

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Introduction** In January 2022 Missouri Commissioner of Education Dr. Margie Vandeven formed the **Success-Ready Students Work Group** (SRSWG). In an introductory letter about the work group, Commissioner Vandeven shared the following:

As we work together to recover from the pandemic and the challenges it has presented for our schools, we have a unique opportunity to reimagine and reshape our education system in ways that provide better access to educational opportunities for all children. With this mission in mind, the Missouri State Board of Education tasked the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with exploring alternatives that replace the traditional time-based educational system with a competency-based system.<sup>1</sup>

The creation of the work group was supported by the Missouri School Board Association, Missouri Association of School Administrators, Education Plus, Greater Ozark Cooperating School Districts, and Greater Kansas City Cooperating School Districts. These organizations, along with other statewide entities, helped recruit members from various stakeholder groups, including: students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, business persons and higher education. Care was taken to ensure that work group membership represented all eight DESE supervisory regions. A complete list of participants and organizations solicited to submit stakeholder names is found [here](#).

Throughout the process emphasis was placed on effective communication. DESE created a website for the SRSWG which was regularly updated. The website included the agenda for each session. After each session a meeting summary with links to slide presentations and videos was posted. This communication strategy allowed the public to follow the work group's progress. The Missouri School Board Association supported this effort by voluntarily providing all technical and graphic arts assistance. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation also contributed by underwriting the cost of facilitation and providing access to the use of ThoughtExchange.

<sup>1</sup>“Letter to Missouri School Leaders and Educators,” Commissioner of Education Margaret M. Vandeven, February 1, 2022, <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/success-ready-students-work-group-commissioner-letter-educators>

The SRSWG' work was guided by five essential questions. These questions were used to focus the study and planning phases which informed development of recommendations and related action steps. The five essential questions are:

1. What is competency-based learning?
2. What strategies, including professional development, are needed to support implementation of competency-based learning?
3. What are barriers to competency based learning that need to be addressed locally and statewide with policy and practice?
4. How can the assessment system (including MAP) be redesigned to support student mastery of priority standards ensuring high school, college, career, and workplace readiness and meets federal requirements?
5. What is the framework and approval process for districts to voluntarily customize MSIP 6 requirements in order to implement CBL practices, including assessment evidence.

**Study Phase** The study phase, which involved three virtual meetings on Feb. 23, March 2, and March 9, 2022, engaged work group participants in understanding learning gleaned from a decade of Missouri studies and reports that addressed topics contained in the essential questions. Significant time was also spent gaining a national perspective for competency-based learning as well as insights about work well underway in Missouri at the local, regional and state levels to implement innovative assessment and learning designs that support students being high school, college, career and workplace ready. Summary documents for each session with links to presentations for Sessions 1, 2 and 3 are found [here](#). Topics addressed by study session were:

Session 1:	Welcome and Introductory Comments Vision and Team Building Competency-Based Learning in the Missouri Context National Perspective - Designing-Up Competency Based Learning
Session 2:	District Case Study: Liberty and Kearney School Districts Partnership Case Study: Real World Learning National Perspective (on CBL and Real World Learning)
Session 3:	District Case Study: Pattonville School District Missouri Assessment Partnership with National (state assessment) Scan

The study phase used the following working definition from the Aurora Institute for competency-based learning. This same definition was referenced in the 2021 Bellwether Report.

**Competency-based education is a system in which:**

- **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.
- **Assessment is a meaningful**, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
- **Students receive timely, differentiated support** based on their individual learning needs.
- **Students progress based on evidence of mastery**, not seat time.
- **Students learn actively** using different pathways and varied pacing.
- **Strategies to ensure equity** for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.
- **Rigorous, common expectations** for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.

*A competency-based school should implement all seven elements of the definition. Strong implementation also requires policies, pedagogy, structures, and culture that support every student.<sup>2</sup>*

The SRSWG believes this definition is sufficient to guide future competency-based learning work in Missouri.

During the course of this work, emphasis was placed on competency-based learning (CBL) as a mind-set used to design-up learning solutions. A CBL mind-set prioritizes learning, with time, structure and instructional strategies serving the purpose to support student success. It emphasizes reliance on research-based practices to engage with learning design. Use of meaningful data within a research design that informs improved practice will be important throughout the CBL implementation process. This approach will help address the following caution noted in the Bellwether Report on CBL's research base.

<sup>2</sup>"Introduction to Competency-Based Education," Aurora Institute, 2022, <https://aurora-institute.org/our-work/competencyworks/competency-based-education/#:~:text=Competency%2Dbased%20education%20is%20a%20system%20in%20which%3A&text=Student%20progress%20based%20on%20evidence,of%20schools%20and%20education%20systems>.

CBL is a nascent field of research, and the bulk of the research is qualitative and based on correlational analyses. With those limitations in mind, however, the research that does exist indicates that exposure to CBL strategies and approaches is associated with several positive outcomes, specifically proficiency gains in math and ELA, improved performance on standardized tests, and better performance on researcher-developed assessments. These outcomes are typically present when the strategies studied include “ clarity around academic expectations, competency-based standards, and use of multiple assessment types.”

Conversely, studies that showed negative correlations between CBL and student outcomes often occurred when schools lacked clear definitions and expectations and suffered from uneven implementation. Adopting CBL can be a powerful strategy for recovering lost learning during the pandemic, but realizing the benefits of CBL requires thoughtful planning, implementation, and continuous improvement.<sup>3</sup>

The studies, reports and presentations SRSWG participants engaged in spoke to the importance of involving local stakeholders when using a CBL mind-set to design-up learning solutions. Implementing CBL involves a series of carefully planned steps that support every student in achieving clear learning targets. As evidenced by the presentations, learning design applies not only to traditional classroom settings but to student engagement outside the normal school structure, including real world learning experiences that lead to workplace readiness. Learning design is supported, or inhibited, by policy structures at the local, state and federal levels. Creating space for local districts to innovate is critical to development of policy and instructional practice at all levels that better support students in their learning.

**Planning Phase** The second phase of the work focused on using learning from the study phase to plan a course of action for competency-based learning in Missouri. The first two planning meetings were held virtually on March 30 and April 6, 2022. On May 4, 2022 participants met in a hybrid format for what was intended to be the final meeting. Fruitful discussion led to the need for additional time. The May 4 meeting was continued on May 18, 2022. That process resulted in recommendations being finalized.

Participants actively engaged in whole group learning and in smaller break out rooms. Their conversations were informed by study materials and use of ThoughtExchange. Guided by the essential questions, the SRSWG identified five connected areas of focus to address: assessment for learning, professional learning design, policy, accreditation & accountability, and innovation zones. These five areas of focus were informed by a decade of study by Missouri educators and align with guidance provided by the Aurora Institute. The following graphic illustrates how these five connected areas of focus create a system of local, state and federal supports that help students master the knowledge, skills and dispositions foundational to being a success-ready student.

<sup>3</sup>“May 2021 Report on Competency-Based Learning,” Bellwether Education Partners, April 9, 2021, <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/may-2021-report-competency-based-learning>.

## FRAMEWORK FOR COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING



To structure the conversation(s), participants used the Knoster Model to frame vision, skills, incentives and resources needed for each area of focus. The Knoster Model supports systems thinking that leads to successful plan development and implementation.

### OVERVIEW: KNOSTER MODEL

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Change
	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Confusion
Vision		Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Vision	Skills		Resources	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives		Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources		=	Treadmill

The SRSWG was supported in its design work by two co-facilitators who were responsible for project development and implementation along with two K-12 co-chairs with expertise in competency-based learning and assessment. Small group conversations were led by trained facilitators with recorders capturing ideas in a shared document. Working within the Knoster Model framework, co-facilitators and co-chairs themed ideas from the small groups and reported those themes back out to the whole group. The results from this process were used to inform development of recommendations and action steps.

For more detail on SRWSG thinking derived from this process see the Summary of Work Group Learning and Ideas which is found on pages 15-37. This section details, by each area of focus, the vision, skills, incentives, resources, action plan needed for successful plan development and implementation. Additional information from studies and reports used to inform this work is found in the Selected References section (pgs. 38-56).

Working from a systems thinking mind-set, the SRSWG identified five recommendations to support implementation of the CBL framework. These five recommendations with action steps connect by design to build a learning system intended to support every student in having the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready. The five recommendations and action steps emphasize intentional collaboration across stakeholder groups and utilization of a strengths-based approach to inform changes in policy and practice that support competency-based learning design at the local, regional and state levels. Importantly, the recommendations recognize and build on the excellence in public education evidenced across the state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS (with Key Action Steps)

### Recommendation 1—Create a steering committee\* for policy development that supports competency-based learning.

#### Key Action Steps

- Identify a steering committee of participants which shall include but not be limited to *students, teachers, administrators, parents, school board members, higher education, business partners and DESE staff* who are knowledgeable in competency-based learning.
  - Steering committee membership shall include representation from individuals serving on the Assessment Work Group Accreditation Work Group, the Business to Education Blue Ribbon Commission and each of the Innovation Zone Groups.
  - The steering committee shall coordinate and conduct regular meetings with these various supporting groups. Feedback from these groups will inform and support efforts to identify and recommend policy priorities to DESE.
- Prioritize areas of focus for 2022-2023 to include:
  - policy that supports the creation of a reimagined assessment system
  - funding state ADA at 95% for competency-based credit.
- Priority areas of focus for 2023-2024 to include:
  - continued work on assessment for learning
  - reimagining an accreditation system that supports assessment for learning
  - policy development connected to an accreditation system centered on student learning

*\*DESE determines the participants for this committee and may choose to integrate this work with other group(s) at their discretion.*

**Recommendation 2a—Create an *Assessment Work Group*\* to support DESE in the design/build of a future focused competency-based assessment for learning system (inclusive of federal requirements) that supports the findings in this study.**

**Key Action Steps**

- Determine an Assessment Work Group whose membership shall include but not be limited to DESE staff, participants from each of the innovation zones who are helping to design CBL growth based assessments that support students in developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready, and by others as determined by DESE.
- Develop and recommend to the Commissioner of Education a reimagined K-12 assessment for learning system to be implemented statewide no later than the 2024-25 school year. See pages 18-20 for details on work for the 2022-2023 school year. This work includes designing use of a balanced, through-course adaptive assessment approach that meets federal accountability requirements.
- Work in collaboration with DESE assessment related committees.
- Support DESE in seeking federal waivers and legislative support as needed to create and implement an assessment for learning system.
- Update the steering committee on policy as appropriate regarding progress on and recommendations related to assessment for learning design. Special attention should be given to policy implications for changes and ways the steering committee can support that work.
- Identify resources including on-going professional learning to support local and statewide assessment for learning implementation.

\* See Assessment for Learning beginning on page 15 and especially pages 18-20 for study findings and more specific recommendations on assessment for learning design.

