

DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF A CORE CURRICULUM - BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM

INTRODUCTION

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4051 (1997) (attached as an appendix) directs the Legislative Council to study the desirability of requiring that a core curriculum be taught from kindergarten through grade 12 and, if determined to be desirable, to develop a core curriculum or endorse an existing core curriculum for delivery to each North Dakota schoolchild, regardless of where the child resides. The study also directs the Legislative Council to determine the feasibility and desirability of requiring that the state assume all costs of delivering that core curriculum to each North Dakota schoolchild.

The definition of the phrase "core curriculum" appears to range from a fixed series of required courses to the instructional methods and materials by which course content requirements are imparted to students. In North Dakota, the Legislative Assembly has already established the minimum courses that school districts must make available to high school students. North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) Section 15-41-24 provides that:

The following units of study must be made available to all students in each public and private high school in this state at least once during each four-year period, and each private high school shall comply with the requirements of this section if such high school is to receive approval by the department of public instruction:

1. English, four units.
2. Mathematics, three units.
3. Science, four units.
4. Social studies, three units. Effective July 1, 1994, social studies must include one unit of world history and one unit of United States history, each of which must be integrated with a strong geography component.
5. Health and physical education, one unit.
6. Music, one unit.
7. Any combination of the following course areas: business education, economics and the free enterprise system, foreign language, industrial arts, vocational education, six units. For purposes of this subsection

vocational education includes home economics, agriculture, office education, distributive education, trade industrial, technical, and health occupations.

Each public or private high school may count for purposes of compliance with this section those vocational education courses which are offered through cooperative arrangements approved by the state board for vocational and technical education.

In NDCC Section 15-41-06, the Legislative Assembly has provided that "[f]our units of high school work must be considered the minimum number of any year from the ninth grade through the twelfth grade." (Exceptions are made for students requiring fewer than four units for graduation.)

Minimum course requirements for elementary and middle level or junior high students are established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction through the school accreditation process. The requirements include instruction in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, music, physical education, and art. Provision is also made for unallocated time that may be used for student-teacher planning and guided learning, the initiation or expansion of a subject area, the provision of elective offerings, and the provision of student personnel services. However, neither the North Dakota Century Code nor the state accreditation standards reference precisely what students should know and be able to do within a given discipline.

The case for standards is summarized in the following quotation:

The articulation of clear, measurable expectations for all students is a relatively new concept. As a nation, many of our teachers, schools, and communities have always had high expectations for their children, but the expectations tended to be localized. The result is that students have been learning different things from school to school, district to district, and state to state. The varying expectations have allowed some children to be exposed to rigorous courses, while others have not been so exposed. Some students are awarded high grades only if they master challenging material while others are awarded high grades and promotions no matter what

they do. Typically, students get passed from grade to grade regardless of how much they learn, and many graduate not even realizing how unprepared they are. Teachers who try to uphold high academic standards with tough grading and promotion policies and demanding homework loads are often pressured by administrators, parents, and students to ease up. In the absence of clear standards, they are powerless. (*Making Standards Matter 1996: An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards*, American Federation of Teachers.)

CORE CURRICULUM OFFERINGS IN OTHER STATES

Following are examples of states that have legislatively addressed their expectations of students.

Alabama

Alabama Code Section 16-6B-2 requires that the following courses be offered in grades 9 through 12 in the state's public schools:

- (1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of English;
- (2) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of mathematics, including material designed to ensure that no high school student fails to learn basic mathematical skills and computer literacy;
- (3) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of science; and
- (4) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of social studies with an emphasis on history, music history, fine arts history, geography, economics and political science.

History courses must include material on the history of the United States and the Constitution of the United States. The curriculum content of American history must include the teaching of important historical documents, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Federalist Papers, and other documents important to the history and heritage of the United States.

