

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

POLICY 601

SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION GOALS

POLICY MANAGEMENT

Adopted: 12/2010

Reviewed/Revised: 2/16*, 2/19, 2/22, 1/25*

Mandatory: Yes

Frequency: Every 3 years

Distribution: Not specified

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish broad curriculum parameters for the school that encompass the Minnesota Graduation Standards and federal law and are aligned with comprehensive achievement and civic readiness.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The policy of the school is to strive for the comprehensive achievement and civic readiness in which all learning in the school should be directed and for which all school learners should be held accountable.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Academic Standard” means a summary description of student learning in a required content area or elective content area.
- B. “Antiracist” means actively working to identify and eliminate racism in all forms in order to change policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions.
- C. “Benchmark” means specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band.
- D. “Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness” means striving to: meet school readiness goals; close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty; have all students attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school; have all students graduate from high school; and prepare students to be lifelong learners.
- E. "Culturally sustaining" means integrating content and practices that infuse the culture and language of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities who have been and continue to be harmed and erased through the education system.
- F. “Curriculum” means school adopted programs and written plans for providing

students learning experiences that lead to expected knowledge and skills.

- G. “Ethnic studies” as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.25, has the same meaning for purposes of this section. Ethnic studies curriculum may be integrated in existing curricular opportunities or provided through additional curricular offerings.
- H. “Experiential learning” means learning for students that include career exploration through a specific class or course or through work-based experiences such as job shadowing, mentoring, entrepreneurship, service learning, volunteering, internships, other cooperative work experience, youth apprenticeship, or employment.
- I. "Institutional racism" means structures, policies, and practices within and across institutions that produce outcomes that disadvantage those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- J. “Instruction” means methods of providing learning experiences that enable students to meet state and school academic standards and graduation requirements.
- K. “Performance measures” are measures to determine school progress in striving to achieve comprehensive achievement and civic readiness and must include at least the following:
 - 1. the size of the academic achievement gap and rigorous course taking, including college-level advanced placement, international baccalaureate, postsecondary enrollment options including concurrent enrollment, other rigorous courses of study or industry certification courses or programs and enrichment experiences by student subgroup;
 - 2. student performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments;
 - 3. high school graduation rates; and
 - 4. career and college readiness under Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1.

IV. LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

- A. The board of directors, at a public meeting, shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning that is aligned with striving for comprehensive achievement and civic readiness and includes the following:

1. clearly defined school goals and benchmarks for instruction and student achievement for all nine student categories identified under the federal law;
2. a process to assess and evaluate each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards, assess and identify students for participation in gifted and talented programs and accelerate their instruction, adopt procedures for early admission to kindergarten or first grade of gifted and talented learners which are sensitive to under-represented groups, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in pursuit of student and school success and curriculum affecting students' progress and growth toward career and college readiness and leading to the world's best workforce;
3. a system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of all instruction and curriculum, taking into account strategies and best practices, student outcomes, principal evaluations under Minn. Stat. § 123B.147, Subd. 3, students' access to effective teachers who are members of populations under-represented among the licensed teachers in the district or school and who reflect the diversity of enrolled students under Minn. Stat. § 120B.35, Subd. 3(b)(2), and teacher evaluations under Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 8, or 122A.41, Subd. 5;
4. strategies for improving instruction, curriculum, and student achievement including the English and, where practicable, the native language development and the academic achievement of English learners;
5. a process to examine the equitable distribution of teachers and strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers;
6. education effectiveness practices that
 - a. integrate high-quality instruction, technology, and curriculum that is rigorous, accurate, antiracist, and culturally sustaining;
 - b. ensure learning and work environments validate, affirm, embrace, and integrate cultural and community strengths for all students, families, and employees;
 - c. provide a collaborative professional culture that seeks to retain qualified, racially and ethnically diverse staff effective at working

with diverse students while developing and supporting teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness; and

7. an annual budget for continuing to implement the school plan; and
8. identifying a list of suggested and required materials, resources, sample curricula, and pedagogical skills for use in kindergarten through grade 12 that accurately reflect the diversity of the state of Minnesota.

B. The school's site goals shall include the following:

1. All students will be required to demonstrate essential skills to effectively participate in lifelong learning. These skills include:
 - a. reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing in the English language;
 - b. mathematical and scientific concepts;
 - c. locating, organizing, communicating, and evaluating information and developing methods of inquiry (i.e. problem solving);
 - d. creative and critical thinking, decision making, and study skills;
 - e. work readiness skills;
 - f. global and cultural understanding.
2. Each student will have the opportunity and will be expected to develop and apply essential knowledge that enables that student to:
 - a. live as a responsible, productive citizen and consumer within local, state, national, and global political, social, and economic systems;
 - b. bring many perspectives, including historical, to contemporary issues;
 - c. develop an appreciation and respect for democratic institutions;
 - d. communicate and relate effectively in languages and with other cultures other than the student's own;
 - e. practice stewardship of the land, natural resources, and

environment;

- f. use a variety of tools and technology to gather and use information, enhance learning, solve problems, and increase human productivity.
- 3. Students will have the opportunity to develop creativity and self-expression through one or more of the following: visual and verbal images, music, literature, world languages, movement, and the performing arts.
- 4. School practices and instruction will be directed toward developing within each student a positive self-image and a sense of personal responsibility for:
 - a. establishing and achieving personal and career goals;
 - b. adapting to change;
 - c. leading a healthy and fulfilling life, both physically and mentally;
 - d. living a life that will contribute to the well-being of society;
 - e. becoming a self-directed learner;
 - f. exercising ethical behavior.
- 5. Students will be given the opportunity to acquire human relations skills necessary to:
 - a. appreciate, understand, and accept human diversity and interdependence;
 - b. address human problems through team and individual effort;
 - c. resolve conflicts with and among others;
 - d. function constructively within a family unit;
 - e. promote a multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive society.

- C. The charter school is not required to include information regarding literacy in a plan or report required under this section, except with regard to the academic achievement of English learners.
- D. Every child is reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and multilingual learners and students receiving special education services are receiving support in achieving their individualized reading goals pursuant to Policy 621 (Literacy and the Read Act).
- E. The charter school is subject to and must comply with the Education for English Learners Act under Minnesota Statutes, sections 124D.58 to 124D.64 as though the charter school is a district.
- F. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, the charter school must adopt and review a language access plan under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.32 as though the charter school is a district.

[The 2024 Minnesota legislature amended Minnesota Statutes 124E.03, subdivision 9 to add Paragraph E. Paragraph D. precedes Paragraph E. in this statute. The language access plan is required starting in the 2025-26 school year. The board may choose to adopt Paragraph E. now or wait until 2025.]

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 120B.018 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 (Educational Expectations and Graduation Requirements for Minnesota Students)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process for Reviewing Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement Goals; Striving for Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.12 (Read Act Goal and Interventions)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1 (Statewide Testing and Reporting System)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.35, Subd. 3 (Student Academic Achievement and Growth)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 8 (Employment; Contracts; Termination)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.41, Subd. 5 (Teacher Tenure Act; Cities of the First Class; Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.147, Subd. 3 (Principals)
Minn. Stat. § 124E.03 (Applicable Law)
Minn. Stat. § 125A.56, Subd. 1 (Alternate Instruction Required before Assessment Referral)
20 U.S.C. § 5801, *et seq.* (National Education Goals)
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (Every Student Succeeds Act)

Cross References:

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 104 (Charter School Mission Statement)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 613 (Graduation Requirements)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 614 (Charter School Testing Plan and Procedure)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 615 (Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 616 (Charter School System Accountability)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 618 (Assessment of Student Achievement)