

## Evaluation Panel and Standards Audit Protocols: Why we do them and how

The evaluation team and standards audit protocols aren't activities we'll do in the course of work in our classrooms, nor will we do them for every student across the state to whom we award a standard. They are too time-consuming, and it will be unnecessary as teachers around the state become familiar with the concepts. This is a **moderation or calibration model** to create a consistent and reliable process for evaluating student work against the standard benchmarks. Teachers will take back to their classrooms what they learn about the requirements of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in the Arts and what the levels of quality in student achievement (the rubric or scoring criteria) mean and apply them to the work their students generate. This is an on-going professional development process for Minnesota arts educators.

When we consider and describe student learning in an evaluation team protocol or standard audit, we must work with the evidence of student achievement that is in front of us. We can't crawl inside students' heads and pretend or think we know what happened and make assumptions. We must be careful about over reading or under reading a collection of student work. We can decide that we don't have enough evidence to make a decision about whether the student work in front of us meets the requirements of the standard benchmark or whether there is or isn't enough evidence to make an evaluation about what level of achievement the student has reached. The more carefully we consider what is readable and not readable about learning and achievement in the collection of student work, the more clear we can become about what student work and accompanying documentation we need to bring when we get together with other teachers to do this process again.

When we as individual teachers offer our opinions about the student work in front of us, we must remember that is precisely what we are doing—offering our opinion. First, our opinions must be based on and anchored in the student work in front of us—**not** what we assume has happened based on our past teacher practice or experience with student learning. Second, we **offer** our opinion and describe what we saw in the student work that led us to arrive at that opinion. We don't try to persuade the group to adopt our opinion. This is a group process based on the expertise of everyone in the group. We must trust the group and the process (and invite everyone to engage in the conversation) to arrive at the most informed decision. This is something we are learning. This is practice to refine the tools we need to do the work and our expertise in doing it. We will not be perfect in our initial attempts.

The process is simple. The work is difficult. All the best rubrics and standards in the world don't **do the work** or make it easier. **The work is the discussion.** The negotiation of meaning includes what the standard benchmarks mean, what the rubrics mean, what the student work means. And that takes brain-numbing **concentration**, lots of **conversation** and **compromise** among people with expertise in the arts area to determine what they see, what it represents in terms of student learning and at what level of quality it is.