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# Minnesota Graduation Standards Implementation:



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## How It Looks from Where It's Happening

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February, 2000

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MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF

*Children  
Families &  
Learning*

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MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF

*Children,  
Families & Learning*

1500 HIGHWAY 36 WEST  
ROSEVILLE MN 55113-4266

T: (651) 582-8200  
TTY: (651) 582-8201

February 10, 2000

Dear Minnesota Citizens Concerned with Education:

From November, 1999 to early February, 2000, each district in the state was given an opportunity to participate in a structured focus group on the subject of Minnesota Graduation Standards implementation. I am pleased to be able to share the information gathered in this publication created by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota.

I commend professional educators who chose to participate, and send a big "Thank You!" to all parents and students who came out for these meetings, which were often on cold mid-winter nights! Thanks also to our Minnesota Educational Effectiveness staff, whose persistence paid off with a 99% district participation rate.

We've learned some things about Minnesota Standards. I am happy to report that there is almost universal agreement that the profession was overdue for this debate about standards and accountability, and while many people express concerns with implementation they have also welcomed the dialogue.

This energetic debate continues. As Commissioner I will make every effort to improve communication about standards and, above all, strive to listen to you. All of us working together will create a public education system which is truly rigorous for all students.

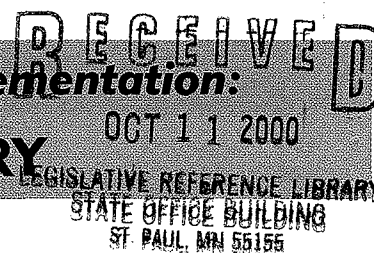
Sincerely,



Christine Jax, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

# **Minnesota Graduation Standards Implementation:**

## **OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY**



### **Background Information**

In September, 1999, the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) set out to develop a process to gather current data about standards implementation from every district in the state. There were several purposes for this process, which was a structured focus group:

- \* Create a means for two-way communication with every district
- \* Collect information about best practices which support standards implementation
- \* Provide information about technical support for the standards
- \* Prepare a current statewide implementation picture

An instrument to guide the process was developed by the MEEP staff and sent to districts in October. Each district was asked to bring together the following mix of people:

- \* School Board Member
- \* Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent
- \* Principal Designee
- \* Graduation Standards Technician
- \* Teachers representing elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as teacher union representation
- \* Parent(s)
- \* Student(s)
- \* Community Education Representative
- \* Special Education Representative

Between November, 1999, and February, 2000, the visits were conducted by MEEP regional coordinators. It is notable that districts welcomed and responded to this opportunity. At the end of the data-gathering period (February 4), 99% of the districts had participated, and the remainder were scheduled. Overwhelmingly, the districts were eager to talk about the implementation experience. The findings are summarized by region and for all of Minnesota in this report. Regional reports of greater length are available upon request from state or regional MEEP staff.

### **General Conclusions**

The findings from the data reveal remarkable consistency in the views of nearly 2500 participants. The discussion guide developed by the MEEP staff helped to focus the issues, yet was sufficiently open to elicit very spirited debate and to encourage expression of diverse opinions and perceptions. Attendance at these district meetings ranged from the minimum of

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

12 "required" participants to as many as 70-100+ persons. Across the state, the regions report similar perceptions and opinions about standards-based education and Minnesota's efforts towards standards implementation. The format of having a dialogue among a broadly representative group of stakeholders has provided the state with rich information about how the process of implementation is proceeding. In general, the participants had the following opinions and perceptions:

### STATEWIDE STANDARDS

There is wide acceptance of statewide standards among all educators in Minnesota. This is in spite of a growing awareness that implementing more rigorous standards will demand more staff development time, more teacher collaboration, and a more serious commitment toward educational reform among all stakeholders, including parents, administrators, teachers and students. The standards are credited by professionals for lifting the level of professional dialogue in ways no other educational reform effort has been able to match. There is nearly universal agreement that the profession was overdue for such debate.

The state envisioned standards implementation as having two branches-basic standards and high standards. The basic standards are measured by the state's Basic Skills Test. These have had an impact upon teaching and local curriculum revision at every level. The high standards are placed in the Profile of Learning and remain more controversial, primarily because the number of standards and how they are measured and scored is still evolving.

### PERFORMANCE PACKAGES

Few educational professionals still view the state as dictating the use of the model assessments. Rather, many teachers are developing performance assessments which align with their local curriculum and most districts have created procedures for the approval of local assessment packages. A handful of districts allow only particular assessments, either state models or those locally developed, but for reasons motivated by the desire to genuinely improve rigor or make the system more manageable for highly mobile students. Parents and students report that they are understandably ignorant of the issues surrounding performance assessment. As a result, they express a wide range of feelings about "packages" which are often reflective of the attitudes of district administrative leaders and teachers.

### INTEGRATION VERSUS ALIGNMENT

Schools are being asked to both integrate and align the standards. *Integration* refers to embedding or placing the standards within the local curriculum. Data from these recent district discussions reveal that over two-thirds of the persons responding believe integration of standards is happening "frequently" or "almost always" at all grade levels. *Alignment* refers to the standards being linked with or having a relationship among all three components of instruction-teaching, assessment, and curriculum. Persons responding to this question feel

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

that the alignment still lags somewhat behind integration, with responses evenly split between "occasionally" and "frequently." In other words, breadth of application (i.e., integration) has generally occurred, with a belief in and support for standards. However, the reality is that the depth of the application of standards (i.e., alignment) is still in development.

### DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership on the part of many superintendents and principals during the mid-90s provided a positive learning climate for teachers, parents and students. The ideal district where the reform effort has been most successful has been led by administrators who sent a clear and consistent message about the research base for standards-based education, while leaving the details of the effort to district and building professionals. The learning curve for standards implementation has been particularly steep in districts where leadership for standards has been lacking.

### COMMUNICATION

The most problematic area is perceived by participants to be communication. Districts say that clear and simple communication about the ideas which support this reform effort has been lacking at every level. As a result, unclear communication has caused both a lack of understanding and feelings of frustration in all stakeholders. The source of greatest consternation, by far, is understanding and then communicating the difference between the district grading system and the standards scores. Related to this is the perceived lack of on-going, systematic, two-way communication between district staff and the community of students, parents, and others. Educators feel the public at large needs a message about standards and standards implementation which is clear, simple and focused. Furthermore, they believe it is the state's responsibility to do this.

### TIME AND THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Time to make the necessary changes to implement a standards based system is perceived as a major problem. Time for staff development is reported as a need by all districts. The action by the legislature to add three days of student contact time, which effectively reduced staff development time by three days, is viewed by most educators as symbolic of a deeper problem represented by a system which does not support sufficient time to plan and deliver on new staff development models. For example, teachers in schools that have had the time to conduct review sessions of actual student performance assessment work have often identified this activity as one of the most valuable staff development activities they have experienced.

### SUMMARY

The data being reported in this study provide a detailed and current view of our state's effort to bring about a major systemic educational reform. These data are both reliable and valid because they are consistent across the districts and they have been gathered from a broadly

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

representative group of stakeholders. The fact that nearly 2500 Minnesotans took an evening of their personal time to become part of the dialogue about standards implementation is remarkable indeed.

