

CompetencyWorks

Competency Education: A Reflection on the Field and Future Directions

Susan Patrick & Chris Sturgis, CompetencyWorks

Tuesday, August 22, 2017

2:00-3:00 p.m. ET



Overview of Learning Goals

- I. What is competency education and how does it differ from traditional system?
- II. Where did we start and where are we now?
- III. How is policy advancing?
- IV. How is our understanding of competency education deepening?
- V. What are future directions for K-12 competency education?

I. WHAT IS COMPETENCY EDUCATION?

What Are the Five Elements of the Competency Education Definition?



Students advance upon demonstrated mastery.



Competencies include explicit measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.



Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience.



Students receive timely and differentiated support.

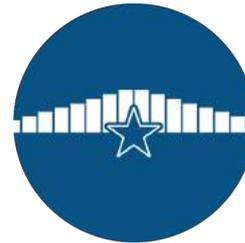


Students develop and apply a broad set of skills and dispositions.

The Traditional System...



Is built upon an institutional fixed mindset



Has high variability in how teachers determine proficiency



Is time-based



Is organized to efficiently deliver curriculum



Depends on extrinsic motivation

A Competency-Based Education System...



Is built upon a growth mindset: All children can learn.



Builds educator capacity: Calibration organized for proficiency.



Is mastery learning-based (with time-bound targets).



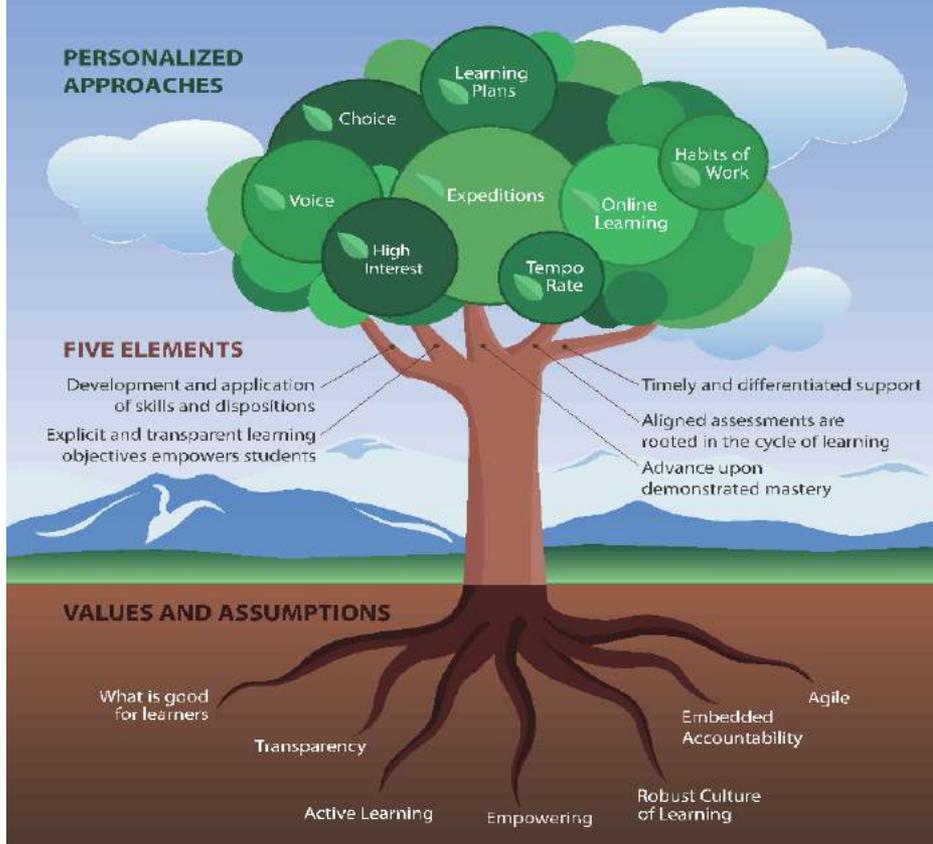
Organized to personalize learning.



Fosters intrinsic motivation.

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION?

Designing For Success. Not Ranking & Sorting.



Personalization and competency education go hand-in-hand.

Without competency education, personalization may result in variable achievement.

