Ohio Competency-Based Education Pilot

Request for Proposals

REVISED SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

Ohio | Department of Education

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I.   Background and Legislative Intent

A.   The Need for Innovation

A time-based system constrains student achievement in a 21st century learning environment and no longer engages students in a way that encourages career aspirations or facilitates future opportunity. Children need hope in the future and need to be engaged by schools in a way that makes learning relevant and exciting. Advancements in technology, coupled with evolving workforce demands, require students be given opportunities to achieve at their own paces, whether advancing beyond standard mastery or requiring additional support to achieve proficiency. Competency-based education emphasizes achievement over enrollment and encourages school districts to adequately address the personalized learning needs of each of their students.

B.   Goals for the Competency-based Education Pilot

The 131st General Assembly established a Competency-Based Education Pilot to provide grants of up to $200,000 per fiscal year in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 to five districts, schools, or consortia of districts and schools for designing and implementing competency-based models of education for their students during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years[1]. This Competency-Based Education Pilot is designed to:

- Promote innovative learning that has meaning to students, cuts across multiple curriculum areas and extends outside of the classroom;
- Advance students to higher-level work once they demonstrate mastery of competencies, rather than advancing based upon seat time in the classroom;
- Give supports to struggling students before they advance, and prevent further failure down the road;
- Keep all students on pace to graduate, and ensure those below level make rapid progress;
- Graduate students with deeper college and career ready skills; and
- Inform future development of statewide competency-based policies and programs.

C.   Applicant Eligibility

The Ohio Department of Education will award up to five grants to school districts, joint vocational school districts, community schools, STEM schools or educational service center-led consortiums (of one or more schools districts, community schools and STEM schools).

Applicants must demonstrate commitment from their governing boards, administrators and teaching staff to plan in 2015-2016 and implement the competency-based pilot for three school years (2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019) and show the capacity to fulfill the responsibilities detailed in this application. Applicants wishing to apply must respond to the Interest Survey by 5:00 pm on Sept. 30, 2015. Only applicants completing and submitting

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[1] Am. Sub. H.B. 64

the Interest Survey will be able to apply in the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP).

Potential applicants must assess their readiness and capacity using the **Competency-Based Education Pilot Self-assessment Tool** included as Appendix A of this application. The tool provides two frameworks for understanding transformation to a competency-based education system. Part I will help potential applicants determine their progress or capacity for moving from traditional to a competency-based approaches. Part II will help potential applicants determine where they are (or what is involved) in the process of competency-based design and implementation. Appendix C includes closely aligned resources and tools appropriate for internal study.

II. General Information

A. Definitions

The Ohio Department of Education views **competency-based education** as a system of academic instruction, assessment, grading and reporting where students receive credit, not as a function of how much time they spend studying a subject but based on demonstrations and assessments of their learning. Instruction is tailored to students' current levels of knowledge and skills, and students are not constrained to progress at the same rates as their peers. Competency-based education allows for accelerated learning among students who master academic material quickly and provides additional instructional support time for students who need it.

Other terms found in this document:
The **Carnegie unit** and the **credit hour** are time-based references for measuring educational attainment. The Carnegie Unit is under critique from educators and education policymakers who want to make student performance more transparent and the delivery of education more flexible. They advocate for innovations that support transparency and flexibility, including competency-based education models.

Seat time often is used in conjunction with "credit hour," referring to time-based educational requirements measuring student time in classes.

Learning standards are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at specific stages of their education. Learning standards describe educational objectives — what students should have learned by the end of a course, grade level or grade span — but they do not describe any particular teaching practice, curriculum or assessment method.

Competencies are the knowledge, skills and/or behaviors students must master in a specific content or performance area. They are both observable and measurable.

Mastery is a demonstration of a specific competency. Mastery of specified competencies in competency-based education is the mechanism by which a student progresses through the educational process to the desired end state.

Competency-based pathways is a phrase associated with competency-based education to distinguish flexible learning models from traditional time-based models where students

generally all follow the same progression of activities. Pathways emphasize varied ways for students to progress to desired end states of completion and achievement.

Ohio's **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support** is a framework to ensure effective instruction for all learners. It frames a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to address academic content and behavior at increasing levels of need. The framework includes effective core (tier 1) academic and behavioral supports and additional targeted and intensive help (tiers 2 and 3) for children who need it.

Ohio's new **Student Success Dashboard** draws on available data to identify students at risk of dropping out and connect students to appropriate interventions. The Web-based information system is based on key indicators to reliably identify students at risk of dropping out including attendance, behavior incidents and course performance.

