

# Idaho Mastery-Based Education Staging Guide



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Mastery Education

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# MASTERY STAGING GUIDE | INTRODUCTION



## WELCOME!

The Idaho Mastery Based Education Framework builds on the definition of mastery education provided in Idaho law and spotlights the legislative intent to provide learning environments where students are empowered, competencies are demonstrated, learning is personalized, and mastery is recognized. Idaho Code 33-1632 defines mastery based education as :

*"an education system where student progress is based on a student's demonstration of mastery of competencies and content, not seat time of the age or grade level of the student"*

Mastery learning supports our goal that all Idaho students persevere in life and are ready for college and careers. Together we collaborate to support student progress and achievement.

Transforming traditional education to student centered mastery learning systems touches every part of the system. It is complex work, and this Staging Guide is intended to clarify the steps and make the change process manageable.



Sherri Ybarra, Ed.S.  
Superintendent of Public Instruction





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## IDAHO MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The Idaho Mastery-Based Education Framework defines a learning environment where **students are empowered, competencies are demonstrated, learning is personalized,** and **mastery is recognized.** Through our work on school culture, curriculum and assessment, instruction, and policy, we create practices and systems of mastery learning that support all students in meeting rigorous outcomes, defined by competencies, standards, and goals for our learners.

*Access the full printable Idaho Mastery-Based Education Framework [here >>](#)*



## IDAHO MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

The Framework organizes our approach to mastery-based education through the following components.

### Learning culture *empowers students.*



The transparency in a mastery-based learning system encourages students to play a greater role, and invest more, in their educational success. With the support of teachers, students take productive risks to learn and demonstrate the competencies, as the focus shifts to learning rather than earning a grade. They make important decisions about their learning pathways, providing insight on projects, activities, and the individual support needed to reach their potential. Self-reflection, self-assessment, goal setting, and progress monitoring, become regular habits. Through meaningful collaboration and routine teacher and peer feedback, learners support one another in their academic growth.

### Curriculum and assessment enable students to *demonstrate competency.*



The College and Career Competencies adopted by the State Board of Education provide the foundation for the Idaho Mastery-Based Education Framework. Competencies represent the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that lead to success. Mastery learning environments focus on competencies through rigorous real-world applications that prepare students for diverse postsecondary pathways. Competencies make learning equitable and transparent through explicit, measurable, and transferable learning objectives.

### Instructional practices *personalize learning.*



Mastery learning provides a foundation for personalized learning through flexible pacing and delivery of common expectations and performance-based assessments. Students receive timely, differentiated supports based on individual academic strengths and needs, and the opportunity to share their understanding in multiple ways. Learning experiences offer opportunities to collaborate in meaningful ways by leveraging student interests and connections to their community. Personalized learning, driven by meaningful interactions with teachers and peers, results in higher levels of student engagement and agency.

### Policies and systems *recognize mastery.*



Coupled with flexibility in pace and delivery, mastery learning is grounded in the idea that students progress when they demonstrate mastery of key content and skills, regardless of the time spent in class or where instruction takes place. Students also have opportunities to demonstrate mastery in multiple formats. Mastery-based education systems ensure learners have equitable access to supports that promptly identify and address learner needs so they can move at their optimal pace through and into new learning experiences.

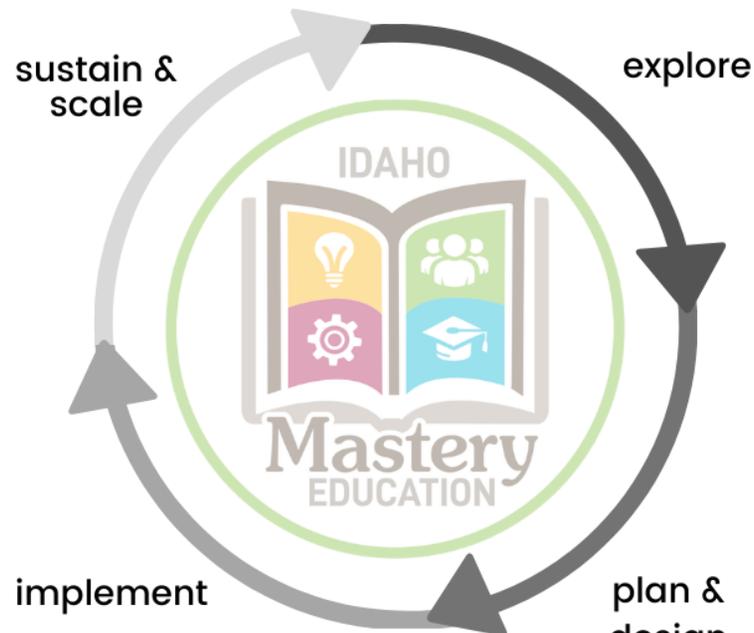
## FOUR STAGES IN THE SHIFT TO MASTERY

The activities in this guide are organized within stages and show an overall sequence of the journey, highlighting smart entry points for individuals and teams, based on readiness from prior knowledge and work completed. It is an ongoing process of learning and change. Where is your team ready to explore, plan and design, implement, or scale?

### KEY ACTIVITIES BY STAGE:

- Systematize processes
- Induct new community members
- Calibrate practice
- Ongoing feedback
- Refine policies
- Share results

- Implement the plan
- Continue building capacity
- Collect data
- Analyze data
- Reflect and refine goals
- Share progress



- Build background
- Self assess
- Develop questions
- Identify resources
- Investigate existing models
- Engage stakeholders

- Create common understanding
- Develop plan
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Build capacity to implement the plan
- Establish accountability

## KEYS TO CHANGE

The Staging Guide incorporates the following key ideas to successful change management within the approach:

- **STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION:** All stakeholders must work together to remove systemic barriers in order to create a student centered mastery learning system. That means members of the school community will have different roles throughout the process, serving at different points as participants, decision makers, and advocates.
- **TEACHER SUPPORT:** Supporting teachers with resources and time devoted to capacity building throughout the process drives the change. Shifts in teacher practice with respect to curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy are the most powerful levers of impact on student outcomes. Well designed systems are no replacement for highly skilled people.
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Local conditions inform the specific sequence of actions a system undertakes, supported by research, proven practice, and the experience of systems that have done the work. There is no one single pathway to a sustainable, scalable mastery learning system because the needs and values of the communities they serve form the foundation for any well designed system.
- **STUDENT CENTERED:** Mastery based education systems ensure that all students are given what they need to be successful, including support, time, and multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate learning. Mastery learning systems are inclusive, nurturing, and culturally sustaining environments where failure is not an option.



## GETTING STARTED...

In the next few chapters you'll dig deeper into the Mastery-Based Education Framework.

Each chapter focuses on one key component of the framework and walks you through the stages to bring mastery into your classrooms and schools.

Use this guide as a reference to define your areas of focus and find recommendations, ideas, and resources to help your team reach its goals.

*Ready?*

WITHIN EACH CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND:



Important **shifts** to consider in mastery-based thinking and practice



**Indicators** of mastery-based learning from the system and student perspectives



**Outcomes** for the stage given the steps and tools provided



A **self-assessment** to identify reasonable entry points based on work already done and priorities



**Activities and resources** to build capacity depending on your role, and to get additional **support** if you have questions or need technical assistance



# STUDENTS EMPOWERED

How do we create a culture of mastery that empowers students?



# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | culture

## HOW DO WE CREATE A CULTURE OF MASTERY THAT EMPOWERS STUDENTS?

At its core, mastery learning is about recreating our education system to truly provide rich, multi faceted, and numerous opportunities for all students to develop the skills, habits, and knowledge they need in order to thrive in college, careers, and life. Mastery-based education takes on the structural, systemic, and cultural inequities that bound and shape educators' and young people's experiences in learning communities.

One of the first and most difficult challenges of developing and implementing a mastery-based learning system and approach is changing our mindsets.

The work of developing a culture of mastery in our schools involves shifts in school culture that are observable and those that are out of our awareness, which is part of the reason why it's so challenging to take on. We need to think about tangible shifts about how to adapt and update our pedagogical practices, how curriculum and assessment must evolve, how we use time and space in the classroom, and what tools are available to students. We also need to examine our deeply held beliefs, values, shared understandings, and the meanings and messages that underlie the material and non-material aspects of our culture, exploring the extent to which they support a mastery-oriented culture.

So how to approach developing a culture of mastery?

Let's look at five aspects of culture and what it looks like from a mastery-based learning perspective.

- Mindset
- Relationships
- Teacher collaboration
- Community connections
- Vision of a graduate



What needs to **shift** within these areas?



And what are the **indicators** of a thriving mastery learning culture?

Whether or not you have been using the frame of mastery learning, let's start by identifying where your current practice aligns to and supports a culture of mastery.