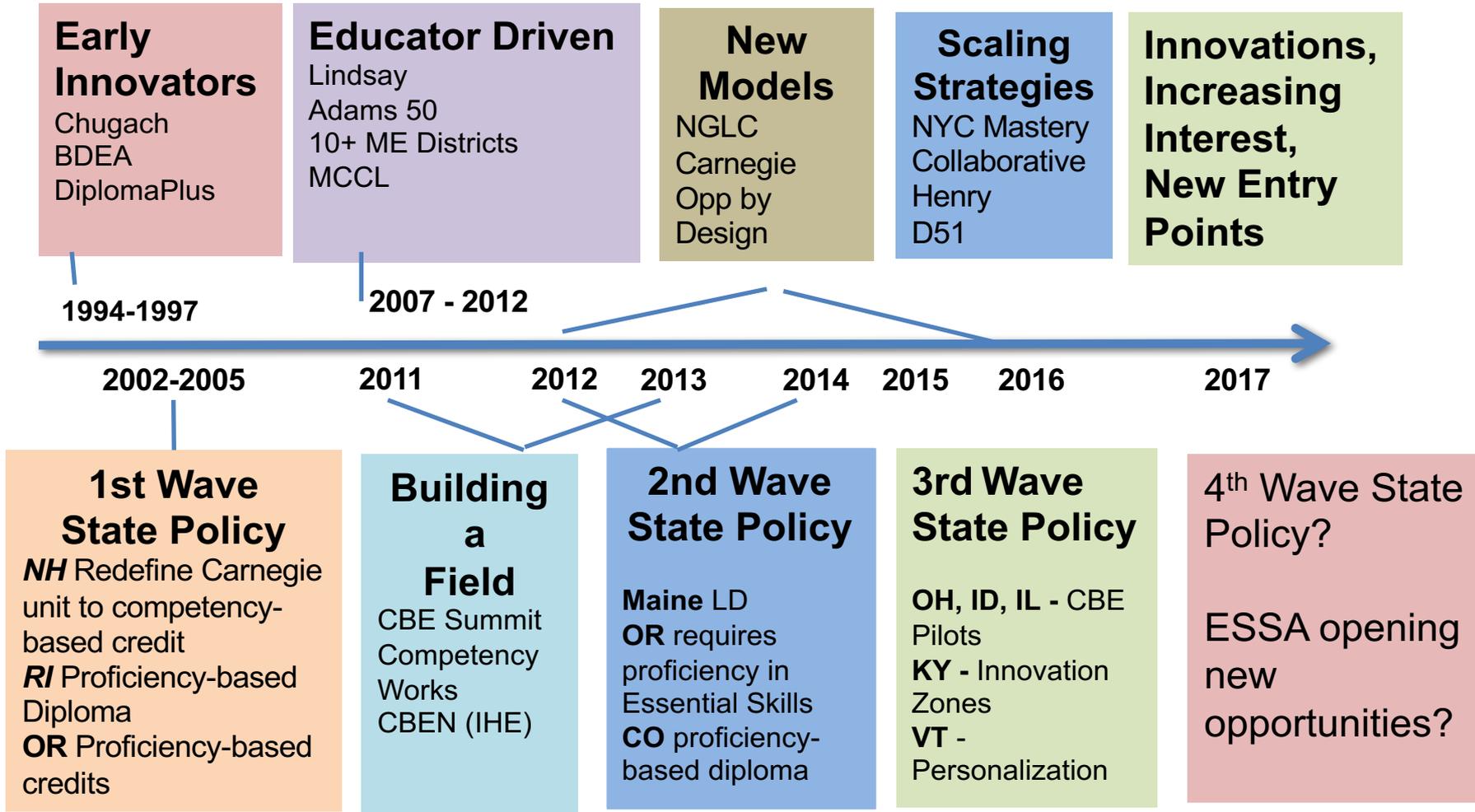
Without personalization, it's unlikely all students will reach outcomes.

*II. COMPETENCY EDUCATION:
REFLECTION ON WHERE WE
STARTED & WHERE WE ARE NOW*

Where We Started

- **School Innovators:** Mastery-based teaching practices (1980' s); Chugach (1994); BDAE (1995); Diploma Plus (1996).
- **State Policy Innovators:** OR allows for proficiency-based credits (2002) RI proficiency-based diploma (2003);NH CBE policy (2005).
- **State of the Field 2010:** Pockets of innovation; isolated efforts, isolated leaders; several terms, no agreed upon definition; only a handful of TA providers and no national advocacy organizations; no web-based resources; not on the national education agenda although a few staff in US DOE are interested.
- **INACOL/MetisNet/NMEF Partnership:** Scan of the field (2010); Summit with 100 innovators and leaders develops definition, identifies major issues, and forms network (2011).
- **CompetencyWorks:** Launched May 2012.
- **Proficiency-based Diplomas:** Maine (2012); OR requires proficiency in Essential Skills (2012); CO proficiency-based diploma (2013).

How Did We Get Here? Stages of Development



Innovative New Models are Developing



Common Design Principles with Variations

Skills and How They Relate

- Emphasis on habits of work and learning, social & emotional learning, academics and higher order skills

Organizing Around Age and Skills

- Design around age-based cohorts & performance levels

Applied Learning

- Creating opportunities for applying knowledge

Meeting Students Where They Are

- Developmentally building foundational skills, scaffolding for skills, advancing beyond grade level

Communicating Progress

- New metrics for growth and improved grading practices

Reciprocal Accountability

- Ensuring transparency, consistency, commitment to success

Where We Are Now: Districts

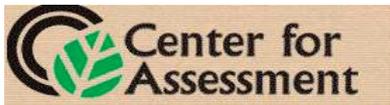
Going in Right Direction

- Our best guess is that **6-10% of districts** in U.S. are converting to CBE. **It is likely more are moving towards CBE than we know with new entry points.**
- Districts with 3-5 years implementation enter new **waves of improvement.**
- **Moving towards scale** in NH-ME-VT with most districts converting or planning.
- **Better understanding** of how personalized and CBE fit together.

