

Competency-Based Learning School-Design Rubric

Design Principle 1: Students are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.			
Big Ideas:		Notes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students actively engage in metacognition throughout the learning process, with ample opportunities for self-reflection and goal setting. • A growth mindset culture, which honors and expects innovative thinking and growth throughout all learning experiences, is prevalent at all times. • Teachers and students co-create learning experiences that promote student agency. 			
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Metacognition	Metacognitive practices in learning experiences authentically engage students. There are ongoing opportunities for reflection to increase a student’s self-awareness; and fluid, ongoing monitoring and adapting of set goals. Teachers provide feedback and support, as necessary, but students are the drivers for this.	Teachers scaffold students’ metacognitive skills, but self-reflection is beginning to become more ingrained throughout the learning experiences. Goal setting and monitoring and adapting are occurring, but it is still a product of teacher-led processes rather than students taking the initiative and ownership within learning experiences.	Teachers provide students with opportunities to reflect on learning, but this typically happens at the end of a learning experience. Students may set goals but do not have consistent opportunities to monitor and adapt these goals.
Growth Mindset	The school and classroom environments honor and expect risk, innovative thinking, and growth throughout all learning experiences, in- and outside school. Deeply embedded structures for collaboration are present within all aspects of learning, for both students and adults.	The school environment is beginning to shift toward being more student centered. Decisions are beginning to be made based on <i>what</i> is best for the learners, rather than what is most comfortable for adults. The school encourages risk taking and innovation and allots time for collaborative practices involving problem solving and critical thinking during the school day for both adults and learners.	The school recognizes the environment has been adult centered and is taking clear steps to shift to a more student-centered approach to learning. School structures and classroom structures are beginning to include opportunities for collaborative problem solving for students and adults.

<p>Co-Created Elements of Learning</p>	<p>Teachers and students co-create learning experiences. The curriculum (what it is students are demonstrating their learning in), instruction (how they are engaged in learning), and assessment (how they are demonstrating their learning) reflect this.</p>	<p>Students have choice in learning opportunities, but much is still very teacher driven. Choice is often limited to learning experiences themselves (how learning happens) rather than what they learn and how teachers assess it.</p>	<p>Teachers are beginning to embed opportunities for students to make choices in their learning, but curriculum, instruction, and assessment are still very much teacher driven.</p>
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Design Principle 2: Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.			
Big Ideas:		Notes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment practices make extensive use of quality performance assessment and allow teachers to assess skills or concepts in a variety of ways. • Grades are about what students learn, not what they earn. • Teachers regularly calibrate their instruction, grading, and assessment practices to develop a common understanding of proficiency. 			
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Assessment Practices	The use of quality performance assessments is widespread among all teachers and is the primary type of assessment they use with students to demonstrate mastery. Just-in-time assessments indicate when students are proficient. The school has developed the capacity for project-based learning or other ways for students to demonstrate knowledge utilization at the highest level.	In addition to traditional assessment measures, teachers in the school make extensive use of formative assessment <i>for</i> learning and some use of performance assessments —multistep assignments with clear criteria, expectations, and processes that measure how well a student transfers knowledge and applies complex skills to create or refine an original product. Students have choice about how to demonstrate their learning.	Although linked to specific competencies, assessment practices are still very traditional—predominantly paper-and-pencil tests and quizzes with no schoolwide systemic attempt to control the depth of knowledge level. Few assessments are graded against a well-defined rubric and little to no common understanding exists between teachers on what proficiency means.
Grading Practices	All assessments are graded against well-defined rubrics. The school has established a system to hold all teachers accountable for the effective use of the common grading expectations. Teachers hold each other accountable as members of a collaborative team.	Most assessments are graded against a well-defined rubric. The school has established a common set of competency-friendly grading practices. Practices include separation of formative and summative assessments, use of a rubric scale, elimination of quarter averages, and promotion of reassessment without penalty.	Few assessments are graded against a well-defined rubric. Grading practices differ greatly teacher to teacher and grade level to grade level.

