Overview

Some people believe that matters such as the number and complexity of profile of learning requirements and school districts' interest in developing local performance packages and various methods for assessing student achievement of the content standards required for graduation may make it difficult for districts to implement all the profile of learning requirements that students need to graduate under the current rule. This bill, among other things, proposes to reduce the number of required content standards, fully implement the profile of learning in all school districts by the 2003-2004 school year, encourage school districts to develop local performance packages, use the results of third and fifth grade reading, math and writing tests and the results of the basic skills reading, math and writing tests for diagnostic purposes and educational accountability, limit an eleventh grade test to school sites and school districts with poor student performance, and direct school districts to design multiple assessment methods to determine student achievement of content standards.

Results-oriented graduation rule; basics skills requirements; profile of learning. (b) Requires high school students to complete 15 content standards that include nine state-required content standards and three district or school-required content standards among the nine learning areas, and three elective content standards, which may also include the tenth learning area of world languages. Requires middle school students to complete at least one content standard in each of the nine learning areas. Requires intermediate school students to complete a content standard in learning areas 1 (read, view and listen), 2 (write and speak) and 4 (mathematical applications). Requires primary school students to focus on, but not complete, learning areas 1, 2 and 4.

(d) Allows school districts to use outstanding work from each grade level as exemplars for measuring student work in that grade, instead of using the outstanding work of third, fifth, eighth and twelfth grade students as exemplars by which to measure all students.
Implementing the profile of learning.

Subd. 1. District implementation of the profile of learning. (a) Strikes language permitting school districts to implement the profile of learning according to a statutory time line or a locally developed time line only with commissioner approval. Also strikes language directing school districts to implement the profile of learning for the 1998-1999 school year and later.

(b) Directs school districts for the 1999-2000 school year to implement all required content standards at the preparatory level and a minimum of six specified learning areas for ninth grade students. Directs school districts for the 2000-2001 school year to implement two additional learning areas for ninth and tenth grade students. Directs school districts for the 2001-2002 school year to implement the two remaining learning areas for ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students, with the expectation that students graduating in the 2003-2004 school year must successfully complete all profile of learning requirements in order to graduate.

(c) As an alternative to paragraph (b), directs school districts to develop a local plan to have all ten learning areas fully implemented by the start of the 2001-2002 school year, with the expectation that students graduating in the 2003-2004 school year must successfully complete all profile of learning requirements in order to graduate.

(d) Strikes language establishing an 11-member advisory committee to make recommendations to the governor and the commissioner on implementing the graduation rule.

Subd. 2. Performance packages. (a) Indicates that state model performance packages are intended to serve as a guideline for teachers and school districts to use in developing content standard specifications that can be embedded in local curricula. Encourages teachers to develop and use local performance packages. Allows school districts to determine whether students must use state or locally developed performance packages. Indicates that locally developed performance packages consist of locally approved assignments and other applications.

(b) Requires school districts that use locally developed performance packages to report the specifications of each content standard to the commissioner. Requires the commissioner to periodically compile the districts' information into a useful format and disseminate the information in a timely manner to school districts, members of the public, and the legislature.

Subd. 3. Waiver. Strikes language obligating school districts to obtain and explain the need for a waiver from immediately implementing profile of learning requirements. Requires districts that elect to implement a local profile of learning plan to document how the plan will improve student achievement and how the plan will be fully implemented for students graduating in the 2003-2004 school year.

Statewide testing. (a) Requires the results of third and fifth grade reading, math, and writing tests to be sufficiently rigorous, valid and reliable for school districts to use in diagnosing educational needs related to student learning and district instruction and curriculum, and for establishing educational accountability.

(b) Directs school districts to assess the performance of eleventh grade students in required learning areas only when the commissioner determines that circumstances of poor student performance at the school site or school district warrant the testing. Requires the testing to be administered beginning in the 2001-2002 school year. Makes testing results available to school sites and school districts for diagnostic purposes related to student learning, instruction and curriculum, for students' post-secondary planning purposes, and for establishing educational accountability. Declares that the eleventh grade is not a graduation requirement.
(d) Makes technical changes.

**Student achievement levels.** (a) Strikes language indicating that the legislature will determine state expectations after receiving the commissioner's recommendations, and requiring the commissioner to submit recommendations to the legislature by December 15, 1998.

(b) Directs school districts, with time and adequate department support, to assist school sites in designing assessment methods to determine student achievement of content standards required for graduation. Allows assessment methods to vary by content standard, but requires all assessment methods to indicate a required minimum level of student achievement. Includes the use of portfolios, performance tasks with rubrics, exit interviews, exhibitions of achievement, locally adopted achievement tests, checks lists and students' performance on state achievement tests as assessment methods. Requires school districts to make timely information about assessment methods and levels of student achievement readily available to the public and the department. Requires school districts to annually report in a timely and useful manner to district residents and the department information about student performance on the state's basic skills tests, the content standards students must complete in order to graduate, sample assessment methods, and district efforts to improve student learning and district instruction and curriculum. Directs the commissioner to review the performance of school sites and school districts demonstrating a pattern of low student achievement on the state's third and fifth grade reading, math and writing tests or on the state's basic skills reading, math and writing tests. Allows the commissioner to review the performance of other school districts at the request of the district or the discretion of the commissioner. Requires the commissioner to pay the costs of these reviews.

**Effective date.** Makes sections 1 to 4 immediately effective.