



COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

June 1, 2018

Submitted to

Governor Rick Scott
President of the Senate Joe Negron
Speaker of the House of Representatives Richard Corcoran
COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM
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SECTION 1003.4996, FLORIDA STATUTES

[Section 1003.4996, Florida Statutes](#), requires the Commissioner of Education to provide to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the Competency-Based Education (CBE) Pilot Program annually by June 1.

Background

The purpose of this five-year pilot program is to provide an educational environment that allows students to advance to higher levels of learning upon the mastery of concepts and skills, rather than advancing based upon seat time in the classroom, through statutory exemptions relating to student progression and the awarding of credits. The five eligible participants named in the legislation were P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School and Lake, Palm Beach, Pinellas and Seminole County school districts. Those choosing to participate were required to submit an application detailing annual goals and performance outcomes.

Four of the five eligible districts chose to participate in the pilot during the 2017-18 school year. The Lake County School District has chosen to pause their participation in the pilot as of the 2017-18 school year.

The report consists of similarities and differences across districts noting successes, challenges and additional comments in the areas of communication plan, professional development, student progression, digital and blended learning, and allocation of resources. There is also a section related to statutory and/or rule waiver requests by the participating districts.

There is no cost to the state for the implementation of the CBE pilot program; any cost is borne by the participating districts.

Supplemental Information

The CBE pilot program legislation allows the commissioner, in addition to waivers authorized in [s. 1001.10\(3\), Florida Statutes](#), to grant additional waiver of rules relating to student progression and the awarding of credits.

The documents developed to fulfill the implementation of this pilot program included:

- Request for Applications;
- Memo to district superintendents regarding annual report; and
- Survey requesting information for compilation of annual report.

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Palm Beach County School District

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	64 elementary schools with a focus on math acceleration.
SUCCESES	<p>The Accelerated Math Program (AMP) Presentation for principals helped schools make placement decisions and know impacts of AMP instruction in the school. AMP Information page on Blender provided resources that administrators and teachers could access on demand. AMP Course pages on Blender provide instructional resources for teachers to use to meet grade level and AMP Standards. Standards-based report card and AMP report card supplements used to communicate progress towards mastery of grade level and AMP standards to parents. AMP FAQ document provided to teachers and administrators. "Getting Ready for AMP" trainings rolled out during summer of 2017 to help with schools that were implementing AMP. Sessions for all AMP courses were offered during pre-school curriculum conferences. Mathematics Cadre Sessions dedicated to AMP courses. Three PD sessions for the year which focused on content, pedagogy for accelerated learning and collegial planning of upcoming Units of Instruction. Google Classroom utilized for ongoing support for AMP teachers. Ongoing support from School District Central Office, by request. Standards-based report card and AMP report card supplements used to communicate progress towards mastery of grade level and AMP standards to parents. Standards checklists of grade-level and AMP competencies used to collect data of progress towards meeting standards. AMP Specific Florida Standards Quizzes and Unit Standards Assessments used to collect data to determine progress towards meeting standards. iReady Instructional and Standards Mastery Components used to determine progress towards mastery of standards. Students in AMP, including above grade level testers had higher proficiency rates and learning gains than their non-AMP peers. iReady Instructional components used to help students meet and/or maintain AMP entry criteria. iReady instructional components used to fill instructional gaps or accelerate students to their actual competency level. The district used open educational resources to meet needs in addition to grade-level textbook.</p>
CHALLENGES	<p>Not all schools were ready to take on the risk of potential losses to learning gains by having students take above grade level tests. State School Accountability rules causing schools to "gate-keep" who is selected to participate in AMP for fear of hurting school grades with regards to above grade-level testing. This is most evident in AMP 4 where students test on 5th Grade FSA with the previous test score as a 3rd Grade FSA. Other than the benefit for students for acceleration, there is no school benefit for acceleration (i.e., bonus points for School Grade calculation). Textbook requirements and adoptions. Once student books are purchased for students at one grade level, there can't be a purchase at an additional grade level without incurring prohibitive costs.</p>
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	<p>The School District of Palm Beach County had a very successful roll out of AMP. It was predicted that approximately ten schools would participate; however, more than forty decided to give the highest achieving students in elementary schools the opportunity to stretch their thinking and engage in the accelerated coursework. The value of the larger sample size gave the AMP implementation team some lessons learned as more schools look to provide this opportunity for their students during the 2017-18 school year.</p>

Palm Beach County School District

STATUTORY/RULE WAIVER REQUESTS	The issue of having to earn multiple years of learning gains when students take above grade level assessments continues to be a problem. The district wants high standards and should be responsible for proficiency and a year's worth of learning gains, but multiple years is a barrier.
PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2018-19?	Yes.

