

# Ohio

## Competency-Based Education: Pilot Planning and Implementation

OFFICE OF INNOVATION

JANUARY 31, 2017

## Introduction

The 131<sup>st</sup> General Assembly created the Competency-Based Education Pilot in Amended Substitute House Bill 64 by providing \$2,000,000 for five selected sites to develop and administer competency-based education (CBE) programs over the course of four school years. Applicants included community schools, joint vocational school districts, STEM schools, traditional school districts and educational service center-led consortia. Each pilot site received \$200,000 per academic year for one planning and one implementation year. The pilot is currently in the first year of implementation. (See Appendix A for legislation)

This report is in response to SECTION 733.30(F)(1) which states:

*Not later than January 31, 2017, the Department shall post on its web site a preliminary report that examines the planning and implementation of competency-based education in the districts, schools, and consortia selected to participate in the Program under division (B) of this section.*

The following report describes the following as each pertains to CBE pilot planning and implementation:

- Ohio's CBE pilot conceptual framework;
- Grant awardee requirements;
- Pilot site summaries describing goals and partnerships;
- Significant actions to date; and
- Planning and implementation lessons learned.

Additionally, the report concludes by discussing a learning agenda for the remaining two years of the pilot and considerations for expanding the reach of CBE and personalized learning throughout Ohio.

### I. Ohio's K-12 Competency-Based Education Framework

*Then you better start swimmin', or you'll sink like a stone –  
For the times, they are a changin'*

Bob Dylan

Policymakers, thought leaders, a growing number of forward-thinking educators and, most importantly, students who need relevant, customized instruction for career and college readiness are challenging the assembly-line approach to education. Much of the emphasis on change is focusing on *personalized learning*, an approach to education that tailors “learning for each student’s strengths, needs, and interests.”<sup>1</sup> As a central vehicle for personalized learning, competency-based education allows students to move at their own pace through course material often of their own choosing, offering a significant opportunity to disrupt a seat-time-based system that is too often removed from relevant learning experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick, S., Worthen, M., Frost, D., Gentz, S. Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning. iNACOL Center for Policy Advocacy, May 2016, Vienna, VA.

To gauge pilot site progress to date, the Ohio Department of Education requested each site complete a survey targeting early successes and challenges. As one respondent put it, “CBE provides a more holistic, functional approach to education,”<sup>2</sup> and that approach challenges educators, administrators, parents, teachers, policymakers and students to reconsider the way in which education is delivered in Ohio. The promise of CBE, whether delivered through blended or hybrid models, project-based learning, or myriad other self-paced innovative instructional methods, is the promise of agency – allowing students to have ownership over their own learning in rigorous and engaging environments that utilize relevant demonstrations of learning. The times are changing, and CBE makes for a useful paradigm.

### **A Sustainable Approach**

As one respondent to the pilot survey stated, “Competencies reflect a growth mindset,” and so too does Ohio’s approach to the CBE pilot. The Office of Innovation (OI) at the Department, the primary administrator of the pilot, was created to improve student outcomes through innovative policy and practice such as competency-based education, personalized learning and STEM. OI promotes creative, evidence-based solutions that embody the following core principles: engaged students with agency in their own learning; school environments that are creative, challenging, and equitable; forward-focused curricula that build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills; transformational educators and administrators; and data-driven decision-making. Through continual learning and alignment to these core principles, the CBE pilot is intended to be a launch pad for sustainable innovation in Ohio, not an end unto itself.

Ohio’s CBE pilot is built on the foundational work of national organizations such as iNACOL, Achieve, The Foundation for Excellence in Education and others who have sought to bring together a common understanding of competency-based education in an effort to better serve the needs of all students. INACOL’s work in capturing promising policy and practices from other states has been particularly beneficial to Ohio’s pilot.

Building on the national CBE framework, Ohio launched a pilot in 2015 to understand how CBE could be effective in an Ohio-specific context. A number of important conditions were considered: 1) Ohio’s desire for innovation is robust as evidenced not only by the creation of the CBE pilot but also by the establishment of the \$250 million Straight A Fund intended to support district-driven innovation and the state’s participation in the Council of Chief State School Officers’ (CCSSO) Innovation Lab Network; 2) the fervent belief in districts as innovation hubs; 3) a commitment to local control; and 4) a commitment to the importance of Ohio’s Learning Standards and an accountability system designed to promote equity and rigor.

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<sup>2</sup> Pilot Site Survey Responses Collected by ODE, December 2016.

With national research, the experiences of forerunner states, and Ohio's particular conditions in mind, the CBE pilot was designed to create "proof point"<sup>3</sup> grants (as described by Achieve) that utilize the learning that is occurring as pilot districts create CBE systems and encounter barriers to success that might inhibit the spread of innovative practices. Importantly, the CBE pilot seeks to understand how innovation works in conjunction with a standards-based system that utilizes summative standardized tests as central to the state's accountability system.