Ohio's **Student Success Plan** is a component of the career success framework designed to support career pathways to successful postsecondary work and career experiences.

Ohio's **Credit Flex** shifts focus from evaluating student learning based on "seat time" to assessing students' demonstrated academic and skill levels or performances. The plan does not eliminate Carnegie units or "seat time" requirements altogether. Rather it retains seat time as one option and expands the number of options for earning credit by adding demonstration of subject area competency and structures that support it irrespective of any time requirements[2].

College Credit Plus is Ohio's new system for dual enrollment. It replaces previous programs, including Post-Secondary Enrollment Options, and has been expanded to cover students beginning in the seventh grade[3].

Ohio's **Achievement Assessment Waiver** supports and encourages districts that are members of the Innovation Lab Network and STEM schools interested in exploring alternative approaches to assessment. Ohio law allows the superintendent of public instruction to approve up to 10 waivers of the state's statutorily prescribed assessment system.

B.   Requirements of Selected Pilot Sites

The purpose of this initiative is to support efforts within Ohio to develop, implement and evaluate K-12 competency-based education systems. Applicants have a great amount of discretion in the design of their pilot programs, as long as they support the initiative's goals, address the target areas and meet the requirements listed below.

1.   Implement a Competency-based Education System

A district, joint vocational school district, school or consortium selected to participate in the pilot program must offer competency-based education that satisfies all of the following requirements:
- Students must advance upon mastery (demonstration of competency);

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[2] Ohio S.B. 311, 2006

[3] Ohio H.B. 487, 2014

- Competencies must include clear, measurable, transferable learning objectives that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of work-ready skills;
- Assessments must be meaningful and a positive learning experience for students;
- Students must receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs;
- The initiative must incorporate partnerships with postsecondary institutions and members of industry;
- The initiative must tie into other state and federal initiatives that support competency-based learning (e.g., credit flexibility, state achievement assessment waiver, early identification of students at risk of dropping out, multi-tiered systems of support, etc.); and
- All appropriate stakeholders must be active participants in the district's program.

2. Build Community Partnerships

A district, joint vocational school district, school or consortium selected as a pilot site must incorporate partnerships with postsecondary institutions and members of industry, such as:

- Alignment of high school and higher education expectations;
- Dual enrollment opportunities through College Credit Plus;
- Alignment with local business and industry priorities;
- Building strong relationships between competency-based pathways and career-technical education; and
- Experiential learning opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and skills through instruction or study outside of the traditional classroom methodology.

3. Tie-in to Other State and Federal Initiatives

Applicants should align their proposed competency-based education programs with integral student programs currently in place and current state and federal initiatives and articulate that vision, supporting structures and systems in their project narratives. These initiatives may include, but are not limited to:

- IDEA;
- Federal programs;
- Credit Flex;
- College Credit Plus;
- State Achievement Assessments Waiver (Innovation Learning Network and STEM Schools);
- Student Success Dashboard and Student Success Plans;
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (both academic and behavioral); and
- Professional development plans.

4. Facilitate Collaborative Leadership

The applicant must identify a collaborative leadership team with differentiated responsibilities for guiding the district's work and participating in a cross-site Competency-based Education Collaborative Workgroup. At a minimum, the active team must include the following members:

- Superintendent (district or career-technical) or community school leader;
- Curriculum director;
- Principal of each building where competency-based education is being implemented;
- Teachers from buildings where competency-based education is being implemented, including a teacher union representative;
- Educational service center representative (if applicable).

Other members might include the pupil services administrator, assessment specialist, technology coordinator or others as appropriate based on level of involvement in the work.

5. Participate in State Collaborative Workgroup

In addition to designing, implementing and monitoring the proposed plan, pilot sites will participate in a state-led competency-based workgroup designed to increase statewide knowledge and understanding of effective competency-based education strategies and to develop information, materials and other applicable resources for use across the state, districts and schools. This work will include, but is not limited to:

- Assisting in the development of model competencies that can be scaled to statewide use;
- Assisting in the identification and/or development of assessments (formative and summative) and tools to monitor learning;
- Assisting in the identification and/or development of student- and pilot-level data and metrics to measure the outcomes of the Competency-Based Education Pilot program, as well as standards for collecting, maintaining and reporting data identified through the collaborative effort; and,
- Participating in cross-site professional development in addition to locally designed, pilot-specific professional development.

6. Serve as a Competency-based Education Model Site

Pilot sites must serve as model competency-based education sites during and following the completion of the pilot.

7. Engage in Data Collection and Reporting

Pilot sites must use data internally to guide competency-based education. Pilot sites should plan to develop and support an internal data collection and reporting system that empowers educators with meaningful and timely information that will guide the continuous improvement of student learning, ensuring that every student is on pace to graduation.

