Competency-based Education Task Force

Meeting Notes

July 30, 2012

9:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

School Administrators of Iowa, Clive

Opened meeting: 9:30

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Allen, Molly Boyle, Connie Buhr, Charity Campbell, Chris Coffman, Shawn Cornally, Joan Corbin, Lyn Countryman, Sandra Dop, Jason Ellingson, , Jeff Herzberg, Pam Kirsch, Valorie J. Kruse, Cathy Molumby, Nancy Movall, Allan Nelson, Dana Schon, Jen Sigrist, David Tilly, Bridgette Wagoner, Susan Walkup, Kari Webb, Todd Wessels, Melissa Peterson for Cindy Swanson, Shane Williams for Andrea Stewart.

Burning Questions participants expressed:

- What does competency really look like?
- How will this be implemented in the schools?
- What will this look like in secondary schools?
- What does this look like in elementary?
- How can we communicate with parents and stakeholders to transfer from grades as we know them?
- What can we do to avoid roll out mistakes?
- How do we bridge gap between secondary and post secondary?
- How will this align with Community College expectations? (remedial education, etc)
- How will competency-based education look when my young child gets to high school? Will it still be around?
- How do we establish validation of competency-based, and how do we navigate local control?
- Which parts are we already doing and which parts do we need more evidence- and how do we share in this work?
- Can it be an alternative? Or can it be something that all kids can participate in? What about alternative "drop-in" ? As an example, could we have a digital literacy circle?
- How do we change the system? How do we develop a school system that fully emphasizes personalized learning?
- Kids don't know what to do with this—they have a seat time addiction, how can we get them off of this addition?
- How do we help boards along with this idea? What can ISBA do to help?
- What is the extent to which the state/DE is going to exercise leadership on this idea? Need to look at this K-16.
- How can we create an environment of openness and bring this to "local control" so that they want to implement these initiatives? You cannot mandate excellence

- How will teacher prep change if this is implemented? And the transition to higher education?
- How do we cultivate the spirit of trust?
- Do we have a common definition in our state? And what does it look like?
- How do we leverage technology with social learning and social authoring to help teachers and districts move to competency-based education?
- How do we support teachers as they begin the hard work of writing competencies? Where do districts go to get help to write competencies?
- How do we bring this to the communities and help them understand the need for change?
- How do we credential learning that happens outside the formal learning setting/school?
- What about eligibility for speech, sports, etc? What if a student completes all competencies by the end of their sophomore year?

AGENDA ITEM: INTRODUCTION: HOPES AND DREAMS

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Bring participants back to the topic after a long absence.	Jeff Herzberg	

Notes:
Jeff Herzberg monitored a Google Hangouts session with students and educators already involved in competency-based education in Oregon, New Hampshire, and Colorado. He asked them to connect about emotional side on what is going on in other parts of the country. How it has changed lives and professions for students and teachers

Diane Smith- Oregon Business Education Compact with Jessica (teacher) & Tanner (student)

- Jessica - HS geography teacher- two things stand out: grading and the way I teach students. I realized I had been grading on behavior and not on what they knew. I was trained in standards based education. Not really about the foundation of your lessons- just taught to the mainstream and not enrichment, etc. Now I am much more confident that I can justify grades and directions students need to go. Much more transparent and students are taking ownership of their learning. The classroom looks different; there is data on the walls. It is student-driven with interventions and enrichments. The emotional side? I have never felt more challenged as a teacher, but kids are giving more too. I am more confident in my grading and what assignments and lessons are. It is much easier if not doing it alone and the support of administration is critical.
- Tanner – Proficiency based teaching help is different. There are no more work sheets and just get answers. With proficiency-based teaching you have to be actively learning. With proficiency-based you can pinpoint where you are struggling. I can change this bad grade, and I now know what I need to do to make it better. I want to be in an active learning classroom.
- Diane- Oregon took on tenants that helped students. First, we need to be clear about what students need to know and be able to do. We were working on a deficit model and kids were doing two things—chasing points and playing school. Second, we need to start telling the truth about student learning. Academic rigor was just not there when we took a look, and kids were taking more remedial courses at college. Colleges felt high schools were dumbing down curriculum.

Brian Stack, New Hampshire- -Brain- Sandborn Regional SD. Nine admin and students.
Oregon is more like what you will see in 5-6 years. We are more like what you will see early on. NH made shift in 2007-08. We had to identify standards and competencies and then course specific and school wide competencies that students are assessed on, a standards-based report card, and a transcript.

