

Education Minnesota

North Star accountability system will drive school engagement

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ST. PAUL, Minn. Aug. 30, 2018 -- The Minnesota Department of Education released the first results from Minnesota's new school accountability system on Thursday and Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said she expected a feature of that system would drive an unprecedented increase in community engagement in public schools.

"Minnesota students, families and classroom educators have waited many years for a meaningful way to communicate the local challenges they see every day to the Legislature. The new North Star accountability system will give them that voice," Specht said. "The new comprehensive needs assessment process will give local communities a new way to organize for their schools and hold their local leaders accountable if they don't deliver."

Under the accountability system, schools designated for comprehensive or targeted support will convene members of the community to create "Comprehensive Needs Assessments," public reports of what the people who interact with the schools every day believe their schools need. Those reports and other data will be considered by new, broad-based "school improvement teams" to develop strategies for their local schools.

"It will soon be very easy to tell who the politicians listen to," Specht said. "Will it be local parents and educators who want smaller class sizes and more courses, or will it be corporate-backed lobbying groups that want more testing and smaller budgets? You can bet the hundreds of Minnesotans, in communities all over the state, who volunteered to write a plan for their local school will be watching very, very closely."

About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota's members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota's public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota's community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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