The nature and extent of data collected in these systems should be determined, in part, by the results of the Competency-based Education Collaborative Workgroup. In cases where pilot sites develop additional metrics that are unique to their programs, they should plan to incorporate those metrics into their internal data collection and reporting systems.

Several "best practices" should be incorporated in the data collection and reporting system developed or used within this project. Pilot sites should:

- Use a student information/learning management system to integrate data from formative and summative assessments so educators may develop and revise a personalized learning plan for every student;
- Map student progression toward mastery for each aligned competency, allowing educators, students and parents to track performance and needs in real time;
- Look at data and information that spans grade levels, years and curricula areas so educators, students and parents can determine the extent of student mastery independent of time and disciplinary barriers; and
- Develop a system that provides transparent, meaningful information to all stakeholders on the impact of instructional practices.

8. **Participate in Evaluation Activities**

Pilot sites must provide data to the Ohio Department of Education for the purpose of evaluating the pilot project. Pilot sites must participate in an annual performance review conducted by the Ohio Department of Education, as required by the enabling legislation.

No later than Jan. 31, 2017, the Ohio Department of Education must complete a preliminary report on the planning and implementation of competency-based education in the pilot districts. No later than Dec. 31, 2018, the department must complete a final report on competency-based education that includes the following:
- An evaluation of the implementation of competency-based education offered by the pilot districts;
- Student outcomes resulting from the competency-based education; and,
- Feasibility of a funding model for competency-based education in Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Education will leverage district quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the implementation of the Competency-Based Education Pilot program, as well student outcomes in pilot districts. Results from this evaluation will be subject to public reporting at both the aggregate pilot program level, as well as at the individual pilot site level. All evaluation results published by either the Ohio Department of Education or pilot sites must comply with state and federal laws regarding student privacy.

To facilitate the Competency-Based Education Pilot evaluation, pilot sites must assure that they will comply with Ohio's reporting requirements as outlined in Ohio law[4]. Measures that will be included in the pilot program evaluation may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Student achievement on statewide assessments;
- Student and staff attendance and absenteeism rates;
- Ohio's Longitudinal Graduation Rates;
- Ohio's Prepared for Success measures (e.g. ACT and SAT participation and performance), as applicable; and
- Ohio's early learning measures, including diagnostic results, the K-3 Literacy Measure and measures related to the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, as applicable.

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[4] Ohio Revised Code 3301.0714

The evaluation of Ohio's Competency-Based Education Pilot program also may include measures based on postsecondary outcomes data that are not directly reported by pilot sites, including:

- Postsecondary enrollment, persistence and completion as reported by Ohio's public institutions for higher education to the Ohio Department of Higher Education and/or the National Student Clearinghouse;
- Remediation-free rates as reported by institutions for higher education to the Ohio Department of Higher Education; and
- Workforce outcomes, subject to availability.

Pilot sites will work with the Ohio Department of Education to identify the students participating in the district's Competency-Based Education Pilot through an appropriate reporting mechanism determined by the department and in compliance with all relevant state and federal regulations regarding student privacy and data reporting.

In addition to leveraging established statewide accountability metrics, the evaluation of Ohio's Competency-Based Education Pilot will utilize the new competency-based education specific data and measures developed through the Competency-based Education Collaborative Workgroup. In cases where pilot sites develop additional metrics that are unique to their programs, the department may incorporate those metrics in the pilot program evaluation process.

The competency-based education evaluation also may include results from a qualitative analysis of the planning and implementation process, as well as student outcomes. Pilot sites may be asked to participate in site visits, interviews and focus groups and may be asked to provide documentation or other artifacts of the planning and implementation process for use in the pilot evaluation.

C.   Budget/Use of funds

Student full-time equivalency: For purposes of state funding, any district or school selected to participate in the pilot program (either by itself or as part of a consortium) shall consider each student enrolled in the district or school that is participating in the Competency-Based Education Pilot program a full-time equivalent for purposes of funding under Ohio law[5].

Allowable use of funds: Funds may be used to support planning, design and implementation activities as outlined in the approved proposal including, but not limited to, technology purchases (hardware and software), meeting costs, facilitation, travel, stipends, substitutes, learning management systems and virtual team platforms. Funds should be designated for cross-pilot collaborative activities and professional development as may be required by the Ohio Department of Education. Funds may not be used to purchase items or services that would supplant current levels of effort.