**Recommendation 2b.—As a related recommended next step, formation of an Accreditation Work Group will need to occur no later than 2023-2024.** The Accreditation Work Group will build on the foundation provided by the Assessment Work Group. Their work will be also informed by research and learning from the Innovation Zones. A core focus will be to design-up a growth-based improvement system that supports every student in having the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready. Accreditation Work Group membership shall include but not be limited to DESE staff, participants from each of the innovation zones and by others as determined by DESE.

**Recommendation 3—Create Innovation Zones for the purpose of:**

- **engaging districts in collaborative work with DESE to design up reimaged assessment and accreditation systems;**
- **promoting use of competency-learning practices with students at the classroom, school and district levels; and,**
- **supporting collaboration between regional and state partners (e.g. higher ed, businesses, etc) and school districts to build capacity for students to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready.**

**Key Action Steps**

Context: Innovation zones provide space where educators are incentivized to grow in their understanding and application of competency-based learning. Recognizing that educators are at different levels of readiness, a cohort model is used to support professional learning and the design/build process for reimaged assessment and accreditation systems. Cohort 1 work will begin in 2022-2023 with additional groups added annually, concluding with Cohort 5 in the 2026-2027 school year. Considerations for developing an effective cohort design include:

- The design of each cohort's experience and responsibilities will be based on learning from previous cohorts and future needs.
- Cohort participants will be supported through existing resources and identified additional funding.
- The insights from the cohort work will be used to inform the steering committee, assessment work group, accreditation work group, the Blue Ribbon Commission and other groups as identified on practices and strategies that work.

The Innovation Zones for Cohort 1 (2022-2023) follow.

1. **SYSTEM DESIGN GROUP** - This space is for school **districts** who have demonstrated system-wide experience with competency-based education and assessment for learning practices. These districts will engage with one another and DESE to develop a growth-based assessment for learning system that ensures students have the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready. This work will inform new ways of using data to: inform student growth on mastery of priority standards, improve instruction, and inform the public on student academic performance. These districts will also engage in learning and sharing on best practices related to professional learning design, policy development and college, career, workplace

readiness indicators. This shared learning will help create reimagined accreditation & accountability practices at the local and state levels.

DESE will work with representatives from the SRSWG to design the application and approval process. Cohort 1 participants should be representative of Missouri school districts (e.g. size, DESE region, rural, suburban, urban). Up to 10% of Missouri school districts may be selected for participation for Cohort 1. The actual number selected will be based on application approvals. As an incentive to engage in next generation assessment and accreditation design, participating districts may choose a waiver of MSIP 6 requirements, except those for which Missouri does not have a federal waiver.

Examples of qualities and commitments that could be included in the Cohort 1 System Design Group application follow.

- Demonstrate a desire to grow in the use of CBL practices.
- Demonstrate understanding of data informed system change and improvement.
- Current use of assessment for learning practices (especially formative, summative, interim assessments that demonstrate student growth).
- Current use of professional learning design that supports implementation of CBL strategies.
- Current or desired future use of real world learning opportunities for students done in collaboration with identified partners (e.g. businesses, industry, entrepreneurial opportunities, etc.).
- Commit to fully participating in regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. virtual, hybrid).
- Commit to study and research such as sharing practices and data (within approved and secure protocols) that inform specific design qualities of an assessment for learning system and a reimagined accreditation system.
- Support DESE in federal waiver requests, policy development, etc.
- Willing to serve as site visit locations for other Missouri educators and stakeholders.

*To effectively engage in this work the process will require facilitation support. Participating districts will need to commit to use of internal resources as defined in the grant application process. Districts will also have access to DESE in-kind support and be eligible to apply for grant funding (if available) that supports the creation, sharing, and development of course assessments, curriculum, training and guidance for teachers, and best practices for the school districts that offer competency-based education courses.*

**2. INNOVATIVE LEARNING DESIGN GROUP** - This space supports educators or individual schools in districts who are not part of the System Design Group with professional learning opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of competency-based strategies. Application is required. Objective criteria for application and selection will be developed by DESE and selected participants from the SRSWG. Districts, schools and/or teachers who have demonstrated some application of Competency-Based Learning (CBL) principles are encouraged to apply. Applicants should, within the scope of their grant application, be willing to:

- demonstrate a desire to grow in the use of CBL practices;
- support professional learning design and development of training materials that supports CBL principles;
- support curriculum and assessment design; and,
- engage with colleagues locally, regionally and statewide as appropriate

*Participants in the Innovative Learning Design Group are eligible, if selected, to serve on the steering committee, assessment work group, accreditation work group, or other groups as defined in the application process.*

*To effectively engage in this work the process will require facilitation/coordination support. Participating districts will need to commit to use of internal resources as defined in the grant application process. Districts will also have access to DESE in-kind support and be eligible to apply for grant funding (if available) that supports the creation, sharing, and development of course assessments, curriculum, training and guidance for teachers, and best practices for the school districts that offer competency-based education courses.*

3. **COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS** - This space is designed to foster collaboration and coordination among **state and regional educational organizations** including **institutions of higher education** to design a personalized professional learning system for educators working both in the System Design Group and the Innovative Learning Design Group. The Collaborative Networks are designed to become a statewide professional learning model for supporting all educators to effectively implement a Competency-Based (CBL) learning system. Special emphasis is placed on supporting regional networks who can help districts grow and sustain the work. Business leaders will support the networks by serving as experts on essential employability skills needed by students and helping educators make connections to Real World Learning opportunities. System Design and Innovative Learning Design Group educator participants will take a key role in sharing their expertise and experience with each other and with future cohorts. State, regional professional learning organizations and higher education institutions will collaboratively create aligned structures and processes for ensuring all preservice, new teachers and veteran educators have access to a continuum of quality professional learning. Microcredentialing or badging opportunities for incentivizing educators should be embedded within this professional learning system. Coaching and mentoring are also key recommended features of this model. The content focus for the professional learning system should include concepts related to system change and improvement and qualities of a personalized learning system, which integrates Real World Learning opportunities. Content related to assessment literacy and effective data analysis is also recommended.

*Resources needed for this work will include facilitation/coordination support, DESE in-kind support, participating organization in-kind support and use of other identified sources.*

**Recommendation 4—Expand capacity for Missouri school districts to engage students in Business-to-Education (B2E) opportunities.**

**Key Action Steps**

- Create a Blue Ribbon Commission consisting of business leaders to champion Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning opportunities.
- Connect the following action steps with work being done in recommendations 1-3:
  - Working with business partners to identify employability skills and career pathways in support of Real World Learning Opportunities.
  - Showcase students and schools from all PreK-12 levels that are already engaged in Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning Experiences.
  - Ensure a balance between business expertise and educator expertise in the design and outcome of learning experiences to ensure that students are college, career, and life ready.
  - Explore credit for work opportunities aligned to Missouri Learning Standards.
  - Develop capstone/internship/externship experiences for students who master competencies prior to expected graduation date.

*Resources needed for this work will include facilitation/coordination support, DESE in-kind support, participating organization in-kind support and use of other identified sources.*

**Recommendation 5—In all engagement processes, model best practices in stakeholder engagement and effective communication.**

**Key Action Steps**

- Involve stakeholders essential to the work. This includes but is not limited to students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, school board members, higher education and the business community. This speaks to the importance of working together to support student success.
- Develop and implement a unified strategy to support effective, unified and on-going communication to inform stakeholders on the why, what, when and how of these recommendations. As part of this effort it is critical for state and regional educational agencies, associations and organizations to work together with one another and local districts to communicate key messages.

# **Summary of SRSWG Learning and Ideas Using the Knoster Elements**

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<b>Professional Learning Design</b>	<b>page 21</b>
<b>Policy</b>	<b>page 27</b>
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<b>Innovation Zone</b>	<b>page 33</b>
<b>Selected Reference</b>	<b>page 38</b>

## ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

### VISION

The first and most important priority of an assessment system is to support every student, every day in their learning. This *vision* is realized through development of a learner-centered assessment system that is adaptive, utilizes through-year (daily) assessments and provides timely feedback to the learner and teacher which can be used for goal setting by students to support mastery of priority standards.

### SKILLS

An effective assessment for learning system uses a CBL mindset to operationalize the following *skills*:

- Uses **multiple measures** which are authentic, continual over time and effectively track progress toward learning targets
- Incorporates defined **learning progressions** and tracks the individual student growth which is connected
- Provides **assessment literacy** for educators and all stakeholders
- Provides **meaningful feedback** that informs growth in learning
- Focuses on **student ownership** in his/her learning including identifying own personal goals
- Embraces **change in educational practice** needed by all stakeholders
- Incorporates various types of experiences such as **authentic writing** and “Real-World” learning that includes partnerships with parents and community members to support personalized learning.
- Clearly defines the **knowledge connected to the priority standards** (and how success looks for these with aligned varying assessments), with the need to incorporate soft skills and dispositions
- Makes **meaningful connections** between disciplines and recognize the challenge of creating assessments for this integrated approach
- Supports **clear understanding (of system)** from all stakeholders of the process and are willing to ask questions for clarification (a new system will take real collaboration and partnerships between all stakeholders).

As these learning skills are developed it is important to recognize the unique strengths of each student and the community where they live. Community context can afford opportunity and limitations for students to engage in real world learning opportunities. To address this issue districts need space to create learning design that provides students opportunities for credit (including real world learning experiences) that are not bound by time or place. Use of digital internships or entrepreneurial experiences is one example of how districts are addressing this equitable access issue. Another example is the creation of regional collaboratives that maximizes opportunities available across districts.

Using assessment for learning with a competency-based mindset shapes the way we think about data collection and accreditation. When thinking about data the first and most important audience is the student. Future focused districts are exploring software solutions that allow the student to drive input of data that are meaningful to them. This approach supports resume development, badging, certifications, etc. that are tied to the student's personal learning plan. Digital solutions which students use to support their personalized journey are an important part of future focused work on assessment for learning and will shape next generation accreditation design.

## INCENTIVES

Creating a shared vision for assessment and developing skill sets to support that vision involves change in practice. It is important that students, educators and other stakeholders see value and are *incentivized* to engage in that change process. The creation of innovation spaces, where stakeholder understanding of the why, what and how is built over time, will be important to the success of future focused learning design and meaningful use of data for continuous improvement.

SRSWG participants identified advantages that assessment for learning within a CBL mind-set brings to students and instructional design. Those advantages follow:

**Students** - supports **academic growth**, emphasizes **mastery** of important learning, provides opportunity for **choice and voice**; **rewards learning**; engagement in **meaningful learning** (e.g. market-value assets, problem-solving); provides **timely intervention(s)** (what, when and how do they occur?); and, **engages the whole learner**.

