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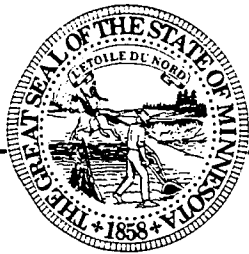
Report on Graduation Standards

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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

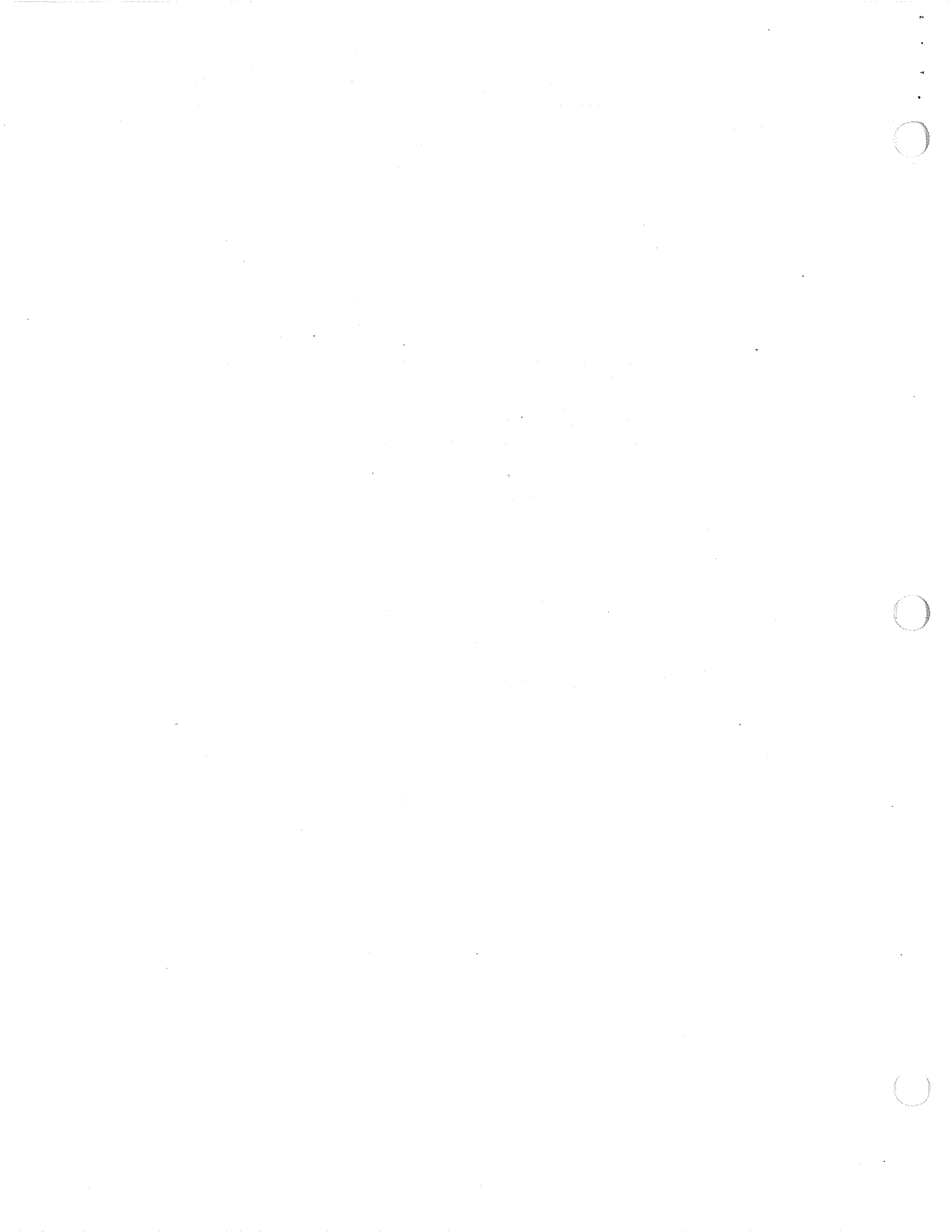
FROM: Jeanne Kling, Acting President
Minnesota State Board of Education

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:

