

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