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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF

*Children,
Families &
Learning*

**Graduation Standards
Advisory Panel
Recommendations**

**Report to the
Governor and
CFL Commissioner**

**As required by
Minnesota Laws 1998
Chapter 398
Article 5
Section 9**

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF

*Children,
Families &
Learning*

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Graduation Standards Advisory Panel Recommendations

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**REPORT OF THE GRADUATION STANDARDS ADVISORY PANEL
DECEMBER 30, 1998**

Introduction:

The 1998 Legislature charged the commissioner to appoint a panel of 11 members to advise the governor and commissioner on the implementation of the Graduation Rule. The members included representatives from education organizations, business, higher education, parents, and an organization representing low-income communities and communities of color. The Graduation Standards Advisory Panel focused on reviewing implementation of the basic requirements and the Profile of Learning standards. Four meetings were held on September 24, October 22, November 19 and December 10, 1998. The committee reviewed background materials, including the Administrative Law Judge George Beck's report dated March 24, 1998. In addition, the panel heard presentations from various individuals.

Panel Members:

Chair: Duane Benson, Executive Director, Minnesota Business Partnership
Bill Blazar, Senior Vice President, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
Glenn Dorfman, Administrator, Minnesota Association of Realtors
Claudia Fuentes, Education Program Officer, The Urban Coalition
Don Helmstetter, Superintendent, Spring Lake Park Public Schools
Leroy Koppendrayner, Commissioner, Public Utilities Commission and former state legislator
Stuart Lade, Teacher, Brainerd High School
Mary Mackbee, Principal, St. Paul Central High School
Mitchell Misialek, Teacher, Lakeview School District and representative, Education Minnesota
Representative Gene Pelowski, Teacher, Winona High School and Winona State University
Cathy Newman, School Board Member, Fergus Falls

Meetings:

September 24, 1998 Overview and Implementation Issues

Presenters: Robert J. Wedl, Commissioner, Department of Children, Families & Learning
Kate Trewick, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Children, Families & Learning
Linda Partridge, Curriculum Coordinator, Foley Public School District
Pete Ziegler, Curriculum Coordinator, Yellow Medicine East Public Schools
Bennice Young, Graduation Standards Coordinator, Minneapolis Public Schools

October 22, 1998 Paperwork and record keeping, number of standards and learning areas

Presenters: Representatives Bob Ness and Alice Seagren, report on local meetings
 Bob Gross, Superintendent, Brainerd Public Schools
 Earl Mathison, Superintendent, Wadena-Deer Creek Public Schools
 Kate Trewick, Assistant Commissioner, report of Administrative Law Judge

November 19, 1998 Technology and record keeping, number of standards and learning areas,
 clarity, content and rigor of the standards, scoring and auditing

Presenters: Mark Manning, Department of Children, Families & Learning
 Marty Borg and Bob Peterson, Bloomington Public Schools
 Charon Tierney, Graduation Standards Regional Coordinator
 Les Gunderson, Teacher, Perham Public Schools and students
 Tom Muchlinski, Wayzata Public Schools

December 10, 1998 General Discussion and voting on recommendations

Background of Development of the Graduation Standards:

In 1990 the State Board of Education established the Graduation Standards Committee, with an Executive Committee representing Minnesota's education, business, and citizen groups. In 1993 the Minnesota Legislature passed a law (Minn. Stat., section 121.11, subd. 7c.) requiring the State Board of Education and the Department of Education to develop a graduation rule based upon results. In 1995, the legislature expanded the statute and included a description of the comprehensive goals, Basic Standards and Profile of Learning.

In 1991, twenty-three public hearings and twenty public meetings were held to respond to first drafts of the graduation rules. Using the input gathered from those meetings, the State Board of Education began developing a two-tiered graduation rule featuring the Basic Standards and the Profile of Learning, or High Standards. The public also gave its input at hearings in 1993, 1994 and 1995. The final public hearing on the High Standards was held in February 1998.

The structure and content of the standards have evolved over time. The Basic Standards in reading and mathematics were adopted by the State Board of Education in March 1996 and the Basic Standards in written composition were adopted by the State Board of Education in February 1997. The final version of the High Standards was adopted by the State Board of Education in May of 1998.

