

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000

NORTH DAKOTA

This profile was verified by the staff of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction in May 2000. All information was current as of that date.

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

North Dakota is in the process of revamping their assessment system, particularly through the implementation of standards-based assessments. These changes were prompted by federal legislation (IASA and IDEA), Title I regulations, and state legislation (NDCC 15.1-02-04) which allows for the State Superintendent to supervise the development of course content standards and the assessment of students.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s):* North Dakota's assessment strategy incorporates a four-pronged system:
 - CTBS/TerraNova
 - State Standards-based Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics (piloted in 1999-2000 school year, fully implemented the following year)
 - NAEP
 - Locally-designed Standards-Referenced Assessments. (Currently, only one district has developed their own standards-referenced assessments, aligned with their own curriculum. A second district is in the process of doing so.)

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested:*
 - CTBS at grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 in the following subjects: reading, language arts, mathematics, spelling, science, and social studies.
 - State Standards tests at grades 4, 8, and 12 in English and Math.
 - *Norm or Criterion Referenced:* Both
 - *Matrix or Census Testing:* The CTBS test is required for all public schools. Schools are highly encouraged to administer the State Standards-based Assessments to all students in grades 4, 8, and 12, however, the tests are only mandated for Title I students. There was no funding appropriated, either by state or federal legislation for these assessments, but state Title I administrative funds will be used to pay for Title I students to be assessed. A federal grant is paying for the math assessment to be administered to all students during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years.
 - *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* North Dakota administers assessments that include all of the above item types.
 - *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)* Spring for the CTBS, year-round for Standards-based assessments.
 - *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)* North Dakota does not administer a high school exit exam.
 - *Other Assessments:* Locally developed tests based on locally developed standards.
 - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Assessment system in transition
3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*
- *State Department of Education*
 - *Commercial Testing Organization*
 - *State teachers and administrators*
 - *Assessment Committee*

The CTBS/TerraNova assessment was developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill. The standards based assessments were developed through the collaborative efforts of educators across North Dakota.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

Local assessments may be used to fulfil the Title I requirement that the progress of all participating students be tracked using multiple assessments. These assessments, conducted at the local level may include a narrative progress report. A portfolio must be maintained on each Title I student documenting the progress of each child and showing the three assessments being

used. The assessments must be given to each student at least twice a year, preferably more often. Different assessment tools can be used at each grade level. Title I teachers must provide parents of all Title I students with the child's individual student assessment results. Title I teachers are required to use the assessment measures in reading, and if serving students in math, three separate assessment measures. However, local assessments are not used in definitions of Title I adequate yearly progress.

A January 10, 2000 letter from the State Superintendent further clarifies: Currently content and performance standards are voluntarily implemented within districts in North Dakota. At this time there is no state requirement to actually implement content and performance standards at the district or school level; however, there is a federal requirement in Title I and special education law that all participating students must be assessed in English language arts and mathematics against these standards and their results reported beginning in the 2000-2001 school year. Obviously, it is in the best interest of districts to adopt/adapt and implement state content standards into their curriculum development activities and move to assess student performance in terms of these performance standards. It is the intent of the Department of Public Instruction to actively encourage the implementation of content and performance standards for all schools and all students.

5. Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?

- *Refining standards:* Since 1994, North Dakota has undergone the slow, deliberate process of developing content standards in the core curriculum (i.e. English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, the arts, physical education, world language, and technology). As of spring 2000, English language arts and mathematics were completed and approved. Content and Performance standards are developed according to protocols established by the SALT team, a committee of teachers, administrators, and DPI staff charged with advancing educational improvement proposals.
- *Revamping assessments* As part of a plan to revise accreditation standards, the State Superintendent intends to develop further statewide standards-based assessments that will identify the degree of students' proficiency in selected areas. Procedures are set forth to assure that such statewide assessments are developed by a body of qualified individuals, tested for validity and reliability, and formalized and approved by the State Superintendent.

What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?

Content standards, performance standards, and standards-based assessments in English language arts and mathematics are complete.

