

## CHAPTER 120B

## CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

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**120B.02 EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOR MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS.**

(a) The legislature is committed to establishing rigorous academic standards for Minnesota's public school students. To that end, the commissioner shall adopt in rule statewide academic standards. The commissioner shall not prescribe in rule or otherwise the delivery system, classroom assessments, or form of instruction that school sites must use. For purposes of this chapter, a school site is a separate facility, or a separate program within a facility that a local school board recognizes as a school site for funding purposes.

(b) All commissioner actions regarding the rule must be premised on the following:

(1) the rule is intended to raise academic expectations for students, teachers, and schools;

(2) any state action regarding the rule must evidence consideration of school district autonomy; and

(3) the Department of Education, with the assistance of school districts, must make available information about all state initiatives related to the rule to students and parents, teachers, and the general public in a timely format that is appropriate, comprehensive, and readily understandable.

(c) When fully implemented, the requirements for high school graduation in Minnesota must require students to satisfactorily complete, as determined by the school district, the course credit requirements under section 120B.024 and:

(1) for students enrolled in grade 8 before the 2005-2006 school year, to pass the basic skills test requirements; and

(2) for students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2005-2006 school year and later, to pass the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments Second Edition (MCA-IIs).

(d) The commissioner shall periodically review and report on the state's assessment process.

(e) School districts are not required to adopt specific provisions of the federal School-to-Work programs.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 4*

**120B.021 REQUIRED ACADEMIC STANDARDS.**

*[For text of subd 1, see M.S.2004]*

Subd. 1a. **Rigorous course of study; waiver.** (a) Upon receiving a student's application signed by the student's parent or guardian, a school district, area learning center, or charter school must declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation under this section if the local school board, the school board of the school district in which the area learning center is located, or the charter school board of directors determines that the student:

(1) is participating in a course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program; a learning opportunity outside the

curriculum of the district, area learning center, or charter school; or an approved preparatory program for employment or postsecondary education that is equally or more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the district, area learning center, or charter school;

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

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

Consistent with the requirements of this section, the local school board, the school board of the school district in which the area learning center is located, or the charter school board of directors also may formally determine other circumstances in which to declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard that the site requires for graduation under this section.

(b) A student who satisfactorily completes a postsecondary enrollment options course or program under section 124D.09 is not required to complete other requirements of the academic standards corresponding to that specific rigorous course of study.

*[For text of subs 2 and 3, see M.S.2004]*

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 5*

#### **120B.11 SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCESS FOR REVIEWING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section and section 120B.10, the following terms have the meanings given them.

(a) "Instruction" means methods of providing learning experiences that enable a student to meet state and district academic standards and graduation requirements.

(b) "Curriculum" means district or school adopted programs and written plans for providing students with learning experiences that lead to expected knowledge and skills.

Subd. 2. **Adopting policies.** (a) A school board shall have in place an adopted written policy that includes the following:

(1) district goals for instruction including the use of best practices, district and school curriculum, and achievement for all student subgroups;

(2) a process for evaluating each student's progress toward meeting academic standards and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction and curriculum affecting students' progress;

(3) a system for periodically reviewing and evaluating all instruction and curriculum;

(4) a plan for improving instruction, curriculum, and student achievement; and

(5) an education effectiveness plan aligned with section 122A.625 that integrates instruction, curriculum, and technology.

Subd. 3. **District advisory committee.** Each school board shall establish an advisory committee to ensure active community participation in all phases of planning and improving the instruction and curriculum affecting state and district academic standards. A district advisory committee, to the extent possible, shall reflect the diversity of the district and its learning sites, and shall include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents. The district may establish building teams as subcommittees of the district advisory committee under subdivision 4. The district advisory committee shall recommend to the school board rigorous academic standards, student achievement goals and measures, assessments, and program evaluations. Learning sites may expand upon district evaluations of instruction, curriculum, assessments, or programs. Whenever possible, parents and other community residents shall comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members.