<p>System of Calibration</p>	<p>Teachers collaborate regularly as to calibrate assessments and to use the data from them to align instruction and make greater revisions of the curriculum as well as monitor the pace and progress of individual students.</p>	<p>Teachers regularly collaborate to develop and calibrate these performance assessments against learning progressions by reviewing student work and monitoring the pace and progress of individual students. Teachers are beginning to align their instructional strategies with performance assessments.</p>	<p>Little to no common understanding exists among teachers of different grade levels and content areas on what proficiency means.</p>
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Design Principle 3: Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.			
Big Ideas:		Notes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures exist to ensure that all students have access to and receive regular, timely differentiated support. There are systems to monitor the pace and progress of individual students throughout their learning. 			
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Support Structures	The school has a comprehensive support structure system to ensure that students who are not making progress receive regular timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs at the time of their learning. Professionals who share the same student or students, including teachers, special educators, guidance counselors, administrators, and other specialists, collaborate regularly as teams on these personalized, differentiated support structures for students.	The school has some structures in place to ensure that all students receive regular timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs. These structures are offered regardless of whether or not the student is identified in some way and are scheduled in such a way so that all students can access them without conflicts in their schedule (such as a flexible learning period that all students can access).	The school has limited structures in place to ensure that all students receive regular timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs. Most of the structures are limited, either to identified students (IEP, EL, 504, as so on) who require them for an educational plan or to students who are available only at certain times of the day when these structures are made available in the schedule (such as lunch or after school).
Monitoring Structures	Collaborative teams monitor the individual pace and progress of students throughout their learning. School leaders use the information collected on pace and progress to help develop personalized professional development plans for teachers to improve instruction.	Teachers have a shared understanding of what the typical pace and progress of a student should be throughout their learning and use it to monitor individual students.	Teachers work individually to monitor the pace and progress of their students and make instructional adjustments, as necessary. Specialists are included as necessary.

Design Principle 4: Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.			
Big Ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy language supports a model whereby students can advance academically upon demonstration of mastery—regardless of grade level. • Teachers monitor the pace and progress of each student as they are challenged at their appropriate level. • Students must produce sufficient evidence in order to be deemed proficient. 		Notes:	
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Policy Language	Policies provide students with multiple and varied opportunities to advance on demonstrated mastery any time, any place, and at any pace, unbounded by a school calendar or clock. They allow students to advance beyond the school that they are in to the next level. At the elementary level, policies support multiage groupings of students and at the secondary level, extensions to higher education when students are ready based on their own learning progression.	Policies allow teachers to meet students where they are by allowing them to access the curriculum that is before or beyond grade level as needed.	Policies support standards-referenced grading and student advancement, which happens at the end of a grade level or course.
Monitoring of Pace and Progress	The student effectively monitors and self-assesses his or her own pace and progress. A mechanism exists for the school to track student pace and progress such as a personalized learning plan.	Teachers have the ability to manage personalized classrooms with clear academic levels. They can group and regroup students so that they can access units that are before or beyond the grade-level curriculum as needed.	The school calendar drives learning opportunities and monitoring by the school calendar and the start and end times of the school day in each grade level or course.

