

## **618 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to institute a process for the establishment and revision of assessments to be used to determine how well students have achieved Minnesota Graduation Standards.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The school district has established a procedure by which students shall complete the Minnesota Graduation Standards. This procedure includes the adoption of performance assessment methods to be used in measuring student performance. The school district strives to continually enhance student achievement toward the Minnesota Graduation Standards.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. “Benchmark” means the academic knowledge and skills that students must achieve at each grade level or high school level to satisfactorily complete a state standard.
- B. “Career and college ready,” for purposes of statewide accountability, means a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.
- C. “Computer-adaptive assessments” or “fully adaptive assessments” include on-grade level test items and items that may be above or below a student’s grade level.
- D. “Elective standards” are the academic standards adopted by the school district in the subject areas of career and technical education and world languages.

### **IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT**

- A. The district shall establish criteria by which student performance toward Minnesota Graduation Standards and elective standards are to be evaluated and approved.
- B. The superintendent shall ensure that students and parents or guardians are provided with notice of the process by which program Minnesota Graduation Standards will be assessed.
- C. Staff members will be expected to utilize staff development opportunities to the extent necessary to ensure effective implementation and continued improvement of Minnesota Graduation Standards.

## **V. STANDARDS FOR MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS**

### **A. Benchmarks**

The school district will offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard. These benchmarks will be used by the school district and its staff in developing tests to measure student academic knowledge and skills.

### **B. Statewide Academic Standards Testing**

- 1. The school district will utilize statewide assessments developed from and aligned with the state's required academic standards as these tests become available to evaluate student progress toward career and college readiness in the context of the state's academic standards. If a state assessment is not available, the school district will determine if a student has met the required academic standards through locally developed assessments.
- 2. The school district will administer annually, in accordance with the process determined by the Minnesota Department of Education, the state-constructed tests aligned with state standards to all students in grades 3 through 8 and at the high school level as follows:
  - a. computer-adaptive reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8;
  - b. high school reading and mathematics assessments and a high school writing test, when it becomes available; and
  - c. science assessments in one grade in the grades 3 through 5 span, the grades 6 through 8 span and a life science assessment in the

grades 9 through 12 span (a passing score on high school science assessments is not a condition of receiving a diploma).

3. The school district will develop and administer locally constructed tests in social studies, health and physical education and the arts to determine if a student has met the required academic standards in these areas.
4. Students for whom the statewide or locally constructed tests are inappropriate, as determined by the student's individualized education program (IEP) team, or students with limited English proficiency, shall be exempt from statewide assessments according to policy set forth by MDE. The school district will report student exemptions to MDE consistent with the format provided by MDE. Alternative assessments shall be provided to students exempt from the statewide tests.
5. The school district may use a student's performance on a statewide assessment as one of the multiple criteria to determine grade promotion or retention. The school district also may use a high school student's performance on a statewide assessment as a percentage of the student's final grade in a course or place a student's assessment score on the student's transcript.
6. For students in grade 8, the school district must record on the high school transcript a student's progress toward career and college readiness. For other students, this record of progress must be made as soon as practicable. In addition, the school district may include a notation of high achievement on the high school diplomas of those graduating seniors who, according to established school board criteria, demonstrate exemplary academic achievement during high school.
7. Students who do not meet or exceed the Minnesota Academic Standards, as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments administered in high school, must be informed that admission to a public school is free and available to any resident under 21 years of age. The school district will determine how this notice is given.
8. District Plan for State Tests Required for Graduation: Procedures for testing, test security, reporting, documentation, notification to students and parents and student recordkeeping in relation to the state tests required for graduation will be developed in accordance with Minnesota law, rule and regulation.