# KEY SHIFTS TO MASTERY



## MINDSET

**Fixed intelligence**

*Learners' beliefs about their intelligence and ability matter greatly. They are predictive of student behavior in school, and they greatly influence engagement and motivation.*

**Growth mindset**

**Disconnected from adults & community**

## RELATIONSHIPS

*The quality of relationships between adults and learners has a profound impact on student achievement. Knowing the learners in our classrooms is the foundation of successful personalized learning.*

**Caring relationships that sustain & support**

**Silos & inequities**

## TEACHER COLLABORATION

*When schools and systems break down silos around professional practice and create common competencies, assessments, and expectations that promote mastery, learners benefit.*

**Collaboration & calibration**

**Learning restricted to school hours and walls**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

*Deep connections between school and community support personalization and promote equity. Mastery learning systems support authentic, real-world learning because the priority is the demonstration of competency, not where the learning took place.*

**Learning extends beyond school hours & walls**

**Inequitable, variable student outcomes**

## GRADUATE PROFILE

*The graduate profile articulates a vision for learners that goes beyond K-12 academic excellence. It is defined by competencies that are explicit and measurable with learning objectives that describe specific and observable skills, knowledge, and behaviors.*

**Shared, transparent values & competencies**

# INDICATORS OF MASTERY



## SYSTEM INDICATORS



## STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS

### MINDSET

Norms, routines, rituals, and practices create community, foster a strong sense of connectedness, and help learners develop important social and emotional skills and dispositions.

Learners have a mastery orientation, regularly reflecting on their learning, celebrating their own growth and the growth of others, and demonstrating positive persistence.

### RELATIONSHIPS

Adults build deep, caring relationships with students to support their academic and socio-emotional development, advocate for their well-being, and jointly monitor their academic progress as they advance through the learning system.

Learners feel that they have ongoing opportunities to build strong relationships with adults, who remain formally engaged in their learning, and with peers, who they see as collaborators for learning and co-creators of knowledge.

### TEACHER COLLABORATION

Teachers engage in collegial practice to support student learning, such as collaboratively analyzing student work, planning responsive instruction, and coaching or mentoring one another.

Learners have adult role models for setting goals, ongoing learning, and collaboration with peers; they tangibly benefit from teachers' collegial efforts to improve learning experience and outcomes.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Schools are meaningfully connected to the broader community, providing expanded learning opportunities for students to learn and apply skills, explore interests, and engage in relationship-building beyond the classroom.

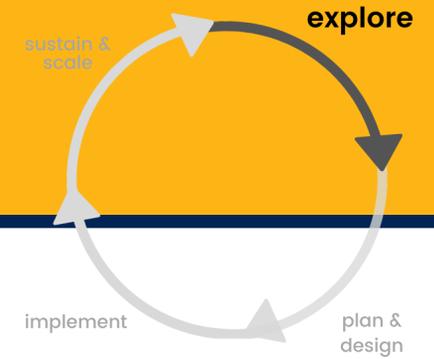
Learners can articulate opportunities for learning experiences that meaningfully connect formal schooling to the local or global community and that are valued by the learning system. Learners feel safe and connected in the learning community, and can describe ways in which their culture and the culture of their communities are valued in the learning environment.

### GRADUATE PROFILE

A set of high-quality academic and efficacy competencies articulate a distilled, equity-driven, unifying school/institutional vision for learner outcomes in a way that is transparent and accessible to all stakeholders.

Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how it promotes the ultimate goal of their education.

# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | explore



## Explore a culture of mastery.

Advancement upon mastery requires schools to make a deep commitment to meeting every learner where they are, and providing the supports and environment students need to successfully demonstrate mastery. Within the classroom, this means designing student learning experiences purposefully structured to nurture self-regulation and build agency. Let's explore how culture empowers students to be independent, engaged learners.

## OUTCOMES



- Identify a specific aspect of culture to cultivate.
- Establish a goal for classroom, school, or system culture.



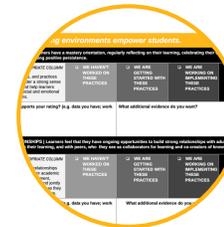
## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



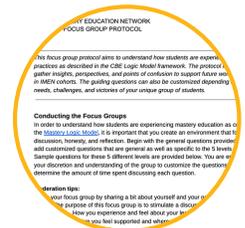
Explore concepts of **culture and mastery** to build background and prepare for fundamental shifts in thinking about a **Culture of Mastery**.



Explore the **Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Culture** to dig deeper into culture to identify areas that need revision or amplification.



Complete the **Culture Self-Assessment**. Gauge progress toward creating a student-empowering learning environment and identify an entry point for your work.



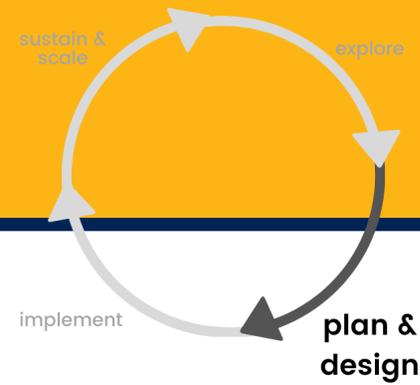
Gather **student insights** into their sense of belonging and connectedness within the school community using surveys or the **IMEN Student Focus Group Protocol**. Extend to other stakeholders if possible.



Explore the **Idaho Competencies**. Draw inspiration and generate questions on how students are empowered by the **Idaho State Board of Education Competencies** and through intentionally cultivating a culture of mastery.

For **Recommended Reading** check out Appendix C.

# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | plan & design



## Plan, design, and build capacity for a culture of mastery.

Cultivating a culture of mastery is an ongoing journey. Each school community has a unique culture with its strengths and gaps, so the pathways to mastery are varied. In this stage let's focus on developing a common understanding of the elements of a mastery culture and design a plan of action toward achieving the goal you have established.

## OUTCOMES



- An actionable plan to meet the goal for classroom, school, or system culture identified in the Explore Stage.
- A common understanding of culture and its connection to mastery learning.



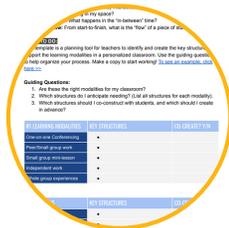
## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

### Inspire GROWTH MINDSETS



A successful mastery learning environment utilizes space, groupings, and other structures to meet student needs and support their development as independent, self-aware learners.

- Take stock: Does my classroom environment reflect my values as an educator? You can use this template: [Classroom Design - Values and Features](#) to assess whether your values align with your learning environment.

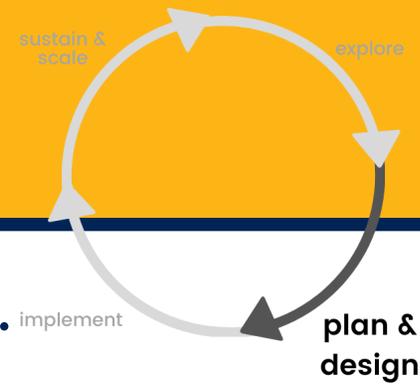


Effective classroom structures help to clarify, prompt, and reinforce desired behaviors and interactions that foster focused learning, ongoing relationship-building, and effective use of time.

- You can also use this [Classroom Design Tool: Key Structures](#) to begin to co-create with students a set of structures (norms, procedures, protocols, routines, schedules, self-monitoring tools) to guide your interactions, nurture relationships, and optimize learning. Explicitly teach students the skills, strategies, and processes that support agency, self-directed learning, and cycles of feedback and revision—key building blocks of a growth mindset.

(More *Plan & Design* activities & tools on the next page >>)

# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | plan & design, cont.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



### Encourage CARING RELATIONSHIPS

Design structures that deepen relationships among students and between students and teachers, such as mentorship and joint progress monitoring with an adult that persists beyond the end of the school year and into the next. The sessions from [IMEN's Virtual Learning Series](#) offer a guide for advancing anchored, caring relationships.



### Plan for TEACHER COLLABORATION

Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues throughout the design and implementation process will strengthen mastery-based learning and bring an equity lens to the work. Our guiding question: *How can we use protocols to focus and strengthen our collective work in a way that enhances the learning of each student?* Check out the [Collaborative Analysis Tools](#) to try on some new ways of collaborating.



### Deepen COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

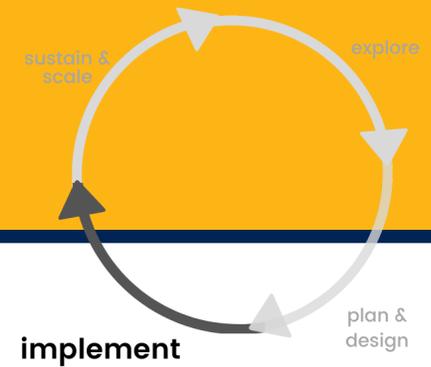
Identify relevant and meaningful guest speakers, community service projects, and internships that will enhance and deepen learning. Create opportunities for students to go into the community to learn from experts, to apply their learning, and to share and communicate what they have learned. Gain inspiration from this video: [Community Partners: Making Student Learning Relevant](#).