-Mark, teacher- 2nd year with competency based grading. It was not a perfect transition but big adjustment. It has sharpened focus on what students are learning. Now we ask: How can we enrich learning? And we grade almost entirely on rubrics. We focus on what are students learning and not learning. We post on the board so that students know why they are learning certain things. This helps us tailor enrichments and interventions and evaluate our teaching tools as well. The big issue is communication with parents and students. I teach freshman and they don't know about competency-based education. They need to be informed of this change in how they are learning.

-Teacher- Students can apply this to college and work.

-Student- We get very specific learning, and I like that. I like the rolling grade- you keep what you learn and it doesn't just start brand new.

-Students- it helps me know what I am doing and helps me learn. It is important to let students and parents know what needs to be learned and it helps simplify what needs to be learn.

-Brian- communication is really the key. We would do that differently if we had it to do over again.

Colorado- Jeff and Julie

-Jeff- Eagle Rock is an independent, residential school and has used proficiency based education since 93. They also do wilderness experience and student projects/presentations.

We use Understanding by Design. All of our assessments are performance-based. Rarely is it a test. Almost all is applied evaluation. We use rubrics. Kids pass the course and earn credit, or they do not earn the credit. Students can spend as much time as they need to pass the grade. Each student has an individual pathway. We believe strongly in student as worker and teacher as coach. Students always know what is expected of them. Much of our focus is in how to assess performance. Continually monitoring where students are, where they need to go, and how they are going to get there.

-Honda supports this school. Their professional development is very well developed.

-Julian- student: In my other school I wanted to take subjects that came a little easier and avoided more difficult courses. I also did not connect that well with teachers. Here I learned I needed to take more responsibility and took a class on brain research. Before I didn't know what was expected, but here I developed skills in focus and perseverance because I knew what was being expected.

Question from audience-

To Oregon: To what extent is instruction individualized vs. group instruction? 30/70%
Group instruction 70%, but much less time – likely to be small group setting and tutorial – to help explain what is needed.

Jason Glass, Director, Iowa Department of Education thanked and challenge the group.
- Make good on constructivist approach, student-centered and engaging.
Iowa now has access and is participating in these three movements:

- Nationally- Fred Bramante- National Non-Profit on Competency-based Ed
- CCSSO- Iowa now a part of this
- REL-Midwest- (regional)- resources on evaluation of Competency-based Ed

Must be prudent. Keep these in mind as you do this work.

- Fidelity – Iowa is designed for variability
    - How will we know if we are really doing this?
- Empirical validation- encouraging research that this is an effective approach- how will we know this is working.
    - What elements should we expect to see if this is working
- Scalability- how can we bring this to others. After we have fidelity and validation, then we should consider scalability

David Tilly- Division of Learning and Results Administrator from DE
Our work will happen in context of a larger picture. Our trend is not where we want it to be. We will be focused on a handful of themes, and we will develop methods. We can do anything, but we can't do everything. We will focus on the following

1. Quality of our educators- building knowledge of our skills and effectiveness
2. Focus on the Core- not just the standards, but also the pedagogy
3. Decision making systems- that we can get just-in-time data systems

As we move forward, we work with Legislative, Districts and AEAs.

AGENDA ITEM: OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND STATE GUIDELINES

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Review the current guidelines, the charge, and the timeline.	Sandra Dop	

Notes:
Sandra Dop outlined the part of Senate File 2284 relating to competency-based education including the charge and timeline for this task force. See http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=483&Itemid=2728#pathways

Our Charge:

1. Redefine the Carnegie unit into competencies.
2. Construct personal learning plans and templates.
3. Develop student-centered accountability and assessment models.
4. Empower learning through technology.
5. Develop supports and professional development for educators to transition to a competency-based system.

The Timeline:

a. Preliminary report due by January 15, 2013
    1. Construct personal learning plans and templates.
    2. Empower learning through technology.
    3. Develop supports and professional development for educators to transition to a competency-based system.
b. Final report due November 15, 2013
    The task force shall submit its plan, findings, models, and recommendations in a final report to the state board of education, the governor, and the general assembly

State Guidelines have been written and posted to the Department Website. They include principles, definitions, examples, and recommended resources.

I. *Principles

A. Students Advance upon Mastery
B. Explicit and Measurable Learning Objectives that Empower Students
C. Assessment Is Meaningful and a Positive Learning Experience for Students
D. Rapid, Differentiated Support for Students Who Fall Behind or Become Disengaged
E. Learning Outcomes Emphasize Application and Creation of Knowledge
*Adapted from International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)

AGENDA ITEM: THE WORK PROCESS AND BRAINSTORMING QUESTIONS FOR ROSE COLBY- Consultant working with NH Department of Education

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Questions for Skype session after lunch	Sandra Dop	

Notes:
Group generated questions for Rose, placing three dots next to the question(s) that the individual felt were most important.

