

Members Present

Anthony Nuñez (Chair), Malinda Riemersma, Alexa Walsh, Paul Johnson, Dr. Gregory Koenig, Nicole Rourke, Kali Fox Miller

Quick recap

The group discussed the implementation of proficiency-based learning in Nevada's education system, focusing on the challenges and opportunities it presents, and the need for a strategic approach to policy recommendations. They also emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement, parent input, and the role of artificial intelligence in recording meetings for privacy and organizational purposes. The team agreed to further investigate the success of proficiency-based learning in other high-performing systems, and to continue discussions on how to create a more holistic and meaningful performance evaluation system.

Next steps

NCEE staff will ensure the AI Zoom companion captures all discussions while removing identifying information, and share the notes with the Chair and the full commission.

The chair will share key takeaways with the full commission during the panel discussion on June 4th.

The group will clarify and reach a shared understanding of terms like "proficiency-based learning" and "value-based education" to ensure alignment.

NCEE staff will provide a more detailed explanation of the four key elements of proficiency-based learning systems and facilitate a discussion to gather reflections from the team for the Chair.

Summary

Subcommittee Kickoff and Proficiency-Based Learning:

Chair opened the meeting at 4:00pm The primary focus of the meeting was the kickoff of subcommittee meetings, particularly the Proficiency Based Learning Subcommittee led by NCEE staff and the Chair. The discussion centered around the use of research to improve education in Nevada, with a focus on proficiency-based learning, and the potential of artificial intelligence in recording meetings for privacy and organizational purposes. The group also emphasized the importance of diverse experiences and consulting with other subcommittees for a holistic approach to policy recommendations.

New Approach for Education: Focusing on Impact and Diversity

Committee members discussed the need for a new approach to education that focuses on the impact of education and the value it provides to each child, rather than just measuring

achievement. They also discussed the challenges of creating a proficiency-based system that accommodates diverse learning paces and does not stigmatize students who are behind. The group agreed on the importance of setting clear outcomes and goals for the new system and the need for collaboration between different policy areas to make it work.

Project Deliverables, Stakeholder Engagement, and Policies

NCEE staff led a discussion about the deliverables of their project, emphasizing the importance of both a long-term vision and a roadmap for achieving it. One committee member stressed the need for stakeholder engagement throughout the process, while another raised concerns about implementing policies at the district and school levels. It was suggested that legislative recommendations could foster community engagement and creativity, and that such recommendations should also include incentives, structural changes, and supports. The group advised against rushing the legislative process and encouraged testing new policies on a small scale before expanding their implementation.

Strategic Education Campaign and Policy Principles

The group discussed the importance of a strategic and consistent education campaign for parents, especially in households with differing educational styles. A concern was raised about the need for inclusive recommendations that consider the varying needs and abilities of students, from advanced Pre-K to high school levels. A member highlighted the importance of parent input and the need to alleviate fears about new teaching methods. NCEE staff stressed the importance of a roadmap and a contextual analysis of the Nevada education system, and asked the team to consider policy principles for proficiency-based learning.

Defining Standards for Proficiency-Based Learning

The group discussed the importance of defining clear standards for proficiency-based learning with a focus on core competencies. The team acknowledged the need to move away from a traditional curriculum and towards a more adaptable model that prepares students for a rapidly changing job market. However, concerns were raised about the practical challenges of implementing such a change, especially in terms of class design and assessment methods. The team agreed to further investigate how other high-performing systems have implemented proficiency-based learning and to initiate discussions around the four key components of these systems.

Proficiency-Based Learning and Support Challenges

The team discussed the concept of proficiency-based learning and the potential challenges and opportunities it presents. One member suggested that some existing supports could be applied differently to meet the diverse learning needs of students in multiple classrooms. NCEE staff proposed examining the current supports and considering whether they could be strengthened or adapted. The group expressed concerns about the understaffing of support staff and the potential impact of changing current supports. Another member highlighted the need for clearer communication with parents about academic expectations. Still another member raised concerns about student motivation, suggesting that a proficiency-based system could lead to some students being stuck in one class for too long. Others agreed and emphasized the importance of fostering a love of learning from an early age. It was suggested that the shift to a proficiency-based model could be a logical next step given current blended learning practices.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Proficiency-Based Learning

In the discussion around the challenges of implementing a proficiency-based learning system, the group acknowledged the need to consider the resistance to change from the existing value system. They also highlighted the need for incentives to motivate students to pursue more rigorous opportunities. NCEE staff emphasized the importance of understanding the root causes of the current system's results and suggested a long-term roadmap for improvement. One member shared the sentiment of a need for change in Nevada's education system, which was ranked low. The group agreed to further discuss these ideas in future meetings.

Proficiency-Based Learning and School Performance Framework

Next the team discussed the importance of a proficiency-based learning system and examined specific elements of such a system to include: Students work towards a clear performance standard Students are assessed for learning and move on when ready Students experience a well-designed curriculum Students receive a range of supports and with a focus on ensuring all students are prepared for learning. The team highlighted the need for early learning supports and a relentless focus on keeping students on track. They emphasized the significance of the Science of Learning, and raised concerns about the cultural shift required to implement such a system. The team also discussed the Nevada School Performance Framework and the need to make it more meaningful and holistic. One member explained the current framework and its limitations, emphasizing the need for a change to better reflect the full range of measures and indicators of a school's performance.

Unified Performance Evaluation System Discussion

The team discussed the need for a unified performance evaluation system to reflect school and student performance, and highlighted the importance of synergizing various elements. Team members shared initial takeaways from this discussion to include:

- Challenges of change and buy-in,
- Considering the input of young people
- Need for investment in early learning and support Importance of adequate supports in the new system
- Complexity of the transition and the need to consider the social context, aiming to create a system within a system.

The team will convene next on June 4th and will begin a deeper exploration of PBL in other systems. Chair closed the meeting at 5:30pm.