### Create a PROFILE OF A GRADUATE

Schools and systems can develop a Profile of a Graduate to create a shared vision for student success. The Idaho State Board Competencies can inspire a system in identifying key competencies for success. The process in this resource, [MITx Course: Envisioning the Graduate of the Future](#) (Also available in this link to the [Course to Go Version](#)) can guide the development of a local graduate profile and includes examples and ideas for engaging all stakeholders.

# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | implement



**Implement your plan, provide feedback and support, engage in action research.**

Now we get into the nitty-gritty work: Implementation! Build in time for teacher learning and collaboration to implement your plan. Having tools to document and measure growth is critical, as is ensuring a process to capture data and evidence so you can tweak and adjust. As you implement, take the opportunity to apply an equity lens to the important work of creating a learning culture where all students are empowered.

## OUTCOMES



Data to

1. inform evaluation of goals identified in plan; and
2. development of new goal and plan.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



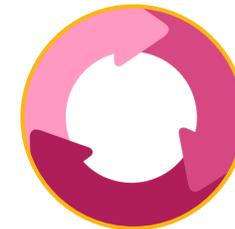
### Implement your plan for cultivating mastery.

Deliver an array of professional learning opportunities, followed up with opportunities to practice and receive feedback and support. Deepen Collaborative Analysis practices.



### Measure impact

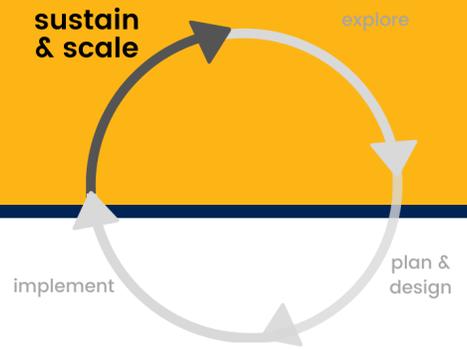
Use tools such as the Student Focus Group Protocol and Teacher Focus Group Protocol to collect data about changes in adult and student culture and use data to respond to unanticipated needs. Remember: both of the protocols can be found with the other Data Collection Tools!



### Reflect

Use insights gathered during implementation to inform the ongoing cultivation and inculcation of a culture of mastery.

# STUDENTS EMPOWERED | sustain & scale



## Establish systems for sustained implementation and collaborative practice.

As new cultural practices take hold in your classroom and school community they become ingrained like habits. This is generally what we want: less work for our brains and more natural connection, collaboration, and community. Just make sure to also build the practices deliberately into the systems and structures to continue deepening your culture of mastery and bringing new team members into the ongoing work.

## OUTCOME



Formalized, sustainable, and scalable systems for continuous improvement of classroom, school, or system culture.



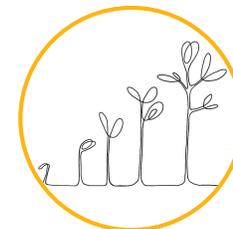
## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



**Systematize processes for continuous attention on a culture of mastery.** Ensure formal structures are in place to monitor and respond to adult and student culture. Adapt the focus group tools and other Data Collection Tools to regularly assess culture.



**Induct new members into the culture**  
Formalize rituals, routines, policies, and practices that support the mastery learning culture to ensure new members experience and share in the culture building. Introduce new teachers to the desired culture through the Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Culture.



**Share results**  
Document practices and collect data to identify high-leverage practices. Share results, resources, and stories within your system and with the broader field.



# LEARNING PERSONALIZED

How do we personalize instruction  
for mastery learning?

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IDAHO MASTERY BASED EDUCATION: STAGING GUIDE



# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | INSTRUCTION FOR MASTERY

## HOW DO WE PERSONALIZE INSTRUCTION FOR MASTERY LEARNING?

In Idaho's student-centered learning approach, flexible learning environments and responsive instructional practices enable teachers to meet students where they are, and are structured to support learning opportunities that optimize engagement, growth, and a sense of community.

Instruction in a well-designed mastery learning system is highly personalized. Students receive timely, differentiated supports based on their individual learning needs because a skilled team of practitioners who are expert diagnosticians, effective facilitators of learning, caring mentors, and fierce advocates work with them to identify those needs and next steps for learning. Learning experiences are meaningful because they leverage student interests and connect to their community.

However, in mastery learning, this is not something done to students, but co-created with students. Learner agency is central, so learners make important decisions about their learning needs and processes, and acquire the skills and metacognitive strategies they need to own their learning.

Competencies and personalization are inseparable, as competencies provide transparent and stable targets for student learning and criteria for evaluating student achievement. They create conditions that allow for personalization while maintaining equity. Competencies define the guaranteed and viable curriculum, ensuring it is not lost in an effort to personalize.

Personalization is grounded in becoming attuned to students' learning needs and interests, then leveraging their interests to effectively respond to these needs. Transparency ensures that students not only understand the "what", but also the "how" and the "why" of learning. The following instructional practices are hallmarks of transparent, responsive learning environments: inquiry-based learning experience, explicit skill and strategy instruction, expanded talk, regular conferencing, moment-by-moment formative assessment, and flexible environments and grouping.



What needs to **shift** within these areas of practice?



And what are the pedagogical **indicators** of a thriving mastery learning environment?

Whether or not you have been using the frame of mastery learning, let's start by identifying where your current practice aligns to and supports instruction for mastery.

# KEY SHIFTS TO MASTERY

*from*

*Where is your team on the journey?*

*to*

## INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

**Delivery of knowledge**

*Inquiry is at the heart of powerful academic endeavors. Wondering about something, researching it, developing a point of view, making a case: this is what academic and professional work is all about. Inquiry prioritizes student questions and ideas, which supports their sense of efficacy, their capacity, and their understanding of themselves as agents of their own learning.*

**Authentic academic experiences**

## EXPLICIT SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

**Focus on knowledge transfer**

*Explicit skill and strategy instruction, often in the form of modeling and think-alouds, ensures that students learn how to apply skills and strategies to content and to the processes of learning themselves. Cognitive apprenticeship and gradual release of responsibility prepare students to undertake rigorous tasks and to take ownership of their own learning.*

**Focus on transferable skills & strategies**

## EXPANDED DISCUSSION

**Teacher-directed discussion**

*Expanded discussion creates opportunities for students to listen carefully to others' thinking and to provide responses showing critical engagement with the task. By removing the written word as a potential barrier for meaning-making and synthesizing new learning, student discourse opens the door to deeper student understanding and provides teachers with data to diagnose and respond to student needs in real time.*

**Student-led academic discourse**

## REGULAR CONFERENCING

**Lack of transparency in learning**

*Regular conferencing is a powerful instructional tool. It's useful for assessment and differentiation, building relationships with students, and gaining insight into students' perspective of learning experiences. Conferences can provide immediate feedback and set next steps for learning, offer guided practice for metacognition and reflection, and allow students to share their thoughts and feelings about their work and their learning.*

**Transparent, equitable learning**

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

**Assessment OF learning**

*Formative assessments keep teacher and student focused on intended outcomes, common understanding of the target, the student's progress, and the next steps for learning. Continuous monitoring of learning allows the student and teacher to adjust course and try alternate approaches in real time.*

**Assessment FOR learning**

## FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS AND GROUPING

**Adult-centric, static**

*Flexible learning environments and responsive pedagogical practices are structured to support learning opportunities that optimize engagement, agency, growth, and a sense of community. Each facet of the learning experience is matched to the needs of learners.*

**Responsive, agile**

# INDICATORS OF MASTERY



## SYSTEM INDICATORS



## STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS

### INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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Inquiry-based learning experiences, built with thoughtfully chosen resources and driven by student inquiry, create personal pathways toward competency.

Learners are regularly engaged in inquiry, posing questions, investigating answers and solutions, and sharing their results, while simultaneously and continuously synthesizing and reflecting to build schema.

### EXPLICIT SKILL AND STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

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Teachers provide students explicit skill and strategy instruction through metacognitive modeling, with ongoing opportunities to practice and apply skills and strategies.

Learners have regular and varied opportunities to develop key cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies, with sufficient time to practice and apply new skills and strategies in collaborative and independent settings; they can describe the connection to the specific skills or strategies they are developing.

### EXPANDED DISCUSSION

.....

Teachers create opportunities for students to listen and respond to others' thinking, demonstrating critical engagement with the task and participating in rich academic discourse.

