CIEE: World Class Teaching and Learning

Personalize, Competency-Based Learning:

Envisioning PCBL Fully Realized under the Roadmap

February 2026

World Class Teaching and Learning

Envisioning PCBL Fully Realized under the Roadmap

Table of Contents

Purpose and Use Case:

- ***Define the destination clearly.*** This brief describes what "PCBL fully realized" looks like when strong practices are coherent, predictable, and available to every learner—not only in isolated bright spots.
- ***Provide a common lens for decisions.*** Use the student experience and "look-fors" that follow to test whether a proposed investment or initiative will make PCBL more doable for educators and more consistent for students.
- ***Prepare the Commission for action on the SB appropriation.*** This brief is a shared reference point for forming a working group and giving it a clear charge: recommend near-term investments that accelerate implementation of the Roadmap in ways that reduce burden and increase coherence.
- ***Support a shared public narrative.*** The language here is meant to help commissioners, partners, and practitioners communicate "what this is" in plain terms that honor existing Nevada strengths while clarifying what it takes to make them systemic.

This Brief is Not:

- ***Not an evaluation of Nevada educators, schools, or districts.*** The intent is to describe a statewide "north star" and make it easier to recognize, support, and spread what is already working.
- ***Not a compliance tool or accountability rubric.*** These "look-fors" are meant for shared learning, alignment, and investment decisions—not scoring classrooms or rating districts.
- ***Not a one-size-fits-all model.*** Local context and design choices will vary; the goal is coherence in the learner experience and shared expectations for quality.
- ***Not a full implementation plan, procurement package, or PD curriculum.*** It clarifies the target state and the enabling conditions that make it feasible; companion planning documents should address sequencing, capacity, and rollout.

Questions to consider as you read:

- What are the 2–3 student experiences in this brief that you believe should be predictable statewide (the shareable core)—regardless of zip code or school model?
- Where do you already see elements of this in Nevada today? What enabling conditions made those bright spots possible—and what would help them spread without adding burden?
- How might this content inform:
    - criteria for coordinating and funding quality professional learning providers,
    - the content and structure of principal-focused PCBL development, and

- the focus of higher ed–district preparation, practicum, and induction pilots?
- What would you simplify or stop doing to make room for more of this work, so the system adds coherence rather than "another layer"?

North Star: PCBL Fully Realized

Nevada already has strong examples of Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) in action. "PCBL fully realized" describes what it looks like when those practices are coherent, predictable, and available to every learner—across schools, classrooms, and communities. This North Star is meant to create shared language for the ecosystem and to help the subcommittee make decisions about what to scale, simplify, and support so PCBL can shift from isolated bright spots to the default experience.

Anchor definition: what "PCBL fully realized" means

In a fully realized PCBL system, the following design features are consistently true. The comparison column is included to clarify the system-level shift (not to characterize any specific school, district, or stakeholder).

Design Feature	PCBL fully realized	Common default structures (for contrast)
Progress equals…	Evidence of mastery. Students advance when they demonstrate competency; time and pacing flex without stigma.	Completion of time and units. Credits and promotion are tied primarily to time in a course and unit completion, with group pacing as the default.
Learning goals are…	Transparent, measurable, and transferable. Students and adults share a common picture of proficiency and success criteria.	Often embedded in tasks and pacing. Goals may be communicated through assignments/units, and expectations for "proficient" can vary by context.
Assessment is…	Part of learning. Students receive timely feedback, revise, and use evidence to improve—often with multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning.	A summary of learning. Assessment often functions mainly as an end-of-unit/course judgment, with fewer structured opportunities to improve evidence.
Agency is…	Built into the design. Students routinely make decisions about goals, pathways, and how they will demonstrate learning—with adult coaching and guardrails.	Present but episodic. Choice may exist, but key decisions about pace, pathway, and evidence are typically set by calendars, courses, and adults.

Ways to meet students' diverse needs are…	Intentionally engineered. Supports, cultural responsiveness, and consistent expectations are designed so every learner can meet high expectations.	Often layered onto the core program. Supports may be delivered through separate processes or interventions; access and expectations can depend on schedule, resources, or classroom context.

The North Star becomes real (or not) through what students experience every day. The sections that follow translate the North Star into observable "look-fors" across the system—student experience, educator practice, leadership conditions, and state-level enablers—so commissioners can identify what to strengthen and resource to make PCBL a consistent statewide experience

What Students Experience

In classrooms where PCBL is fully realized, students experience learning as a pathway they can navigate—with clear goals, multiple ways to show learning, and predictable supports that help them progress. Across subjects and grade levels, students can explain what they are learning, what quality looks like, and what their next step is.

- **Clarity + ownership of targets:** Students can name the competency/learning target they're working on, describe what "proficient" looks like, and identify what comes next.
  Common classroom signals include: student-friendly proficiency scales; posted success criteria; student progress trackers; and routine student self-assessment/reflection tied to learning targets.
- **Readiness-based progression:** Students advance when they show mastery. Time, scaffolds, and supports flex so students can keep progressing—while learners who are ready to accelerate have ways to do so.
- **Meaningful demonstrations of learning:** Students regularly show what they know through multiple credible methods over time—e.g., performance tasks, projects, presentations, portfolios, and capstones—aligned to clear criteria for proficiency.
- **Feedback + revision are normal:** Students receive actionable feedback in time to use it, and there are structured opportunities to revise, re-practice, and strengthen evidence before proficiency decisions are made.
- **Evidence travels with the learner:** Students maintain a portfolio of evidence (documents, videos, links, reflections) aligned to competencies. Evidence can be collected across multiple

learning experiences and remains usable for advising, transitions, and student storytelling about growth.

