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### Overview

Proposes to substitute a series of assessments for the state's reading, math, and writing GRAD tests so that all students have sufficient knowledge and skills in core academic subjects to graduate from high school and have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without remediation. Includes in the series of assessments (i) a nationally normed college entrance exam, (ii) a college placement diagnostic exam, (iii) targeted instruction, intervention, and remediation, and (iv) an exploration of each student's college and career interests, aspirations, and aptitudes.

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- 1 Planning for students' successful transition to postsecondary education and employment; involuntary career tracking prohibited.** (a) Requires school districts, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, to assist all students by no later than grade 9 to explore college and career interests and aspirations and develop a transition plan to postsecondary education or employment. Makes technical changes.  
  
(c) Strikes paragraph encouraging school districts to use nonstate revenue and in-kind contributions to implement this section.
- 2 Educational planning and assessment system (EPAS) program.** (b) Directs the education commissioner to provide ACT Explore tests for students in grade 8 or grade 9 but not in grades 8 and 9 and to provide the ACT Plan test for students in grade 10.  
  
(c) Allows students entering grade 9 before the 2013-2014 school year who have not demonstrated proficiency on the MCAs, the GRAD tests, or the basic skills tests to satisfy

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state high school graduation requirements in reading, math, and writing by taking the ACT assessment for college admission in their senior year of high school.

(d) Directs the state to pay the test costs for school districts and charter schools to participate in these assessments.

Makes this section effective immediately and applicable through the 2015-2016 school year.

**3** **Statewide testing.** (a) Directs the education commissioner to make computer adaptive reading and math assessments for students in grades 3 through 8 part of Minnesota's comprehensive assessment system. Requires students who failed to pass a basic skills test by the end of the 2011-2012 school year and students in their senior year who have not yet demonstrated proficiency on the GRAD tests by the end of the 2012-2013 school year to take a college admissions assessment that supports career and college readiness standards for all students.

(b) Makes technical changes.

(c) Makes students in grade 8 in the 2012-2013 school year and later subject to state graduation requirements based on a longitudinal, systematic approach to student education and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation.

Strikes language requiring students to demonstrate proficiency on state reading, math, and writing tests in order to graduate from high school.

Instead, in order to graduate from high school, requires students to:

(1) attain required academic standards and college readiness benchmarks, as demonstrated on a nationally normed college entrance exam;

(2) take achievement and career and college readiness tests in math, reading, and writing to monitor students' continuous development and growth in required knowledge and skills; to analyze students' progress and performance levels, identifying students' academic strengths and diagnosing areas where students require curriculum or instruction adjustments, targeted interventions, or remediation; and based on students' progress and performance data, to determine students' learning and instructional needs and the instructional tools and best practices to support academic rigor for the student; and

(3) engage in age-appropriate exploration and planning activities and career assessments to identify personally relevant career interests and aptitudes and help students and their families develop a transition plan for postsecondary education or employment without need for postsecondary remediation.

Requires the expectations of schools, districts, and the state for career or college readiness to be comparable in rigor, clarity of purpose, and rates of student completion.

Requires a student under clause (2) to receive targeted, relevant, academically rigorous, and resourced instruction, which may include a targeted instruction and intervention plan focused on improving a student's knowledge and skills in core subjects so the student has a reasonable

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chance to succeed without need for postsecondary remediation.

Directs schools and school districts to actively encourage a student in grade 11 or 12 who is identified as academically ready for a career or college to participate in courses and programs awarding college credit to high school students.

Declares that students are not required to achieve a specific score or level of proficiency on a high school assessment in order to graduate from high school.

(d) Strikes language allowing students enrolled in grade 8 in any school year from the 2005-2006 to the 2009-2010 school year to receive a high school diploma without passing the math GRAD test if they satisfy certain conditions.