Learners listen carefully to others' thinking and provide responses showing critical engagement with the task, opening the door to collaborative meaning-making and deeper understanding.

### REGULAR CONFERENCING

.....

Teachers create frequent opportunities for students to engage in conferences with teachers and peers to reflect on and analyze students' own work, give and receive feedback, and identify next steps for learning.

Learners regularly confer with teachers and peers to evaluate progress, give/receive feedback, identify actionable next steps, and sharpen cognitive and metacognitive skills.

### FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

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Teachers and students use formative assessment to identify and respond to learner needs in real time.

Students access their learning data in real time, and can discuss, reflect, and evaluate their work and progress relative to their goals; they benefit from timely, responsive attention to their needs.

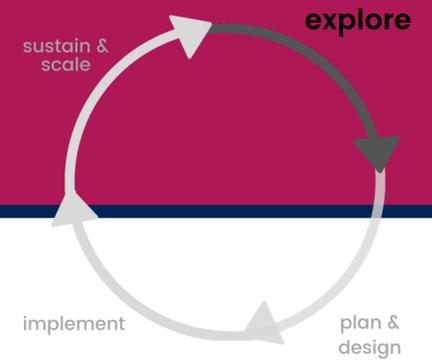
### FLEXIBLE ENVIRONMENTS AND GROUPING

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Learning spaces and grouping strategies are flexible, enabling individualized, timely supports based on specific targets and observed needs, while also allowing students to collaborate and engage purposefully with one another independently.

Learners participate in an array of learning activities and flexible groupings based on specific goals, needs, and interests.

# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | explore



There are so many ideas about what personalized learning is. First, let's agree on what personalized learning is *not*. It is not centered on technology. An online learning management system might be part of the learning system, but technology is merely a tool. It's not focused on students moving at their own pace. Students move at their own pace because they know what their goals are and they have a road map to get there. It's not anchored in independent online work like a study hall. Personalized learning is anchored in the real world and relies on a connected community of learners. Students must have opportunities for collaboration, presentation, debate, and feedback. Communication is an essential skill required for every field of professional work!



## OUTCOMES

- Identify a specific instructional practice to develop.
- Establish a goal for classroom, school, or system instructional practice.

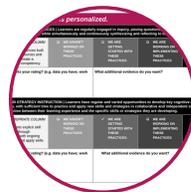
Explore instruction that supports personalized learning.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



**Explore the highly personalized practices** that enable teachers to meet students where they are, and provide timely, differentiated supports based on their individual learning needs. Start with a broad introduction for your team: [Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Instruction](#).



**Complete the Self-Assessment** Use the [Instruction Self-Assessment](#) to assess current instructional practice and to identify an entry point for your work.



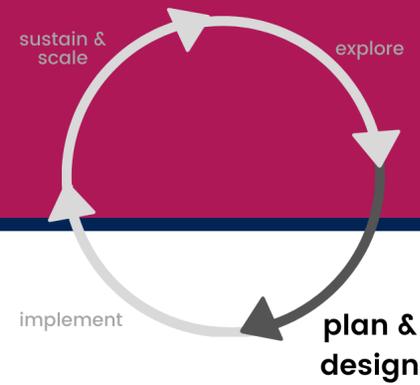
**Explore the Learning Cycle** If you haven't explored the Learning Cycle yet, start with this [Overview](#). If you are familiar with it, dig in deeper with: [Designing Deep Learning Experiences Using a Learning Cycle and Scaffolding](#).



**Collect baseline data about pedagogical practice** to make informed choices about which pedagogical practices to prioritize. A tool like the **Admin Baseline Data and Plan** in the [School-based Coaching Plan](#) can support your observation and data capturing work. To learn more about the tool, read Part 2 of the [IMEN Coaching Toolkit](#).

For **Recommended Reading** check out Appendix C.

# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | plan & design



## Plan, design, and build capacity in mastery-based instruction.

This stage is all about building instructional capacity in personalized learning. Allow teachers time and support to develop their practices. Provide professional development and follow-up coaching/mentoring to deepen practice.

## OUTCOMES



- An actionable plan to meet the goal for classroom, school, or system instructional practice identified in the EXPLORE Stage.
- A common understanding of the instructional practice(s) that supports personalized learning.

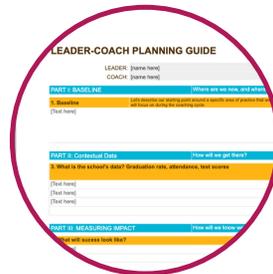


## KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS



### Develop plan to build capacity

Plan an arc of learning for the focus instructional practice, creating opportunities for educators to deepen their knowledge. Establish continua for professional practice aligned to the core teacher standards, and design tools to measure professional growth. Adopt a model for teacher coaching, such as the one described in the [IMEN Coaching Toolkit](#).



### Develop a system for accountability

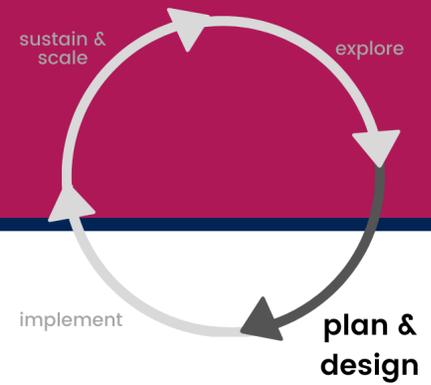
Instructional leaders commit to supporting teacher learning by establishing goals for themselves directly tied to improving teacher practice. [School-based Coaching Plan Template's](#) Goal-setting and [Admin Log](#) support this work.



### Connect mastery learning to work you are already doing

with the [Idaho Mastery Learning Crosswalk](#). It's important to see that mastery learning isn't something new. Instead, it is the hub that brings everything together, *and* it aligns closely with work that is already taking place in schools and districts around the state. Check out the connections between the Idaho Mastery-Based Education Framework and frameworks you may already be using: Danielson, Marzano, and PLCs.

# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | plan & design



## KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS, CONTINUED

Build capacity in key personalized learning practices. Create professional development opportunities for educators to deepen their knowledge of pedagogy in:



### Inquiry-based learning experiences

Use student-led inquiry to design experiences built around the learning cycle that engage students in meaningful and authentic learning.



### Regular conferencing

Conferences are a powerful instructional tool. They provide teachers with more time for assessment and differentiation, building relationships with students, and insight into their own work from the perspective of the student.



### Expanded student talk

Student discourse becomes a powerful data stream that enables teachers to diagnose and respond to student needs and understandings in real time.



### Flexible environments and grouping

Flexible learning environments are a structure to support and enhance flexible student grouping and multiple modalities for teaching and learning.



### Moment-by-moment formative assessment

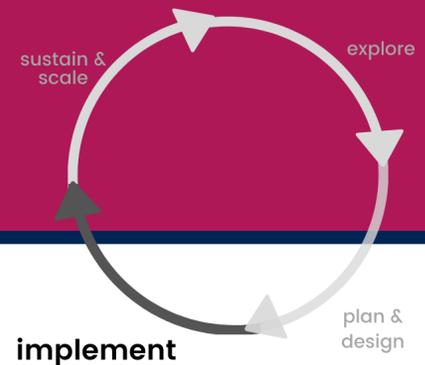
Let's expand our thinking about how we provide responsive supports to learners based on a real-time diagnostic formative assessment process that ensures timely intervention before gaps develop.



### Explicit skill & strategy instruction

Students learn a lot from seeing and hearing teachers demonstrate thinking, processes, and strategies. The most skillful teachers are often the ones who are metacognitive about their own processes and can communicate them to students: metacognition is at the root of explicit skill and strategy instruction.

# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | implement



## Implement plan, provide feedback and support, engage in action research

The implementation work involves trying new practices in a safe and supportive environment, getting and giving feedback, iterating on practices, and deepening practices with additional training and mentoring.

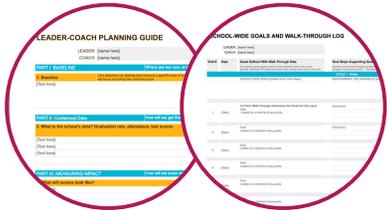


## OUTCOMES

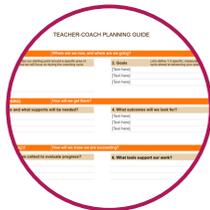
- Data to inform
- 1) evaluation of goals identified in your plan to align content and competencies with curriculum and assessment; and
- 2) development of new goals and plans.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS



**Implement plan for capacity building** - Deliver an array of professional learning opportunities, followed up with opportunities for learners to practice and receive feedback. The **School and Leader Plans** and **Teacher Plan** in the *School-based Coaching Plan* are designed to support this work.

