

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT

June 9, 2017

Submitted to

Governor Rick Scott

President of the Senate Joe Negron

Speaker of the House of Representatives Richard Corcoran

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

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**SECTION 1003.4996, FLORIDA STATUTES**

[Section 1003.4996, Florida Statutes](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1003.4996,+f.s.&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.4996.html), requires the Commissioner of Education to provide to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program annually by June 1.

Background

The purpose of this five-year pilot program is to provide an educational environment that allows students to advance to higher levels of learning upon the mastery of concepts and skills, rather than advancing based upon seat time in the classroom, through statutory exemptions relating to student progression and the awarding of credits. The five eligible participants named in the legislation were P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School and Lake, Palm Beach, Pinellas and Seminole County school districts. Those choosing to participate were required to submit an application detailing annual goals and performance outcomes.

2016-17

Four of the five eligible districts chose to participate in the pilot during the 2016-17 school year. Seminole County School District elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only.

The four remaining districts entered the pilot program at varying levels of experience and implementation. All spent a good deal of time in administrative and teacher training as well as communication with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that there is a good understanding of what competency-based education (CBE) is and is not. Most districts were forward-thinking in the use of technology to its best advantage in a CBE program. A variety of ways were employed to allocate resources to the project, from grant funds to district funds.

The first year of the pilot program was not without challenges. Overall, ensuring that there was enough time for addressing deep professional development was a common concern. In general, however, the participant districts are positive and committed to their participation in the pilot moving forward. Lake County will take a pause on the project for 2017-18 while the new superintendent assesses the most pressing needs of the district, but they expect to move forward the following year.

The report consists of similarities and differences across districts noting successes, challenges and additional comments in the areas of communication plan, professional development, student progression, digital and blended learning, and allocation of resources. The summaries may be studied as well as more detailed information by district.

There is no cost to the state for the implementation of the CBE pilot program; any cost is borne by the participating districts.

Supplemental Information

The CBE pilot program legislation allows the commissioner, in addition to waivers authorized in

[s. 1001.10(3), Florida Statutes](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=s.+1001.10&URL=1000-1099/1001/Sections/1001.10.html), to grant additional waiver of rules relating to student progression and the awarding of credits.

The documents developed to fulfill the implementation of this pilot program included:

* Request for Applications;
* Memo to district superintendents regarding annual report; and
* Survey requesting information for compilation of annual report.

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE) PILOT PROGRAM**

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**SUCCESSES**

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| **District/School** | **Communication Plan** | **Professional Development** | **Student Progression** |
| **Lake County Schools** | Established K-12 competencies for math, English Language Arts (ELA) and science. | Teams of teachers and district staff to develop competencies. | N/A |
| **Palm Beach County Schools** | Administrator and teacher webinars; FAQ document; resources for parent communication; videos highlighting Accelerated Math Program (AMP). | Professional development opportunities provided to teachers of AMP Courses. | School-level developed selection criteria matched with needs of student populations. |
| **Pinellas County Schools** | Common understanding of CBE concept across levels (teacher and admin); leveraging collaboration with Great Schools Partnership (GSP). | Alignment of CBE framework and District Strategic Plan; shared leadership between high school area content specialists and high school teachers. | Developed: K-12 competencies for core content areas, task-neutral scoring rubrics, standards-based assessments and tasks, and framework for reporting in the online gradebook. |
| **P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School** | Monthly updates to the School Advisory Council (SAC) on standards-based grading (SBG) and stakeholder support; SBG practices fully implemented in K-5. | Increased knowledge, use and application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles; year-long professional learning community facilitated by UF College of Education; team attended the New England Secondary School Consortium spring conference. | Consistent alignment of formative and summative assessments to standards and learning goals. Clearly defined grades 6-12 learning goals. |
| **Seminole County Schools** | The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only. | | |