The required courses must be successfully completed by a student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 prior to the student's graduation or receipt of a diploma. Students with disabilities are exempt from this requirement and must instead meet the requirements set forth in their individual education plans. Graduation requirements are established by the Alabama State Board of Education and must include the minimum courses set forth above.

In addition to the required courses, a number of elective courses must also be successfully completed

by a student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 prior to the student's graduation or receipt of a diploma. The State Board of Education also determines the number and classification of elective units required for high school graduation.

Statutory requirements for the elementary grades include reading with an emphasis on phonics; spelling; handwriting; mathematics; oral and written English using material designed to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills; social studies emphasizing the geography and the history of the United States and Alabama; science; hygiene and sanitation; physical education; the arts, including music and the visual arts; and environmental protection. Local boards of education may set additional requirements.

The Alabama State Board of Education is authorized to adopt policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and standards requiring that college and university departments of education review their existing educational programs for all prospective teachers in order to ensure that they are properly prepared to teach the courses required by law.

Arkansas

Arkansas Statutes Section 6-60-208 provides that, beginning with the 1997-98 school year, a student must successfully complete the college preparatory core curriculum or a technical preparatory core curriculum, with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 point scale, to be eligible for unconditional admission to an associate of arts or a bachelor's degree program in a public four-year institution of higher education or to enroll in any certificate, diploma, or degree program in any public two-year institution of higher education.

California

California Code Section 66204 requires that the Superintendent of Public Instruction assist all school districts to ensure that all public high school students have access to a core curriculum that meets the admission requirements of the University of California and the California State University system.

Georgia

Georgia Code Section 20-2-140 directs the Georgia State Board of Education to establish competencies that each student is expected to master prior to completion of the student's public school education. The state board is also directed to establish competencies for which each student, at the discretion of the student and the student's parents, should be provided opportunities to master. The state board must then adopt a uniformly sequenced core curriculum for grades kindergarten through 12, based

upon those competencies. Each local school board must include the state's uniformly sequenced core curriculum in its own curriculum. Local school boards may expand and enrich this curriculum to the extent they deem it necessary and appropriate for their students and communities.

At least once every four years, the adopted competencies and uniformly sequenced core curriculum must be reviewed by a task force broadly representative of educational interests and the public. After considering the findings and recommendations of the task force, the state board must make such changes in the student competencies lists and the core curriculum as it deems are in the best interests of the state and its citizens. The proposed changes are to be reported to and reviewed by local school boards and the Georgia General Assembly.

The Georgia State Board of Education is also directed to adopt a student assessment program consisting of instruments, procedures, and policies necessary to implement the core program. Nationally norm-referenced instruments in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies must be administered to students in grades 3, 5, and 8 and based on those results, the State Board of Education is to review, revise, and upgrade the core curriculum. Following such a revision, the State Board of Education is to contract for the development of criterion-referenced tests and to administer the tests to students in three grades not lower than grade 3. A curriculum-based assessment must be administered to students in grade 11 for purposes of determining graduation eligibility.

The nationally normed assessments are to provide students and their parents with grade equivalencies and percentile ranks while the criterion-referenced tests and the high school graduation tests are to provide for results that reflect state levels. In Georgia, student achievement is considered in the awarding of salary supplements to school district personnel.

Oklahoma

Section 11-103.6 of the Oklahoma Statutes directs the State Board of Education to adopt curricular standards for the instruction of students in the public schools and specifically provides the following:

All students must initially gain literacy at the elementary and secondary levels through a core curriculum. Students must develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, computing and critical thinking. They also must learn about cultures and environments - their own and those of others with whom they share the earth. Students, therefore, must study social

studies, literature, languages, the arts, mathematics and science. Such curricula shall provide for the teaching of a hands-on career exploration program in cooperation with vocational-technical education schools. The core curriculum shall be designed to teach the competencies for which twelfth grade level students shall be tested . . . and shall be designed to prepare all students for employment and/or postsecondary education. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature that Oklahoma history be included in the social studies core curriculum for purposes of this section.