Subd. 4. **Building team.** A school may establish a building team to develop and implement an education effectiveness plan to improve instruction, curriculum, and student achievement. The team shall advise the board and the advisory committee about developing an instruction and curriculum improvement plan that aligns curriculum, assessment of student progress in meeting state and district academic standards, and instruction.

Subd. 5. **Report.** (a) By October 1 of each year, the school board shall use standard statewide reporting procedures the commissioner develops and adopt a report that includes the following:

- (1) student achievement goals for meeting state academic standards;
- (2) results of local assessment data, and any additional test data;
- (3) the annual school district improvement plans including staff development goals under section 122A.60;
- (4) information about district and learning site progress in realizing previously adopted improvement plans; and
- (5) the amount and type of revenue attributed to each education site as defined in section 123B.04.

(b) The school board shall publish the report in the local newspaper with the largest circulation in the district, by mail, or by electronic means such as the district Web site. If electronic means are used, school districts must publish notice of the report in a periodical of general circulation in the district. School districts must make copies of the report available to the public on request. The board shall make a copy of the report available to the public for inspection. The board shall send a copy of the report to the commissioner of education by October 15 of each year.

(c) The title of the report shall contain the name and number of the school district and read "Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement." The report must include at least the following information about advisory committee membership:

- (1) the name of each committee member and the date when that member's term expires;
- (2) the method and criteria the school board uses to select committee members; and
- (3) the date by which a community resident must apply to next serve on the committee.

*[For text of subds 6 and 7, see M.S.2004]*

Subd. 8. **Biennial evaluation; assessment program.** At least once every two years, the district report shall include an evaluation of the district testing programs, according to the following:

- (1) written objectives of the assessment program;
- (2) names of tests and grade levels tested;
- (3) use of test results; and
- (4) student achievement results compared to previous years.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 6-11*

#### **120B.128 EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (EPAS) PROGRAM.**

(a) School districts and charter schools may elect to participate in the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) program offered by ACT, Inc. to provide a longitudinal, systematic approach to student educational and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation. The EPAS achievement tests include English, reading, mathematics, science, and components on planning for high school and postsecondary education, interest inventory, needs assessments, and student education plans. These tests are linked to the ACT assessment for college admission and

allow students, parents, teachers, and schools to determine the student's college readiness before grades 11 and 12.

(b) The commissioner of education shall provide ACT Explore tests for students in grade 8 and the ACT Plan test for students in grade 10 to assess individual student academic strengths and weaknesses, academic achievement and progress, higher order thinking skills, and college readiness. The state shall pay the test costs for school districts and charter schools that choose to participate in the EPAS program. The commissioner shall establish an application procedure and a process for state payment of costs.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 12*

### **120B.13 ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS.**

Subdivision 1. **Program structure; training programs for teachers.** (a) The advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs are well-established academic programs for mature, academically directed high school students. These programs, in addition to providing academic rigor, offer sound curricular design, accountability, comprehensive external assessment, feedback to students and teachers, and the opportunity for high school students to compete academically on a global level. Advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs allow students to leave high school with the academic skills and self-confidence to succeed in college and beyond. The advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs help provide Minnesota students with world-class educational opportunity.

(b) Critical to schools' educational success is ongoing advanced placement/international baccalaureate-approved teacher training. A secondary teacher assigned by a district to teach an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or other interested educator may participate in a training program offered by The College Board or International Baccalaureate North America, Inc. The state may pay a portion of the tuition, room, board, and out-of-state travel costs a teacher or other interested educator incurs in participating in a training program. The commissioner shall determine application procedures and deadlines, select teachers and other interested educators to participate in the training program, and determine the payment process and amount of the subsidy. The procedures determined by the commissioner shall, to the extent possible, ensure that advanced placement and international baccalaureate courses become available in all parts of the state and that a variety of course offerings are available in school districts. This subdivision does not prevent teacher or other interested educator participation in training programs offered by The College Board or International Baccalaureate North America, Inc., when tuition is paid by a source other than the state.