**Assessment Design** - **celebrates and shows growth**; makes **assessment meaningful** to the student (how to do this on a state test?), provides **timely feedback** (esp. state test); makes **assessment relevant** and focused on **authentic** skills; and, **supports** students/teachers in **identifying interventions**

**Learning Design** - shows how to: **collaboratively connect with community and business partners** (e.g. market value assets); creates **deeper collaboration** between **teachers** with the **workplace/business partners**; **transitions students** across **grade levels**; transitions students to **post-secondary** (e.g. college, workplace); and, uses existing applications of CBL to **inform future practice** (e.g. vocational education)

## RESOURCES

**Resources** identified by the SRSWG participants as essential to effectively implementing assessment for learning fell into the five categories: support, communication, funding, professional development (training, education) and tools. Specific support needed in each of these categories follows.

**Support** - **statewide** endorsement of and **support** for the CBL framework is critical to effective implementation of assessment for learning.

**Communication** - provide a **clear, common, cohesive message** to all stakeholders; find **positive ways to communicate** with communities; **work with businesses** on what should be assessed; help **Boards of Education** develop a clear understanding of how this helps students, **messaging** from elected officials and DESE.

**Funding** - **prioritize money** to design, purchase, deploy, and support equity and access for **all LEA systems** in all geographies and school/community types; and **provide transportation** so students can access real-world learning opportunities.

**Professional Development (training and education)** - staff need **release time**; **training** for teaching all kids and for **system usage and leverage**; training on **how to use data** properly, engage with **data-driven decision making**, and once data are collected then **transitioning into effective action steps**; **on-boarding new teachers** and leaders to **receive the necessary training** and support that others would have already received; **differentiated training** that accounts for all size/types of schools; and, support for **parents**.

**Tools** - need a system that shows **individual growth**; a **state curriculum digital** platform; and **alignment with credentialing**.

## ACTION PLANS

Based on this study the following action step is recommended (see Recommendation 2 on page 8).

**Create an *Assessment Work Group*\* to support DESE in the design/build of a future focused competency-based assessment for learning system (inclusive of federal requirements) that supports the findings in this study.**

Key action steps supporting this recommendation are:

- Assessment Work Group membership shall include but not be limited to DESE staff, participants from each of the innovation zones who are helping to design CBL growth based assessments that support students in developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready, and by others as determined by DESE.
- Develop and recommend to the commissioner a reimagined K-12 assessment for learning system to be implemented statewide no later than the 2024-25 school year. This work includes designing use of a balanced, through-course adaptive assessment approach that meets federal accountability requirements.
- Work in collaboration with DESE assessment related committees.
- Support DESE in seeking federal waivers and legislative support as needed to create and implement an assessment for learning system.
- Update the steering committee on policy as appropriate regarding progress on and recommendations related to assessment for learning design. Special attention should be given to policy implications for changes and ways the steering committee can support that work.
- Identify resources including on-going professional learning to support local and statewide assessment for learning implementation.

***The following actions steps are specific to work conducted in 2022-2023***

- Design a system that supports every student, every day in their learning and keeps them as the first and most important audience. Data flow from the student up and are used in ways that are meaningful for informing instruction and system improvement.
- Define readiness as mastering competencies. This applies to all facets of assessment for learning (e.g. self-designed entrepreneurial experiences, internships, badging/credentialing, credit attainment through demonstration of learning (regardless of seat time), federally mandated tests).
- Focus on the most important foundational learning by incorporating design qualities such as: a balanced, through-course, adaptive system that supports student voice, and includes a continuous feedback loop for students with easily understood results that guide instruction and informs continuous improvement efforts at all levels; builds on competencies, learning progressions and proficiency scales; and creates exemplar experiences.
- The system will meet or could meet federal requirements for statewide assessment system and federal accountability requirements (with waiver requests as needed).
- Key steps in the process of going from concept to realized system, may include but are not limited to:
  - Creation of an Advisory Committee to provide input and leadership in strategic areas.
  - Determine where LEAs are at and where they want to be with assessment needs and system requirements
  - Build the Advisory Committee's understanding with the state of assessments and assessment systems along with state and federal requirements.
  - Determine with the Advisory Committee what needs to be in a system and what resources are needed. The elements identified would form the basis of a Request for Proposal (RFP). Sample areas to include are:
    - Assessment System Overview requirements – *translation of the first bullet into actionable elements.*
    - Assessment Development and Items
    - Reporting
    - Systems Training and Professional Development

- Commitment to Improving Assessment and Working with Federal Requirements
- Data Management
- Managing Users, Assessments, and Assigning Assessments
- Assessment Delivery
- Implementation and Ongoing Support/Management
- Technology – Applications, Security, Backup
- Supplemental Programs
- Distribute RFP
- Review submitted RFPs
- Select vendor/solution
- Plan for deployment and implementation of new system

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN

### VISION

The **vision** for professional learning design is to **increase educator effectiveness and student success in a competency based learning system**. This vision is supported by having clear and compelling "WHY?." To operationalize the vision SRSWG participants noted the importance of: embedding **collaboration time** within the work day so educators can problem solve; leveraging **CBL expertise**; promoting **inclusive participation** and recognition of **leadership at all levels**; providing opportunities to **see CBL in practice** (district/school visits); supporting collaboration with and **engagement of staff in designing their professional learning**; **personalizing** professional learning for different grade levels and content areas; providing professional learning for **all audiences** (staff, teacher, parent, student); and, ensuring **connection to the broader community**.

### SKILLS

Specific skills needed to support the vision fell into three categories: 1) Teacher Professional Learning Design, 2) Teacher/Leader/Higher Education Professional Learning Content; and 3) Other Stakeholder Professional Learning Needs. Detailed thoughts related to implementation of each category follow.

#### Teacher Professional Learning Design

- The structure of professional learning needs to be intentionally personalized and flexible at all levels: statewide, regional and local (the state has a wide variety of types of districts, with educators and communities at different readiness levels for considering a significant systemic change).
- The design will need to create opportunities for teachers to have an authentic voice in creating the competency-based design; training and support for authentic collaboration will be necessary.
- Using collaboration as a design feature for professional learning (virtual and face-to-face) will need to be modeled and supported by statewide, regional and district cohorts and networks, led by teachers and leaders with expertise in both a competency-based learning system and quality professional learning.
- Teachers and leaders will need opportunities to visit model classrooms and CBL in action.
- Modeling, coaching, and feedback opportunities will need to be components of professional learning for all teachers who are implementing a competency-based learning system.

- Opportunities to clarify the need for all current initiatives and identify levers they can use to promote change
- Connection for how educator evaluation system aligns to CBL system
- A guide will need to be developed for building, classroom strategic implementation.
- Develop a powerful innovator group to live the changes and share the success and the struggles.

**Teacher/Leader/Higher Education Professional Learning Content**

- Deep understanding of a competency-based learning system.
- Personalized learning system: How to develop learning progressions based on Missouri Learning Standards, which are supported with quality assessments and an effective individual student monitoring system that promotes student agency
- Assessment literacy
- Processes and structures for engaging in collaborative inquiry-based continuous improvement cycles, utilizing various types of student data
- Designing and implementing a facilitative instructional approach to promote student learning
- Integrating real world learning, technology and current CTE approaches as part of the instructional design.
- Essential communication tactics to continually inform stakeholders
- Guidance and support for effectively collaborating with business, community in identifying competencies, partnerships and credentialing opportunities
- Educator externships in the business world

**Stakeholder Professional Learning:**

- Parents, business and community members must be provided opportunities to be engaged in the development of the CBL system, valuing their varying perspectives and backgrounds
- Parent, business and community members must have ongoing opportunities to learn about the purpose of CBL, what it looks like in a classroom and how they will receive communication about student/building, district and state progress (using students to help present the results, use of varying social media and technology formats should also be provided)
- Parents need to know how to support their students at home

## INCENTIVES

Competency-based professional design work is challenging. To incentivize participation in this work SRSWG participants identified the following ways to motivate, compensate and connect educators engaging in CBL design work.

**Motivate** innovative use of CBL strategies by providing: an understanding of the **why**; **coaching** and on-going **feedback** for teachers on how to implement CBL strategies; **data** that demonstrate what is being measured matters and teachers can see how their work is making a positive difference in student learning; a **safe space** to for teachers to learn forward without fear of accountability ramifications; **time to** learn, grow and effectively **implement new learning**; and, **additional classroom supports** through university partnerships and teacher aides recognition and acknowledgement of effective practices that work.

**Compensate** professional learning on CBL through: state-level certification or training recognition system that is transportable and ties into advancement on the salary schedule, DESE and locally sourced funding of after-school and /summer training opportunities; and, university credit for participation in training

**Connect** teachers, districts and businesses together so they see examples of CBL strategies in action (e.g. real world learning, assessment for learning practices, etc). This will help local districts understand the value and scope of the work as they implement within their own school community.

## RESOURCES

These incentives require resources such as money/funding, time, communication systems & strategies, support, and collaborative networks. Thoughts on each topic follow.

### Money/Funding

- Cost of PD should not be an issue
- Teacher retention as a related initiative
- Equitable access for all districts

### Time

- Finding time for teachers to work through understanding and implementing (CBL)

### **Communications Systems & Strategies**

- **Consistency**
  - Consistent messaging - investment in developing and implementing a strategic communications plan
  - Dedicated individuals and organizations charged with communicating
    - Combining efforts between collaborative groups/efforts
  - Common vocabulary across the state
- **Strong, clear, rationale document with connections to resources**
  - Teachers need to be involved with the WHY to help with buy-in during implementation.
  - Clear, Findable Resources, Knowledge Base
    - Examples of assessments, assessment systems, grading approaches, mastery tracking approaches that support a competency-based approach
    - Bank or collection of resources built for competency-based approach.

Equitable access for all districts

### **Support**

- DESE including alignment with teacher certifications
- Community support and partnerships (e.g., expertise in various fields)
- Higher Education support where pre-service matches the new expectations.

### **Collaborative Network(s)**

- Missouri-Wide Collaborative Group of Educators: Thought Partner
  - Access to lighthouse or leader districts who can speak to the success and challenges in implementing the work
  - Combining Messaging

## ACTION PLANS

Based on this study two action steps are recommended. These action steps are part of Recommendation 3 on pages 9-12. SRSWG ideas that supported formulation of the action step follow.

1. Support innovative competency-based learning design by identifying (using objective selection criteria) “Innovator” districts, schools and/or teachers who have demonstrated application of Competency-Based Learning (CBL) principles. Applicants should demonstrate a desire to grow in the use of CBL practices, be willing to serve as models (including site visits) for all educational systems and support professional learning design and content that allows CBL to scale up in the state.