**SUCCESSES**

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| **District/School** | **Digital and Blended Learning** | **Allocation of Resources** |
| **Lake County Schools** | 2016-17 was concentrated on creating competency continuum. | Funding for resource development from Gates Foundation grant. |
| **Palm Beach County Schools** | Maximized blended learning through virtual and project learning, i-Ready, and online platform for formative assessments. | Designated AMP teacher(s) at participating schools. Significant funding invested to implement i-Ready and other instructional resources. |
| **Pinellas County Schools** | Extensive roll out of Microsoft Office 365 to manage differentiated curriculum. | Funding via Next Generation Systems Initiative grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. |
| **P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School** | Teacher collaboration utilizing technology and digital tools to support personalized learning. Bloomboard to support CBE professional learning for teachers. | Course redesign and professional learning funded via Digital Classrooms allocation. |
| **Seminole County Schools** | The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant, but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only. | |

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

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**CHALLENGES**

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| **District/School** | **Communication Plan** | **Professional Development** | **Student Progression** |
| **Lake County Schools** | New curriculum specialist in social studies, unable to complete that content area; new district leadership desire to pause project. | N/A | New superintendent would like to pause the CBE work over this next year to become more familiar with district's needs and challenges. |
| **Palm Beach County Schools** | Plan not developed until late April/early May. | Schools needed more guidance getting started with AMP. | Concerned that students taking accelerated courses will adversely affect learning gains and ultimately school grade. |
| **Pinellas County Schools** | N/A | Time to allow teachers to work on initiative in partnership with district specialists during non-student hours. | Due to more people and schools coming on board, resources are stretched. |
| **P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School** | Ability to assist stakeholders in understanding how all components of CBE must come together to support a successful pilot. | Current state of school facilities at secondary level; bringing together faculty from across disciplines and levels of experience; providing adequate contact time for necessary professional learning. | Minimal flexibility related to end-of-course assessments and impact of student achievement on teacher evaluation; ample time for conducting formal review of each course. |
| **Seminole County Schools** | The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only. | | |

**CHALLENGES**

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| **District/School** | **Digital and Blended Learning** | **Allocation of Resources** |
| **Lake County Schools** | 2016-17 concentrated on creating competency continuum. | N/A |
| **Palm Beach County Schools** | District currently does not have a Learning Management System. | Instructional materials support. |
| **Pinellas County Schools** | Learning curve. | Scaling the work to all schools and all grade levels and estimating the costs per school in order to plan a budget. |
| **P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School** | N/A | N/A |
| **Seminole County Schools** | The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only. | |

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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| **District/School** |  |
| **Lake County Schools** | New superintendent has indicated that she would like to pause the work related to CBE for the 2017-18 school year; however, Lake County is still interested in being part of the state's pilot program and waivers. |
| **Palm Beach County Schools** | The School District of Palm Beach County had a very successful roll out of AMP. It was predicted that approximately ten schools would participate; however, more than forty decided to give the highest achieving students in elementary schools the opportunity to stretch their thinking and engage in the accelerated coursework. The value of the larger sample size gave the AMP implementation team some lessons learned as more schools look to provide this opportunity for their students during the 2017-18 school year. |
| **Pinellas County Schools** | In 2017-18, the district will move from planning and development to implementation at the high school level. |
| **P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School** | The district feels it is clear that schools of today and tomorrow must be redesigned to support all learners in achieving college and career readiness. Testing, sorting and grading students do not accomplish what today's workplace and universities demand. Checking off standards and graduating students from high school does not guarantee preparedness for post high school success. As a developmental research school with a legislated mission to redesign and test solutions for K-12 education, the CBE pilot provides an opportunity for them to help inform and lead the future of Florida's schools. |
| **Seminole County Schools** | The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only. |