*[For text of subd 2, see M.S.2004]*

Subd. 3. **Subsidy for examination fees.** The state may pay all or part of the fee for advanced placement or international baccalaureate examinations. The commissioner shall pay all examination fees for all public and nonpublic students of low-income families, as defined by the commissioner, and to the limit of the available appropriation, shall also pay a portion or all of the examination fees for other public and nonpublic students sitting for an advanced placement examination, international baccalaureate examination, or both. The commissioner shall determine procedures for state payments of fees.

Subd. 3a. **College credit.** The colleges and universities of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system must award, and the University of Minnesota and private postsecondary institutions are encouraged to award, college credit to high school students who receive a score of three or higher on an advanced placement or four or higher on the international baccalaureate program examination.

[For text of subd 4, see M.S.2004]

**History:** 1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 13-15

### 120B.131 COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP).

Subdivision 1. **Program structure.** The college-level examination program (CLEP) offered by the College Board provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement and receive college credit or advanced standing through a program of examinations in undergraduate college courses. Schools must provide information about CLEP and the opportunity to receive college credit from a Minnesota postsecondary institution to students successfully completing a college-level course.

Subd. 2. **Reimbursement for examination fees.** The state may reimburse college-level examination program (CLEP) fees for a Minnesota public high school student who has successfully completed one or more college-level courses in high school and earned a satisfactory score on one or more CLEP examinations in the following subjects: composition and literature, mathematics and science, social sciences and history, foreign languages, and business and humanities. The state may reimburse each successful student for up to six examination fees. The commissioner shall establish application procedures and a process and schedule for fee reimbursements. The commissioner must give priority to reimburse the CLEP examination fees of students of low-income families.

Subd. 3. **College credit.** The colleges and universities of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system must award, and the University of Minnesota and private postsecondary institutions are encouraged to award, college credit to high school students who receive a satisfactory score on a CLEP examination under this section. The commissioner, in consultation with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, shall set a passing score for college credits.

**History:** 1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 16

### 120B.15 GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS.

School districts may identify students, locally develop programs, provide staff development, and evaluate programs to provide gifted and talented students with challenging educational programs.

School districts may adopt guidelines for assessing and identifying students for participation in gifted and talented programs. The guidelines should include the use of:

- (1) multiple and objective criteria; and
- (2) assessments and procedures that are valid and reliable, fair, and based on current theory and research.

**History:** 1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 17

### 120B.22 VIOLENCE PREVENTION EDUCATION.

Subdivision 1. **Violence prevention curriculum.** (a) The commissioner of education, in consultation with the commissioners of health and human services, state minority councils, battered women's and domestic abuse programs, battered women's shelters, sexual assault centers, representatives of religious communities, and the assistant commissioner of the Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention, shall assist districts on request in developing or implementing a violence prevention program for students in kindergarten to grade 12 that can be integrated into existing curriculum. The purpose of the program is to help students learn how to resolve conflicts within their families and communities in nonviolent, effective ways.

(b) Each district is encouraged to integrate into its existing curriculum a program for violence prevention that includes at least:

- (1) a comprehensive, accurate, and age appropriate curriculum on violence prevention, nonviolent conflict resolution, sexual, racial, and cultural harassment, self-protection, and student hazing that promotes equality, respect, understanding, effective communication, individual responsibility, thoughtful decision making, positive conflict

resolution, useful coping skills, critical thinking, listening and watching skills, and personal safety;

(2) planning materials, guidelines, and other accurate information on preventing physical and emotional violence, identifying and reducing the incidence of sexual, racial, and cultural harassment, and reducing child abuse and neglect;

(3) a special parent education component of early childhood family education programs to prevent child abuse and neglect and to promote positive parenting skills, giving priority to services and outreach programs for at-risk families;

(4) involvement of parents and other community members, including the clergy, business representatives, civic leaders, local elected officials, law enforcement officials, and the county attorney;

(5) collaboration with local community services, agencies, and organizations that assist in violence intervention or prevention, including family-based services, crisis services, life management skills services, case coordination services, mental health services, and early intervention services;

(6) collaboration among districts and service cooperatives;

(7) targeting early adolescents for prevention efforts, especially early adolescents whose personal circumstances may lead to violent or harassing behavior;

(8) opportunities for teachers to receive in-service training or attend other programs on strategies or curriculum designed to assist students in intervening in or preventing violence in school and at home; and

(9) administrative policies that reflect, and a staff that models, nonviolent behaviors that do not display or condone sexual, racial, or cultural harassment or student hazing.