The Oklahoma State Board of Education is directed not only to prescribe, adopt, and approve specified levels of competencies in each area of the core curriculum, but also to provide students with an option for high school graduation based upon the attainment of the desired levels of competencies. Students who have individualized education plans are exempt from these requirements.

SETTING EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

The movement to develop high quality academic standards that clearly define what students should know and be able to do has received considerable attention. In its 1995 report, *Assignment Complete*, the New York-based Public Agenda Foundation found that a majority of American citizens support setting and enforcing consistent academic standards that prompt students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve at higher levels.

In March 1996, the nation's governors convened with prominent business leaders to lend support for state efforts to implement higher educational standards and use technology to enhance student learning. While the participants discussed the valuable role that standards play in supporting improved student learning, they also discussed the myriad of strategies used by the states to develop and implement the academic standards. With respect to both statutory and nonstatutory standards, they found that some are voluntary and others are not. They found that some are linked to high school graduation requirements, while others are linked to college entrance requirements. They found that some are written very specifically for the educational sector, while others are targeted toward parents.

Perhaps even more importantly, the participants found that standards, in the sense of curricular content, are only one of the many tools that the states need to employ in their efforts to improve classroom instruction and boost student performance. They concluded that in order for the curricular standards to be truly effective, they must be accompanied by

performance standards that articulate specific levels of student performance at specific grade levels and by thorough and adequate performance assessments that measure students' progress toward attaining the standards. Participants argued that real change can occur only if we are willing to link state standards directly to and require accountability regarding teachers, teaching practices, teacher education schools, and resource allocation.

While numerous states have, to a certain extent, become involved with raising their educational standards, the states of Colorado, Delaware, Minnesota, and South Carolina have made the greatest progress in developing high level content standards. They have embraced different approaches to developing and implementing their standards--approaches which reflect their varying social, political, and governance structures, as well as their unique modeling of innovative reform strategies. A description of their experiences follows.

Colorado

Facing polls indicating that a majority of Colorado parents, business people, and educators believed that the state's public schools were out of touch and out of date, that academic expectations for most students were too low, and that too many students were not acquiring the skills and knowledge they needed to succeed in today's world, Governor Roy Romer convened a special session of the Colorado General Assembly in 1991. Among the accomplishments of that session was the creation of the Commission on Achievement in Education. The commission was directed to assess the need for education reform in the state. Commission members included representatives from the House and the Senate, as well as representatives of business, higher education, communities, school administrators, and teachers. The commission immediately created several task forces, including one charged with outlining a strategy for developing and implementing a statewide system of academic standards.

Developing the Standards

Soon after HB93-1313 was signed, Governor Romer appointed nine members to the State Standards and Assessment Development and Implementation Council. The members included three teachers, two local curriculum directors, one high school principal, one school district superintendent, a community college president, and a university professor. A challenge faced by the council was devising a way to establish high academic standards throughout the state while honoring Colorado's cherished system of local control, which is required by the Colorado state constitution. The constitution forbids the

adoption of a state curriculum and grants the publicly elected school board in each of the state's 176 school districts the authority to grant diplomas, set graduation requirements, determine course offerings, and establish curricula.

When the council began its work in 1993, it created five subject area task forces--reading and writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography. Teachers from across the state, as well as several experts in higher education, were then invited to serve on the task forces. The teachers asked to serve were selected on the basis of their prior leadership in education reform and the development of education standards. Their mission was to draft, in each subject area, standards that would be disseminated for public review and comment.

Between August 1993 and December 1994, the task forces produced three separate drafts, each of which endured an extensive public review process. Thousands of Coloradans contributed comments and suggestions. At each stage, the public input resulted in significant changes. On April 1, 1995, the council submitted to the State Board of Education its final recommendations for model academic content standards for kindergarten through grade 12 in the subject areas.

