could be anyone for a day. Wouldn't it be beautiful to see Earth rising on the moon's horizon?

Final Score: 4

This is a more than adequate response. There is a clear central idea ("I would choose to be an astronaut") that is well-developed with supporting details ("I would enjoy hiking across the rugged terrain of Mars, or playing soccer on the moon"). There is a beginning, middle, and a nice ending. The writer's strong control of the language ("Uncovering the ancient ruins of an extinct civilization would be thrilling") enhances the overall quality of the response.



"Who I Would Like To Be For a Day"

Have you ever wanted to change your identity for a day? I would like to change it on every whim. Have you ever wanted to be two places at once? I would like to stretch between them. I could, if I was Plastic Man for a day.

Who is Plastic Man, you ask? He is a character created by Jack Cole in 1941 for "Police Comics." This is his story. Small-time criminal Eel O'Brien and his buddies were working a chemical plant heist. Eel was the last one out and he tripped and fell down the stairs, knocking over a vat of acid. His buddies, afraid of the plant's guards, left him there, soaking. His run from the police ended in a field, where he collapsed. A monk took him in. He suddenly felt guilty and decided to reform. When he woke up and found himself stretching like a rubber band. He played with his now-flexible face and became... "Plastic Man"!

Plastic Man can stretch, bounce, change his facial features, and alter his shape. His body, from his



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 4 - Sample Paper B (Continued)

neck to his torso, to his legs can stretch around the city. In mid-air he can roll up into a ball and bounce, harmlessly off the ground. Plastic Man can imitate a complete variety of characters by distorting his facial features with his hands. Plastic man can also change his shape into an arsenal of devices that range from hanggliders to carpets and steam rollers.

Plastic Man appeared from 1941 to 1956 in "Police Comics" and "Plastic Man." He was later bought by DC Comics to combat the copycat Mr. Fantastic of DC's rival, Marvel Comics. Throughout the seventies and eighties there have been a number of unsuccessful revivals of Plastic Man. "Plas" (Plastic Man) most recently appeared in an issue of "The Power of Shazam."

If I were Plastic Man, I would be someone completely different, with his wacky sense of humor, outlandish costume, and very unconventional crimefighting. There are plenty of reasons why I want to be Plastic Man for a day.

Final Score: 4

The central idea is clearly expressed ("I could, if I was Plastic Man for a day") and developed with many supporting details ("In mid-air he can roll up into a ball and bounce..."). The paper is organized with a clear beginning, middle, and end. There is a control of language that enhances the overall quality of the response ("If I were Plastic Man, I would be someone completely different, with his wacky sense of humor, outlandish costume, and very unconventional crimefighting"). This response is more than adequate.



FEBRUARY 1997 COMPOSITION

Your teacher has asked you to write about **one** person you would choose to be if you could be someone else for one day.

Name that person and give specific reasons **why** you would like to be that person for one day. Give enough details so your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 17-19 received a score of three based on the criteria below.

Score Point 3 = An adequate response; the passing score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- has some supporting details and sufficient development.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- may present minor obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 3 - Sample Paper A

Have you ever wanted to be someone else?

Well I have If I could be someone else for a day I would be the singer Jewel because she has a very pretty voice, she's pretty, and she's rich and famous.

The first reason why I would want to be Jewel is she has a very pretty voice. Her voice can be sweet, relaxing or it can make you want to get up and dance.

The next reason why I would want to be Jewel is because she's pretty.

Her eyes are really pretty.

Her body is perfect she can wear anything she wants and she looks good in it.

The last reason I would want to be Jewel is because she's rich and famous.

It would be really cool if you can go out and buy anything you want.

Or if you're walking down the street and people see you and they want to get pictures and autographs.

That's why I think it would be



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 3 - Sample Paper A (Continued)

*really cool to be jewel for
a day.*

Final Score: 3

The response is on the assigned topic ("I would be the singer Jewel"), and the writer provides some supporting details to explain why she has chosen to be this particular person ("she has a very pretty voice. Her voice can be sweet, relaxing or it can make you want to get up and dance"). There are errors in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics, but they do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the response. This is an example of a "low 3."



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 3 - Sample Paper B

If I could be anyone in the world for a day, I would choose to be Thomas Edison. He was the founder of the light bulb and many other everyday useful inventions like the phone.

When Thomas was young, he would take things apart just to find out what was inside. When he got them apart, he would often study them to see how they worked. His interest in interacting and inventing things is what is so amazing to me.

To be able to look around and say, "I helped make this an easier place to live." would be an unbearable feeling. But to say that you manage a factory that puts out an average of one patent a day, is unreal.

I've always wanted to invent something useful like Thomas Edison did every day. These are the reasons I would choose to be him for a day.

Final Score: 3

The writer clearly expresses the central idea of the response ("I would choose to be Thomas Edison") and develops that central idea with supporting detail ("His interest in interacting and inventing things is what is so amazing to me"). There is a clear beginning, middle, and end, and the few errors do not detract from the overall quality of the essay. This is an adequate response.



FEBRUARY 1997 COMPOSITION

Your teacher has asked you to write about **one** person you would choose to be if you could be someone else for one day.

Name that person and give specific reasons **why** you would like to be that person for one day. Give enough details so your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 21-23 received a score of two based on the criteria below.

Score Point 2 = A less than adequate response score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- may be somewhat focused.
- may lack a beginning, a middle, or an end.
- may present obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 2 - Sample Paper A

If I had to be someone it would be my dad. He is nice, Kind cool, funny, and really fun to be around. He has a good job that pays and a really nice house. He has two kid a mom and a dad nine brothers and sisters. He likes to go out with friends he likes to play softball, hunting, and going to stuff with his dad, brothers and son. He also went to collage for three years and he met his wife there. Now he works at a plant where he make things. He was raised in Florida and wants to move back sometime.

Final Score: 2

The essay is on the assigned topic (be someone for a day). The writer maintains focus on his dad as the person he would like to be. While there is a beginning, a middle, and a sense of closure, the ideas presented are, essentially, a list that lacks the development necessary to move the paper to a higher score point. Additionally, there are errors in word usage ("two kid"), sentence formation ("out with friends he likes to play..."), and mechanics (punctuation and spelling). This is a less than adequate response.



Muhammad Ali

If I could be Muhammad Ali for one day. I would visit Las Vegas, and I would fight Mike Tyson. After I beat him. I would go on and fight the world champion. It would be hard but, I am sure I would beat him. I would go get the title. Then I would fly to meet the president.

After meeting the president. I would fly to a little town somewhere in Minnesota, and open a sport clinic. For the disabled, and the people who want to just get a nice workout I would open up a boxing ring. For kids who want to become boxers for a living. I would get my doctorate in medicine. I would help whoever wanted to become a boxer. I would make them a boxer.

The way I would make them boxers. First I would start out with them lifting weights. A little bit at a time. So that way they would form their muscles. So they would be hard for when they fight their match they wouldn't get hurt. The next thing I would do is gradually teach them how to punch. They would need to know how to keep their confidence up. When they are fighting. It is a very important thing



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 2 - Sample Paper B (Continued)

The last thing I would do, is fight
them my self, and send them off to
fight. That is why I would like to be
mahomid Ali for a day.

Final Score: 2

This response is on the assigned topic, but halfway through the paper, the writer's focus drifts from "Mahomid Ali" to how to teach boxers. The paper does have a beginning, a middle, and an end. There are numerous sentence formation errors ("After I beat him." "For the disabled, and The people who want to just get a nice workout."), spelling errors ("champion," "musceles," "woulden't"), and punctuation errors (especially commas). These errors are frequent enough to distract from the overall quality of the response. This essay is less than adequate.



FEBRUARY 1997 COMPOSITION

Your teacher has asked you to write about **one** person you would choose to be if you could be someone else for one day.

Name that person and give specific reasons **why** you would like to be that person for one day. Give enough details so your teacher will understand your ideas.

The paper on pages 25 and 26 received a score of one based on the criteria below.

Score Point 1 = A very inadequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- is very difficult to follow.
- may lack a coherent focus.
- is disorganized.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 1 - Sample Paper A

I would like to be my uncle. Because he farms. I like to farm because I like to work outside, I enjoy working on a farm. He is in town during the week, he works for fix-it-plus.

Then he helps his dad on the farm. He gets up at 1:00 in the morning some times. when he gets up at 1:00 in the morning he removes snow. that's what I like doing. I like feeding the animals.

He raises Hens and Steers at his place. He lives 2 1/2 miles from Lakeside. I go out there I help him with chores I help him with field work. I help out in the equipment ready. I help out in the spring and fall.

I help put things away in the fall when we are all done. I haul corn every fall. I chop stalks every fall too. I haul corn silage when he chops. I rake hay if it needs to be. I chisel plow at fall. I Plow, Disk, chopstock, chisel plow rake.

I haul manure in the fall. It usually takes



FEBRUARY 1997
Score Point 1 - Sample Paper A (Continued)

2-3 Days I get to Plow snow with a
truck and a Blade. I usally Do 3 of
them. In the summer time I mow Lons.
I cultivate,

Final Score: 1

While this paper is on the assigned topic ("I would like to Be my uncle"), it lacks a coherent focus as evidenced by the shift from the uncle to what the writer does to help on the farm. The numerous errors in word usage, spelling, and capitalization make the paper very difficult to follow and substantially detract from the overall quality of the response. This is a very inadequate response.



MAY 1996 COMPOSITION

Name one goal you would like to accomplish and give specific reasons why. Give enough details so that your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 28-31 received a score of four based on the criteria below.

Score Point 4 = A more than adequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- is well developed with supporting details.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- demonstrates a control of language that enhances the overall quality of the response.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FINAL DRAFT

One goal I would like to accomplish is to learn how to work in the film making business. It is a field which interests me a lot. I am interested in many different areas of the field, including editing, cinematography, and even possibly directing.

I am interested in film making for many reasons. First, I enjoy watching movies and would like to be on the other end of the film business. I have ideas for movies that would be very exciting to make. Second, it would be an exciting career if I chose to follow it. A successful filmmaker can become very wealthy and prominent. This career would also allow me to travel if I filmed in a Foreign country.

There are many aspects of the film making business which I am interested in. The most achievable careers would be in editing or in cinematography. These are much less glamorous jobs, but I would like them anyway. An overall goal, though, would be to direct a successful movie.

I would like to become qualified to work in the film making business because I am interested in it. I have

THIS PAGE WILL BE SCORED.



FINAL DRAFT

taken some courses on video production,
but would like to do more. If I am
ever able to do so, I would like to
create my own movie.

Final Score: 4

In this response, the central idea of learning the filmmaking business is clearly stated and even further defined as editing, cinematography and directing. Ideas are well developed with supporting details and specific word choice ("prominent," "achievable," "video production" and "qualified"). Also, organization is strengthened by the clear beginning, middle and ending. Varied and complex sentences also demonstrate a control of language that enhances this response. The few spelling errors that are present do not detract from the overall quality of the paper. This paper is a more than adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

What would it be like to be able to speak, read, and communicate in many different languages? This is a question I think about often. If I had to pick one specific goal in my life, it would be to be fluent in foreign languages, particularly Spanish.

I have loved the thought of learning to speak Spanish for as long as I can remember. In my younger days, as a child, I loved to say the little words I knew, mostly from watching Sesame Street, like hello, and goodbye, and the numbers.

