



Promising State Policies to Advance Personalized Learning

WRITTEN BY:

Susan Patrick, Maria Worthen, Dale Frost and Susan Gentz

iNACOL published the report *Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning* to highlight specific state examples of promising policies to support and scale personalized, competency-based learning to close equity and achievement gaps. This executive summary outlines the policies in that report.

What Is the Promise of Personalized Learning?

Personalized learning can:

- Dramatically increase equity in education;
- Facilitate data-rich, powerful learning environments to create the conditions in which teachers and schools have the flexibility and capability to optimize learning for each student;
- Support continuous improvement; and
- Ensure all students, especially those from traditionally underserved populations, receive the necessary interventions and supports—exactly when they need them.

Students will learn how to take control of their learning. Teachers will have high expectations for every student, know how they learn and adjust instruction to meet students' learning needs.

By meeting students where they are and using advanced technologies to personalize learning at scale, these innovative models enable students to achieve dramatically improved outcomes. The goal is equity as well as excellence as the system must change to meet the needs of all learners. The system must learn how to address the needs of people they have never successfully served as well as how to operate at the leading edge of pedagogical and organizational innovation.

According to a [2015 RAND study](#), students attending schools using groundbreaking personalized learning models “made gains in mathematics and reading over the past two years that were significantly greater than a comparison group made up of similar students.”

What Is Personalized Learning?

Personalized learning is tailoring learning for each student's strengths, needs and interests — including enabling student voice and choice in what, how, when and where they learn — to provide flexibility and supports to ensure mastery of the highest standards possible.

In contrast to one-size-fits-all traditional education models, personalized learning empowers and engages both teachers and students as they design learning goals and pathways for students to meet college- and career-ready standards. Personalized learning helps teachers and students build strong relationships and provides students with rigorous, customized options.

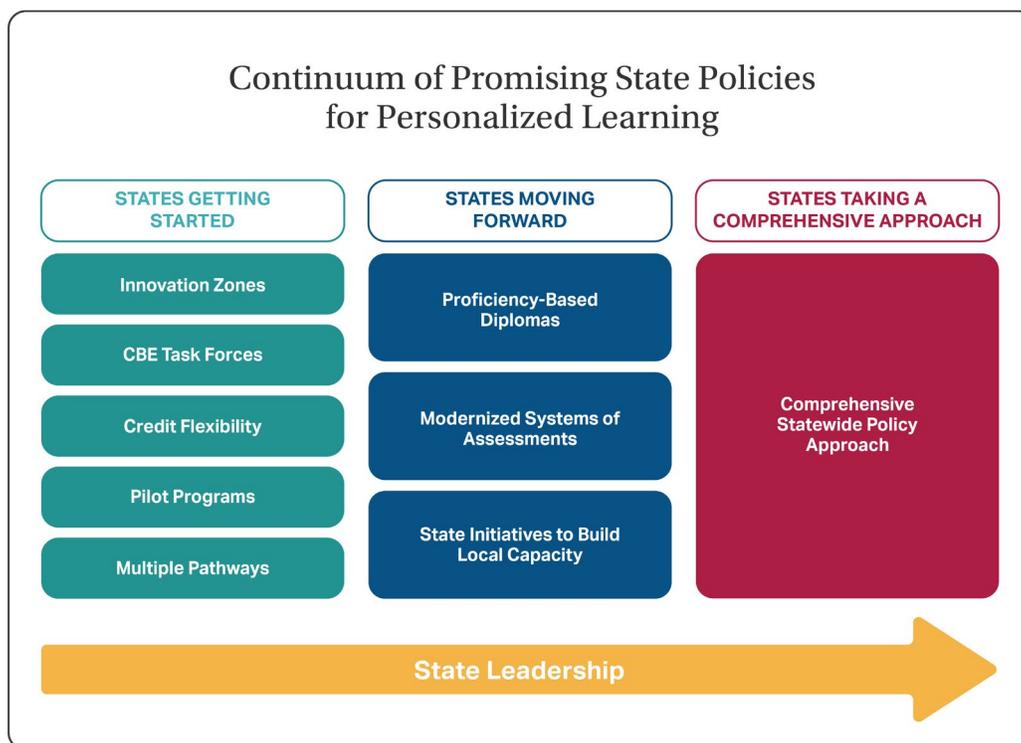
Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in December 2015, provides states with a historic opportunity to advance personalized, competency-based learning. With significant new flexibility to rethink accountability, redesign systems of assessments and modernize teacher preparation, states can now pursue a more comprehensive policy approach for student-centered learning.

No matter where they are on the continuum of policy leadership to support personalized learning, there are multiple policy entry points that states can take.

States that do not yet have any enabling policies can get started by studying policy barriers and creating room for local innovation, while states that have already made progress may want to consider more comprehensive steps towards transformation.

We encourage state policymakers to advance a set of the following promising policies in a way that fits within their state's unique policy landscape and education system.



Learn More

The iNACOL report *Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning* contains examples from 16 states of policies to enable and scale personalized learning. If you are a policymaker wishing to advance personalized learning in your state, contact the iNACOL Center for Policy Advocacy [here](#). Learn more at iNACOL.org and on the [iNACOL blog](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



The mission of the International Association for K–12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is to catalyze the transformation of K-12 education policy and practice to advance powerful, personalized, learner-centered experiences through competency-based, blended and online learning. iNACOL is a non-profit organization focusing on research, developing policy for student-centered education to ensure equity and access, developing quality standards for emerging learning models using competency-based, blended and online education, and supporting the ongoing professional development of school and district leaders for new learning models.