D.   Assurances

A district, school or consortium selected to participate in the pilot program must remain subject to all accountability requirements in state and federal law that are applicable to that

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[5] Ohio Revised Code 3317, 3314 or 3326.

district, school or consortium, including general department requirements and competency-based education specific assurances (Appendix B).

E. Ohio Department of Education Contact Information:
Steve Gratz, Ph.D.
Senior Executive Director
Center for Student Support and Education Options
Email: competency.based.education@education.ohio.gov
Phone: (614) 728-7730 or (877) 644-6338

III. Application Process

A. Overall Pilot Timeline
The Competency-Based Education Pilot program is to be carried out over a four-year period. Grantees will have seven planning months (December 2015 – June 2016), followed by three academic years of implementing their districts' competency-based pilots (2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019). Grants up to $200,000 per fiscal year are awarded for the planning year (FY16) and the first full year of pilot implementation (FY17).

B. Interest Survey for the Competency-based Education and Innovative Learning Pilot Programs
The Competency-Based Education Pilot will allow five eligible applicants to develop and implement competency-based programs during the pilot. Funding for two fiscal years will be awarded in an amount up to $200,000 per academic year for selected applicants. The application will open in the CCIP on Oct. 1, 2015. Applicants interested in applying must complete and submit the Interest survey by 5 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2015 in order to apply in the CCIP. Questions can be emailed to competency.based.education@education.ohio.gov.

C. Request for Proposal Timeline
All grant applications must be submitted in the CCIP and are due no later than 4:59 p.m. on Oct. 30, 2015. Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from Nov. 2-30, 2015. The selection and award of the five pilot sites will be made no later than Dec. 15, 2015.

D. Planning Timeline
Upon notification, the pilot sites may begin their planning processes immediately and will be required to participate in department-sponsored professional development and competency development activities tied to the initiative. The seven-month period from Dec. 16, 2015, through June 30, 2016, will serve as the planning period.

E. Implementation Timeline:
- 2016-2017   Year 1 Implementation
- 2017-2018   Year 2 Implementation
- 2018-2019   Year 3 Implementation

F. Timeline Table

Activity	Completion Date
Grant application available for review on the Ohio Department of Education's website (PDF application)	Aug. 21, 2015
Grant application evaluation criteria available for review on the Ohio Department of Education's website	Sept. 15, 2015
Interest Survey completion	Sept. 30, 2015 by 5:00 pm
Grant application opens in the CCIP system	Oct. 1, 2015 at 12:00 pm (Noon)
Grant applications are due to the department of education	Oct. 30, 2015 at 4:59pm
Raters begin evaluating grant applications	Nov. 2, 2015
Awardees selected to receive grants are notified	Dec. 15, 2015

G.   Application Requirements

1. Project Summary/Abstract
Applicants are to provide a summary of their competency-based education plan that aligns with the implementation components and the management plan and includes a concise description of the following information:

- Project objectives and activities;
- Proposed project outcomes;
- Proposed measures of those outcomes;
- Number and location of proposed sites;
- Number and general description of students to be served; and
- Community involvement, including integration with college and career readiness opportunities.

2. Project Narrative
The project narrative shall include the sections described below:

Project overview. The section of the narrative should address, with clarity and relevant detail, each of the following components:
A. *Theory of Action/Logic Model*: Provide a brief overview of the logic model and theory of action. Include a description of how the model would change current practice and move student learning forward.
B. *Context:* Provide a description of the setting, including general community demographics, facilities involved and learners to be served in the project.

C. *Implementation of Competency-Based Education:* Describe the proposed competency-based education plan and its implementation, considering the following components:

- ***Career pathways and partnerships with industry/business and postsecondary institutions.*** Describe the career pathways that will be available to students as well as the industry/business and postsecondary partnerships that the applicant either has made or intends to make for the purposes of the competency-based education plan and the accessibility of jobs for students.

- ***Nonacademic competency development.*** Describe the nonacademic knowledge and skills students will need, as well as how the knowledge and skills will be acquired through career pathways in a competency-based education system.

- ***Curriculum.*** Describe the range of curricula materials used within your competency-based education plans, highlighting how technology will be used to expand learning options, increase student choice, demonstrate evidence of learning, increase overall instructional efficacy, support data collection and analysis, and improve communication. Describe the anticipated process for curriculum development in a competency-based education system.

- ***Instructional strategies for student learning.*** Describe the instructional strategies that will be used in the competency-based plan.

- ***Assessment.*** Describe how formative assessments will be used to guide daily instruction and aid in student selection of customized pathways. Describe how summative assessments, which vary in form and are administered when students indicate readiness, would denote mastery of competencies.