Through the years, my vocabulary has grown and expanded dramatically, and I can now speak in a variety of sentences, am familiar with many phrases, and can conjugate a number of verbs with ease. The language of Spanish is very complex, and despite the knowledge I have attained, I have a long way to go. A long way.

I don't plan to use Spanish only as a means of getting along as a tourist. I have thought about numerous careers, and I plan to have a career dealing with foreign language. Perhaps as an interpreter, or as a translator. There are many possibilities that I have not yet considered.

I am in Spanish class now, in high school, and I have a good start. If I can-

THIS PAGE WILL BE SCORED.



MAY 1996
Score Point 4 - Sample Paper B (Continued)

FINAL DRAFT

tinue my interest in foreign language, and
try to learn all that I can, I will reach
my goal: to attain the fluency and
understanding of Spanish, and beyond.

Final Score: 4

The fluency of this paper demonstrates a control of language that enhances the overall quality ("Through the years, my vocabulary has grown and expanded dramatically. . . The language of Spanish is very complex, and despite the knowledge I have attained, I have a long way to go."). The central ideal of becoming fluent in Spanish is clearly expressed. Additionally, the paper is well organized, well developed and supported with many details ("the little words I knew, mostly from watching Sesame Street, like hello, and goodbye and the numbers"). This response has all of the characteristics of a "4" score point.



MAY 1996 COMPOSITION

Name one goal you would like to accomplish and give specific reasons why. Give enough details so that your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 33-38 received a score of three based on the criteria below.

Score Point 3 = An adequate response; the passing score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- has a central idea that is clearly expressed.
- has some supporting details and sufficient development.
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- may present minor obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may have errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics; but they do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FINAL DRAFT

One of my goals in life is to go to a good college. I don't know what I want to be yet so I'll need more time to think about it, and more ideas to look at in college. When we get out of High School the only jobs will be able to get without a college education will be a job at McDonalds or something. So many people are going to college that it will be hard to compete with them for jobs if we're not as educated.

I think it would be fun to go to college, and living in a dorm with someone you've never met before. I love traveling, and getting to see new things.

Going to college is definitely one goal I would like to accomplish.

Final Score: 3

This response is related to the assigned topic. The central idea of going to a good college is clearly expressed in the first sentence. The writer provides several supporting details (explaining why it would be easier to get a job with a college education and why it would be fun to go to college). In addition to the succinct beginning and ending, there is an organized middle. Minor errors (incorrect use of comma after "it" in fourth line, "living in a dorm" instead of live in a dorm, the misspelling of "definitely") do not detract substantially from the overall quality of this response.



FINAL DRAFT

My goal is to become a scientist in the field of technology. I want to become a scientist in the field of technology, because I always wanted to make & build inventions. I always wanted to build inventions that would help the world & answer the questions of the unknown. Questions like: "Where do U.F.O.'s come from?" "Are there aliens on Mars?" & "Can we communicate with aliens?" That's why I want to become a scientist in the field of technology.

Final Score: 3

Although this paper is brief, the ideas about building inventions "to help the world and answer questions of the unknown" sufficiently develop the central idea of being a scientist. Additionally, the sample questions provide some supporting detail. Ideas are expressed clearly and without obstacles in moving from one idea to another. Sentences are correctly formed and there are no spelling or word usage errors. Minor punctuation errors are present. Overall, this paper is an adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

One goal that I would like to accomplish is, that, I would like to take partnership in owning a Comic Book store and Cafe. The people I would like to take partnership with are one or two of my friends, who's name's are Mike and/or Jim. I think that this would be a very challenging experience for me. But, I would also like to take classes on manegment. Also, I am good at and enjoy drawing. So, I would like to take classes on improving my drawing skills also. I think that I would like to own a comic book store is because, I like comic books. The reason I would like to own a cafe is because, I like food and cooking. I also think that having a Cafe next door would be very alluring to customers. It would attract people making them want to sit down and take a little rest while they eat and read. But, I think that I would locate my and my friends comic book store in Canada. Because, people in Canada are very nice and they love to read

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FINAL DRAFT

Comic books and eat good food.

Final Score: 3

This paper clearly focuses on owning a comic book store and cafe as a goal the writer would like to accomplish. Ideas that explain why, who, where, and how the writer plans to prepare for this venture are adequately developed. Spelling, word usage and punctuation errors do not substantially detract from the overall quality of the composition. This is an adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

Life Changing Goals

If I was asked what one goal I'd like to accomplish it would be to go to and complete college. I'd like to go to college because it's a great accomplishment that will lead to a better and happier life.

Going to college would be a great accomplishment for me considering I'd be the first in my family to do so. By going to college in the future being my goal I'd hopefully accomplish other things while trying to accomplish my main goal. I'd like to get good grades in high school. I'd also like a scholarship for college. By accomplishing this I think I could live a better life.

If I were to complete and accomplish going to college I think it would effect my life a lot. I'd have a great job which would make me happy. I could then provide for a child if I chose to. I'd have great self-respect and could have a great marriage. I wouldn't have money problems which usually cause problems in marriage. If I had all these things I could enjoy life.

College has many advantages for life, making it better so I can enjoy it more. By going to college I have more skills allowing me to make more money. I'd be a success and have many experiences I enjoy. I'd have a job I enjoy, not one I'm stuck with. Which means I'd be happy going to work everyday. A Happy environment let's people enjoy everything more.

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FINAL DRAFT

In conclusion I feel by setting my goal to go to college it will change my life for the better. It will also be a great accomplishment and open up excellent opportunities for my to enjoy life.

Final Score: 3

Although this paper is repetitive ("going to college . . . a great accomplishment" is repeated several times), it is an adequate response because it fulfills the other criteria for a "3" score point. It has a clear central idea, sufficient development, supporting details and a beginning, middle and ending. There are some errors in mechanics ("opportunities," "A Happy") and usage ("for my to enjoy"), but they do not substantially detract from the response.



MAY 1996 COMPOSITION

Name one goal you would like to accomplish and give specific reasons why. Give enough details so that your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 40-45 received a score of two based on the criteria below.

Score Point 2 = A less than adequate response score

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- may be somewhat focused.
- may lack a beginning, a middle, or an end.
- may present obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FINAL DRAFT

When I am asked to think of a goal that I would like to accomplish I would have to say it would be to become a pro tennis player. I pick this goal because I love to play tennis. I am starting to get pretty good. I know that I don't have much of a chance to make it to the Pro Tennis Tour. One nice thing about play tennis is that you can always play tennis, you don't have to have a partner you can just practice your ground strokes against a large wall. I think that tennis is a great sport, it will get you in great shape if you play alot. If I never made the pros I think that I wouldn't mind that I would also like to join a tennis club of some sort. Overall this would not be a complete loss if I didn't make it as a club player I think that I would like to be a pro but I'm not really going to sweat it.

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Final Score: 2

Serious errors in sentence formation, word usage, spelling and mechanics detract from the overall quality of this paper ("One nice thing about play tennis is that you can always play tennis, you don't have to have a partner you can just practice your groundstrokes against a large wall."). The unclear ending weakens the support given in the development of the paper ("Overall this would not be a complete loss if I didn't make it as a club player I think that I would like to be a pro but I'm not really going to sweat it."). This paper is a less than adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

One goal I like to accomplish is getting a good job. I would like to be pay around \$500,000 - \$400,000 dollars a years. I would support my family and relatives. I like my job to be easy and last about 8 to 10 hours a day Monday thru Friday. But first I have to get good grades in school and take classes in college about the job I want. I stay in college for for years and get a scholarship. Applied to a good job and get a good salary with a bonus one a while.

Final Score: 2

In this response, the focus is somewhat vague (what kind of job?) and there is no ending. Abrupt changes from idea to idea also create obstacles for the reader. Additionally, there are many word usage errors ("One goal I like to accomplish," "I would like to be pay around \$500,000-\$400,000 daollars a years."). There are also two sentence formation errors near the end of the paper. This is a less than adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

My goal that I'd like to accomplish is becoming a pilot. There are several reasons that I would like to accomplish are, I really love to fly, going someplace where I've never been to, and I love to brag about flying an airplane to the people from all around the world.

For the first time, I fascinated about flying airplane when I was five. I have ridden on the airplane many times. And it is fun for me to fly around the world, bringing the passengers from one place to another place in the world. I really love to fly an airplane. I don't know why I really love to become a pilot somebody when I grow up.

The other reasons that I'd like to accomplish to be a pilot are, I really like to control and play with the technology which I am trying to say is that I enjoy working inside the airplane while I fly. And I want to have a good salary from my job.

As I told you, I really love to fly an airplane. I just want to be like other people who are pilots also. A pilot earns more than \$100,000 a year. I want to have more money which I can afford to pay whatever I need to.

Final Score: 2

This composition is related to the assigned topic. Although the writer states several reasons for wanting to become a pilot at the beginning of the response (. . . "I really love to fly, going someplace where I've never been to, and I love to brag about flying an airplane to the people from all around the world."), these are not the reasons that the writer attempts to develop. There is an attempt to develop several other reasons, but ideas are not organized or clearly expressed. Additionally, word usage and sentence formation errors are plentiful. These errors, combined with the lack of organization, indicate that this is a less than adequate response.



FINAL DRAFT

One of my goals in the year to come is make Varsity Wrestling team. I would like to make the Varsity Wrestling team next year for the experience. What I mean for the experience is that when I go into 11th and 12th grade I have 1 year of knowledge in the higher level of wrestling. The one big problem that I see with kids is that they will be good on B squad and when they get on varsity they are too nervous to do any thing and they get pounded on.

I also think when you get on the varsity team of any kind you get a lot more respect from people. Sure there going to expect more out of yourself. That's all right you loose a couple of matches in a row you will get down and when you get down you get angry and you put that anger into dedication in practice and you work harder and then you show the people what you are made of.

I think the B squad level helps because it lets you know there is always hope to get on varsity and you have to compete to get a spot B squad level like you got to compete on the varsity team.

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FINAL DRAFT

I think a little differert then
athe people but i think you should
have your best coach at B' squad
level so they are more prepaired for
varsity. If you ain't prepaired you
are going to go out on the mat
and get pounded on. Those where
the statements why and how I am
going to get on varsity wrestling.

Final Score: 2

In this response, the central ideal of making the varsity wrestling team is clearly stated, but the focus drifts to the B squad and the coach. Additionally, there are sentence formation and word usage errors, word omissions and misspellings of basic words. Although there is a beginning, middle and ending, the frequent errors present obstacles for the reader in moving from idea to idea. This composition is less than adequate.



MAY 1996 COMPOSITION

Name one goal you would like to accomplish and give specific reasons why. Give enough details so that your teacher will understand your ideas.

The papers on pages 47-49 received a score of one based on the criteria below.

Score Point 1 = A very inadequate response

The composition:

- is related to the assigned topic.
- is very difficult to follow.
- may lack a coherent focus.
- is disorganized.
- may contain errors in sentence formation, word usage, and mechanics that are frequent enough to detract from the overall quality of the composition.



