

March 1, 2010

Dear Business and Community Leader:

Attached please find a copy of the Citizens League report, "*Minnesota Educators' and Students' Insights on Assessment and Accountability.*"

In 2009, after 57% of the state's 11th graders passed the GRAD test in mathematics, the Minnesota legislature passed and the governor signed a five-year reprieve that enables students to earn a high school diploma even if they fail. At the same time they created a task force charged with developing a recommendation for a new high school assessment and accountability system for Minnesota. This report was commissioned by the University of Minnesota, on behalf of the task force, to answer the question, "will the task force's ACCESS proposal improve student learning?"

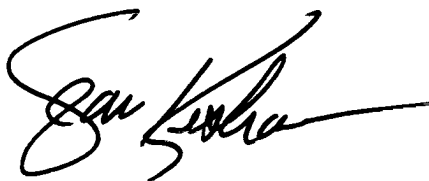
The Citizens League's researchers spoke with educators and students from six schools to gain their insights on this question. The educators and students, who represented a wide range of experiences and performance levels, offered nuanced and sophisticated perspectives, summarized in the attached report. Among these young Minnesotans, there was widespread agreement that ACCESS would improve student learning, despite concerns for students who struggle the most, and a strong sense that standardized testing offers an incomplete picture of students' knowledge and skills.

I believe you will find that this report offers an illuminating look into accountability and testing.

We have enjoyed the conversation that this project has started with you, and hope to continue it in the future.

Feel free to contact me at 651-293-0575, or skershaw@citizensleague.org, with any questions.

Sincerely,



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