Directs the education commissioner, after consulting with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities chancellor and using a request for proposal process, to contract with a nationally recognized vendor for a series of assessments that are consistent with this subdivision, are aligned with state academic standards, and include career and college benchmarks. Requires these assessments in math, reading, and writing for students in grades 8 or 9, 10, and 11 or 12 to be predictive of and nationally normed for career and college readiness, nationally recognized as a college entrance exam, include a college placement diagnostic exam, contain career exploration elements.

Directs the education commissioner and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities chancellor to collaborate in aligning instruction and assessments for adult basic education students to provide the students with diagnostic information about the targeted interventions the students need so they may seek postsecondary education or employment without need for postsecondary remediation.

(1) Directs districts and schools to annually use the career exploration elements in the assessments to help students, beginning no later than grade 9, and their families explore and plan for postsecondary education or careers based on the students' interests, aptitudes, and aspirations. Requires districts and schools to use timely regional labor market information and partnerships and other resources to help students and their families develop and pursue an individualized plan for postsecondary education or a career. Requires this process to help all students pursue their interests and career goals by increasing students' engagement in and connection to school, improving students' knowledge and skills, and deepening students' understanding of career pathways leading to an industry-recognized credential, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree.

(2) Requires students whose growth in academic achievement between grades 8 and 10 shows adequate progress toward meeting state career and college readiness to be given the college entrance exam part of these assessments in grade 11. Declares that a student who demonstrates attainment of required state academic standards, including career and college readiness benchmarks, on these assessments is academically ready for a college or career. Encourages such students to participate in courses and programs awarding college credit to high school students. Declares that such courses and programs may include sequential courses of study within broad career areas and technical skill assessments that extend beyond

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course grades.

(3) Requires all students in grade 11 not subject to clause (2) to be given the college placement diagnostic exam so that the students, their families, the school, and the district can use the results to diagnose areas for targeted instruction, intervention, or remediation and improve students' knowledge and skills in core subjects sufficient for the student to graduate and have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without remediation. Requires these students to be given the college entrance exam part of these assessments in grade 12.

(4) Declares students subject to clause (3) who demonstrate (i) attainment of required state academic standards, including career and college readiness benchmarks on these assessments, (ii) attainment of career and college readiness benchmarks on the college placement diagnostic part of these assessments, and where applicable (iii) successfully complete targeted instruction, intervention, or remediation approved by the education commissioner and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities chancellor after consulting with local school officials and educators to be academically ready for a career or college. Encourages such students to participate in courses and programs awarding college credit to high school students. Declares that such courses and programs may include sequential courses of study within broad career areas and technical skill assessments that extend beyond course grades.

(5) Directs the education commissioner and the assessments vendor to determine the alignment between these assessments and state academic standards. Where alignment exists, requires the commissioner to seek federal approval to, and immediately upon receiving that approval replace Minnesota's federally required assessments with the assessments under this paragraph.

(e) Requires schools, districts, and the state to have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on students' attainment of knowledge and skills so students, their parents, and teachers know how well students must perform to have a reasonable chance to succeed without need for post secondary remediation. Requires the commissioner and Minnesota's public postsecondary institutions to ensure that the foundational knowledge and skills for students' successful performance in postsecondary employment or education and an articulated series of possible targeted interventions are clearly identified and satisfy Minnesota's postsecondary admissions requirements.

(f) Requires a school, district, or charter school to record a student's progress toward career and college readiness on the student's high school transcript.

(h) Requires third through eighth grade computer-adaptive assessment results to be available to districts for diagnostic purposes and to be disseminated to the public. Directs the commissioner to establish empirically derived benchmarks on adaptive assessments in grades 3 through 8 that reveal a trajectory toward career and college readiness.

(i) Requires third through eighth grade computer-adaptive assessments to be aligned with state academic standards.

(j) Makes computer-adaptive assessment results for students in grades 3 through 8 part of the

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statewide public reporting system.

Makes this section effective immediately and applicable to the 2013-2014 school year and later except that paragraph (a) applies immediately and the requirements for computer-adaptive reading and math assessments in grades 3 through 8 apply in the 2015-2016 school year and later.