Sources: Great Schools Partnership, Aurora Institute, Mastery Transcript Consortium

What Educators Do

When PCBL is fully realized, teaching is grounded in a shared definition of proficiency—and supported by routines that make learning visible, actionable, and equitable. Many Nevada classrooms already show pieces of this work; the "fully realized" version is that these practices are consistent, supported, and coherent across classrooms and schools.

- **Design from competencies and clear success criteria:** Units and lessons begin with prioritized competencies and proficiency criteria, then translate into aligned learning targets, learning experiences, and assessments.
- **Use evidence to guide next steps:** Teachers gather evidence frequently (formative checks and performance tasks), interpret what it shows, and respond with targeted instruction—small-group workshops, scaffolds, and extensions.
- **Run clear feedback-and-revision cycles:** Feedback from teachers is timely, specific, and tied to agreed-upon criteria. Students routinely use feedback to revise, resubmit, and demonstrate growth over multiple opportunities.
- **Plan for learner variability:** Teachers anticipate that students will enter with different strengths and needs and proactively build *varied supports* (scaffolds, alternate resources, structured practice, language supports, and enrichment) into the learning design.
- **Orchestrate flexible pacing with shared routines:** Classrooms use predictable structures—learning plans, conferencing, progress trackers, and clear "what's next" pathways—so students can be working toward different targets while the teacher maintains coherence and momentum.
- **Calibrate proficiency and scoring quality:** Teachers regularly examine student work together using common rubrics/proficiency scales, strengthening shared expectations for mastery and improving reliability and fairness.
- **Center equity through culturally responsive practice:** Learning experiences and assessments are designed to honor student identity and voice, offer meaningful pathways to demonstrate learning, and maintain consistent high expectations with the supports students need to meet them.

Sources: Great Schools Partnership, Aurora Institute,

What Local Leaders Do

When PCBL is fully realized, school and district leaders make the model doable and durable by aligning the "behind-the-scenes" conditions so strong classroom practice can spread and stick. This includes things like schedules, adult learning, assessment systems, and communication. Many Nevada leaders are already building these enabling conditions; the fully realized version is that they operate as an integrated system rather than isolated efforts.

- **Design schedules that create real flexibility and support:** The master schedule includes protected structures that make readiness-based progression workable (e.g., flex/intervention blocks, advisory, conferencing time, and time for performance assessment design and scoring).
- **Make adult learning job-embedded and recurring:** Leaders protect and strengthen ongoing learning routines—PLCs, coaching cycles, student-work protocols, and calibration—so teacher learning is continuous and tied to daily instruction.
- **Build a coherent assessment and mastery system:** Leaders ensure staff share common rubrics/proficiency scales and manageable performance assessment practices so "mastery" means the same thing across classrooms.
- **Align reporting and communication to mastery:** Families receive progress information that clearly reflects competency growth, evidence, and next steps—building a shared language that students, educators, and caregivers can use.
- **Align walkthroughs, feedback, and coaching to PCBL look-fors:** Observation and feedback prioritize evidence of learning targets, student agency, feedback-and-revision routines, and equitable supports—so coaching reinforces the intended model and strengthens instruction over time.

Sources: ERIC, Aurora Institute, Great Schools Partnership

What the State Puts In Place

In PCBL fully realized, the state's role is to make mastery-based learning *implementable at scale*—with clear permissions, shared definitions, and practical infrastructure that districts can adapt locally. The aim is consistency for students and families (a coherent, predictable experience), while still leaving room for communities to shape how learning comes alive in their schools.

- **Updates credit policy to enable mastery-based earning of credit:** State policy clarifies that students can earn credit through demonstrated, standards-aligned competency—supported by clear criteria and guardrails for quality and equity. This includes enabling learning and credit in multiple settings/modalities (e.g., work-based learning, CTE, independent study) when evidence meets common expectations for proficiency.
- **Modernizes graduation demonstrations:** Graduation pathways allow students to demonstrate readiness through multiple credible demonstrations. This includes performance assessments, portfolios, and capstones—anchored in clear criteria for quality and rigor.
- **Builds modern learner records/transcripts:** The state advances transcript/record approaches that communicate competencies and evidence in ways that are legible to colleges, employers, and families. The system is designed so that a student's mastery can travel across transitions and be understood outside their home district.
- **Invests in assessment quality + calibration capacity:** The state supports statewide/regional infrastructure for assessment literacy, calibration/moderation, and high-quality performance assessment design. As a result, proficiency judgments are trustworthy, comparable, and equitable.
- **Aligns measurement and accountability to PCBL:** Evaluation and accountability systems incorporate indicators aligned to the model (e.g., demonstrations of readiness, learner progress evidence, authentic learning opportunities), so system incentives reinforce the intended learning design.
- **Resources the transition (and the "glue" work):** The state funds the infrastructure that makes PCBL doable over time. This includes professional learning, coaching, tools/artifacts, data systems, and networked learning that allows districts to build coherence and durability rather than isolated implementation pockets.

Sources: ERIC, Aurora Institute, Colorado Charter School Institute, NASBE