Reaching the Tipping Point

Insights on Advancing Competency Education in New England

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Speakers
Paul Leather, New Hampshire Department of Education
David Ruff, Great Schools Partnership
Chris Sturgis, CompetencyWorks
Our Speakers

David Ruff
Executive Director
Great Schools Partnership

Paul Leather
Deputy Commissioner of Education
New Hampshire Department of Education

Chris Sturgis
Co-Founder
CompetencyWorks
Overview

- How is our understanding of competency education deepening?

- How is CBE advancing in each of the states?

- What are the policy features that can explain the different levels of progress in the NE states?

- What are lessons learned about implementing a goal-oriented policy strategy?

- What is the future direction and challenges for competency education in New England?
HOW IS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF COMPETENCY EDUCATION DEEPENING?
Five Elements of Competency Education

1. STUDENTS ADVANCE UPON DEMONSTRATED MASTERY

2. STUDENTS RECEIVE TIMELY AND DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT

3. EXPLICIT AND TRANSPARENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
   - EMPOWER STUDENTS
   - IMPROVE INSTRUCTION

4. ALIGNED ASSESSMENTS ARE ROOTED IN THE CYCLE OF LEARNING

5. STUDENTS DEVELOP AND APPLY A BROAD SET OF SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS
Three Conditions for Competency Education

- NURTURE A GROWTH MINDSET AND SAFE, RESPECTFUL CULTURE OF LEARNING
- BUILD INTRINSIC MOTIVATION SO STUDENTS ALWAYS PUT THEIR BEST EFFORTS FORWARD
- EMBED ACCOUNTABILITY INTO SCHOOL AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS
How has your understanding of competency education deepened?

Discussion with Paul and David
HOW IS CBE ADVANCING IN EACH OF THE STATES?
New Hampshire

- **Schools and Districts**
  - 16 leading districts with 90% districts making transition.
  - More emphasis on CBE with growing understanding of personalized learning

- **State Policy**
  - Carnegie credit to competency-based credit & revised ed code
  - Theory of change is supports, incentives, and co-design
  - Extended learning opportunities
  - Virtual Learning Academy Charter School

- **Initiatives That Can Inform**
  - NG2: Personalized Inclusive Education Pathways
  - Work-study practices based on developmental framework for essential skills and dispositions
  - PACE
Maine

- **Schools and Districts**
  - Moderate understanding of personalized, CBE
  - 80-90% making transition
  - 26 schools in League of Innovative Schools

- **State Policy**
  - **Proficiency-based diploma** and standards-based system
  - Early investments in networks/training, self-assessments, Guiding Principles, SEA support
  - Limited state investments since then...

- **Initiatives That Can Inform**
  - **Maine Cohort for Customized Learning & collaboratives**
  - Research on implementation by ME Education Policy Research Institute
Vermont

- **Schools and Districts**
  - 50% of districts received training
  - 23 schools in League of Innovative Schools

- **State Policy**
  - **Personalization & Proficiency**
    - Personalized learning plans, flexible pathways, proficiency-based graduation
  - Comprehensive system of assessments
  - Qualitative reviews

- **Initiatives That Can Inform**
  - VT Transferrable Skills Assessment Supports
  - School Quality Review Process
Connecticut

- **Schools and Districts**
  - Two districts are moving system-wide
  - 32 secondary schools in LIS

- **State Policy**
  - Act for Unleashing Innovation
  - Change in credit attainment requirements
  - Mastery-based Guidelines for Implementation

- **Initiatives That Can Inform**
  - CAPSS: Role of school superintendents as leaders for change
Massachusetts

- **Schools and Districts**
  - Early innovators
    - Diploma Plus
    - Boston Day, Evening Academy
    - Francis Parker Charter Essential School
  - Melrose

- **State Policy**
  - To date inactive on competency-based education although credits are not time-based

- **Initiatives That Can Inform**
  - District-led MA Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment
  - MAPLE—Massachusetts Personalized Learning EdTech Consortium
Rhode Island

**Schools and Districts**
- Emphasis on high schools
- Grad requirements include PBA or exhibitions
- **Little or no district wide transitions to K12 system**
- Providence w/ Carnegie for 2 new schools
- 17 schools in League of Innovative Schools

**State Policy**
- **“Diploma System”** including individualized plans, multiple opportunities and measures to demonstrate learning, multiple pathways, supports and interventions.
- New strategic plan emphasizing personalized learning

**Initiatives That Can Inform**
- PASA extended learning using competencies
- Scaling Up Performance Based Graduation Network
- Performance Assessment for Learning Micro-Credential
How does this reflect your understanding of each of the states?

Questions from Participants & Discussion with Paul and David
POLICY FEATURES
Why move beyond policy permission?

Policies can help to:

• Clarify and focus on what matters most
• Increase broad-based support
• Ensure sustainability of meaningful work
• Make equity public
• Bring about change in schools and classrooms
What is a High Leverage Policy?