**4** **Statewide and local assessments; results.** (a) For purposes of administering computer-adaptive assessments in reading and math to students in grades 3 through 8 beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, defines computer-adaptive assessments, fully-adaptive assessments, on-grade level, above-grade level, and below-grade level.

(b) Directs the commissioner to use fully adaptive tests math and reading assessments for grades 3 through 8 beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

(c) Directs the commissioner to implement computer-adaptive reading and math assessments for grades 3 through 8.

(d) Directs the commissioner to ensure that: (i) individual student performance data and achievement and summary reports are available within three school days; (ii) individual student growth data are available from school year to school year; (iii) parents and educators are able to use elementary and middle school student performance data to project student achievement in high school; and (iv) useful diagnostic information about areas of students' academic strengths and weaknesses is available to improve student instruction.

(f), (g), (h) Make conforming and technical changes.

Makes this section effective for the 2013-2014 school year and later except the requirements governing computer-adaptive reading and math assessments for grades 3 through 8 apply in the 2015-2016 school year and later.

**5** **School performance reports.** Adds the percentage of students whose progress and performance levels are meeting college and career readiness benchmarks to the academic performance data the education commissioner must report publicly. Refers to reports, not report cards.

Makes this section effective for the 2013-2014 school year and later.

**6** **Standard high school diploma for adults.** (a) Directs the education commissioner to adopt rules for providing a standard adult high school diploma to persons who are not eligible for K-12 services, do not have a high school diploma, and successfully complete a commissioner-approved adult basic education program of instruction needed to earn an adult high school diploma.

(b) Requires adult basic education program participants to demonstrate proficiency in a standard set of competencies sufficient to ensure that postsecondary programs and institutions and potential employers regard persons holding a standard high school diploma and persons holding a standard adult high school diploma to be equally well prepared and qualified graduates. Requires approved adult basic education programs to issue a standard adult high school diploma to qualified persons.

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Makes this section effective July 1, 2014.

- 7 **Statewide assessment and accountability; transition.** Makes students enrolled in grade 8 before the 2012-2013 school year eligible to be assessed under the proposed assessments for career and college readiness, including a nationally normed college entrance exam and the college placement diagnostic exam, to the extent these exams are available. Declares that other measures of statewide accountability, including student performance, preparation, rigorous course taking, engagement and connection, and transition into postsecondary education or the workforce remain in effect.

Makes this section effective immediately.

- 8 **Career pathways advisory and technical education task force.**

**Subd. 1. Recommendations.** Establishes an advisory task force to recommend to the legislature how to improve the secondary and postsecondary outcomes for students and adult learners, align secondary and postsecondary programs and Minnesota's workforce needs, and measure and evaluate the combined efficacy of K-12 and postsecondary education programs.

(b) Directs task force members to seek advice from educators, employers, policy makers, and other stakeholders and consider how to: better inform students about career options and ensure a skilled Minnesota workforce; develop and revise an education and work plan for each student; improve monitoring of students' progress with targeted interventions and support and remove the need for remedial instruction; increase and accelerate high school students' opportunities to earn postsecondary credits leading to a certificate, license, or degree; better align secondary and postsecondary courses and expectations; better align high school standards and assessments, postsecondary readiness measures and entrance requirements, and the expectations of Minnesota employers; increase postsecondary completion rates; and provide postsecondary graduates with the skills needed for civic engagement, ongoing employment, and continuous learning.

**Subd. 2. Task force membership and operation.** (a) Lists task force members. Directs the education commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, to convene the task force. Makes task force members ineligible for compensation or reimbursement for task force activities.

(b) Directs the education commissioner to provide technical assistance upon request.

(c) Directs the task force to submit its recommendations to the legislature by February 15, 2014.

Makes this section effective immediately.

- 9 **Appropriations.** Appropriates unspecified sums in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to the education department for college and career ready assessments, computer adaptive tests, the request for proposal assessments, and the advisory task force.

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**10**      **Repealer.** Repeals rule requirements related to the state reading, math, and writing GRAD tests.

Makes this section effective immediately.