Concerns

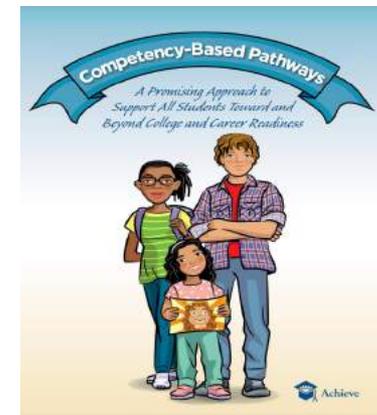
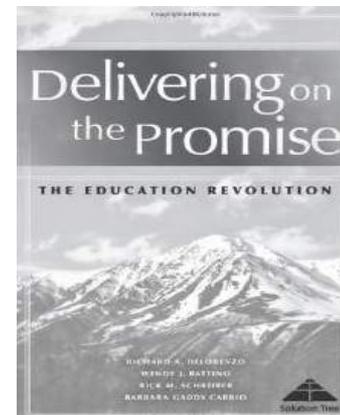
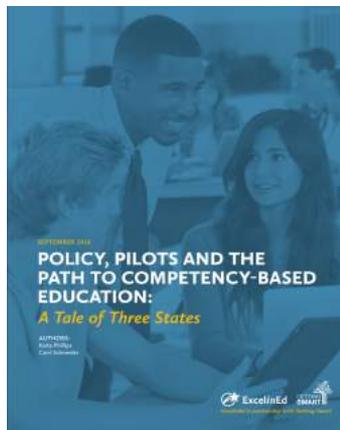
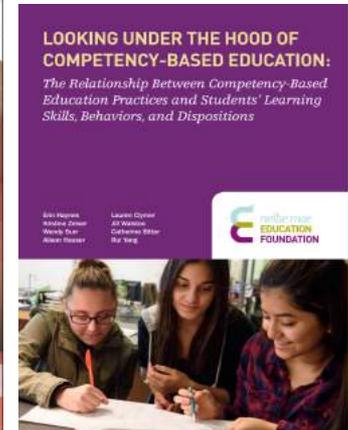
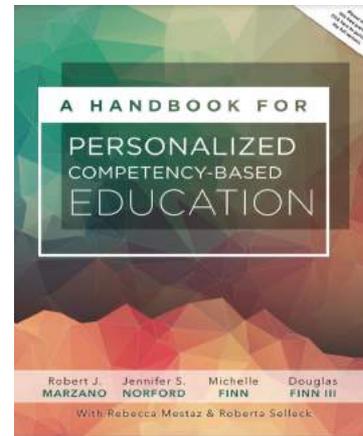
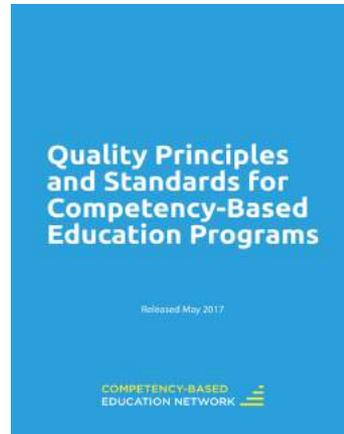
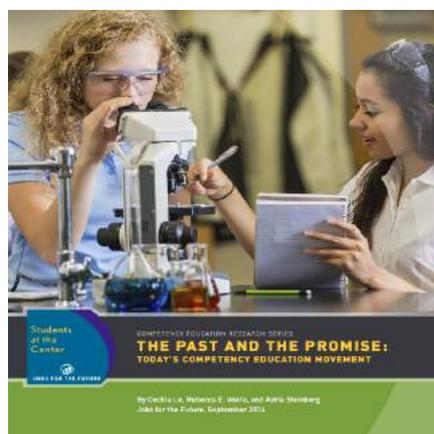
- There are still **limited number of exemplars** in which high quality models can describe improvements for students and other stakeholders.
- Top-down dynamics and multiple entry points may be leading to **shallow design and piecemeal implementation.** See AIR Research.
- Increasing attention about **special populations and students with gaps.**
- **Traditional patterns continue.** Most school still delivering grade level curriculum. Little advancement beyond grade level.