Research on educational reform has shown that it takes about ten years for a major systemic reform to become fully operational. Minnesota began the process of standards implementation some years ago with the creation of pilot sites. However, school year 1998-99 was the first year of state-wide implementation of the Profile of Learning as it related to the high standards. Still needed is a process by which thoughtful and deliberate dialogue can continue to shape this initiative as it unfolds. Equally important is understanding that it is essential to allow time for stakeholders to become knowledgeable about standards. Both teaching and learning are experiencing significant reform as a result of standards implementation—reform that is believed will better serve our evolving society in the new century.

Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Ph.D., Primary Investigator  
Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement  
College of Education and Human Development  
University of Minnesota

and

Janet R. Heidinger, Ph.D., Data Analysis and Editor

### Acknowledgements

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Xuan Vu, Graphic design

Mary Lillesvie, Manager, Division of System Services

Diane Cirksena, MEEP Team Leader

MEEP Regional Coordinators

# **Summary Statements and Findings from Stakeholder Discussions**

## Standards Integrated into the Curriculum K-5

Districts that have used their own curriculum and created assessments based on the standards or have adapted a state model package have made significant progress toward integrating the standards.

*"The standards are concrete proof that the state thinks what I teach is important."*

Erin Otto  
Music Teacher  
Clearbrook-Gonvik

### KEY:

Numbers represent size of student population

**A** = Multiple high schools:  
15,000 + (Anoka-

Hennepin; Apple Valley-  
Rosemount; Minneapolis;  
Osseo; St. Paul)

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Findings	District Size
* Districts are talking about what they are teaching more than ever, both within and across grade levels.	ALL
* The preparatory standards have validated the elementary curriculum. Some elementary teachers would like to focus assessment energies on the basics. Many support the comprehensive learning represented by all ten Learning Areas.	ALL
* Elementary teachers need to be experts in many content areas but may not have formal training that matches the content of the standards.	ALL
* In districts where there was early leadership for planning standards delivery across each grade level there is a high degree of commitment to both curriculum and performance assessment at each grade level. However, the required assessments at grades 3 and 5 sometimes don't match the existing curriculum.	ALL
* High staff turnover is viewed as having both a positive and a negative impact. New teachers are viewed as more flexible, but inducting new staff members necessitates ongoing professional development about standards and performance assessment.	ALL
* Some districts are concerned about specialists (i.e., art, physical education, music and keyboarding) delivering and assessing standards to large numbers of students.	ABC
* Arts standards requirements have created a need and an opportunity to partner with arts/cultural organizations and to engage in interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Primary and intermediate arts standards are not being delivered in theater and dance and are not meeting the intent of the standards due to limited specialists/programs.	ABC
* Many primary teachers feel there should be grade level exemplars.	ALL
* Training is needed, according to teachers, for the primary inquiry standard, because "how to get kids to ask questions" is very difficult.	ALL



## Standards Integrated into the Curriculum 6-8

The structure of the middle level (organizational, philosophical and/or physical) has a direct effect on the progress toward integrating what many perceive as an unrealistic number of standards.

*"Graduation Standards is new, exciting, complicated, and messy which is good; it is also valuable and crucial."*

Brenda Corbett  
Middle Level  
Teacher  
West St. Paul-  
Mendota Heights

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Findings	District Size
* Districts are talking about what they are teaching more than ever, both within and across grade levels.	<b>ALL</b>
* Focus and work on standards implementation in the middle school lags behind high school, primary and intermediate, unless there is a "family" or "pod" structure in place. Most schools consider the number of middle school standards to be overwhelming. This is especially true in small districts where the same teachers are responsible for delivering standards to students in grades 7 through 12.	<b>ALL</b>  <b>DE</b>
* Districts that have bundled standards (particularly in interdisciplinary teams) have had the most success embedding standards at the middle level. Bundling has worked very well when the standards are intrinsic to the subject, and less well when unlike standards are forced together.	<b>BCDE</b>
* Schools with team common prep time have made significant progress toward integration and bundling of standards. Even if there is a "family" structure, standards in Decision Making, Resource Management, Literature and the Arts, and World Languages are difficult or impossible to complete in an existing schedule.	<b>BCDE</b>
* High staff turnover impedes consistent implementation of standards and requires repetitive staff development.	<b>DE</b>
* Sixth grade school structure is often separate from grades 7 and 8. Teachers at this grade level are unsure of their role in delivering standards. A few schools are assessing standards in grade 6.	<b>ALL</b>
* Preparing students to be successful on Basic Skills Tests (BSTs) takes precedence over working on high standards in many schools.	<b>BCDE</b>
* Specialists (arts, music, physical education, family and consumer education, computer, industrial tech) are concerned about delivery and assessment expectation due to large numbers of students, time constraints and lack of resources (currently not enough staff).	<b>ABC</b>
* Many schools indicated a focus this year on embedding standards into the curriculum rather than using the state packages. There is widespread movement away from using state packages as curriculum.	<b>ALL</b>

## Standards Integrated into the Curriculum 9-12

In most districts, standards have been placed with varying levels of integration. Students confirm that the level of integration depends on how well the teacher understands standards. Content may represent a challenge to teachers because of lack of background. There is progress toward understanding standards as more than "packages."

*"When a teacher says to you, 'Now, we're going to stop what we're doing and do this state package,' it's no wonder kids get turned off."*

Luke Slindee  
10th grader  
Fillmore Central

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Findings	District Size
* Districts are talking about what they are teaching more than ever, both within and across grade levels.	<b>ALL</b>
* High schools that offer standards through a wide variety of courses and other educational options experience fewer problems with the "24 standards requirement" than schools that offer standards only through traditional courses.	<b>ALL</b>
* When high schools place standards only in required courses, scheduling flexibility and student choices become limited. The reason cited is to insure that all students meet 24 graduation standards.	<b>ALL</b>
* Vocational teachers and teachers of elective courses in schools with restrictive placement of standards express frustration with decision-makers who have not provided for flexible placement opportunities.	<b>ALL</b>
* As teachers become more familiar with the standards, they realize how their curriculum delivers standards. The stress levels for both students and teachers decrease accordingly.	<b>ALL</b>
* Many districts report teachers in 11th and 12th grade finally "getting on board," although 11th and 12th grade students are not subject to the Graduation Rule.	<b>ALL</b>
* A number of schools have required the use of uniform assessments to: a) reduce the risk of incomplete assessments among highly mobile student populations; b) ensure uniform rigor; c) make a more manageable system.	<b>ABDE</b>
* The world language standard is so rigorous that traditional programs offer little opportunity for students to achieve scores of 3 or 4. World language teachers think the standard must be rewritten if world language remains a high school offering.	<b>ALL</b>
* Some standards present significant challenges to teachers (e.g., Economics Systems, Discrete Math, Themes of US History, and Chance and Data Handling). This highlights the need for more staff development.	<b>ALL</b>
* The number of math standards at the high school level is perceived to be impossible for lower ability math students. In some districts a significant curriculum change has given more students the opportunity to be successful in math.	<b>ALL</b>