FINAL DRAFT

I would like to finish my years in school focusing on the techniques of the business magnet learning more on recordkeeping and how to become a corporation and learn the value in many different business types. I would like to focus on a nice college that's write for my grade level and my school standards and my learning style. I plan on focusing on getting a scholarship for the use of me or Notre Dame college I would like to go to one of these colleges to make the foot ball teams better and to have earned my Degree so I can play professional football. I would like to accomplish all of the goal I planed so I can have children, and a wife so I could teach them about the things I learned if their intersted. Mostly I would want my kids to become something of their life and not to Drop out and how to cope with school activities and how to have fun doing it. When I become a professional ball player I would like to get my mother a new car my brother a high school car and my grandmother and anties care I would put my grandmother in a house with a made so she wouldnt barely haft to do nothing but important things I would make sure that every one live in a good environment and to main tain a good health and to not trust any one not even me not saying I would try any thing for them to lose their trust. And most of all, I would like to learn my brother with the things I know so he wont Depat from it and he will know what to do in a cilvation later on in life and how to make

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FINAL DRAFT

it in this world and how to become a
great business man or maby even work for
me once I retire from playing football
and have other goals in life and not just
one goal cause you always need something
to fall back on and when he becomes older
he would know how to follow the same steps
I did because he looks up to me and I
couldnt possible let him Down.

Final Score: 1

This paper lacks a coherent focus and a clear central idea. Because of sentence formation errors and incorrect word choice, ideas are difficult to follow ("Mostly I would want my kids to become something of their life and not to drop out and how to cope with school activities and how to have fun doing it"). There are many errors in word usage and mechanics throughout this response.



FINAL DRAFT

I want to halpe ~~the~~ peoal who don't have
a home and that need something toent.
And needed close and some way to
sleep. I feel sorryer fore them. They
dont have any famely and they don't
that may firend. if some one councl
Just give tham a Jod moed They
can get on thay feet and get a howe
and food calose. and make a some
firends and meed thary famely
will take to tham.

Final Score: 1

Although the central ideal of helping the homeless is stated, this paper is very difficult to follow because of the frequency and seriousness of the errors. There are errors in sentence formation, spelling of simple words, capitalization and usage ("if someone could Just give Tham a Jod moed They can get on thay feet and get a howe and food, calose and make a some firend's and meed thary famely will toke to tham"). This paper is a very inadequate response.



STATE OF MINNESOTA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Statement of Need and Reasonableness In the Matter of the Proposed Permanent Rules Relating to Graduation Rule, Profile of Learning: Chapter 3501 (3501.0300 to 3501.0469).

I. BACKGROUND

Historically, Minnesota, like other states, mandated that diplomas should be awarded based on credits (Carnegie units) earned by students in required and elective courses. These requirements, repealed in 1993, were articulated in Chapter 3500 of the *Department of Education Rules Relating to Education*, which specified that schools must require "successful completion" of a total of at least twenty credits, with each credit representing at least 120 hours of instruction. The required subjects included communication, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, and electives. Although school districts implemented the credit-based system, members of the community, parents, and students had little truly comparable information about the education students received. Postsecondary institutions, employers, and parents could not tell from transcripts of credits what content had actually been mastered by students because course content varied significantly from school to school. Students themselves have often not known how their performance compared with performance of students in other districts, other buildings, or other classrooms.

Credit-based or course-based requirements alone do not require consistent opportunities to learn and to demonstrate critical skills. Under a credit-based system, students may or may not experience data-handling or geometric concepts in their math courses. Students may or may not experience in their courses the inquiry processes, work on speech skills, or projects in resource management.

Educational research shows that Minnesota's implementation of a credit-based system is like implementation throughout the nation.

While initially the Carnegie unit may have represented an implicit set of standards, over the years schools have moved away from a central core of knowledge and skill toward ever-expanding offerings and ever-decreasing

uniformity in the school experiences. In 1995, the United States Office of Education reported that more than 2,100 different courses were being offered in American high schools (Ravitch, 1995).

Where the content covered and the manner in which time is spent was at one time fairly uniform in American education, today there is little consistency in how much time students spend on a given subject or in the knowledge and skills covered within that subject area (Marzano & Kendall, 1996).

Moreover, credit-based systems often emphasize memorization rather than demonstration of concepts. When *knowledge level* understanding of concepts is emphasized more than *application* of those concepts, students are often graded on their ability to *remember* information rather than on their ability to *use* the information to solve problems, analyze results, and evaluate alternatives. Many educators are convinced that emphasizing application over memorization will better prepare students for adulthood in an increasingly complex world -- whether in further education or in employment.

Because of the lack of information about actual mastery of skills, there has been a call for increased accountability for results in public education. The 1983 national report, *A Nation at Risk*, argued for national education reform and accountability. By then, Minnesota, historically a leader in education, had already made strides toward that end. In 1976, the Planning, Evaluating, and Reporting [P.E.R.] Law (M.S. 123.74, 1976 and subsequent years) required local districts to involve educators and the community in plans for continuous educational improvement. The P.E.R. process was strengthened by subsequent legislation which mandated annual review of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (1978 and 1979); for aligning local curricula with State Board of Education goals (1983); for involvement of parents, community members, and staff on local P.E.R. committees (1984); for Assurance of Mastery programs (1985); for the state's development of Essential Learner Outcomes and tests of those outcomes for district use (1987); and for each district's periodic collection and reporting of consumer opinions (1992).

While these efforts were positive steps toward greater accountability, there were no requirements for student *results* to qualify for graduation, and -- despite a program called Assurance of Mastery (M.S. 123.74, et seq.), which required school boards to establish procedures to assure individual pupil mastery in math and communications, and a process of evaluation four times during K-12 -- no guarantee that the awarding of a

diploma signified that the recipient had mastered or even experienced specific learning before graduation.

The basic idea of standards-based reform is to create clear, consistent, challenging goals for student learning, and then to make educational practices more coherent by deliberately using those goals to guide both instruction and testing (Pritchard, 1996).

Demands for accountability and increased achievement led to calls for results-based graduation requirements. In the 1980s, Minnesota business leaders, parents, and other citizens demanded stronger assurance that graduates had experienced and learned critical skills and processes necessary for postsecondary education and employment. While all students may not achieve the highest levels of performance in all standards -- in fact, most would excel in some areas and have less success in other areas - - the community wanted students' accomplishments to be scored against more consistent standards. In addition, citizens sought assurance of opportunities for all Minnesota high school students to experience, learn, demonstrate, and be evaluated against a comprehensive range of advanced skills and processes.

Responding to these demands for accountability, the State Board and the legislature directed the Department of Education to begin the development of "results-based" rather than "input-based" graduation requirements. This change was consistent with what was occurring in other states across the country.

In the late 1980s, state and district policymakers turned their attention from the number of academic courses to the quality of the core academic content being taught in public schools (Massell, 1997).

In 1987, the State Board formally articulated its intention to develop a performance-based education system. In 1990, the State Board established the Graduation Standards Committee, with an Executive Committee representing Minnesota's education, business, and citizen groups. In 1991, twenty-three public hearings and twenty public meetings were held to respond to first drafts of the graduation rules. As a result of the input gathered from those meetings, in 1993, the Board began the development of a two-tiered graduation rule -- one part setting basic requirements standards with levels of achievement required for graduation and the other setting rigorous standards against which student application and performance work would be scored.

In 1993, the legislature mandated that the State Board adopt graduation rules that were results-oriented and would begin with students entering ninth grade in 1996. Pilot sites were selected -- thirteen original pilots in 1994 and ten more in 1995 -- to develop materials and try out the developing system of standards. Teams of teachers and others from across the state were convened to consider various learning areas, the requirements that should be specified, and assessments that might be used in classrooms. At the same time, tests of basic skills in reading and math were developed, piloted, and implemented via required statewide basic requirements standards enacted through rulemaking in 1996 (Minn. Rules 3501.0010 to 3501.0180). Basic skills tests of written composition were developed, piloted, and implemented through a similar rulemaking process in 1997 (Minn. Rules 3501.0200 to 3501.0290). The required basic skills tests in reading, mathematics, and written composition constitute the first tier of the Minnesota graduation standards rules.

On a schedule established by the State Board in 1994, the second tier, now commonly and statutorily referred to as the "Profile of Learning," was to be developed, piloted, and ready for rule adoption in 1997-1998. The State Board remains committed to the completion of a phase-in of these results-oriented graduation requirements.

While many states simply decreed standards, Minnesota's approach has been to build educational capacity to deliver the new rigorous standards. Training and practice materials have been developed and delivered by the department throughout the development of the Profile of Learning, just as was done for the basic requirements. An ongoing public dialogue about what education needs to provide for all students was occurring as was school development and "try-out" of standards and performance packages. The standards and performance packages went through several iterations leading to the proposed rules.

The proposed Profile of Learning rules are a culmination of nearly a decade of work to restructure and improve public education in Minnesota. The P.E.R. laws were sunset in 1996 in anticipation of the new graduation standards. Funding to the agency for development of information on the graduation standards and for school implementation through staff development has been ongoing and was enhanced in 1997 with a per pupil allocation to school districts. Every district in the state has named a graduation standards technician to facilitate implementation. Most districts have begun -- and many have nearly completed -- the process of "embedding" the new Profile of Learning standards into their district curricula. Since 1996, over fifteen thousand Minnesota teachers have been trained in the design, structure, and use of Profile of Learning performance assessments in the classroom.

The standards themselves have gone through an intensive review. The Profile of Learning requirements were evaluated and reevaluated by the Graduation Standards Executive Committee and the State Board of Education. A review of the standards was conducted to assure that the required twenty-one standards represented a comprehensive educational background for students. Business, industry, and postsecondary needs were also considered in the standards development process. A second review of the standards was conducted by a national consultant to assure balance and to eliminate duplication among standards. A review of the state model performance packages designed as examples of classroom assessment for the standards was conducted by a nationally recognized assessment expert (Minnesota Assessment Model, 1997) to assure that the packages reflected best practice in performance assessment and instruction.

Districts have maintained locally-adopted graduation requirements, and most districts have continued to use credits since the 1993 repeal. Currently, there are no statewide requirements in effect for graduation beyond the State Board of Education Rules mandating basic requirements in reading and mathematics (Minn. Rules 3501.0010 to 3501.0180) and written composition (Minn. Rules 3501.0200 to 3501.0290) which became effective in 1996 and 1997 respectively.

But Minnesotans want more than just basic skills. To complete the Minnesota education standards and opportunities for all Minnesota students of the future, the proposed rules provide a Profile of Learning, built on the existing foundation of basic requirements standards and expanded to encompass higher order thinking skills, application skills, and experiential learning. These rigorous Profile of Learning standards are designed to achieve the statutory (M.S. 121.11 Subd. 7C) goal of preparing students to function as "purposeful thinkers, effective communicators, self-directed learners, productive group participants, and responsible citizens."

The Profile of Learning focuses on opportunity to learn. When *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* provisions call for state learning standards, the intention is clearly to increase substantially the academic opportunities of *all* American students beyond the status quo. For example, although schools *offer* advanced courses such as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and/or calculus, a substantial number of high school graduates do not elect to take these courses. Music programs in band and choir are also typically *offered*, but may be accessible to only a small percentage of students -- often through audition requiring demonstration that the student has already developed performance skills -- and even those enrolled may not be required to work toward high content standards. Choir students may, in fact, be able to earn "A" grades in some high schools without having learned to read music.

