

**TO:** Roger Breed, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Education

**FROM:** Margaret Worth, General Counsel

**SUBJECT:** Policy Review Information Item

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### **PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

State Board Policies G7, G8 and B5 for review.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

State Board Bylaw B8 requires that all State Board Policies, including Bylaws, Internal Policy Directives and General Education Policies, be reviewed by the Board every four years. Pursuant to the review schedule implemented by the State Board's Policy Committee, State Board Policies G7, G8 and B5 are submitted for review.

If the Commissioner, Board President or any Board member believes that action or referral to the Policy Committee is necessary in connection with these Policies, an appropriate motion may be placed on the Agenda for the May Board meeting.

Pursuant to B8, Policies G7 and G8 will expire on October 6, 2012, unless revised or reaffirmed prior to that date. Policy B5 will remain in effect indefinitely until revised or rescinded.

### **Estimated Cost**

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**Supporting Documentation Included:** Board Policies B8, G7, G8, and B5.

**For additional information on this item:** Call Margaret Worth (402) 471-0310 or e-mail [Margaret.Worth@nebraska.gov](mailto:Margaret.Worth@nebraska.gov)

Policy, Bylaw, and Position Statement Development

The State Board may change its existing policies, bylaws or position statements or adopt new policies, bylaws, or position statements at any time, on its own motion or upon recommendation by the Commissioner.

All State Board policies, bylaws and position statements shall be included on the State board's webpage.

All State Board policies, bylaws and position statement are to be reviewed by the Board every four years and the Commissioner will recommend a subsequent review date when each new policy is proposed.

The State Board's general education policies or position statements (designated by the letter "G") shall expire four years after their adoption unless revised or reaffirmed by the State Board prior to expiration. Starting on October 6, 2010, general education policies or position statements that are more than four years old shall expire on October 6, 2012, unless revised or reaffirmed prior to that date.

The State Board's procedural bylaws (designated by the letter "B") and the State Board's internal policy directives (designated by the letter "D") shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by the State board.

The General Counsel will review all Board policies, bylaws and position statements annually for compliance with state law.

All State Board resolutions, except those honoring an individual, shall contain an expiration date.

Board Action History

- 12/10/76  
Prior BD-1 (Statement of Board authority and foremost consideration.)  
Prior BDA-2 (Systematic procedures for policy adoption.)  
Prior BDE-2 (Annual policy review.)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9311 BOP  
(Replace 1976 policies with statement that Board can change or adopt policies at any time.)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B8  
(Added 5-vote requirement and 3-year minimum review.)
- 6/7/02 – Prior B8  
(5-vote requirement deleted.)
- 9/7/06 – B8  
(Added references to bylaws and position statements, changed 3 to 2 year reviews, added annual General Counsel law review.)
- 10/6/10 – B8  
(Changed 2 to 4 year reviews and clarified expiration dates of policies, bylaws and position statements approved by the State Board.)

Cross-References

- 79-301(2) – The State Board's duty to form policy.
- 79-315 – The State Board's power to organize itself.

Nebraska State Board of Education Policy on Essential Curriculum

The Nebraska State Board of Education believes that the Essential Curriculum provides a strong academic foundation and prepares students to be:

- Lifelong learners
- Independent self-sustaining wage earners
- Participating member of society

The Essential Curriculum emphasizes the Nebraska Standards in reading/writing, mathematics, science, and social studies/history and acknowledges the necessity to complement them with essential learnings in other areas such as visual and performing arts, foreign language, business education, marketing education, agriculture education, industrial technology, family and consumer sciences, information technology, and health and wellness as well as the learning support areas of library media and guidance.

The Board recognizes that:

- The standards in reading/writing, mathematics, science and social studies/history are the foundation of the curriculum
- The essential learnings in additional areas add depth and breath, strengthening the curriculum as a whole
- Schools need to provide students with multiple approaches to learning
- Opportunity to demonstrate achievement should be provided throughout the curriculum by using various methods and strategies

The Essential Curriculum combines the standards and the essential learnings into an educational experience that integrates the content and skill mastery as well as analytical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. It is important to show how disciplines relate to one another as well as to everyday life. All public schools in Nebraska should offer their students access to the Essential Curriculum.

Board Action History

- 6/7/02 – G7 (NEW)  
(Based on policy statement adopted 3/3/2000.)