(c) The department may provide assistance at a neutral site to a nonpublic school participating in a district's program.

*[For text of subds 2 and 3, see M.S.2004]*

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 18*

#### **120B.232 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Character development education.** The legislature encourages districts to integrate or offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness. Instruction should be integrated into a district's existing programs, curriculum, or the general school environment. The commissioner shall provide assistance at the request of a district to develop character education curriculum and programs.

Subd. 2. **Funding sources.** The commissioner must first use federal funds for character development education programs to the extent available under United States Code, title 20, section 7247. Districts may accept funds from private and other public sources for character development education programs developed and implemented under this section.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 19*

#### **120B.235 AMERICAN HERITAGE EDUCATION.**

(a) School districts shall permit grade-level instruction for students to read and study America's founding documents, including documents that contributed to the foundation or maintenance of America's representative form of limited government, the Bill of Rights, our free-market economic system, and patriotism.

(b) Districts may not censor or restrain instruction in American or Minnesota state history or heritage based on religious references in original source documents, writings, speeches, proclamations, or records.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 20*

**120B.30 STATEWIDE TESTING AND REPORTING SYSTEM.**

Subdivision 1. **Statewide testing.** (a) The commissioner, with advice from experts with appropriate technical qualifications and experience and stakeholders, consistent with subdivision 1a, shall include in the comprehensive assessment system, for each grade level to be tested, state-constructed tests developed from and aligned with the state's required academic standards under section 120B.021 and administered annually to all students in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level. A state-developed test in a subject other than writing, developed after the 2002-2003 school year, must include both machine-scoreable and constructed response questions. The commissioner shall establish one or more months during which schools shall administer the tests to students each school year. For students enrolled in grade 8 before the 2005-2006 school year, only Minnesota basic skills tests in reading, mathematics, and writing shall fulfill students' basic skills testing requirements for a passing state notation. The passing scores of the state tests in reading and mathematics are the equivalent of:

(1) 70 percent correct for students entering grade 9 in 1996; and

(2) 75 percent correct for students entering grade 9 in 1997 and thereafter, as based on the first uniform test administration of February 1998.

For students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2005-2006 school year and later, only the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments Second Edition (MCA-II's) in reading, mathematics, and writing shall fulfill students' academic standard requirements.

(b) The third through 8th grade and high school level test results shall be available to districts for diagnostic purposes affecting student learning and district instruction and curriculum, and for establishing educational accountability. The commissioner must disseminate to the public the test results upon receiving those results.

(c) State tests must be constructed and aligned with state academic standards. The testing process and the order of administration shall be determined by the commissioner. The statewide results shall be aggregated at the site and district level, consistent with subdivision 1a.

(d) In addition to the testing and reporting requirements under this section, the commissioner shall include the following components in the statewide public reporting system:

(1) uniform statewide testing of all students in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level that provides exemptions, only with parent or guardian approval, for those very few students for whom the student's individual education plan team under sections 125A.05 and 125A.06, determines that the student is incapable of taking a statewide test, or for a limited English proficiency student under section 124D.59, subdivision 2, if the student has been in the United States for fewer than three years;

(2) educational indicators that can be aggregated and compared across school districts and across time on a statewide basis, including average daily attendance, high school graduation rates, and high school drop-out rates by age and grade level;

(3) students' scores on the American College Test; and

(4) state results from participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress so that the state can benchmark its performance against the nation and other states, and, where possible, against other countries, and contribute to the national effort to monitor achievement.

(e) Districts must report exemptions under paragraph (d), clause (1), to the commissioner consistent with a format provided by the commissioner.