The proposed Profile of Learning standards require all students to complete all required statewide content standards. As the proposed rules were developed, it became clear that, in Minnesota, "opportunity to learn" must be ensured for every student if the M.S. 121.11, subd. 7C mandate -- "The standards must also provide an opportunity for students to excel by meeting higher academic standards through a profile of learning that uses curricular requirements to allow students to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the foundational skills" -- is to be achieved. This was clarified in the same statute, which further directs that "[t]he profile of learning must measure student performance using performance-based assessments compiled over time that integrate higher academic standards, higher order thinking skills, and application of knowledge from a variety of content areas."

The proposed rules, then, assure not only that schools offer learning opportunities, but that all students have those experiences. The proposed rules avoid *general* categories of subject areas (e.g., English) and instead spell out *specific* areas of learning (e.g., reading, speaking, writing) which students must experience, complete, and earn scores indexed against exemplars of excellent achievement. In short, to achieve the statutory goal, the proposed rules have enumerated expected *student* experiences and results rather than the traditional categories of course credits. Educational research supports this way of structuring the standards.

Research is redefining the preparation for lifelong learning and lifelong change. It is learner-centered and is focused on students acquiring and learning to apply complex processes, concepts, and skills which will enable students to learn and work simultaneously (Senge, 1990).

Consistent with national and international standards-based movements, but designed and considered carefully by Minnesotans, the Profile of Learning is congruent with recognized best educational practice and is aimed at keeping Minnesota and its students leaders in national and global education.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Profile of Learning: A Statewide Framework for Standards-Based Education

The Profile of Learning is a framework of standards-based education and applied learning. It is designed to assure accountability for individual student results and to assure that students actually experience the learning determined to be necessary to function successfully as adults in postsecondary learning and in the world of work.

In the proposed Profile of Learning, required and elective learning experiences are organized and categorized into ten Learning Areas. (See Appendices A and B.) These requirements provide a "broad range of academic experience and accomplishment" as mandated by M.S. 121.11, subd. 7c, and are consistent with educational research affirming essential components of a comprehensive education.

The Profile of Learning is organized by essential concepts and processes rather than by the traditional subject areas. It represents a commitment to a rigorous and usable education for all students by emphasizing transferable skills and discipline-based knowledge. While this *categorization* of requirements is somewhat different from the categories currently employed in most secondary schools, the relationship to more traditional categories is clear. Learning Areas 4 and 6 focus on math and science respectively. Learning Areas 1 and 2 elaborate the essential components of communication and with the literature requirements in Learning Area 3 focus on the traditional subject of "English." Learning Area 5 focuses on historical learning including the history of science, math, arts, and cultures which is organized to emphasize the use of primary data and secondary source data, the scientific method, and historical trends. Learning Area 7 groups United States history and citizenship, geography, culturally diverse perspectives, and societal concepts and institutions. Learning Area 8 groups health, physical fitness, and occupational experience as aspects of life decision making. Learning Area 9 addresses economics and resource management both for individuals and in society. Learning Area 10 is the learning of a language other than English.

In addition to categorizing essential student experience into high school requirements for graduation, the rules specify a series of preparatory standards for primary, intermediate, and middle level grades. These preparatory standards ensure that students have sufficient content background and experience to pursue, when they reach high school, each of the required Learning Areas and to perform at the highest

levels of achievement possible. All preparatory standards in Learning Areas 1 through 9 must be pursued by all students in elementary and middle level grades. Placement of those standards into specific grade levels or clusters remains the choice of the local district and community as they determine what will best meet the needs of their collectively and individually unique learners.

Each Learning Area of the Profile of Learning contains content standards that build sequentially through the primary, intermediate, middle, and high school levels. Review of each Learning Area identifies an aligned application continuum: the standards progress from basic to more advanced, general to specific, and simple to complex.

After the comprehensive preparatory standards, a student is allowed choices among the high school standards that permit the demonstration of the maximum student achievement within each required Learning Area. For example, in Learning Area 2, high school students may choose to emphasize academic writing or technical writing, after having completed preparatory content standards in *both* kinds of writing.

The groupings from which the student may select the required twenty-one high school standards, in combination with the preparatory standards, comprise a comprehensive education. The grouping of the standards within each Learning Area is based on the work and decisions of many stakeholders about what should be included in requirements for graduation.

A broad range of academic experience and accomplishment in critical content is also ensured. Within the required twenty-one high school standard groupings, students must, for example, do both writing and speaking, pursue all three mathematics areas, engage in the themes of American history and diverse perspectives, study health, and study literature. Applications of varied technologies are included in several required standards.

Learning opportunities in all preparatory standards and the twenty-one required high school standards groupings must be provided by the district. Opportunities to learn the content, processes, and required applications of the statewide standards are provided in classroom instruction as well as in performance package activities that the local district adopts to certify completion of the required standards by all high school graduates.

Finally, the rules recognize that, while all students need a comprehensive educational experience to prepare them for lifelong learning, people are different, having different skills, interests, and areas of strength and weakness. The rules do not demand that all students *achieve* outstanding levels of performance in all areas. Rather, they recognize that individual student achievement on content

standards produces a student *profile*, indicating those areas and standards in which the student excels and those in which the student has not achieved at a high level. Within the proposed rules, the individual learning styles and preferences of students are recognized, allowing for achievement of the standards in varied contexts, programs, courses, and learning environments. The proposed rules also establish a consistent means of recording and reporting student results as scored against high quality examples of excellent achievement. This information -- this *profile* -- helps the student and those who will subsequently teach and employ the graduate to recognize strengths and needs for further experience and learning.

III. STATEMENT OF THE BOARD'S STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Minnesota statute specifically authorizes the proposed rules for the Profile of Learning. In 1993, the Minnesota State Legislature directed that "...the state board shall use its rulemaking authority...to adopt a statewide, results-oriented graduation rule..." (Minnesota Statute 121.11, subdivision 7c.). The current language of that statute (1997), in addition to setting foundational skill standards in reading, math, and writing further specifies in paragraph (b) that "[t]he standards must also provide an opportunity for students to excel by meeting higher academic standards through a profile of learning that uses curricular requirements to allow students to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the foundational skills."

The statute further describes the nature of the Profile of Learning. "When fully implemented, the requirements for high school graduation in Minnesota must include both basic requirements and the required profile of learning. The profile of learning must measure student performance using performance-based assessments compiled over time that integrate higher academic standards, higher order thinking skills, and application of knowledge from a variety of content areas" [M.S. § 121.11 Subd 7c (d)].

The statute emphasizes the intention that these standards should affect learning in all grades K-12, not just in the senior high school. Minn. Stat. § 121.11 Subd. 7c (b) makes it clear that these standards are for all students: "[T]he state board shall set in rule high academic standards for all students." In addition, the 1997 Omnibus Education Bill in Minn. Laws 1997, 1st Spec. Session, Ch. 4, Art 5 §28, Subdivision 12,

provides aid to districts "to accelerate implementation of the graduation rule throughout all educational sites in the district through intensive staff development and decentralized decision-making." Funding is provided at the rate of ten dollars per pupil unit for all students at all levels K-12 in each district.

The intention that the rules should, in addition to the traditional classroom and in-school program, allow school districts to credit students for learning in community, activity, and work experiences is clarified in an amendment to Minnesota Statute 126.685 (1997 Omnibus Education Bill, Minn. Laws 1997, 1st Spec. Session, Ch. 4, Article 3, § 18) which states that school districts may require students to develop and maintain a record of "...service learning experiences, out-of-school learning experiences, and career-related experiences, such as job-shadowing, career mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, and other work-based learning activities that may be used to fulfill the profile of learning." Clearly, the legislature intends that "results," wherever achieved, should be recognized in the Profile of Learning.

Finally, the 1997 legislature mandated statewide testing (Minn. Laws 1997, Reg. session, Ch. 138, § 1, M.S. 121.1113) for students in grades 3, 5, 8, and a high school grade and directed that those tests be "...highly correlated with the state's graduation standards..."

The Board has closely followed statutory requirements. Not only do the proposed Profile of Learning rules articulate standards beyond foundational basic skill levels in reading, mathematics, and written composition, but they also provide for preparatory standards for primary, intermediate, and middle level grades which address teaching and learning as students progress toward the high school standards. The proposed rules also provide for assessing and credentialing learning results, whether learned and demonstrated within the traditional school program or in community, activity, or work-based learning environments.

In response to subd. 7c (a), which specifies that the rule is "...to be implemented starting with students beginning ninth grade in the 1996-97 school year," the Board has phased in the rule requirements, beginning with basic requirements in reading and mathematics for ninth graders in the 1996-97 school year, adding the written composition basic requirement for ninth graders in the 1997-1998 school year, and proposing to add this third and final phase of requirements -- the Profile of Learning -- for ninth graders in 1998-99. Meanwhile, in 1996 the Department of Children, Families and Learning provided training for a number of teachers from each school district across the state on one Learning Area of the Profile of Learning and, in the summer of 1997, five

additional Learning Areas. The final four Learning Areas will be the focus of training for the summer of 1998. This training supported the implementation of graduation standards rules.

In response to subd. 7c (a), which requires that "[t]he board shall not prescribe in rule or otherwise the delivery system, or form of instruction that local sites must use to meet the requirements contained in this rule," the Board has proposed rule requirements in the Profile of Learning which may be delivered in a variety of school structures, configurations, and schedules and using a variety of instructional strategies. As the state model performance packages may be adapted or other packages created entirely by the local districts, there is no limit to the creative approaches to student demonstration which schools may teach and allow students to perform.

In response to subd. 7c (b) (1), which states that "the rule is intended to raise academic expectations for students, teachers, and schools," the Board has designed rules which clearly articulate the Learning Areas and standards or groups of standards which schools must offer and which students must complete. The standards require both content knowledge and the demonstrated ability to *apply* concepts and processes. As one example of increased expectations, these rules will, for the first time, require that students demonstrate skills in speaking and listening. They will also require more mathematics and science than the state has previously required. The scoring criteria provided in the proposed rules indicate a high level of achievement against which student work is to be evaluated and measured.

In response to subd. 7c (b) (2), which cautions that "any state action regarding the rule must evidence consideration of school district autonomy," the Board has guarded the right of local districts to implement the standards through local adoption of implementation policies and procedures which local school boards and communities will establish to guide the unique implementation their local districts have selected.

In response to subd. 7c (b) (3), which requires the agency to provide, with assistance from local schools, "appropriate, comprehensive, and readily understandable" information about the rules to parents, teachers, and the general public, the Board and the department have consistently provided videos, written documents, and other materials which explain the rules. These materials have been provided in various languages and formats and have been augmented with a "community communication" program in which a department staff member works with local boards to inform their local citizens about the rules. The proposed rules further require that local boards disseminate information about the standards to all stakeholders.

In response to subd. 7c (c), which requires consultation with "psychometric experts in assessment, and other interested and knowledgeable educators, using the most current version of professional standards for educational testing . . . [to] evaluate the alternative approaches to assessment," the Board and the department have worked with a number of national education consultants and a nationally recognized psychometric expert, they have had model performance packages evaluated by a company recognized nationally for its work in performance learning and assessment, and they have involved hundreds of educators throughout the state in the development of standards and performance packages. (See below in Sections V and VI.)