Cross-References

- 92 NAC 10

## STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT, AND REPORTING

### STANDARDS

**Purpose.** It is the intent of the State Board of Education to strengthen education in Nebraska by providing measurable model academic content standards in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening; mathematics; science; and social studies/history. The model standards should:

- Identify the key content knowledge that students should know and be able to do.
- Clarify expectations for educational achievement of Nebraska public school students.
- Guide development of local curriculum content and assessment procedures.
- Provide frameworks for teachers in determining instructional content, activities, and strategies.

**Review Process.** To assure continued quality academic standards, future revisions and clarification procedures should:

- Maintain the intent of the current academic content in Nebraska L.E.A.R.N.S.
- Assure clarity and specificity to assist Nebraska schools in continued implementation of local assessments.
- Include review and validation by knowledgeable practitioners and experts for each area of the standards.

It is the responsibility of the State Department of Education to develop a process to guide local districts in reviewing and comparing local standards with state standards. This process should assure that local schools have quality academic content standards that are equal to or more rigorous than the model state standards.

## ASSESSMENT

**Purpose.** The State Board of Education believes that the assessment of student academic performance is a local responsibility. The assessment should serve the following major purposes:

- To assist in planning and providing classroom instruction appropriate to student needs.
- To monitor the progress of students in a program, school, or district.
- To provide information for decision making by teachers, administrators, parents, and policy makers.
- To assist in planning for staff development programs.

Although each function is vital, the primary purpose of assessment is to improve instruction and increase learning in the classroom. The results of assessment should be used primarily to judge how well individual students are learning and to modify instruction accordingly.

**Process.** It is the policy of the State Board of Education to establish an assessment process with the primary purpose of benefiting student learning. Since each assessment process or instrument has different strengths, no single assessment can adequately achieve all of the above purposes. Therefore, multiple assessment processes based on instruction already in place in Nebraska schools should be the basis for local and statewide assessment. The process should:

- Provide all public school students an opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement and progress in mastering academic content standards.
- Ensure that a student assessment system is based upon sound classroom assessment.
- Make use of multiple, validated measures for statewide assessment.
- Include external measures and reviews that ensure quality and validity.

It is the policy of the Board that assessments used or developed for use in Nebraska shall assess academic content only.

**Assessment Quality.** To assure quality local assessments, the State Department of Education will develop criteria and procedures for review of local assessments and selection of assessment models. From the highest rated locally developed assessments, the Department will select four models. Districts may either adopt one of the four models or adapt their local assessment to be as highly rated as one of the four models. These models will guide school districts in continued quality assessment of the subject areas.

Local assessment shall include norm-referenced standardized tests selected from those approved by the Department (or shall be validated by approved procedures) and shall be used for comparison of achievement results with locally created assessment and shall be one method to validate the results of local assessments.

**NAEP.** To provide information to further validate Nebraska's assessment process, Nebraska schools will participate biennially in the U.S. Department of Education National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) States' Assessment. Districts are allowed to opt out if a substitute

district can be found and if assurances are provided that the sample group of schools represents an adequate and valid sample. In accord with NAEP procedures, students are excused from the test if requested by their parents.

**Writing Assessment.** A statewide writing assessment will be conducted to provide both local and statewide information. It will consist of a trait based model using actual samples of student writing under controlled conditions. A statewide report of student progress will be prepared by collecting a random sample of student writing to be scored by an outside agency.

Professional development of classroom teachers in writing instruction and evaluation of student writing is essential for strengthening writing instruction and improving student achievement in writing. At the local level, teachers should evaluate student writing using the results of assessments so that the information will benefit instructional practice.

## **REPORTING**

**Purpose.** The State Board of Education believes that reporting of public school performance to the local and statewide community is critical to improving the quality of education in Nebraska. Local and state reports should include information to:

- Provide accountability to the public.
- Assist district policy makers in focusing programs and resources.
- Support local school improvement procedures.

Local districts should design and issue local reports that best communicate to the community. However, some consistency in data gathered and uniformity in reporting will best inform Nebraskans about the educational performance of their districts and will support local and state-level decision making for continued improvement of student learning.

**Reporting Procedures.** Schools will report achievement data with reference to the standards for grades 4, 8, and 11. Other data determined by the Department shall be submitted to provide the data for the State Education Report Card and School District Profiles described in STARS.