Building the Field



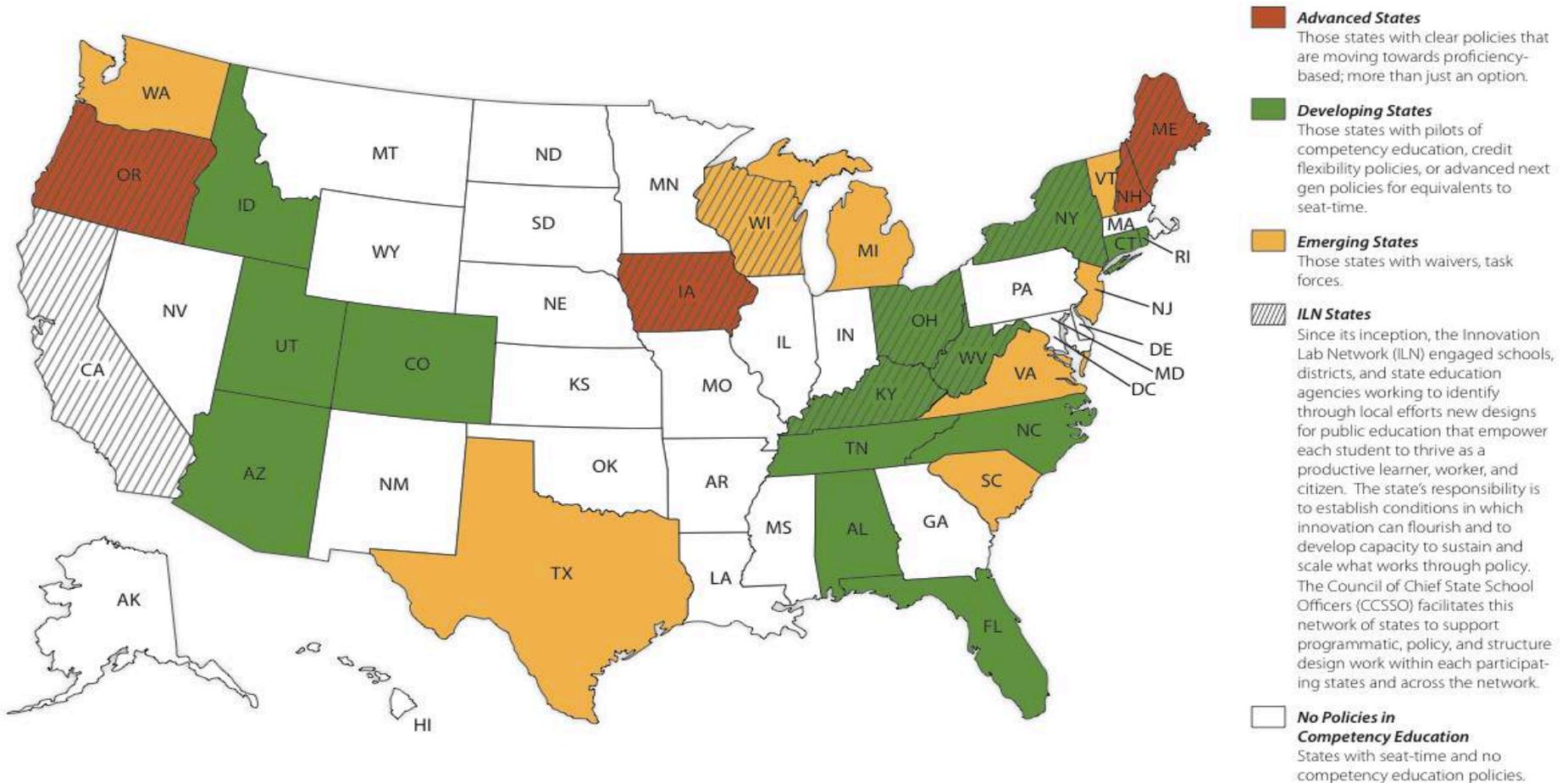
The Literature on CBE Has Grown

111 reports and books on competency education



III. HOW IS POLICY ADVANCING?

A Snapshot of K-12 Competency Education State Policy - 2012



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

December 10, 2015





Meeting ESSA's Promise: State Policy to Support Personalized Learning

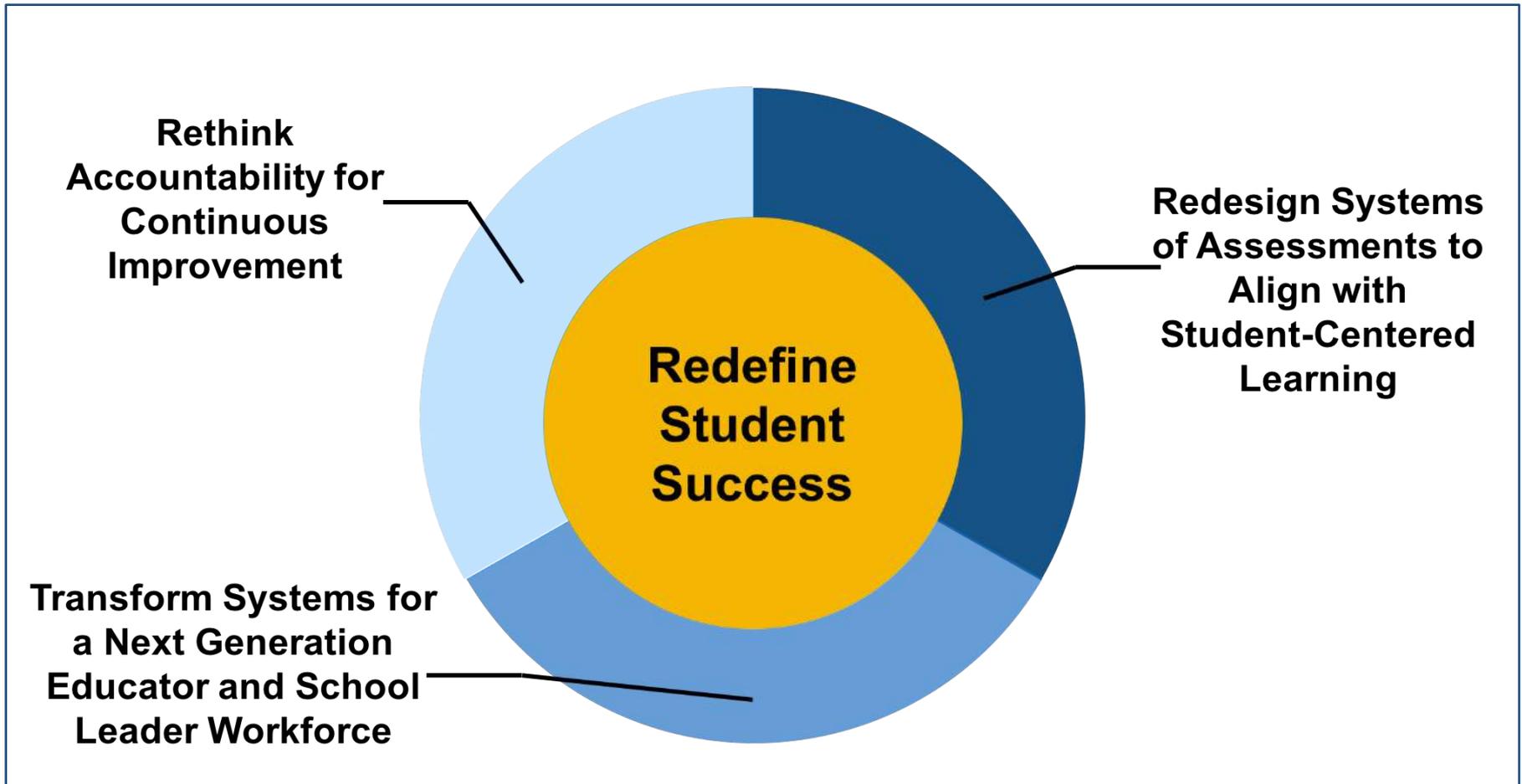
New Policy Opportunities Under ESSA

- Rethink accountability for continuous improvement.
- Redesign systems of assessments to align with student-centered learning.
- Transform systems to build capacity for a next generation educator and leader workforce.