*"I found that virtually all my teachers have been doing the standards all their lives. We just needed to get it (curriculum) organized into the standards format."*

Joe Legari  
Teacher,  
Part-time  
Assessment  
Coordinator  
Mesabi East

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## **Standards Integrated 9-12. . .**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>District Size</b>
* Most schools are only now beginning to focus on ALC (Alternative Learning Centers) delivery of standards. In districts where leadership for standards has included ALC teachers, considerable progress has been made toward managing standards delivery for a highly mobile population.	<b>ALL</b>
* Teacher and administrator attitude controls student perception of standards, and consequently, parental perception as well.	<b>ALL</b>
* Teachers in separate and segregated sites are extremely challenged to deliver and assess high school standards regardless of their content background.	<b>ALL</b>
* A few schools are experimenting with ways for students to meet a standard through independent study options provided by their district.	<b>CDE</b>
* Loss of students to the Post Secondary Education Options (PSEO) is a significant financial concern for some schools. Those schools perceive it to be a "lose-lose" situation: PSEO drains money and resources, but is not accountable to districts for the delivery of standards.	<b>ALL</b>
* In the Implementation Manual, all schools have a "Policy F" (credit for outside learning) which typically is not yet accessed by students. Most students are unaware of policies and procedures for outside learning. External providers are eager to help deliver standards, but few have actually learned enough about standards, policies and procedures to actually do it.	<b>ALL</b>
* Students generally like standards work when it is relevant, tied to classroom issues and supported enthusiastically by the teacher. Students who are taught about the learning process and "why we're doing what we're doing" think standards are necessary. They believe standards give them a better chance to find areas of strength, success and individual ways to express their learning.	<b>ALL</b>
* Schools believe that scheduling impedes or enhances implementation of the standards. Schools that have implemented block scheduling believe that it allows for more flexibility in support of standards.	<b>ALL</b>
* In some instances, teacher job security determines the placement of standards. This makes for difficult staffing decisions.	<b>CDE</b>
* Small schools need more models of how to place standards.	<b>DE</b>

## Alignment of Instruction with Standards

Where districts have invested in training, progress toward authentic assessment has better aligned instruction with standards, and has positively impacted teacher beliefs that "ALL" students means "ALL" students.

*"I am asking my students to do harder things than I ever did before. They are doing them and in the process they are teaching me, teaching me better ways to do things that I never thought of before. This is hard work but it's better for kids."*

Kathy Detloff  
Teacher  
Swanville

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Finding	District Size
* Most professional educators report that, for the first time, they are having rich conversations with their colleagues about curriculum and instruction.	ALL
* Teachers are using a greater variety of assessments, and credit the standards for making assessment an issue.	ALL
* More and more teachers are saying they are teaching what students need, not favorite teacher topics. Teachers also credit the standards with forcing discussions about curriculum in which overlaps and gaps are being positively addressed.	ALL
* Teachers voice concerns about whether they are prepared to use instructional strategies for all students.	ALL
* Teachers of Moderate to Severely Mentally Impaired students mostly believe the standards do not apply to their students.	ALL
* Teachers who understand performance assessment and who have previously used hands-on instruction in the classroom have adapted more quickly to Minnesota Graduation Standards.	ALL
* Requiring all teachers in a district to use identical performance assessments, while frustrating for teachers, provides strong data for planning.	ALL
* When teachers have time to develop or identify performance assessments that are integral to a specific curriculum and to critique its alignment to the standard, assessment is seen as being closely linked to instruction and curriculum. This seems to happen better when working in a collegial group rather than as a solo endeavor.	ALL
* Where teachers are told to use state model packages without the teachers' input, the package is often delivered as an add-on, completely separate from the curriculum. Increasingly, teachers understand and support the writing of their own assessments, but are frustrated by the lack of time to write them.	ALL
* Some principals report observing changes in teaching methods that support standards-based instruction. They believe students have become more actively involved in learning.	ALL

*"It (standards) is now embedded but the TIME to get it done is an add-on."*

Mary Lilliquist  
3rd Grade  
Teacher  
Caledonia

## Alignment of Instruction . . .

Findings	District Size
* Questions are being raised in some districts about teachers who "refuse" to teach an assigned standard or state openly they'll give a phantom score. A small number of schools are using disciplinary procedures against such teachers.	ALL
* While the Minnesota Electronic Curriculum Repository (MECR) is a potentially valuable tool, some teachers who have tried to use the MECR are frustrated by printing or other technical problems, or by missing assessments (e.g., elementary science). Most teachers are encouraged by the rewritten model assessments.	ALL
* School districts are looking to new teachers as their future leaders in instruction and assessment. Schools are reporting that standards have influenced their hiring practices. New teachers who have standards-based training have an advantage.	ABC

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## Student and Parent Understanding of Expectations for Graduation

Communication varies greatly from school to school. In general, in schools where board members, administrators, and teachers are well informed on standards, students and parents feel informed and trust that the school is making wise decisions. Few high school students and their parents understand the flexibility local districts have for the placement and assessment of standards. This is one reason some high school students and their parents are concerned about meeting 24 standards for graduation.

*"I haven't had  
parents say  
'Why?' but  
'Explain' it  
more.  
Parents trust  
the staff."*

Lynette Aehling  
Technician and  
Teacher  
Bertha-Hewitt

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Findings	District Size
* In school districts where there has been strong and consistent leadership for standards, staff, students and parents feel the Profile of Learning is a positive thing.	<b>ALL</b>
* All districts express a need for a strong and consistent message from "the TOP" to clarify the Governor's office and Children, Families & Learning's support of standards. They ask for tools to explain the need for graduation standards to parents. In many areas, parents are still not well informed, or are misinformed. Children, Families & Learning is asked to take the lead. Public service announcements featuring the Commissioner and the Governor talking about why they believe standards are important may be helpful.	<b>ALL</b>
* The traditional methods of communicating information from school to parents are generally NOT working, as the urgency "to know" has not yet reached its peak.	<b>ALL</b>
* Although many schools have attempted to share information through meetings, newsletters, teacher reports, etc., most parents are relying on the schools to make decisions that will allow students to meet the requirements.	<b>ALL</b>
* Districts in which teachers are encouraged to showcase activities aligned with standards by contacting local press, setting up parent parties and telling kids and colleagues how the activities fit with the graduation standards, feel their efforts are valued. They believe that the information needs to be connected to a context in which parents/communities have an interest.	<b>ALL</b>
* When parents are shown a "traditional" assessment and then asked to participate in a performance assessment, they clearly see the difference and value.	<b>ALL</b>



## Understanding Differences between District Grading Systems and Standard Scores

Utilizing a dual system of grading, grading A,B,C,D, and scoring 4,3,2,1, is currently a challenge for many districts. Parents assume 4=A, 3=B, etc. Misinterpretation, misinformation, and changing state rubrics have contributed to the confusion. Teachers are unpracticed in holistic scoring and unaccustomed to scoring according to criteria rather than by making comparisons among students. Teachers, administrators and students think the discussion around scoring and comparing student work is extremely beneficial, enabling better teaching and increasing student accountability.

