

# House Research Act Summary

**CHAPTER:** 500

**SESSION:** 2000 Regular Session

**TOPIC:** Amendments to the Profile of Learning

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- 1 **Length of school year; days of instruction.** Amends the requirement that school calendars include an additional three days of student instruction by allowing school districts to devote the additional three days to either student instruction or staff development training related to improving curriculum, instructional practices of teachers and other staff and alternative student assessments.
- 2 **Results-oriented graduation rule; days of instruction.** (a) Defines a school site as a separate facility or as a separate program within a facility.  
(e) Indicates that the profile of learning contains 11, instead of 10 learning areas: (1) read, listen, and view; (2) write and speak; (3) arts and literature; (4) mathematical concepts and applications; (5) inquiry and research; (6) scientific concepts and applications; (7) social studies; (8) physical education and lifetime fitness; (9) economics and business; (10) world languages; and (11) technical and vocational education.  
(f) Strikes the requirement that the commissioner submit to the legislature by January 15 an annual written report on the progress made in developing and implementing graduation requirements.  
(g) Directs the commissioner, beginning 8/31/00, to make public at least via an electronic format a report, based on school site information, of the preparatory and high school content standards that each school site requires and the number of student waivers the district, charter school or area learning center approves.  
(h) Requires school districts to integrate required and elective content standards in the scope and sequence of district curriculum.  
(i) Indicates that school districts are not required to adopt specific provisions of the Goals 2000 and federal school-to-work programs.
- 3 **School site determination of required content standards.** (a) Requires school districts, area

learning centers, and charter schools annually by 8/15, to notify the commissioner of the preparatory and high school content standards that each school site requires under paragraph (b).

(b)(1) Directs public school sites, by a majority vote of the licensed teachers and administrators voting jointly at the school site and by a majority vote of the school board, (2) area learning centers, by a majority vote of the licensed teachers and administrators voting jointly at the school site and by a majority vote of the school board of the school district in which the center is located, and (3) charter schools, by a majority vote of the licensed teachers and administrators voting jointly at the charter school and with the sponsor's approval, to determine the number of preparatory and high school content standards the school site requires students to complete, including the number of high school content standards students must complete to graduate.

(c) Requires students at public school sites, area learning centers, and charter schools to complete the state-required content standards when the school board or sponsor and the school site are unable to agree on the required preparatory or high school content standards under paragraph (b).

(d) Requires a school district, area learning center, and charter school to report to the commissioner the schedule, by school year, a school site will use to implement all state-required preparatory and high school content standards.

(e) Directs school districts to continue to fully implement the profile of learning, provide learning opportunities for all students in the preparatory content standards in learning areas one to nine, and learning opportunities sufficient to meet graduation requirements in high school content standards in all learning areas. Requires school districts to offer at least one foreign language under learning area ten.

(f) To implement preparatory and high school standards, requires school sites to work to improve the scope and sequence of language arts, math, science and social studies curriculum, research-based instructional skills of teachers and other district staff, and alternative assessments of student achievement.

- 4 **Transcript data.** Requires students' transcripts to account for work done in the content standards the school district, area learning center, or charter school implemented for the 1998-1999 school year and later. Permits students who completed high school content standards before the 2000-2001 school year to request that the transcript record a "complete" or "incomplete" instead of a numeric score.
- 5 **Performance assessments.** Indicates that school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools are not required to use state or locally developed performance packages to assess student achievement of a content standard. Requires school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools to select performance assessments that have a grading system comparable to the criteria established under the definition of rubric contained in rule. Permits school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools to use more than one form of assessment. Prohibits the commissioner from mandating the assessments school sites must use.
- 6 **Rigorous course of study; waiver.** (a) Permits a school district, area learning center, or charter school, upon receiving a student's application and with the approval of the student's parent and the recommendation of the student's teacher or college instructor, to decide that the student completed the content standard if: (1) the student participates in a rigorous course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or a learning opportunity outside the school site curriculum that is equally or more rigorous than the content standard required by the school site or the state graduation rule; and (2) the student can not participate in the rigorous course of study without the waiver.
- (b) Indicates that a student who satisfactorily completes a post secondary enrollment options course or program that is approved by a post secondary institution under paragraph (c) satisfies

the requirements of the content standards corresponding to the specific rigorous course of study.

(c) Requires the board of regents of the University of Minnesota, the board of trustees of the Minnesota state colleges and universities, and the governing boards of Minnesota private colleges, beginning August 15, 2002, to determine which courses that the institutions offer under the post secondary enrollment options program are sufficiently rigorous to meet the requirements under paragraph (a), clause (1), and to notify the commissioner of the institutions' determinations. Requires the commissioner to list the post secondary enrollment options program offerings that meet the requirement for rigor.