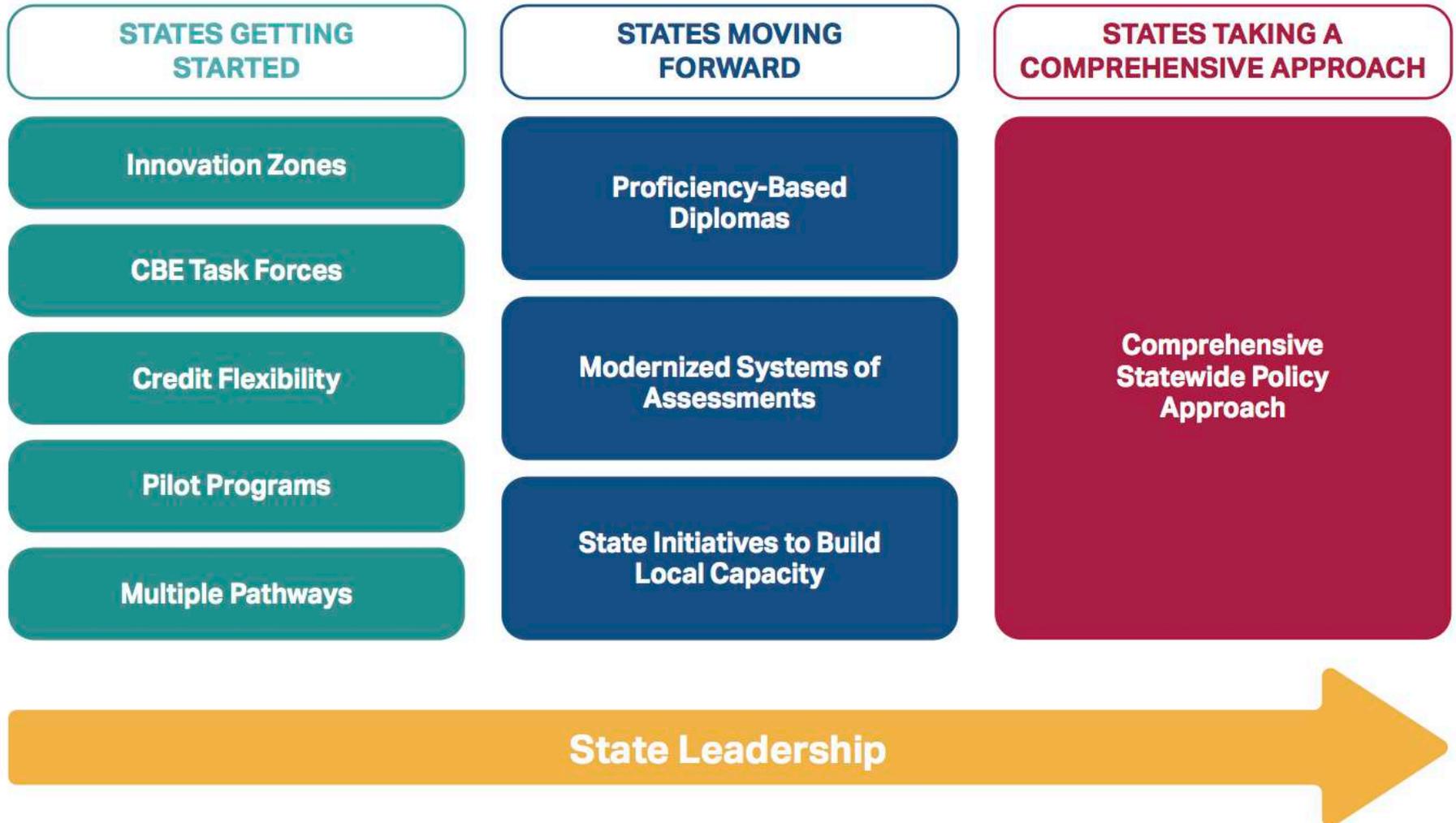
Continuing Opportunities

- Create personalized, competency-based education systems.
- Build new learning models infrastructure.
- Create system coherence and build capacity for the long-term.

System Coherence



State Policy: Entry Points to Create Personalized, Competency-Based Education Systems