Over the development years there have been adaptations made to reflect the concerns of the various stakeholders. The Basic Standards were reduced from seven to two subjects. Written composition was later returned to the Basic Standards. The 10 learning areas of the High Standards were originally 15. The number of high school level High Standards was reduced from

63 to 48. The actual content of the standards evolved as well. The high school level requirements changed several times over the development years. Task management skills were cut from the proposed rule to simplify the standards. The vision of the High Standards also changed over time. During 1993-95 the vision called for more rigid assessments of student achievement. Some envisioned state performance assessments where teachers chose what assessments to use from a menu of state produced performance tasks. That vision changed into a focus on content standards that outlined what students needed to know and be able to do and an assessment system that allowed teachers to develop their own assignments and tasks to measure student achievement of the standards. While pilot sites were required to use state sample performance packages so that these models could be tested, under the Graduation Rule local school districts are not required to use state sample performance assessments. They are encouraged to use their own assignments, tests and other assessments to measure student achievement against the standards.

In 1996 the Department of Children, Families & Learning provided training for a number of teachers from each school district across the state on one High Standards learning area. During the summer of 1997 teachers were trained in another five learning areas and training in the summer of 1998 focused on the remaining four learning areas. Each local school district has identified a Graduation Standards Technician to assist teachers in implementing the Graduation Standards. Each district has also been assigned a MEEP Regional Coordinator. In 1998 Implementation Support Team members were added to the growing list of professionals available to assist districts in implementation.

Graduation Standards Advisory Panel Recommendations

During the advisory panel's first three meetings it identified five primary issues surrounding implementation of the Graduation Rule. For each of the five issues separate recommendations were offered to resolve the various concerns. Below are the five issue areas and the subsequent recommendations.

Primary Issues Identified by the Panel:

- 1) Does the Graduation Rule result in excessive paperwork/recordkeeping;
- 2) Are there too many required (non-elective) standards and, are there too many Learning Areas;
- 3) Is the Graduation Rule too focused on instructional *processes* as opposed to academic *results*;
- 4) How can consistency of scoring of student achievement be improved on a statewide basis; and
- 5) Are there changes which could be made to improve the clarity and rigor of the rule?

Advisory Panel Positions and Recommendations:

1) **Paperwork/record keeping** - the Graduation Rule, at least initially, has resulted in increased paperwork for some teachers and schools. The performance assessment requirement frequently referred to as "performance packages" has resulted in increased paperwork and confusion and appears to be the major source of concern. Also, separate from the "paperwork issue" districts are not clear as to what student data should be maintained to reflect progress toward attaining the standards. In addition, districts have not adopted an electronic system for record keeping because the state only initiated piloting of electronic systems in the spring of 1998. Those pilots are now being implemented. It is critical that efforts be made to facilitate efficient and effective record keeping for teachers and schools.

Recommendation:

- Retain all of the standards identified in the Graduation Rule but eliminate references to the requirement of performance packages. Retain statewide third, fifth and eighth grade tests with a new 11th grade test which provides international comparisons of student achievement. (Passed on a voice vote with no opposition.)

Rationale:

- The state should establish rigorous academic standards defining what students should know. However, the establishment of standards should not dictate or influence how teachers teach. Repealing the mandate for performance packages does not mean teachers should not implement applied learning strategies if they or the local school board believe they are most effective. However, the rule should not require this practice for every teacher. In addition, by repealing the required use of performance packages and related student portfolios much of the concern related to the recordkeeping burden can be addressed.

2) **Number of standards/learning areas** - there may be too many required (non-elective) standards and learning areas in the high school and middle schools levels. There is concern that teachers will spend too much time exposing students to a broad range of academic and non-academic subjects and not enough time making sure that students have an in-depth understanding of learning in core subject areas.

Recommendation:

- Reduce the number of required learning areas from 10 to perhaps five (those representing the "core areas" of reading, writing, math, science and people and cultures/social studies). Implementation of the remaining learning areas would be left to local district discretion. (Passed on a voice vote.)