In "Promising State Policies for Personalized Learning" iNACOL advocates for the creation of a task force to better understand the issues associated with transitioning from a system based on seat-time to one built on competencies. Ohio's pilot serves this purpose. The pilot encourages peer learning opportunities for participating districts and does so with one eye toward the districts beyond the pilot interested in implementing CBE but unsure how to go about doing so.

The CBE pilot is a decidedly ground-up approach and intentionally comprehensive in nature – seeking to understand what is required from students, teachers, school leaders, policymakers and community partners to create a culture that is student-centered and competency-driven, the instruction and assessments to support it, and the policies needed to make it viable. The CBE pilot logic model that describes the expected outcomes can be accessed [here](#).

### **The Definition of Competency-Based Education**

Ohio's CBE definition echoes those of CompetencyWorks and iNACOL and other national thought-leaders and states such as New Hampshire, Iowa and Kentucky that have led the way in CBE development. Competency-based education: 1) allows students to move at their own pace, 2) promotes deeper learning, 3) addresses the individual needs of students, 4) promotes innovative instructional models, and 5) bridges the gap between classroom innovation, authentic assessments and state-required standards.

### **The Sum of the Parts**

Complete system transformation must be methodical, sustained and supported at the classroom, district and state levels. Pilot sites have agreed to implement all core CBE components defined in the application, but total transformation will take time. Each site has emerged as a leader in a critical area, and the experiences of these very different sites are collectively informing a model based on the building blocks of CBE. For example, Chagrin Falls is building teacher capacity to allow students to move at their own pace. Cincinnati Public Schools is integrating of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and dispositional competencies throughout the curriculum. Cuyahoga County ESC is developing and implementing performance-based assessments for authentic demonstrations of learning. Fairfield County ESC is using CBE to serve at-risk students. Geauga County ESC's consortium of STEM

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<sup>3</sup> Advancing Competency-Based Pathways to College and Career Readiness: A State Policy Framework for Graduation Requirements, Assessment and Accountability. Achieve

schools is utilizing project-based learning to better serve students through relevant, engaging experiences.

### **The State Education Agency's Role**

The SEA has traditionally been viewed as a compliance agency, but through the pilot, the Department will learn how to best catalyze innovative practices and policies in a state that rightfully looks first to local districts as hubs for innovation. The department will seek ways in which the state can support local efforts and where, above all, the SEA must get out of the way.

## **II. Pilot Overview**

### **➤ Application and Selection Process**

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) were eligible to apply. Grantees had 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).

Applicants were required to demonstrate commitment from their governing boards, administrators and teaching staff and show the capacity to fulfill the responsibilities detailed in the application. Applicants wishing to apply were required respond to the Interest Survey by 5 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2015. Only applicants completing and submitting the Interest Survey were able to apply in the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) system.

Potential applicants were required to assess their readiness and capacity using the Competency-Based Education Pilot Self-Assessment Tool included in the application. A link to the tool can be found [here](#). The self-assessment tool was used to help districts assess their capacity for moving from a traditional to competency-based approach and determine their current status along the continuum toward competency-based education implementation.

### **➤ Pilot Goals**

The 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.

➤ **Pilot Requirements**

To ensure the goals of the pilot are met, participants are required to do the following ([a full description of requirements can be found in the full application](#)):

**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);
- ✓ 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.

**3. Tie-in to Other State and Federal Initiatives**

Programs should align 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**

Participants 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.

#### **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.

#### **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 their progress to develop and support an internal data collection and reporting system that empowers educators with meaningful and timely information to guide the continuous improvement and ensure that every student is on pace graduation.

#### **8. Participate in Evaluation Activities**

Pilot sites must provide data to the Department for the purpose of evaluating the pilot project and participate in an annual performance review.

#### **➤ Selected Sites**

Following the rigorous selection process, the following pilot sites were selected. Descriptions of each project is included below:

##### **Chagrin Falls Exempted Village**

The REALIZE U Project makes sure that all 2,010 students in four Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools maximize their individual potential. Students will show growth and competency through personalized and flexible learning experiences. The pilot will identify locally created and nationally standardized measures to illustrate student growth and competency for all courses in grades kindergarten through 12 by the 2016-2017 school year. It will expand the existing use of standards-based grading practices for all classes in all grades by the 2018-2019 school year.

The pilot also will grow the capacity of teachers. Three teachers will be trained in STEM programming via Project Lead the Way in summer 2016 and all students

in grades K-8 will begin to receive STEM programming as of the 2016-17 school year, expanding competencies to include real-world application of learning and problem-solving. Opportunities for secondary teachers to achieve College Credit Plus credentialing or endorsements to enable them to teach new AP courses (AP Computer Science Principles and English Composition I and II via CCP to be offered within our HS by our district teachers beginning in 2017-18) through online graduate coursework in the areas of English and Technology, via work with the University of Akron and Cleveland State University, will commence in spring 2016 and conclude by summer 2017.