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

**2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Lake County School District**

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| **PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS** | Three elementary schools, five middle schools, five high schools, all with a focus this year on competencies for K-12 math, ELA, science and social studies. |
| **SUCCESSES** | Successful in creating competencies for three of the core content areas for K-12 (math, ELA and science). Teams of teachers and district staff participated in professional development around CBE and were part of the process of developing the competencies themselves. Many of them shared that the process of work involved in developing the competencies was one of the best professional development opportunities they'd experienced. Several shared that the process of carefully evaluating the standards vertically, in a K-12 continuum, gave them a far deeper understanding of both the expectations of the standards and the level of work students in each grade would need to master in order to be ready for the following grade level. Our Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant provided the resources to develop competencies. |
| **CHALLENGES** | There were a few challenges. There was a new curriculum specialist in social studies, which meant no progress in getting that content area completed. There is new district leadership who would like to put a pause on the competency progression work. Piloting the progression was slated to begin in select teachers' classrooms this spring, but the new superintendent's desire to become more familiar with all of the district's needs and challenges has meant a pause on that work. |
| **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS** | While the new superintendent has indicated that she would like to pause the work related to CBE for the 2017-18 school year, the district is still interested in being part of the state's pilot program and waiver. |
| **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2017-18?** | No. |

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM**

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**Palm Beach County School District**

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| **PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS** | 64 elementary schools with a focus on math acceleration. |
| **SUCCESSES** | Informational webinars, videos, PowerPoints, letters and other documents were rolled out for administrators, teachers and parents. Mathematics professional development in the areas of resources and pedagogy; creation of online discussion forums for teachers to discuss best practices, successes and challenges. The district encouraged schools to develop selection criteria that best met the needs of their particular student population. Suggestions for selection criteria were provided, including FSA assessment scores where available, district-created assessment scores, marks on the standards-based report card, attendance, teacher recommendation, and student and parent interest. Specific course codes were created for these courses to allow for longitudinal tracking purposes in the student information system. Additionally, i-Ready has been a perfect complement to the Accelerated Math Program (AMP) as a means to personalize learning. AMP has helped to push student thinking to assist with acceleration and to help students who have content deficits. The program maximizes blended learning through virtual and project learning. i-Ready, a web-based diagnostic and instructional tool is available to all elementary schools. i-Ready, which is used to supplement instruction, allows teachers to measure growth and identify strengths and weaknesses of students so that learning can be personalized. In addition to using i-Ready in the classroom, students and their parents have access to the web-based program from their home computer or tablet, allowing students to continue their learning after school and in the summer. Open educational resources and cognitively complex tasks that give students opportunities to show mastery in the real world are other examples of digital resources that are used to supplement AMP curriculum. In addition, formative assessments are administered online. School level: At least one teacher at every participating school has been designated as an AMP teacher. Schools also provide technology access for students to utilize AMP materials and online assessments. District level: The district has invested significant funding to implement i-Ready and other instructional resources that can be utilized in digital form to facilitate multi-level classrooms. Exhaustive human resource support has also been allocated to AMP to develop new scopes and sequences, lesson plans, and assessments. Staff has also created and implemented teacher and administrator professional development for AMP. |

**Palm Beach County School District**

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| **CHALLENGES** | The plan was developed in late April/May which didn’t allow the district to market the idea to schools as much as desired. Between closing out schools and preparing for the new year, there were not as many schools initially that joined the initiative as might have been anticipated. Schools needed more guidance in getting started with AMP as far as scheduling is concerned. Teachers needed more assistance than anticipated with the move away from whole classroom instruction to a more personalized environment. In order to address these challenges next year, an online training module will be provided to schools to help them “Get Ready for AMP.” Schools are concerned that students taking accelerated courses will adversely affect learning gains and, ultimately, the school grade. The district currently does not have a Learning Management System that provides student-facing content based on their individual interests. Instructional materials support—students in AMP3 do not have a textbook to address additional 4th grade standards. Students in AMP4 get the 5th grade textbook but do not have a textbook to address the additional 4th grade standards. The district curriculum team is vetting and curating open educational resources from multiple sources or, in some circumstances, creating curricular resources to best meet the needs of the students. Although the district has developed solutions, this was a challenge to overcome. |
| **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS** | The School District of Palm Beach County had a very successful roll out of AMP. Where it was predicted that approximately ten schools would participate, more than forty decided to give the highest achieving students in elementary schools the opportunity to stretch their thinking and engage in the accelerated coursework. The value of the larger sample size gave the AMP implementation team some lessons learned as more schools look to provide this opportunity for their students during the 2017-18 school year. |
| **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2017-18?** | Yes. |

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**Pinellas County School District**