## **VI. RIGOROUS COURSE OF STUDY WAIVER**

- A. Upon receiving a student's application signed by the student's parent or guardian, the school district must declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation if the school board determines that the student:
  - 1. is participating in a course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program; a learning opportunity outside the curriculum of the school district; or an approved preparatory program for employment or post-secondary education that is equally or more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the school district;
  - 2. would be precluded from participating in the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity or preparatory employment or post-secondary education program if the student were required to achieve the academic standard to be waived; and
  - 3. satisfactorily completes the requirements for the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity or preparatory employment or post-secondary education program.
- B. The school board also may formally determine other circumstances in which to declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard that the site requires for graduation under this section.
- C. A student who satisfactorily completes a post-secondary enrollment options course or program or an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program is not required to complete other requirements of the academic standards corresponding to that specific rigorous course of study.

## **VII. CAREER EXPLORATION ASSESSMENT**

- A. Student assessments, in alignment with state academic standards, shall include clearly defined career and college readiness benchmarks and satisfy Minnesota's postsecondary admissions requirements. Students in grade 11 or grade 12 must be provided with an opportunity to participate on a nationally normed college entrance exam. Achievement and career and college readiness in mathematics, reading and writing must also be assessed. When administering formative or summative assessments used to measure the academic progress, including the oral academic development, of English learners and inform their instruction, schools must ensure that the assessments are accessible to the students and students have the modifications and supports they need to sufficiently understand the assessments.

- B. On an annual basis, the school district must use the career exploration elements in these assessments, beginning no later than grade 9, to help students and their families explore and plan for postsecondary education or careers based on the students' interests, aptitudes and aspirations. The school district must use timely regional labor market information and partnerships, among other resources, to help students and their families successfully develop, pursue, review and revise an individualized plan for postsecondary education or a career. This process must help increase students' engagement in and connection to school, improve students' knowledge and skills and deepen students' understanding of career pathways as a sequence of academic and career courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential, an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree and are available to all students, whatever their interests and career goals.
  
- C. All students, except those eligible for alternative assessments, will be encouraged to participate on a nationally normed college entrance exam in grade 11 or 12. A student under this paragraph who demonstrates attainment of required state academic standards on these assessments, which include career and college readiness benchmarks, is academically ready for a career or college and is encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students. Such courses and programs may include sequential courses of study within broad career areas and technical skill assessments that extend beyond course grades.
  
- D. As appropriate, students through grade 12 must continue to participate in targeted instruction, intervention or remediation and be encouraged to participate in courses awarding college credit to high school students.
  
- E. In developing, supporting and improving students' academic readiness for a career or college, the school district must have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on students' attainment of knowledge and skills so that students, their parents and teachers know how well students must perform to have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without need for postsecondary remediation.

***Legal References:*** Minn. Stat. § 120B.018 (Definitions)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 (Educational Expectations for Minnesota's Students)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.021 (Required Academic Standards)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.022 (Elective Standards)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.023 (Benchmarks)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 (Statewide Testing and Reporting System)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.31 (System Accountability and Statistical Adjustments)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0640-3501.0655 (Academic Standards for Language Arts)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0700-3501.0745 (Academic Standards for Mathematics)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0800-3501.0815 (Academic Standards for the Arts)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0900-3501.0955 (Academic Standards in Science)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1300-3501.1345 (Academic Standards for Social Studies)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1400-3501.1410 (Academic Standards for Physical Education)  
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (Every Student Succeeds Act)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 104 (School District Mission Statement)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 601 (School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 613 (Graduation Requirements)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 614 (School District Testing Plan and Procedure)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 615 (Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 616 (School District System Accountability)

Policy Adopted: 9/27/21  
Alexandria Public School District - No. 206  
Alexandria, Minnesota

**Rigorous Course of Study Waiver**

I. To be completed by the student

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Counselor \_\_\_\_\_

I am requesting permission to waive the following course: \_\_\_\_\_

I believe that I qualify for rigorous course of study waiver because I am participating in a course of study that is more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the school district. (Write a brief explanation) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

II. To be completed by the parent/guardian

I have reviewed the above application and the process for rigorous course of study waiver. I grant permission to proceed for the above-named course.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

III. To be completed by the principal, counselor and teacher

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Application Received \_\_\_\_\_