Through partnerships with Hiram College and Cuyahoga Community College, Chagrin Falls will increase the course offerings available for students in grades 7-12 in two years. All teachers in grades kindergarten through 12 will have opportunities to take graduate coursework to attain the Gifted Endorsement (24 staff members by the 2017-18 school year) for gifted education and toward special education licensure and/or reading endorsement (two teachers by the 2017-18 school year) in special education, via partnerships with Ashland University, Kent State University and the University of Toledo.

The pilot will develop summer programming to help students move into more rigorous levels of content in the upcoming school year. It also will create interest-based study through enrichment programming, beginning in summer 2016. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, all students will create a personalized capstone project designed to evidence mastery of content and skills in grades 3, 6, 8 and 12. Each capstone will showcase the student's distinct competencies as they relate to research and learning within each school (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12).

### **Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS)**

My Tomorrow is empowering Cincinnati Public School students to turn their dreams, aspirations and strengths into concrete plans for their futures. At the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the district launched My Tomorrow\*ed, a bold vision that by 2020, 100 percent of all seventh-graders are prepared to actively pursue their chosen career paths at graduation. Beginning in 2015-2016, My Tomorrow includes grades 5-12 and will expand to all grade levels within a five-year period of launch.

The pilot will allow Cincinnati to expand these efforts by creating a college- and career-going culture in all schools. It will support the districtwide plan for student-driven, competency-based education that aligns with a broader economic and workforce development plan. Partnerships with KnowledgeWorks, the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce, business leaders, higher education partners, community partners and school administrators and teachers will create the framework.

Through the pilot, the district will engage every high school leader and their community partners in assessing the readiness of their schools for competency-based education. The data from this engagement process will inform the selection of the first group of pilot high schools in year 2016-2017, estimated to be five schools. The remaining high schools, estimated to be six schools, will join as the second group in year 2017-2018. The long-term goal is to expand competency-based education to all K-12 schools by year three (2018-2019). Volunteer leaders, through partnerships between local community agencies, higher education and the regional chamber of commerce through the Business Education Connectivity Council will work with students to develop college- and career-readiness opportunities. These activities will include developing real-world skills and knowledge through internships, job shadowing, mentoring and a K-12 roadmap of career-readiness activities.

### **Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County (ESCCC)**

Through the pilot, the Ohio Innovation Lab Network Consortium will implement for the first time in Ohio an innovative and scalable competency-based assessment system. Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity will support this effort. The consortium includes the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County and six Ohio school districts. The districts are Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools, Kirtland Local Schools, Maple Heights City Schools, Orange City Schools, Perry Local Schools and Springfield City Schools. The center will assist the consortium with the development of customized competency-based assessment materials.

Additionally, the pilot will establish and oversee scoring procedures and provide customized professional development. The consortium's main outcome is to foster innovation in its schools by implementing pathways that community partners support.

The pilot will use competency-based assessments for project-based learning, blended learning, work-based learning and portfolio/capstone projects. The six school districts will use these assessments to support systematic and districtwide changes in instruction and curriculum while monitoring student achievement toward desired performance outcomes. During the pilot's first year, the center also will support professional learning communities comprised of 48 teacher coaches. They will design, review, pilot and score approximately 75 performance tasks. This will happen through combined onsite and virtual training in support of a train-the-trainer approach. Each coach will impact 100 students within their school districts, for a total of 4,800 students.

Since all six districts serve 21,828 students (56 percent minority/multiracial, 68 percent from economically disadvantaged households), the first year of the effort will impact 22 percent of the consortium's student population. The end result (measure) will be a scalable professional development model that trains Ohio educators to create trustworthy, valid and reliable competency-based

assessments. All Ohio teachers will be able to use these assessments. The consortium school districts, supported by various community partners, will serve as local hubs exemplifying implementation of competency-based education.

### **Fairfield County Educational Service Center (FCESC)**

FAST Forward Competency-based Education Pilot is an initiative to transform educational systems in Fairfield County through a shared services model. It will provide multiple pathways to success in career and college at a student's individual pace. The pilot is a consortia led by Fairfield County Educational Service Center. Members include Eastland Fairfield Career and Technical Schools, Pickerington Community School, Cleveland Construction, Kokosing, Tackett Electric, Ricart Automotive, Germain Toyota, Jeff Wyler Chevrolet, Best Buy, Samsung, Board of Developmental Disabilities, Juvenile Court, local mental health agencies, Fairfield Transit, Columbus State Community College, Ohio University-Lancaster, Hocking College and Central Ohio Technical College in Fairfield County.

There are four goals. The first is to successfully transform three schools into competency-based education models. The second is to grow academic achievement of at-risk/special education youth. The third is to increase attainment of competencies students need for industry credentials and graduation. The fourth is to increase the successful transition after high school without need for remediation. The Eastland Fairfield Career and Technical Schools will pilot programs for construction technologies, automotive technologies and welding. Pickerington Community School (sponsored by Pickerington Local Schools) will open in fall 2016 as a competency-based education school model that uses individualized student success plans. Eastland Fairfield Career and Technical Schools and Pickerington Community School will transform practices to enable every student to develop competencies toward career and college readiness using individualized success plans.