- ***Mastery.*** Describe how your site will work with the statewide collaborative in developing statewide competencies, learning progressions and appropriate assessments.

- ***Grading and transcripts.*** Describe the process that will be used to develop a grading and transcript system that aligns with the competency-based education plan. If the applicant has previously developed a grading and transcript system aligned with the competency-based education plan, it may upload examples to provide additional evidence.

- ***Grade levels.*** Describe how grade level flexibility will allow advancement of students, based on mastery instead of seat time, outside of one grade level per year.

- ***Data collection.*** Describe the data collection process to include the means of monitoring the implementation of the competency-based education plan,

the establishment of data collection methods and the creation of an evaluation system that supports teaching and learning in a competency-based framework.

- **Nontraditional options.** Describe what non-traditional options will be available to students to master competencies, earn high school credit, or meet curriculum requirements, outside of the traditional education setting.

- **Communications with students, families and community.** Provide a detailed description for student, family and community engagement in the development and implementation of a comprehensive competency-based education plan.

- **State and federal initiatives.** Describe the ways in which competency-based education will be integrated in all state and federal initiatives or integral programs.

D. *Continuous Improvement Process:* Describe the plan for continual internal evaluation and iteration across all key components of the proposed model.

- **Culture of continuous improvement.** Describe the current culture of practice and how this plan will cultivate a change in systemic practice that supports competency-based education across grade levels, buildings, subject areas and staff.

E. *Scalability:* Discuss how this model could scale up beyond your pilot plan. What is the timeline for scaling the plan across the entire full pilot site (e.g., across content areas, grade levels, school buildings, etc.).

F. *Capacity:* Describe the experience, knowledge, skills and resources necessary to implement the plan, including any advantages or additional relevant resources, partnerships, funding or other supports that would be available to your model and/or to your planning efforts. Describe how the plan would be carried out if a change in leadership occurs.

3. Management Plan

A single LEA applicant: Describe how the competency-based education plan will support teachers and administrators in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of systemic practices through high quality professional development. Explain how all stakeholders (e.g. administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, industry partners, etc.) will collaborate in order to share lessons learned and best practices while also engaging in the statewide collaborative.

Educational Service Center: Provide a clear plan for facilitating/leading all consortium partners to ensure cross collaboration in the group while also actively engaging as a statewide pilot member. Describe how the Education Service Center will not only act as the fiscal agent of the partnership but as a facilitator in all facets of the relationship (e.g. communication, professional development, etc.).

Each partner within an ESC-led consortium: Describe how the competency-based education plan will support teachers and administrators in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of systemic practices through high quality professional development. Explain how each partner will collaborate with stakeholders (e.g. administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, industry partners, etc.) and other members of the consortium to share lessons learned and best practices while also engaging in the statewide collaborative.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

Applicants must submit a planning budget for FY16. If selected for the pilot, the awardee must submit a budget for FY17 at a later date in the CCIP. The applicant will be required to provide a narrative of budget items in the Competency-Based Education Pilot program competitive grant application.

5. Attachments

A. Signatures of key partners (required)

Applicants must provide a letter of support that includes the signatures of key partners: the board president, superintendent, treasurer, principals, union representation, lead teachers and community school sponsor. This letter of support must be uploaded in the Competency-Based Education Pilot competitive grant in the CCIP at the time of submission of the application. Each partner within an ESC-led consortium as well as the ESC must provide a letter of support as described above at the time of the application submission in the CCIP.

B. Self-assessment Tool (required)

Applicants must complete the Self-assessment Tool (Appendix B) and upload the document in the Competency-Based Education Pilot competitive grant in the CCIP at the time of submission of the completed application. Each partner of an ESC-led consortium as well as the ESC must complete and submit a Self-Assessment Tool in the CCIP at the time of the application submission in the CCIP.

C. Community-based letters of support (optional)

H.   Submission Instructions

The eligible applicant must complete the [Interest Survey](#) by 5 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2015, to apply for the Competency-Based Education Pilot competitive grant in the CCIP.

The applicant must submit the Competency-Based Education Pilot competitive grant, including the required attachments, in the CCIP by 4:59 p.m. on Oct. 30, 2015, in order to be considered.

I.   Review Process

An independent committee of expert practitioners will review and score proposals under guidance and coordination by the Ohio Department of Education.

As the Competency-Based Education Pilot project is a discretionary grant competition, the reviewers may consider past performance of the applicant in carrying out previous awards, such as achievement of project objectives, timeliness of reporting, use of funds or overall compliance with grant conditions. Additional factors that may be considered when selecting an applicant for an award are geographic distribution, type of site (rural, small town, suburban, urban), ages/grades served or number of students served.