### Ideas Supporting Action Step

- DESE and Success-Ready Students Work Group representatives identify key selection criteria for identifying “Innovator” districts, schools and possibly classrooms.
- Provide ongoing communication to districts across the state regarding the CBL work happening in “Innovator” districts/schools/classrooms.
- Create a website to “house” CBL resources identified or developed by the “Innovator” districts/schools/classrooms that can be accessed by all educators in the state.
  - Include CBL resources for parents and community members.
- Design an implementation guide with identified professional learning support for educators to reference on their journey toward designing and implementing a CBL system.
- Identify experts from the “Innovator” districts/schools/classrooms to serve as mentors/coaches to provide support as others onboard and implement the CBL practices.
  - Build the capacity of additional educators to serve as mentors and coaches as new districts implement a CBL system.
  - Make these experts available to support the preparation of new teachers.

2. Foster collaborative networks and coordination among state and regional educational organizations including institutions of higher education to design a personalized professional learning system for educators working in “Innovator” districts/buildings/classrooms, which then becomes the model for supporting all educators in the state to effectively implement a Competency-Based (CBL) learning system. Special emphasis is placed on supporting regional networks who can help districts grow and sustain the work.

#### Ideas Supporting Action Step

- Design a network of education organizations, districts/schools, higher education institutions, and business leaders who collectively guide the innovative development of Competency Based Learning (CBL) work at the regional level.
- Identify an educational leader for each region of the state who oversees a corps of expert CBL professional developers, coordinates the work of the networks and collaborates regularly with other state level regional leaders.
  - Create and implement a needs assessment of regional CBL teacher and leader professional learning needs.
- Create phases or continuums of effective CBL implementation (including identifying the skills, processes, knowledge, and pedagogy) with associated professional learning needs, allowing teachers to see where they are in the process and determine personal growth goals.
- Create professional learning modules (possibly a hybrid, which incorporates some virtual opportunities) with the essential content, pedagogy, and practices educators, school leaders and community members need to implement and support CBL.
  - Identify research, resources, and reading materials most essential to understanding the CBL approach.
- Incentivize (release time, space, monetary) educators to engage in professional learning, including designing and supporting collaborative teams working on continuous improvement cycles which captures ideas and research related to the effectiveness of various CBL approaches.
- Engage “Innovator” educators in site visits and book studies of states and districts who are successfully implementing CBL, who will then serve as model Missouri implementation sites for educators to visit.
- Work with state leaders to revise professional teaching and leader standards/evaluation systems to incorporate competency-based learning practice.
  - Incorporate CBL learning as part of the MDLS system.
- Design learning modules for parents and community members to help them better understand the CBL process

## POLICY

### VISION

Policy plays an important role in competency-based learning design. The current policy structure relies heavily on time-based assumptions. Moving to a learning based policy approach that treats time as a variable requires thought and research. It is the **vision** of this work that state and local policy makers support competency-based education policies and innovative learning by prioritizing flexibility, funding, and research.

### SKILLS

Engaging in policy development requires stakeholders to take the time necessary to develop knowledge of current state and federal accountability requirements and then use a competency-based mind-set to reflect on needed changes. Any change will have intended and, at times, unintended consequences. Stakeholders engaged in policy development should make use studies and research, including data and case studies from the field (e.g. classroom, school, district, partnerships, etc) to inform decisions about how time, structure and instructional strategies can better support student mastery of the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to ensure high school, college, career and workplace readiness.

### INCENTIVES

Development and implementation of competency-based policy requires front loading support for districts engaged in this work. Support in the form of incentives will help districts as they create policy solutions. Some incentives such as competency credit, which is already permissible in DESE's high school handbook, can be incentivized by funding with accountability for learning CBL approaches. (e.g. ADA at 95%). Others may require a more measured approach with incentives provided to districts, schools and teachers to participate in field-based study that informs redesign in areas of assessment and accountability. One such district level incentive is to allow flexibility in or freedom from current assessment and accountability requirements in return for their support of system redesign.

### RESOURCES

Resources such as facilitation support and local grants to help organize and coordinate this work.

### ACTION STEPS

Participants in the SRSWG identified the following for consideration as **action steps** regarding policy development. These ideas were used to develop each of the recommendations (1-5) and related action steps.

#### Communication & Engagement

- Presentation of the Success Ready Students Work Group Framework to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the State Board of Education.
- Develop a compelling “Why?” and case for change to guide the work.
- Ensure that all stakeholder groups are involved in shaping policy in support of Competency Based Learning to ensure ownership of the work.

- Enlist public relations and marketing specialists to assist in the development of common vocabulary, messaging, and talking points.
- Socialize the work with legislators, business leaders, boards of education, and other stakeholders.

### **Research & Best Practice**

- Convene a policy work group tasked with reviewing existing policy that advances or inhibits Competency Based Learning.
- Expand Missouri's learning network to learn from states that are further advanced in supporting innovation, Competency Based Learning, and Real World Learning opportunities.
- Study state funding models best suited to support Competency Based Learning approaches.
- Identify considerations for whole system change needed to support Competency Based Learning PreK thru 12th Grade.
- Coordinate with other education associations to support Board of Education policy development.
- Identify learning management systems that support Competency Based Learning approaches.
- Review the Missouri Graduation Handbook for necessary changes to support Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning opportunities.
- Develop competency based pathways toward graduation.

### **Barriers**

- Identify policy barriers that inhibit Competency Based Learning at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Rethink accountability measures and data collection suited to monitoring the effectiveness of Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning.
- Coordinate with the Missouri Legislature to redesign the existing foundation formula to move away from Average Daily attendance to an Average Daily Membership approach.
- Consider an interim funding approach of 94% funding for competency-based credit similar to virtual course funding.

### **Business to Education (B2E)**

- Work with business partners to identify employability skills and career pathways in support of Real World Learning Opportunities.
- Create a Blue Ribbon Commission consisting of business leaders to champion Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning Opportunities.
- Showcase students and schools from all PreK-12 levels that are already engaged in Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning Experiences.
- Ensure a balance between business expertise and educator expertise in the design and outcome of learning experiences to ensure that students are college, career, and life ready.
- Explore credit for work opportunities aligned to Missouri Learning Standards.
- Develop capstone/internship/externship experiences for students who master competencies prior to expected graduation date.

**Innovation Zone**

- Create a CBL pilot program that includes start-up funding for schools, continuous improvement support and data collection.
- Identify incentives for districts participating in Innovation Zones that allow for exemptions from portions of MSIP 6.
- Study the opportunity to provide waivers for Competency Based Learning schools with respect to ADA and APR points.

Additional considerations were provided that impact the long term efforts in developing Competency Based Learning and Real World Learning opportunities across Missouri.

- Recalibrate teacher evaluation and promotion practices aligned to Competency Based Learning and Real World learning experiences.
- Ensure flexibility for students who might demonstrate competency in a different manner or at a different time than what is traditionally expected.
- Constructive engagement with legislators on education committees.
- Frequent progress monitoring and reporting of the work to the State Board of Education
- *Reduce the number of standards to identify key learning outcomes, reduce what has to be “traditionally” assessed, and increase opportunities for alternative assessment.*

## ACCREDITATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

### VISION

Work on accreditation and accountability by the work group was limited. The work group does **envision** DESE continuing to work with stakeholders to rethink accreditation and accountability in ways that focus on student-centered learning systems and research on how students learn best.<sup>1</sup>

### SKILLS

To construct a student-centered learning system, stakeholders engaging in this work should:

- Examine the purpose of K–12 education and how accountability, evaluation, and quality assurance methods need to be modernized to support high-quality, student-centered teaching and learning.<sup>2</sup>
- Use assessment for learning data to support individual student growth in mastering priority standards and to inform school and district instructional improvement efforts.<sup>3</sup>
- Build out accountability standards for innovative practices (e.g. real world learning, internships)<sup>4</sup>, and
- Develop a system for measuring school climate, effective instructional staff and practice, leadership and governance and social emotional competencies.<sup>5</sup>

### INCENTIVES

To incentivize development of a student-centered learning system, DESE should consider:

- Supporting student-centered accountability pilots and investing in communities leading to new accountability models with reciprocity, transparency, and equity<sup>6</sup>; and,
- Supporting an assessment for learning pilot that informs a reimaged MAP test which maximizes available flexibility in federal assessment and accountability design requirements.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Rethink Next Generation Accountability,” Aurora Institute, March 2022  
<https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Policy-Brief-March-2022-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Rethink Next Generation Accountability,” Aurora Institute, March 2022  
<https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Policy-Brief-March-2022-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> MASA Accreditation and Assessment, Missouri Assessment Partnership

<sup>4</sup> 2019 Commissioner's Advisory

<sup>5</sup> MASA Accreditation and Assessment and 2019 Commissioner's Advisory

<sup>6</sup> “Rethink Next Generation Accountability,” Aurora Institute, March 2022  
<https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Policy-Brief-March-2022-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Missouri Assessment Partnership

## RESOURCES

The resources needed include support for facilitation of the Accreditation Work Group and for districts engaged in redesigning the accreditation and accountability system.

## ACTION PLAN

When formulating a recommendation for accreditation, it is important to note SRSWG sees assessment for learning design as an antecedent to creating a reimagined accreditation system. With Assessment design underway in 2022-2023 it will be important that accreditation design begins during the 2023-2024 school year. To support this work it is recommended that an Accreditation Work Group be formed. This group will build on the foundation provided by the Assessment Work Group. Their work will be also informed by research and learning from the innovation zones. A core focus will be to design up a growth-based improvement system that supports districts in using a competency-based mind-set that supports every student in having the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace ready. Accreditation Work Group membership shall include but not be limited to DESE staff, participants from each of the innovation zones and by others as determined by DESE.

Specific action steps the SRSWG recommended to support development of a reimagined accreditation system follow.

### Short Term (2022-2023)

- DESE forms a committee to review approaches to accountability and accreditation in other states.
- Reimagine MSIP 7 with a focus on key outcomes and done in combination with a redesign of the state assessment system to ultimately redesign MSIP and MAP with timelines
- Create a task force to explore interim assessment approach that will drive changes in student learning and leading to a process for LEAs wanting to pilot
- Scaffold professional learning to change practices to improve student learning
- Identify incentives for districts to innovate both within and outside of the current MSIP structure that integrates competency-based learning and accounts for the educational approach taken by LEAs.
- Identify and leverage key indicators LEAs and the state can use to focus on competency-based learning work.
  - Build knowledge around Success Ready measures
  - Create a profile of an exemplary district with key indicators identified
  - Establish point structures within MSIP to reward internships/externships/job readiness along with SEL to promote self-directed learning
  - Annual implementation goals

- Review and revise teacher evaluation system to include a focus on growth
- Redesign ADA
- Determine what equity will look like in this work

### **Long Term (beyond 2022-2023)**

- Revisit measurements to ensure intent and outcomes.
  - High leverage measures coupled with high leverage outcomes that are most essential.
  - Sources of measurements – local versus state
  - Inclusive of students, such as students meeting personal goals or student self-assessment as examples of next generation concepts to measure.
  - System built on growth viewed in multi-faceted context.
  - Need for standard and flexible measures.
- Determine what equity will look like in this work
- Continue engagement with higher education and workforce.
- Create a crosswalk of legacy versus future-focused accountability models.
- Create reports that are differentiated and understood for different stakeholders.