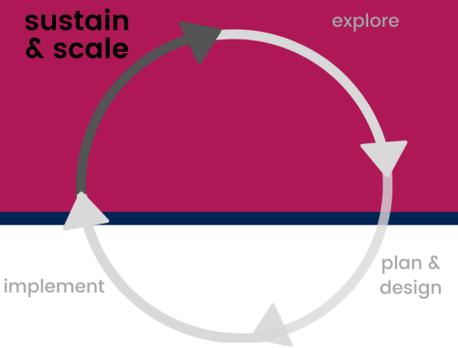


**Measure professional growth** - You can use the Coaching Plan to collect data about changes in pedagogical practice, and use data to respond to unanticipated needs.



**Reflect** - Use insights gathered during implementation to inform the approach to the next area of instructional focus. Within the School-based Coaching Plan, the **Evidence of Impact** and **Coaching Cycle Report** organize data in a way that allows users to see the big picture, which is helpful for reflecting and charting next steps.

# LEARNING PERSONALIZED | sustain & scale



## Establish systems for sustained implementation and collaborative practice.

As new instructional practices take hold in your classroom and school community, celebrate and share what is working well. Highlight excellent practices (video is great for this!) so they can spread throughout the learning community. Having a system set up to onboard new team members will be critical to bringing them into the ongoing work.



## OUTCOME

Formalized, sustainable, and scalable systems for continuous improvement of instructional practice.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & TOOLS



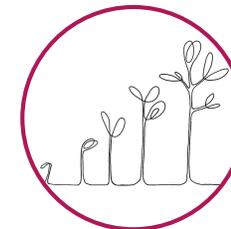
### Systematize processes for promoting ongoing improvement

Ensure formal structures are in place to provide teachers with opportunities to deepen their pedagogical practice and receive ongoing feedback, for example by adapting the [School-based Coaching Plan](#) to incorporate teacher-to-teacher observation and coaching.



### Induct new teachers into existing practices

Create a system to ensure new teachers have the opportunity to learn, practice, and receive feedback on key pedagogical practices that involve both instructional leaders and colleagues. Background knowledge can be built by sharing introductory tools like the [Idaho Mastery Learning Explore Series: Instruction](#).



### Share results

Document practice and collect data to identify high-leverage practices, and share results within and outside the system.



# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED

How do we ensure all students demonstrate competencies through curriculum and assessments?



# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

## HOW DO WE ENSURE ALL STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCIES BY THE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS?

By organizing the curriculum around a set of clearly defined competencies that students demonstrate, Mastery-based education systems **make learning the constant and allow time to be variable**. This design supports both personalization and equity. Flexible enough to respond to learners' needs and interests in real time, the curriculum remains rigorous and coherent because it is driven by a set of explicit, measurable, and transferable outcomes.

A mastery-oriented approach to curriculum design is most effective when complemented with a mastery-oriented approach to assessment design. When performance tasks frame the student-centered curriculum, learners engage in relevant, rigorous, and purposeful learning that prepares them to navigate a complex and changing world. Robust formative assessment is embedded throughout to identify learners' needs and plan next steps for learning, ensuring that all students gain the knowledge and skills the curriculum intends.

The inquiry-based Learning Cycle drives unit, lesson, and assessment design, illustrating that learning continuously connects to, and builds upon, previous learning and culminates in meaningful and rigorous demonstrations of competency. By making transparent the cognitive and metacognitive processes used to develop mastery, learners come to understand their own learning processes. Through this powerful scaffolding, the Learning Cycle fosters greater learner agency, supporting learners as they develop the skills to navigate learning experiences and monitor their growth.

Curriculum and assessments in mastery-based education systems enhance equity by providing engaging and accessible entry points into the topic through resources that both affirm the multiple identities of learners and expose them to new and different perspectives. They build agency and autonomy by intentionally and purposefully cultivating student engagement and giving all individuals equal opportunities to learn.



What needs to **shift** within these areas?



And what are the **indicators** of a thriving mastery-based culture?

Whether or not you have been using the frame of mastery learning, let's start by identifying where your current practice aligns to and supports mastery-based curriculum and assessment.

# KEY SHIFTS TO MASTERY

from

Where is your team on the journey?

to

## CONTENT AND COMPETENCY ALIGNED

**Content-focused**

*Assessment for learning* allows educators to respond to student needs to ensure that all students achieve and demonstrate the content and skill objectives. Assessment also forms the foundation for the clear, actionable feedback that is essential to building students' capacity to take ownership of their learning. This agency-building approach is responsive to both the academic and cultural needs of students, who develop a strong sense of their growth over time and see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

**Content- and Competency-aligned**

## STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING CYCLE

**Opaque learning processes**

*Learning experiences are informed by an inquiry-driven Learning Cycle grounded in the learning sciences and in child and youth development research. The Learning Cycle serves as a framework for the design of experiences that move students through a transparent learning process. In each stage of the cycle, expanded student choice and a metacognitive approach to learning nurture student agency.*

**Transparent, student-centered learning**

## PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS

**One-size-fits-all progression**

*Each student follows a path to demonstrating competency that responds and adapts based on their individual learning progress, strengths, needs, interests, and goals. Students co-construct their individualized learning plans, setting goals based on evidence and choosing activities to reach their goals, fostering agency. They make meaningful choices about what, how, and when learning happens, and have the skills and support, when needed, to act up those choices.*

**Student-directed and -monitored learning**

## SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENTS

**Point-in-time testing and advancement**

*Assessments are designed to create powerful learning experiences for students and to provide all stakeholders with the data they need to draw accurate inferences about student achievement. Assessments are built on the belief that learners develop skills over time and competence emerges gradually, not spontaneously. The mastery-based design of the tasks hinges on bringing the feedback cycle into the classroom, presenting learners with multiple opportunities for practice, allowing them to revise work as their skills develop, and providing frequent actionable feedback.*

**Multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning**

# INDICATORS OF MASTERY



## SYSTEM INDICATORS



## STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS

### CONTENT AND COMPETENCY ALIGNED

Curriculum and assessment affirm and build upon learners' interests, cultural backgrounds, and identities, while actively creating well-scaffolded, autonomy-enhancing opportunities to build and demonstrate competence.

Learners experience a curriculum with clear connections to their lives, interests, and goals, and which positively relate to aspects of their social and community identity.

### STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING CYCLE

The Learning Cycle drives learning experiences, engaging learners in meaning-making, investigation, creation, communication, synthesis, and reflection.

Learners can describe the underlying structure and processes that support their learning, including both cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies.

### PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS

Lessons, units, courses, and classes are flexible, arranged to allow multiple learning pathways and responsiveness to student needs.

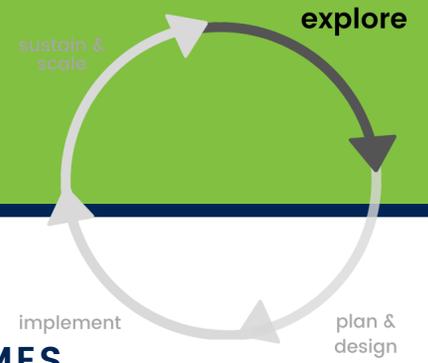
Learners have both opportunity and capacity to select from a range of developmentally appropriate, meaningful choices within and among culturally responsive units of study; choices are designed to increase relevance, foster self-regulatory capabilities, and support interest-based learning.

### SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENTS

A clearly articulated set of performance assessments allows students to develop and to demonstrate each competency at higher levels of sophistication as they progress toward graduation.

Learners can articulate the connections between the competencies or skills they are developing, the content they are learning, performance-based assessments they are working on, and how each of these relates to their learning goals and personalized pathway.

# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | explore



## Explore and envision curriculum and assessments built around competencies

This stage of exploration is based on knowing your current curriculum and assessment approach as well as understanding a mastery learning system, so that you can see which area(s) your team should focus on. Shifting to a mastery-based approach in this domain requires a paradigm shift around the purpose of assessments, so ensuring the team believes in the rationale for the shift is critical.



### OUTCOMES

- Identify a specific aspect of curriculum and assessment to advance.
- Establish a goal for aligning content and competencies with curriculum and assessment.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



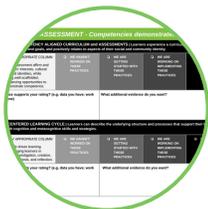
**Explore the curriculum and assessment domain** of mastery-based education. Begin to self-assess your assets and needs in the curriculum and assessment. Start with a broad introduction for your team from the [Explore Series](#).



**Explore the Idaho Competencies**  
Closely compare the [Idaho College & Career Competency set](#) to current grade level and course outcomes. Use [Unpack a Competency](#) to dig into a competency and crosswalk it to course outcomes to identify gaps.