E.   Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for the Competency-Based Education Pilot competitive grant will be released Sept. 15, 2015.

IV.   Appendices

A.   Self-assessment

B.   Assurances

C.   Readings and Resources

APPENDIX A

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Ohio's Competency-Based Education Pilot
Self-assessment Tool

The definition of Competency-Based Education for the purposes of this pilot is outlined as:
Any system of academic instruction, assessment, grading and reporting where students show mastery based on demonstrations and assessments of their learning rather than the amount of time they spend studying a subject. A competency-based educational program shall encourage accelerated learning among students who master academic materials quickly while providing additional instructional support time for students who need it.

This tool is designed for self-reflection to assess readiness/capacity to design and implement competency-based education as a pilot site. The items were developed based on
- Enabling legislation Ohio House Bill 64;
- Literature review on competency-based learning, including studies on how the reform is defined, research findings on this education model, and challenges and facilitators for successful implementation;
- Systematic review of exemplars and lessons learned from advanced states, districts and schools implementing competency-based learning models.

The self-assessment can be used to support the decision to submit an application and, if the decision is to move forward, to assist with the planning phase activities and fidelity of implementation.

In weighing a decision to apply, an eligible applicant must consider the overarching goals of the Competency-Based Education Pilot. This Competency-Based Education Pilot is designed to:
- Promote innovative learning that is meaningful to students, cuts across multiple curriculum areas, and extends outside of the classroom, such as jobs and postsecondary study;
- Advance students to higher-level work once they demonstrate mastery of competencies, rather than advancing based upon seat time in the classroom;
- Give supports to struggling students before they advance and prevent further failure down the road;
- Keep all students on pace to graduate and ensure those below level make rapid progress;
- Graduate students with deeper college and career ready skills;
- Identify how teachers can help students move in different ways;
- Engage teachers deeply with researchers in practice; and,
- Inform future development of statewide competency-based policies and programs.

Readiness Rubric
Each component of the self-assessment is scored based on the eligible applicant's capacity to implement a paradigm shift in systemic educational practice. The applicant will gauge how close its current system is to competency-based (step 1); and its capacity to successfully transition to a competency-based system (step 2). Applicants should apply a three-point scale for building a culture that supports competency-based education when completing each component of the rubric, with a score of one being the lowest potential and a score of three being the highest.

If a consortium applies for the pilot, each district and/or school in that consortium should independently complete steps 1 and 2 of this readiness rubric. Consortium leads should review all readiness when determining which districts or schools to include in the pilot.

Step 1: What level along the competency-based continuum is your district or school currently operating?

	Traditional	Emerging	Competency-Based	Points
	1	2	3	
Personalized Learning	Student learning happens inside a traditional classroom with little to no accommodation for student interests and learning styles.	Student interests and learning styles are sometimes considered when educators incorporate real-world experiences and partners into the classroom.	Students choose from a wide range of learning experiences at school, online and in their community. Educators work with diverse partners and students to piece together individual learning pathways that accommodate student interests and learning styles.	
Learning Progression	Students are expected to master grade level college and career ready standards.	Students are expected to master grade level college and career ready standards and transferable skills.	Students are expected to master competencies aligned to college and career ready standards. Each competency has clear, transferable learning objectives.	
Learning Pace	Students advance based upon seat time, at the instructor's pace, regardless of whether they mastered the learning objectives or need additional time.	Even though courses are based upon seat time, students may take accelerated courses if they demonstrate readiness. Students receive specialized support when they fall behind peers. Educators continually group students to encourage peer learning and maximize learning gains for all.	Students receive customized supports and accelerated opportunity both in-school and out-of-school to ensure they stay on pace to graduate college and career ready. Students advance based upon mastery, not based upon seat time.	
Instruction	Every classroom has one teacher who designs and delivers an instructional program with very little differentiation for individual students.	Educators engage in some collaboration across teams and content areas to align and differentiate instruction based on real-time feedback on student performance.	Educators work collaboratively with students, each other, parents, and industry and community partners to develop a unique learning plan for every student based on student interests, learning styles and real-time data.	

	Traditional	Emerging	Competency-Based	Points
	1	2	3	
Assessment System	Assessment instruments are used at set times to evaluate and classify students, not to guide instruction. Students have one opportunity to take the summative assessment at the end of the course or at the end of the year.	Educators use formative assessment instruments when they believe students are ready to demonstrate mastery. These assessments help educators tailor instruction so that more students are ready to master the summative assessment at the end of the year.	A comprehensive assessment system is an essential part of the learning system. Formative assessments guide daily instruction and student selection of customized learning opportunities. Students demonstrate mastery of competencies through performance-based assessments. Students take these assessments when they are ready and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.	
			Total Points	

Based upon the total number of points earned in step 1, an applicant should consider the following:
Total Points in Step 1

13-15 The applicant's current system of education aligns well with a competency-based system expected in this pilot. The applicant should complete step 2 of this rubric to determine its capacity to successfully transition to a full-scale competency-based system.