<p>Evidence of Mastery</p>	<p>The school has an established quality-control system with clearly defined levels of mastery that teachers use to determine when students are ready to move on with teacher input.</p>	<p>Within the existing school calendar, the school has several opportunities for students to advance along their own continuum of learning upon demonstrated mastery through blended and online learning. At the elementary level, this happens through multiage classrooms and at the secondary level, through extended learning opportunities such as apprenticeships, community service, independent study, internships, performing groups, college courses, private instruction, and extended learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Students advance at the end of a grade level or course when they have produced sufficient evidence to be deemed proficient based on grade-level or course standards.</p>
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Design Principle 5: Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.			
<p>Big Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction and assessment of competencies, skills, and dispositions are designed so demonstration of mastery includes application of skills and knowledge. Multiple and varied opportunities exist to assess these. • Instructional strategies are learner-centered approaches that promote student agency and deeper engagement with pacing the teacher varies to meet the unique interests and needs of each student. • Expanded learning opportunities provide a way for students to personalize how they will demonstrate mastery of lifelong learning skills based on their needs and life experiences in order to help them be college and career ready. 		<p>Notes:</p>	
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Learning Outcome and Disposition Design	Instruction and assessment of competencies, skills and dispositions are ongoing, with students actively tracking their own learning progression in these competencies. Students receive ample opportunities for reflection and growth. Student self-reflection, goal setting, and monitoring are a regular part of the assessment process and students take active ownership in their growth related to these.	Rubrics that provide more opportunity for growth clearly define student expectations for competencies, skills, and dispositions. Teachers assess these on a regular and ongoing basis. The school uses collected data to determine a student's college and career readiness.	The school has established learning outcomes that measure application and creation of knowledge as well as the development of important skills and dispositions. One specific rubric does not define the dispositions, which teachers only assess at certain times during the year, limiting active student agency.
Instructional Strategies	Learner-centered instructional strategies that place student interests and needs at the center have widespread use at all levels of the system. Such models include project-based learning, workshop instruction, and Universal Design for Learning. The strategies flexibly allow teachers to vary pacing to meet the unique interests and needs of each student in an effort to increase student agency and engagement.	Teachers have made efforts to shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instructional strategies on a more frequent basis. Teachers consider students interest and needs and in some cases embed them into instruction in several ways.	The majority of instructional strategies prevalent in classrooms are teacher centered, meaning that the teacher is maintaining order and control over the <i>what, when, and how</i> of instruction.

<p>Expanded Learning Opportunities</p>	<p>At the elementary level, students are able to pursue areas of interest, demonstrating that they are personalizing competencies and have ownership in how they will show mastery. At the secondary level, students are readily able to participate in robust, real-world projects or other inquiry-based learning opportunities where they have the opportunity to apply learning in a new context outside the classroom experience. At all levels, students can exhibit their learning.</p>	<p>The school has established many opportunities for students to engage in real-world projects and other inquiry-based learning as part of their regular programming.</p>	<p>The extent to which students have opportunities to engage in real-world projects and other inquiry-based learning varies by grade level and teacher.</p>
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Design Principle 6: Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.			
Big Ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative culture exists with a shared purpose of learning for all, whatever it takes. This strong culture for learning, inclusivity, and empowerment is apparent in all aspects of the school. • Learning outcomes are completely transparent, and educators work in collaborative teams through a continuous-improvement process to monitor and respond to student progress, proficiency, pace, and need. • Pedagogy promotes student agency based on the most recent scientific research about learning which ensures all students receive feedback and experiences resulting in powerful learning outcomes. 		Notes:	
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Purpose and Culture	District or school-based leadership have a deep commitment to learning for all, whatever it takes. All educators nurture a strong culture of learning, inclusivity, and empowerment in all interactions and activities. The community has been involved in shaping new definitions of success and graduation outcomes. The school invests in both student and adult mindsets, knowledge, and skills.	The school has expanded its approach to equity by committing to a belief that high expectations are possible for all students. The school has started to identify and consider the unique set of experiences, strengths, needs, identities, and passions of each student, and use these to make decisions related to school improvement.	The school realizes equity by providing the same resources and educational experiences to all students and emphasizes equity by holding different students to a shared set of school or district expectations.