Subd. 1a. **Statewide and local assessments; results.** (a) The commissioner must develop reading, mathematics, and science assessments aligned with state academic standards that districts and sites must use to monitor student growth toward achieving those standards. The commissioner must not develop statewide assessments for academic standards in social studies, health and physical education, and the arts. The commissioner must require:

(1) annual reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level for the 2005-2006 school year and later; and

(2) annual science assessments in one grade in the grades 3 through 5 span, the grades 6 through 9 span, and a life sciences assessment in the grades 10 through 12 span for the 2007-2008 school year and later.

(b) The commissioner must ensure that all statewide tests administered to elementary and secondary students measure students' academic knowledge and skills and not students' values, attitudes, and beliefs.

(c) Reporting of assessment results must:

(1) provide timely, useful, and understandable information on the performance of individual students, schools, school districts, and the state;

(2) include, by the 2006-2007 school year, a value-added component to measure student achievement growth over time; and

(3)(i) for students enrolled in grade 8 before the 2005-2006 school year, determine whether students have met the state's basic skills requirements; and

(ii) for students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2005-2006 school year and later, determine whether students have met the state's academic standards.

(d) Consistent with applicable federal law and subdivision 1, paragraph (d), clause (1), the commissioner must include alternative assessments for the very few students with disabilities for whom statewide assessments are inappropriate and for students with limited English proficiency.

(e) A school, school district, and charter school must administer statewide assessments under this section, as the assessments become available, to evaluate student progress in achieving the academic standards. If a state assessment is not available, a school, school district, and charter school must determine locally if a student has met the required academic standards. A school, school district, or charter school may use a student's performance on a statewide assessment as one of multiple criteria to determine grade promotion or retention. A school, school district, or charter school may use a high school student's performance on a statewide assessment as a percentage of the student's final grade in a course, or place a student's assessment score on the student's transcript.

*[For text of subs 2 and 3, see M.S.2004]*

Subd. 4. **Access to tests.** The commissioner must adopt and publish a policy to provide public and parental access for review of basic skills tests, Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, or any other such statewide test and assessment. Upon receiving a written request, the commissioner must make available to parents or guardians a copy of their student's actual answer sheet to the test questions to be reviewed by the parent.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 21-23*

## **120B.31 SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATISTICAL ADJUSTMENTS.**

*[For text of subs 1 to 3, see M.S.2004]*

Subd. 4. **Statistical adjustments.** In developing policies and assessment processes to hold schools and districts accountable for high levels of academic standards under section 120B.021, the commissioner shall aggregate student data over time to report student performance levels measured at the school district, regional, or statewide level. When collecting and reporting the data, the commissioner shall: (1) acknowledge the impact of significant demographic factors such as residential instability, the number of single parent families, parents' level of education, and parents' income level on school outcomes; and (2) organize and report the data so that state and local policy makers can understand the educational implications of changes in districts' demographic profiles over time. Any report the commissioner disseminates containing summary data on student performance must integrate student performance and the demographic factors that strongly correlate with that performance.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 11 s 1*

**120B.362 VALUE-ADDED ASSESSMENT PROGRAM.**

(a) The commissioner of education must implement a value-added assessment program to assist school districts, public schools, and charter schools in assessing and reporting individual students' growth in academic achievement under section 120B.30, subdivision 1a. The program must use assessments of individual students' academic achievement to make longitudinal comparisons of each student's academic growth over time. School districts, public schools, and charter schools may apply to the commissioner to participate in the initial trial program using a form and in the manner the commissioner prescribes. The commissioner must select program participants from urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout the state.

(b) The commissioner may issue a request for proposals to contract with an organization that provides a value-added assessment model that reliably estimates school and school district effects on students' academic achievement over time. The model the commissioner selects must accommodate diverse data and must use each student's test data across grades. Data on individual teachers generated under the model are personnel data under section 13.43.

(c) The contract under paragraph (b) must be consistent with the definition of "best value" under section 16C.02, subdivision 4.

**History:** *1Sp2005 c 5 art 2 s 24*