These pilot sites will actively recruit underserved students who are at risk, adjudicated youth, dropouts and those with disabilities. The pilot will impact approximately 200 students across the three sites in 2016-2017. The pilot schools will be lab schools and provide three models for competency-based education replication.

**Geauga County Educational Service Center (GCESC)** Geauga County Geauga County Educational Service Center is leading a unique consortium of four established independent STEM-designated schools. These schools provide students with personalized learning pathways toward college and career success, which is the foundation of competency-based education. Each school approaches competency-based education through a different lens and uses different resources to monitor student progress. Recently, three of the four schools received conditional approval of their "waiver from state assessments"

applications. The fourth school was not yet eligible to apply because it was not open, but will apply when the next round of applications are accepted.

The four pilot STEM Schools are Dayton Regional STEM School, grades 6-12; BioMed Science Academy, grades 9-12; Global Impact STEM Academy, grades 9-11; and iSTEM Geauga Early College High School, grade 9. These schools collectively serve 1,250 students from 99 districts in 21 counties. This represents nearly one quarter of all Ohio counties. Twenty-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged and 18 percent are students with disabilities on 504 plans or individualized education programs.

By the 2018-2019 school year, the schools' projected enrollment is 1,700 students. The key focus of the pilot is to test and enhance a performance-based assessment rubric as an alternative for state tests. Additionally, the pilot will more effectively manage the student remediation process within STEM school settings so that other Ohio schools can replicate it.

Key partners in the pilot include: Ohio Soybean Council, The Ohio State University, Clark State Community College, Springfield Clark Career Technical Center, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Stark State, University of Akron, Wright State University, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Wave Foundation, Auburn CC, Lakeland Community College, Geauga Growth Partnership, SIFCO Applied Surface Concepts, Lubrizol Corporation and Battelle Education/Ohio STEM Learning Network.

➤ **Pilot Implementation: Significant Actions to Date**

**Participating Teachers, Students, and Schools**

Pilot Site	# Teachers Trained	# Students Participating in CBE	# Schools involved in Activities
Chagrin Falls Exempted Village	30	1500	4
Cincinnati Public Schools	57	4191	22
ESC of Cuyahoga County	75	1205	17
Fairfield County ESC	23	147	23
Gauga County ESC	91	1323	5

**Leadership Advisory Group**

The advisory group, comprised of leaders designated by each pilot site, meets bimonthly via conference call. The calls serve as a forum for peer-to-peer

learning and a channel for the Department to share resources or gather feedback.

### **Collaborative Workgroup**

The Office of Innovation has convened three collaborative workgroup meetings since grants were awarded in December 2015. Participation is required as part of the grant, but the intent goes far beyond compliance. The meetings are designed to foster cross-pilot collaboration and a shared learning environment.

- The first, an introductory meeting in January 2016 was held at RAMTECH. Participants from the CBE pilot and the Innovative Lab Network participated in a workshop led by Stanford SCALE on performance tasks and assessments.
- The second meeting, a four-day convening at the PAST Foundation in Columbus in April 2016, focused on competency design in mathematics, English Language Arts, science and social studies. Janet Twyman, Ph.D. BCBA, from the Center for Innovations in Learning, along with Karen Sanders and Mark Mitchell from The Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, facilitated the discussions.
- The collaborative workgroup was convened once again on December 2016 at the North Central Ohio ESC in Marion. The meeting featured Wendy Surr, Project Lead, Great Lakes & Midwest Regional Deeper Learning Initiative, American Institutes for Research discussing “Looking Under the Hood of Competency-Based Education,” a report recently released by AIR. The report focuses on student perceptions of their experiences in CBE schools. Pilot sites made presentations about their projects highlighting early successes and lessons learned.

### **Overarching Competency Development**

Competencies, the knowledge, skills and/or behaviors students must master in a specific content or performance area, provide the foundation for a competency-based education system. Students advance when they demonstrate concept mastery rather than through recitation of knowledge. Consequently, competencies are particularly important as a bridge between Ohio’s Learning Standards (what we expect students to know) and authentic demonstrations of learning as expected in a competency-based system.

Following the four-day collaborative workgroup meeting in April with the collaborative workgroup, the Department created a draft of overarching competencies based on the enduring concepts and big ideas embedded in Ohio’s Learning Standards. These competencies are based on stakeholder and expert feedback, are rooted in best practice and allow maximum flexibility for district leaders and teachers to create course-level and unit level competencies

that will be compiled over the course of the pilot to be shared with districts across the state.

Ohio's overarching competencies follow the design principles listed below:

- A focus on the over-arching, enduring concepts and cross-disciplinary big ideas that reflect transferable knowledge and skills;
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that have universal application for college and career;
- Flexibility, allowing for student choice;
- Measurability, allowing for locally designed modes of mastery demonstration; and
- A balance between the skills illustrated in Ohio's learning standards as the foundation for the overarching-state proposed competencies and the locally-created.

