Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirements Pilot Project

Illinois State Board of Education
November 30, 2016
Webinar Agenda

• Welcome
  – Jason Helfer, ISBE

• Competency-Based Education: Understanding the Why, What, Where and How
  – Wendy Surr, Midwest Comprehensive Center
  – Janet Twyman, Center on Innovations in Learning

• Overview of Illinois Pilot Project Request for Application
  – Mary Reynolds, ISBE

• Questions & Answers
Additional Information

- Webinar is recorded and will be kept on Pilot Project website
- All questions from today's webinar will be added to a Frequently Asked Questions section on the ISBE Pilot Project website:
  
## Competency-Based Education

1. **Why embrace competency-based education?**

2. **What is competency-based education?**

3. **What is the prevalence of competency-based education?**

4. **How are states and districts implementing competency-based education?**
Why embrace competency-based education?
One size does not fit all.

Source: Bailey, Schneider, Sturgis, and Vander Ark, 2013
States Are Moving Away From Time-Based Systems for Teaching and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Students Learn and Teachers Teach</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Competency-Based Education Model</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students earn credit and advance based on:</td>
<td>course completion seat time</td>
<td>demonstrated mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction is:</td>
<td>primarily whole class</td>
<td>personalized to the learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student work results in:</td>
<td>a letter grade</td>
<td>a new competency</td>
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<tr>
<td>The relationship between learning and time:</td>
<td>Time is held constant, while learning varies.</td>
<td>Learning is held constant, while time varies.</td>
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What is competency-based education?
Defining Competency-Based Education

Competencies are:
• Explicit, measurable, and transferable
• Emphasize application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions

Educators and schools ensure that:
• Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual needs
• Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience
• Students advance upon mastery

Adapted from Sturgis, Patrick, & Pittenger, 2011
What Is a Competency?

A competency is more than just academic knowledge and skill.

A competency:
• Includes nonacademic areas
• Requires integration
• Enables a student to apply and expand his or her learning over time
What is the prevalence of competency-based education?
A Snapshot of K-12 Competency Education State Policy Across the United States

**Advanced States**
Those states with comprehensive policy alignment and/or an active state role to build capacity in local school systems for competency education.

**Developing States**
Those states with open state policy flexibility for local school systems to transition to competency education.

**Emerging States**
Those states with limited flexibility in state policy—usually requiring authorization from the state—for local school systems to shift to competency education, for exploratory initiatives and task forces, and/or with minimal state activity to build local capacity.

**No Policies in Competency Education**
States with no state-level activity and enabling policies for competency education. Significant policy barriers may exist, such as inflexible seat-time restrictions.

**ILN States**
The Innovation Lab Network (ILN) is a group of states facilitated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) taking action to identify, test, and implement policies to support student-centered approaches to learning.
New Hampshire

- First state to implement college and career readiness competency standards
- Credit and graduation based on mastery
- In 2012, created the Performance Assessment Pilot (PACE); selected districts are able to develop performance-based assessments in combination with statewide assessments

Source: International Association for K–12 Online Learning, 2016; Frost, 2016; Sturgis, 2016a.
• 2009: Statewide credit flexibility plan
• 2014–15: Statewide competency-based education pilot program (with funding)
• 2015–16: Five sites selected for Competency-Based Education Pilot
• 2015–16: Creation of draft learner competencies

Sources: Ohio Department of Education, 2016; Surr and Rasmussen, 2015
How are districts and schools implementing competency-based education?
Sanborn High School, New Hampshire

- Small learning communities
- Courses organized by competencies
- No penalties for “late work”
- Students have option for re-takes and re-dos
- Parallel grading and transcripts

Source: Frost, 2016; Sturgis, 2014; Sturgis, 2016a.
Cumberland High School, Rhode Island

• Credit granted upon mastery of standards
• Students rated on their “learner qualities”
• Advisory period four days per week
• Flexible program of studies, opportunities to earn certificates
• Credit-bearing opportunities for applied projects, internships, and apprenticeships
• Advisory board of business and professional leaders
• Student empowerment strategies

Source: Sturgis, 2016b.
Think Big!