In response to subd. 7c (d), which states that "[t]he profile of learning must measure student performance using performance-based assessments compiled over time that integrate higher academic skills, higher order thinking skills, and application of knowledge from a variety of content areas," the Board has proposed a comprehensive educational background through the ten Learning Areas and standards requirements which reflect the broad range of experience and skills needed to function as adult learners, citizens, and workers. It has integrated application activities into the standards requirements and provided training which assists schools in designing academic activities which are authentic to real world applications. It has provided models which integrate thinking skills with academic content and process. It has used national standards, recognized documents such as the Secretary's Commission on Acquiring Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report, school-to-work expertise, and the advice and requirements of postsecondary educational institutions in the development of the proposed broad-based and rigorous standards which address skills and processes identified as essential for lifelong education and employment.

In response to subd. 7c (e), "The Board shall periodically review and report on the assessment process and student achievement with the expectation of raising the standards and expanding high school graduation requirements," the Board already reviews results of testing in basic requirements and is establishing a process for periodic review of standards, results, and assessments with the intent to continuously upgrade the standards. The proposed rules specifically require districts to keep records of assessments administered and student results so that the required review, upgrading, and expansions of the standards may be accomplished.

IV. OVERVIEW OF STATEMENT OF NEED FOR THE PROFILE OF LEARNING

The evidence to support the need for rules establishing the Profile of Learning comes primarily from four sources:

1. State mandates regarding what the Board must include in its results-oriented graduation rule;
2. Federal law setting the parameters for state-controlled learning standards;
3. Education research which supports the need to change from time-based to standards-based education to prepare students for their individual and collective futures; and
4. The continuing call by Minnesotans for accountability and for continuously improving educational opportunity and achievement by all students.

1. State mandates specifically articulate the need for the Profile of Learning. Numerous Minnesota Statutes, as referenced in Sections I and III of this document, direct the Board to adopt a Profile of Learning rule and detail specific requirements for the rule. The central directive of the mandate is stated in Minnesota Statute 121.11, subd. 7c (b) [1996] which reads that:

(b) To successfully accomplish paragraph (a), the state board shall set in rule high academic standards for all students. The standards must contain the foundational skills in the three core curricular areas of reading, writing, and mathematics while meeting requirements for high school graduation. The standards must also provide an opportunity for students to excel by meeting higher academic standards *through a profile of learning that uses curricular requirements to allow students to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the foundational skills* [Italic emphasis added].

Having adopted rules requiring basic skills in reading and mathematics in 1996 and in written composition in 1997, the State Board is fulfilling the remaining part of this legislative mandate through the current proposal for adoption of Profile of Learning rules.

Requirements in the 1997 statewide testing legislation (Minn. Laws 1997 Reg. Session, Ch. 138 § 1), that the statewide tests be correlated to the Profile of Learning

standards, and 1997 legislation funding provided to schools at \$10 per pupil in the 1997-1998 school year for acceleration of graduation standards implementation (Minn. Laws 1997, 1st Spec. Session, Ch. 4, Article 5, § 28) further enhance this statutory mandate.

2. Federal law sets parameters for educational programs that advance the defensibility of the Profile of Learning. While the provision and regulation of education are within the authority of the states, there is no question that federal initiatives have strongly encouraged states to adopt standards such as those in Minnesota's Profile of Learning.

In order to participate in the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Public Law 227 (103-227 Sec. 306 (c) (1))* of March 31, 1994, states must have "a process for developing or adopting state content standards and state student performance standards for all students" including "the adaptations and accommodations necessary to permit such participation." Minnesota, a Goals 2000-funded state since August of 1994, must adopt such statewide content and performance standards. These were partially achieved through the adoption of Minn. Rules 3501.0010 through 3501.0290. These will be fully achieved by the adoption of the proposed rules which establish comprehensive content standards and performance standards: the proposed rules are, therefore, needed to fulfill federal requirements.

Compliance with other federally-funded programs also requires development of standards. Participation in Title I (Improving America's Schools Act), another federal program, also requires state content standards and consistent testing of students and evaluation of schools against those expectations. Minnesota's school-to-work initiative is currently funded under a federal school-to-work grant, which was written and funded, based directly on the implementation of school-to-work initiatives in Minnesota that are congruent with the proposed Profile of Learning rules.

In sum, Minnesota's participation in federal funding and programs has been based explicitly on an assumption that the Board will adopt Profile of Learning rules as directed in law (M.S. 121.11 subd. 7c). The Profile of Learning is consistent with national initiatives to improve schools and the academic achievement of all students.

3. Education research supports the need for the Profile of Learning. The department has undertaken a thorough review of education research literature. Evidence from educational research, studies, and reports are used throughout this document to support the need for the proposed rules.

Current education research supports the need for high standards, application learning, diverse learning opportunities, results-orientation, emphasizing higher level thinking skills, learning concepts and processes that are transferable, performance assessment, and individualized curriculum and instruction. The Profile of Learning provides for: 1) the establishment of high content standards across Learning Areas that comprise a comprehensive education; 2) the requirement of authentic application by learners using real-world reference; and 3) the demonstrated completion by students of the standards, which are consistent with this research.

There is a need to provide standards which maximize learning potential and which prepare students effectively for the world of work and lifelong learning. The Profile of Learning's emphasis on content skills, completed application work, local flexibility in curriculum and instruction decisions, and clear reporting of student progress and achievement are congruent with needs defined by research and data, not only about learners, but also about the school and the education system.

4. Minnesotans have demanded stronger accountability for high learning standards, higher achievement, and better preparation of Minnesota students for productivity in the future. The Profile of Learning provides what Minnesota stakeholders have stated is needed for public education. With the 1993 repeal of state-mandated, credit-based graduation requirements and the contemporaneous statutory requirement that the State Board of Education adopt new, results-oriented graduation requirements, came ten million dollars in legislative funding to "jump start" the public dialogue about what should be required of students and to design and develop the new graduation requirements.

Broad participation by Minnesota citizens -- including educators, business leaders, policymakers, parents, and community members -- has resulted in stakeholders across the state being involved in an ongoing process and being heard during the four years that the proposed rules were under development. This continuous involvement of stakeholders has resulted in an understanding that Minnesotans want the following for their schools and their students:

- That the opportunities to learn provided in schools will truly prepare them for postsecondary education, for the world of work, and to be competitive in a global economy. The information that students who finish high school have often been unprepared for the world of work and that those who wish to continue with postsecondary education often need remediation before they can approach credit-bearing courses

raised concern among Minnesotans. Long confident that the Minnesota education system was among the best in the nation, Minnesotans were distressed to find that many students lacked even the foundational skills of reading, mathematics, and writing.

Business and industry sought a workforce with the ability to apply advanced skills and processes. The abilities to be effective communicators, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners were among the most highly sought by employers (SCANS Report, 1991). Preparation for these most complex skills demanded that students have experience in using what they know; and the rapidly changing technology and logarithmically expanding body of knowledge and information made it necessary that students learn skills which would make them able to access, understand, and use whatever new information their world discovered.

Remembering information is no longer enough; in fact, one could simply not remember enough information to serve him or her for life. Basic "facts," though certainly important, need to be augmented by complex concepts and processes once believed to be needed only by the most purely "academic" learners.

Ultimately, this call by citizens was for a comprehensive system of education which prepares students in situations which integrate knowledge, concepts, and processes, just as they are integrated in adult life. This integration called for a new "application-based" approach to school which both challenged and prepared students. This integration called for standards which included both understanding and application. This call, in short, supports the need for the Profile of Learning.

- **That all learners are provided learning opportunities which recognize their uniqueness and maximize their achievement.** Minnesotans want schools which address the individual needs and interests of each student while driving toward the highest possible realization of each learner's potential. Whereas previous requirements recognized and celebrated the accomplishment of some students in some "academic" courses such as English, mathematics, traditional sciences, history, and geography, there was little recognition of "applied" learning courses or the fact that many students achieved necessary skills better when they learned these skills in areas of vocational or recreational interest. Thus, speaking skills learned in the Future Farmers of America speaking contest were not credited because they were not learned in traditional language arts and speech courses. Vocational and career-based courses were "electives" which students often could not fit into their schedules, despite the fact that they were a context in which students could learn essential skills, as well as, and sometimes even better than, they could or did in "required" classes.

The Profile of Learning emphasizes not *where* students learn but *what* students learn and assesses their demonstration that they have learned it. It articulates learning standards, but leaves local schools free to deliver curriculum and instruction to achieve those standards in various programs and opportunities which meet individual student interests and goals. This continues the development in Minnesota of alternative learning environments such as Postsecondary Enrollment Options, alternative schools, interdisciplinary programs, and school-to-career programs that emphasize strong applied learning of skills and processes.

The Profile of Learning emphasizes that students have varying areas of strength and weakness, but that all students must have opportunities to learn and demonstrate their achievement. It recognizes that students learn in different ways and environments, and, therefore, it credits achievement wherever and however it is demonstrated. The Profile of Learning sets required areas of learning rather than required levels and courses. It recognizes the truth of John Gardner's admonition: "The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water" (J. Gardner, 1962). And it recognizes that school is a place for experience as well as achievement, assisting the student in accessing as much of the real world as possible.

- That the state, while setting strong and consistent standards, will preserve the right of parents and local communities to design curriculum, instruction, and school opportunities which they believe will best serve the needs of their students. Unlike states which have mandated statewide curricula, and sometimes even textbooks and instructional methods, for students' experiences in classrooms, Minnesotans believe that the local community is best able to determine what will work for students. Minnesotans believe that all students, no matter where they attend school, should be challenged to complete statewide standards in essential skills and processes. But they also believe that districts and school sites are as individual as the students they serve. They want a system which holds the schools accountable for specified statewide results, but gives them great latitude in the methods and materials they use.

The Profile of Learning does not dictate curriculum, instructional method, or strategy. While statewide testing, as adopted by the 1997 legislature, will provide information about learning *results* achieved in each district and site, the proposed rules for the Profile of Learning do not mandate *how* students must learn or *in what environments*, carefully leaving those decisions to local sites.

- **That learning experiences are comprehensive.** Beyond the basic skills, Minnesotans want to be certain that the experiences their students have cover the complete range of skills and processes students need for success.

The Profile of Learning is Minnesota's definition of a comprehensive standards-based education that includes an integrated knowledge base of the essential skills, concepts, and processes that a public high school graduate should know and be able to do to function effectively as a purposeful thinker, effective communicator, self-directed learner, productive group participant, and responsible citizen. The Profile demands broad-based experience; it sets requirements that avoid the student's "choosing around" or totally missing necessary applications.

- **That student achievement can be recorded and reported meaningfully for the students themselves, their parents, and those who will give them postsecondary opportunities.** It is generally recognized that present report cards and transcripts are not sufficiently meaningful because the grades and scores that are reported are not benchmarked against consistent or clear standards. Often grades consider attendance, participation, behavior, or progress considerations which make it difficult to determine what the student's actual achievement in the area is. As a result, employers, colleges, and universities are finding current transcripts of little help in determining what actual skills and abilities the applicant possesses.

The Profile of Learning is designed to provide a student record set out as a "profile" of the strengths and weakness of the student, scored against consistent standards. It requires that students complete the work required by the standard and that a professional evaluation of the student's achievement -- scored against high exemplars -- be reported. This requirement will assist students and parents as students progress through school and will assist employers and admission officers in determining the level of achievement the student has demonstrated. Clearer reporting of student strengths and weaknesses, scored against more consistent standards, will provide a clearer assessment of each student's and graduate's accomplishments.

