



Chapter 2: State Guidelines

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*Change—A bend in the road
is not the end of the road
unless you fail to make the turn.*

State Guidelines

Introduction

Working together with teachers, parents, and community members to foresee the demands of the 21st century, the state of Minnesota designed the Minnesota Graduation Standards. These standards define both basic and advanced learning students must demonstrate in order to earn a high school diploma.

The graduation rules have been approved by the Minnesota State Legislature and are defined in Chapter 3501 (3501.0300-3501.0430) of the Minnesota State Statutes. The graduation rule differentiates between minimum competencies, as reflected in

the Basic Standards tests and the rigorous standards of the Profile of Learning, which are achieved through classroom work and are assessed both at the classroom level and through statewide accountability tests called the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

The Basic Standards tests were designed to ensure that students have mastered the basics in reading, mathematics, and written composition in order to graduate from a Minnesota public high school. This framework was not designed to aid in implementing the Basic Standards testing. For additional information regarding the Basic Standards tests, go to the

Minnesota Graduation Standards

Testing

Takes place on a schoolwide level

Basic Standards Testing

Grade 8 Math/Reading
Grade 10 Writing

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

Grades 3, 5 Math/Reading
Grades 5, 10 Writing

Profile of Learning

Takes place on a classroom level

Levels of Standards

Preparatory Standards

- *Primary (K-3)*
- *Intermediate (4-5)*
- *Middle School (6-8)*

High Standards

- *High School (9-12)*

Learning Areas for All Standard Levels

1. Read, Listen, and View
2. Write and Speak
3. Arts and Literature
4. Math Concepts/Applications
5. Inquiry and Research
6. Scientific Concepts/Applications
7. Social Studies
8. Physical Ed/Lifetime Fitness
9. Economics and Business
10. World Languages (Optional)
11. Technical/Vocational Ed (2001)

Content Standards. There are content standards in each learning area. The content standards describe what students should know and be able to do.

special education tab of the CFL website:
<http://cfl.state.mn.us>

The focus of this framework is on the requirements for implementation of the Profile of Learning, including both the High Standards and the Preparatory Standards. Within the Profile are content standards. The content standards define what students should know, understand, and be able to do to demonstrate an advanced level of learning. Students achieve a content standard when they complete locally designed performance assessments. Between kindergarten and eighth grade, students work on the Preparatory Standards to prepare them for the high school level content standards.



A copy of the state High and Preparatory Standards can be found in Appendix 1.

In the 2000 legislative session a number of revisions were made to the law relating to the graduation standards. While the names of the some of the learning areas were changed and an eleventh learning area was included for January 2001, none of the standards was revised. Other changes from the 2000 legislative session include:

Standards must be embedded in class curriculum. “School districts must integrate required and elective content standards in the scope and sequence of the district curriculum.”

The school “site” determines required content standards. By August 15 of each year, each school district, ALC, and charter school must notify the commissioner of the preparatory and high school content standards required at each site. *Local school boards define “site.”*

Completing Content Standards

Preparatory Standards (K–8)

Learning opportunities must be provided for all Preparatory Standards.

High Standards (9–12)

Districts must provide learning opportunities “sufficient” to meet state graduation requirements. The required district standards are embedded, there is instruction, and the standard is scored and recorded.

Performance Assessments

A performance assessment is a set of tasks and/or assignments the student completes to demonstrate the learning required by a content standard and scored using state criteria. The state may **not** mandate assessment tasks.

Record Keeping

Districts are required to publish the number of standards required and the placement of standards in the curriculum.

- Preparatory Standards

Districts are required to record achievement scores for completed standards.

- High Standards

Completed standards and achievement scores will be a part of a student’s official transcript.



Scoring Criteria for Minnesota’s High and Preparatory Standards

The state scoring criteria uses a scale of 0–4 with a 4 being the highest score. A score of 1 reflects sufficient competency to allow a student to graduate; a 0 indicates incomplete work. Scores reflect professional judgment based on multiple evidence of sustained work over time.

Each of the learning areas has a rubric to aid in determining what score work should receive. These rubrics correspond to the four levels of standards: primary, intermediate, middle school, and high school. Current versions of the state rubrics for each learning area are available at the CFL website at: <http://cfl.state.mn>

The chart on the next page defines how scoring would be affected by accommodations, modifications, and exemptions. An assessment task may be changed for a student without lowering the rigor of the task or eliminating the specifications of the standard. When accommodations such as these are made, a student receives a score of 1–4 on their work.



List of Possible Accommodations to Assess the Minnesota Standards, Appendix 3.

Students with IEPs may receive a score of “Pass Individual” if the rigor of the work is lowered or a specification of the standard is eliminated.

Students with IEPs may also be exempted from completing a standard.



A further discussion of providing accommodations and modifications is found in Chapter 5, page 5-2.



Scoring Criteria	Definitions
4 EXEMPLARY: Indicates evidence of student learning in all parts of the standard at a level that consistently exceeds expectations and that is applied in new and insightful ways.	ACCOMMODATION: Changing the task, topic, product, or activity without lowering the rigor or eliminating the specifications of a standard.
3 PROFICIENT: Indicates evidence of student learning in all parts of the standard consistently at a proficient level.	
2 NOVICE: Indicates evidence of student learning in all parts of the standard at an adequate level some or all of the time.	
1 EMERGING: Indicates evidence of student learning in all parts of the standard at a superficial level some or all of the time.	
0 Student work on the standard is incomplete.	
IEP Pass Individual Modified content standard is delivered. This requires a team decision and IEP or 504 Plan documentation.	MODIFICATION: Lowering the rigor or eliminating one or more specifications of the standard to meet the educational needs of a student with an IEP or 504 Plan.
IEP Exempt The standard is not delivered to the student but an alternate personal goal is offered. This requires a team decision and IEP or 504 Plan documentation.	EXEMPTION: Not requiring a student with an IEP or 504 Plan to complete a particular standard, but work toward an individual goal.