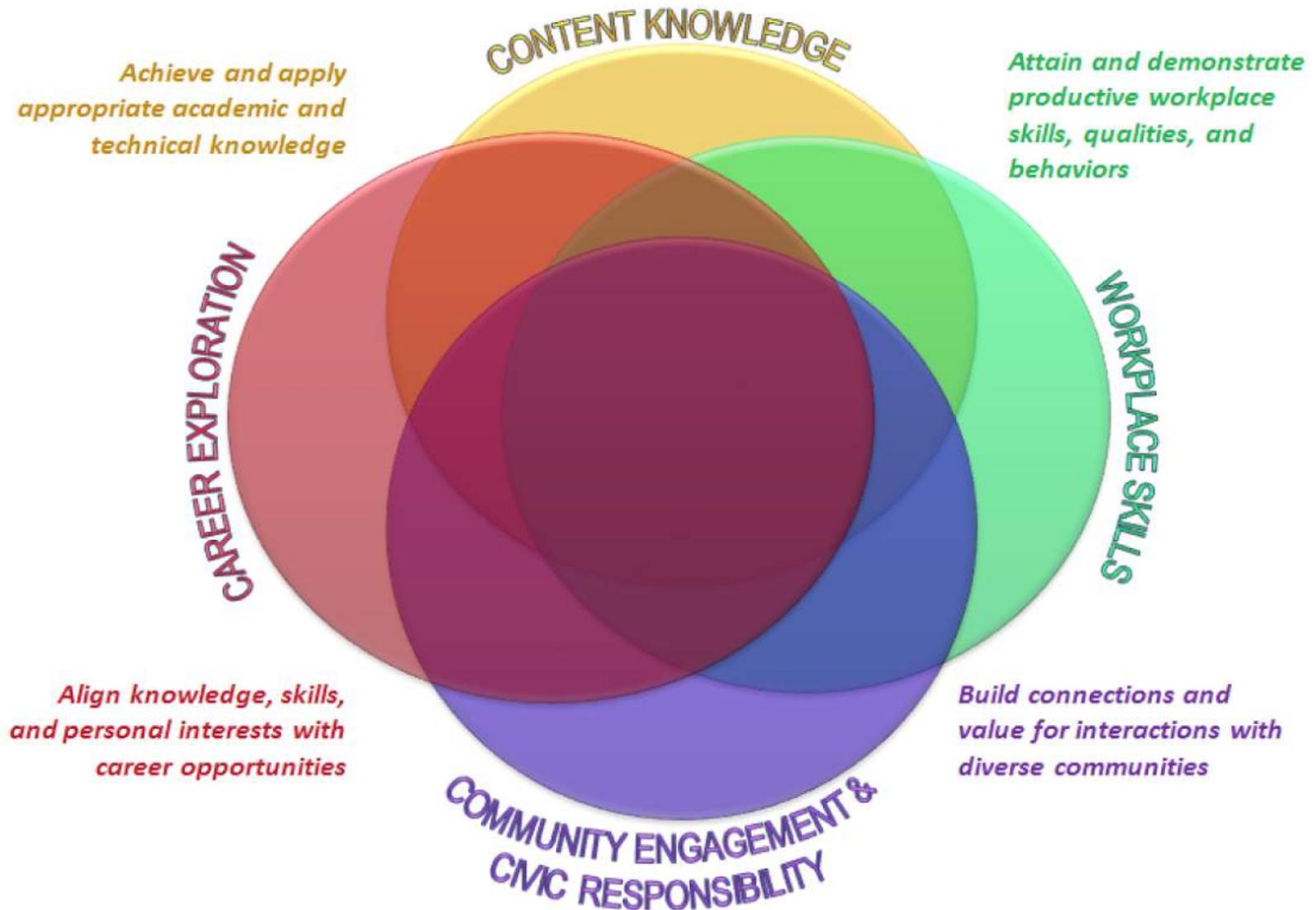
Redefining Student Success

- Opportunity for local stakeholders to come together across communities to ask:
 - What do we want students to know and be able to do to be successful and fulfilled in college, career, and civic society?
- Opportunity for states to develop “profile of a graduate” to meaningfully drive system redesign conversations.

Example: Profile of a Virginia Graduate

Profile of a Virginia Graduate

**In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will,
During His or Her K-12 Educational Experience:**



Profile of a Virginia Graduate

In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual:

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

- Attains and is able to use the knowledge and skills described in the Standards of Learning for core instruction areas (English, math, science, and history/social science), the arts, personal wellness, languages, and Career and Technical education programs.
- Attains and demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to transition to and achieve in a global society and be prepared for life beyond high school graduation.
- Explores multiple subject areas that reflect personal interests and abilities.

WORKPLACE SKILLS

- Attains and demonstrates productive work ethic, Professionalism, and personal responsibility.
- Communicates effectively in a variety of ways, and to a variety of audiences, to interact with individuals and within groups.
- Demonstrates workplace skills including collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and responsible citizenship.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- Makes connections and is involved in the community through civic opportunities.
- Demonstrates integrity, maintains personal health and wellness, and shows respect for others.
- Shows respect for diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures in words and actions.
- Understands and demonstrates citizenship by participating in community and government decision-making.

CAREER EXPLORATION

- Understands knowledge, skills and abilities sought by employers for career opportunities
- Aligns knowledge, skills, and abilities with personal interests to identify career opportunities.
- Sets goals for career, school and life and has knowledge of a variety of pathways, course work, and/or requirements to achieve goals.
- Develops skills to align to current workplace needs, and that adapt to evolving job opportunities.
- Applies skills and knowledge by participating in workplace experiences.

Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Citizenship

Example: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

**Assessments
for/of Learning**



**Rethink
Accountability**



Assessment for and of learning

- Systems of assessments should:
 - Provide timely data to teachers to differentiate supports based on individualized learning needs
 - Measure content knowledge, application of knowledge and important skills and dispositions
 - Determine student progress on and mastery of standards and learning objectives
 - Provide transparency



Systems of
assessments can use
combo of:

- Summative assessments
- Interim assessments*
- Formative assessments**

Assessments can
include:

- Adaptive items
- Performance tasks

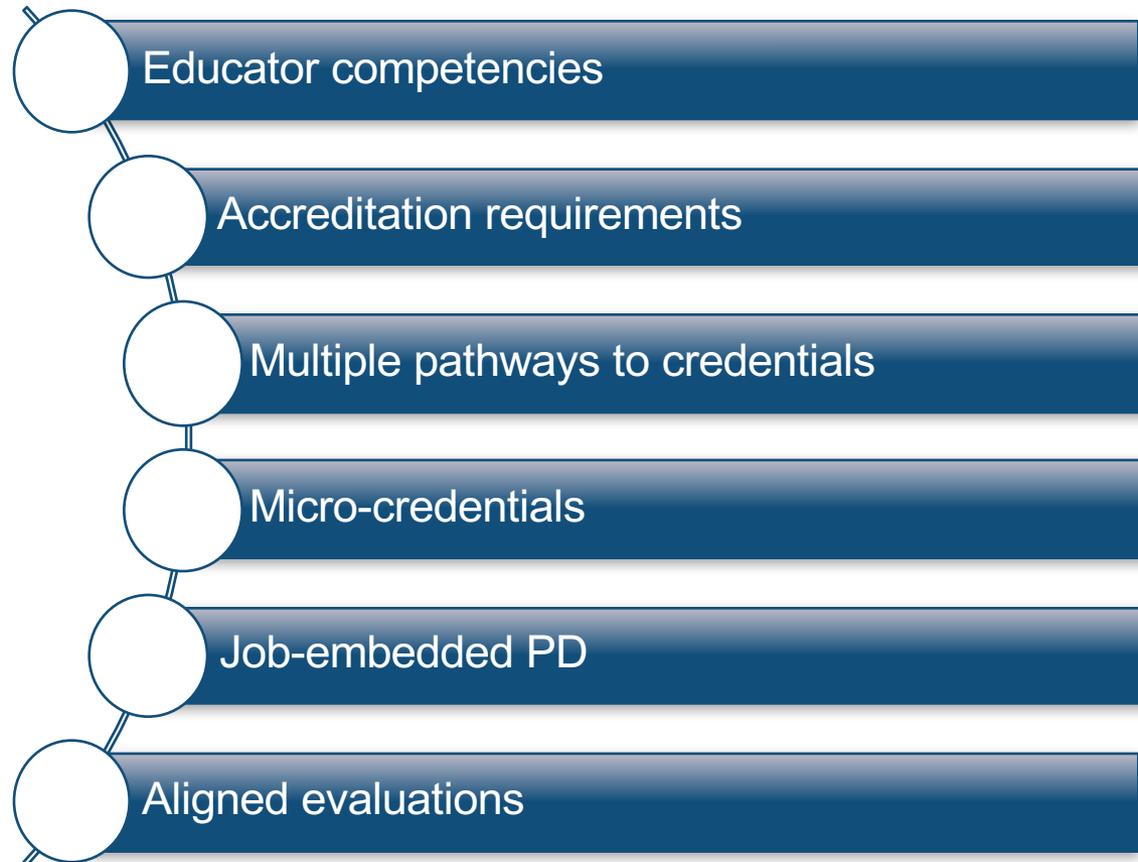
* Must be able to combine into single summative determination of proficiency.