10-12 The applicant's current system of education is partially aligned with a competency-based system expected in this pilot. The applicant should complete step 2 of this rubric to determine its capacity to successfully transition to a full-scale competency-based system.

Less than 10 The applicant's current system of education is very traditional and shows little alignment with a competency-based system. If the applicant seeks to promote innovative learning in which students advance to higher-level work once they have demonstrated mastery of competencies, it should consider modifying one of the components in the table above. In addition, the applicant should complete step 2 of this rubric to determine how to build its capacity in moving toward a competency-based system.

Step 2: What is your district's or school's capacity to transition to a competency-based system?

	Low capacity to transition to competency-based education	Developing the capacity to transition to competency-based education	High capacity to transition to competency-based education	Points
	1	**2**	**3**	
Decision Making	Decisions are made slowly, with little input from staff and building administrators. Conflict results when it is unclear how a decision was reached.	Decisions are made slowly, with input from various staff and administrators. Administrators explain the rationale and process for decision making.	Decisions are made quickly, and staff and administrators at all levels are afforded input opportunities and everyone understands how decisions are made.	
Leadership for Change	The district's/school's leadership team is hands-off and excludes building input. Decisions and actions are not connected throughout the district.	The district's/school's leadership team includes input from building administrators and staff and is responsible for making decisions related to improving student performance. School administrators and staff are responsible for carrying out the change.	The district's/school's leadership team is hands on and owns most decisions. All staff take responsibility for changing adult behaviors to improve student performance.	
Organizational Structure	The district's/school's rigid organizational structure and high rate of administrative turnover have prevented successful changes over the past five years and have built an organizational culture cynical to change.	The district's/school's organizational structure has resulted in a mix of successful and unsuccessful changes over the past five years.	The district's/school's flexible organizational structure has resulted in successful, systemic changes being implemented over the past five years.	

	Low capacity to transition to competency-based education	Developing the capacity to transition to competency-based education	High capacity to transition to competency-based education	Points
	1	**2**	**3**	
Motivation and Culture of Innovation	The district/school is characterized by red tape and defined channels that discourage staff from working across content and departments. Continuous improvement is limited and discourages risk taking.	The district/school is open to innovation, but only through a slow change process with cautious leadership or has some collaboration opportunities for staff to work across content and departments. While the district/school promotes continuous improvement, it does not reward risk taking.	The district/school promotes continuous improvement, rewards risk taking and its structure allows staff to work across content and departments.	
Data Collection and Use	Data are not readily available to educators and are rarely used in the decision-making process.	Data systems provide limited "real-time" information on each student's learning but are readily available to educators and used in the decision-making process.	"Real-time" data are readily available to administrators, teachers and students and are used to drive decisions that seek better outcomes for student learning.	
Continuous Improvement	The district/school examines change when mandated to improve performance and looks only within its boundaries for best practices.	The district/school examines change primarily when performance is low and seeks research in the field.	The district/school constantly examines change (regardless of performance levels) and seeks research in the field and best practices beyond its boundaries.	
Benchmarks	The district's/school's benchmarks are set according to the state standards.	The district/school continuously sets benchmarks that go beyond state standards and reflect incremental change.	The district/school continuously sets benchmarks that go beyond state standards and are competitive with the high performance of others.	

	Low capacity to transition to competency-based education	**Developing the capacity to transition to competency-based education**	**High capacity to transition to competency-based education**	**Points**
	1	**2**	**3**	
Communications	Communication protocols are typically top-down and/or one-way. Communication outside of the district is limited.	Communication protocols are in place that allow for two-way communication within the district.	Effective communication protocols are in place that allow for two-way communication reaching all levels in the district and reaching outside to the community.	
Partnership with Industry and Jobs	The district/school has limited partnerships with local industries; such partnerships are for the purpose of completing and ensuring basic requirements are met.	The district/school is expanding its partnerships with local industries for the purpose of giving students more opportunities to complete core requirements or supplementary classes (e.g. credit flex, College Credit Plus, etc.).	The district/school partners with industry to facilitate pathways to competencies through credentialing, mentorships, apprenticeships, job shadowing and other non-traditional methods for course completion.	
Connections with Post-Secondary Partner	The district provides limited opportunities to students seeking postsecondary options. The burden of understanding and exploring options is placed on individual students, rather than on the district.	The district is expanding the postsecondary options available to students through programs such as credit flexibility and College Credit Plus. Programs are available to individual students but are not an institutionalized part of the district/school's structure.	The district/school has made postsecondary or related partnerships a priority and actively seeks out and communicates these opportunities to better the experience for all students.	