6. What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?

North Dakota has established a set of protocols for the development of content standards, performance standards, and assessments. Protocols exist to assure validity throughout the process.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification* State assessment data is not used for this purpose, although local assessment data may be.
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability* State assessment data is not used for this purpose, although local assessment data may be.
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)* The use of assessment data for program evaluation may develop in the future.
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.* Assessment data is not used for this purpose.
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers* Yes, individuals schools may use the assessments for these purposes. The state conducts workshops for teachers and administrators on how to interpret test data and how to best use the data.
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)* Schools are highly encouraged to use assessment data for accreditation and school improvement purposes, however, they are not required to use assessment data when preparing a school improvement plan.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The state plans to encourage a four-pronged approach to assessment, as itemized in question 2. It is the intent to use student performance data as a basis for accreditation within the school improvement plan. Student performance data would also be used in the district's report card.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

North Dakota has advanced standards-based assessments funded entirely through federal grants. The long-term challenge for the state is to fund the maintenance of these projects using state resources.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies with regard to students with disabilities: The issue of exclusions on assessments is resolved within the student's IEP or 504 plan. Each student is accounted for within assessment protocols. Students who have an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan will follow their plan as to the level of participation in any district or statewide assessments. If an assessment has not been addressed in the student's plan, the following guidelines may apply:

- 1) If the student is enrolled in the general education curriculum with no identified accommodations, the student should participate in the assessments.
- 2) If the student is enrolled in some modified or accommodated course work within the general education curriculum, a decision must be made as to what accommodations may be needed in order for the student to participate in the assessments.
- 3) If the student does not participate in the assessments, justification for nonparticipation must be provided and evidenced in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. An alternate assessment will need to be given to those non-participating students.

Policies with regard to students with Limited English Proficiency: LEP students should have their English proficiency assessed to determine the appropriate level of participation in statewide assessments. Those with the lowest level of English proficiency may be excluded from statewide assessments.

2. What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?

The purpose of assessment accommodations is to give students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do, under the conditions they need to demonstrate their knowledge. The following accommodations are examples of those which would require documentation in an IEP:

Timing/Scheduling:

- Flexible Schedule
- Extend the time allotted over several days
- Administer the test in several sessions, specify duration
- Allow frequent breaks during testing
- Allow subtests to be taken in different order

Presentation

- Braille edition or large-type edition
- Prompts available on tape
- Increased spacing between items or reduced items per page or line
- Increased size of answer bubbles
- Passages provided with one complete sentence per line
- Teacher helps student understand prompt
- Student can ask for clarification of directions
- Computer reads paper to student
- Highlighted key words or phrases in directions

Test Directions

- Signed directions to students
- Directions read to students
- Simplified language in directions
- Highlighted verbs in instructions by underlining

- Clarified directions
- Cues (i.e. arrows or stop signs) provided on answer form
- Additional examples provided

Use of Assistive Devices/Support

- Visual magnification devices
- Templates to reduce visible print
- Auditory amplification device, hearing aid or noise buffers
- Audiotapes for administration of certain sections
- Papers secured to work area with tape/magnets
- Questions read aloud to student
- Masks or markers to maintain place
- Questions signed to pupil
- Dark heavy or raised lines or pencil grips

Setting

- Administer the test individually in a separate location
- Administer the test to a small group in a separate location
- Provide special lighting
- Provide adaptive or special furniture
- Provide special acoustics
- Administer test in locations with minimal distractions
- Preferential seating

Response

Test Format

- Increased Spacing
- Wider lines and/or wider margins
- Graph paper
- Paper in alternative format (word processed, Braille, etc.)
- Student allowed to mark responses in booklet rather than answer sheet

Use of Alternative Devices/Supports

- Word processor
- Student tapes response for later verbatim transcription
- Typewriter
- Communication device
- Dictation to a proctor/scribe
- Alternative response such as oral, sign, typed, gesture
- Braille
- Copy assistance between drafts
- Tape recorder
- Calculator
- Abacus

- Arithmetic tables
- Spelling dictionary
- Spell check

Decisions about which accommodations are appropriate should be made by persons familiar with the test and with the student. The team that develops the IEP should make this decision for students receiving services under the IDEA. As a rule, an accommodation should be allowed if:

- 1) It is based on the student's need,
- 2) It does not give students with disabilities an advantage, and
- 3) It does not change the nature of what is being tested

LEP students may be allowed accommodations as well.

3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?

North Dakota does not provide assessments in languages other than English.

4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?