Rationale:

- The state should be responsible for identifying the expectations, or standards, in the "core" subject areas but should allow for local decision-making in the remaining areas.
- 3) Excessive focus on *process over results* - we should strike a balance that provides for consistency and clear expectations for student achievement from the state, while allowing for local discretion and accountability.**

Recommendation:

- Rather than require performance assessment for successful completion of each standard, require each student to successfully complete locally approved performance assessments in at least 10 standards, with at least one from each required Learning Area at any grade level. Note: The committee on an earlier vote reduced the total learning areas to five (Passed by a vote of 7-4.)

Rationale:

- This will provide a better balance for potentially phasing-in performance assessments than requiring them in all standards. This also clarifies that performance assessments are locally approved, as opposed to either being designed by the state or required to be similar to state models.

4) Consistency of Student Scoring - the public must have access to uniform and comparable data across all sites and districts in the state. This is important both for local and state accountability but even more so for program improvement purposes. The current Basic Skills Test is clear evidence of this in that the public knows and understands the current levels of student achievement across the state. In response some local school boards and districts have changed curriculum and instructional practices to raise student achievement.

Recommendation:

- The panel did not make specific recommendations on this as a single issue since its earlier recommendation to repeal state requirements for performance packages addressed this concern. In addition, the panel's recommendations on statewide testing provide a foundation for uniform data on student achievement.

5) Improve clarity and rigor - it is critical that the terminology used in the graduation standards be clear and understandable to teachers, parents and students. Each of the standards should be rigorous enough to truly challenge all students. Statewide testing should allow for direct national comparisons and compliment implementation of the standards.

Recommendation:

- Implement a statewide 11th grade test which allows for national and international comparisons of student achievement and is tied to the required Learning Areas. In addition, the legislature should determine a minimum score for student performance on the test which would be required for receipt of a high school diploma. (Passed on a voice vote with no opposition.)

Rationale:

- Assessment of successful student achievement relative to state standards is necessary to assure students are academically prepared for either the workplace or post-secondary education. In addition, because high school graduates will be competing in an increasingly global economy, the assessment must provide for international comparisons of student performance.

6) Other recommendations - In addition to the five major areas above, the panel also believed that the following action should be taken:

- The Commissioner should appoint a group to examine and make recommendations concerning the potentially significant number of students who may fail to meet expectations and who may choose not to continue with their education. (Passed on a voice vote with no opposition.)

Rationale:

- Current indications, based on student performance on the Basic Skills Tests, are that some students may not receive a high school diploma. It is imperative to identify strategies which will enable these students to attain, at least the basic skill levels necessary to succeed after high school. In addition, strategies must also be identified to assure future students will have the academic skills needed to successfully complete the Basic Skills Tests.

**Proposed Recommendations Considered but Not Adopted
(by issue area)**

1) Paperwork/record keeping -

Recommendations Not Adopted:

- Identify status of statewide software project, make its development and implementation

a priority and examine whether districts may need additional time to implement the rule's components regarding record keeping until the project is available. Enable districts to use software that is comparable and compatible with the state's record keeping software.

- Repeal or amend 3501.0370, subpart 1, clause C. This provision requires districts to use a *checklist* to identify the work students must complete.
- Eliminate the reporting and scoring requirement or postpone the requirement until the pilot sites have had time to develop, test and find a valid, clear and concise system.
- Retain the standards as identified in the Graduation Rule, eliminate references to performance packages and replace them with locally approved performance assessments.
- Retain the standards as identified in the Graduation Rule, eliminate references to the requirement of performance packages, implement a statewide 11th grade test and create greater consequences for adults in "the system" if students fail to meet expectations.