*"I agree with a lot that has been said, like about the need for accountability. I do also respect the frustration on the part of the teachers. I think it's been implemented much too fast. The letter grades that we see are MUCH DIFFERENT than what we see from standards."*

Pam Cunningham  
Parent,  
North St. Paul-  
Maplewood

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Findings	District Size
* Teachers find the new state scoring criteria more functional, but want more time with their colleagues to learn how to use scoring criteria by scoring student work together. They affirm that when they look at student work together, it is the most valuable staff development activity they have ever had.	ALL
* When teachers consistently over time use Minnesota's scoring criteria, they generally become more comfortable that their score is similar to that of other colleagues.	ALL
* Special education and general education teachers are challenged by how to score the work of students with IEPs.	ALL
* Some districts express concern over scoring student work at the four benchmark grade levels rather than in scoring students at each grade level. Other districts see value in scoring against consistent high standards and criteria.	ALL

## Recording the Standards

Districts are uniformly frustrated that record-keeping software wasn't ready sooner, and they are concerned about how different software systems will facilitate the efficient inter-district transfer of transcripts.

*"...while reviewing application files, I came across a file of a student who was ranked in the lower 25% of his class, had a 16 ACT score, but had a 3.06 grade point average. How does this happen? Additional information, (such as a standards-based transcript), would have helped me sort out the type of student I was looking at. I have seen more of the above examples than I care to this year."*

Richard Shearer  
Director of  
Enrollment Services  
Southwest State  
University

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Findings	District Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Record-keeping systems are an issue at several levels:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Day to day tracking of classroom activities;</li> <li>B. Tracking of standards on transcripts;</li> <li>C. Simplifying the tracking of a highly mobile population;</li> <li>D. Dissension about public vs. private ownership of software;</li> <li>E. Software systems that talk to each other so that all records can be easily shared within and across districts;</li> <li>F. Fear that the record-keeping systems may not remain viable or available.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Teachers are reluctant to submit scores on standards due to variability of scoring among teachers delivering the same standards (the lack of inter-rater reliability).</li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Many primary teachers believe that scoring and reporting of reading, writing and mathematics standards must take precedence over standards in other learning areas.</li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Many schools are reluctant to send scores on standards to parents and post-secondary institutions.</li> </ul>	<b>ABC</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✱ Districts with mobile student populations and alternative or separate sites indicate it is very challenging to record what students have achieved when only part of the standard has been assessed.</li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>
<p><b>Note:</b> Although the above topic does not appear as a distinct item on the survey used to guide discussion in each district focus group, it is fair to include the above points in this report as they were heard repeatedly across regions.</p>	



## Using Multiple Forms of Achievement Data to Make Decisions

Most districts, large and small, are beginning to use Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA), Basic Standards Tests (BST) and Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) data to make some decisions about curriculum and staff development and, in some cases, instruction. Principals appear to be key to modeling the use of data at the building and classroom levels. Other sources of data are seldom used to make these and other decisions, such as, system changes and structural reforms that go beyond standards and curriculum.

*"We put extra dollars into the reading program, and we have documented evidence that it paid off. Our building really takes ownership of the reading and math tests. For an old coach like me it's like winning the game."*

Peter Eikron  
Principal  
Chisago Lakes

### KEY:

(Numbers represent size of student population)

**A** = Multiple high schools:  
15,000 + (Anoka-Hennepin; Apple Valley-Rosemount; Minneapolis; Osseo; St. Paul)

**B** = Multiple high schools:  
6,000 - 15,000

**C** = Single high school:  
3,000 - 6,000

**D** = 500 - 3,000

**E** = 500 or fewer

**All** = ABCDE

Findings	District Size
* Most districts have an objection to newspaper coverage of test results, but acknowledge the public's need to know, and a desire to use data better for continuous improvement.	<b>ALL</b>
* In smaller districts there is little confidence in the ability to clearly communicate about achievement data and a desire that the state provide interpretations that would assist in such communications.	<b>DE</b>
* The discussion of data helps district policymakers and educators move toward more informed decisions.	<b>ALL</b>
* Districts often lack clear processes and procedures for using multiple forms of data to inform decision-making at all levels, instructional to systemic.	<b>ALL</b>
* A small number of districts have a specific process for involving all their schools in using data to set goals and make changes based on the district vision and mission and for holding them accountable for continuous improvement.	<b>ALL</b>
* Use of test data has increased over the last two years. Basic Standards Tests are credited with this change.	<b>ALL</b>
* Few districts are sending student test data to the classroom level to assist in the dialogue of adjusting curriculum.	<b>ALL</b>
* Teachers want more specific reports of data (classroom and student) and the opportunities to use it effectively to tailor their instruction.	<b>ALL</b>
* Teachers often complain about Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) having little to do with what they teach.	<b>ALL</b>
* Users must distinguish between the purpose of standardized testing (e.g., NRT, MCA, BST) versus the purpose of classroom-based data (from sources such as scoring guides, checklists, fluency rate checks, etc.) in order to ensure accurate interpretation of data.	<b>ALL</b>

## Communication with Stakeholders about Standards Implementation Policies and Procedures and School Environment

Local policies and procedures for implementation of high standards, while formally communicated to the public, have not been widely discussed and, as of this time, remained untested by students and parents. As a result, there is little urgency to refine and revise these policies and procedures.

*"Oh, I prefer to think of you not as guinea pigs, but as pioneers."*

Vicki Roy  
School Board Chair  
Burnsville  
(Responding to student's statement that students are "guinea pigs")

Findings	District Size
* In the Implementation Manual, all schools have a policy which affords student the possibility to earn credit for outside learning. Most students are unaware of these policies and procedures and have not accessed this option. External providers are eager to help deliver standards, but few have actually learned enough about standards, policies and procedures to actually do it.	ALL
* Districts that regularly survey parents, graduates, staff and community identify this effort as helpful in building quality programs and strong community support. Using an annual survey has impacted curricular decisions and course offerings.	ALL
* Few districts regularly gather input from their stakeholders.	ALL

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## Meeting the Needs of All Students

Districts have increased their conversations about standards-based instruction and how it affects all students. All district are struggling with time and resources to meet the needs of all students.