The state board approved the standards in September 1995. Thereafter, the council began work on the second phase of its mission--the development of an assessment framework for each of the standards. The assessments will eventually be used to measure student progress toward the content standards.

The decision to recommend "model" standards that define what students should know and should be able to do circumvented the constitutional concerns. Districts could either adopt the state's model or develop their own content standards, provided that their standards met or exceeded the state standards. In this way, districts were able to maintain their authority to define curriculum, programs of instruction, course offerings, and graduation requirements.

Costs

Operating costs for the council's efforts during the 1993-94 school year were approximately \$210,000. This covered printing and mailing expenses; meeting expenses, including travel, food, and lodging for council and task force members; and salaries for substitute teachers hired to replace those who served on the task forces. The Colorado Department of Education was responsible for 3.8 FTEs who provided staff support. Approximately 1.1 of the 3.8 FTEs was involved in administrative support. During the 1994-95 school year, the operating costs were approximately \$200,000.

Delaware

"New Directions for Education in Delaware" is an initiative to develop statewide education content standards and assessments. It was conceived by the state education superintendent, Dr. Pascal Forgione, when he returned to Delaware after serving as the director of the National Education Goals Panel in Washington, D.C. With the help of five district superintendents, Dr. Forgione constructed a five-year plan for developing and implementing content standards and related assessments. The plan was adopted by the Board of Education in May 1992 and was inaugurated on July 1 of that year. The plan called for the following:

- Setting clear standards on what Delaware students should know and be able to do;
- Teaching children by participation in activities using real world problems;
- Measuring students' performance by having them demonstrate what they have learned;
- Holding schools accountable for students' progress;
- Ensuring that all children start school ready to learn;
- Creating an environment with minimal disruption;
- Allowing each school district to design its program; and
- Preparing students for a successful transition to work or to higher education.

The plan also called for three levels of partnership--school partners, community partners, and development partners.

To implement the reform plan, the state's commitment of \$7 per student was leveraged with \$5 per student of existing resources from the state's 19 local school boards for the development of standards and assessments. This amounted to nearly \$500,000 per year. The school boards agreed to fund the partnership for the following five years.

In addition, the Business Public Education Council, an organization representing the state's business community, matched the \$5 per student local contribution. A total of \$1.7 million was raised for education reform.

Four curriculum framework commissions were initially created for the drafting of standards in the areas of mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies (including civics, history, geography, and economics). The second round of commissions wrote standards for the visual and performing arts, foreign languages, business and marketing, and agriculture. Each commission consisted of 45 to 48 members and was composed of teachers from every school district, parents, business and community

leaders, higher education representatives, and curriculum experts.

The curriculum commissions in mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies worked for almost three years to draft and revise the standards documents. Throughout the process, they consulted with national and international education experts to decide which topics should be included in the standards. They also conferred with officials in other states undertaking similar reform efforts.

After completing the content standards, the four curriculum framework commissions drafted a volume of classroom performance models to accompany the content standards. These documents contained five to 10 detailed lesson plans that were intended to show teachers how particular standards might be translated into instructional learning activities in the classroom. Unlike the Colorado task forces, the Delaware commissions did not make a concerted effort to write the standards in lay language. The Delaware standards were intended to be for teachers and curriculum professionals and to drive a school district's curriculum. The content standards were reviewed by the State Board of Education and formally approved in June 1995. Thereafter, work began on the development of new assessments consisting of performance-based assessments, portfolios, and norm-referenced tests.

Professional Development

In response to Delaware teachers who expressed a strong desire to learn new instructional practices necessitated by the content standards, the Delaware Legislature in 1995 approved \$2.5 million for professional development programs. The money was used to enhance the teachers' capacity to understand the new standards and to provide them with new teaching and learning strategies. As an adjunct, the Delaware Professional Standards Council, an independent body that reports to the State Board of Education, developed a plan to align teachers' standards with the academic content standards. The council is collaborating with teacher training institutions for the revision of their programs so that course requirements will match the new content standards.