**Explore the Learning Cycle**  
If you haven't already, meet the [Learning Cycle!](#) Consider how it can serve as the basis of curriculum and assessment design for deep, meaningful learning experiences.



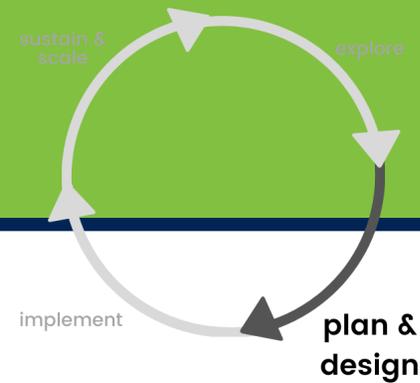
**Complete the Self-Assessment**  
Use the [Curriculum and Assessment Self-Assessment](#) to appraise how well your curriculum and system of assessment ensures that all students demonstrate competencies by the application of knowledge and skills. Use the insights you gleaned to identify an entry point for your work.



**Spot Check Units and Projects**  
Collect sample units and projects from across grade levels and content areas. Use the [Rigor, Relevance, Agency for Equity Task and Project Quality Checklist](#) to assess their quality. This can help you to identify potential areas of focus for your curriculum and assessment work.

For **Recommended Reading** check out Appendix C.

# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | plan & design



## Plan, design, and build capacity for mastery-based curriculum and assessments

OK... This is a BIG stage with several important aspects to mastery-based curriculum and assessment. This means there are many starting points to dive into over the course of your work in this domain, and you may find that you cycle frequently between PLAN & DESIGN and IMPLEMENT. Pace yourself and focus on the goals you have established as priorities in the plan for your team, and make sure you are developing clear and common language for what's what in your curriculum and assessment systems for mastery.

## OUTCOMES



- An actionable plan to meet the goal for aligning content and competencies with curriculum and assessment identified in the EXPLORE stage.
- A common understanding of the criteria for high-quality curriculum and assessment aligned to content and competencies.

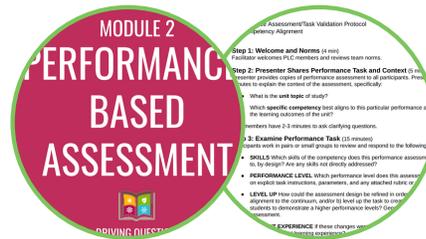


## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

**Align Content and Competencies with Curriculum and Assessments** - This is a big task that involves multiple areas and will likely be a continual process. Depending on your entry point, these tools can help you get started:



**Performance assessment overview:** For a simple, holistic approach that can be implemented at the team level see this presentation [\*So I've designed a PBA. Now What?: Designing Learning for Mastery on Any Performance Task.\*](#)



**Performance assessment validation:** [\*What Makes a Quality Performance Assessment?\*](#) as well as the [\*Performance Assessment Validation Protocol For Competency Alignment\*](#)

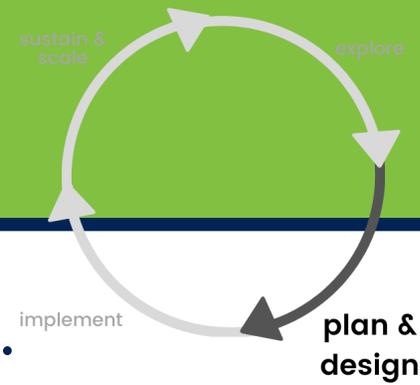


**Mastery curriculum ADAPTATION & DESIGN**

- Existing units and lesson adaptation: [\*Mastery Adaptation Guide\*](#)
- New unit and lesson plan design: [\*Mastery Curriculum Design Guide\*](#)

Both are broken into modules that support professional learning across a range of settings and groups.

# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | plan & design



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



### Adopt or Develop a Learning Cycle

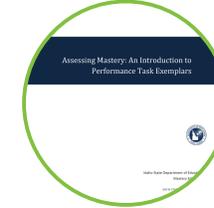
Organizing units and lessons around a student-centered learning cycle makes our learning processes transparent. Using the [\*Learning Cycle\*](#) to design explicit learning experiences teaches students the skills, strategies, and processes that support agency, self-directed learning, and cycles of feedback and revision. This workshop from the IMEN Symposium describes [\*Using the Learning Cycle to Plan\*](#) as a way to make learning visible.



### Plan for Personalized Pathways

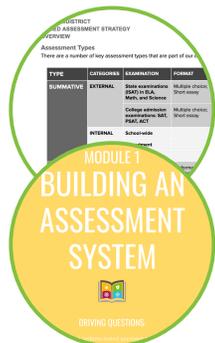
Opportunity maps ensure that students have multiple, purposefully planned opportunities to develop and demonstrate competencies through robust performance assessments. This work can be undertaken at both the course and system levels.

- COURSE LEVEL: [\*Curriculum Planning Tool | Portfolio at a Glance\*](#)
- SYSTEM LEVEL: [\*Determining Mastery for Advancement, Promotion, and Crediting\*](#)



### Explore and Develop Performance Assessments

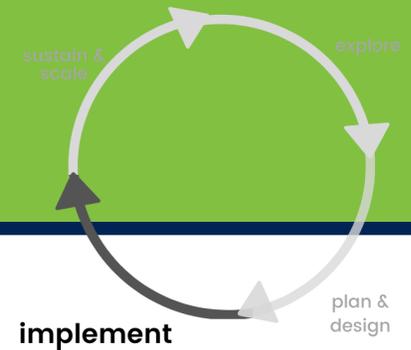
Performance assessments allow students to develop and demonstrate mastery of competencies and standards in any discipline. Unlike traditional assessments of learning, which are assigned after the learning takes place, performance assessments are assessments *for* and *of* learning. They encourage choice and agency, address student needs and engage student interest.



### Articulate the System of Assessments

Use the [\*Tiered Assessment Strategy Template\*](#) to clarify your overall assessment strategy. As described in [\*Building a Competency-based Assessment System\*](#), systems of assessment are often organized around tiers that help us to a) build a shared understanding about where different assessments and assessment-related activities “live” throughout the system, and b) create a structure that separates time-based assessments. Tier 1 represents external assessments that are time-bound (e.g., state exams); Tier 2 represents school-wide assessments and assessment-related events that are time-bound (e.g., grad ceremony); Tier 3 represents a possible “in-between” layer of assessments/events organized around teams or departments (flexible); Tier 4 represents all assessments/events at the classroom level (flexible).

# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | implement



## Implement plan, provide feedback and support, engage in action research

Implementing new or revised curriculum and assessments involves action research to capture the impact of changes in real time. Treating each implementation as an action research cycle will allow your team to identify what's working and what adjustments still need to be made. Remember to calibrate and tune your practices in the evaluation of competencies and assessments for equitable and rigorous learning.



## OUTCOMES

Data to inform

- evaluation of goals for aligning content and competencies with curriculum and assessment; and
- develop new goal and plan

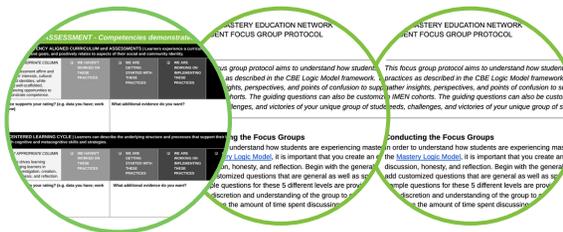


## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



### Implement your plan for cultivating mastery

Deliver an array of professional learning opportunities, followed up with opportunities for learners to practice and receive feedback. Use the [Mastery Curriculum Design](#) or [Adaptation](#) modules to guide your team through the process of shifting to mastery-based practices.



### Measure impact

Periodically revisit the [Curriculum and Assessment Self-Assessment](#), using it as a touchstone for progress.

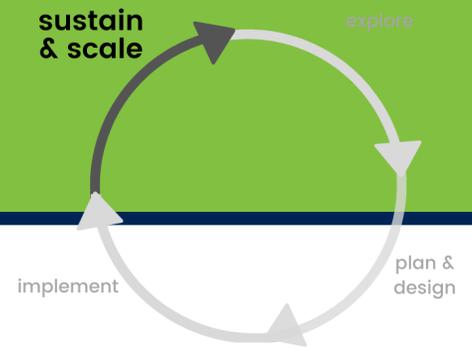
Tools such as the [Student Focus Group Protocol](#) and [Teacher Focus Group Protocol](#) can help you collect data about changes in curriculum and assessment practices and how students experience those changes.



### Reflect

Use insights gathered during implementation to inform the ongoing shifts to mastery-based curriculum and assessment.

# COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED | sustain & scale



## Establish SYSTEMS for sustained implementation and collaborative practice

As new curriculum units and performance assessments are successfully implemented in your classroom and school community, a body of work will emerge that should be codified for collaborative use. Training materials for staff new to mastery-based practices are also being created organically. Throughout this work you are also identifying the leaders in designing mastery-based learning experiences whose work can be elevated to support colleagues. As always, calibrate for equitable practices in assessment for learning.



## OUTCOME

Formalized, sustainable, and scalable systems for continuous improvement of curriculum and assessment.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



### Systematize processes for continual review and renewal of curriculum and assessment

Ensure formal structures are in place to continually develop, review and update curriculum and assessment to support mastery learning. For example, schedule regular collaboration times to tune and validate performance assessments and units, identify instructional leaders to coach and lead the work, and review student data to disrupt any equity or access issues.



### Ensure appropriate onboarding of new faculty

Systematize definitions, protocols, and design principles of designing mastery-based curriculum and assessments through the *Mastery Curriculum Design* or *Adaptation* modules. Ensure new staff understand the *Tiered Assessment Strategy* for collaborative planning to provide ample, equitable opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Providing the time and space for learning mastery-based practices means fewer interventions downstream.



### Share results

Document practice and collect data to identify high-leverage practices and tools, and share results within and outside the system.

Create a library of model performance assessments, projects, and units that can be shared across the district and network as exemplars and training tools.



# MASTERY RECOGNIZED

How do we create policies and systems that allow learners to progress upon mastery?

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IDAHO MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION: STAGING GUIDE



# MASTERY RECOGNIZED | POLICIES & SYSTEMS

## HOW DO WE CREATE POLICIES AND SYSTEMS THAT RECOGNIZE MASTERY?

Like any quality system that is responsible for student learning, a mastery-based education system is focused on creating the best environment for students to learn and become really good at things. Some of the key differentiators of mastery learning involve the systems-level approach to time, grades, advancement, and human capital that are focused on creating opportunities to demonstrate increasing competence and redesigning systems to recognize mastery. This involves removing barriers that have become a norm in the education system but actually do not serve to help young people gain competence.

**Schedule** - Because no research-based, ideal schedule exists, organize time to enable the practices that do have a research basis and to create opportunities for experiences that align with its stated values. Time should be flexible enough to support paces of learning determined by learner needs and to enable learners on-demand access to the materials, experts, and opportunities they'll need to accelerate their learning.

**Staff Configurations** - Personalized, competency-based learning changes the role of the classroom teacher. Teachers have always played many roles, but new systems place new demands on them. Effective mastery-based schools create differentiated roles for educators that model personalized, mastery-based mindsets and provide sufficient time and support to allow teachers the opportunity to build expertise, take on new responsibilities, and continue to learn and develop.

**Grading & Advancement** - In mastery-based education systems:

- The purpose of reporting or "grading" is to support and enhance learning. The goal is developing competency, and how long and how many tries don't matter.
- Mastery-based "grades" are adopted because they value growth over time and opportunities for revision; they are fluid, rather than permanent, instilling a growth mindset to help build student self-efficacy.
- "Grades" are transparent messages of progress that can precisely communicate to all stakeholders what has been learned and what comes next because they are connected to specific learning expectations.
- Transparent "grades" enable transparent advancement and crediting—everyone involved in the decision understands the criteria for moving forward.



What needs to **shift** within these areas?



And what are the **indicators** of mastery-based systems and policies?

Whether or not you have been using the frame of mastery based education, let's start by identifying current policies and systems and how they support mastery learning.

# KEY SHIFTS TO MASTERY

*from*

*Where is your team on the journey?*

*to*

## DRIVERS OF POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

**Lack of a common set of values**

*Community values drive the design of policies and systems to support a culture of mastery. Policies and systems are the bridge between the statutes and the daily practices in the school. They have to be grounded in the same values that the community wants to manifest in the classroom.*

**A common mission and vision for student competence**

## ORGANIZATION OF TIME

**Focused on adult needs**

*Time is organized to responsively meet the needs of educators and learners. Flexible use of time supports personalized pathways and pacing, and ensures equitable opportunities to demonstrate mastery.*

**Flexible use of time**

## ADULT ROLES

**Organized to meet adult needs**

*Differentiated adult roles responsively meet the needs of learners and leverage professionals' strengths to support personalized pathways and pacing, and ensure equitable opportunities to demonstrate mastery.*

**Differentiated adult roles**

## GRADING, ADVANCEMENT, AND CREDITING

**Gateways & uncertainty**

*Equitable, transparent, performance-based grading, advancement, and crediting policies enable students to progress to higher-level work and meet important milestones based on demonstrated readiness.*

**Equitable, transparent, performance-based**

## TRACKING AND DATA MANAGEMENT

**Prioritizes reporting**

*Systems to track growth and manage data support student agency and make student progress and achievement clear to all stakeholders.*

**Prioritizes tracking growth**

# INDICATORS OF MASTERY



## SYSTEM INDICATORS



## STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS

### DRIVERS OF POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

Policies and systems are grounded in the values essential to mastery learning: equity, growth, responsiveness, flexibility, and transparency.

Students learn in an environment that is equitable, growth-oriented, responsive, flexible, and transparent.

### ORGANIZATION OF TIME

Flexible, responsive scheduling enables personalized student pacing for developing and demonstrating competence.

Learners build and demonstrate their growing competence at the time and the pace appropriate to their needs.

### ADULT ROLES

Flexible, differentiated roles enable adults to leverage their strengths to provide responsive supports to ensure all learners develop competence.

Students access learning partners, resources, tools, and supports they need when they need them.

### GRADING, ADVANCEMENT, AND CREDITING

A clear purpose, with strong ties to the culture of mastery, drives equitable and transparent grading, advancement, and crediting policies and practices, which are agency-promoting, grounded in research, and built on a common understanding of the competencies.

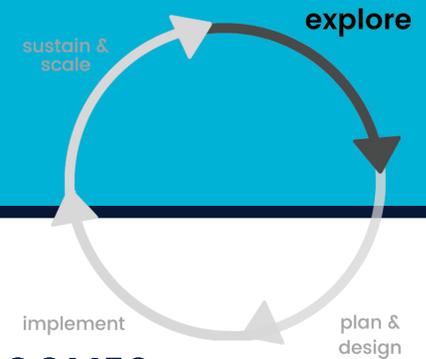
Students and adults collaborate to build a shared understanding of the competencies, which they use to equitably identify goals, communicate growing competence, determine advancement, and certify achievement.

### TRACKING AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Competency-based data management systems enable students, teachers, and families to collaboratively monitor learner progress against individualized goals.

Students and adults collaboratively and continuously gather, document, and analyze, in real time, an array of student data to respond to learner needs, supporting their growth.

# MASTERY RECOGNIZED | explore



## Explore and envision policies and systems that support progression upon mastery.

What are the systems and policies that define mastery learning, and where is your team in the journey towards ensuring it all aligns to the vision of helping students become competent?

Begin to self-assess your assets and needs in the policy and systems domain.



## OUTCOMES

- Identify a specific policy or system to address.
- Establish a goal for policy or systems work.



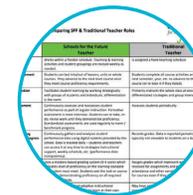
## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



**Explore policies and systems of mastery-based education.** Start with a broad introduction for your team from the *Explore Series*.



**Analyze current systems and policies.** Do they support or undermine stated values and a culture of mastery? Begin by identifying practices, policies, and systems that are already in place in your system. A good introduction to the topic can be found in *Decision Points for Grades, Promotion, Reporting and Mastery-based Grading Policies and Practices*.



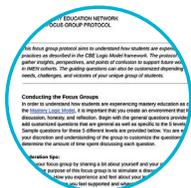
**Explore Differentiated Roles.** Consider how the shift to mastery-based learning could impact teacher roles. This resource, *What's different? Comparing SFF & Traditional Teacher Roles*, describes how one system reimaged what it means to be a teacher.



**Explore flexible organization of time.** Look at how other mastery-based systems organize time to maximize personalization. *How Schools for the Future Works: Student Schedules, Creative Uses of Time in School*, and *Flexible Scheduling Research Summary* can get you started.



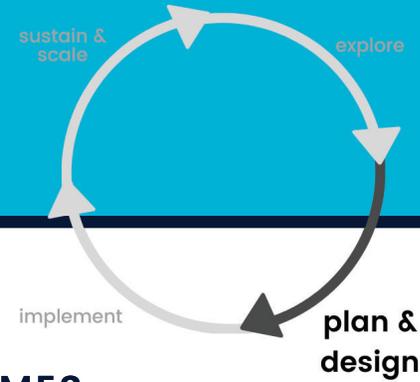
**Complete the Self-Assessment.** Use the *Policy & Systems Self-Assessment* to to identify an entry point for your work.