*"Our mission statement includes a reference to '...positive learning experience for all learners, promoting academics, citizenship and individual self-esteem.' We believe that each and every student in the Mahnomen district has the right to take the basic standards tests without modification or accommodation ...to succeed without having the bar/standard lowered; to know that his/her accomplishment is nothing less than anyone else in the school or state. Modifications/ accommodations come only after the student has been unsuccessful and is supported by an IEP or a 504 plan."*

Brent Gish  
Superintendent  
Mahnomen

Findings	District Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Staff members who have been working on the reform effort for several years identify a concern for "ALL students" as needing to include the large group of students that may not be heading for a four year college degree and/or are not a part of specialized programs. There are more opportunities to learn for this group outside of traditional and/or required courses of study. Districts need assistance in embedding standards in non-traditional educational offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language Learners (ELL), Title 1, Alternative Learning Centers (ALC), separate sites and segregated sites are significantly more challenged by standards implementation.</li> <li>Gifted and Talented program coordinators are concerned that restrictive placement of standards may limit choices.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Where leadership took an early and firm stand that standards would better meet the needs of gifted students, teachers and students have responded positively and see the positive effect that applied learning provides.</li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Staff members express greater support for standards in districts where a commitment is made to a collaboration between regular and special education teachers. In districts where pull-out situations occur, special education teachers express dissatisfaction working with standards implementation.</li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Implementation of standards and inclusion of students with disabilities have been most successful in districts where general and special education staff have had joint training and task writing.</li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Standards-based instruction appears to raise expectations for students with special education needs. Special education teachers say things such as, "S/he did it," and, "This is good for my students."</li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Many districts are still struggling with what to do about the "lower tier" of math students. Teachers continue to be challenged by the wide range of student learning needs.</li> </ul>	ALL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Non-content specialists are extremely challenged to deliver and assess high school standards at separate and segregated sites. (A teacher with a K-12 Special Ed license might have content knowledge for grades 1-6 but is teaching at an alternative high school.)</li> </ul>	ALL

*Graduation  
Standards make  
a [school like]  
Herman  
relevant. We  
CAN deliver the  
standards here."*

Phil Smith  
Superintendent  
Herman - Norcross

## Meeting the Needs . . .

Findings	District Size
* Separate sites staff express satisfaction when given opportunities to mutually share information, implementation strategies, performance assessments and other information.	ALL
* Alternative Learning Center students often lack preparatory skills that make achievement of a high school standard difficult.	ALL
* Reciprocity of achieved standards sometimes is not honored between the Alternative Learning Center and the public school site.	ALL
* Among administrators and staff, there is a growing concern about who will be the advocates for the population of non-English speaking students.	ABCD

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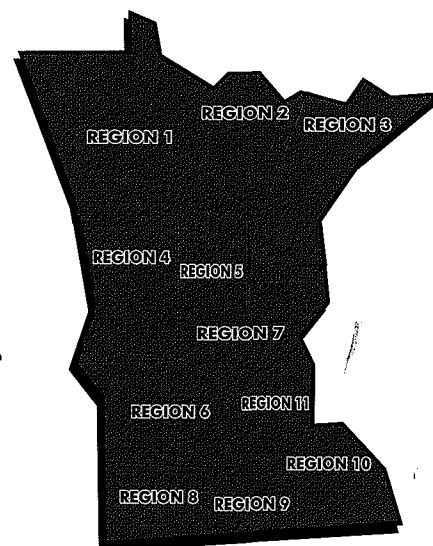
# ***Stakeholder Perceptions and Opinions by Region***

# STATEWIDE SUMMARY

There are 347 school districts in Minnesota. Student populations within these districts range from fewer than 500 to more than 15,000. Progress toward full implementation of the Graduation Standards varies from district to district.

The numbers reported on this page and the following pages reflect responses by individual participants. They do not produce consistent totals because a given individual may not have responded to all items.

The chart below represents a summary of responses for the state.

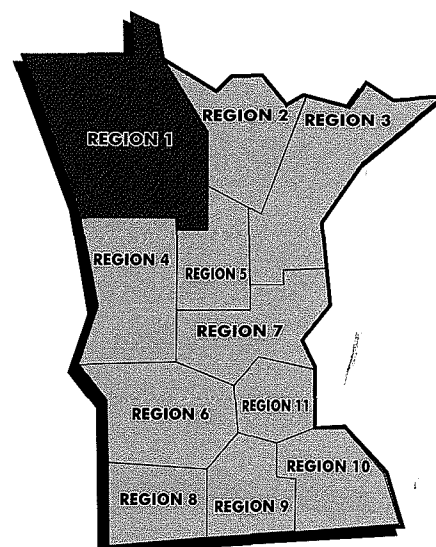


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	2410	145	32	620	1157	521
* Middle/junior high	2378	106	32	633	1125	397
* High school	2398	98	36	668	1096	488
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	2394	196	93	1142	1141	235
* Assessment	2431	153	106	1020	1191	305
* Curriculum	2393	129	92	984	1230	352
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	2405	244	376	1499	766	151
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	2412	253	679	1536	597	111
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	2471	111	267	992	1041	372
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	2482	70	48	323	789	1596
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	2424	96	59	336	727	1439
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	2422	163	261	1009	700	796
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	2321	138	151	432	673	1071
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	2446	166	383	1430	861	209
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	2481	153	430	1415	884	270
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	2472	140	162	1031	1422	399

**Please note:** Data on this page represent a sampling of stakeholder opinion gathered at focus groups hosted by the districts. The numbers are useful for noting large trends but not for making comparisons.

# REGION 1

Region 1 consists of 31 districts in the northwest section of the state. The districts are predominantly small to medium-sized, with K-12 student populations ranging from 250 to 1,200. Most districts possess strong and consistent leadership with goal-oriented staff development opportunities. Implementation of the graduation standards in Region 1 can be characterized as steady and growing. All but one district participated in the district visits.

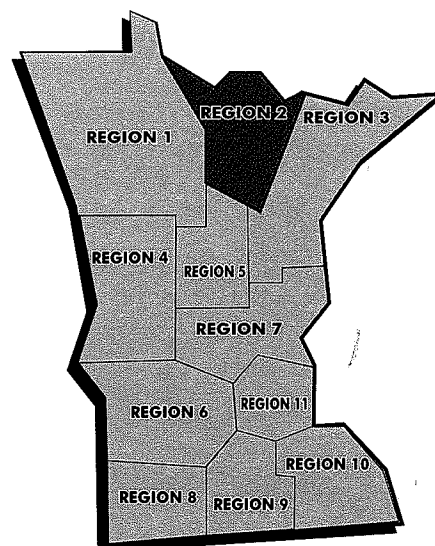


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	209	5	1	42	85	47
* Middle/junior high	207	6	2	50	86	36
* High school	210	6	1	54	84	41
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	199	11	5	61	87	13
* Assessment	205	7	4	82	98	19
* Curriculum	194	9	4	74	97	18
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	219	14	21	105	74	13
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	203	22	40	114	42	20
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	212	4	16	82	69	30
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	193	1	0	17	70	107
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	204	5	1	10	67	99
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	295	6	9	24	63	70
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	198	8	9	22	63	85
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	220	8	18	102	75	29
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	212	11	30	126	54	15
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	224	6	10	79	115	31

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# REGION 2

Region 2 is located in north-central Minnesota and contains 22 districts, all of which participated in this survey. Three districts occupy large geographic areas and have multiple high schools. St. Louis County district consists of seven K-12 schools located several miles apart. The largest school has more than 6,000 students, but most districts have mid-sized or small high schools. Implementation of the graduation rule has varied depending on leadership, usage of available resources, staff development opportunities provided for teachers, number of teacher preparations, and district personnel perception of legislative commitment to stay the course.