AGENDA ITEM: SKYPE SESSION: ROSE COLBY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Deeper understanding of the task.	Jeff Herzberg	

Notes:
REFER TO ROSE'S POWERPOINT:
GOALS:

1. To build understanding for the architecture of high quality competency-based learning systems

2. To raise awareness of the importance of the paradigm shift in school culture when moving to student centered, personalized learning

What is competency based learning (CBL)

1. Competencies (not standards) are used as a measure of student learning
2. In a completely CBL environment, students move forward at their own pace and in any place as they demonstrate mastery of intended competencies. Grade level and chronologically age are not factors in moving forward. (Key: at *their* instructional level, assessed with multiple assessments and move forward after demonstrating mastery- not age or grade level)

QED- Transformational Change Model
http://qedfoundation.org/transformational-change-model/

- Have conversations around this model and use as a sliding scale of progress

What is competency?
Competency is a student's ability to TRANSFER content and skill in/across content areas.

- No compromise. Not enough to know it and do it, you have to SHOW it

Principles of CBL

- The following is a three-part working definition of the design principles of a CBL pathway that can serve as a starting point for discussion: (iNacol- When Failure is not an Option)
  1. Advance upon mastery
  2. Explicit and measureable learning objective that empower students
  3. Assessment is meaningful

Standards and Competencies
Standards are the concept and skills built into the units of study
Competencies are the demonstration

Designing high quality units of instruction Colby suggested we use Understanding by Design Version 2

1. Acquisition : Stage q Standards, Broad Goals, content, skills
2. Meaning : Evidence or assessment tasks giving meaning to the acquisition
3. Transfer : Performance assessments with relevance and meaning to the learner that is tuned to DOK Levels ¾

Competencies and Performance Indicators

- Performance Indicators are designed to guarantee that students are learning using higher order thinking skills- Level 3 and Level 4 represent transfer and application

Webb's Depth of Knowledge

1. Recall-
2. Skills
3. Strategic Thinking
4. Extended Thinking

Currently there is lots of level 1 & 2 in high school. In CBL, kids need to be learning at Level 3 & 4 and assessed at Level 3 & 4. This is important in consideration of unit design. Working with strategic thinking and extended thinking in our units of study.

Teaching to standards may simply be teaching at DOK levels 1 and 2

Competency Criteria:

- Whether in the traditional classroom in online/blended learning or in an extended learning opportunity, these criteria can be used to guide the assessment tasks and learning plan
  1. Research – 21st century skill, seek out answers
  2. Reflection – day to day connection with how student is moving through material
  3. Product – (a test is not a product)
  4. Presentation

*Refer to **ELO Presentation Rubric***

- Asked questions - always going back to the competency
- Rubrics invoked at the beginning of the learning and implemented when student is ready

Paradigm Shifting:

- Writing competencies based on high level learning targets
- Success in meeting performance indicators should guide decisions about when a student is ready for summative assessment
- Pre-assessment should be used to guide instructional decision points in designing a unit learning plan
- Students are connected to their learning by the design of the lessons
- Research, reflection, product, and presentation can be used to guide personalization.
  - Traditional grading systems do not work in a CB system
    - Just because 6-weeks of a term is over does not mean the competency is over.
    - Really need to have technology in place in order to make competency grading work

New Hampshire Spaulding School Site- see website for grading rubrics
https://sites.google.com/site/newtoshsfaq/

- *SHS Competency*-Based Assessment - YouTube **www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNnqHOwGYSc**

New Hampshire Lebanon High School – ELO Rubrics

- https://sites.google.com/a/sau88.net/lhs_elo/elo-rubrics

Question for Rose:

1. How do you translate the Carnegie Unit into Competencies—You have to have a competency-based grading system in order to earn credit.
2. How do you devise a unit of credit, now that you do not have a Carnegie Unit? Meet the competency validation tool. I can invoke that competency in 9th grade and again in 10th grade—using the different lenses of what they may be studying. Social studies competencies can be used k-12.