Structure	All educators in the school realize equity through transparency about learning. Teachers work in collaborative teams to continually monitor and respond to student progress, proficiency, and pace, and regularly respond and adapt to student needs using continuous-improvement processes.	Educators in the school actively unpack the curriculum and look for ways to ensure all students are growing at a meaningful pace. The school is developing processes and strategies to measure and monitor student growth based on student-performance levels and uncover bias to provide better learning opportunities for historically underserved students.	The school curriculum is filled with examples of learning targets and rubrics that use language inaccessible to all students. Some scaffolding exists to provide students access to the curriculum but it lacks the ability to help students develop proficiency in prerequisite skills. This leads educators to strongly emphasize covering the curriculum and passing students without reaching proficiency at the end of the year to the next grade level.
Pedagogy	Educators work in collaborative teams to develop a shared understanding and practice of pedagogies that draw from the most recent scientific research about learning, ensuring all students receive feedback and experiences that result in powerful learning outcomes. This promotes all students to become active learners, fostering their ability for agency, self-direction, and empowerment. All students are held to the same high standards for rigor and excellence, including demonstration of mastery and fluency of foundational skills.	Educators have made an effort to begin to use pedagogical strategies with a growth mindset model, which recognizes that students start with different sets of academic skills, social and emotional skills, and life experiences in an effort to better meet the needs of diverse learners. These strategies have become more learner centered and culturally responsive.	Teacher-centered pedagogical strategies that offer little opportunity for students to actively apply their learning are widespread in the school. While formal processes to provide feedback and communicate progress on lifelong learning skills necessary for student agency exist, educators lack support for how to coach or assess these skills in ways that guard against bias. Expectations of what it means to be proficient can look different across grade levels and schools in the system.

Design Principle 7: Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.			
Big Ideas:		Notes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a framework of standards, learning progressions, competencies, and dispositions aligned with national, state, or local frameworks. • Competencies have a high level of cognitive demand and rigor. • There exists a system to calibrate the competencies and dispositions across grade levels and content areas to ensure a common understanding of proficiency. 			
Indicator	SCALE		
	Performing School meets all characteristics in Developing and improves by . . .	Developing School meets all characteristics in Initiating and improves by . . .	Initiating School characteristics include . . .
Framework of Standards, Competencies, and Dispositions	Competencies, skills, and dispositions are applicable to real-life situations and require an understanding of relationships among theories, principles, and concepts.	The school has expanded the framework of standards to include competencies, skills, and dispositions with performance assessments and include both academic skills that are transferable across content areas as well as habits of learning behaviors. These are mapped K–12 as a continuum of learning progressions based on the standards so that students know exactly where they are and what they need to do next. The school district has established clear transitional and graduation competencies that articulate what it means to be ready for the next level.	The school has developed an academic framework of standards (knowledge and skills) that are aligned with national, state, and local frameworks in the school and are limited to scope and sequence of the textbook, program, or resource. The school identifies dispositions that are not easily measurable.

<p>Cognitive Demand</p>	<p>The cognitive demand of the competencies, skills, and dispositions is high—they require students to have a deep understanding of content as well as application of knowledge to a variety of settings by promoting complex connections through creating, analyzing, designing, proving, developing, and formulating.</p>	<p>The cognitive demand of the competencies, skills, and dispositions is medium—they ask students to show what they know in limited ways through identifying, defining, constructing, summarizing, displaying, listing, or recognizing. Teachers occasionally ask students to create conceptual connections and exhibit a level of understanding that is beyond the stated facts or literal interpretation through reasoning, planning, interpreting, hypothesizing, investigating, and explaining.</p>	<p>The cognitive demand of the competencies, skills, and dispositions is low—they ask for routine or rote thinking, and require basic recall of information, facts, definitions, and other similar simple tasks and procedures.</p>
<p>System of Calibration</p>	<p>In collaborative teams, teachers regularly engage in the calibration of the competencies and dispositions across grade levels and content areas to ensure a common understanding of proficiency by looking at student work.</p>	<p>Standards-referenced grading makes it clear what students know and how they are progressing. Teachers have a shared understanding of proficiency for both academic skills and dispositions by grade level and course by looking at student work.</p>	<p>The competencies are very specific to the facts in the content. The school has selected a taxonomy to have common language about depth of knowledge and has started a process to identify the competencies for each grade level, content area, and course. The school identifies dispositions, but a common process to collect evidence and report progress on dispositions does not exist in the school.</p>