

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs
Position Paper on Algebra II
Revised March 22, 2008

The Legislature recently made changes to high school graduation requirements including an “algebra II credit or its equivalent” scheduled to take effect for the 2014-2015 class. We oppose this requirement for **everyone** in order to graduate.

As we have studied this provision, difficulty arises over the definition of algebra I and II. Many adults have a memory of the traditional courses in algebra they took in school. However, modern conceptions of algebra appear to have changed from this traditional view but the picture is not clear. The Minnesota Department of Education in a handout refers to patterns, functions and graphing emphasizing practical application. Meanwhile, the newly revised state mathematics standards offer examples which appear to be much like traditional algebra II.

We support the expectation that all students increase and demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the areas of arithmetic, simple geometry, beginning algebra, probability, statistics, and applications of math to daily life. These areas of competence are important for adult functioning. Many students will go beyond this level because of aptitude or career aspirations that require a deeper knowledge of math.

We support that every school provide all levels of math including algebra II (and beyond) and we encourage all students to take as much math as possible. Our objection is the **requirement** of algebra II or its equivalent for graduation.

If the requirement continues, it is highly likely that there will be either increased dropouts among students who cannot or will not meet the algebra II requirement or its equivalent or a dumbing down of this important course.

Note: This draft is the outcome of comments and meetings over the past two years, the last being at the 2008 annual conference involving about fifteen educators. Wayne Jennings chaired this initiative. Further comments are welcome and can be addressed to wayne@institute4learning.org or to any MAAP board member.