

Background and Rationale: School or District Level Assessment & Evaluation

The commitment to performance assessment has not wavered since arts educators from across the state gathered to write the first set of K-12 arts standards. Those educators rejected a statewide paper and pencil test and requested time and money to implement a system of classroom-level performance assessment. To implement that system requires that all Minnesota arts educators: 1) understand the requirements of the standard benchmarks, 2) implement aligned, quality performance assessments, and 3) agree upon how the different levels of achievement in student learning look, sound and act.

One system that closely resembles what Minnesota arts educators had in mind is the Queensland, Australia model. It places emphasis on building the expertise of teachers to evaluate student learning. Teachers gather locally, regionally and statewide in a tiered system to agree on what standard benchmarks require, how to assess them in the classroom, what to gather and how to document examples of student learning, and finally how to judge the levels of quality demonstrated in the student work.

This is an on-going moderation or calibration process to create consistent and reliable evaluation of student learning against a standard benchmark. These aren't activities teachers do in their everyday work in classrooms, nor are they done with the work of every student in Queensland to whom a standard is awarded. That evaluation of every student's work is unnecessary as teachers become familiar with and agree upon what meets the standard benchmark requirements and what constitutes the different levels of quality. This is the expertise teachers take back and apply in their classrooms.

The Perpich Center has developed—with the help of arts educators from across the state in the Quality Teaching Networks, the arts area working groups and the district evaluation panels—the tools and processes to do this work and support district, regional and state level meetings to begin a statewide moderation and calibration process.