To operationalize these efforts DESE and school districts will need to determine if existing funding sources are sufficient to meet expectations, including digital tools for LEAs, that support students being success-ready. This review includes making sure that students, teachers and districts have relevant, timely, and actionable data to inform learning needs.

## INNOVATION ZONE

### VISION

Critical to future design is creation of a ‘safe’ space where innovation can take place. The work groups *vision* is that, *using the CBL framework, cohorts of districts, schools, individual educators and engaged stakeholders voluntarily collaborate with one another and DESE to design up reimagined assessment and accreditation systems that support student mastery of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare them to be high school, college, career and workforce ready.*

### SKILLS

Doing this work requires skill development across assessment for learning, professional learning design, policy and accreditation/accountability categories. Stakeholder engagement is critical as districts use data, internal study and external research to inform effective implementation of competency-based principles. Districts that have been engaged in such work can support all Missouri districts by taking a lead in design work. They have experience on what works, what doesn’t and why. They also have insight on barriers that stand in the way of student success. This especially applies in the areas of assessment and accreditation.

As a next step, it is important to incentivize districts, schools, teachers, state and regional education agencies/organizations to collaboratively support students mastering the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be high school, college, career and workplace readiness. One way to incentivize this work is for the state board or state department of education to create an innovation zone (see Recommendation 3). For districts, schools and teachers creation of an innovation zone supported by grant money incentivizes use of a competency-based mindset in learning design and policy development. For organizations it encourages collaboration with K-12 partners and one another. One example of this is higher education working with innovation zone participants to create coursework and credentialing that supports operationalizing competency based learning principles in classroom and school design. Both of these approaches require funding for facilitation, a commitment of in-kind cost and ideally grant money to support learning design and training materials.

Also needed is a space where leading districts voluntarily collaborate with DESE on deep engagement with assessment and accreditation system design. To effectively engage in this work districts will need flexibility in existing requirements and commit to shared learning. These include:

- Waiving MSIP 6 requirements (except those federally required).
- Using insights and data from assessment for learning strategies to inform development of a reimagined state assessment system.

- Jointly study and create dashboards that demonstrate student mastery of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that support them being high school, college, career and workplace ready, including student engagement in real world learning experiences;
- Developing the conceptual framework and a draft set of standards and indicators for next generation accreditation and accountability.
- identifying and advocating for federal waivers requests, state policy and state statutory changes that address barriers to effectively use the CBL framework in supporting **student** mastery of the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to be high school, college, career and workforce ready.

## INCENTIVES

For the innovation zone to work it should have manageable beginnings and bring in more participants over time. Use of a cohort model supports this approach. As a starting point, consider having up to 10% of Missouri districts be part of Cohort 1 for the 2022-2023 school year. Subsequent Cohorts can be added annually to broaden participation and grow understanding. Ideally each cohort group will be representative of the state as a whole. Realistically, especially in Cohort 1, representation may not be equally proportional for every DESE region. The determining factor for involvement in a cohort will be readiness to engage in the work. Readiness is a function not only of current practice but also context. Some districts who have practices in place and are ready to engage may not currently have local capacity. The ability to join later speaks to inclusion of districts at a time that is right for them.

## RESOURCES

The cohort process will need facilitation support and resources that allow for equitable partition in professional learning including research, sharing of data and other identified needs. To the extent possible these can be met with in-kind support and supplemented with additional identified funding sources.

The complete list of ideas generated by the SRSWG are found below. They are grouped into four themes: professional learning, system and process design considerations, resources, and general thoughts and ideas for creating an innovation zone. These ideas were used in the development of Recommendation 3. which serves as the **action step** for the innovation zone category, and informed development of recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 5.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- Visit model schools (other states)
- Develop cohorts of practice
- Looks like-early year development, early stages of learning
- Innovation zones for higher education? Pipeline? Having space to identify what this preparation looks like, effectively? Develop a cycle of review...how will we know we are being successful? Quality?

- DESE creates in-person conferences to allow sharing/networking of highs and lows of CBL implementation between administrators.
- Scheduled time during the school year for purposeful collaboration
- Identify and disseminate exemplars of schools' already on this path in MO and in other states. Models to emulate or build from.

## SYSTEM AND PROCESS DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Re-examine DESE resource standards/indicators
- Pilot in various types of schools
- Creation of school/district early adopter collaboration groups through the RPDCs including businesses and high ed.
  - Mixture of school types and geography.
  - Provide funding directly to the districts for this work, possibly through the RPDC.
  - Reports (quarterly, semi-annually) in the cohort groups.
  - These early adopters become the regional models for other regional districts.
  - DESE creates a recognition system highlighting the work of these schools.
  - Bring in teacher GROUPS to highlight the work. Ensure that these are groups to encourage the information. (see implementation team)
- Each school creates an implementation team in charge of CBL implementation.
- Form a supportive network of support for this collaborative group—who will lead/guide Innovation Zone? Will this be led at state or district level and what happens when leadership changes?
- Develop a long range plan of development from inception to full statewide implementation –different stages within the plan
  - engage & inform
  - explore & execute
  - evaluate and realign
- Design structures and supports needed by the innovation zone schools to begin.
- Reach out to diverse, varied schools districts to build the 10%.
- Who is initially coming to make these 10%? What cross sections of each participating district would participate? High quality classroom educators essential at the foundation.
- Is there an option/avenue to withdraw from participation in local circumstances change?
- identify and advocate for federal waivers requests and policy changes that support CBL.
- create a draft set of standards and indicators for MSIP 7.
- pilot MSIP 7 draft standards in lieu of MSIP 6 standards
- Selection of participants: Facilitate matching of districts in close geographical proximity for collaboration. Consider selecting districts that are diverse in terms of size and resources.
- Allow piloting of non-performance measures (e.g. climate and culture)
- Creating statewide models for competencies at different grade levels

- Identify LEAs already doing the work or ready to do the work (Identify flexible models)
- Create a study group cohort with access to current research
- Establish criteria for qualifying to enter an innovation zone:
  - What is the research base to support work of the innovation zone?
  - What platforms or softwares will be utilized to support and make consistent the work across Innovation Zones?
  - Identify district parameters. E.g. can a district enter an innovation zone regardless of their APR score/accreditation status?
  - Determine the process for the district to apply to be in an innovation zone, be vetted, and be accepted.
- Develop examples of the types of Innovation Zones that might be pursued.
  - Example: Zone the uses experiential, real-world assessment of desired learning. Partner with businesses to develop tasks to show how competencies are used in the particular field.

## RESOURCES

- Create a hub of resources for early adopters
- Provide funding and support for cross district collaboration
- Modify Career Ladder to support teacher collaboration within and outside of the district and focus the funding on innovation
- If Career Ladder does move forward, use this for implementation of CBL.
- Subsidies for interim assessments
- Transportation for workforce learning opportunities
- Support
  - Legislative bipartisanship support
  - Regional structures and staff to support professional learning, coaching and planning
  - Network of LEAs supporting each other

## **GENERAL THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FOR AN CREATING INNOVATION ZONE**

- What will the indicators be, will they be different from what we are accustomed to?
- Graduate portfolios...
- Structure of high school experience (design of grade levels, to many other specifics/details)
- How do we get students exposed more deeply to pathways, align their portfolios
- Students that are unable to get to vocational courses due to not having required credits
- Creating a digital portfolio platform that captures priority standards and student work that showcases the desired disposition and 4Cs.
- Get rid of silos (grade/content) Integrated learning (Blow up current school structures)
- Reconsider configuration of collaborative groups –Change to schools 10 percent or grade level or grade level bands/number of students?
- Can we consider changing the name of MSIP–rebrand?
- Encourage interdisciplinary tasks which demonstrate competency to promote multiple ways to approach.
- Means to access all stakeholders including students, parents, community members, business leaders etc. in defining the competencies and the measures in the classroom, virtual, ‘real’ world.
- Bring work teams together to identify how students show growth.
- Develop examples of “what should assessment and accountability look like?”
- Consider higher education
- use assessment for learning strategies to create dashboards that demonstrate student mastery of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that support them being high school, college, career and workplace ready.
- FAQ on a site that can reach all schools
- Hear voices from industry as to their needs
- Identify solutions for today's students for today's struggles - mental health - equity
- Continue to focus on teacher retention and attraction
- Develop action research
- Incentives
- Identify LEAs that represent state population
- Identify some funding source to support development of this work
- RPDC innovation team to support
- Waivers and grants to pilot this work
- Flexibility to school calendar
- Creative internships
- High-Ed allow Masters work to encompass this work towards degree
- Explore unlimited experiences worldwide

## **SELECTED REFERENCES**

<b>ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>ACCREDITATION &amp; ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>INNOVATION ZONE</b>	<b>54</b>

## SELECTED REFERENCES ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

### Proficiency Based Task Force Report

**Recommendation 4:** Increase the availability of EOCs, and possibly TSAs, to support Proficiency-Based Credit.

**Recommendation 6:** Develop an assessment system, aligned to Missouri learning standards, for primary and intermediate grades/ages that supports Proficiency-Based Learning. Aspects of this recommendation that require significant consideration include:

- An EOC-like assessment system based on testlets (i.e. small tests) that build toward a grade-level specific composite score.
- Classify students by learning level and those learning levels must have a grade-level equivalency.
- Treat time as a variable to demonstrate proficiency with an assessment design that supports that concept.
- Define and develop an adaptive assessment system for English Language Arts and Mathematics that not only assesses, but serves as a screener to determine if current students are ready for first testlet and to determine grade-level equivalent for new students.
- There is a maximum of two administrations of each testlet per student, with the last score counting for accountability.

**Recommendation 7:** Develop an assessment reporting system that supports Proficiency-Based Learning. As a part of assessment redesign and development, the reporting system should provide for the following:

- MOSIS matures so that it not only collects data from but provides information for school districts.
- Assessment results are available quickly, the system is user friendly and helps teachers easily improve learning through specific diagnostic results at a minimum of the standard level.

### MASA Accreditation and Assessment

The MASA Assessment report recommended the creation of a grades 3-8 state assessment system that had the following qualities: clear, fixed learning targets, timely, meaningful feedback, multiple administration windows within a school year, and an adaptive format that measured growth over time toward high school course content readiness. The rationale for this

change included the following: students need timely, meaningful feedback that supports goal setting and tracking progress toward high school course content readiness; educators need timely, meaningful data in order to use time, structure and teaching strategies in ways that lead to student mastery of important competencies; and communities need honest feedback and fair reporting, recognizing that in our reporting processes family income/poverty impact the child, mobility/stability impact the child; and community resources (investment) impact the child.

