

Elaine Leedy

From: Senator Dean Mortimer [dmortimer@senate.idaho.gov]
Sent: Friday, April 11, 2014 6:06 PM
To: Sunny Deye
Cc: Elaine Leedy
Subject: Re: Mastery based education system - Info from NCSL

Sunny, thank you so much. Let me try and digest this and share what you have given us. I am sure we will be back in touch

Sent from my iPad

On Apr 11, 2014, at 3:40 PM, "Sunny Deye" <sunny.deye@ncsl.org> wrote:

Hello Senator Mortimer,

This email is a response to Elaine Leedy's request for information from NCSL on studies or research related to mastery-based education systems. It sounds like your task force has a big job in front of you!

To date, NCSL's work in this area has focused on states that provide credit flexibility so that students can earn credit for out-of-school time learning. NCSL's policy brief, [Rethinking "Seat Time:" State Approaches to Earning](#)

[Credit in Out-of-School Time](#) highlights various state competency-based education policies, including: **State Policies in Practice**

- New Hampshire. In 2005, the New Hampshire Board of Education began requiring high schools to assess students based on their mastery of course-level competencies.
- Ohio [Senate Bill 311](#) (2007), the Ohio Core Curriculum Act, required the state Board of Education to adopt a plan to require all Ohio school districts to allow students to earn high school credit based on demonstrated subject area competency, instead of completed hours of classroom instruction. Students in Ohio now can earn high school credit by completing traditional coursework, showing mastery of course content or pursuing "educational options" through the "credit flexibility" program. This program allows students in all districts to create individualized learning plans for earning credit through out-of-school time pursuits such as after-school programs, educational travel, internships, community service, arts, music or sports.
- Oregon - A policy change by the Oregon state Board of Education in 2002 allowed school districts to award credit to high school students based on proficiency. Students can demonstrate their proficiency in a subject by traditional in-class work or through documented out-of-school expanded learning experiences. The Oregon Department of Education piloted proficiency-credit programs in seven schools between 2004 and 2006. In 2007, the state Board of Education increased graduation requirements and allowed proficiency-based credits to fulfill some of these requirements. In 2009, the board adopted the Credit Options Rule, requiring all in-class work to be connected to a demonstration of proficiency or mastery of standards. Students now can earn credit through this standards-based system in the classroom, outside the classroom, through prior learning or through competency examinations. [H.B. 2220](#) (2011) enhanced this by requiring student proficiency evaluations to include content-based assessments, criterion-referenced assessments and performance-based assessments.
- Rhode Island - In 2003, the Rhode Island Board of Regents passed new regulations that require high school students to "graduate by proficiency" by demonstrating achievement in standards-based content as well as applied-learning skills. Schools now must offer students opportunities to complete "diploma assessments," which include exhibitions, portfolios, Certificates of Initial Mastery or end-of-course assessments, to demonstrate mastery of the required competencies.

Recent State Policy Actions

- Iowa [S.F. 2284](#) (2012) allows school districts to award high school credit to students based on their ability to demonstrate mastery of required competencies, rather than on traditional time-based models. The law also created a task force to conduct a study of competency-based instruction, including standards, assessment models, professional development and integration with the Iowa Core curriculum. The [Final Report of the Competency-Based Education Task Force](#) was released in December 2013.
- Maine [L.D. 1325](#) (2009) required that multiple pathways to learning—including apprenticeships, online classes, dual enrollment and technical education—be provided for all Maine students. [L.D. 949](#) (2011) built upon L.D. 1325 by requiring high school students to demonstrate achievement in core learning areas to earn a standards-based diploma rather than a traditional time-based diploma.
- Michigan - In 2010, the Michigan Legislature added the option of a seat-time waiver by amending the State School Aid Act of 1979. This amendment allows school districts to waive the minimum amount of school time required by offering students access to innovative programs such as experiential learning, online learning, work-based learning and continuing to work toward a high school diploma without physically attending high school.

NCSL's [Connected Learning Advisory Board](#) met in December 2013 and heard about competency-based learning from two experts in the field - Matt Williams from KnowledgeWorks and Stephen Bowen, formerly the Superintendent in Maine and now with the Council of Chief State School Officers. You can view Matt's presentation [here](#) (Stephen did not have a powerpoint). If it's useful, I would be very happy to connect you with either of these experts to coordinate an in-state presentation.

Our Connected Learning Advisory Board is just beginning this conversation – no formal findings or recommendations yet – but we will continue to study the issue in the next several years.

Here are some additional resources that might prove helpful:

- [*Advancing Competency-Based Pathways to College and Career Readiness: A State Policy Framework for Graduation Requirements, Assessment and Accountability*](#), Achieve
- [*Mean What You Say: Defining and Integrating Personalized, Blended, and Competency Education*](#), iNACOL
- [*Necessary for Success: Building Mastery of World-Class Skills – A State Policymakers Guide to Competency Education*](#), CompetencyWorks
- www.comptencyworks.org is a collaborative initiative drawing on the knowledge of its partners and an advisory board, including iNACOL, the American Youth Policy Forum, Jobs for the Future, the National Governors Association, and MetisNet. The site has a wealth of information and is updated regularly.

If you have additional questions, or if I can help facilitate connections with these experts, please let me know.

All the best,
Sunny

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