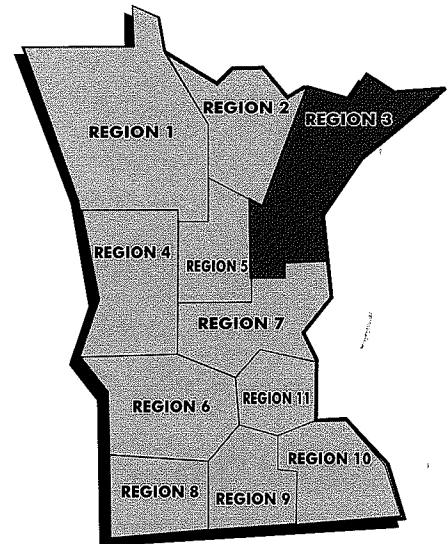
DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	135	18	9	34	55	17
* Middle/junior high	139	11	2	25	51	23
* High school	145	7	3	38	53	29
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	140	20	7	74	59	13
* Assessment	140	17	9	64	73	13
* Curriculum	138	16	7	59	68	19
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	147	11	29	99	32	6
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	147	14	40	89	22	11
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	145	13	23	61	39	12
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	148	7	10	17	38	78
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	142	9	9	22	35	65
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	139	14	19	45	30	32
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	146	5	7	31	32	55
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	150	10	27	69	64	12
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	154	10	33	84	36	5
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	146	6	12	60	79	25

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# REGION 3

Region 3 includes the urban district of Duluth, several mid-sized districts, and a large proportion of small, rural districts. They are spread geographically up the North Shore, across the Iron Range, down the I-35 corridor half way to the metro area, and across to the lakes of East Central. The region has mostly traditional districts, but also includes two charter districts and one Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) district. Common to all visits was the perceived need for more staff development time and a growing compliance with the Graduation Rule.

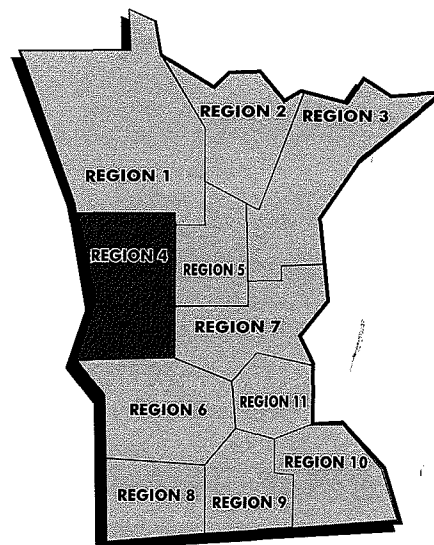


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum	168	2	1	32	83	49
* Elementary						
* Middle/junior high	169	1	7	29	90	28
* High school	170	2	1	20	61	37
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	158	7	3	30	73	35
* Assessment	157	5	2	46	74	33
* Curriculum	161	0	5	43	81	34
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	77	84	5	50	82	22
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	172	5	15	80	66	21
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	160	5	3	52	67	34
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	159	1	0	23	33	107
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	159	5	2	24	23	99
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	161	3	5	41	35	54
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	154	6	6	31	30	75
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	177	6	14	67	63	22
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	177	16	12	80	60	31
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	174	7	7	46	98	32

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# REGION 4

Region 4 consists of 35 school districts in a nine county area of west-central Minnesota. The student population varies in size from 5,926 in the Moorhead School District to 111 in Cyrus Technology Elementary School, with a majority falling in the small to mid-sized range. All the districts participated in this study and each reported a good deal of ongoing effort by staff and administration in supporting the implementation of the Graduation Standards.

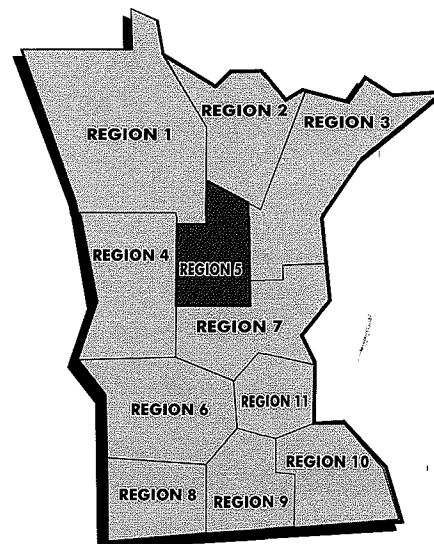


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	220	12	1	52	111	21
* Middle/junior high	219	6	4	58	97	12
* High school	216	8	5	64	97	11
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	215	16	5	106	88	9
* Assessment	228	4	4	101	93	10
* Curriculum	225	8	3	102	86	16
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	226	13	31	124	43	4
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	221	15	48	125	37	0
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	229	5	23	93	71	13
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	234	2	3	29	64	100
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	230	3	4	29	62	94
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	213	15	23	64	49	37
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	222	6	11	41	56	75
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	223	10	40	113	46	9
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	222	11	48	110	80	17
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	218	7	16	91	97	22

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# REGION 5

Region 5, located in central Minnesota, is comprised of 28 districts. District student populations range in size from 379 students in LaPorte to 7,249 in Brainerd. Student populations range from 500-2,000 students in 21 of the districts. Brainerd, the Freshwater Education District and Wadena were Graduation Rule pilot sites. Wadena was a Tier II site. Districts are progressing from placing standards to becoming standards-based, student-centered systems. All districts and one charter school participated.

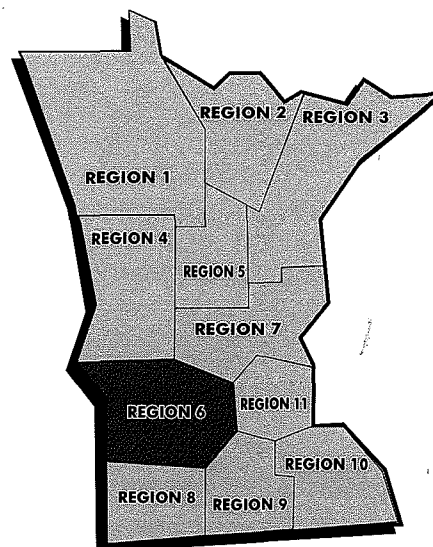


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	183	7	0	70	110	54
* Middle/junior high	178	3	1	67	114	33
* High school	184	2	1	67	114	33
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	173	11	5	106	113	19
* Assessment	180	9	9	100	105	30
* Curriculum	180	6	4	91	125	26
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	178	11	19	111	44	10
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	169	26	49	167	57	15
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	167	1	26	77	103	43
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:	171	6	2	25	73	155
* Basic standards tests						
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	180	9	3	22	66	139
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	173	12	11	56	72	71
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	170	13	7	33	69	109
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	175	22	24	127	85	16
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	183	13	35	144	88	17
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	181	21	9	94	144	39

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# REGION 6

Region 6 consists of 20 districts in southwest and west-central Minnesota. Other than a few larger districts, most are consolidated districts with approximately 1000 students each. Implementation of the Graduation Standards in this region can be described as progressing slowly. Where district or site leadership is strong, implementation has progressed further. All districts participated.