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Pinellas County School District

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	Seven high schools and two middle schools.
SUCSESSES	<p>Successes with the personalized learning program and work developing a competency-based system revolve around emphasis in curricular offerings now in giving students a voice and choice in how they work to master the standards and allowing students who need more time to take that time to gain the necessary skills to master the learning goals. Being culturally responsive in the approach to the curriculum in order to help students make life-long connections between what they do in school and how they interact with the world has to be a priority for every student in Pinellas County Schools. The district realized the goals of CBE were really the same goals for every student and teacher in the district, and moving forward CBE is an embedded curriculum resource for all teachers and an expectation in every classroom district wide. The message about CBE had naturally progressed from for a few teachers to every teacher in every classroom. The communication plan is to gradually include the CBE language into professional development (PD) and into coaching conversations as the district continues to expect excellence throughout its schools. They are working closely with district leadership to ensure that there is a common vision and common language to share it. During the 2017-2018 school year the district embarked on creating secondary competencies in core curriculum areas. In order to do that work they continued their contract with Great Schools Partnership- an organization that provides CBE implementation support. With their help they were able to begin writing Algebra I competencies, the rest of the Biology competencies, and begin elementary competencies. PD was planned around using the competencies to assess student work. This was designed to allow the district experts and item competencies writing team the opportunity to put their product into practice and from that PD it was discovered that there are some adjustments that need to be made to the original product. The focal point this year was to continue to create and to begin to use the task neutral scoring criteria with a select group of teachers. These are individual scoring descriptions that help a teacher assess how well a student has mastered the learning goals associated with the competencies. The district was able to get many of the high school scoring criteria assessed against genuine student work. That has allowed for the improvement of the CBE rubrics for inclusion in curricular materials to all high school teachers next year. There is direction for the work moving into the 2018-2019 school year. Over the last few years, the district has designed a system to provide anywhere anytime access to standards aligned learning and practice for secondary students in ELA and math. The district is currently in the process of developing the lessons for elementary (grade 3-5) students. This program, called the Personalized Learning Platform, is a blended learning system in that the lessons are accessed digitally but the assessment is done in conjunction with the classroom teacher associated with the participants. A new curriculum platform was developed and used to help enhance classroom instruction for secondary students enrolled in a Pinellas County school. Beginning in 2018 students have access to additional instruction and practice with standards where their assessment data indicated they need practice. In addition to the curriculum resources, two staff members were hired to provide additional support to the pilot schools, direction for scaling the work district wide, and consultation for continued innovation as related to CBE.</p>

Pinellas County School District

CHALLENGES	<p>Ongoing two-way communication was the biggest challenge during the 2017-18 school year. The district began with a plan to build programs within schools that would enlist pilot classrooms to help build and perfect their CBE system. They found that they had to expand the recruitment of teachers to work on the creation of the model itself. The work had to be expanded to individual teachers (experts in standards based instruction) beyond the original pilot schools who were in some cases working in isolation from the larger groups of teachers working within the formal personalized learning programs. Maintaining effective ongoing communication became a challenge had to continually be addressed. Getting classroom teachers familiar with the Task Neutral Rubrics in order to make them a consistent part of assessment was a challenge, but there is a PD plan to put that into practice for next year. There was not enough time to test all of the CBE task neutral scoring criteria and rubrics and get feedback on them all. Hurricane Irma exacerbated the challenge in that they lost a week of school and due to hurricane make up days they lost almost every mandatory PD day that were planned to provide practice to teachers around this task. Programing issues associated with the mass amount of student data that needed to be linked to the new24/7 Personalized Learning Platform were challenging, but those were mitigated and the system went live during the second semester. A truly effective blended learning program should include 1-to-1 technology, but new challenges arise that cause budget allocations to go to more pressing needs. Having the most innovative 1-to-1 technology will always be the biggest resource challenge for CBE because in order to have an authentically equitable system for all of our students there is a need to provide every necessary technological element for students of need.</p>
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	N/A
STATUTORY/ RULE WAIVER REQUESTS	No waivers to state statute for the 2018-19 school year. However, the district does request that House Bill 1035 from the 2018 Legislative session (that addresses personalized learning and competency-based progression systems) be considered again during next year's legislative session.
PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2018-19?	Yes.

