

618 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to institute a process for the establishment and revision of assessments to be used to determine how well students have achieved the Graduation Standards.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

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

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Above-grade level” test items contain subject area content that is above the grade level of the student taking the assessment and is considered aligned with state academic standards to the extent it is aligned with content represented in state academic standards above the grade level of the student taking the assessment. Notwithstanding the student’s grade level, administering above-grade level test items to a student does not violate the requirement that state assessments must be aligned with state standards.
- B. “Academic standard” means a summary description of student learning in a required content area or elective content area.
- C. “Below-grade level” test items contain subject area content that is below the grade level of the student taking the test and is considered aligned with state academic standards to the extent it is aligned with content represented in state academic standards below the student’s current grade level. Notwithstanding the student’s grade level, administering below-grade level test items to a student does not violate the requirement that state assessments must be aligned with state standards.
- D. “Benchmark” means the specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band.
- E. “Computer-adaptive assessments” means fully adaptive assessments.

- F. “Elective standards” means a locally adopted expectation for student learning in career and technical education and world languages.
- G. “Fully adaptive assessments” include on-grade level test items and items that may be above or below a student’s grade level.
- H. “On-grade level” test items contain subject area content that is aligned to state academic standards for the grade level of the student taking the assessment.
- I. “Required standard” means a statewide adopted expectation for student learning in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and the arts, or a locally adopted expectation for student learning in health or the arts.
- J. “Rubric” means the criteria set by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) that must be used by a district to score student work that meets the specifications of a content standard.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

- A. The School Board shall establish criteria by which student performance of locally adopted Graduation Standards and elective standards are to be evaluated and approved. The criteria will be submitted to the school board for approval. Upon approval by the school board, the criteria shall be deemed part of this policy.
- B. The superintendent shall ensure that students and parents or guardians are provided with notice of the process by which program Graduation Standards will be assessed.
- C. Staff members will be expected to utilize staff development opportunities to the extent necessary to ensure effective implementation and continued improvement of the implementation Graduation Standards at all levels and/or transition to assessments under the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- D. Grading procedures at the elementary and middle school levels will be established on a grade by grade basis and are subject to approval by the principal.
- E. Grading procedures at the secondary level will be established by each individual classroom instructor and are subject to approval by the principal. Grade point average calculations will be based on criteria established in Appendix I of this policy.

VI. STANDARDS FOR MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A. Benchmarks

The school district will offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard. These benchmarks will be used by the school district and its staff in developing tests to measure student academic knowledge and skills.

B. Statewide Academic Standards Testing

1. The school district will utilize statewide assessments developed from and aligned with the state's required academic standards as these tests become available to evaluate student progress toward career and college readiness in the context of the state's academic standards.
2. The school district will administer annually, in accordance with the process determined by MDE, the state-constructed tests to all students in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level as follows:
 - a. annual reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 7;
 - b. state-developed grade 8 and high school reading and mathematics tests aligned with state academic standards; and
 - c. annual science assessments in one grade in the grades 3 through 5 span, the grades 6 through 8 span, and a life science assessment in the grades 9 through 12 span (a passing score on high school science assessments is not a condition of receiving a diploma).
3. The school district will develop and administer locally constructed tests in social studies, health and physical education, and the arts to determine if a student has met the required academic standards in these areas.
4. The school district may use a student's performance on a statewide assessment as one of the multiple criteria to determine grade promotion or retention. The school district also may use a high school student's performance on a statewide assessment as a percentage of the student's final grade in a course, or place a student's assessment score on the student's transcript.
5. For students in grade 8 in the 2012-2013 school year and later, the school district must record on the high school transcript a student's progress toward career and college readiness. For other students, this record of progress must be made as soon as practicable. In addition, the school

district may include a notation of high achievement on the high school diplomas of those graduating seniors who, according to established school board criteria, demonstrate exemplary academic achievement during high school.

C. Rigorous Course of Study Waiver

1. Upon receiving a student's application signed by the student's parent or

guardian, the school district must declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation if the school board determines that the student:

- a. is participating in a course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program; a learning opportunity outside the curriculum of the school district; or an approved preparatory program for employment or postsecondary education that is equally or more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the school district;
 - b. 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
 - c. satisfactorily completes the requirements for the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity, or preparatory employment or postsecondary education program.
2. The school board 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.
 3. A student who satisfactorily completes a post-secondary enrollment options course or program or an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program is not required to complete other requirements of the academic standards corresponding to that specific rigorous course of study.