**PILOT** The report provided specific guidance on state assessment design and a process by which to pilot ideas before full adoption of the model. The design elements are: adaptive with embedded power standards to provide clear fixed learning targets; multiple administration opportunities within year; achievable grade level competency; learning level progression accurately reflecting a student's starting point in the accountability process; and a redesign of MOSIS capturing learning progression by ELA, Math, Science allowing students to test when formative data say they are ready.

An assessment innovation pilot that corresponded with the anticipated start of MSIP 6 in 2017 was recommended. Specifically, the group recommended: applying for a federal pilot to support innovative state assessments, allow up to 10% of Missouri districts to be "waiver" districts in 2016-17 and pilot new assessment approaches linked to MSIP 6 student success standards; use research from this process to inform continued modification to MAP and MSIP 6; include district representation from every DESE region; support federal assessment innovation pilot process; align local policy with practice; test drive next generation MSIP 6 standards for student success measures; and participate in and collaborate with other districts on research to determine effectiveness of the pilot.

The pilot would involve a multiple-measures approach, with pilot districts: using formative and interim assessment for learning strategies that hold promise to meet federal accountability guidelines; measuring student growth toward high school course content readiness; using growth measures to demonstrate improvement across disaggregated groups with individual learning plans for students whose learning level is different than that typically associated with their Age (using growth rates as primary score reported to the public); organize MAP so 3rd grade serves as the baseline, 5th grade to benchmark learning level progression and 8th grade for status; and, use district assessments for learning that are valid and reliable measures of growth predictive of learning level mastery with third party assessment validity and reliability verification required.

### **Missouri Assessment Partnership**

The Partnership's vision for through-year assessment is to administer interim/benchmark/formative assessments across the year that supports teaching, learning, and program improvement which builds towards a summative profile of student learning and proficiency.

## Recommendations

- Design up a Learning with Student Centered Assessment which has the following qualities:
  - System focused on teaching and learning first, accountability second. • Every student – Every day
  - Online, with a quick turnaround providing meaningful data and reports. • This will be exclusively on the vendor/partner. Thus, the vendor/partner are foundational to this being a successful endeavor.
  - Focus on growth with emphasis on competency towards high school and college/career readiness. Currently assess at the state's pace – need to assess at the student's pace
  - Criterion-referenced through-course, done in shorter iterations and less invasive than done in the current model, showing proficiency throughout the course and not just at the end of the year.
  - Authentic Writing
  - Professional Development for teachers on system-usage and connections to improve/deliver instruction and resources for students that aren't on pace.
  - Inclusive for all students, regardless of arbitrary 1% caps
  - Coherence and Continuity over time – long-term commitment with the vendor/partner
  - Integration of subjects would be ideal, but we recognize that may be for future iterations.
  - Must be able to meet all technical requirements
- Pilot a new assessment system:
  - Assessment would align to Missouri Learning Standards and have comparability/alignment to Missouri MAP Achievement Levels
  - Vendors would propose processes/approaches to the development of through-course assessments (Activities, Timelines)
  - Annual submission of student achievement data to DESE from vendor
  - Use of the data in all accountability systems (ESSA & MSIP6). Accountability would be the same for all LEAs. The difference would be the source of the assessment data used in the standards dealing with student achievement.

## Commissioner's Advisory Committee 2019 and 2021

### **2019**

**Innovative & Flexible School Structures** - In order to respond to the changing and differing needs of Missouri's students, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should give districts flexibility in creating different pathways and school structures. Missouri is a diverse state that represents a number of geographies and types of people, and the state should develop a clear vision around what students should know, what skills they should possess, and what steps need to occur for that to happen. This may include teacher professional development and micro credentialing, innovative curriculums that emphasize soft skills, project-based learning, and a number of other initiatives that serve students' individual needs.

Recommended action steps are:

- Develop a clear vision around what students should know and be able to do by the end of high school, and demonstrate why those goals are important. Systems operate in the way they were created to operate. To redesign schools, there must be a clear goal for what students should receive from their education. From there, local districts and schools, with support from DESE, can determine what would need to happen to rebuild the system based on those goals;
- Implement a plan to support schools and districts in understanding what flexibility they have and the potential incentives available; and,
- Rethink accountability standards for districts based on a redesigned school model.

## **Bellwether Report**

### **Recommendations**

- DESE should convene practitioners and measurement experts to develop a statewide system of assessments to support CBL.  
Learning objectives in a CBL system also require mechanisms for students to demonstrate their attainment of those objectives through assessments. CBL assessments can look very different from traditional assessment systems. For instance, traditional assessments are only administered once per school year, while students may have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of competencies through CBL assessments. Since CBL is centered on adapting the pace of learning to individual students' needs, CBL assessments need to be more flexible than traditional assessment systems: They ought to provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their competencies at different times and in different ways.

For example, a student moving to a district at the traditional age for fourth grade may be able to demonstrate math competency at a fifth-grade level but may also be at a third-grade level in reading at the beginning of the school year. This information would in turn help educators to tailor more support to help the student to accelerate their progress in reading and grant them more independence and a chance to continue to accelerate in math. Missouri educators can build assessments that align with the state's approach to CBL by learning from New Hampshire's Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) system.<sup>31</sup> The PACE system combines locally developed performance tasks with a complex "common task" at each grade level, with students also taking a reduced number of traditional standardized assessments.<sup>32</sup> This approach requires a great deal of thoughtful work and training with educators to define and calibrate consistent scoring practices within and across districts to ensure that the definition of "competency" doesn't vary significantly from classroom to classroom.

In developing scoring practices for CBL, educators will need to shift their approach to assessing student work. For instance, traditional grading systems often incorporate both student achievement of learning goals as well as nonacademic learner behaviors like effort, late assignments, and attendance. Assessing student work in a CLB context requires a shift in mindset to focus on students' mastery of specific competencies. The competencies defined by Missouri educators will reflect academic skills and knowledge, and may also include discrete competencies related to noncognitive skills (e.g., student dispositions and behaviors). Educators can and should find ways to capture those noncognitive skills separately, to disentangle them from skills/knowledge but nonetheless recognize their importance for long-term student success. In addition, scoring practices for CBL often differ from traditional grading in that they focus on a summative assessment of whether a student has demonstrated each competency, rather than a semester-long average of performance throughout the learning process.

While the PACE system has many promising features, it is still a pilot program. The complexity of measures to address comparability of scores across schools and districts maybe a barrier for the public at large to understand the system, and it may prove difficult to scale given the capacity demands on educators and the lack of a larger-scale example other than New Hampshire.<sup>33</sup> With those caveats, Missouri educators could build on New Hampshire's work to create a CBL assessment system that can meet the needs of students while also addressing issues of comparability, complexity, and capacity. Specifically, DESE should support the important work of developing and calibrating CBL assessments through ongoing PD opportunities and professional learning networks.

- DESE should define and collect data on outcome measures. (see Innovation Zone for more)

## **Aurora Institute**

### **Recommendation**

TRANSFORM SYSTEMS OF ASSESSMENTS - States must redesign their systems of assessments to align with current research on how students learn best, provide evidence of deeper student learning, build capacity for valid and reliable assessments of student learning, and ensure student outcomes include demonstrations of enduring learning. States should support appropriate use of assessments to improve teaching and learning and coherence by aligning assessments to enable student-centered learning. Student progress through K–12 should be determined using evidence that demonstrates their knowledge and skills through meaningful learning activities and provides actionable, real-time information to students and their families.

### State Policy Recommendations

- Create a model of continuous improvement for redesigning assessments by collaborating with willing districts and schools to pilot new, innovative systems of assessments that align with competency-based learning.
- Engage practitioners and leaders from K–12 education, industry, and higher education to create a process, resources, and recommendations to support the development of mastery-based performance assessments across K–12 that demonstrate student readiness to graduate.
- Design culturally responsive assessment practices in partnership with communities where every student can see themselves in the assessment experience.
- Build assessment literacy for educators, practitioners, students, parents, state and local policymakers, and community members.

## IDEAS FROM GROUP WORK SUPPORTING RECOMMENDATION(S)

### **Design/build an assessment for learning system**

- Supports every student, every day in their learning.
- Incorporates design qualities such as: student voice; a continuous feedback loop for students with easily understood results that guide instruction and informs continuous improvement; builds on competencies, learning progressions and proficiency scales; and creates exemplar experiences.
- Clearly defines the purpose (why) and qualities (what) of a learner-centered assessment system.
- Incorporates a through-course assessment design using an adaptive test engine.
- Ensures MAP Assessment Blueprints support assessment for learning strategies (formative, summative, interim)
- Ensures statewide assessments, including EOC's, support mastery of the most important foundational learning.
- Meets federal requirements with waiver requests as needed to support student-centered design
- Creates a balance between local assessments that can be used for accountability purposes and common statewide assessments.
- Supporting statewide growth and development through sharing by model districts.
- Partnering preK-12 and higher education
- Create a framework for implementation
- Implementing a new state assessment system based on an overt commitment to assessment for learning with accreditation/accountability as secondary.
- Incorporating through-course assessment into the design.
- Supporting on-going professional learning for teachers that creates a culture of assessment for learning
- Ensuring statewide assessments, including and especially EOC's, support mastery of the most important foundational learning.
- Involving districts in assessment design, finding the right balance between local assessments that can be used for accountability purposes and common statewide assessments.
- Supporting statewide growth and development through sharing by model districts. Partnering preK-12 and higher education
- Identify a software package that will establish the flow of implementation to create a real time assessment of learning to support vision and goals

### **Provide professional learning for educators on assessment for learning practices**

- Teachers and administrators build capacity to apply assessment for learning practices, including: unwrapping priority standards (learning targets), creating proficiency scales, helping students understand learning targets, using assessments (e.g. formative, summative, interim) to guide instruction, engage with standards-based grading, using data for continuous improvement.
- Districts share practices that work and serve as site visits.
- DESE utilizes existing structures such as DCI to support professional learning.

### **Develop an effective and on-going communication strategy**

- WHY - assessment for learning is important to student learning and instructional improvement
- WHAT- scope of work
- WHEN - timeline w/implementation steps
- HOW - common vocabulary/universal language, examples from existing district models, marketing and branding, emphasizing student voices, anticipating/addressing barriers.

## SELECTED REFERENCES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN

### Proficiency Based Task Force Report

Cross reference Assessment for Learning

### MASA Accreditation and Assessment

MASA recommended a new generation accreditation system that had the following qualities: set high standards, be a quality assurance program, use multi-metric approach for inputs and outcomes, recognize academic and non-academic measures, empower local ownership of goals and measures, recognize that one size does not fit all, and foster collaboration and innovation. The approach identified standards for successful students that focused on system inputs (school climate and culture, effective instructional staff and practices, stable and effective leadership and governance) and outputs (academic achievement, success-ready graduates). Encouragement was made to consider poverty, mobility/stability and community resources (investment) in the accreditation process.