(d) Declares that a student who enters the ninth grade before the 2001-2002 school year and satisfactorily completes an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or a post secondary enrollment options course satisfies the requirements of the content standards corresponding to the specific rigorous course of study.

- 7 **Students held harmless; waiver.** Permits a school board or charter school board of directors to waive content standards for students who entered the ninth grade before the 2000-2001 school year if the governing board determines the student can not meet school site graduation standards due to circumstances related to implementing the profile of learning that are beyond the student's control.
- 8 **Student transfers; other waivers.** Requires school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools to establish processes by which to transfer as completed: (1) those content standards that other school sites verify are completed, (2) verified work that nonstate educational institutions accept for completing the equivalent of content standards, and (3) students' opportunities to complete content standards through learning acquired outside district curriculum, if the school board determines that the requirements at the site from which the student transferred are sufficiently different to prevent the student from fulfilling the requirements at the school site where the student is currently enrolled.
- 9 **Completion of a content standard.** Permits school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools to establish more than one content standard in a course, allow students to complete a content standard in different subject areas, and determine the grade level at which a student may complete a content standard.
- 10 **Records.** Requires school districts, area learning centers, and charter schools to maintain the following records at each school site that must be available for audit by the commissioner: (1) examples of local assessments; (2) aggregate data on students' completion of content standards; (3) aggregate data on high school graduates; (4) examples of student work in high school content standards; and (5) number of available, required, and completed content standards.
- 11 **Scoring.** Indicates that a student's grade level does not prohibit a student from receiving the highest state exemplar score for completing a content standard. Permits teachers to assign student work a "0" score. Requires the assessment of a content standard to be included as part of the student's grade for a course or subject.
- 12 **High standards tool library.** (a) Directs the commissioner to maintain for teachers a high standards tool library on content standards at all grade levels that offers examples of assessment tools, lesson plans, best practices methods, research on proven methods, and examples of exemplars aligned with content standards.  
(b) Directs the commissioner by 6/30/00 to establish various tools under paragraph (a). Requires the tool library to be interactive and allow teachers to submit various tools. Requires the commissioner to reserve a portion of the tool library for tools submitted by teachers without commissioner review.
- 13 **Technology and record keeping.** (a) Directs the commissioner to designate to school districts,

area learning centers, and charter schools the software packages for reporting student performance on content standards. Requires the commissioner to ensure that the record keeping software can transfer student records between schools and school districts and is available at minimal cost. Directs the commissioner to convene an advisory group to recommend record keeping practices under the graduation rule. Requires the commissioner to report on technology needs for efficient daily classroom record keeping and accountability reporting.

(b) Requires the commissioner to notify the legislature that the requirements in paragraph (a) have been met.

- 14 **Examination and evaluation panel.** Directs the commissioner to establish an academic panel to examine, evaluate and sustain the rigor of state content standards. Directs the commissioner to consider regional representation when selecting panel members, including: (1) two teachers selected by Education Minnesota, including a teacher of the year and a teacher with national board certification; (2) deans of the colleges of education from the University of Minnesota, a Minnesota state college and a Minnesota private college; (3) a curriculum and assessment director; (4) and an assessment practitioner; (5) a school board member selected by the Minnesota school boards association; and (6) an elementary, middle and secondary school principal, each selected by the state organization representing such principals.

Directs the panel to consult with education experts on academic standards and the office of educational accountability, and to analyze the report that the independent reviewer under contract with the department of children, families and learning prepares on profile of learning standards, procedures and assessments. Requires the review to evaluate the quality of the state's standards and assessments as an integrated educational system. Allows the panel to recommend refinements to the profile of learning, including changes effected through administrative action and amendments to law and rule, and requires the panel to compare for the commissioner by 12/15/00 the rigor of the state standards and the north star standard. Directs the panel by 7/1/01 and every other year thereafter to evaluate the rigor of state standards and the North Star standard and make recommendations to the commissioner.

- 15 **Statewide testing and reporting.** (a) Strikes the requirement for a single statewide norm referenced or criterion referenced test or a combination of a norm-referenced and criterion referenced test, and instead requires a test. Requires a test to be aligned with the state's graduation standards and administered annually to all third, fifth and eighth grade students. Permits a school district, at parents' written request and with a teacher's recommendation, to offer basic requirements tests in reading, math or written composition beginning in the fifth grade, instead of the eighth grade. Requires such students to take the basic requirements tests when the tests are administered to other students. Makes students' third and fifth grade reading, math and written composition test results available to districts for diagnostic purposes affecting student learning and district instruction and curriculum, and for establishing educational accountability. Requires the commissioner to disseminate third and fifth grade test results to the public.