	Low capacity to transition to competency-based education	Developing the capacity to transition to competency-based education	High capacity to transition to competency-based education	Points
	1	**2**	**3**	
Student Advancement	The district/school operates under the traditional K-12 model; student grade levels are defined and discrete. There is no flexibility that allows students to move beyond grade level when ready.	The district/school allows for some grade level flexibility by combining grade levels within whole classrooms, through acceleration policies or through additional supports provided to students.	The district's/school's grade level configurations are flexible and allow students to move to the next level of learning when they master academic content. Student advancement is not based on grade levels.	
Total Points				

Taking into account the applicant's current alignment with a competency-based system of education (identified in step 1), an applicant should consider its capacity to successfully transition based upon the following range in scores:

Total Points in Step 2

29-33   The applicant has a strong capacity for successfully transitioning to a competency-based system and should consider applying to participate in the state's pilot.

22-28   The applicant has a strong opportunity for successfully transitioning to a competency-based system, so long as it continues to build its capacity for innovation. If the applicant's current system of education aligns with competency-based (step 1), then the applicant should consider applying to participate in the state's competency-based pilot while it works to strengthening its lower-rated components of innovation (step 2).

Less than 22   Innovation is possible, but it might be very difficult to transition to a competency-based system given the applicant's current low-capacity for change. The applicant should consider strengthening two or three of the components listed in step 2 as it prepares itself to move in the direction of competency-based education.

APPENDIX B

Competency-Based Education Pilot Assurances

The Ohio Department of Education reserves the right to:

1. Require grantees to participate in program evaluation occurring, including public reporting of program outcomes;
2. Ensure grantees are meeting all applicable accountability requirements in state and federal law;
3. Make selections to five grant awardees/consortia by preference on concept for pilot programs;
4. Select any number of type of awardees for the five grants up to $200,000 in each fiscal year for planning purposes (2015-2016, 2016-2017);
5. Implementation of competency-based education programs must occur during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years;
6. Provide technical assistance as needed to awardees;
7. Give preference applicants who meet the goals outlined in Am. Sub. H.B. 64, including:
   - Promote innovative learning that is meaningful to students, cuts across multiple curriculum areas and extends outside of the classroom;
   - Advance students to higher-level work once they demonstrate mastery of competencies rather than advancing based upon seat time in the classroom;
   - Give supports to struggling students before they advance and prevent further failure down the road;
   - Keep all students on pace to graduate and ensure those below level make rapid progress;
   - Graduate students with deeper college and career ready skills; and,
   - Inform future development of statewide competency-based policies and programs.
8. Select applicants who have demonstrated commitment from their governing boards, administrators, sponsors, teaching staff, unions and other local stakeholders;
9. Require grantees to participate in professional development plans and state working groups including, but not limited to, the following:
   - Assisting in the development of model competencies that can be scaled up or down;
   - Assisting in the identification and/or development of assessments (formative and summative);
   - Assisting in development of monitoring tools;
   - Assisting in development of best practices; and
   - Assisting in the identification and assessment of data and metrics used to ensure compliance, progress and growth.
10. Require proof of fiduciary responsibility of the grantee to be submitted at any time;
11. Make changes to the grant requirements, administer research and funds at any time;
12. Make grant awards without discussion with the applicants; therefore, proposals should represent the applicant's best effort to ensure a quality proposal from a technical content and cost standpoint;
13. Reject any or all proposals received in response to the application;
14. Withdraw the application at any time, at the agency's sole discretion;
15. Disqualify any respondent whose conduct and/or application fails to conform to the requirements of the application;

16. Seek clarifications from the applicants;
17. Use application information obtained through the state's investigation of a provider's qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing and any material or information submitted by the provider in response to the agency's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the application;
18. During the application period, amend the application specifications to correct errors or oversights or to supply additional information, as it becomes available;
19. Change any of the scheduled dates;
20. Disburse funds subject to availability of state funds;
21. Waive any requirements that are not material;
22. Request information pertinent to the application; and
23. Require clarification at any time during the qualification process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of a provider's application and/or to determine a provider's compliance with the requirements of the application.

Appendix C

READINGS AND RESOURCES

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