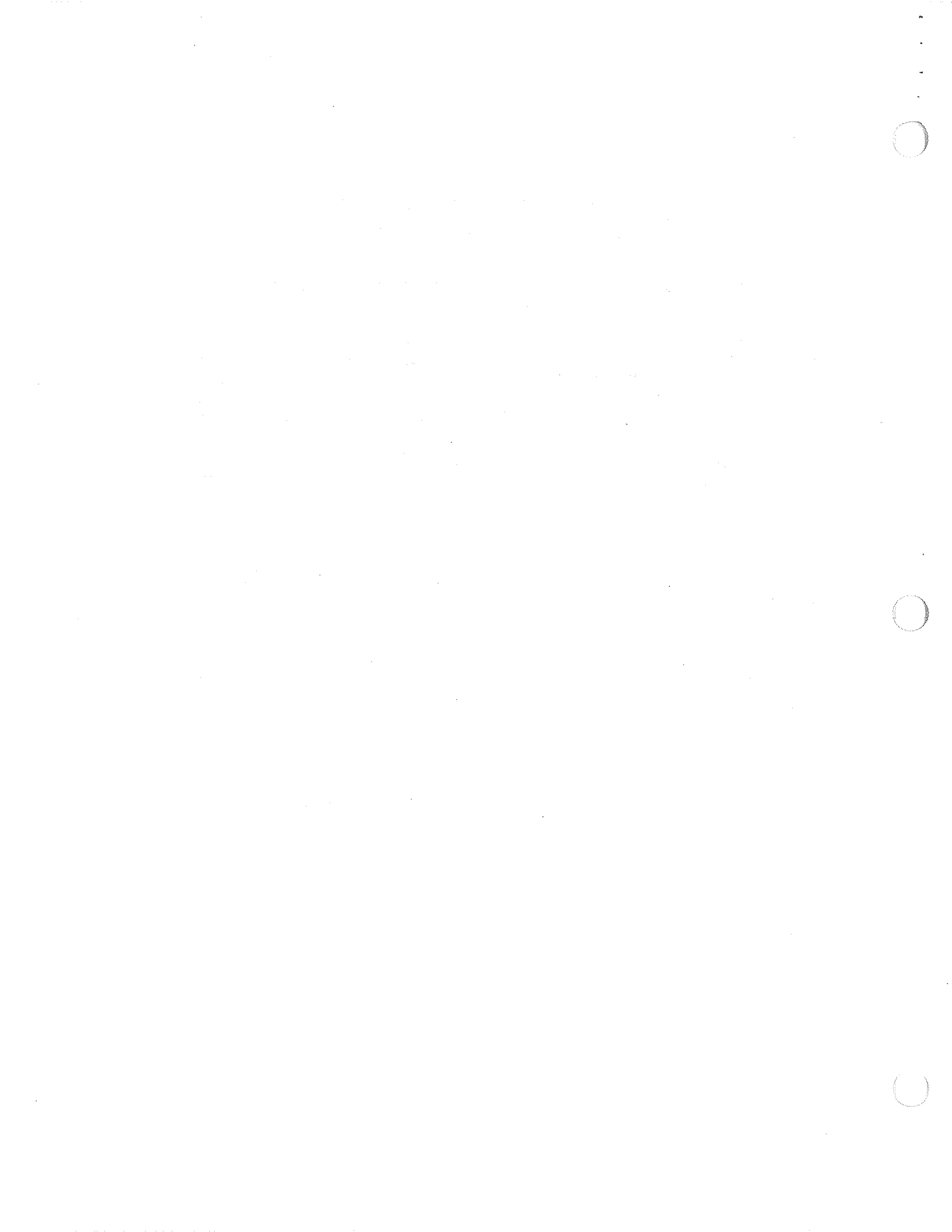
\$1247.80

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.