(c) Directs the commissioner to report school site and school district student academic achievement levels of the current and two immediately preceding school years. Requires the report to include students' unweighted mean test scores in each subject tested, the unweighted mean test scores of only those students enrolled in the school by January 1 of the previous school year, and the unweighted mean test scores of all students except those receiving limited English proficiency instruction.

(d) Refers to a statewide public reporting system instead of a statewide educational accountability and public reporting system. Makes technical changes. Includes average daily attendance, high school graduation rates and high school drop-out rates by age and grade level as

educational indicators. Strikes as a component in the statewide reporting system the basic skills and advanced competencies connecting teaching and learning to high academic standards, assessments and transitions to citizenship and employment.

- 16 **Student academic achievement levels.** (a) Requires school districts annually to determine if student academic achievement levels at each school site meet state and local expectations. Requires school districts to work with school sites to develop a plan to raise student academic achievement levels to meet state and local expectations in those school sites that do not meet state and local expectations for two out of three consecutive school years, beginning with the 2000-2001 school year. Strikes a requirement that the commissioner submit recommendations to the legislature by January 2000.
- (b) Directs the department, at a district's request, to assist the school district and the school site in developing a plan to improve student performance, which must include parental involvement components.
- 17 **Best practices network.** Directs the commissioner by 6/30/00 to establish a best practices network for learning areas one through ten, and by 6/30/01, a best practices network for learning area 11.
- 18 **Technical and vocational education.** Directs the commissioner to recommend to the legislature by 1/15/01 graduation standards rules or a realignment of standards for implementing a technical and vocational education learning area.
- 19 **Content of external review.** Directs the commissioner to contract with an independent organization to evaluate the quality of the state's standards as an integrated educational system. Requires the contractor's report to (1) analyze the content of the state's standards, (2) compare and recommend revisions by benchmarking the state's standards to other states' standards, (3) indicate whether the standards are clear, specific, measurable and easily understood, and whether the standards are set at an appropriate level of difficulty for a particular grade level, and (4) determine what changes can strengthen the quality and alignment of the state's standards.
- 20 **Graduation rule amendments.** Directs the commissioner by 7/1/00 to use the expedited rule making process to amend Minnesota Rules, chapter 3501, governing state graduation requirements, by: (1) adding to the grading criteria the option of "0" for student work on an assessment or content standard; (2) deleting all references in rule requiring school sites or school districts to use state or locally developed performance packages and making all use of all performance packages, including for purposes of student assessment, optional at the discretion of the school site or school district; (3) amending the definition of "performance package" to make all use of performance packages optional, consistent with clause (2); and amending the definition of "rubric" to mean the criteria the commissioner sets and school districts must use to measure student work that meets the specifications of a content standard, consistent with clauses (2) and (3).
- 21 **Repealer.** (a) Repeals Minnesota Statutes, sections 120B.03, subdivisions 1, 2 and 3, governing school district implementation of the profile of learning, the development and use of state and local performance packages, and the conditions under which implementation of the profile of learning under subdivision 1 are waived for a school district; and 120B.04, governing lifework development plans.
- (b) Repeals Minnesota Rules, parts:
- 3501.0330, subpart 2, item A, governing district learning opportunities for all students in all preparatory content standards in learning areas one to nine, and learning opportunities sufficient to meet graduation requirements in high school content standards in all ten learning areas, including at least one foreign language in learning area ten;

3501.0360, creating adjusted performance packages;

3501.0370, subparts 1, 2, and 4, governing assessment and scoring of student achievement, including third, fifth, eighth and twelfth grade exemplars;

3501.0420, subpart 1, item D, governing policies and procedures for assessing student demonstration of the content standards, including criteria for adopting local performance packages and identifying the teaching staff and processes established for scoring student work, and subpart 4, governing implementation reports to the community; and

3501.0430, governing school districts' responsibilities for maintaining records for periodic review and audit of graduation standards, opportunities, and requirements.

(c) Repeals Minnesota Rules, part 3501.0330, subpart 7, item B, governing district waiver of a content standard for students participating in a rigorous course of study, which is repealed effective 7/1/01.

22 **Effective date.** Makes sections 1 to 21 immediately effective.