North Dakota is completing the process of developing an alternative assessment. Training on the assessment will be provided to special education personnel during the spring of 2000. By the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year, special education teachers will be ready to implement the alternate assessment statewide

The Department of Public Instruction's Standards, Assessments, Learning and Teaching (SALT) Team met with members of the Task Force on Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide/Alternate Assessments in July 1998 to discuss some of the issues in the development of alternate assessments. The SALT Team recommended that the development of alternate assessments follow the same process as has been used in all other areas. This includes:

PHASE I: Standards and curriculum frameworks were first developed and served as the basis for designing the assessment.

PHASE II. Following the public input process, the standards and frameworks were reviewed by the SALT team. After final approval by the state superintendent, an assessment development team was formed to prepare the alternate assessment. The draft alternate assessment was field tested during the Fall of 1999.

5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?

North Dakota does have the goal of inclusion for students with disabilities. As the Department of Public Instruction notes in a brochure to parents: If your child does not participate in student assessments offered by the district or state, then information about your child's performance relative to local, state, and national standards will not be available. When the performance of students with disabilities is included in the overall school performance, educators are more aware of the learning needs of all students. If schools and states do not have this information, they are not able to change instruction or set policy that meets the needs of all students, including students with disabilities.

6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

No changes are anticipated other than those mentioned above.

Performance Standards

1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?

Following the development of state content standards in a given core subject, North Dakota has developed (or is in the process of developing) performance standards. The performance standards in English language arts are complete and have been approved; mathematics will be completed and approved by September 2000. Four levels of performance standards were written for each benchmark by North Dakota educators from various grade levels. These benchmarks form a rubric that is used for the scoring of standards-based assessments:

- Level 4: Demonstrates exemplary performance, exceeds performance standard; **advanced proficiency.**
- Level 3: Demonstrates solid performance; meets State performance standard; **proficient.**
- Level 2: Performance is emerging or developing toward performance standard; **partially proficient.**
- Level 1: Attempt made but there are serious errors; **novice.**

Current CTBS cut scores have been translated to fit the state's four levels of proficiency. Used largely for Title I adequate yearly progress purposes, these cut scores at the aggregate school level are listed below.

	Dec. 1997	Jan. 1999	Dec. 2000
Advanced	65.00-99.99	65.00-99.99	65.00-99.99
Proficient	50.00-64.99	50.00-64.99	50.00-64.99
Partially Proficient	40.00-49.00	30.00-49.00	30.00-49.99
Novice	0-39.99	0-29.99	0-29.99

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, dropout rates or other measures?*

This issue applies only to adequate yearly progress within Title I. However, given that the vast majority of schools in North Dakota are Title I schools, these targets apply to nearly all schools.

- *Target level* The state has the goal of raising the composite score to 50.00 (proficient) for each school, but not within any particular time frame.
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required* North Dakota officials would like to see a 2.0 increase in the composite CTBS score.

In addition, as part of the North Dakota Education Improvement Process, districts identify their own target areas (goals).

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

Within the use of the CTBS test, the performance calculations are based on the most recent annual composite scores.

With regard to state assessments, performance standards have been established based on state assessment protocols. These protocols demand clear alignment of content standards to high level expectations. These performance standards in English language arts and math have been validated through the state assessment development process.

North Dakota does not yet report on achievement levels – just overall scores – so a final unit of analysis has not been identified.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

All students and schools are included in performance calculations, except the scores of tests that were taken in a non-standardized way.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

North Dakota intends to continue an alignment of its state content standards, its challenging performance standards and its Standards-based assessments. Moreover, it is expected that local districts will report on student performance levels in the future.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Based on Title I adequate yearly progress, less than 10% of schools are failing to meet acceptable levels on performance targets (only 20 in Program Improvement).

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports:*

Student progress is reported through several forums: 1) The annual CTBS test results are reported at the student level. 2) Within the state math and ELA standards-based assessments, students receive reports of their progress in terms of benchmarks. 3) Title I students receive detailed reports on their progress based entirely on local assessments.

- *School reports:*

School data is reported through several forums: 1) the state orders nine reports for each school on the Test of Cognitive Skills and the CTBS5 with detailed information that should help teachers and administrators better understand their students skills in specific areas and develop strategies to address these. 2) Given that most districts in ND have only one school at each level, district reports (available on the state education website) are essentially school reports; these include a range of indicators. 3) Title I produces a report on adequate yearly progress status for each school.