2) Number of standards/learning areas -

Recommendations Not Adopted:

- For the high school level, reduce the number of non-elective standards from 21 to 18 or less, as suggested by Administrative Law Judge George A. Beck. The number of non-elective middle school standards should also be reduced.
- Consolidate the number of learning areas from 10 to a lesser number, with no more than four required standards in any area.
- Retain the number of required high school standards (24) but allow a phase-in (e.g. 15 by 2002, 18 by 2003, 21 by 2004 and 24 by 2005).
- Eliminate the Inquiry Learning Area and instead require the elements of that standard be met in other learning areas as determined by local districts. Examine whether standards included in other learning areas and whether other learning areas could be consolidated or eliminated completely.
- Retain and continue to fully implement the number of required high school standards (24) but phase-in the number required of students for graduation (e.g. student transcripts would reflect the following: 15 by 2002, 18 by 2003, 21 by 2004 and 24 by 2005).
- Reduce the graduation standards to three learning areas: inquiry, speaking and writing, listen and view that focus attention on mastery of basic skills (via testing) and critical thinking skills. Leave decisions about other learning areas and standards to local

districts.

3) Excessive focus on *process over results* -

Recommendations Not Adopted:

- Retain the academic standards contained in the Graduation Rule but repeal all references to required utilization of performance packages (e.g. retain standards but do not influence instructional practice).
- Retain the standards contained in the Graduation Rule, repeal all references to required utilization of performance packages and replace them with locally approved performance assessments.

4) Improve consistency of scoring -

Recommendations Not Adopted:

- Establish a regional auditing process to ensure scoring of student achievement is consistent. This system could/should be expanded to a uniform statewide approach.

5) Improve clarity and rigor -

Recommendations Not Adopted:

- Raise expectations for student achievement on the Basic Skills Test, without changing its format.
- Implement a rigorous statewide high school test which allows for direct national comparisons of student performance and determine the extent to which part or all of the test should compliment the Graduation Standards.
- Remove references to the Profile of Learning and replace them with references to Graduation Standards or High Standards.
- Establish a task force to review the standards for clarity, consistency and content and make recommendations for improvement. The task force should also carefully review the language of the Graduation Rule for consistency and clarity and make recommendations concerning consolidation where appropriate. The task force's membership should include teachers and other "stakeholders" from around the state and report to the legislature and public.

Other Recommendations Not Adopted:

- Postpone changes to the graduation standards for one year and allow districts and schools to work on implementation. Focus on providing technical assistance and training to facilitate implementation of the standards.

Appendix A
Minority Reports



Spring Lake Park School District 16

8000 HIGHWAY 65 NE, SPRING LAKE PARK, MINNESOTA 55432

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan Heegaard, On Behalf of the Graduation Standards Implementation Advisory Committee

FROM: Don Heimstetter, Superintendent *DH*

RE: Final Input On December 10 Recommendations

DATE: December 16, 1998

Thank you for allowing members of the Committee the opportunity to submit final comments and suggestions. I am sure that we have our own "package" solution to the concerns raised by the Graduation Rule, and this provides us the opportunity to address the issues as a whole rather than one at a time, as we did at our December 10 meeting.

Here then is my overall list of suggestions:

1. Retain the ten learning areas and the 48 high school standards but with no State requirements. Rather, allow each local school district the discretion to establish its own requirements for graduation.
2. Require performance assessments from at least ten standards. Grading and record keeping is left to the local district's discretion.
3. As recommended by the Committee, implement a statewide eleventh grade internationally comparable test based on the core learning areas and tied at some date in the future to the graduation requirements. However, it should be one sit-down test that is practical and acceptable as a part of that requirement; it should not be a battery of tests.
4. Provide opportunity, support, and even incentives for districts to research, develop, utilize, and validate performance assessments to meet the standards.
5. Fully fund or remove the three days of additional class time that were legislated. Those days must be restored for staff in-service and training.
6. Finally, I want to re-emphasize the Committee's recommendation that a group be appointed to examine and make recommendations concerning the potentially significant number of students who may fail to meet expectations and who may choose not to continue with their education.

SERVING RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES IN SPRING LAKE PARK, BLAINE, AND FRIDLEY

MINORITY REPORT

We believe the Graduation Standards describe a system that contains multiple opportunities for students to achieve. The rule provides consistency, safeguards and adaptations to ensure all students the opportunity to meet standards. From that perspective, we agree with the panel on establishing a group to examine the needs of students who may fail. Appointing a representative group to look at the reasons some students might fail is important; the Graduation Rule may have helped facilitate this conversation, but the problem isn't new.