Costs

The total cost of developing the standards and assessments in Delaware was \$15.5 million. According to the Delaware State Superintendent, the majority of the program's budget was spent on the operating expenses of the four curriculum framework commissions.

Minnesota

Minnesota, like many other states, traditionally awarded a high school diploma to any student who completed 20.5 course credits and received a passing grade of at least D- in all classes. Even though the state had required that all students take certain courses (e.g., four years of English, three years of social studies, etc.) there was little consistency among schools as to what was taught in those classes or as to what students learned in those classes. Minnesota had employed the traditional seat time rule, which required only that students be exposed to certain contents for a prescribed period of time. There was no requirement that the student learn the content or even learn it at a certain level.

In 1989, however, the Minnesota Legislative Assembly enacted legislation directing the then State Department of Education to adopt a statewide graduation standard, which requires students to demonstrate that they have mastered certain skills and have acquired sufficient knowledge about specific subjects. The enactment, known colloquially as Minnesota's graduation rule, contained the following provisions:

- Implementation of the new graduation rule will start with students entering the 9th grade in the 1996-97 school year (i.e., those scheduled to graduate from high school in the year 2000).
- The State Board of Education may not prescribe the delivery system, form of instruction, or a single statewide form of assessment that local sites must use to meet the requirements contained in the rule.
- The content of the graduation rule must differentiate between minimum competencies and rigorous standards.
- Assessments to measure the knowledge required by all students for graduation must be developed according to the most current version of professional standards for educational testing.
- The State Board of Education must periodically review and report on the assessment process and student achievement with the expectation of raising the standards and expanding the high school graduation requirements.
- When fully implemented, the requirements for high school graduation in Minnesota, including both basic requirements and the required profile of learning, must include a broad range of academic experience and accomplishment necessary to achieve the goal of preparing students to function effectively as purposeful thinkers, effective communicators,

self-directed learners, productive group participants, and responsible citizens.

Writing the Standards

Minnesota adopted an intricate process for writing its basic requirements and high level content standards. Initially, the State Department of Education sponsored a series of town meetings across the state to give parents, teachers, and other community members an opportunity to identify what they believed students should know when they graduate from high school. Several of these meetings were held in each congressional district. They produced approximately 160 statements describing what students should learn. These statements were eventually condensed into five comprehensive goals, which guided the development of Minnesota's basic requirements and the 10 elements included in the profile of learning.

The process of writing the high level content standards known as the profile of learning began in January 1994. A group of teachers, chosen from pilot sites and representing professional organizations across the state, met periodically in St. Paul for the next six months to develop content standards in each of 15 broad areas or elements.

During the first two months of the process, teachers met by content area to write descriptions of the knowledge and skills required by the elements in their disciplines. The teachers were encouraged to write "big overarching statements" concerning required learning for as many elements as necessary to cover their disciplines. There were, however, two stipulations--the required knowledge and skills had to represent the heart of the discipline and the discipline had to accept responsibility for instruction and assessment associated with the required learning. During this preliminary stage, teachers wrote 141 statements which were reviewed by a group of people representing postsecondary education, business, and community interests.

During the second stage, which lasted from April to May 1994, the teachers used the statements to construct detailed content standards. Statements were collapsed and combined and each became the first summary sentence of an individual content standard. The result was the creation of 60 content standards, with four being added later in the process.

In July 1994, a team of administrators and curriculum specialists from throughout the state met to review the standards and draft a proposal for graduation requirements based on the profile of learning. To solicit feedback, the department issued the first draft of the profile of learning and accompanying graduation requirements and requested feedback from school districts throughout the state,

from representatives of the state's educational organizations, and from the general public. A second series of town meetings was held. Based on the input, two more drafts were written.

