

QUALITY EDUCATION

DEFINITION

A quality education is the creation, in a student's development, of discerning and deliberative thinking skills, of a broad knowledge base, and of independent learning skills, to the level of one's ability. Its goal is to nurture democratic, productive, and responsible citizenry.

IMPLEMENTATION

Each school district jurisdiction shall maintain a permanent record of each student's learning profile and educational progress. This shall be based on accepted norms of individual student progress that meet the intent of the foregoing definition of a quality education. Student performance shall be measured by these individualized student guidelines. Students will be encouraged to perform to their level of ability via individualized learning models or combinations thereof.

1. Each student shall have a periodic learning profile and educational progress analysis to establish optimal guidelines for their continuing educational advancement.¹
2. The classroom environment will be expected to meet the needs of a practical number of categories of learning styles and the augmentation of thinking and independent learning skills.² (It may be necessary, where applicable, to provide individualized learning environments within the classroom setting.)
3. The State Board of Education, in coordination with school districts, shall create a uniform set of periodically updated guidelines for the assessment of individualized learning and performance category measurements.
4. The State Board of Education, in coordination with school districts, shall stay abreast of and dispense proven best practices related to instruction and curriculum toward developing thinking and independent learning skills. They shall further define a broad knowledge base.

The State of Montana shall fund the costs as determined by the legislature to implement and maintain this system of ensuring a quality education and shall receive a biennial report prior to each legislative session on the State of Education.³

¹ A high percentage of the provisions for implementation are already in place, including aptitude and achievement tests. Most effective teachers practice with learning profile concepts. This model is a simplified, cost effective version of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for Special Education. We would be simply codifying proven methods recognized in quality education.

² Local school administrators, on first reading, estimate that the requirements as specified would generate additional Pupil Instruction Related (PIR) days in the school year for teacher training and student evaluations, but that perhaps some training could be shifted to the Teacher Convention format.

³ This proposal maintains local control, contains costs, and places the legislature in its appropriate oversight role with funding tied to relevant educational standards.