



Uniform Achievement Standards in the Page Amendment

Background

The Page Amendment proposes the following language:

All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, **as measured against uniform achievement standards** set forth by the state.

The goal of this language is to provide an **objective standard** in the constitution by which the state's performance is measured. The proposed language will require the state to establish standards that "fully prepare [children] with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society" and measure progress toward meeting those standards to ensure all children are receiving equitable learning and resources.

Will this amendment enshrine standardized testing in the Minnesota Constitution?

No. We share the concern that for too long testing has been used only to identify failure, not to help individual children succeed. Standards should help identify how well a child is learning and what they need to advance academically, socially, and emotionally. Simply testing children and teaching to the test does not prepare children to participate in our economy, democracy, and society. There's an opportunity for progress to be made simply by shifting the focus from group failure to helping each individual child progress.

The state currently sets academic standards and other World's Best Workforce accountability goals, and it measures progress toward those goals. Minnesota has rigorous standards today, and this amendment does not propose to change those standards – the legislature has purview over standards and measurements thereof.

Standardized summative assessments such as the MCAs are required by federal and state law for various purposes, including state accountability systems and funding. Federal law and/or state law can be modified at any time, and the proposed amendment would not alter that. The proposed amendment would require measurement of "skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society" – however, this does not necessarily mean summative assessments – in fact, it likely means that multiple measures could be utilized, including items like locally-developed tests, college preparation test, learning growth measures, GPA, social-emotional learning, attendance, and other factors that align to "skills necessary".

Why do we need to measure?

Setting standards, measuring progress, and holding schools accountable for outcomes is important to a quality education system because it helps ensure that students are learning. What gets measured gets done. When the data indicates there are gaps and weak spots, resources can be provided to help students succeed.



How does measurement help students?

Yes. Students of color, Indigenous students, English learners, immigrant students, students with disabilities, students from low-income families, students experiencing homelessness, and other historically underserved students experience unique challenges that impede learning. Data on multiple measures, including school climate, student access to resources and opportunities, and student learning outcomes, are essential tools to address systemic inequities in our education system, as well as to gauge the quality of instruction and support offered.

Transparent, actionable measures of the experiences of different groups of students can empower families and advocates; guide state and local resource allocation, interventions, and supports; and identify equity gaps that require investment, policy, and guidance. Parents and families deserve to know whether their children are meeting college- and career-ready expectations and whether the education system is responding to and improving their opportunities to succeed.

Could the Page Amendment help us improve testing?

Yes. The goal of the Page Amendment is to measure outcomes. Many of the pain points on testing have arisen because state summative assessments are being used for things they were not designed to do or have been tied to things they were not designed to be tied to. While systems measures are important for accountability, it is more important that we are gathering and using data to help students. Minnesota's testing system could be improved to track multiple measures and gather multiple datapoints, as deemed necessary to meet the quality standard of "skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society."