Schools districts who assess grades other than 4, 8, and 11, and whose standards have been approved by the State Board as equal to or more rigorous than that of the State (and who have accompanying assessment procedures) may assess and report grade level(s) that correspond to the district plan.

The Department will develop criteria for disaggregation of data. The Department will also implement a unified data collection system which incorporates federal requirements for disaggregation of data. Districts having fewer than 10 students in the grades being reported shall submit reports directly to the Department. If a building has fewer than 10 students in the grades being reported, scores will be reported as an aggregate for all of the schools in the districts. Under no circumstances will individual student data be collected or reported by the State Department of Education, nor shall individual student data be available for harvesting from any other outside agency.

**Reporting Schedule. In order to provide for systematic planning and reporting, Nebraska school districts will report results of progress in achieving state or local standards according to the following schedule: In 2000-01: reading, writing, speaking, listening; in 2001-02: mathematics; in 2002-03: science; in 2003-04: social studies/history. Statewide writing assessment will be conducted according to the following schedule: in 2000-01: grades 4, 8, and 11; in 2001-02: grade 4; in 2002-03: grade 8; in 2003-04: grade 11. Thereafter the cycle will repeat. The Department of Education will issue a report card in the fall of 2000 with an aggregate of statewide**

**information available from the 1999-2000 school year. In the fall of 2001, the Department of Education will issue a State of the Schools Report to include local information by district as well as an aggregate of statewide information.**

Board Action History

- Policy statement adopted 6/9/2000

Cross-References

- 92 NAC 10

Bylaw: Board Committees

The State Board of Education hereby establishes standing committees of Board members for the purpose of delegating specific issues or tasks for initial study, review and/or recommendation. Standing Committees of the Board will meet at the direction of the Committee Chair or on the request of a Committee Member. In addition, the Board President may request a Committee to meet and deliberate on a specific topic or activity. The Commissioner of Education may request an opinion from a Standing Committee regarding a proposal he is preparing for recommendation to the State Board. Committees shall undertake specific tasks upon approval of the State Board or the Board President. Committees may present proposals to the Board or the Board President to be designated as priority activities for their committee.

Upon completion of the assigned activity or task, the committee shall report to the full Board their deliberations and recommendations. All recommendations of the committee are subject to the approval of the Board.

Board appointments to the Standing Committees will be made by the Board President. Requests for membership on the committees may be made by individual Board members. The Committee chair will be appointed by the Board President. The Board President serves as an ex-officio member to all committees. Each standing committee shall be assigned Nebraska Department of Education staff to assist and/or advise the committee. The Commissioner of Education will assign staff.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee may be directed to review proposed policies, bylaws or position statements of the Board and report their review or make recommendations for revisions to the Board. The Committee may be requested to develop policy, bylaw or position statement proposals for consideration by the Board.

The Policy Committee shall be given the additional responsibility to review the budgets for the NDE Trust Funds. The proposed budget for the Trust Funds shall be approved by the Board.

The Policy Committee develops recommendations related to strategic planning and State Board development activities.

#### Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee shall be given the specific responsibility of reviewing legislative proposals and making recommendations to the Board for possible action. The Committee shall also be charged with advising the Commissioner on legislative matters at times when the Board is unable to meet or when emergency issues arise.

#### Commissioner's Appraisal

The Appraisal Committee shall, when directed by the Board or the Board President, review or recommend policies and procedures for the review of performance of the Commissioner of Education. Proposals for procedures and instruments to review the performance of the Commissioner of Education shall be approved by the Board.

### Ad Hoc Committee

Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the President or by the Board, as the need arises. Ad hoc committees are formed to carry out specified tasks. After the committee presents its final report to the Board, the committee will disband unless the President and/or Board gives new direction.

### Board Action History

- 8/19/77 – Prior BBC  
(Discussed temporary committee appointments, actions not binding unless approved by Board, listed 3 committees.)
- 12/7/84 – Prior 9131 BOP  
(Same text as BBC, renumbered.)
- 12/8/95 – Prior B5  
(Same text as 9131 BOP, except for deletion of reference to 3 committees.)
- 5/12/00 – Prior B5  
(Complete revision. Discussed and listed 5 standing committees and committee meeting procedures.)
- 10/3/03 – Prior B5  
(Complete revision. Different list of 4 committees. Added space for cross-references and Legislative history.)
- 9/7/06 – B5  
(Minor changes. Deleted Curriculum Committee from list.)

### Cross-References

- 79-315 – State Board's power to organize itself