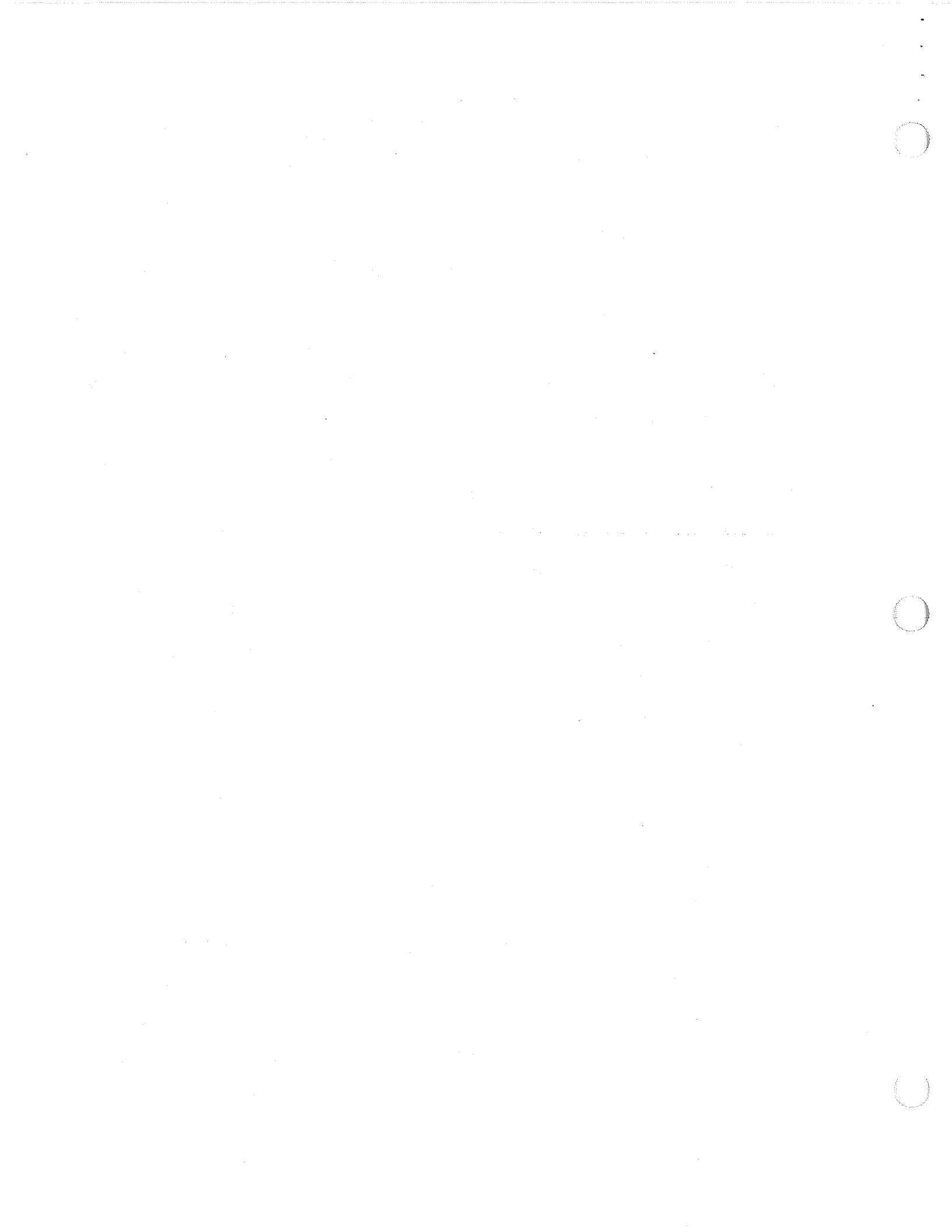
The Department has provided a handbook regarding testing procedures, scoring, rubrics for scoring, and samples to all districts. *[Appendix B is a copy of the Handbook on Written Composition and the results of the 1997 voluntary testing opportunity in written composition.]*