Adoption of the Profile of Learning is needed to provide all Minnesota students with rigorous preparation for adult work, citizenship, and lifelong learning in the Twenty-first Century and to ensure locally designed delivery of statewide learning opportunities. This need has been articulated in state mandates, federal parameters, educational research, and stakeholders' views. Evidence gained from surveys, public meetings, and

studies that involved stakeholders and Minnesota citizens at large will be used throughout this document to support the need for the proposed rules.

V. OVERVIEW OF STATEMENT OF REASONABLENESS FOR THE PROFILE OF LEARNING

In developing the Profile of Learning and in preparing the proposed rules for the Profile of Learning, the State Board of Education and the Department of Children, Families and Learning sought detailed information, input, and advice from a variety of sources. The reasonableness of these proposed rules rests, for the most part, on six major points:

1. The scope and extensiveness of involvement and participation of **primary stakeholders** in Minnesota in the development process;
2. An ongoing, **consistent process** structured around the **Graduation Standards Executive Committee** to gather and review suggestions and input during the development period for the graduation standards;
3. The involvement of **professionally recognized experts in education and educational assessment, Minnesota educators,** and the use of widely recognized, credible sources of **current best practice and professional standards;**
4. The **piloting of the standards and assessments** in school districts with the involvement of teachers, students, parents, and communities;
5. The derivation of the proposed rules to respond to identified needs for accountability, for individual student results, for local autonomy, and for the education of all students in the skills and processes needed for lifelong learning and postsecondary education and employment; and
6. The rulesⁱ responding to the **authorizing legislation.**

Each of these major points is further elaborated below:

1. Stakeholder Involvement

For two decades Minnesotans have been involved in a public dialogue on education. It is the scope and extensiveness of the stakeholder participation that gives strong support to the reasonableness of the proposed rules. Parents, interested individuals and groups, and the public in general were encouraged to provide input and were involved in forty-three public meetings about graduation requirements between 1990 and the present. In the fall of 1994, the then Minnesota Department of Education established an external consumers information and input process to solicit suggestions and comments

from business, industry, the military, labor, and higher education. This input focused on skills and knowledge needed by high school graduates and ways the proposed rule could be made more relevant to the lives of students after high school. In 1994-95, eight meetings were convened for communities of color to review drafts of the standards and to provide input.

Reports from the public meetings held in 1994 indicated public support of all ten Learning Areas of the Profile of Learning, particularly for the areas of Decision-Making and the Arts. Others commented that the competency-driven Profile gives clearer expectations than current requirements, provides accountability for learning, and supports local control (Rochester Public Meeting; Bloomington Public Meeting).

A poll in the *Pioneer Press*, February 1994, stated that 89% of Minnesota voters supported requiring performances and minimum standards for graduation. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents also favored activities in the Profile of Learning that emphasized collection of information from a variety of perspectives, stewardship of the environment, and improvement of individual and community health (O'Connor, 1994).

The department's public information activities, which have increased substantially since the fall of 1994, continue to ensure the broad distribution of information about the proposed Profile of Learning. Over 150,000 brochures and information packets were developed and disseminated to school districts, education-related organizations, attendees at meetings and workshops, and individuals requesting materials. These materials were designed to communicate information and to provide ongoing opportunities for citizens to dialogue with the department. Prior to commencing the formal rulemaking process, the State Board of Education reviewed the various components of the rules as they were developed. This process gave the public yet another opportunity to comment and make suggestions. In November 1996, the formal rulemaking Request for Comments was published by the State Board of Education and disseminated by mail to over 5000 recipients. In Winter 1997, a survey was sent to schools to identify issues regarding the proposed rules (Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, 1997); and, between Spring 1997 and board adoption, several meetings with the state Special Education Advisory Committee, the State Multicultural Education Advisory Committee, and content organizations' leadership were held to clarify and finalize language.

2. Graduation Standards Executive Committee

Between 1990 and 1997, the Graduation Standards Executive Committee, representing major education organizations as well as Minnesota business and citizens,

worked with department staff and the State Board to develop comprehensive results-oriented graduation standards that require students to demonstrate competencies to graduate. The following procedures were established by the committee to guide the review and revision of the standards. The reason for developing these procedures was to ensure systematic consideration of input and comments.

- a.) Any individual, group, or organization could submit comments and suggestions to the Department of Children, Families and Learning at any time during the 1993-1997 development process. Written comments were acknowledged and forwarded to the appropriate working group.
- b.) All suggestions for revision were forwarded to the Executive Committee with recommendations from staff and pilot sites to accept, reject, or modify the suggestion for inclusion in the redraft of standards.
- c.) The Executive Committee acted on each recommendation.
- d.) The Executive Committee developed recommendations to the State Board after verifying that all suggestions had been considered.
- e.) The Executive Committee forwarded recommendations to the State Board of Education for the Board's review and action.

3. Professional Experts and Best Practice

Numerous professional experts have been consulted during the development and refinement of the Profile of Learning. Both Minnesota educators and national consultants contributed their expertise on best practice.

Over one thousand educators, representing twenty-three school districts throughout the state including teachers with content area expertise, principals, and assessment specialists, worked over two years to develop and revise standards and assessments for the Profile of Learning. These educators also participated in initial field tryouts of the Profile of Learning. The Best Practice Network is a statewide organization of Minnesota teachers. The network groups meet according to content subject areas to consider the application of best practice in their various subject areas to teaching. The various work groups of the Best Practice Network have met several times each to review issues and standards in their respective content areas during the development of the Profile of Learning.

National consultants in the areas of standards-based education, assessment, and applied learning have been directly involved in working with the department during the development of the content standards and assessment activities. Evidence from educational research, studies, and reports are used throughout this document to support

the need for the Profile of Learning rules and to confirm that the Profile constitutes best practice.

4. Pilot Sites

Beginning in 1993, pilot sites were involved in a continuous process of development, revision, and implementation of the proposed rules in cooperation with the then Department of Education. The department selected thirteen Tier I pilot sites to assist in development of the standards and assessments for the proposed rules. The sites began their work in 1993 and have worked primarily on the Profile of Learning standards and assessments, but have also implemented reading and mathematics basic requirements as conditions for graduation in their schools. A fourteenth Tier I pilot site was added in 1994. These sites include two urban, five suburban, and seven rural districts. Two education districts, which represent consortia of smaller districts in their regions, were among the rural sites. Two of the pilot sites were already involved in developing district standards and assessments before beginning work on the new graduation standards.

In 1994, the Tier I pilot sites embarked on a project to build the first drafts of performance packages for standards. Assessment technicians were named for each site, and teachers volunteered to build high school level package drafts. In the summer of 1995, nearly two hundred drafts were considered by content committees. The drafts were evaluated as ready for revision and release or in need of further work.

In the summer of 1995, the Center for Student Performance was established to work on the draft packages submitted by pilot sites, to build additional performance packages, and to develop sample packages for the primary, intermediate, and middle level standards. By spring 1997, the Center met its goal of publishing a strong draft of at least one model package for each standard at each level.

In 1995, Tier II pilot sites were selected. These pilots were high schools only and they worked to try out performance packages developed by Tier I sites and the Performance Center. During the 1996-97 school year, both Tier I and Tier II pilot sites received results-based grants from the Department of Children, Families and Learning to try out the performance packages in their classrooms. The sites participated in the first "student work exchange" seminars on scoring and performance expectations, and submitted student work as potential exemplars. Meanwhile, the Department of Children, Families and Learning began a three year cycle of training for teachers throughout the state -- Phase I included training on implementing the Inquiry Standards in Learning Area 5, with fifteen hundred teachers participating and receiving follow-up

training. These teachers submitted student work as a result of their implementation, for consideration as state model exemplars. Phase II, conducted in summer 1997, involved over 10,000 teachers working on Learning Areas 4 (Mathematical Applications), 6 (Scientific Applications), 7 (People and Cultures), 8 (Decision-Making), and 9 (Resource Management). They will also receive formative and summative conferencing during the 1997-98 school year. Phase III training on Learning Areas 1 (Read, Listen, and View), 2 (Write and Speak), 3 (Literature and the Arts), and 10 (World Languages) will be provided in summer 1998.

The experience of the pilot sites has provided an important foundation for the development and refinement of the Profile of Learning standards. The pilot sites were tapped as a major source of advice during the development process, meeting to discuss various aspects of the rule, requirements for students, and implementation needs of schools across the state. At the finish of the piloting in spring 1997, each site submitted its evaluation of the piloting experience, further implementation plans, and recommendations -- all of which became a part of the wealth of data generated from implementation efforts across the state to inform policy decisions regarding this rule and to ensure the rule's reasonableness.

5. Proposed Rules Respond to Identified Needs

Evidence that the proposed rules meet the needs identified in Section IV for students and schools will be used throughout this document to support the reasonableness of the proposed provisions. Documents cited throughout this statement of need and reasonableness are listed in the bibliography.

6. Proposed Rules Meet Authorizing Legislation

Evidence that the proposed rules meet the requirements set out in the authorizing legislation (M.S. 121.11 subd. 7c) will be used throughout this document to support the reasonableness of the proposed provisions and can be found particularly in Section III of this document.

VI. DETAILED STATEMENT OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS

3501.0300 PURPOSE.

The purpose of parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469 is to establish the profile of learning requirements for a high school diploma.

This purpose statement is needed to state clearly that these proposed rules are for the purpose of establishing the requirement that the proposed statewide standards must be offered in every Minnesota public school district and must be completed by all students before a diploma can be awarded by a district.

This provision is reasonable because it gives clear direction to districts that state level standards are established, must be offered, and are minimum criteria to be used for awarding a local high school diploma. The State Board is directed by M.S. 121.11, subd. 7C. to set these requirements.

3501.0310 SCOPE.

Parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469 govern the minimum requirements that public school districts shall establish for earning a high school diploma for all students who enter ninth grade for the first time in the fall of 1998 or a subsequent year.

This statement of scope is needed to specify which students are included in the proposed rules and when and for whom the rules become effective.

This provision is reasonable because it provides four years notice to 1998 ninth grade students who must complete the requirements to earn a high school diploma. This four year prior notice is consistent with the period of notice that was given when the basic requirements in reading, mathematics, and written composition were adopted, and provides adequate notice to and opportunity for students to complete the requirements by their graduation date.

3501.0320 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. Scope. For the purposes of parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469, the terms defined in part 3501.0030 have the same meaning unless otherwise indicated in subpart 2.

The provision in subpart 1 is needed to clarify that some of the terms used in the Rules Relating to the Graduation Standards in mathematics, reading, and written composition (Minn. Rules 3501.0010 to 3501.0290) continue to apply to these proposed rules for the Profile of Learning.

It is reasonable because the subpart informs readers that these terms are used consistently throughout the entire three phases of the graduation standards rules unless clearly indicated otherwise by the specific definitions in subpart 2.

Subp. 2. Definitions for the profile of learning. For the purposes of parts 3501.0300 to 3501.0469, the terms in items A to J have the meanings given them.

A. "Graduation requirements" means the number and distribution of high school content standards that a district must offer and certify that a student has completed to be eligible for a high school diploma.

B. "Learning area" means one of the ten categories into which all preparatory content standards and high school content standards are organized. The learning areas include: (1) read, listen, and view; (2) write and speak; (3) literature and the arts; (4) mathematical applications; (5) inquiry; (6) scientific applications; (7) people and cultures; (8) decision making; (9) resource management; and (10) world languages.

C. "Content standard" means a set of state-prescribed specifications in a learning area.

(1) "High school content standard" means a content standard that fulfills one of the high school graduation requirements.