While the Minnesota Department of Education engaged in the process of reviewing and revising the content standards and proposed graduation requirements, groups of teachers working in 14 pilot sites across the state began the process of writing test specifications for the base requirements and assessment packages. These test specifications included performance assessments drawn from the 64 standards outlined in the profile of learning. Basic tests in reading and math were administered to students in 24 pilot sites during the 1995-96 school year and served as models for other schools. Schools that did not adopt the state-developed assessments had to create their own alternative set of assessments.

In order to ensure that school administrators and teachers were well versed in the graduation rule, the department assigned a coordinator to each of the state's 11 regions. The coordinator was responsible for providing training and disseminating information to teachers and staff in local schools. In addition, the department allocated an assessment trainer to each of the 24 pilot sites experimenting with the draft assessments. The trainer was to help facilitate the implementation of the assessments.

Costs

The development and implementation of the new graduation standards was funded by \$18 million in legislative appropriations over four years. The money covered the costs of developing the standards and funded a commission that was responsible for estimating the cost of implementing the new requirements statewide.

South Carolina

During the 1970s, the South Carolina Department of Education instituted minimum competency levels for students in kindergarten through grade 12. These reforms focused on improving students' basic skills and ensuring that student achievement reached minimum levels. By the early 1990s, many teachers, parents, and business leaders felt that South Carolina students were ready for greater challenges. When Barbara Stock Nielsen was elected South Carolina's State Superintendent of Education in 1991, she set about to raise academic standards and shift the schools' focus to high level skills. To facilitate this shift, she launched a multiyear effort to develop and adopt statewide curriculum frameworks--documents that communicate the core academic knowledge and skills all students are expected to learn.

South Carolina adopted a clustered approach to the development of curriculum frameworks. Based on nominations provided by professional associations representing teachers and curriculum experts, the State Superintendent of Education appointed a curriculum framework writing team to draft a curriculum framework in an assigned subject area. The writing team consisted of 10 to 20 individuals, all of whom have taught, lectured, written, or practiced in their respective disciplines and are knowledgeable in the most current thinking on learning and teaching in their curriculum field. Staff from the State Department of Education provided support for each writing team and took care of logistics and the gathering of information. Each of the writing teams was also assisted by a professional writer who helped draft the documents.

The writing teams met regularly to build consensus about the direction of and the major components of their draft frameworks. This phase continued from six to 24 months, depending on the degree of consensus that existed within a particular group.

When a draft framework was completed, the writing team submitted it to the State Superintendent who forwarded it to the South Carolina Curriculum Review Panel. This panel consisted of 11 members appointed by the State Board of Education. Candidates for the Curriculum Review Panel must have taught, lectured, written, or practiced in one of the academic areas slated for a curriculum framework or in a related education field. At least three members had to be full-time classroom teachers, and all members had to submit a statement declaring that they have no association with curriculum material providers and have no other conflicts of interest. The Curriculum Review Panel members could not be current members of a curriculum framework writing team or employees of the South Carolina Department of Education. The panel's role in the curriculum process was to oversee a field review, make revisions, and recommend adoption of the curriculum framework to the State Board of Education. This was accomplished by the panel appointing a five-member subcommittee to conduct a framework field review. The subcommittee was to allow at least 60 days for public comment, with all comments required to be submitted in writing. Based on public input, the subcommittee revised the field review draft in collaboration with members of the framework writing team. The subcommittee consisted of at least two panel members and other specialists in the curriculum area under review. Again, no State Department of Education employee or person with a commercial interest in particular curriculum materials could serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee was responsible for sending the draft

framework to district superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, students, business leaders, civic groups, colleges and universities, and other individuals who requested copies. Principals were asked to facilitate a school level review of each framework with teachers and parents and to summarize their input. After the subcommittee finished its work, the Curriculum Review Panel would recommend state approval of the revised curriculum framework. A framework was considered final when the state board voted to adopt it. South Carolina's initial curriculum frameworks covered mathematics, the visual and performing arts, and foreign languages. The second round included frameworks covering standards in English language arts, science, and health and safety. The final round was reserved for social studies and physical education.