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P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	One K-12 school.
SUCCESES	<p>Periodic updates to the School Advisory Council on standards-based grading (SBG) has continued to meet with positive support and stakeholder interest throughout the school year. Led by teachers, back-to-school information sessions for parents included information regarding new grading practices and policies and the shift to mastery-based learning for successful course completion. SBG report cards are the official reporting system for grades K-6, with pilot work completed during the school year in 7th and 9th grades. Leadership continues to work with internal and external stakeholders to help them understand how SBG, personalized learning, blended learning, universal design for learning (UDL), and project-based learning are foundational components that must come together to support a successful CBE pilot. Successes continue to include developing faculty knowledge, use, and application of UDL principles to enhance responsiveness to learner variability. A team of four secondary teachers and school leaders attended the New England Secondary School Redesign conference sponsored by the Great Schools Partnership. A team of four teachers and school leaders spent two days in Henry County, GA meeting with district leaders who shared details about their CBE transformation process and visiting schools engaged in implementation. Finally, a team of eight school leaders and middle school faculty visited High Tech High and Lindsay School District in California to experience and examine alternative models to personalized, competency-based education. Teachers from each of these travel groups meet monthly with school leadership. Teachers continue to lead professional learning sessions for one another devoted to innovative uses of technology and digital tools to support a personalized, CBE learning environment. Monthly conference calls with David Ruff from the Great Schools Partnership has helped school leaders support the local work to transform P.K. Yonge to a CBE/mastery-based learning program. Over the past year they brought together faculty from across disciplines to identify disciplinary competencies to be mastered within courses and through the grade levels. P. K. Yonge teachers are working to identify shared “habits of work” and seeking to separate reporting on the “habits of work” from mastery of content and skills. Students and parents are provided progress updates throughout the year in relation to both academic learning goals and habits of work. The school has increased use by faculty of digital solutions and tools for supporting student learning and personalization. P.K. Yonge teachers implemented 20 secondary courses that were redesigned last summer to incorporate UDL principles and to effectively integrate technology to personalize and improve student mastery of content. Course development in the learning management system is aligned to support CBE; all secondary courses include clearly defined and posted learning goals. The school is able to fund faculty Waves of Innovation 2018 proposals with our Digital Classroom Allocation (DCP) for course redesign and professional learning aligned with competency-based education during the summer.</p>

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School

CHALLENGES	Challenges to efficiency, reporting, and student/parent understanding surfaced. The continuing challenge is to ensure all communications, terminology, organizing frameworks, and professional learning align initiatives underway with the construction of a state-of-the-art 6th-12th grade building intentionally designed to support student-centered, personalized, competency/mastery-based education. The school continues to be challenged to provide adequate contract time for professional learning to transition to a fully developed competency-based system. A significant challenge is teacher concern about accountability and final evaluation ratings tied to bonus compensation. The school is challenged by a pre-determined timeline for mastery of content determined by state testing calendars and end of school year credit award, inhibiting opportunities for all students to master learning goals. Another challenge is to assist teachers across disciplines in being consistent in aligning formative and summative course assessments with specific course standards and student learning goals. Equity in student access to the internet beyond the school campus and during non-school hours is a tremendous challenge. Efforts to address this challenge have included providing open access to the school library until 5:30 each day. Additional challenges include finding ample time for conducting an individualized, formal review of all courses to identify strengths and areas of growth for improving integrity, clarity, and alignment of outcomes and learning goals and standards through 6-12 department meetings. Another challenge is to provide ample time and structure for secondary departments to build internal capacity for conducting thorough online course review and analysis of student work. The school is challenged by a pre-determined timeline for mastery of content determined by state testing calendars and end of school year credit award, inhibiting opportunities for all students to master learning goals. Another challenge is to assist teachers across disciplines in being consistent in aligning formative and summative course assessments with specific course standards and student learning goals.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	As P.K. Yonge begins construction of their 6th-12th grade building intentionally designed with the future in mind, continuing their efforts to fully implement a CBE/mastery-based education system will be central to their future work.
STATUTORY/RULE WAIVER REQUESTS	N/A
PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2018-19?	Yes.