A high leverage policy:

- Increases academic aspirations, achievement and attainment for all students
- Promotes greater equity in learning, performance, or life outcomes for students
- Generates positive ripple effects throughout the educational system
The High Leverage Policy Framework

- LEVERAGE POINTS
- Success Factors
- Systems Change
- Positive Student Outcomes

Policy Theory of Action
Leverage Points

The intended objectives of an educational policy or the entry points within the educational system that policy makers desire to influence.
The intentional, predetermined features of a policy—both written and unwritten—as it was initially crafted.
Policy Features determine:

• The mixture between pressure (usually outlined in accountability expectations) and support (usually provided through appropriate educator development and/or financial incentives)

• The breadth and/or specificity of the leverage point

• Coherence with existing policies (or it identifies required policy changes)

• Where best to locate the policy on a “goal-strategy” continuum
Policy Features: Capacity Needs

- Monitoring Requirements
- Current School + District Capacity
- Educator Ownership + Local Control

HIGH

LOW

PRESCRIPTIVE STRATEGY

GOAL-ORIENTED STRATEGY
Policy Features: Capacity Needs

- Knowledge and skill gap requires professional development

- Monitoring Requirements

- Current School + District Capacity

- Educator Ownership + Local Control

- High

- Low

- Prescriptive Strategy

- Goal-Oriented Strategy
Policy Features: Capacity Needs

- Monitoring Requirements
- Current School + District Capacity
- Educator Ownership + Local Control

- High: anger and aggravation creates poor implementation
- Low: Prescriptive Strategy
- Goal-Oriented Strategy
Implementation Contingencies

The contextual factors and foreseeable contingencies that may arise during the implementation of a policy and that may influence how it is interpreted and enacted.
How the Framework Operates

Example: Graduation Requirements

LEVERAGE POINT
- graduation requirements; senior exit exhibitions

Success Factors

POLICY FEATURES
- state mandates; capacity-building

IMPLEMENTATION CONTINGENCIES
- engagement of district/school leadership in the creation of exhibition model

REDESIGNED CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY; ALIGNED PD; REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES; ETC.

MASTERY OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS; INCREASED COLLEGE READINESS; INCREASED COLLEGE-GOING AND PERSISTENCE
Personalized Learning

District and School Policy Checklist

✓ Graduation Requirements *(Policy File IKF)*
✓ Multiple Pathways *(Policy File IKFF)*
✓ Academic Recognition: Latin Honors and Grade Point Averages *(Policy File IKD)*
✓ Transcripts *(Policy File IKC)*
✓ Grading and Reporting System *(Policy File IKA)*
✓ Dual Enrollment and Early College *(Policy File IHCD)*
✓ Assessment of Student Learning *(Policy File ILA)*
Personalized Learning
District and School Policy Checklist

- Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration (Policy File IKE)
- Demonstrations of Learning, Exhibitions, and Capstone Projects (Policy File ILA)
- Academic Interventions (Policy File JCDL)
- Personal Learning Plans (Policy File ILAPL)
- Portfolios (Policy Files ILA and ILAPL)
- Attendance (Policy File JEA)
- Academic Eligibility: Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities (Policy File JJIC)
Implications of policy features

Questions and Comments
MANAGING POLICY AND PRACTICE
THROUGH RECIPROCAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

Learning from the New Hampshire Experience
Richard Elmore’s concept of “reciprocal accountability” is at the core of New Hampshire’s model

“For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation. Likewise, for every investment you make in my skill and knowledge, I have a reciprocal responsibility to demonstrate some new increment in performance.”

~ Elmore, 2002, p.5
Aligned With the State’s Vision—Core Values and the Instructional Core

Includes a pre-K-20 vision

New Hampshire: Our Story of Transformation, 2014
### Who is PACE -- Which Districts/Schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 -- Year 1 (2014-15)</th>
<th>Additional Tier 1 -- Year 2 (2015-16)</th>
<th>Additional Tier 1 -- Year 3 (2016-17)</th>
<th>Tiers 2 and 3 – Year 3 (2016-17)</th>
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<td>SAU 35 White Mountains</td>
<td>Allenstown</td>
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<td>SAU 39 Amherst and Mont Vernon</td>
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Organization to PACE Scaling

- DoE/NH Learning Initiative PACE Management Team
- Tier I Implementing Districts
- Tier 2 Preparing Districts
- Tier 3 Planning Districts
Innovative Student Learning NG2
No Grades, No Grades

ELOs Extended Learning Opportunities

Innovative Student Learning

Work Study Practices ESD/MyWays

PACE Performance Assessment of CBE

NHLI

Jonathan Vander Els
NG²: Personalized Inclusive Education Pathways

Deeper Learning
Real Solutions to Real Issues and Challenges

Student & Educator Agency

Whole – Child/Youth Development

Performance Assessments

Learning Progressions

Blended Learning
Flexible Time, Space & Role

CBE (No Grades: NG) + Multiage Learning (No Grades: NG) = NG²

Mary & Doug Earick
Jonathan Vander Els
Implications for states in managing a goal-oriented strategy

Questions and Comments
WHAT IS THE FUTURE DIRECTION AND CHALLENGES FOR COMPETENCY EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND?
Future Direction for New England?

1. ESSA? Department of Education and the Trump Administration?

2. Will leading states be able to sustain momentum? Has there been enough community engagement? Is there enough belief that this is the right direction that parents, community members and educators advocate for CBE?

3. Will additional states lift off?

4. Are we really meeting the needs of students with gaps and those that are already beyond grade level?

5. Will we see development of more robust models drawing on personalized learning, inquiry or project-based, and blended learning?

6. What research, metrics, and information management systems do we need and how can we put them into place so that we can determine if we are getting results?
NATIONAL SUMMIT ON K-12 COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

If you have one year of experience in CBE, please consider joining a Technical Advisory Group.