

# Growing Leaders in Educational Innovation: Competency-Based Tools You Can Use



**Illinois**  
State Board of  
Education

## **Ten Ways Districts Can Create More Equitable Learning Opportunities for Students**

### **1) Self-assessment Tools**

Determine if your district is traditional, emerging, or competency-based. There are several self-assessment tools you may use. The Ohio self-assessment tool is available on the ISBE competency pilot webpage.

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CompetencyPilot.aspx>

### **2) Apply for School Waivers 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25g**

Don't let current rules prevent you from making learning more equitable. Eligible applicants may petition the State Board of Education for the waiver or modifications of mandates of the School Code may be requested when an eligible applicant demonstrates that it can address intent of the rule or mandate in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or when necessary to stimulate innovation or improve student performance. Each application must include a written request by the eligible applicant or Independent Authority and must demonstrate that the intent of the mandate can be addressed in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or be based upon a specific plan for improved student performance and school improvement.

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Waiver-Application.aspx>

### **3) Repeal of Section 18-8.05**

A school district needs to demonstrate that they have 176 student attendance days plus 4 days for institute and/or teacher conferences. With the repeal of 18-8.05, there is no definition of student attendance day in the school code. A school district needs to define student attendance day with their Board and their Collective Bargaining Unit, if applicable. There is no document for a school district to fill out to put a full day of school improvement on their calendar. The District is required to submit a calendar with the requisite number of student attendance days.

### **4) Remote Educational Programs 105 ILCS 5/10-29**

A student may participate in the program only after the school district, pursuant to adopted school board policy, and a person authorized to enroll the student under Section 10-20.12b of the School Code determine that a remote educational program will best serve the student's individual learning needs, the curriculum is aligned to State learning standards, the program is delivered by certified instructors, students participating in the program are enrolled in a school district and tested as part of all assessments administered by the school district, and the program may not extend for longer than 12 months unless the term is renewed by the school.

### **5) ISBE Secondary Course Catalog**

Experience courses provide students with work experience in a field related to their interests. Goals are typically set cooperatively by the student, teacher, and employer (although students are not necessarily paid). These courses may include classroom activities as well, involving further study of the field or discussion regarding experiences that students encounter in the workplace. It is up to the district to award credit for the internship through the course.

### **6) Professional Development**

Model best practices during meetings and trainings. Encourage innovation throughout the district. Consider creating professional learning communities to support the work.

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## **7) Community Involvement**

Find ways to get the students into the community and the community members into the school. Create partnerships and build capacity to ensure equitable learning experiences for all students.

## **8) Increase Graduation Rates**

Allow students to meet graduation requirements through a flexible structure. Find ways to include work, volunteer, and extra-curricular activities into courses. There is no limit to learning. Incorporate life experiences into individualized learning plans for each student.

## **9) Recognize the Importance of Student Voices**

Allow student voices to help facilitate innovative approaches in your district. Encourage students to share their voices statewide on the student voices webpage.

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Student-Voices.aspx>

## **10) Become a Competency Pilot District**

Explore the opportunity to apply to become a competency pilot by visiting the “Request for Applications” and learn more about competency-based education on the ISBE Competency Pilot webpage at

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CompetencyPilot.aspx>.