We make the following recommendations in difference to the majority opinion:

- The panel's suggestion of reducing the ten learning areas to five "core areas" does not simplify the rule. The learning areas group the content standards; to reduce the learning areas without changing the content standards will have little effect. We recommend the number of required content standards be reduced at the high school level. There are too many content standards placed at the middle and intermediate levels. This will be more effective than reducing the learning areas.
- There must be a statewide standard of rigor and accountability. The panel's recommendation to have locally approved performance assessments in 10 standards will lead to inconsistent measures of student achievement. Appropriate assessment of each content standard is essential to effectively measure progress for all students, including high mobility students.
- We support a statewide testing system. It is an important piece of the assessment process. Tests must align with standards and ensure valid, reliable and unbiased results. The panel's suggested internationally normed tests are biased and costly. The state tests must reflect current research and be selected by educators.
- State mandated record keeping of "tasks and packages" must be set aside until there is a consistent electronic, statewide record keeping system in place. Recording is unmanageable until a system is available to all school districts.

To suggest a significant alteration of the Graduation Standards would negate the substantial public process that went into its creation. There was broad participation by Minnesota's citizens, including education and business leaders, policy makers, parents and community members at 23 public meetings and 20 public hearings. To modify the essence of the rule would be premature.

Mitchell Misialek

Lakeview Schools

Cathy Newman

Fergus Falls School Board Member

Nancy Andrews

The Urban Coalition

Appendix B

Home research Information Brief: October, 1998

Lisa Larson, (651) 296-8036
Kerry Kinney Fine, (651) 296-5049
Legislative Analysts

State High School Graduation and College Preparation Requirements Compared

This information brief summarizes the state's new high school graduation rule and compares the requirements in that rule to the preparation requirements for Minnesota's four-year colleges and universities.

For more information on Minnesota's high school graduation rule, see the House Research information brief "Profile of Learning and the State High School Graduation Rule."

Minnesota's Previous High School Graduation Rule

Until the 1996-1997 school year, Minnesota's high school graduation rule required public school students to complete a total of nine credits in core academic areas: four English credits, one math credit, one science credit, and three social studies credits. School districts could require additional course work for graduation; those having sufficient financial resources and college-bound students often exceeded the state's minimum curricular requirements.

Critics of the credit-based rule argued that the graduation requirements:

- ▶ were too few in number and overly general;
- ▶ could be satisfied with various levels of the same course, including remedial, basic, general, and academic levels; and
- ▶ gave the same label to different content, despite the influence of curriculum guides and standardized subject matter tests.

They believed that students' mastery of particular subjects varied widely, in part because of differences in schools' curricular content and revenue disparities among school districts. They also thought that defining graduation requirements in terms of courses and credits based on time prevented schools from focusing on educational goals or preparing students to function in a competitive and complex society.

Minnesota's Current High School Graduation Rule

In 1992, the Minnesota Legislature committed itself to establishing a new high school graduation rule for the state's public school students by directing the State Board of Education (the board) to adopt in rule two types of graduation requirements: the basic standards tests and the profile of learning.

Required Basic Standards and ACT Tests

The reading and math basic standards tests became effective for students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-1997 school year and later. The written composition basic standards test became effective for students entering the tenth grade in the 1997-1998 school year and later. The state requires public school students to receive a passing score of 75 percent on the reading and math basic standards tests and three points out of a possible four points on the written composition basic standards test in order to graduate from high school. As with Minnesota's previous high school graduation rule based on Carnegie-unit credits, school districts may elect to exceed the state's minimum graduation requirements.

A passing test score on the basic standards tests is based on a statewide reading, math, or writing standard, requiring skills that most students should be able to master:

- ▶ the math test requires students to understand math through pre-algebra
- ▶ the reading test requires students to be able to read at a degree of difficulty equal to popular adult nonfiction
- ▶ the writing test requires students to respond to an adult reader in writing with short answers to two statements or requests for information

Students first take the reading and math basic standards tests in eighth grade and the written composition basic standards test in tenth grade. In the 1997-1998 school year, 71 percent of the eighth grade students tested throughout the state received a passing math score and 68 percent received a passing reading score.