The Ohio Department of Education's role is to provide connection points between innovative efforts at the local level and broader statewide efforts such as Ohio's Learning Standards. The overarching competencies embody this role in a very concrete way. The Department will not mandate certain competencies associated with curricula, but instead highlight the skills and behaviors associated with the standards. The unit and course-level competencies are left to the teachers and district leaders.

The Department submitted the draft overarching competencies to the pilot sites and then to the Center for Standards & Assessments Implementation (CSAI) for review. Currently, the Department is leading a revision process that will address stakeholder recommendations. The competencies will be revised and submitted for stakeholder review. Once completed, the overarching competencies, along with a stakeholder-reviewed glossary, will be available for any district in Ohio interesting in implementing CBE.

### **Annual Evaluation**

Working in consultation with The Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Department will evaluate pilot sites to capture the fidelity with which their programs have been administered, as well as CBE's benefits or limitations in serving students. As required by the competency-based education pilot grant:

- Pilot sites will work with the Department 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.
- Additionally, the evaluation may also include measures based on postsecondary outcome data that are not directly reported by pilot sites, including postsecondary enrollment, remediation-free rates as reported by institutions for higher education to the Ohio Department of Higher Education and workforce outcomes (subject to availability).

The first annual evaluation will occur in June 2017.

### **III. Expenditures:**

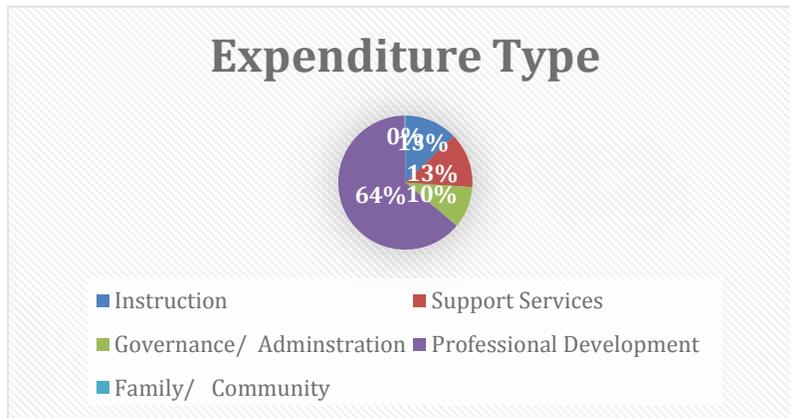
#### **Grant Themes**

Each grantee pursued an application that met the individual needs and aspirations of their particular district. Below are the overarching goals for the grants. Funding aligns with these goals.

- Test and enhance draft Performance Based Assessment (PBA) rubrics designed through the State Assessment Waiver planning process, and more effectively manage student remediation process within STEM school settings that can be replicated across CBE schools.
- Build systems and supports to recapture and provide CBE programming to the community's most underserved and at-risk youth in the CTE environment, increasing the change to CBE 2 programs in a single location each year.
- Implement an innovative and scalable competency-based assessment system of career, technical and college pathways with the support of Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity.
- Embed career-readiness skills in content areas, integrate more technology onto the classrooms, give students more tools to chart their career pathways and build their social and emotional skills, and line up resources to support teachers in this effort.
- Ensure all students are able to maximize their individual potential and illustrate growth and competency through the provision of personalized and flexible learning.

<b>Activity Type (Planning Year)</b>	<b>Total Grant Funding (\$)</b>
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<b>Instruction</b>	128,000.00
<b>Support Services</b>	132,402.10
<b>Governance/Admin</b>	100,260.00
<b>Professional Development</b>	635,587.95
<b>Family/Community</b>	2,000.00
<b>Total</b>	998,250.00



**Examples:**

- **Instruction:** Software and licenses for instruction (e.g. InventorCloud, Lego STEM)
- **Support Services:** Fiscal Support and services, CBE Coordinator, Data Services, Design Team Members
- **Governance/Administrative:** Accountant services, CBE Program Director, Project Management, Reporting Activities
- **Professional Development:** Substitutes, Travel Mileage and Meeting Expense, Stipends, Facility Use, Training/Software Licenses, Site Stipends for Project Convening, Teacher Stipends for work outside contracted day, Contract with PD provider
- **Family/Community:** Event materials and refreshments

**Grant Funding Expenditures Anticipated for 2017 Implementation**

<b>Activity Type</b>	<b>Total Grant Funding (\$)</b>
<b>Instruction</b>	173,886.43
<b>Support Services</b>	77,638
<b>Governance/Admin</b>	131,974.57
<b>Professional Development</b>	476,640

<b>Family/Community</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	860,139



#### **IV. Preliminary Findings**

Site successes and challenges will serve as the CBE blueprint beyond the pilot. Lessons learned during the planning and initial implementation phases were gathered in four ways. First, leadership advisory calls serve as an important part of the peer-to-peer learning structure. Ideas are shared among site leaders and OI staff members. Second, during the December 1, 2017 collaborative workgroup meeting in Marion, pilot representatives made presentations describing early project successes. Third, pilot site representatives also participated in a lessons-learned discussion during which successes and challenges were shared with work group members. Finally, each site completed a survey describing their efforts to achieve their intended outcomes, as well as global lessons learned regarding competency-based education administration at scale.