- *District reports*

The following district report card information is available on the state education website, most indicators are compared to the state:

- ✓ District Fast Facts: Grades served, number of schools, enrollment by grade level, FTE staff
- ✓ District Environment: Enrollment totals and by special education, nonpublic, home based, race/ethnicity, free/reduced meals; transportation.
- ✓ District Resources: Revenue, mill levy, instructional costs, transportation costs, student/classroom teacher ratio, student/counselor ratio, student/computer ratio, average salaries for teachers and administrators, staff experience, staff with master's degree or higher.
- ✓ District Programs: Student contact days, professional development days, graduation requirements/credits, total courses offered (9-12), courses provided via electronic media, courses provided via correspondence, advanced math/science by gender, accreditation/quality indicators (education improvement plan, curriculum plan, professional development plan, student evaluation plan, library services plan, pupil personnel plan), post-secondary enrollment options, gifted and talented services, alternative high school program, safe/drug free schools program, kindergarten 90 days or more.
- ✓ District Performance: CTBS scores for grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 in reading, language, math, and composite at district and state levels; ACT results; average daily attendance; graduation rate; number of high school graduates attending four year college, two year college, vocational school, workforce, military/other.

✓ Supplemental District Information: List of schools, grades served, curricular areas, accreditation status.

- *State reports* North Dakota has a range of state assessment data, including NAEP results, aggregate CTBS results, and aggregate English language arts and math results from the Standards-based assessments. In general, this sort of data is designed for legislators, policy makers and those who request such information from the Department of Education. The state also produces a Title I report.
- *Title I reports* North Dakota Title I produces several reports, as described above.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

Overall student performance and district performance are identified through the district report card on the state website. There are no state guidelines or rules for dissemination of performance data.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)? Check on the following categories required by federal regulation:*

- *Gender*
- *Race*
- *LEP status*
- *Migrant Status*
- *SWD*
- *SES*

CTBS data and English language arts and math Standards-based assessments are disaggregated by all categories, some of which is available on the state education website. In addition, enrollment statistics are disaggregated by SES and Race, while enrollment in advanced math courses is disaggregated by gender.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

The state has trend data for the CTBS, NAEP, English language arts and math Standards-based assessments. The data is available, but is it not routinely reported to the public.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

Local school districts must account for all students enrolled in their school district at the time of the statewide assessment administration. This is accomplished by reporting all enrolled students in one of the following categories:

- 1) Participating in the assessment under standard conditions
- 2) Participating in the assessment with accommodations
- 3) Participating in an alternate assessment
- 4) Not participating in assessment due to one of the following reasons: prolonged illness, extended absences from school, physician recommendation, parent request, or a security or penological interest. The reason for nonparticipation must be documented.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction will report annually the number and percentage of students with disabilities participating in assessment programs. The state will also report on the performance level attained by students with disabilities as required by the IDEA 1997. The results of student performance will provide standards-referenced information.

6. What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?

Schools should use student profile data as part of the North Dakota Education Improvement Process.

7. Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?

It is anticipated within the next generation of state accreditation that student performance be used as a basis for all school improvement efforts. It is further expected that local districts would routinely report student performance levels to their constituencies.

8. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.

The primary issues raised in the area of performance standards and reporting involves professional development among teachers and school administrators. Generally, North Dakota schools have not shared a common understanding related to curriculum standards, nor have schools shared a common understanding of expected student performance levels. It is anticipated that professional development related to content and performance standards will be the primary agenda of districts for a number of years to come.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.

The current accountability system is based on an accreditation/improvement process known as the North Dakota Education Improvement Process. It is anticipated by the school year 2002-2003 North Dakota will implement a new generation of accreditation rules. Schools and districts are also required to adhere to accountability measures of federal law.

2. What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?

Probe on:

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

Organize the response into the following subsections:

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

No student accountability policies are currently in place.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The North Dakota Education Improvement Process is based upon eight process standards that were developed in 1994. The process consists of a three to five year sequence of activities directed toward improvement of student learning. Schools may use the process to fulfill the education evaluation/improvement requirements for both North Dakota and North Central Association accreditation.

The eight phases include the following:

- Phase I: Making the Decision and Commitment
- Phase II: Getting Started
- Phase III: Developing the Student Profile
- Phase IV: Developing the Mission Statement, Identifying Target Areas, and Developing Target Area Goals
- Phase V: Assessing Student Performance and Establishing Expectations
- Phase VI: Developing the Education Improvement Plan
- Phase VII: Implementing the Education Improvement Plan and Documenting Student Success
- Phase VIII: Continuing the Process

During these phases, the following activities will have occurred and should have become part of the school's portfolio

- An external review of the target areas and target area goals by the visitation chairperson
- An external review of the target areas and target area goals by three members of the State Committee
- An external team visit following the development of the education improvement plan
- A second external team visit for the purpose of documenting student success.