(2) "Preparatory content standard" means a primary, intermediate, or middle level content standard that a district requires students to complete, usually in kindergarten through grade 8.

(a) "Primary content standard" means a content standard that the district requires students to complete in approximately kindergarten through grade 3.

(b) "Intermediate content standard" means a content standard that the district requires students to complete in approximately grades 4 and 5.

(c) "Middle level content standard" means a content standard that the district requires students to complete in approximately grades 6 through 8.

D. "Specifications" means what a student must know

and be able to do to complete a content standard.

E. "Performance package" means a group of assignments and application activities that a student shall perform to demonstrate completion of the specifications of a content standard.

(1) "State model performance package" means a state-developed performance package that is an example of assignments and application activities.

(2) "Local performance package" means a performance package other than a state model performance package adopted by a district to show that a student has completed all specifications of a content standard at a level that equals or exceeds the difficulty and complexity of the state model performance package.

F. "Rubric" means the criteria set by the commissioner to be used by a district to assign a score to student work on a performance package.

G. "Exemplar" means an actual example of student work on a performance package determined by the commissioner to represent student performance that earns a score of "3" or "4."

H. "Exemption" means that a student with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan is not required to complete a particular content standard.

I. "Modification" means that a student with a disability with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan or a student with limited English proficiency with an individual graduation plan is not required to complete all specifications of a content standard or that a student with limited English proficiency may complete a content standard entirely in a language other than English.

J. "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

Subpart 2. is needed to inform the reader that there are specific terms used in the Profile of Learning rules that are not included in the rule definitions for the basic standard tests (part 3501.0030). This subpart is reasonable because it provides specific definitions of terms which clarify the exact meaning of the requirements of the proposed rules. In the instances where a term also appears in part 3501.0030, subpart 2 is necessary and reasonable to clarify the term if applied differently to these proposed rules.

3501.0330 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.

Subpart 1. Standards and requirements. The statewide content standards are established in parts 3501.0440 to 3501.0469. The preparatory content standards are in parts 3501.0460 to 3501.0469. High school content standards are in parts 3501.0440 to 3501.0450. High school graduation requirements are in subparts 3 and 5.

Subp. 2. Districts and students.

A. A district shall provide learning opportunities for all students in all preparatory content standards in learning areas one to nine, and learning opportunities sufficient to meet graduation requirements in high school content standards in all ten learning areas. A district shall offer at least one foreign language in learning area ten.

B. There are 48 high school content standards that are in ten learning areas. A student is required to complete 21 of the 47 content standards in learning areas one to nine under subpart 3 for graduation. A student may select electives from 28 of the 47 content standards in learning areas one to nine under subpart 3. A student may select the content standard in learning area ten as one or more electives.

Subpart 1 is needed to establish a standards-based system of education in Minnesota public schools. The need for establishing a standards-based system of education has been set out in Section IV of this document. In addition, educational research supports both the need and reasonableness for requiring statewide standards and mirrors the needs that have emerged from state and federal statute and Minnesota stakeholders.

Research supports the need to change from seat time to standards-based, results-oriented education:

The main purpose of content standards is to establish a common reference and comprehensive vision for education from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Content standards are supposed to help educators design and reach a common understanding of what to teach. ...[P]art of the primary rationale for establishing content standards is that they provide a basis for evaluating current school practices and reforming what is taught and learned in schools to make education substantially better than it is now (Pritchard, 1996).

The development of standards and assessments is a critical piece of reforming the entire education system so that it is much more coherent and is driven by much higher standards (Resnick, 1993).

Standards-based reform can help formalize high academic expectations for all students (Wheelock, 1996).

Content standards are the essential first step in establishing clear expectations for student learning (Borthwick, 1996).

[Without the use of standards,] ...the curriculum content, teaching techniques, and evaluation methodology varied from school to school and classroom to classroom. There were no consistent expectations for students, no consistent formats for reporting to parents, and no consistent approaches to evaluating student achievement (Doctorow, 1994).

While much of the standards debate of the 1980s focused on student performance, the 1990s debate makes it clear that standards are not just for students anymore – they are for all education stakeholders and systems. The purpose of standards is not to expose failure, as it frequently did in the past, but to leverage continuous improvement for all people and parts of the educational system. Therefore, standards become indicators of progress, not judgments of failure. They enable all of us to measure how well the total system and our part in it are performing and where we can continuously improve. Using a standards-based reform model:

- agreement needs to be achieved on what students are to know and be able to do
- progress through school and graduation from high school should be determined according to mastery of this agreed upon content
- teachers will know ahead of time what they are to teach, and students will know what will be expected of them (Jennings, 1995).

[C]lear standards would help alleviate the frustrations associated with student mobility. ...Without standards, or with weak standards, we have no reliable way to measure success (Gandel, 1995).

The provision is reasonable for a variety of other reasons including the following: First, it fulfills the need for standards-based education as mandated in statute (MS 121.11 subd 7c) and clarifies that the standards and requirements are, in fact, established in these proposed rules and in which parts of the rules the specifications of the individual standards and the graduation requirements may be found. Second, this provision is reasonable because Minnesota stakeholders support higher standards.

Subpart 2 A. is necessary to clearly inform the district of what must be provided at the preparatory and high school levels and where in the proposed rules these are specified. It is reasonable that school districts offer these opportunities because students are required under these proposed rules to complete these requirements.

This provision is needed to require the school district to assure that learning opportunities in all statewide requirements are available to all students. If graduation is dependent on completion of specified demonstrations of learning, the student must have the opportunity to learn and participate in that learning for both preparatory and high school standards.

Providing learning opportunities means that the methods and frequency of opportunities for students to receive instruction consider the needs of the students. The district curriculum and its instructions to teachers need to show that teachers have been directed to address the needs of all students and that materials and time have been provided for them to do so. This directive is needed because if individual students are to be held responsible for completing the requirements, then individual learning rates must be considered.

This provision is reasonable because the school districts need to be held responsible for observing the rights of students to have learning opportunities in everything they are required to know and do to be eligible for a diploma. Evidence of the district's compliance is required to be reported in part 3501.0420.

This requirement is reasonable because it is consistent with the current practice in Minnesota and of other states to ensure opportunity to achieve graduation:

All states that employ high-stakes minimum competency testing require their local districts to offer the appropriate opportunities for students to learn the content covered by the test (McMillan, 1994).

Once the testable portion of the core curriculum is determined, an administrative rule or statute should specify that the local districts must teach this portion of the core (Mehrens, 1993).

This provision is also reasonable because it is consistent with the Minnesota law that prohibits the establishment of a single curriculum (M.S. 121.11 Subd. 7c). While directing that learning opportunities must be provided, the state will allow districts to have full latitude to decide the issues traditionally contained within a curriculum, i.e.,

how the topics will be taught, what materials are to be used, and how students will access the instruction.

Subpart 2 B. is needed and reasonable to clarify the requirements that students must complete in the establishment of a standards-based system of education. The need and reasonableness of these student requirements is elaborated under subpart 3. below. The need and reasonableness of the specific graduation requirements and content standards are addressed in other parts of this document.

Subp. 3. Distribution requirements for high school graduation. A student shall be required by a district to complete all specifications of at least 24 high school content standards to be eligible for high school graduation. The district shall require a student to complete 21 of the 24 high school content standards as follows:

A. one content standard in learning area one, read, listen, and view in the English language: reading, listening to, and viewing complex information, under part 3501.0441, subpart 2, or technical reading, listening, and viewing, under part 3501.0441, subpart 3;

B. two content standards from learning area two, write and speak in the English language:

(1) academic writing, under part 3501.0442, subpart 2, or technical writing, under part 3501.0442, subpart 3; and

(2) public speaking, under part 3501.0441, subpart 4, or interpersonal communication, under part 3501.0442, subpart 5;

C. two content standards from learning area three, literature and the arts:

(1) literary and arts creation and performance, under part 3501.0443, subpart 2, in an art form other than creative writing; and

(2) literature and arts analysis and interpretation of literature, under part 3501.0443, subpart 3;

D. three content standards from learning area four, mathematical applications:

(1) discrete mathematics, under part 3501.0444, subpart 2, or chance and data analysis, under part 3501.0444, subpart 3;

(2) algebraic patterns, under part 3501.0444, subpart 4, or technical applications, under part 3501.0444, subpart 5; and

(3) shape, space, and measurement, under part

3501.0444, subpart 6;

E. two content standards from learning area five, inquiry:

(1) math research, under part 3501.0445, subpart 2; history of science, under part 3501.0445, subpart 3; history through culture, under part 3501.0445, subpart 4; history of the arts, under part 3501.0445, subpart 5; world history and cultures, under part 3501.0445, subpart 6; records of history, under part 3501.0445, subpart 7; or issue analysis, under part 3501.0445, subpart 8; and

(2) research process, under part 3501.0445, subpart 9; social sciences processes, under part 3501.0445, subpart 10; research and create a business plan, under part 3501.0445, subpart 11; market research, under part 3501.0445, subpart 12; case study, under part 3501.0445, subpart 13; or new product development, under part 3501.0445, subpart 14;

F. two content standards from learning area six, scientific applications:

(1) concepts in biology, under part 3501.0446, subpart 2;

(2) concepts in chemistry, under part 3501.0446, subpart 3;

(3) earth and space systems, under part 3501.0446, subpart 4;

(4) concepts in physics, under part 3501.0446, subpart 5; or

(5) environmental systems, under part 3501.0446, subpart 6;

G. four content standards from learning area seven, people and cultures:

(1) themes of United States history, under part 3501.0447, subpart 2;

(2) United States citizenship, under part 3501.0447, subpart 3;

(3) diverse perspectives, under part 3501.0447, subpart 4; and

(4) human geography, under part 3501.0447, subpart 5; institutions and traditions in society, under part 3501.0447, subpart 6; or community interaction, under part 3501.0447, subpart 7;

H. three content standards from learning area eight, decision making:

(1) individual and community health, under part

3501.0448, subpart 2;

(2) physical education and fitness, under part 3501.0448, subpart 3; and

(3) career investigation, under part 3501.0448, subpart 4; or occupational experience, under part 3501.0448, subpart 5; and

I. two content standards from learning area nine, resource management:

(1) economic systems, under part 3501.0449, subpart 2; and

(2) natural and managed systems, under part 3501.0449, subpart 3; personal and family resource management, under part 3501.0449, subpart 4; business management, under part 3501.0449, subpart 5; financial systems, under part 3501.0449, subpart 6; or technical systems, under part 3501.0449, subpart 7.

This provision sets out the distribution of the content standards. The specifications for each individual standard are stated in Part 3501.0440 - 3501.0450. The detail supporting need and reasonableness for the specific Learning Areas and required standards in the ten Learning Areas appears later in this document where the standards are specified. This provision of the proposed rules sets, as the requirement for graduation, the completion of twenty-one required high school standards distributed across the nine required Learning Areas.

The distribution requirements for graduation stated in subp. 4 are needed because they include sufficient breadth of content and application and ensure that each student participate in learning experiences that, as a whole, comprise a comprehensive education. The distribution pattern of twenty-one required standards is reasonable because it has been designed to require students to participate in what has been determined through the five year development period that involved stakeholders, educators, experts, and best practice network groups.

