

# MINNESOTA QUALITY TEACHING COALITION

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs \*\*\* Minnesota Association of Charter Schools  
Minnesota On-line Learning Alliance \*\*\* Minnesota Rural Education Association

## Characteristics of Highly-Qualified Teachers in Innovative, Project-Based, Small High Schools\*

Because of the nature of the holistic, flexible, student-centered learning environments fostered by small schools, especially project-based schools, teachers who act as generalists in small learning communities need to demonstrate the following standards as outlined in the Standards for Effective Practice for Teachers (Minnesota Rules: 8710.2000) in addition to being licensed in a discipline:

- Design interdisciplinary learning experiences that allow students to integrate knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry across several subject areas.
- Collaborate with others professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students by connecting disciplinary knowledge to other subject areas and everyday life.
- Effectively utilize the local community as an extension of the classroom-learning environment by identifying and using community resources to foster student learning.
- Use multiple teaching and learning strategies to engage students in active learning opportunities that promote the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance capabilities and that help students assume responsibility for identifying and using learning resources.
- Know factors and situations that are likely to promote intrinsic motivation and help students become self-motivated in order to foster student lifelong growth and learning.
- Design and manage learning communities in which students assume responsibility for themselves and one another, participate in decision-making, work both collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities.
- Engage students in individual and group learning activities that help them develop the motivation to achieve, by relating activities to students' personal interests, allowing students to have choices in their learning, and leading students to ask questions and pursue problems that are meaningful to them and the learning.
- Know how to ask questions and stimulate discussion in different ways for particular purposes, including probing for learner understanding, helping students articulate their ideas and thinking processes, promoting productive risk-taking and problem-solving,

facilitating factual recall, encouraging convergent and divergent thinking, stimulating curiosity, and helping students to question.

- Use varied and appropriate formal and informal assessment techniques including observation, portfolios of student work, teacher-made tests, performance tasks, projects, student self-assessments, peer assessments, and standardized tests.
- Implement students' self-assessment activities to help them identify their own strengths and needs and to encourage them to set personal goals for learning.
- Demonstrate the ability to work with mixed-age/grade groupings and utilize the range of abilities and experiences in such a situation to instructional advantage.

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*\* Adapted from a paper by Ron Newell, Learning Program Director for EdVisions Schools (2003)*