Four notable themes emerged through lessons learned feedback:

- The critical role teachers play in the successful implementation of a CBE system.  
From gaining teacher buy-in to ensuring quality training and professional development – mobilizing teachers is essential;
- The role of leadership in shaping a vision for CBE and consistent messaging;
- The culture shift required to implement a competency-based system; and
- The role the state should play to promote a transition to CBE.

Quotes from the lessons-learned surveys are excerpted below. The summary begins with global insights gleaned from site representatives and concludes with global challenges that must be addressed in order to make CBE successful.

### **Global Insights for Implementing Competency-Based Education in Ohio**

- ❖ CBE and tasks incorporating authentic learning components contribute to student readiness with content knowledge, skills, and competencies to better prepare students for colleges and understanding of the skillsets required for future careers and lifelong learning. (ESCCC)
- ❖ CBE provides a more holistic functional approach to education. (Chagrin Falls)
- ❖ Adopting a growth mindset of learning for adults AND students is critical to this process. It helps adults to recognize learning as a continuum and the need for a competency-based approach to education. (Chagrin Falls)
- ❖ To scale up at the K-12 level, a common understanding of the terms and methods must be shared broadly. Overarching competencies must be defined for the state, although implementation within parameters should allow local districts to make curricular decisions about the particular courses and grade levels, methods, number of skills and competencies to be achieved, goals and objectives, etc. Specific data points will have to be identified in order to provide reliable collection and reporting of data for comparability purposes. (ESCCC)
- ❖ Districts and educators are at different levels of readiness to implement new projects. New projects and programs must be carefully presented to participating educators by district leaders so that participants can understand the relevance and significance of the work and how it integrates with current state-mandated work and aligns with other projects or programs in the district. (ESCCC)
- ❖ An important lesson learned was the value of including as many stakeholders (teachers, parents, students) in the planning phase.
- ❖ "...As a rule, parents take longer to get acclimated to this type of learning, instruction, assessment and hands-on experiences." (GCESC)

### **The Teacher's Critical Role**

- ❖ Growing the capacity of our teachers is a necessary part of this process...helping them to see how competency may be evidenced in multiple, ongoing and varied ways, and growing their toolbox of competencies (i.e. via interdisciplinary approaches, problem-based learning experiences, etc.) and strategies to evidence them for varied student populations (i.e students with reading disabilities, gifted students across K-12). (Chagrin Falls)
- ❖ All educators on the ESC-CC pilot CBE district teams are writing and implementing Performance-Based Tasks and Assessments during Fall 2016 to Winter 2017. Based on feedback from Stanford facilitators, educators are editing and revising tasks. The Scoring workshop for full teams is upcoming during winter 2017, with further implementation of

- tasks and data collection in spring 2017. A group of coach/trainers from the districts is being selected for additional professional development during 2017, and they will use a train-the-trainer model to introduce a second cohort of teachers from the districts in the 2017-2018 academic year, with additional teachers trained in 2018-2019 for task writing, implementation, scoring, data collection and comparison of PBA data with state assessments and/or end of course assessments. (ESCCC)
- ❖ The phase-in approach at Eastland-Fairfield CTS has been a key part of implementation; the go-getters have taken the idea and implemented various components in their classrooms while some of the veteran staff have been able to watch colleagues go through the process and tentatively plan their own implementation. Providing opportunities for go-getters to present at staff meetings and our district professional development day has provided differentiated learning opportunities for the staff to explore at their own pace.(FCESC)
  - ❖ *In recommending important steps for implementing a CBE system:* Build teacher capacity to manage the classroom environment. Also build supports from senior leadership for competency based education. (CPS)

### **The Role of Leadership**

- ❖ A major lesson learned is the need to facilitate the learning and understanding of administrators, school counselors and community members from each district. (FCESC)
- ❖ A big takeaway for any district is to work within a collaborative environment that is supported by district senior leadership. If it is not a priority of support from senior leadership, there will be pockets of success and not districtwide adoption. (CPS)

### **School Culture and Structure**

- ❖ *In recommending steps for implementing a CBE system:* ...develop a graduate profile and capstone or portfolio projects that will capture student CBE work in various disciplinary areas and demonstrate student growth in the discipline over time. This is expected to provide a more complete understanding of student achievement and gaps of knowledge than a one-time standardized test.(ESCCC)
- ❖ CBE and implementation of alternate teaching, learning and assessment require careful and extended planning with specific goals and objectives in mind for the districts or consortium. (ESCCC)
- ❖ The basis for instruction at the Success Center is online learning through FLVS (Florida Virtual School). Early on, we realized the content is challenging and requires a more hybrid (blended) approach for student success. As such, we have structured the staffing and time throughout the evening program to ensure students have adequate time with HQT staff in each area to accomplish weekly goals. (FCESC)
- ❖ The Success Center staff began creating weekly academic goals for students that keep them moving forward in each class that have resulted in nearly every student being at 50 percent of the way through each