Districts must prepare a "learning opportunity and remediation plan" for each tenth grade student who has not passed the reading or math basic standards test. Students have multiple opportunities to pass the basic standards tests. The graduation rule allows school districts to exempt from test taking only those few students with disabilities or limited English proficiency for whom reasonable accommodations are required. Districts must note the altered level of performance on the students' records.

Minnesota's four-year colleges and universities require students to take the ACT exam for admission. The ACT exam tests students in math through trigonometry, science reasoning, English, and reading. While some campuses set a minimum score for admission, most combine

the ACT score with a student's high school class rank. Students with a below average ACT score or class rank may still be admitted if they perform well on the other measure. The following table summarizes the K-12 basic standards and college testing requirements.

Basic Standards Tests* for High School Graduation		Entrance Test Requirement U of M; State Universities; MN Private Colleges
Reading	Students must read at a degree of difficulty equal to popular adult nonfiction.	ACT test is in four areas: math through trigonometry, English, science reasoning, and reading.
Math	Students must understand math through pre-algebra.	
Written Composition	Students must respond to an adult reader by writing a composition in response to a request for information.	

*Students must pass the basic standards tests in order to graduate from high school. A passing score of 75 percent on the reading and math tests and three out of a possible four points on the written composition test do not ensure that students are able to meet college preparation requirements.

Required Curriculum

In addition to the basic standards tests, the legislature directed the board to adopt the profile of learning as the second part of the state's high school graduation rule. The profile of learning contains high academic standards requiring students to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the state's basic competencies in reading, math, and writing. Beginning with the 1998-1999 school year, ninth grade students entering Minnesota's public high schools also must complete 24 content standards in order to graduate from high school.

The profile of learning is composed of ten broadly defined learning areas:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Read, view, and listen | 6. Scientific applications |
| 2. Write and speak | 7. People and cultures |
| 3. Literature and the arts | 8. Decision making |
| 4. Mathematical applications | 9. Resource management |
| 5. Inquiry | 10. World languages (optional for students) |

Divided among the ten learning areas are 56 preparatory content standards for grades K-8 and 48 high school content standards for grades nine to 12. Students in grades nine to 12 must complete 21 of 47 content standards in learning areas 1 to 9, and at least three additional content standards as electives; learning area 10, world languages, is an elective.¹ Students must use computer

¹ The board has discussed the possibility of changing the status of world languages within the profile from an elective to a requirement. However, the state cannot ensure that all Minnesota school districts, which intend to fully implement the higher educational standards of the profile beginning in the 1998-1999 school year, have the capacity to offer world languages. Related questions also remain: should a world language requirement apply to elementary, middle, or high school students; and what impact will a world language requirement have on English as a second

technology in completing at least one required content standard in learning areas 2, 4, 5, and 6. Students may complete a content standard more than once in order to improve their score for that standard.

Districts may modify the performance requirements for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The state and districts use the performance scores of K-8 students on the preparatory content standards, measured as advanced, proficient, partially proficient, or basic, as diagnostic tools.

Minnesota's public and private four-year campuses require certain curricula as preparation for admission. While most private colleges have long had preparation requirements, the University of Minnesota, followed by the state universities, mandated these requirements beginning in the early 1990s. All campuses expect similar student preparation, emphasizing a strong core curriculum in English, math, sciences, and social studies. Students who do not complete these requirements may still be admitted, but must make up the coursework in college.

The table² on page five compares high school graduation standards that include the profile of learning and the college preparation requirements for four-year public and private colleges in Minnesota. As the table shows, the relationship between high school and college requirements is not entirely clear and may need more coordination to ensure that students meet the requirements of both systems. To address this issue, a number of school districts incorporate required content standards into existing credit-based courses.

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language (ESL) programs?

² Community and technical colleges are excluded from the table because they are open admission institutions and do not require specific academic preparation.