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

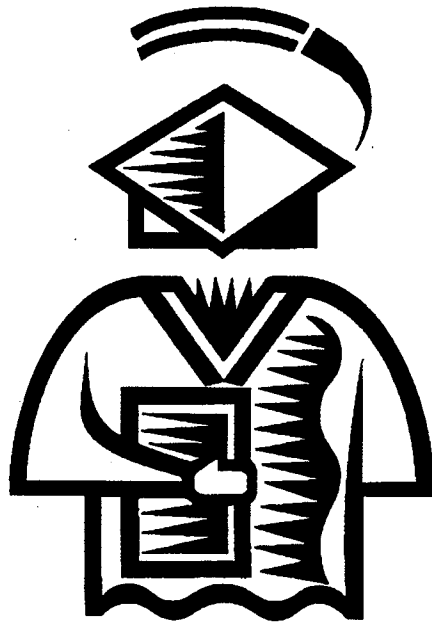
Basic

Reading and Mathematics

Test Results

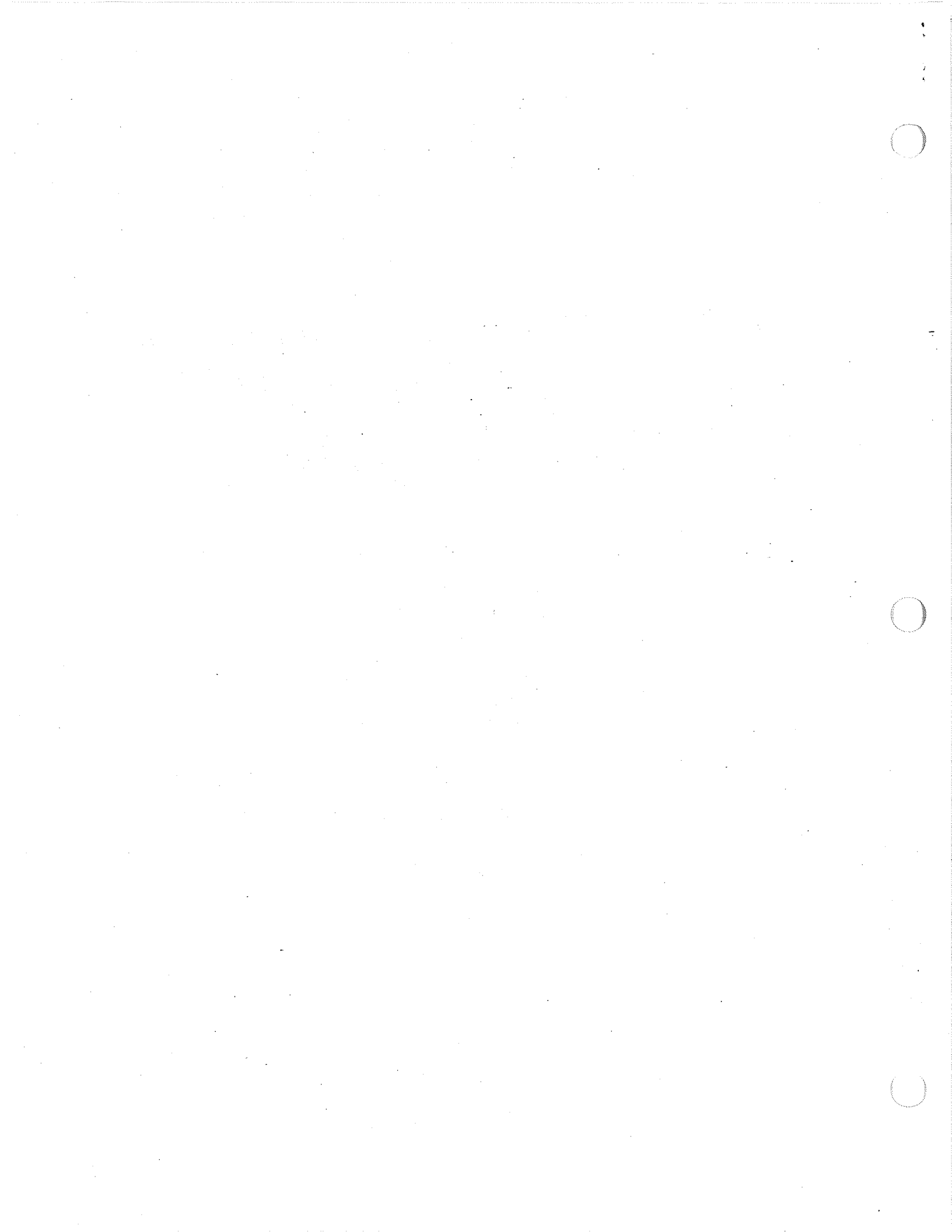
State Profile Reports
public and non-public schools

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					BASED ON TOTAL STUDENTS TESTED				
PERCENT RANGE	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	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

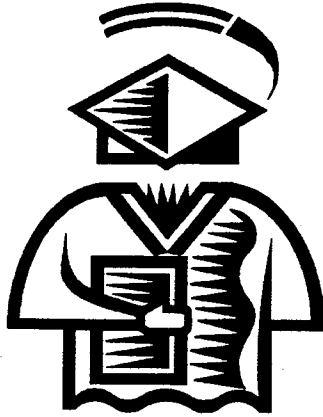
LEP	NA
Special Education	NA
Free/Reduced Lunch	NA
AFDC	NA
Mobility Index	NA
Drop Out Rate	NA
Per Pupil Expenditure	NA
Total Students Enrolled Grade 8 (1997)	NA
Total Students Enrolled Grade 9-12 (1997)	NA

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> <p>Intermediate (15 Standards)</p> <p>Middle Level (28 Standards)</p> <p>High School (48 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

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/>

<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 ("chapion," "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 $2\frac{1}{2}$ 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 usually 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 coucl 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.