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Seminole County School District

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	Three high schools each offering a one-credit elective course.
SUCCESES	<p>The district implemented a majority of the communications objectives outlined in their CBE pilot application. Communications resources developed and disseminated to students, families, and community members about the Problem Solving Incubator (PSI High) program included a website, social media accounts with regular updates, video assets, a program brochure, information card, and student curriculum guide. To view or download any of these resources, please visit our website at www.psihigh.scps.k12.fl.us. They delivered multiple presentations about the PSI High program and its focus on CBE at events including Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) School Board meetings, SCPS Business Advisory Council meetings, Magnet School Night, and several other stakeholder events. Students received multiple in-class presentations providing program information and soliciting feedback. A presentation about the program including reasons to transition to CBE and standards-based assessment was also delivered at a convening of all SCPS guidance counselors. Several strong relationships with local businesses and community organizations were developed to support project-based learning with authentic performance evaluation. Students, parents, teachers, and community members have been supportive of the learning model and its integration of mastery-based learning to accomplish the goals of student empowerment, personalization and authentic performance assessment. Teachers in the program have received a number of professional development opportunities specifically targeted toward CBE. These include multiple video presentations and conferences with teachers in other competency-based programs throughout the United States, weekly two hour PLC meetings to review topics about competency design and evaluation, and professional reading including Marzano’s Handbook for Personalized Competency-Based Education That Works. Teachers designed rubrics and aligned district ePathways Skills for Future Ready Graduates into project-based work. Both teachers and students evaluated student work using scales for district 21st century skills. Students and teachers valued the competencies and scales for ePathways Skills for Future Ready Graduates. Teachers evaluated student work using a collaboratively developed scale that aligned to the language for district frameworks for those skills. Students were able to provide evidence toward other essential skills and dispositions as well, with students meeting the requirements for the course through different paths and paces. The work of aligning academic learning goals to each core high school discipline and subject began. Core academic and elective graduation competencies for the PSI High program will launch for the 2018-2019 school year. All teachers participating in the 2017-2018 pilot received classroom sets of Chromebook laptops, a competency-based online learning platform, and training on integrating the Chromebooks into project-based learning experiences. Students primarily used the devices for productivity, online research, communication, and developing media products. The district plans to integrate online curriculum for blended learning in core subject areas and technology electives beginning in 2018-19. Seminole County Public Schools, in combination with grant funding from the XQ Institute, has provided support in the areas of personnel, curriculum, technology, and facilities to help ensure the success of the PSI High CBE pilot.</p>

Seminole County School District

CHALLENGES	Areas for improvement include designing and delivering additional student experiences and materials to support the transition to standards-based grading that also integrates a framework for 21 st century skills. Teachers struggled with effectively monitoring and reporting student progress on these skills throughout the year. They cited a need for a more robust online system for CBE, as well as challenges in helping students understand the skills and scales. Based on student and teacher feedback, the district will provide a more robust, user-friendly online environment, provide additional professional learning, and simplify the way competencies are aligned to student work for the 2018-2019 school year. There will be additional lesson study and coaching cycles with teachers as well. Developing content-area competencies and aligning them to courses required more time and resources than initially allocated. Teachers also reported difficulty in evaluating student work through future-ready competencies while relying on a traditional gradebook. For next year, the pilot will expand into all courses in the program. Teachers will have access to a competency-based gradebook and learning management system to better report student progress. Students will each have a personal graduation plan and yearly learning plan to track their progress on each learning goal. Based on user feedback, a new system will be provided for 2018-2019 where students will build a personal learning plan and graduation plan. Both students and teachers will align learning experiences to graduation competencies and track achievement on those competencies in real-time.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	N/A
STATUTORY/ RULE WAIVER REQUESTS	The district requests a waiver from State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09422 Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements. This rule requires EOC administration at the conclusion of the year in which a student is enrolled in a course. This administration requirement precludes students from learning at an individual pace or through a personalized schedule, particularly if mastery of a course's learning goals takes longer than one academic year. To meet the law, we would ensure that all students take all required state exams including FSA, Biology, Algebra 1, Geometry, and U.S. History by the first day of their senior year.
PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2018-19?	Yes.

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Lake County School District

The Lake County School District has chosen to pause their participation in the pilot as of the 2017-18 school year.