State statutes that address the accreditation of schools are as follows:

NDCC 15-21-04.1 – Authorization, Grades 1-12

The superintendent of public instruction shall have the authority to adopt standards for the accreditation of the public and private schools of the state. Any public or private school which complies with such standards shall be deemed an accredited school.

NDCC 15-40.1-06 – Penalties, High Schools, Not Accredited

A high school that is not accredited on or before July 1, 1991, is not entitled to the amounts resulting from applying the weighting factor as provided by the foundation aid payment formula. A high school that remains not accredited for the second year will have an additional \$200 per student deducted from the amount per student received for the previous year. An additional \$200 deduction per student per year will continue for each additional year the school remains not accredited.

NDCC 15-40.1-08 – Penalty, Elementary Schools, Not Accredited

An elementary school that is not accredited on or after July 1, 1992 will have the elementary foundation aid reduced by \$200 per student each year that the school is not accredited.

NDCC 15-21.04.5 – Waiver of Conditions for Accreditation and Approval

The superintendent of public instruction may waive any conditions for the accreditation and approval imposed by statute for a reasonable length of time, provided the waiver encourages innovation or permits experimentation and provided the plans and purposes document the potential for an improved program.

However, it should be noted that the state does not rely heavily on rewards or sanctions as a part of their accreditation/ accountability system, rather, their focus is on building capacity.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Districts are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of all federal guidelines related to education programs.

3. What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

There are no state-identified targets at the moment. As part of the improvement process, schools are to identify self-imposed target areas (academic subjects) and goals. In the next generation of accreditation it is expected that continuous improvement standards will be adhered to by both districts and schools.

4. Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded?

All students should be included in the calculation of progress.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The systems are different: the accreditation/improvement system focuses on local target areas (goals) whereas the Title I system of accountability focuses on a state-determined definition of adequate yearly progress.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

At the moment, as part of the Education Improvement Process, schools are required to:

- Establish baseline data regarding current levels of student performance in each target area
- Disaggregate and analyze data
- Determine levels of performance expected of students
- Determine the discrepancies between the actual and expected student performance.

It is anticipated within the next generation of accreditation that schools and districts will need to account for overall student performance at an aggregated and disaggregated level. All such information will be used to advance their district or school's overall education implementation plan.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

All non-public schools may voluntarily participate in the accreditation system.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

It is anticipated that within the next generation of accreditation districts and schools seeking accreditation will need to meet five core educational standards:

- 1) Instructional standards, including content standards, performance standards, and assessment plans.
- 2) Personnel standards, including licensure of staff and professional development plan.
- 3) Facilities and environment standards, including library services, counseling services, food services, plant renovation, safety and health regulations.
- 4) Finance standards including audit requirements and integrated finance plans.
- 5) Continuous improvement standards, including integrated monitoring self-study analysis, and overall reporting.

Districts and schools will be expected to develop and implement an integrated strategic plan called the Education Implementation Plan. All facets of education will be monitored through peer review and proficiency of performance scores.

The state hopes to have a new accountability/accreditation system in place for the 2002-2003 school year. In the following months, state officials will initiate regional forums on this issue, but at the moment, detailed information is not available.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

A significant amount of training for school districts and teachers is required to allow the state to meet the high standards. The focus is on building capacity at the local level and refocusing the system on achievement for all students.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

In North Dakota, 98-99% of all districts contain a Title I school, and most districts are single-school districts. Hence, there is very little need for a separate definition of low-performing non-Title I schools and Title I schools. For details on identifying and assisting low performing schools, please refer to the subsequent section on Title I.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

Please refer to the section on Title I.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Please refer to the section on Title I.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*
- *Other – Explain*

Please refer to the section on Title I.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

There is no separate system of assistance for non-Title I schools.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

Please refer to the section on Title I.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Please refer to the section on Title I.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Any changes are in the context of Title I, please see below.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

The only measures used in determining adequate yearly progress in North Dakota are the aggregated school results from the CTBS assessment. The target that has been established by North Dakota officials is a 2.0 point improvement in a school's composite score. Subgroup performance is not used to determine adequate yearly progress.