VII. CAREER EXPLORATION ASSESSMENT

- A. Commencing with the 2014-2015 school year, student assessments, in alignment with state academic standards, shall include career and college readiness

benchmarks. Mathematics, reading, and writing assessments for students in grades 8 and 10 must be predictive of a nationally normed assessment for career and college readiness. This nationally recognized assessment must be a college entrance exam and given to students in grade 11. This series of assessments must include a college placement diagnostic exam and contain career exploration elements.

- B. On an annual basis, the school district must use the career exploration elements in these assessments, beginning no later than grade 9, to help students and their families explore and plan for postsecondary education or careers based on the students' interests, aptitudes, and aspirations. The school district must use timely regional labor market information and partnerships, among other resources, to help students and their families successfully develop, pursue, review, and revise an individualized plan for postsecondary education or a career. This process must help increase students' engagement in and connection to school, improve students' knowledge and skills, and deepen students' understanding of career pathways as a sequence of academic and career courses that lead to an industry--recognized credential, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree and are available to all students, whatever their interests and career goals.
- C. Students in grade 10 or 11 not yet academically ready for a career or college based on their growth in academic achievement between grades 8 and 10 must take the college placement diagnostic exam before taking the college entrance exam under Section VII.D. Students, their families, the school, and the district can then use the results of the college placement diagnostic exam for targeted instruction, intervention, or remediation and improve students' knowledge and skills in core subjects sufficient for a student to graduate and have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without remediation.
- D. All students, except those eligible for alternative assessments, must be given the college entrance part of these assessments in grade 11. A student under this paragraph who demonstrates attainment of required state academic standards on these assessments, which include career and college readiness benchmarks, is academically ready for a career or college and is encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students. Such courses and programs may include sequential courses of study within broad career areas and technical skill assessments that extend beyond course grades.
- E. As appropriate, students through grade 12 must continue to participate in targeted instruction, intervention, or remediation and be encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students.
- F. In developing, supporting, and improving students' academic readiness for a career or college, the school district must have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on students' attainment of

knowledge and skills so that students, their parents, and teachers know how well students must perform to have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without need for postsecondary remediation.

- Legal References:**
- Minn. Stat. § 120B.018 (Definitions)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 (Educational Expectations for Minnesota’s Students)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.021 (Required Academic Standards)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.022 (Elective Standards)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.023 (Benchmarks)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process)
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 (Statewide Testing and Reporting System)
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0640-3501.0655 (Academic Standards for Language Arts)
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0700-3501.0745 (Academic Standards for Mathematics)
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0800-3501.0815 (Academic Standards for the Arts)
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0900-3501.0955 (Academic Standards in Science)
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1300-3501.1345 (Academic Standards for Social Studies)
 - 20 U.S.C. § 6301, et seq. (No Child Left Behind Act)

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

Appendix I

GRADE LETTERS AND VALUES

I. Secondary Schools

- A. A dual-weighted grading system will be implemented at the high school. The dual-weighted grading system will calculate a weighted and an unweighted grade point average for all high school students.

B. Grade Non-Weighted Letters and Values

A	4.00	B-	2.67	D+	1.33
A-	3.67	C+	2.33	D	1.00
B+	3.33	C	2.00	D-	0.67
B	3.00	C-	1.67	F	0.00

Each letter grade has been assigned a numerical value for the purpose of calculating final grades and for determining the grade point average of each student.

C. Grade Weighted Letters and Values

A	5.00	B-	3.67	D+	1.33
A-	4.67	C+	3.33	D	1.00
B+	4.33	C	3.00	D-	0.67
B	4.00	C-	1.67	F	0.00

Determined courses at the high school are assigned a weighted value of 1 point more than their corresponding non-weighted grade point average from grades A-C. Grades C- and lower are not weighted.

D. Grade-Weighted Courses

The criteria and procedures for determining that a course will be designated as a grade-weighted course at the high school will involve the following steps:

1. All courses receiving college credit from an accredited post-secondary institute will be grade weighted, regardless of where the course is taught, medium by which it is taught, or instructor.
2. Advanced Placement (AP) courses will be grade-weighted.
3. High school courses that are not advanced placement courses or college-level courses, and that are requested to have a weighted status require staff to complete a proposal.
 - a. Teachers or other school professionals will complete a grade weighted course proposal. The proposal content and intent will be discussed at the District Advisory Committee Meeting in which

the committee will give their recommendation to the high school principal.

- b. The proposal will then be submitted for approval to the high school principal.
- c. Following Advisory Committee and principal recommendations, the proposal will be brought to the school board for discussion and official action.