** Used for diagnostic and continuous improvement purposes; could be embedded in performance tasks.

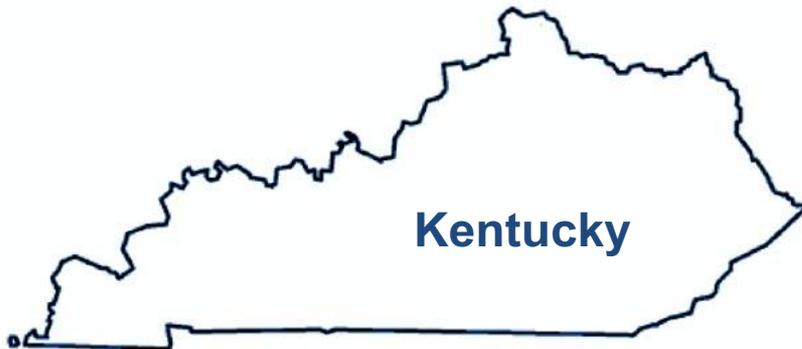
Innovative Accountability & Assessment Demonstration Authority

- States can pilot innovative assessments in a subset of districts
- Opportunity to build capacity for common performance tasks
- Rigorous technical quality and comparability requirements
- Resource: innovativeassessments.org

Next Generation Educator Workforce Systems



Innovation Zones



iNACOL **ISSUE BRIEF**

Innovation Zones: Creating Policy Flexibility for Personalized Learning

WRITTEN BY:
Susan Patrick and Susan Gentz

What Are Innovation Zones?

There is a new state education policy concept termed either **innovation zones** or **districts of innovation**. State education agencies interested in shifting their role from enforcing compliance to one of supporting innovation and building capacity in districts are working to spur new innovative instructional models and create space for competency-based pathways in student-centered learning models. States set up an innovation zone by passing enabling legislation to set up a program and/or offering certain waivers or exemptions from administrative regulations and statutory provisions.

Innovation zones help state policy leaders identify outdated policies and regulations that may get in the way of educators designing innovative models.

Innovation zones help state policy leaders identify outdated policies and regulations that may get in the way of educators designing innovative models. School leaders creating new, personalized learning models may run into policy barriers or outdated regulations, and the innovation zone allows for a waiver process to identify and remove these barriers. The terms innovation zones and districts of innovation both refer to this idea of creating space for districts and schools to innovate, identify policy barriers and remove them through waivers (the concept name varies from state to state).

Why Are Innovation Zones Important?

Policy makers establish innovation zone authority or programs through legislation or rulemaking to catalyze the development of new learning models. The innovation zone authority provides increased flexibility for a state to waive certain regulations and requirements for schools and systems beginning to plan, design and implement personalized, competency-based education models.

MARCH 2016

Where We Are Now: Policies and Regulations

Federal

- ESSA State Plans (2017)
 - Innovative Assessment Pilots: applications in *2018*?
 - Opportunity to amend State Plans for continuous improvement: 2018+

State

- Innovation zones or enabling policies (CT, KY, WI)
- Pilots (NV, OR, IA, OH, ID, FL)
- Proficiency-based diplomas (CO, ME, NH, VT, RI, AZ (exam))
- Expanded learning opportunities (CO, NH)
- Exploring (AK, DE, HI, IL, MO, OK, UT, WY, SC)
- Performance assessment (NH PACE, Assessments *for Learning*)

*IV. HOW IS OUR
UNDERSTANDING OF CBE
DEEPENING?*

Insights and Lessons Learned

1. Developing **diverse leadership** requires intentionality and changes in practice and processes.
2. Invest in **building the culture** as much as the structure. **Agency and empowerment** matter.
3. Need to be able to directly **confront the institutional practices and bias** that leads to inequity.
4. **Pedagogy first** – if there is a shared understanding of the principles of learning and teaching based on the learning sciences, every part of implementation will go easier.
5. Pay attention to **holistic definitions of student success and habits of work** early in the process of implementation.
6. **Don't start with changes in grading** until you have the culture and infrastructure in place.
7. Important to **meet students where they** are that considers their social-emotional skills, their growth mindset, their performance levels, where they are in age-based grades, and how to best motivate and engage them.

Insights and Lessons Learned

These innovations in competency education are designed from the ground up – this is an educator-led innovation in K-12 education.

You can begin without a supportive state policy context; however, once you have a more fully developed model, you will run into major policy barriers. Enabling state policy IS needed to support CBE practices for mature implementations:

- 1.Accountability and new systems of assessments
- 2.Time-based regulations, line-of-sight restrictions, anytime/everywhere learning
- 3.Meeting students where they are in their learning, academic + SEL
- 4.Align graduation requirements: credential/high school diploma need alignment to college/career/future-readiness & new holistic definitions of student success
- 5.From pilots to scaling district-wide, state-wide

DISCUSSION

*What are
your lessons
learned?*



Four Critical Issues

- Equity
- Quality
- Meeting Students Where They Are
- Policy Approaches for the Long-Term to Ensure “Fit for Purpose” and to Sustain Competency Education

National Summit on K-12 Competency-Based Education

CompetencyWorks 

Meeting Students Where They Are

Report #10: An Initial Overview of K-12
Competency-Based Education

2017-2018
Author(s)
Editor(s)
Reviewer(s)



CompetencyWorks

In Pursuit of Equality: A Framework for Equity Strategies in Competency-Based Education

Report #11: An Initial Overview of K-12 Competency-Based Education

2017-2018
Author(s)
Editor(s)
Reviewer(s)