Local assessments may be used to fulfil the Title I requirement that the progress of all participating students be tracked using multiple assessments. These assessments, conducted at the local level may include a narrative progress report. A portfolio must be maintained on each Title I student documenting the progress of each child and showing the three assessments being used. The assessments must be given to each student at least twice a year, preferably more often. Different assessment tools can be used at each grade level. Title I teachers must provide parents of all Title I students with the child's individual student assessment results. Title I teachers are required to use the assessment measures in reading, and if serving students in math, three separate assessment measures. However, local assessments are *not* used in definitions of Title I adequate yearly progress.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

Schools should make the target gain of 2.0 points on the composite CTBS score in order to make adequate yearly progress. There is no separate definition for non-Title I schools. The definition is the same for targeted and schoolwide programs; there are no charter schools in North Dakota. The state does not identify non-public schools for program improvement or for distinction.

Given that 94% of North Dakota districts are single school districts, a district definition of adequate yearly progress is not particularly relevant. However, if 2/3 of schools in a district are not making adequate yearly progress, then the district is considered as not making adequate yearly progress.

This is a transitional definition: in the future the definition of adequate yearly progress will also take standards-based assessments into account.

3. What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?

Normed achievement test data is used to indicate if a school has achieved adequate yearly progress by comparing average test scores and determining whether the 2 point increase was attained. This determination is made by the state. However, schools must be given the opportunity to review this assessment data and provide substantive evidence if the school believes that such identification was in error. In such cases, the following criteria may be used to demonstrate adequate progress:

- 1) Locally-designed performance assessments
- 2) Locally-designed criterion-referenced tests using content assessment
- 3) Norm-referenced test at the local level.
- 4) State standards-based English language arts and math assessments

4. What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?

Schools must be identified for improvement if:

- a) The school has a mean composite score at the novice level for two consecutive years or
- b) The school has a mean composite score at the partially proficient level for two consecutive year and has failed to make a target gain of 2 points in the total battery score; or
- c) The school had a decline in the total battery score for the last reporting period.

Furthermore, if a school district has more than two-thirds of its schools identified for program improvement the State Title I office is required to identify the district for improvement. (Note, however, that most of the LEAs in North Dakota are single school districts.) If identified, the school district will be required to revise its original Title I plan, in consultation with schools,

parents, and educational experts. Such revision shall include determining why the Title I plan failed to bring about increased achievement. These schools must develop or revise a program improvement plan in ways that have the greatest likelihood of improving the performance/achievement of participating children.

After identifying a school for program improvement, the State shall provide the school with an opportunity to review the assessment data provided in the memorandum. If the school believes that such identification is in error, it may provide evidence to the State to support such belief.

Once identified, the school is required to:

- 1) Submit the improvement plan or revised plan to the State for approval.
- 2) Implement the improvement plan or revised plan during the first year immediately following such identification (the 2000-2001 year) and
- 3) Devote, over two consecutive years, an amount equivalent to at least 10 % of the Title I funds received during one fiscal year to support effective professional development activities.

If a school makes the 2 point gain in the CTBS composite score for two years, then they are no longer considered in Program Improvement.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning:* The state holds a planning workshop for schools that have been identified as in need of improvement, usually held in February. During this workshop officials review the process that identified these schools as in need of improvement, how to develop plans that will help improve scores, and types of assistance that is available.
- *Financial* State school improvement funds are used for program improvement schools.
- *Expert Assistance* yes

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams* yes
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

As required by Title I, a statewide school support system has been established. School support teams provide technical assistance to schools and districts in the areas of standards implementation, parent involvement, schoolwide planning and other activities as appropriate. Additional assistance is available from the Wisconsin technical assistance center.

North Dakota has identified distinguished educators, who may be teachers, administrators, retired educators, or university faculty members. In addition, schools that have attained advanced status for three consecutive years will be identified as distinguished schools. Such schools will be recognized for their expertise and serve as models under the statewide school support system.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

North Dakota intends to pursue the use of EdFlex following the approval of its content standards, performance standards, assessments, and long-term accountability measures by the U.S. Department of Education.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The system will be changed after state standards-based assessments are in place, but how it will change and when has not been determined.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

There is no system of adequate yearly progress for non-Title I schools

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The main issue identified by North Dakota officials was the lack of funds – they noted that many regulations are associated with the Title I program; some schools in North Dakota get as little as \$6,000 or \$7,000, but have to comply with many requirements.

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