

Competency-based Education

Seminole County Public Schools – Implementing Systems-change with State Regulations

How does your organization define competency-based education?

We are currently developing this definition based on national models including Maine, Great Schools Partnership, iNacol, Marzano, NCSL, and CompetencyWorks. Particularly, we favor the following elements from the CompetencyWorks definition:



1. Students advance upon mastery.
2. Competencies include explicit, measurable objectives that empower students.
3. Assessment is meaningful and positive.
4. Students receive differentiated support based on their needs.
5. Outcomes emphasize the application and creation of knowledge along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

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URL

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Overview

In April of last year, we requested to be included in the language of Florida House Bill 1365, which created Section 1003.4996 in the Florida Statutes. This bill allows selected districts to apply for

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waivers from any state rules needed to pilot a competency-based school or program. We are currently authoring an application to label our upcoming [PSI High](#) program as a competency-based education (CBE) pilot and request waivers for as many FLDOE rules as possible. For example, a waiver request for rule 6A-1.045111 Hourly Equivalent to 180-Day School Year will be included in the application.

Beliefs

We believe that many of the state rules regarding mandatory yearly assessments and seat time are detrimental to students and families. Seminole has offered a possible testing solution to the state called the Sunshine Solution, in which nationally norm-referenced tests like the PSAT or Iowa exam could replace the Florida Standards Assessment. This “play” allows us to continue to work with state lawmakers on developing policies in the best interest of students.

Rationale

The opportunity presented itself to make progress on legislative change related to our beliefs when Florida House Bill 1365 allowed for waivers was considered.

Outcomes

We are still developing the application and will submit it before Summer 2017.

Surprises

This legislation is very new, so we are still exploring all of the opportunities this provides for personalized learning. Although this is an exciting opportunity to implement changes, much of what we develop will need to fit within existing institutional structures.

Trade-offs

Productivity in other areas.

Considerations

Be sure to include all stakeholders in discussion and development, including families, business partners, community leaders, and teachers. Most importantly, include students in all of the processes. We were challenged and motivated by students more than any other group.

Diverse expertise is needed to consider all areas that may be affected by the transition to CBE. This includes everyone. The areas you would expect to participate are departments like curriculum, professional development, and scheduling/state reporting. Other areas that are equally valuable include legal, facilities (for areas like class size and FISH), assessment and accountability, information systems (to ensure our learning systems are able to meet the needs of CBE teachers and learners), ESE, ESOL, and communications (to keep all stakeholders informed).

Artifacts

- [Florida HB 1365 Text](#)
- [Florida State Board of Education Rules](#)

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