

As schools work to achieve more equitable outcomes for all students, the movement to adopt competency-based approaches to teaching, learning, and graduating has gained momentum as a lever for change. By focusing on competency-based practices, such as prioritizing the most essential knowledge and skills, providing rigorous and engaging learning experiences aligned to clear outcomes, and ensuring that all students have access and supports to reach the standards, schools graduate students better prepared for college, career, and civic life.

Beliefs are inextricable from practices, and both are essential for implementing effective and equitable competency-based systems. The practices identify core activities to support competency, but without these foundational beliefs, the practices alone will not necessarily create more equitable outcomes for all students.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Belief 1: All students can and will learn when they feel included, respected, and valued by their learning community.

- A. Students are known as individuals and learners, and they are supported in developing positive relationships with each other and with adults in the learning community.
- B. The curriculum, classrooms, and structures of the school recognize and honor student identities and interests.
- C. The district and school communities have systems and structures that engage and include all students, families, and the broader community in meaningful ways.
- D. The district and school actively work to uncover and eliminate systemic inequities based on demographic groups and identity traits.

OUTCOMES

Belief 2: All students must be challenged, believed in, and supported to reach common, high expectations.

- A. Learning outcomes are clearly articulated and consistently applied to all students, including those that are long-term (graduation competencies and performance indicators), short-term (learning targets), and habits of work.
- B. All students engage in complex thinking and the application of skills and knowledge throughout the learning process within and across content areas.
- C. Interventions, extensions of learning, and opportunities to revise and relearn are systemic and provided regularly so that all students achieve common outcomes.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Belief 3: Student learning is enhanced by clear cycles of practice, feedback, assessment, and reflection.

- A. All forms of assessment are aligned to a common set of standards.
- B. Habits of work are assessed and reported separately from academic knowledge and skills.
- C. The continual use of formative assessment provides opportunities for students to practice, self-assess, and give and receive feedback.
- D. Summative assessments, evaluated against common scoring criteria, are used to evaluate a student's level of achievement on competencies and performance indicators at a given point in time.
- E. All forms of feedback (including grades) are used to adjust instruction and learning, to inform academic interventions, and to identify extensions of learning.
- F. Students regularly reflect on their learning progress and are taught to evaluate and use feedback.

LEARNING PATHWAYS

Belief 4: Students are empowered and engaged by choice in their learning experiences.

- A. All learning pathways (courses, internships, extended learning opportunities, etc.) are aligned to a common set of standards.
- B. Learning in different ways and at varied paces is expected and planned for in all settings, requiring differentiation, student choice, and personalized learning options to meet common outcomes.
- C. Students make important decisions about their learning experiences and how they will demonstrate their knowledge and skills.