- course prior to the holiday break (about two weeks before we would expect them to be at the same place in a traditional school). (FCESC)
- ❖ Getting feedback from students and parents is critical in helping to guide implementation and make tweaks as needed. Students informed staff of their areas of weakness and are being much more proactive in seeking support when needed rather than passively failing or waiting for the teacher to identify the need for intervention. (FCESC)

### **The Role of ODE or any SEA**

- ❖ CBE may be implemented along with the traditional teaching and standardized assessments. However, currently most CBE is still tied to traditional seat time but with an infusion of PBA, PBL, or other authentic means of demonstrating learning. Some exceptions are with CTE testing and certification. Online courses may offer an opportunity for students to be self-paced. (ESCCC)
- ❖ A common language from the Department to support community understanding for competency based education. Also, assessments that support personalized pacing need to be created. (CPS)
- ❖ The lack of ability to seek out testing waivers was a huge blow to competency-based education. Double-assessing hurts students by minimizing instructional time. If districts/schools are willing to put in the work to identify nontraditional ways for students to evidence competencies, they should be provided with flexibility/freedom to use them in place of traditional measures. (Chagrin Falls)
- ❖ In general, testing windows that are currently required for state-mandated assessments do not adequately reflect the needs of the students within a STEM school and/or CBE environment. With these mandated testing windows, it is difficult to assess students' mastery of learning and move them along the learning continuum when they have to wait for a state assessments. (GCESC)
- ❖ Determining and communicating how the CBE project overlaps with other policy and agency priorities would also be very useful to ensuring that the project implementation and outcomes are aligned with those priorities. (GCESC)

### **Global Challenges for Implementing Competency-based Education in Ohio**

- ❖ Challenges include time and funding for extended professional development of teachers and administrators working collaboratively for design and implementation, and follow-through with successive iterations, data collection, training of additional teachers, etc. A challenge will be ODE/ODHE alignment of CBE statewide in support of student transition from secondary to postsecondary, and support for best practices and exemplary programs. (ESCCC)
- ❖ Districts and consortia need financial support for technical requirements for collecting and reporting data, the costs and time constraints of

- administering and scaling up new pedagogical methods and assessments, the professional learning needs of educators who are adopting new curricula and instructional strategies, and providing the funds, facilities, and opportunities for in-school and out-of-school learning. Districts also need support in connecting with business and community organizations that will discuss their future workforce needs. They need to learn about the new programs, courses and models of CBE or other student-focused learning at the career or university and college levels. (ESCCC)
- ❖ It is imperative for a school exploring CBE to travel and visit sites that have successfully implemented CBE and see the different approaches being taken to ensure individualized, personalized learning. (FCESC)
  - ❖ Each district has expectations for our district, and molding program implementation into all of those expectations has been difficult. One of the main questions involves grade-point averages and the granting of credit for transcript purposes. (FCESC)
  - ❖ The global lessons learned as a result of planning and implementing CBE is that there are many different approaches to take to provide this type of learning to students and that often it is challenging to narrow the focus to the right plan given the students and communities. (FCESC)
  - ❖ ...the way in which higher education institutions require transcripts has been a barrier to appropriately notating student learning within a mastery-based and project/problem-based learning environment. (GCESC)
  - ❖ There needs to be a consensus or education as to how competencies, skills and assessments all interplay to support competency-based learning. Also, there is teacher professional development needed to develop this type of facilitation of student personalized learning. If districts are to implement this type of education, there needs to be vertical articulation of supports and learning from the community, higher education and ODE. (CPS)

## **V. Conclusion: Toward a CBE Learning Agenda and Beyond**

CompetencyWorks argues CBE transformation includes three essential elements: Shared Leadership, Shared Journey of Inquiry, and Shared Vision and Shared Ownership.<sup>4</sup> All three are encouraged through Ohio's pilot. CBE adoption beyond the pilot, however, depends on an intentional strategy for transformation. The following learning agenda outlines the essential pieces needed for Ohio to move innovation forward:

### **1) A shared vision for the innovative classroom**

A personalized learning environment that integrates technology, project-based learning, performance assessments, experiences beyond the classroom, and most importantly, student agency remains out of reach for most schools and educators in Ohio. A CBE system is one pathway to a more

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<sup>4</sup> Implementing Competency Education in K-12 Systems: Insights from Local Leaders June 15 Sturgis

innovative classroom, but it is only a piece of the puzzle. The CBE pilot will propel innovation forward but should not be mistaken for the only pathway.

