

New Academic Standards talking points College of Education – U of M

Overall concerns

- The speed with which this is being implemented does not give credit to its importance, its implementation, or its potential impact on students and teachers. The committee lacked adequate participation by credentialed teachers and other education professionals. Many of the standards are not research-based.
- The dramatic and rapid shift to these standards belies the reality of the classroom. Schools have aligned curriculum and courses to the Profile. To realign to such vastly different and such a large number of standards over the summer is just not feasible. Implementation plans have not been developed to address teacher professional development.
- A considerable amount of time and money has gone into studying the best ways to revise and improve existing standards. That valuable work has merely been boxed and shelved without any attempt made to include it in new standards.
- The development of these standards has not included a detailed exploration of the philosophy of testing and its cost. The content testing in Virginia cost \$18 million in 2001. Not only will Minnesota have this cost of administering the test, but there is the cost of constructing the tests, a huge investment if the tests are to have any kind of validity, reliability, or usefulness.

Concerns about the reading/language arts standards

- There is a lack of any larger, coherent K-12 scope and sequence across the grade levels in terms of how certain strategies evolve or are developed across grade levels.
- The proposed standards also demonstrate little integration of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
- Analysis of the proposed standards indicates that most represent relatively low-level thinking skills. There are far fewer standards that address higher-order thinking skills such as the ability to synthesize information and ideas, formulate and apply one's own ideas, pose questions, connect experience to learning, criticize, judge, or evaluate.
- The writing standards are based on traditional formalist methods of writing instruction, with some reference to composing processes. Students are limited to specific types of writing at specific grade levels, reducing their opportunity to experiment with a range of different types of writing.

- The speaking/listening standards involve no variation from grades 6-12 and focus on traditional speech instruction with little attention to uses of drama/role play or issues of second language learners.
- The viewing standards are superficial at best and fail to address the need for students to acquire important informational, media, digital, and computer literacies. These are better developed in the California standards <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/reading/grade1112.html> and the Vermont standards <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.html> and in various standards developed by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
- The literature standards focus primarily on teaching text features at the expense of engaging students in more current reader response/literary critical analyses of texts; the range of different types of literature, particularly multicultural literature, is highly limited at the high school level.