Content standards...indicate the knowledge and skills -- the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating, and the most important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge essential to the discipline -- that should be taught and learned in school. They help develop the work and learning habits essential to success in the world outside school: studying well, thinking logically, drawing inferences, supporting assertions with evidence, and applying what is known to a new situation. Central to the purposes of schooling, these habits enable students to

apply the knowledge and skills they learn in school to problems of the real world (Wurtz, 1993).

The provision to require completing all specifications of each standard is needed to ensure that each student has experience and demonstrates performance in all required content, skills, concepts, and processes that have been determined to be an essential part of a comprehensive education. Completion of all specifications is also needed so that all students will be required to complete the same requirements for graduation ensuring that consistent requirements are applied to all students in all districts in the state. This is reasonable because it establishes a *statewide* standard and ensures the statewide comparability and opportunity that requiring state standards is designed to provide. Accountability for individual student results is dependent on the same clear expectations being set out and required for all students in all public schools across the state.

Twenty-four is a reasonable number of standards to require. When counselors were brought together in 1995 to discuss what would be reasonable student requirements, they selected twenty-three. Subsequently, discussions were held with pilot site directors, who had experience implementing standards since 1993, to determine what number was needed and reasonable as a state minimum. In 1996 and 1997, pilot directors were again convened to discuss this issue, and the final recommendation of pilot site directors was twenty-four required standards. When the Graduation Standards Executive Committee addressed this issue in 1997, they also determined that twenty-four was reasonable, based on the premise that the twenty-one requirements represented a comprehensive breadth and essential content, and three electives gave students additional opportunity to pursue a world language and/or at least two different areas of interest beyond the required. Twenty-four was also determined to be a reasonable number of standards because it represents a reasonable amount of work to be accomplished by a student in the four years of high school. Embedding twenty-four standards into district curriculum has been the focus of the training provided by the department for "placing" standards within the curriculum in schools across the state, and this activity has substantiated the reasonableness of the total number in practical application because the embedding of twenty-four standards could be accomplished by school districts.

Subp. 4. Elective requirements. In addition to the distribution requirements under subpart 3 that districts shall offer and require students to complete to be eligible for high

school graduation, districts shall require students to complete three additional high school content standards of the student's choice from the high school content standards listed in parts 3501.0440 to 3501.0450. Elective requirements may not be fulfilled by repeating standards completed to fulfill distribution requirements in subpart 3, items A to I, except for learning area three, where literary and arts creation and performance or literature and arts analysis and interpretation under part 3501.0443, or both, may be completed in multiple art areas; learning area five, where the world history and cultures standard may be completed with a world history survey and a comprehensive, in-depth study of one or more cultures, nations, movements, or time periods under part 3501.0445, subpart 6; or in learning area ten, world language, under part 3501.0450, subpart 2, where the standard may be completed in more than one world language.

This provision for elective requirements is needed and reasonable because it ensures additional choice and the opportunity to focus on an area of particular interest or need beyond the distribution requirements. The prohibition against repeating a standard to satisfy an elective is needed and reasonable so that students experience a comprehensive education. The three electives are part of the twenty-four total requirements, the need and reasonableness of which have been discussed above.

Subp. 5. Additional requirements.

A. A district shall require a student to complete one application of technology in each of the following four learning areas: area two, write and speak; area four, mathematical applications; area five, inquiry; and area six, scientific applications.

B. A district may establish additional requirements beyond the statewide graduation requirements.

Requiring inclusion of technology applications is needed because being skilled in the use of technology is necessary to the student's ability to function in the Twenty-first Century world of work and in lifelong learning. Technology is a learning tool and is, therefore, not a free-standing content standard in itself. It is reasonable to require schools to provide, as part of the student's work across the standards and other curriculum, opportunities to learn and apply technology because it fulfills the need for students to learn to use technology. It is reasonable to require at least four varied applications of technology because the application requirements are placed in Learning

Areas where these (computers, graphing calculators, precision measurement devices, etc.) would normally be used in instruction.

The proposed provision to allow local districts to have higher achievement and additional requirements for graduation is needed because Minnesota public school districts each award their own high school graduation diplomas. There is no state diploma in Minnesota. This is reasonable because while the proposed rules require statewide standards at a minimum to be the basis of a school district certifying a student as eligible for a diploma, there is no interest or intent to restrict individual school districts from going beyond the statewide minimums. Granting discretion to districts to exceed statewide requirements is reasonable because it is consistent with the legislation authorizing these proposed rules [M.S. 121.11 Subd. 7c (b) (2)] which mandates that "any state action regarding the rule must evidence consideration of school district autonomy."

Subp. 6. Repeating content standards. A district shall allow a student to complete a content standard more than once so that the student may improve the score for that content standard.

This provision is needed to clarify that students may and are encouraged to work to improve scores with which they are not satisfied. It is reasonable in that it is consistent with the practice of allowing additional chances on basic requirements tests and current practice in many classrooms throughout the state and in that it encourages students to increase their level of achievements.

Subp. 7. Variations. A district shall require completion of the requirements in subparts 1 to 5 for a student unless variations are expressly stated for the student. Variations for a student from the requirements in subparts 1 to 5 are permitted only as specified in parts 3501.0340 and 3501.0350.

Providing variations from the distribution and elective requirements only for students with IEP or 504 Accommodation Plans or LEP individual graduation plans is needed and reasonable to meet the special educational needs of disabled and LEP students, while ensuring that all students are subject to the same statewide requirements. The proposed rules will include all students with disabilities and all LEP students in the statewide standards and will support them with reasonable

accommodations, with appropriate modifications or, in cases of severe disability, exemptions, as specified in parts 3501.0340 and 3501.0350.

3501.0340 VARIATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPs OR SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATION PLANS.

Subpart 1. Determination of requirements.

A. A student with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan in kindergarten through grade 8 shall have all primary, intermediate, and middle level content standards considered by the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team for inclusion in the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan as specified in subpart 2.

B. A student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team shall consider the graduation requirements in part 3501.0330 for inclusion in the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan when a student with a disability is 14 years old or registers for grade 9. An IEP team shall also consider the student's transition plan when determining which of the required and elective content standards will be included in the student's IEP.

This provision is needed to establish that the preparatory and high school state content standards apply to all students including students with disabilities and, therefore, must be considered by the IEP teams or Section 504 Accommodation Plan teams as the basis for decisions regarding IEPs and Section 504 Plans.

This provision is reasonable because it is consistent with state and federal laws regulating special education.

Subp. 2. Individualized plans.

A. For a student in kindergarten through grade 8 with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan, the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team may modify preparatory content standards for the student in the IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan. The team shall define which specifications of a content standard the student will pursue under the selected modification. If the team determines that the student is to be exempt from one or more of the content standards, it shall explain the exemption in the IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan. When exempt status is adopted for a content standard, the team shall determine whether or not a different standard or IEP goal specific to the learning area is appropriate and shall

include that goal in the student's plan.

B. For a high school student with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan, the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team shall:

(1) determine whether the student will pursue the content standard without modification;

(2) determine whether one or more of the 21 required content standards will be modified to an individual level;

(3) define the elective content standards that the student will also pursue and whether, for each elective, the student will pursue the content standard without modification, or the content standard modified to an individual level; or

(4) determine whether the student is exempt from one or more of the graduation requirements under part 3501.0330, subparts 3 to 5. When exempt status is adopted for a content standard, the team shall determine whether or not a different standard or IEP goal specific to the learning area is appropriate and shall include that goal in the student's plan.

C. A student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team shall define which specifications of a preparatory or high school content standard the student will pursue when a content standard is modified. When a content standard is modified, the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team shall define appropriate assessment of the modified content standard.

In the proposed rules, all students with disabilities are expected to participate in the graduation standards process. IEP and 504 teams are expected to hold all students with disabilities to the statewide standards except when inappropriate or unfeasible as determined individually in the IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan processes. This provision is necessary to assure that the adoption of individual modified standards or exempt status occurs only for individual students through the IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan processes concurrently with the adoption of transition goals and objectives. This provision is also needed to assure that all IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans for students with disabilities will identify necessary accommodations so that students have appropriate support to achieve the standards. This subpart is needed to ensure that, in both the preparatory and high school levels, the individual needs of the student for considerations in meeting the standards are met through the IEP and 504 processes.

This proposed provision is reasonable because it is consistent with federal and state laws and the current practice of school districts, and it is the result of deliberation

and recommendations from the State Special Education Advisory Council that is charged in statute to advise the State Board of Education in matters relating to special education.

Federal law [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1987 Section 614 (d)(1)(v)(I)] requires that IEPs include statements that justify why a student is not able to participate in all aspects of the general education program. Since this subpart requires the IEP team to determine the extent to which the student will pursue the Profile of Learning requirements and standards required of all students, it is needed and reasonable to require that the IEP team also determine, identify, and provide justification for any decision to modify those standards for a student.

3501.0350 VARIATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP).

Subpart 1. Individual graduation plans. A district shall establish and maintain procedures that ensure LEP students will be provided opportunity to complete both preparatory and high school content standards. Graduation requirements for an LEP student shall be as specified in part 3501.0330, subparts 3 to 5, unless modified in an individual graduation plan developed and annually reviewed by a team including school advisory staff designated by the district, teachers of the LEP student, parents or guardians of the LEP student, and the LEP student. Specifications for standards in learning areas one and two shall not be modified to permit completion in a language other than English.

According to the Literacy Summit Action Coalition, Minnesota has a large refugee population in need of literacy training. Hmong, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Russian groups constitute the majority of Minnesota's language minority population (Literacy Summit Action Coalition, 1995). These are also the populations reported by the U.S. Census Bureau as having the most limited English skills.

According to the Education for Limited English Proficient Students Act of 1980 (M.S. 126.261), school districts are responsible for providing appropriate educational services to LEP students. The Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 advocates the inclusion of LEP students in the statewide standards, and supports language considerations for LEP students by stating that "no state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin, by the failure by an educational agency to overcome language barriers that impede equal

participation by its students in its instructional programs." In order for this to occur, the proposed rules need to include variations for LEP students as needed.

The variations, as stated in 3501.0350, shall be made only when it is determined by the district that an individual LEP student needs a modified standard. The individual graduation plan is needed because it allows for consideration of an individual student's needs and a clear statement of expectations for a student for whom the state standard is modified.

Students who enter secondary school with limited English skills have the challenging and time-consuming task of building academic language proficiency in English. While students are learning English, their access to instruction on the Profile of Learning may need to be modified because:

A. A portion of each school day will be spent on learning English. This same time is available to English-speaking students for instruction at the high school level on other required standards.

B. Instruction in many content courses and information sources are available primarily in English. While effective teaching strategies can make the content in all disciplines accessible to LEP students, some LEP students may not be able to learn as much as they would if they were fluent in the language of instruction.

C. Some LEP students have had an interrupted educational background resulting in limited preparation for many of the required standards. These students may need additional support and time to achieve high school standards.

Therefore, this provision is reasonable because it establishes a process for LEP students to pursue the requirements for a high school diploma at a modified level if appropriate for the individual student. This part is also reasonable because it considers the input and recommendations of a task force of ESL and bilingual educators convened by the department to specifically address considerations for LEP students under the Profile of Learning requirements. This part is also reasonable because it considers feedback from various meetings with representatives from the major language minority communities in Minnesota.

Subp. 2. Student election. A student whose individual graduation plan team recommends that a content standard be modified under this part may refuse the modified requirement and pursue graduation without modified requirements.