Start imagining what is possible in your district and schools...
References


Illinois Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirements Pilot Project Request for Applications
Illinois Eligibility Requirements

• Up to **12 public school districts serving grades 9-12** will be selected for the first cohort of the pilot program.

• Districts with a student population of fewer than 500,000 may participate in the pilot program for some or all of their schools serving grades 9-12. Districts with more than 500,000 students may select six schools to participate in the project.
Illinois Process

**Phase I**

Initial application due January 27, 2017 to ISBE

**Districts will…**

| Establish a standing Planning & Implementation Committee, including an equal number of administrators and teachers | Demonstrate that the proposal is a core strategy and that all students within the participating schools will have access to the pilot program | Develop plans for administrator & educator professional development, community engagement & communications, assigning course grades, collecting & assessing student progress, data collection & reporting, and engaging feeder elementary schools | Actively partner with a community college and a higher education institution other than a community college |

**Phase II**

Full development and implementation of a detailed plan (for districts selected for first cohort)
In Illinois’ competency-based learning system, students must…

- Demonstrate mastery of all required competencies to earn credit.
- Demonstrate mastery of adaptive competencies defined by the school district in addition to academic competencies.
- Advance once they have demonstrated mastery. Students shall receive more time and personalized instruction, if needed, to demonstrate mastery.
- Have the ability to attain advanced postsecondary education and career-related competencies beyond those needed for graduation.
- Be assessed using multiple measures to determine mastery, usually requiring application of knowledge.
- Be able to earn credit toward graduation requirements in ways other than traditional coursework, including learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting (such as Supervised Career Development Experiences).
Think Big - Explore Your Options!

**What’s Possible…**

**Awarding Credit for:**
- Demonstrated mastery of competencies in lieu of course attendance & participation (seat time)
- Online secondary & dual enrollment post-secondary courses
- Community service, internships & paid employment
- Independent study

**Student Attendance & Participation:**
- Alternative methods for counting course attendance & daily attendance
- Alternative school year/school day requirements

**What’s Not Possible…**

**Waivers or modifications to:**
- State assessments
- Accountability requirements
Think Big - Explore Your Options!

**What’s Possible…**

**Grading and Progression:**
- Proficiency-based grading in lieu of letter grades
- Grade and course progression upon demonstrated mastery rather than school schedule, quarters, semesters
- Competency status in lieu of school grade level designation

**Assessment:**
- Alternative assessment options for final course exams (e.g. presentations, portfolios, performance assessments)
- Exams administered at flexible time points
- Opportunities for re-assessment without penalty

**What’s Not Possible…**

**Waivers or modifications to:**
- Teacher tenure or seniority
- Teacher or principal evaluations
Think Big - Explore Your Options!

**What’s Possible…**

Graduation Requirements:
- Establishing additional requirements for earning a diploma (e.g. mastery of Adaptive Competencies, work-based experiences)
- Substituting specific course requirements and credit hours required for graduation with demonstrated mastery of competencies, or fulfillment of alternative options such as work-based learning experiences
- Enabling students to meet graduation requirements through multiple and flexible pathways & be recognized for additional credentials & badges earned

**What’s Not Possible…**

Waivers or modifications to:
- Learning standards
- Legal protections or supports intended for the protection of children or a particular category of students, such as students with disabilities or English Learners

Think Big - Explore Your Options!
References

• Application, attachment, Ohio’s Self-Assessment, research, and background can be found on ISBE’s website: http://www.isbe.net/ed-technology/html/competency-based-pilot.htm?col1=open#CollapsiblePanel1

• Frequently Asked Questions will be added to website and updated based on feedback.

• Illinois Law

• Email questions to competencypilot@isbe.net.
Applications due to ISBE Office by January 27, 2017.

Questions?