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| **PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS** | Three middle schools and four high schools. |
| **SUCCESSES** | Ensuring that district-level leaders, school leaders and teachers know what CBE is and what it is not. This is an ongoing effort that will be refined and expanded. The district is leveraging their partnership with the Great Schools Partnership (GSP) to help them frame their message both interally and externally. Another success has been the purposeful alignement of the CBE framework with the District Strategic Plan. Shared leadership between high school area content specialists and high school teachers has allowed for great success building the high school-level content-area competencies, performance indicators and task neutral scoring rubrics. K-12 competencies for each core content area have been developed, creation of task-neutral scoring rubrics, teacher-developed standards-based assessments and tasks and a framework for reporting in the online gradebook. There has been an extensive roll out of Microsoft Office 365 allowing teachers to manage differentiated curriculum. All expenses have been covered by the Next Generation Systems Initiative grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. |
| **CHALLENGES** | Finding time to allow teachers to work on this initiative in partnership with district specialists during non-student hours of the school year. Expanding the intensive work taking place with our high school curriculum team to our middle school and elementary school area content specialists and their teachers to work with GSP to develop their content-area competencies, performance indicators and task neutral scoring rubrics. Due to more people and schools coming on board, resources are stretched. District is unsure as to how much time will be needed to devote to making necessary changes as they collect hard and soft data around this implementation. They anticipate having to assess and tweak as they move forward. Both the competency work and the software being incorporated are new to the teachers and leaders, so there is a learning curve on both fronts. A continued challenge is scaling the work to all schools and all grade levels and estimating the costs per school in order to plan a budget. |
| **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS** | In 2017-18, the district will move from planning and development to implementation at the high school level. |
| **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2017-18?** | Yes. |

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**P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School**

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| **PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS** | One K-12 school. |
| **SUCCESSES** | Monthly updates to the School Advisory Council (SAC) on standards-based grading (SBG) have been met with positive support. SBG has enhanced the integrity of what is reported regarding students' learning and mastery of content and skills. Stakeholder support is strong for the continued development, implementation and refinement of SBG practices in grades 6-12 and is fully implemented in grades K-5. There has been an increase in faculty knowledge, use and application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles due to professional learning in UDL being incorporated into monthly professional development sessions. A year-long professional learning community facilitated by partners in the UF College of Education was instituted to support effective implementation of UDL principles. A team of six secondary teachers and leaders attended the New England Secondary School Consortium spring conference, returning with next steps and possible thought partners. Teachers are assisting one another in innovative uses of technology and digital tools supporting personalized learning. There is more consistency in aligning both formative and summative course assessments to standards and learning goals. Ninth grade students and their parents are provided progress updates throughout the year in relation to both learning goals and habits of work. Through the 1:1 digital device learning environment (for grades 6-12), students have greater flexibility in the use of technology to support their learning. All secondary courses include clearly defined and posted learning goals. At present, the Digital Classroom Allocation allows for funding course redesign and professional learning aligned with CBE. Bloomboard will be launching to support CBE professional learning for teachers. |
| **CHALLENGES** | Ability to assist stakeholders in understanding how all the components of CBE must come together to support a succesful pilot. Also, the current state of the school facilities at the secondary level is that they are outdated and not conducive to competency-based education; bringing together faculty from across disciplines and levels of experience, providing adequate contact time for necessary professional learning; the minimal flexibility related to end-of-course assessments and the impact of student achievement on teacher evaluation; ample time for conducting formal review of each course to identify areas of growth, alignment of outcomes and learning goals to standards in 6-12 department meetings are other challenges. |

**P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School**

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| **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS** | The district feels it is clear that schools of today and tomorrow must be redesigned to support all learners in achieving college and career readiness. Testing, sorting and grading students do not accomplish what today's workplace and universities demand. Checking off standards and graduating students from high school does not guarantee preparedness for post-high school success. As a developmental research school with a legislated mission to redesign and test solutions for K-12 education, the CBE pilot provides an opportunity for them to help inform and lead the future of Florida's schools. |
| **PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN 2017-18?** | Yes. |

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**Seminole County School District**

The Seminole County School District is an eligible participant but elected to use 2016-17 as a planning year only.