Profile of Learning (Grades 9-12)		Preparation Requirements U of M; State Universities; MN Private Colleges
1. Read, View, and Listen in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reading, listening, & viewing complex information ▶ Technical reading, listening, & viewing 	Four years emphasizing writing and including reading, speaking, literary understanding/appreciation Recommended two to three years visual/performing arts; computer literacy/skills
2. Write and Speak in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Academic writing ▶ Technical writing ▶ Public speaking ▶ Interpersonal communication 	
3. Literature and the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Literary & arts creation & performance ▶ Literature & arts analysis & interpretation 	
4. Mathematical Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discrete mathematics ▶ Chance & data analysis ▶ Shape, space, & measurement ▶ Algebraic patterns ▶ Technical applications 	Three years including one year each of algebra, geometry and higher algebra
5. Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Math research ▶ History of science ▶ History through culture ▶ History of the arts ▶ World history & cultures ▶ Records of history ▶ Issue analysis ▶ Research process ▶ Social science processes ▶ Research & create a business plan ▶ Market research ▶ Case study ▶ New product development 	
6. Scientific Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concepts in biology ▶ Concepts in chemistry ▶ Earth & space systems ▶ Concepts in physics ▶ Environmental systems 	Three years including one each of physical science and biological science and one additional lab science
7. People and Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Themes of U.S. history ▶ U.S. citizenship ▶ Diverse perspectives ▶ Human geography ▶ Institutions & traditions in society ▶ Community interaction 	Two to three years including U.S. history and, for the state universities, geography
8. Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Individual & community health ▶ Career investigation ▶ Physical education & fitness ▶ Occupational experience 	
9. Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Economic systems ▶ Natural & managed systems ▶ Personal & family resource management ▶ Business management ▶ Financial systems ▶ Technical systems 	
10. World Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ World languages (optional for students) 	Two years in a single language

Appendix C

Chronology – OBE – Graduation Standards as a State Policy Issue in Minnesota (1971 – 1996)

CHRONOLOGY
OBE-GRADUATION STANDARDS AS A STATE POLICY ISSUE IN
MINNESOTA (1971-1996)

1971: Education Department begins Minnesota Educational Assessment Program (testing cycle to start in a sample of school districts in 1972-73).

1972: Development of "Some Essential Learner Outcomes" (SELOs) begins in Education Department in cooperation with educators and other experts.

1976: Legislature enacts Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting (PER) law for school districts; Minnesota's grassroots, "local control" approach to accountability and competency testing.

1983: Commissioner Ruth Randall (appointed that year by Governor Rudy Perpich) recommends "learner outcomes" and state achievement tests to Legislature to replace traditional clock hour-seat time graduation standards. Education lawmakers intrigued by the idea, critical of presentation; they take no action.

1984: Legislature revises PER law to include a required local testing cycle; Education Department to develop "assessment item bank" for voluntary district use.

The Minnesota Plan, promoted by the Minnesota Business Partnership, calls for state "core area competencies" and state tests among its recommendations for major reorganization of the K-12 system.

Commissioner Randall establishes a "team" in the Education Department to coordinate its OBE efforts and assist school districts (some 30 report experimentation with OBE-like ideas).

1985: DFL Governor Rudy Perpich pushes for his controversial **Access to Excellence** school reform plan. "Learner outcomes" and state tests are among his proposals, but they receive little attention in the furor over Perpich's main initiative: "open enrollment."

1986: State Board of Education includes OBE demonstration sites among its strategic goals; later in the year it adopts Education Department's proposal for a new student assessment system, one oriented to results (learner outcomes).

Governor's Discussion Group (created after the 1985 session) includes a "core curriculum with measurable outcomes" in its dozen recommendations to Perpich for the 1987 session.

Commissioner Randall and the Business Partnership, among others, continue to push for a uniform statewide student testing program, one yielding comparable results across districts.

1987: Legislature amends PER statute to require State Board to adopt "core learner outcomes" for each curriculum area; school districts are required to include these outcomes as part of district curriculum and to assess their achievement.

1988: Legislature creates Task Force on Education Organization; learner outcomes and assessment among areas to be studied.

State Board adopts set of "learner goals" for all students to guide development of required "core learner outcomes."

1989: Key education legislators on the Task Force propose a new Office of Restructuring," outside the Education Department, to coordinate all state K-12 restructuring and OBE efforts. In the same draft document, these legislators also propose that a statewide OBE system be created in Minnesota by 1993.