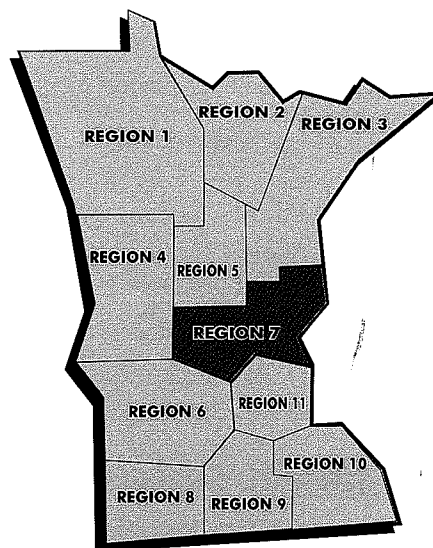


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	173	23	4	40	100	32
* Middle/junior high	171	16	0	36	98	19
* High school	179	12	0	40	81	38
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	203	16	9	101	89	15
* Assessment	199	11	13	74	99	19
* Curriculum	196	11	7	65	113	17
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	206	17	23	129	56	12
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	192	28	58	121	33	5
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	207	6	12	84	69	18
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	206	4	2	19	60	108
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	193	5	1	17	58	96
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	173	14	25	37	44	59
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	174	14	13	26	53	80
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	192	23	34	105	57	11
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	205	12	40	106	59	13
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	217	6	14	67	114	30

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# REGION 7

Region 7 includes 36 districts located in central Minnesota. Some districts border the metro area, while others are up to two hours from the Twin Cities. Districts vary in size; St. Cloud is the largest and Isle is typical in size of the smallest. This region is home to three graduation standards pilot sites: St. Cloud, Elk River and Annandale. Support of the Graduation Standards in the region is very strong. Districts have strong leadership and direction from veteran technicians. Teachers are supported with staff development dollars and are encouraged to take ownership of the standards and their assessments.

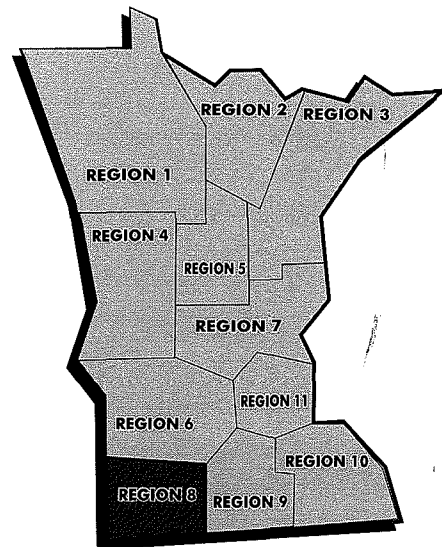


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	213	14	4	75	84	46
* Middle/junior high	218	12	9	68	87	42
* High school	216	14	10	73	123	43
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	213	17	11	116	110	20
* Assessment	211	19	11	41	125	36
* Curriculum	211	19	18	99	107	41
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	223	7	52	163	77	14
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	205	25	90	153	55	10
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	204	26	36	119	121	29
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:	220	10	4	76	102	156
* Basic standards tests						
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	222	10	9	75	88	149
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	219	10	24	77	77	94
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	217	15	11	68	88	30
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	218	12	38	170	95	24
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	220	10	63	140	89	23
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	223	7	28	116	138	33

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# REGION 8

Region 8 consists of 26 districts located in the southwest corner of Minnesota, all of which participated in this survey. Most school student populations are under 850, except for Redwood Valley, Marshall and Worthington. Implementation of the Graduation Standards in this region can be characterized as moving forward. Small districts have grave concerns about meeting standards because of limited resources and the number of teacher preparations. The region's districts have been very supportive of giving staff release time to integrate standards into the curriculum and to attend regional and statewide staff development opportunities. Teachers express a need for continued support.

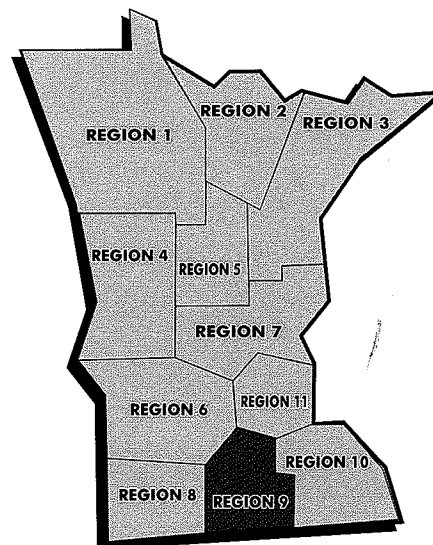


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	337	25	5	81	115	50
* Middle/junior high	344	15	1	82	111	48
* High school	334	18	10	83	109	37
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	329	43	18	150	115	24
* Assessment	337	35	15	167	97	26
* Curriculum	328	32	17	128	127	30
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	338	37	72	183	88	19
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	340	45	84	168	73	8
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	341	36	42	113	107	27
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	338	16	14	44	97	1445
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	340	19	16	51	86	131
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	321	30	44	72	79	75
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	320	30	23	59	72	105
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	350	32	53	192	74	24
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	333	42	76	165	76	21
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	335	36	20	124	151	40

**Please note:** Data on this page represent a sampling of stakeholder opinion gathered at focus groups hosted by the districts. The numbers are useful for noting large trends but not for making comparisons.

# REGION 9

Region 9 has 38 school districts and three charter schools. It is located in the south-central, southern part of the state. The average school district has 1200-2000 pupils. The region has a range of district sizes. Mankato, the largest district, has 7000 students. Comfrey and Butterfield, two of the smaller districts, have about 200 students. All school districts are working toward implementation of standards. Those districts that have made progress in standards-based implementation have strong leadership, both at the district and site level. Ongoing support in the form of resources, graduation standards coaches and curriculum directors is a key to continuous progress in implementing a standards-based system. All districts participated in this study.

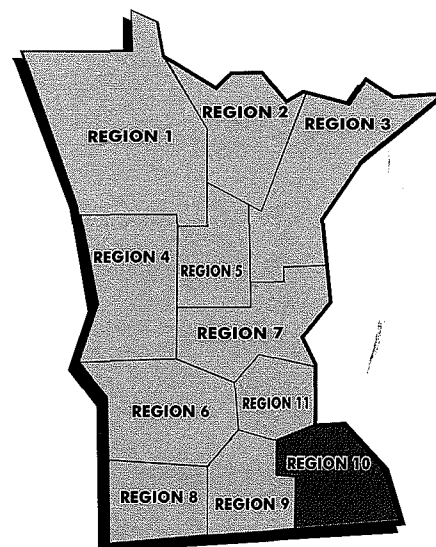


DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	304	17	4	69	133	65
* Middle/junior high	295	15	4	77	120	68
* High school	304	13	0	77	131	71
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	310	19	12	132	132	31
* Assessment	309	27	12	118	146	36
* Curriculum	301	11	12	110	130	53
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	327	18	24	171	100	19
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	317	21	65	179	84	6
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	319	5	36	111	115	41
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	326	12	7	23	86	187
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	280	16	8	34	90	160
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	258	24	22	75	97	82
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	264	19	24	45	84	114
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	293	15	30	171	111	15
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	304	11	34	176	86	31
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	305	13	7	121	169	54

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# REGION 10

Region 10 consists of 46 districts and two state academies located in the south-eastern part of the state. They are primarily small to medium-sized, rural districts. The implementation of standards has been affected greatly by the political process. Success has been found in districts where strong leadership has created an environment conducive to learning for all students and staff alike.