CompetencyWorks

Fit for Purpose: Taking the Long View on Systems Change and Policy to Support Competency Education

Report #12: An Initial Overview of K-12 Competency-Based Education

2017-2018
Author(s)
Editor(s)
Reviewer(s)



CompetencyWorks

In Search of Efficacy: Defining the Elements of Quality in a Competency-Based Education System

Report #13: An Initial Overview of K-12 Competency-Based Education

2017-2018
Author(s)
Editor(s)
Reviewer(s)



Emerging Tough Issues

1. What Research and Evaluation is Needed to Advance Competency-Based Education?
2. How Can Technology Best Support Competency-Based Education?
3. How Can We Build the Critical Elements in Building Balanced Systems of Assessments for Personalized, Competency-Based Education?
4. What Do We Know About Changing Mindset?
5. What Does Teacher Preparation and Training Look Like in a Personalized, Competency-Based Systems?
6. How Can We Build a Field of Competency Education that Stretches from Kindergarten through Higher Education?
7. What are Implications for Leadership, Management and Human Capital in Competency-Based Education?

Emerging Tough Issues (continued)

8. What Are Implications for Ensuring Students are Supported in Building Agency and the Lifelong Learning Skills?
9. How Can We Strengthen the Field of Competency-Based Education?
10. What Are the Ways that Personalized, Competency-Based Schools Can be Innovative and Move Beyond the Traditional Structures to Best Serve Students?
11. How Can Personalized, Competency-Based Education Be Scaled?
12. How Can Districts and Schools Prepare for Proficiency-Based Diplomas?
13. How Can We Build Public Understanding and Public Will to Support School and District Policy Development?
14. How Do We Manage Quality and Equity in the For-Profit Sector of CBE?

*V. WHAT ARE FUTURE
DIRECTIONS FOR K-12
COMPETENCY EDUCATION?*

Charting the Course: Major Action Steps to Advance CBE

1. Strengthen **diversity** in the field.
2. Strengthen the **working definition** and create **logic model**.
3. Improve **communication strategies** targeted to different stakeholders
4. Build shared understanding of **quality**. Tools to support learning across schools and communities of practice.
5. Engaging **higher education and colleges of education** in:
 - Prepare leaders and educators for personalized, competency-based systems.
 - Build bridges across K-12 and higher education to address college admissions issues including ranking by GPA.
 - Build aligned understanding of credentialing learning with proficiency-based diplomas and multiple pathways.

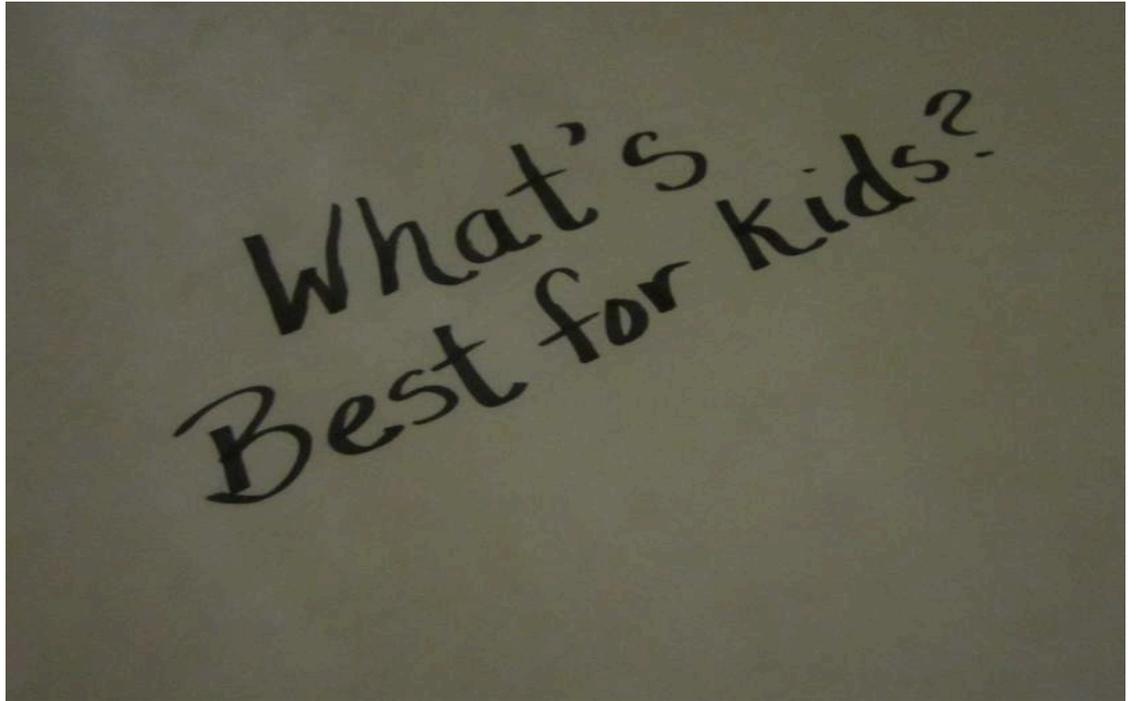
Charting the Course: Major Action Steps to Advance CBE

7. Shift district top-down policies to support greater **school autonomy** for leading CBE from the bottom-up.
8. Generate demand for the **information management systems** for CBE models and student-centered learning.

Future Directions for Teaching and Learning within CBE

- **Balancing** academic knowledge, skills and content with learning how to learn.
- Improved **pedagogical methods, SCL instruction and assessment literacy.**
- **Aligning higher order skills** with performance-based assessments.
- **Student agency, voice and choice.**
- Opportunity for **inquiry and applied learning.**

Start and End with Learner- Centered Culture



- From a map showing the history of Chugach School District. When the district began to ask this question to make decisions was the turning point towards competency education.

For more Information and TO share
ideas

Chris@metisnet.net
SPATRICK@inacol.org

CompetencyWorks.org