3. How does local control play into this in New Hampshire? Rules say courses must have competencies, which are developed at local level and look different at each local school.
4. Higher Ed- how has teacher prep changed?
5. How about PD for teachers already in the profession? Different entry points depending on teacher. UDL teachers have an edge and may start at a different entry point. Need to look at Professional Learning Communities. Stand and deliver does not seem to work. Need to create same language and vocabulary. Need to provide a lot of coaching.
6. What has really changed as far as the structure for students? CBE looks different at different schools. Students engage with their work and are successful in their work in different ways. Student may say "I need to relearn this" and will seek engagement of the student in their own learning. Schools are still in fairly traditional schedules. Grading looks different, but schedules are similar.
7. How is a competency-based system different from a standards-based reporting systems? Standards may not be at a Depth of Knowledge Level 3 or 4. Standards define content. Common Core standards have done a great job of carving out equity in learning and portability of learning. It drills down to what is important for kids to know and be able to do, a competency is application and transfer—a level of expertise.
8. If we look at DOK- how do we address Levels 1 & 2 in a CBL environment? Students have to have the knowledge and/or be able to do the skill, PLUS they must demonstrate. We have to be sure that there are learning paths.
9. In regards to Core Standards and CBL/DOK Levels 3 & 4: Must all competencies be addressed at the DOK Level 3 & 4? Yes, competencies are Levels 3 and 4.
10. If the common core only has 4 standards at DOK 3 & 4 for 9-12 math, does that mean we only have 4 competencies or does that mean we have to create competencies that we will write at level 3 and/or 4 to encompass all the standards that are in the common core at DOK 1 & 2?
11. How do you wean students away from Carnegie Units/Seat time? Start at the elementary level. Get the students to come into this new format. Be sure to change grading as well.

AGENDA ITEM: DEFINING OUR WORK AND TIMELINES

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Begin conversations in the subgroups and plan for further work.	Sandra Dop	

Notes:
Sandra reviewed Task Force charge. Refer to handout found at table.
Preliminary report due by January 15, 2013.

Group work: Participants self selected into groups for each of the items on the charge from the legislature: Carnegie to competency, professional development, accountability and assessment, and learning plans and templates. Technology will be addressed by each group.

Groups further defined the charge, listed goals, tasks and timelines, resources needed, and possible success indicators and then reported to the larger group.

Groups named chairs:
Credit as Carnegie unit to credit as competency—Kari Webb
Professional Development—Dana Schon
Accountability and Assessment—Lyn Countryman
Learning Plans and Templates—Jason Ellingson

Sub Group Reports

Learning Plans and Templates:

- We still need a better sense of what CBE is.
- IF we need to move from Point A to Point B, we need a better definition of what Point B is (transformation). Once we know how far we can go, then we can address the other needs. We have an opportunity to take this really to transformation. Perhaps we need to define the continuum. We need to help people know where they are along the continuum.
- Colorado has the model we may want for our state Colorado is at the end of the continuum (Point B)- what they need to get done, what they need to learn, what about extended learning opportunities

Assessment:

- Local control is important
- Communities will support varying degrees of traditional and transformation
- Your school could look differently but still has fidelity to the model

Professional Development

What are the indicators of success?

- We need multiple plans based on audience. Teachers, administrators, community, stakeholders.
- How do you define professional development? We need to think about second order change and adult learning.
- Why are we teaching teachers-in-training separate from teachers-in-practice?
- Can we integrate the work of all the professional organizations?

Competency: – How we make the switch from Carnegie to competency-based credit
Tools and resources-

- Exemplars- Standards and Units
- Flow chart- example of how it works and it becomes about enrichments
- Guaranteed and Reliable Curriculum-
- Need to demonstrate and explore how personalization impacts learning and engagement
- Connecting to other state initiatives, RTI for example
- Policies- NCAA, diploma, etc

AGENDA ITEM: NEXT STEPS

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Plan for next meeting and subgroup work.	Sandra Dop Jeff Herzberg	

Notes: Next steps for these subgroups will be to decide one and invite people/experts to bring in and the resources needed. It was recognized that the groups are interdependent and will need to stay in communication with each other.

Other discussion:

- Should there be a moment when we look at the barriers?
- Suggested that we go to guidelines on resources- Reinventing Schools Coalition and perhaps the *The Leader's Guide to 21st Century Education*
- Can we take the Characteristics of Effective Instruction and overlay CBE in each of the areas?
- If the CBE system is the four principles, should we be cross walking those principles with something we already do like the Six Outcomes of the Iowa Core?
- Do we have empirical evidence? We need to do action research and do this with fidelity
- We need to know what the 3 key reading all of us should read are then perhaps do a webinar to process them.

AGENDA ITEM: PERMANENT CHAIR

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Elect a chair	Sandra Dop	

Notes:
Chair: Jason Ellingson, Bridgette Wagner, Jeff Herzberg and Sandra Dop will meet to outline a plan for the group to move forward.

AGENDA ITEM: NEXT MEETING

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up
Second large group meeting		Sandra Dop will do a meeting invite.

AGENDA ITEM: Adjourned 3:14

Expected Outcome	Lead	Follow Up