Approximately 40,000 copies of the first three frameworks, those for mathematics, foreign languages, and visual and performing arts, were distributed to the public. Approximately 3,200 responses were returned to the Curriculum Review Panel. The public's comments were then summarized and incorporated into the frameworks.

In the second stage of the review process, the Curriculum Review Panel conducted a series of public input sessions to give citizens a final opportunity to express their opinions. Six such sessions were held for each framework at locations throughout the state. However, generally fewer than 100 people attended these sessions. With few new comments to be incorporated, the frameworks were finalized quickly and two years after beginning, they were approved by the State Superintendent of Education and formally adopted by the State Board of Education.

Costs

Funding for the development of South Carolina's curriculum frameworks originally came from the State Department of Education's regular operating budget. A department spokesman stated: "We believe that curriculum revision is part of the Department's charge, so we did not get a new allocation of money from the legislature to do this."

Since the effort began in 1991, there have been on average three writing teams working at one time, with each team's expenses amounting to about

\$30,000 per year. This includes travel and lodging, resource materials, consultants, pay for substitute teachers, and a professional writer for each team. Printing costs and costs associated with Department of Education staff support are not included in these figures.

NORTH DAKOTA'S CURRICULAR FRAMEWORKS

The Superintendent of Public Instruction has developed "Curriculum Frameworks" for mathematics, English, social studies, and science. A curriculum framework, according to departmental drafts, is designed to "serve as a bridge between the content standards and the classroom by providing for the content of the curriculum and how that content should be organized and presented." North Dakota does not have, however, standards for each grade level. Instead, the standards are benchmarked to grades 4, 8, and 12. North Dakota school districts are not required to use these standards.

CONCLUSION

Based on the experiences of other states, it appears articulating expectations or standards for public education, regardless of the terminology actually used, requires the development of a broad public consensus on what students should know and should be able to do when they complete high school. In the past, educational standard setting was limited to health, safety, and procedural issues, and the closest thing to academic standards produced by the states were curriculum frameworks that provided a basis for what should be taught at each grade level. The principal difference between past attempts to regulate education and the current focus on academic standards is the emphasis on student learning. Inherent in the development of academic standards is consideration of issues related to the thoroughness and adequacy of the teacher training programs, the appropriateness of existing teacher certification and recertification standards, school and school district efficiencies and economies of scale, and finally, the adequacy and equity of local and state resource allocation.

ATTACH:1

Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly, State of North Dakota, begun in the Capitol in the City of Bismarck, on Monday, the sixth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4051
(Senators Solberg, Christmann)**

A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Council to study the desirability of requiring that a core curriculum be taught from kindergarten through grade 12; and if determined to be desirable, to develop a core curriculum or endorse an existing core curriculum for delivery to each North Dakota school child, regardless of where the child resides; and to determine the desirability and feasibility of requiring the state to assume all costs of delivering that core curriculum to each North Dakota school child.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of North Dakota states that the Legislative Assembly is to provide for "the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools which shall be open to all children of the state"; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of North Dakota states that the Legislative Assembly shall take "steps as may be necessary to prevent illiteracy, secure a reasonable degree of uniformity in course of study, and to promote industrial, scientific, and agricultural improvements"; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Assembly believes that each North Dakota school child should be challenged academically in, at the very least, the disciplines of mathematics, science, English, history, geography, music, art, and physical education, regardless of where in the state the child resides;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Legislative Council study the desirability of requiring that a core curriculum be taught from kindergarten through grade 12; and if determined to be desirable, to develop a core curriculum or endorse an existing core curriculum for delivery to each North Dakota school child, regardless of where the child resides; and to determine the desirability and feasibility of requiring the state to assume all costs of delivering that core curriculum to each North Dakota school child; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislative Council report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to the Fifty-sixth Legislative Assembly.

Filed March 26, 1997