
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2020

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Competency-Based Education

History

Competency-Based Education (CBE) permits a school district or accredited nonpublic school to award high school credit to an enrolled student upon the student's demonstration of required competencies for a course or content area, as approved by a teacher. The school district or accredited nonpublic school must determine the assessment methods to be used for a student to be deemed to have demonstrated sufficient evidence of the required competencies. The CBE allowance was added in 2012 (Senate File 2284 – Education Reform Act). Senate File 2284 also created a Competency-Based Education Task Force to conduct a study regarding competency-based instruction standards and options. The Task Force was also established to do the following:

- Redefine the Carnegie unit into competencies.
- Construct personal learning plans and templates.
- Develop student-centered accountability and assessment models.
- Empower learning through technology.
- Create supports and professional development for educators to transition to a competency-based system.
- Draft a strategic plan and a proposed timeline for statewide implementation of competency-based learning for consideration by the General Assembly (amended in 2013 by House File 215 – Education Reform Appropriations Act).

The Task Force submitted a preliminary report on January 15, 2013. The final report with final recommendations was submitted to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly on December 9, 2013.

Overview

The Competency-Based Education Grant Program was established in 2013 in HF 215 (Education Reform Appropriations Act). The Department of Education is required to:

- Award grants to no more than 10 school districts annually for purposes of developing, implementing, and evaluating competency-based education pilot and demonstration projects.
- Develop a grant application and evaluation and selection criteria.

More Information

Iowa Department of Education: www.educateiowa.gov

Competency-Based Education Task Force: www.educateiowa.gov/competency-based-education-task-force

LSA Staff Contact: Lora Vargason (515.725.2249) lora.vargason@legis.iowa.gov

- Ensure each pilot or demonstration project is conducted for a minimum of one year. Projects may be conducted for multiple school years as proposed by the applicant and approved by the Department.
- Distribute funds to selected school districts no later than December 1 annually. Grant amounts are distributed as determined by the Department.

The Department is required to submit progress reports analyzing the status and preliminary findings of the projects to the State Board of Education, Governor, and the General Assembly by January 15 annually. The Department is required to summarize the project findings, including student achievement results, and submit the summary and any recommendations in a final report to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly by January 15, 2019.

Funding

Competency-Based Education received a General Fund appropriation of \$425,000 in FY 2016 and \$338,000 in FY 2017. The appropriation allocated \$100,000 for the Competency-Based Education Grant Program. The remaining funds were allocated to the Department in HF 604 (FY 2014 Education Appropriations Act) according to the Competency-Based Education Task Force preliminary report as follows:

- \$100,000 to bring together in-state and out-of-state experts to write model competencies aligned to the Iowa Core and the universal constructs.
- \$25,000 to investigate and provide examples of templates that will effectively and efficiently record and report student achievement in a competency-based environment.
- \$100,000 to develop the Assessment Validation Rubric and model assessments aligned to the competencies.
- \$100,000 to design professional development for preservice and in-service teachers, as well as in-service and aspiring administrators.

Competency-Based Education has not been funded since FY 2017.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code section [256.7](#)
Iowa Code section [256.7.26\(a\)\(2\)](#)
Iowa Administrative Code [281](#)
2012 Iowa Acts, [ch. 119](#)
2013 Iowa Acts, [ch. 121](#) and [ch. 141](#)

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