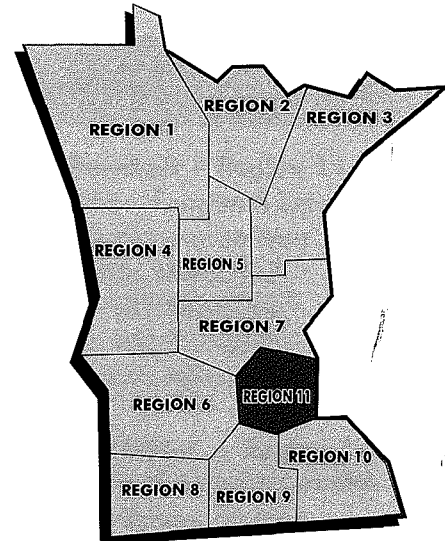
DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	167	13	0	39	69	33
* Middle/junior high	159	18	0	37	73	27
* High school	175	12	1	38	66	36
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	173	8	2	49	68	11
* Assessment	173	12	7	50	61	15
* Curriculum	174	10	4	47	64	15
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	172	13	26	84	33	7
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	165	26	50	74	28	2
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	184	3	9	55	62	27
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	172	4	3	5	40	111
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	167	8	4	10	34	98
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	166	7	14	32	23	77
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	169	6	9	17	27	92
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	163	7	28	76	41	7
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	160	8	10	75	54	17
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	158	9	10	52	74	15

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# REGION 11

Region 11 encompasses the seven-county metro area. The majority of the districts consist of two or more high schools and several elementary schools. Region 11 also includes several small rural districts. Implementation of the Graduation Standards varies considerably within the region. It is apparent that districts with strong leadership at the district and/or site level, effective communication links and a strong commitment to professional development are further along in the implementation process. All districts participated in the visits.



DISTRICT DISCUSSION GUIDE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING	What should be?		What is:			
	Agree	Disagree	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
1. Standards are integrated into the curriculum						
* Elementary	301	9	3	86	212	107
* Middle/junior high	279	3	2	104	198	61
* High school	265	4	4	114	177	112
2. The following are aligned with the standards						
* Teaching methods	281	28	16	217	207	45
* Assessment	292	7	20	177	220	68
* Curriculum	285	7	11	166	232	83
3. Students and parents understand the expectations for graduation	292	19	74	280	137	25
4. The difference between the district grading system and standards scores is clearly understood.	281	26	140	266	100	13
5. The district has a process for using multiple forms of achievement data to make decisions for improving student learning.	303	7	41	145	218	98
6. The district has a process for publicly reporting assessment data relative to:						
* Basic standards tests	306	7	3	45	126	342
* MN Comprehensive tests (MCAs for grades 3 and 5)	307	7	2	42	118	309
* Performance against preparatory and high standards	277	28	65	117	131	145
* Other, including NRTs (Norm Referenced Tests, such as the Iowa test)	287	16	31	59	99	251
7. Policies in the Graduation Standards Implementation Manual are clearly communicated to staff, students, parents and the community.	285	21	77	238	150	40
8. Students and community are formally asked about satisfaction with the school environment.	311	9	49	209	202	80
9. The academic needs of all students are being met (e.g., Gifted and Talented, Title I, Special Education, English as a Second Language).	291	22	29	181	243	78

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# MEEP REGIONAL COORDINATORS

## Kathy Thygeson – Region 1

Thief River Falls Schools  
230 South Labree  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701  
TEL: 218/681-8711  
FAX: 218/681-3252  
kathy.thygeson@state.mn.us

## John Miner – Region 2

Grand Rapids Schools  
902 N Pokegama Av  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
TEL: 218/327-5857  
FAX: 218/327-5702  
john.miner@state.mn.us

## Julie Williams – Region 3

Secondary Tech Center  
215 N 1st Av E  
Duluth, MN 55802  
TEL: 218/723-4150 x267  
FAX: 218/733-2065  
julie.williams@state.mn.us

## Barbara Hexum – Region 4

Lakes Country Service Coop  
1001 East Mount Faith  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
TEL: 218/739-3273  
FAX: 218/739-2459  
barbara.hexum@state.mn.us

## Sherry Grundman – Region 5

Benton Stearns Ed District  
PO Box 299  
Sartell, MN 56377  
TEL: 320/252-8427 x106  
FAX: 320/252-1316  
sherry.grundman@state.mn.us

## Bob Kutter – Region 6

Renville Schools  
301 NE 3rd St, Box 338  
Renville, MN 56284  
TEL: 320/329-8362  
FAX: 320/329-3271  
bob.kutter@state.mn.us

## Charon Tierney – Region 7

Benton Stearns Ed District  
517 2nd St S, Box 299  
Sartell, MN 56377  
TEL: 320/252-8427  
FAX: 320/252-1316  
charon.tierney@state.mn.us

## Deb Hoyme – Region 8

Canby Schools  
307 1st Street W  
Canby, MN 56220  
TEL: 507/223-7535  
FAX: 507/223-7536  
deb.hoyme@state.mn.us

## Donna Oakey – Region 9

South Central Service Coop  
1610 Commerce Dr  
N Mankato, MN 56003  
TEL: 507/389-5104  
FAX: 507/389-1772  
donna.oakey@state.mn.us

## Sheila Finer – Region 10

Emmons Schools  
479 Main St, Box 8  
Emmons, MN 56029  
TEL: 507/297-5452  
FAX: 507/297-5443  
sheila.finer@state.mn.us

## Pat Bernhoft – Region 11

Children, Families & Learning  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113  
TEL: 651/582-8754  
FAX: 651/582-8845  
pat.bernhof@state.mn.us

## Julie Eisfelder – Region 11

Children, Families & Learning  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
TEL: 651/582-8768  
FAX: 651/582-8845  
julie.eisfelder@state.mn.us

## Mike Foster – Region 11

Children, Families & Learning  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
TEL: 651/582-8286  
FAX: 651/582-8845  
michael.foster@state.mn.us

## Dave Glick – Region 11

Children, Families & Learning  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
TEL: 651/582-8619  
FAX: 651/582-8845  
dave.glick@state.mn.us

## Marlys Peters-Melius – Region 11

Children, Families & Learning  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
TEL: 651/582-8848  
FAX: 651/582-8845  
marlys.peters-melius@state.mn.us

## STATE STAFF

**Diane Cirkse**, Team Leader

651/582-8759

diane.cirkse@state.mn.us

**Terry Alvarado**, Office & Administrative Specialist

651/582-8749

terry.alvarado@state.mn.us

**Connie Anderson**, System Accountability

651/582-8750

connie.j.anderson@state.mn.us

**John Froelich**, Staff Development Coordinator

651/582-8860

john.froelich@state.mn.us

**Lori Kleven**, Office & Administrative Specialist

651/582-8804

lori.kleven@state.mn.us

**Alicia Mathews**, Conference Coordinator

651/582-8823

alicia.mathews@state.mn.us

**Judee Vier**, Office & Administrative Specialist

651/582-8865

judee.vier@state.mn.us