Legislature establishes a semi-autonomous Office of Educational Leadership (OEL) within the Education Department to develop two-year research project to determine OBE effectiveness.

Legislature funds 10 OBE R&D sites selected by the State Board of Education and coordinated by OEL.

1990: State Board of Education announces that it is rejecting the traditional graduation standards approach (which it has been working on since 1987) and will develop a new outcome-based rule.

State Board and new Education Commissioner Tom Nelson grant waivers from state rules to Rochester so it might continue OBE development. OBE is declared by the Board to be "the main road to accountability and high performance in Minnesota schools."

1991: The Office of Educational Leadership is not refunded; instead, it is terminated. The legislature does, however, indicate support for OBE; the term is defined in law, 30 OBE program contracts are awarded to selected districts, and experimental choice (charter) schools are authorized in law (up to eight schools must be "outcome-based").

State Board gives preliminary approval to an "outcome-based" graduation rule; Board then holds a series of regional public hearings across the state on the proposed rule.

1992: State Board adopts "assumptions" and a timetable aimed at the adoption of a

"competency-based" high school graduation rule. A Personal learning plan for each student is not included, and OBE delivery system is emphasized as being optional for districts. Board, Commissioner (Gene Mammenga), Department, and (later) Governor Arne Carlson voice support for OBE.

The Legislature declares its "commitment to establishing a rigorous, results-oriented graduation rule." However, the State Board is precluded by law from prescribing the form of delivery system, instruction, or a single statewide assessment that districts must use.

1993: Early in the year, the State Board presents its third draft of Minnesota's proposed graduation rule. The number of outcomes has been pared significantly.

The 1993 omnibus education law reaffirms support for the results-oriented graduation rule, linking repeal of many laws and rules with the beginning of its implementation--1996. The Legislature appropriates \$10 million (exceeding the Governor's request) to accelerate development. Funds are used by 13 pilot sites to develop standards and assessment procedures. Repeal of many State Board of Education and Board of Teaching rules is to be phased-in over the next several years, as schools shift from focusing on "input" requirements to "outcomes."

1994: The Legislature leaves the schedule for implementing the graduation rule intact, after proposals to delay are defeated. Additional provisions are added to the law: the State Board of Education must submit annual progress reports to the legislature until all graduation requirements are implemented; the rule must differentiate between minimum competencies--Basic Requirements--and rigorous standards--Profile of Learning; and assessment procedures must be based on the most current standards for educational testing. Nevertheless, the results-oriented graduation rule is still scheduled to begin in the 1996-97 school year.

St. Paul becomes the 14th pilot site.

Nine high schools are selected to serve as "Tier II" pilot sites, where proposed graduation standards will be "test-driven." Tier II pilot site students entering ninth grade in 1995 will be required to achieve the Basic Requirements in reading and math before they graduate. Also, Tier II schools will use assessments developed in the 14 original pilot sites to measure student achievement of Profile of Learning standards.

1995: Governor Arne Carlson's 1996-97 budget recommends \$15.3 million for continued development of the Graduation Standards--\$5 million more than was appropriated for 1994-95. The legislature appropriates \$12.5 million for this purpose (included in overall Education Department funding). No significant amendments are added to the law, and the schedule to begin implementation in the 1996-97 school term is unchanged.

In December, a public hearing is held on the proposed Graduation Standards for the reading and math Basic Requirements.

1996: In March, the State Board of Education authorizes final adoption of the Basic Requirements for reading and math. Also, the Board begins the process for adopting the writing Basic Requirements. Reading and math tests will have to be passed prior to graduation by those in ninth grade in the fall of 1996. According to a Board timetable for future Graduation Standards rulemaking, those in ninth grade in 1997 will have to pass writing tests before they graduate. The timetable also includes projected dates for implementation of the five phases of the Profile of Learning (now also referred to as "High Standards").

The Legislature adds \$2.96 million to the Department's appropriation for use in Graduation Standards development. This year's education law also enacts a new local process for reviewing instruction and curriculum, very similar to the PER law (which is repealed effective August 1, 1996). The new local process is linked to the state's Graduation Standards.

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