**2) A framework to move the vision forward**

A tiered system of innovation, much like that of a number of other states, should be explored as a way to provide forward-thinking districts a roadmap toward innovation. The Department plays a unique convening role and should work with stakeholders to provide tools and support for districts as they chart a course for district transformation.

**3) Developing transformational leaders**

Effective transformative leadership is being demonstrated in regions and districts and schools participating in the pilot and beyond. The qualities of those leaders should be more clearly captured, defined and shared with other interested school leaders and administrators.

**4) Educator preparation for a competency-based education system**

As the pilot sites have reported, having teachers engaged in the process of school transformation and ensuring they are prepared to implement CBE are essential elements to sustainable implementation. The process for doing so should be more clearly captured, defined and shared with other interested school leaders as they seek ways to prepare their teachers. The state must determine from the CBE pilot how to best support those professional development efforts.

**5) Demonstration of mastery in a standards-based system**

A student's ability to demonstrate mastery and move at his or her own pace is fundamental to competency-based education. Like many other states, Ohio must grapple with the coexistence of a CBE system that requires flexibility and authenticity in assessments and concurrently address the issues of equity, comparability and accountability that are central to the state's standards-based system.

**6) Essential flexibility**

Students move at their own pace in a CBE system. Classroom structure, curricula, instruction, assessments, etc. require flexibility. Seat time and school-day requirements should be examined and existing opportunities for credit flexibility, experiential learning, simultaneous credit and College Credit Plus should be explored for expansion.

**7) Post-secondary alignment**

In a comprehensive CBE system, students with the ability to earn postsecondary college credit or workforce credentials should be able to do so. Likewise, postsecondary institutions must be able to recognize competency attainment for the purposes of matriculation. This will require K-12 to work closely with postsecondary institutions to ensure alignment.

The pilot will conclude at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. The department will post a final report by December 31, 2018.

## **Appendix A**

SECTION 733.30. (A) The Competency-Based Education Pilot Program is hereby established. Under the Program, the Department of Education shall provide grants to city, local, and exempted village school districts, including municipal school districts as defined in section 3311.71 of the Revised Code, joint vocational school districts, community schools established under Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code, and STEM schools established under Chapter 3326. of the Revised Code, and consortia of one or more school districts, community schools, and STEM schools led by one or more educational service centers for designing and implementing competency-based models of education for their students during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years.

(B)(1) A district, community school, STEM school, or consortium shall submit an application to participate in the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program to the Department not later than November 1, 2015. The application shall be submitted in a form and manner prescribed by the Department.

(2) Not later than March 1, 2016, the Department shall select not more than five districts, schools, or consortia to participate in the Program. The Department shall require a district, school, or consortium to agree to an annual performance

review conducted by the Department as a condition of participating in the Program.

(C) The competency-based education offered by a district, school, or consortium selected to participate in the Program under division (B) of this section shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

- (1) Students shall advance upon mastery.
- (2) Competencies shall include clear, measurable, transferable learning Am. Sub. H. B. No. 64 131<sup>st</sup> G.A.2843 objectives that empower students.
- (3) Assessments shall be meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
- (4) Students shall receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
- (5) Learning outcomes shall emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of work-ready skills.
- (6) It shall incorporate partnerships with post-secondary institutions and members of industry.

(D) A district, school, or consortium selected to participate in the Program under division (B) of this section shall remain subject to all accountability requirements in state and federal law that are applicable to that district, school, or consortium.

(E)(1) If a district is selected to participate in the Program or is selected to participate in the Program as part of a consortium under division (B) of this section, each student enrolled in the district who is participating in competency-based education shall be considered to be a full-time equivalent student while participating in competency-based education for purposes of funding under Chapter 3317. of the Revised Code, as determined by the Department.

(2) If a community school is selected to participate in the Program or is selected to participate in the Program as part of a consortium under division (B) of this section, each student enrolled in the school who is participating in competency-based education shall be considered to be a full-time equivalent student while participating in competency-based education for purposes of funding under Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code, as determined by the Department.

(3) If a STEM school is selected to participate in the Program or is selected to participate in the Program as part of a consortium under division (B) of this section, each student enrolled in the school who is participating in competency-based education shall be considered to be a full-time equivalent student while participating in competency-based education for purposes of funding under Chapter 3326. of the Revised Code, as determined by the Department.

(F)(1) Not later than January 31, 2017, the Department shall post on its web site a preliminary report that examines the planning and implementation of competency-based education in the districts, schools, and consortia selected to participate in the Program under division (B) of this

section.

(2) Not later than December 31, 2018, the Department shall post on its web site a report that includes all of the following:

(a) A review of the competency-based education offered by the districts, schools, and consortia selected to participate in the Program under division (B) of this section;

(b) An evaluation of the implementation of competency-based education by the districts, schools, and consortia selected to participate in the Program and student outcomes resulting from that competency-based education;

(c) A determination of the feasibility of a funding model that reflects student achievement outcomes as demonstrated through competency-based education.