For measuring success several recommendations were made, including:

*Academic Achievement* - use of standardized assessments along with formative/interim assessments. District rankings on academic achievement would be similar to teacher evaluation rankings and factors in social context with categories being: exceeds, meets, progressing and needs improvement.

*Success-Ready Graduates*: A collaborative effort with a set of DESE identified measures combined with a set of additional locally-created measures

*Inputs*: DESE, in collaboration with the district, would identify one measurement of the selected input standard, the District would identify one additional locally-developed measure, and the district would report progress annually to the local board and DESE.

To report success DESE would annually report district status on academic achievement and success-ready graduates at both the district level and building level. This is a status report and would not be used for accreditation purposes. Accreditation would be reviewed on a four-year cycle with a mid-cycle desk review. The end-of-cycle review would also include a multiple day site visit from a review team. The review team would encourage feedback from practitioners, create improved collaboration, identify best practices and innovative practices and promote sharing between districts. In this model the creation of accreditation with distinction was not recommended.

**PILOT** - It was recommended that this approach be used as the basis for the next MSIP cycle, that DESE undertake an input and engagement process for all stakeholder groups in Missouri and that DESE allow 10% of Missouri districts to be “waiver” districts in 2016-17 and pilot a new system in collaboration with DESE and other “waiver” districts

## **Missouri Assessment Partnership**

MOAP's vision for a student-centered assessment model includes professional development and learning opportunities for teachers and users.

## **Commissioner's Advisory Committee 2019 and 2021**

### **2019**

**Teacher Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention** - Teacher recruitment and retention levels are low statewide, and Missouri is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers to fill available positions. Missouri needs to improve teacher preparation recruitment efforts and reconsider preparation providers' models in ways that encourage a high-quality and diverse selection of candidates. Additionally, policies must be enacted that encourage teachers to continue teaching. These policies may relate to compensation, leadership opportunities, access to mental health and wellness supports, and increased support and professional development. Recommended action steps are:

- Create a marketing and communications campaign that rebrands the teacher profession in a way that entices people to enter the teaching workforce and emphasizes the beneficial impact teachers have on the public. Research shows that millennials are attracted to organizations and positions whose missions align with their own beliefs;
- Create opportunities for districts to develop innovative pathways to teaching; and,
- Work to change the traditional structure of the teaching profession so that it is a sustainable field in which one can grow.

## **Bellwether Report**

### Recommendations

- DESE should ensure that practitioners are engaged in the translation of Priority Standards into CBL competencies.

The core of CBL can have different names —competencies, learning objectives, mastery standards—but they all serve a similar purpose: translating state standards into discrete, sequential goals for students to master. Ultimately, these learning goals should build toward a collection of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that represent what every Missouri high school graduate should attain.

Missouri educators already have a head start on this work as they develop and finalize Priority Standards in English language arts, math, science, and socialstudies.<sup>27</sup> Translating Priority Standards to a CBL context should be made easier by comparing them to documentation of competency frameworks from other states, including Rhode Island,<sup>28</sup> South Carolina,<sup>29</sup> and Utah.<sup>30</sup> Each of these documents provides specific examples of what students should be able to demonstrate in academic subject areas and in certain essential skills identified in their states' framework for CBL.

DESE should convene educators from across the state to develop competencies that align to Missouri's Priority Learning Standards and build off the work that other states have already done. At the same time, participating in this process is an important professional development opportunity for educators who will be among the first to pioneer the approach in Missouri.

- DESE should define and collect data on outcome measures. (see Innovation Zone for more)

### **Aurora Institute**

#### Recommendation

MODERNIZE THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE: - States should invest in competency-based educator professional learning systems to build educator capacity for student-centered learning. This will require changing how systems recruit new educators, redesigning preservice preparation, rethinking professional development, and implementing competency-based frameworks to ensure educators have the skills, supports, and resources to implement student-centered education models.

#### State Policy Recommendations

- Convene a statewide task force on modernizing teaching and professional learning.
- Remodel teacher licensure and credentialing based on mastery, including competency-based pathways through micro-credentials.
- Support statewide and regional communities of innovative practice across systems and schools.
- Prioritize educator preparation and development for building the knowledge and skills teachers need to lead in competency-based, student-centered learning

## SELECTED REFERENCES POLICY

### Proficiency Based Task Force Report

**Recommendation 2:** Modify MOSIS as necessary to support the implementation of Proficiency-Based Learning.

**Recommendation 3:** Establish minimum standards by which Proficiency-Based Credit can be earned.

**Recommendation 5:** Complete the development of a standard statewide transcript.

**Recommendation 9:** Advocate for legislative action which allows for districts to access ADA (attendance based equivalency) funding for Proficiency-Based Learning in a manner similar to Virtual Education. Under the current system, no real incentive exists for schools to allow for accelerated earning of credit. The structure provides, in fact, a disincentive as accelerated learning will lower the ADA of a district. Economically speaking, the reduced variable costs are attractive but fixed costs, by definition, remain regardless of the loss of ADA. The virtual education setting currently provides funding at the level of 94% of ADA for an equivalent traditional class. The recommendation of the task force is to use a 95% standard to ensure A+ eligibility. Further considerations for this recommendation include:

- Legislation appropriately crafted to ensure district funding of learning.
- Appropriate safeguards, in tandem with the state accountability plan recommended in number 7, to ensure learning is the basis for advancement rather than accelerated funding.

Without this check, an incentive to accelerate regardless of learning will exist.

**Recommendation 10:** Advocate for statutory change which provides economically efficient advantages to fund college credit.

### MASA Accreditation and Assessment

Policy considerations are addressed in the Assessment for Learning and Accreditation & Accountability categories.

### Missouri Assessment Partnership

See Assessment for Learning category for policy implications

## Commissioner's Advisory Committee 2019 and 2021

### **2019**

**Workforce Development and Tomorrow's Economy** - Missouri needs to create shared definitions of the various pathways students can take as they move from K-12 schooling to postsecondary education and the workforce in the form of concrete checkpoints that students reach as they advance through their academic careers. In order to achieve this common understanding, strategic conversations need to regularly occur across sectors, including education, business, and government. Systems that allow for this consistent communication need to be created at the local, regional, and state levels. Recommended action steps are: strengthen partnerships between education leaders and business leaders to better inform workforce needs; develop a state framework that establishes clear pathways for students to enter the workforce; and, expand access to postsecondary credentialing opportunities for all students, regardless of location, race, age, socioeconomic class, etc.

**Using Data Systems** - State longitudinal data systems are complex and often lack a direct connection to learning, which is why it is crucial to have a set of statewide goals that inform practice. Missouri should develop a set of use cases that can inform programs and practice by identifying scenarios in which data systems can be used. Once those use cases are clearly defined, the state will need to ensure that it has the necessary data systems and processes that will allow teachers and leaders to use the data to improve practice and prioritize equity. Given the challenges involved with making the connection between data and practice for many, Missouri should also inform its target audiences about the usefulness and importance of strong data systems, particularly for accountability and equity. Recommended action are:

- Identify what Missouri is trying to measure and what information needs to be collected for these measurements;
- Create a plan to engage stakeholders to define outcomes for a longitudinal data system to encourage momentum and collaboration; and,
- Create a communications plan to educate audiences (i.e. students, parents, districts) on how a data continuum can be useful for their needs. For example, parents will be informed on how to access data dashboards and districts will know how to navigate data available on their schools and students

**2021** - The purpose of the report was to shape DESE goals going forward to recover from COVID-19 and build a stronger, more equitable system. It is important to note that these recommendations cross over into the other areas.

## **LEARNING ATTAINMENT**

**Support Kindergarten Readiness:** Identify funding allocations and distribute resources equitably; review existing standards, data and curriculum; and, set ambitious and realistic enrollment goals & increase available programs.

**Create High-Quality, Equitable, Responsive Learning Frameworks:** Develop accountability & assessment frameworks with equity focus; offer flexibility for LEA's for learning loss interventions; and, collaborate with educator preparation programs.

**Address the Digital Divide Across Industries and Sectors:** collaborate to leverage resources for broadband access; identify and distribute technology based on equity gaps, and, determine funding sources to provide device access.

## SCHOOL DESIGN

**Identify Critical Skills Necessary for College & Career Success:** create a school innovation steering committee; develop a statewide profile of a graduate model; and, reengage families of disconnected students.

**Collaborate with Business & Industry Stakeholders to Identify Skills:** focus on competency-based learning; partner and collaborate with business leaders; and, prioritize growth & non-academic measures in accountability.

**Implement Measures for Centering Equity, Diversity, & SEL Standards:** facilitate conversations on equity statewide; leverage partnerships to measure equity & SEL; and articulate the importance of SEL in the future workforce.

## EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

**Increase Educator Compensation:** determine how to increase salaries; create a tiered salary schedule; and, determine source of sustained funding stream for increased salary.

**Invest in Teacher Pipeline Programs:** increase the number of grow your programs; recruiting educators of color and/or from low income backgrounds; and, reframe perception of teacher workforce.

**Create Frameworks for Promoting Teacher Leadership Opportunities:** create programs to split between instruction & leadership roles; create educator leadership positions that offer career growth; and, prioritize educator mental health.

### Bellwether Report

#### Recommendations:

- DESE should work with legislators to identify and reduce funding barriers to CBL.
- DESE should work with legislators to develop and use waivers liberally to create the necessary flexibility for CBL schools.
- DESE should define and collect data on outcome measures.
- DESE should work with legislators to develop legislation that provides regulatory flexibility and grant funding, and creates organizational structures to support CBL pilots programs and learning networks. (see Innovation Zone for more)

Missouri policymakers should consider developing legislation to establish formal regulatory, stakeholder, and financial support for CBL pilots in districts. This can be accomplished by formalizing several of the preceding recommendations in state statute that:

1. Articulates a clear case for why CBL is needed in Missouri public schools
2. Defines CBL or establishes a process to develop a definition with stakeholder input
3. Sets expectations for ongoing stakeholder engagement
4. Creates policy waivers and/or waiver application processes to support CBL implementation, including waivers related to funding calculations
5. Establishes a CBL pilot program that includes start-up funding for schools, continuous improvement support, and data collection procedures
6. Outlines professional learning networks to support CBL practices among Missouri educators
7. Provides resources to DESE to support the work outlined above, either by directly funding DESE or funding a partnership with a state-level intermediary to coordinate and support pilot districts

This approach will allow CBL efforts to start on a small scale with interested and motivated schools (with buy-in from district leadership), providing ideal conditions to identify and work through unforeseen challenges.<sup>48</sup> The lessons learned from grant-supported CBL pilots can in turn inform efforts to scale these programs across the state by building on the knowledge gained by Missouri educators, administrators, and students.

