

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

601 DISTRICT CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish broad curriculum, instruction and assessment parameters that advance high academic and personal achievement and set expectations for a positive and stimulating learning environment critical to student success.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Student learning in the Minnetonka School District is based on the effective implementation of the interrelated components of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Successful implementation of these systems results in equity of opportunity, high quality curriculum and instructional resources, on-going assessment to meet individual learner needs, and a positive classroom climate focused on student success.

The District's educational program shall be based upon setting and attaining world-class standards for all students. This standards-based curriculum requires intentional planning and review for teaching, learning, assessment, resources, professional development, supervision and evaluation, and comprehensive program improvement.

III. DEFINITIONS

Curriculum: a written plan including standards, benchmarks, essential questions, an assessment plan, instructional resources and strategies, and time allocations for emphasis and pacing for the content to be taught.

Instruction: a teacher-led process, which transforms well-planned curriculum into student learning. Instruction is standards-focused teaching for the purpose of providing meaningful learning experiences that enable all students to master academic content and achieve personal goals.

Assessments: multiple tools used to gather information about the student's performance on the standards taught.

Evaluation: the process of making judgments about the level of students' understanding or performance.

Standard: a statement of what the student will be able to know, understand and do.

Benchmark: a clear, specific description of knowledge or skills the student should acquire by a particular point in the student's schooling.

Core Instructional Materials: resources recommended through a District process, approved by the School Board, and used by teachers to provide a required common content for students to achieve intended learning.

Supplementary Materials: resources determined by teachers and principals, as monitored by the Superintendent or designee, which supplement the core materials, and provide for different student needs as required to meet the intended student learning.

Differentiation: the process teachers use to plan learning experiences, which intentionally respond to learner differences. Students would have opportunities to work at their levels of readiness (assessed levels of skills and knowledge), in preferred and varied learning modes/styles, and engage their interests in order to achieve curricular goals.

IV. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The School Board, in its governance capacity, is accountable for the teaching and learning program and delegates responsibilities as follows:

The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible to direct the Administration to create and achieve individual and organizational goals aimed exclusively at furthering the District's Mission and Vision for teaching and student learning.

V. STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

A. The focus of the curriculum, instruction and assessment programs will be to develop students who are active, life-long learners. The District will emphasize reading and writing as the foundation of all learning and will further seek to develop each student's skills as noted below:

1. reading and writing as foundations for learning.
2. a profound command of the English language.
3. a mastery of mathematics.
4. a mastery of scientific principles.
5. a thorough understanding of American history, our system of government, and the importance of participating in the democratic process.
6. global awareness through study of world language, history, geography, and current events.
7. appreciation of music, literature, visual and performing arts.
8. participation in robust physical activity and health education.
9. technological proficiency.
10. life skills.

B. Students are encouraged to seek depth of learning and complexity of content and thinking. On controversial issues, teachers have the obligation to assess their own bias

and to ensure balance of materials and instruction. The Superintendent will make efforts to ensure error-free materials are used.

- C. Students will be expected to be active, engaged learners and develop desirable qualities of self-discipline, motivation, curiosity, confidence, cooperation, and respectful behavior.
- D. School practices and instruction will be directed toward developing in each student a positive self-image and a sense of personal responsibility.
- E. Multiple and varied assessments measure on-going student progress toward learning goals.

VI. INSTRUCTION

The interaction between a teacher and student is recognized as central to successful learning. Instruction is the critical element in the process of transforming curriculum and materials into learning. The aims of the instructional process are for teachers to:

- A. use District curriculum, assessments and materials to deliver high quality instruction.
- B. supplement core materials, if necessary, based on unique learner needs.
- C. have a thorough and complete command of the subjects they teach.
- D. transcend skill development and mere knowledge-transfer into retention and application of learning.
- E. emphasize excellence, love of learning, critical thinking, cooperation, exploration, and respect for others.
- F. understand how student attitudes, prior knowledge, habits of mind, and relevance impact the learning process.
- G. use research on brain development, learning modes, and gender differences, and other social and cultural differences as foundational to teaching methods.
- H. provide effectively differentiated learning experiences to meet varied student readiness, interests and learner profiles.
- I. ensure that each student has mastered to their fullest potential the skills and knowledge taught.

VII. ASSESSMENT

Curriculum and assessment plans must clearly describe where standards will be taught and where standards will best be measured and documented. Quality assessments provide clear,

accurate and timely pictures of what a student has learned against a specific benchmark expectation. Differentiation, by design, requires pre-assessment and multiple, ongoing forms of assessment and evaluation. A comprehensive assessment plan should:

- A. enhance student learning.
- B. include state, district and classroom components.
- C. clearly identify at which of those three levels each of the standards will be assessed.
- D. match the types of assessment used to the demands of the standard assessed.
- E. require that assessment results be reported in a timely manner to students, educators, parents, community members, and policymakers.
- F. specifically identify how the data will be used to assess and evaluate effectiveness.
- G. provide information necessary for public accountability and reporting.
- H. be balanced in terms of time, resources, and capacity required.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Every District teacher will work to ensure that students have mastered, to their fullest potential, the skills, knowledge and concepts taught. A well-planned and adequately funded professional development program will support teachers' efforts. Professional development plans must coordinate with the Instructional Program Review and Improvement Cycle and support teachers in their subject expertise and in their ability to create a positive, supportive, respectful and caring classroom learning climate.

Cross References: Policy #603 Program Improvement and Curriculum Development
Policy #606 Instructional Material Review and Selection
Policy #613 Graduation Requirements
Policy #515 Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records

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