State-level funding should also support the creation and facilitation of professional learning networks dedicated to improving CBL practice in Missouri. Funding CBL-focused convenings, school visits, and conferences can help establish networks of educators and administrators focused on solving problems and honing their practice in a CBL context. DESE leadership of these efforts can also provide state leaders with a valuable source of communication and information to better understand the policy and practical barriers educators are encountering in CBL classrooms, which can in turn help them address those barriers at a more systemic level.

Missouri policymakers should also consider the most appropriate governance structure to manage CBL implementation and professional learning networks. The Idaho State Department of Education created the Idaho Mastery Education Network (IMEN), which originally consisted of 19 “incubator sites” that included 32 schools and provided a community of practice for educators building CBL programs. Arkansas took a slightly different approach by partnering with the University of Arkansas to create an Office of Innovation that would support the implementation and evaluation of student-centered learning environments.<sup>49</sup> While housing this work within DESE could help bring immediate credibility to CBL efforts, there are benefits to the organizational flexibility that comes with partnering with a third party to lead this work. Whether the right partner exists or can be created, as well as DESE’s confidence that a partner organization could effectively sustain efforts over time, is an essential consideration.

### **Aurora Institute**

**Advance Competency Based Education Policies:** The prevailing traditional, one-size-fits-all K–12 education model does not meet the unique academic and holistic needs of all learners. All states can support competency-based education policies and innovative learning by prioritizing flexibility, funding, and research. It is important for states to shift their role from solely focusing on compliance toward taking an active role in advancing innovation and catalyzing change.

### **State Policy Recommendations**

- Establish competency-based education task forces with diverse stakeholders.
- Create and launch competency-based pilots that allow educators and schools to innovate new teaching and learning approaches tied to a state vision of student success.
- Redefine credits based on mastery of learning, rather than seat-time; award credits based on demonstration of knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- Build greater knowledge about how districts and schools are designing and implementing competency-based systems with embedded equity strategies to fully meet the needs of historically underserved students.
- Create competency-based pathways to graduation.

## SELECTED REFERENCES ACCREDITATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

### Proficiency Based Task Force Report

**Recommendation 8:** Develop an accountability plan for Proficiency-Based Learning and Credit.

### MASA Accreditation and Assessment

MASA recommended a new generation accreditation system that had the following qualities: set high standards, be a quality assurance program, use multi-metric approach for inputs and outcomes, recognize academic and non-academic measures, empower local ownership of goals and measures, recognize that one size does not fit all, and foster collaboration and innovation. The approach identified standards for successful students that focused on system inputs (school climate and culture, effective instructional staff and practices, stable and effective leadership and governance) and outputs (academic achievement, success-ready graduates). Encouragement was made to consider poverty, mobility/stability and community resources (investment) in the accreditation process.

For measuring success several recommendations were made, including:

*Academic Achievement* - use of standardized assessments along with formative/interim assessments. District rankings on academic achievement would be similar to teacher evaluation rankings and factors in social context with categories being: exceeds, meets, progressing and needs improvement.

*Success-Ready Graduates*: A collaborative effort with a set of DESE identified measures combined with a set of additional locally-created measures

*Inputs*: DESE, in collaboration with the district, would identify one measurement of the selected input standard, the District would identify one additional locally-developed measure, and the district would report progress annually to the local board and DESE.

To report success DESE would annually report district status on academic achievement and success-ready graduates at both the district level and building level. This is a status report and would not be used for accreditation purposes. Accreditation would be reviewed on a four-year cycle with a mid-cycle desk review. The end-of-cycle review would also include a multiple day site visit from a review team. The review team would encourage feedback from practitioners, create improved collaboration, identify best practices and innovative practices and promote sharing between districts. In this model the creation of accreditation with distinction was not recommended.

**PILOT** - It was recommended that this approach be used as the basis for the next MSIP cycle, that DESE undertake an input and engagement process for all stakeholder groups in Missouri and that DESE allow 10% of Missouri districts to be “waiver” districts in 2016-17 and pilot a new system in collaboration with DESE and other “waiver” districts

## **Missouri Assessment Partnership**

Does not specifically address this topic.

## **Commissioner's Advisory Committee 2019 and 2021**

### **2019**

**Redesigning Accountability Systems** - In order to incentivize districts to take advantage of the flexibilities available to them, the state must create an accountability system that rewards innovation while continuing to hold educators to a high standard. The accountability system should incorporate traditional rigorous measures such as literacy and numeracy, as well as innovative programs and hard to define elements such as school climate and social emotional competencies. The system must be designed to capture how well students are performing and being served and ensure that student subgroups are not being left behind. Recommend action steps are:

- Determine the purpose of the accountability system and clearly communicate that message to various audiences:
- Build out accountability standards for project-based learning, internships, and other innovative programs to ensure that they are adequately preparing students:
- Develop a system for measuring some of the more abstract elements of school quality, such as school climate, leadership, and social emotional competencies:

## **Bellwether Report**

**Recommendation:** DESE should define and collect data on outcome measures

## **Aurora Institute**

### **Recommendation**

**RETHINK NEXT GENERATION ACCOUNTABILITY** - The current accountability framework is not guiding states towards an education system that is fit for purpose for our youth in today's changing world. States need a new take on the purpose of accountability, who is accountable, for what, and how it will drive a modern vision of high-quality learning for all. States should work with all levels of the system to rethink accountability and improve quality to expand learning opportunities focused on student-centered learning systems and research on how students learn best.

### *State Policy Recommendations:*

- Examine the purpose of K–12 education and how accountability, evaluation, and quality assurance methods need to be modernized to support high-quality, student-centered teaching and learning.
- Support student-centered accountability pilots and invest in communities leading new accountability models with reciprocity, transparency, and equity.

## APPENDICES: STUDY AND REPORTS INNOVATION ZONE

### Proficiency Based Task Force Report

See the other categories for recommended changes that support innovation zone work.

### MASA Accreditation and Assessment

See PILOT section of **Assessment for Learning** and **Accountability & Accreditation** categories for specific recommendations on pilots.

### Missouri Assessment Partnership

See **Assessment for Learning** category for recommendations on a pilot

### Commissioner's Advisory Committee 2019 and 2021

#### **2019**

**Innovative & Flexible School Structures** - In order to respond to the changing and differing needs of Missouri's students, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should give districts flexibility in creating different pathways and school structures. Missouri is a diverse state that represents a number of geographies and types of people, and the state should develop a clear vision around what students should know, what skills they should possess, and what steps need to occur for that to happen. This may include teacher professional development and micro credentialing, innovative curriculums that emphasize soft skills, project-based learning, and a number of other initiatives that serve students' individual needs.

Recommended action steps are:

- Develop a clear vision around what students should know and be able to do by the end of high school, and demonstrate why those goals are important. Systems operate in the way they were created to operate. To redesign schools, there must be a clear goal for what students should receive from their education. From there, local districts and schools, with support from DESE, can determine what would need to happen to rebuild the system based on those goals;
- Implement a plan to support schools and districts in understanding what flexibility they have and the potential incentives available; and,
- Rethink accountability standards for districts based on a redesigned school model.

## Bellwether Report

### **Recommendations:**

- DESE should work with legislators to develop legislation that provides regulatory flexibility and grant funding, and creates organizational structures to support CBL pilot programs and learning networks. (see Policy for more)  
Getting CBL programs off the ground in schools will require more than interested schools and districts—they will also need structure and support to guide them through the implementation process. Other states have addressed this challenge by providing small grants to districts and regional organizations to facilitate various stages of CBL implementation. Idaho provides funding through regional “incubators” to work with schools and districts to implement mastery-based approaches and effectively utilize resources from the state education agency and peer networks across the state.<sup>44</sup> In Utah, the state board of education offers three grant programs to support three distinct phases of implementing competency-based learning: exploratory, planning, and implementation.<sup>45</sup>

Implementing CBL in classrooms will also be a major change for Missouri educators. As schools and districts begin adopting CBL, educators will likely need to engage in professional learning with peers across Missouri and in other states that have more developed CBL programs. As Missouri educators develop and hone their ability to manage CBL, in-state professional learning networks will become both more practical and more relevant. While DESE should take the lead on coordinating professional learning opportunities to support CBL implementation, educators should lead the design and delivery.

Implementation efforts in Missouri schools will likely require different levels of professional learning and support based on the pace and scale of the transformation, which can vary by school level. The process of shifting to a CBL approach can be more incremental at the high school level by starting with a single subject area.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, since elementary school educators tend to specialize in grade levels instead of specific subject areas, implementing CBL at this level can require dramatic school-or district-wide changes.<sup>47</sup>

- DESE should define and collect data on outcome measures.

This will require Missouri to consider flexible data sharing policies to support understanding of when CBL works and for whom, enabling the analysis of outcomes based on student subgroups, a statewide system for training around assessment and accountability to eliminate educator bias and ensure inter-rater reliability, and early investment in the development of a rigorous approach to learning and evaluation.

A strong foundation of student outcomes data is vital for assessing and improving CBL programs in Missouri. Before DESE can collect any data on CBL student outcomes, those outcomes must be defined by educators and other key stakeholders. Outcome measures will certainly include some combination of student performance on traditional and innovative assessments developed specifically for CBL programs. DESE should lead efforts to define these metrics early and establish data collection and quality procedures, along with data-sharing agreements with districts.

Innovative assessments like New Hampshire’s PACE system will require significant commitment from DESE to provide technical assistance and support. DESE should also lead efforts to ensure consistency and reliability in innovative assessment scoring practices through a combination of professional learning to support inter-rater reliability and audits of randomly selected student portfolios and assessment results as a check on reliability across schools and districts.

Competency-based learning systems often focus on developing skills and dispositions that aren't traditionally measured by assessments, such as intrinsic motivation, ownership over learning, and engagement in their

school community. DESE may want to lead work to deploy surveys of students and educators in CBL and non-CBL settings to better understand how CBL affects a well-defined set of nonacademic outcomes.

The definition and collection of outcomes data should begin as soon as possible. Establishing a baseline of these metrics will not only help assess progress and challenges in CBL implementation, but also it will make it much easier to conduct formal program evaluations after a few years of implementation.

## **Aurora Institute** **Recommendations**

Establish Innovation Zones - Innovation Zones are a powerful strategy states should use to create space for new student-centered learning designs and education transformation without restrictions from outdated state regulations. The state, in turn, can take advantage of the short-term waivers to examine those policies to address underlying policy barriers in the long-term and advance enabling conditions for new, innovative learning models.

### State Policy Recommendations

- Authorize the state board or state department of education to create statewide Innovation Zones with allocated state funding to support or expand local innovation and flexibility toward student-centered learning.
- Prioritize flexibility from state statutes, regulations, and requirements that impose barriers to advance student-centered learning, such as removing seat-time policies.
- Evaluate how Innovation Zones have improved outcomes for 21st-century learners and advanced needed policy changes at the district or state levels.

Create competency-based pathways across K-12, higher education, career and technical education, and the workforce. -