**Assess perceptions of current policy and practice.** Gather student insights into their perception and experience of grading practices and policies using surveys or the *IMEN Student Focus Group Protocol*. Extend to other stakeholders.

For Recommended Reading check out Appendix C.

# MASTERY RECOGNIZED | plan & design



## Plan, design, and build capacity to support progress upon mastery.

Plan the work needed to shift your system to one that advances mastery learning, rather than creates obstacles for recognizing mastery. Develop the capacity of teachers, parents, and students to understand learning goals, student progress, and grading process and philosophy to create a collaborative relationship between all stakeholders. This is deep work, so pace yourself!

## OUTCOMES



- An actionable plan to meet the goal for policy and systems change identified in the EXPLORE stage.
- A common understanding of the policies and systems that support mastery learning.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



**Design Equitable, Transparent Performance-based Grading, Advancement, and Crediting Policies.** Identify the values you want to promote and the practices that align with those values and develop policies that support them. Communicate how those policies should be implemented. The *Guide to Determining Mastery*, can guide you through the process.



**Design Flexible Organization Of Time.** *Creative Uses of Time in Schools* outlines a process for organizing time to meet specific goals of your mastery-based learning system.

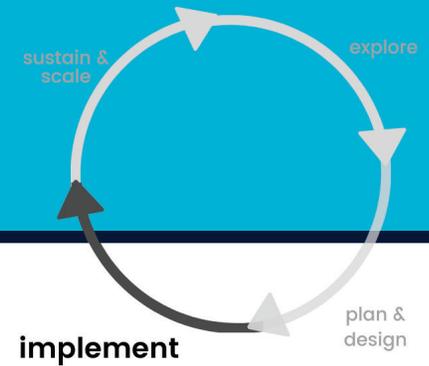


**Systematize transparency and equity.** *Collaborative scoring* of student work is one way to build a shared understanding of the fine details of the competencies, which can also help teachers communicate the competencies to students. Creating opportunities to help *parents* understand competencies is also vital.

**Design Differentiated Adult Roles.** Ask how your system can, in the words of Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, "get the right people on the bus in the right seats." Conduct a Functional Audit: identify needs that are unmet, poorly met, or create unnecessary strain and drain. Identify individuals in your system who have talent or expertise in specific areas, and develop a plan to deploy them where those assets can be leveraged and further developed.

**Identify System for Tracking Student Growth and Managing Student Data.** Begin by collecting requirements. What functionality do you need a tracking platform to be able to do? This might be limited to tracking progress on competencies, while relying on current systems to handle other functions such as student information, scheduling, and reporting. On the other end, it might mean creating a wishlist for features in an all-in-one solution that unifies the functions of a traditional student information system with courseware. Once you've identified the must-haves, and perhaps some nice-to-haves as well, begin to explore platforms.

# MASTERY RECOGNIZED | implement



**Implement plan, provide feedback and support, engage in action research.**

**Go slow to go fast.** Of all the changes involved in shifting to mastery learning systems, those that touch on grading, scheduling, and staffing are most visible, have the widest impact, and are most closely tied to tradition. *Going slow to go fast* means building a wide coalition of stakeholders and communicating frequently. It also allows time to build systems and policies that reflect both the values of the community and to incorporate what has been learned through implementation in other areas.



## OUTCOMES

Data to inform

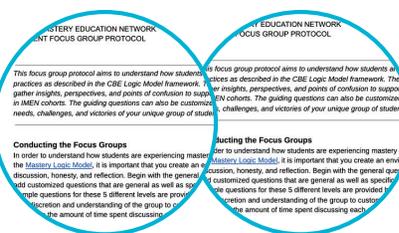
- evaluation of goals identified in your plan for policy and systems to support mastery-based education; and
- development of new goals and plans.



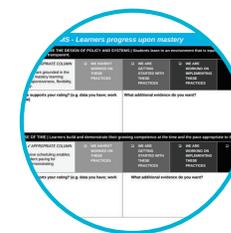
## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



**Implement new policy and systems**  
Implementing changes to grading, scheduling, and staffing with integrity requires capacity building. Deliver an array of differentiated professional learning opportunities, followed up with opportunities for learners to practice and receive feedback. The **Admin Log** and **Teacher Plan** in the *School-based Coaching Plan* are designed to support this work.

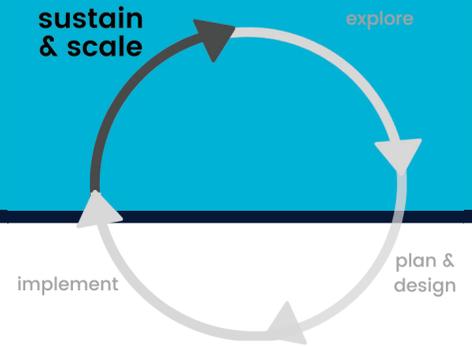


**Measure impact**  
Use tools such as the *Student Focus Group Protocol* and *Teacher Focus Group Protocol* to collect data about the impact of system and policy changes on practice and on adult and student culture. Use data to respond to unanticipated needs and identify potential tweaks or opportunities for additional learning or communication.



**Reflect**  
Use insights gathered during implementation to inform the ongoing shifts to mastery-based curriculum and assessment.  
  
Periodically revisit the *Self-Assessment*, using it as a touchstone for progress.

# MASTERY RECOGNIZED | sustain & scale



## Establish SYSTEMS for sustained implementation and collaborative practice.

Systematize processes for promoting ongoing improvement. Ensure formal structures are in place to provide teachers with opportunities to leverage new policies and systems, and to implement with integrity.



### OUTCOME

Formalized, sustainable, and scalable systems for continuous review of policies and systems to support mastery-based learning.



## KEY ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

### Continue to refine sustainable support structures.

Adapting the *School-based Coaching Plan* to incorporate teacher-to-teacher observation and coaching can help teachers prepare for new roles or make effective use of unfamiliar schedules.



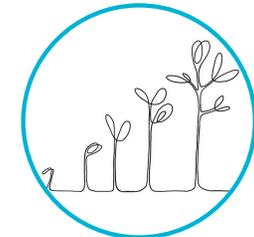
### Induct new teachers into existing practices and policies

Create a system to ensure new teachers have the opportunity to learn and implement mastery learning practices. Coaching is an integral component to demonstrate partnership with teachers as they engage in deep paradigm shifts.



### Keep equity in the forefront through routine systems analysis

Each year, engage stakeholders in broader collaborative analysis to address any unresolved barriers to the equitable opportunities for learners to be recognized for mastery.



### Share results

Document practice and collect data to identify effective policy and systems, and share results within and outside the system.



# APPENDIX A IDAHO COMPETENCIES & CONTINUA



IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

Each competency icon below links to its related performance level descriptors (Levels 1-6).



Additional links:

- [Competencies Overview](#)
- [Full Competency Set](#)
- [Text Only Version](#)





# APPENDIX B

# MASTERY INDICATORS



## APPENDIX B: INDICATORS OF MASTERY

# A CULTURE OF MASTERY: STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS & CORE TEACHER STANDARDS

### Student Learning Indicators: **STUDENTS EMPOWERED & LEARNING CULTURE**

- Learners have a mastery orientation, regularly reflecting on their learning, celebrating their own growth and the growth of others, and demonstrating positive persistence.
- Learners feel that they have ongoing opportunities to build strong relationships with adults, who remain formally engaged in their learning, and with peers, whom they see as collaborators for learning and co-creators of knowledge.
- Learners have adult role models for setting goals, ongoing learning, and collaboration with peers; they tangibly benefit from teachers' collegial efforts to improve learning experience and outcomes.
- Learners can articulate opportunities for learning experiences that meaningfully connect formal schooling to the local or global community and that are valued by the learning system.
- Learners feel safe and connected in the learning community, and can describe ways in which their culture and the culture of their communities are valued in the learning environment.
- Learners know what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how it promotes the ultimate goal of their education.

### Core Teaching Standards: **THE LEARNER AND LEARNING & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- Standard 2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- Standard 3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.



## APPENDIX B: INDICATORS OF MASTERY

# THE INSTRUCTION OF MASTERY: STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS & CORE TEACHER STANDARDS

### Student Learning Indicators: **LEARNING PERSONALIZED & INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES**

- Learners are regularly engaged in inquiry, posing questions, investigating answers and solutions, and sharing their results, while simultaneously and continuously synthesizing and reflecting to build schema.
- Learners have regular and varied opportunities to develop key cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies, with sufficient time to practice and apply new skills and strategies in collaborative and independent settings; they can describe the connection between their learning experience and the specific skills or strategies they are developing.
- Learners listen carefully to others' thinking and provide responses showing critical engagement with the task, opening the door to collaborative meaning-making and deeper understanding.
- Learners regularly confer with teachers and peers to evaluate progress, give/receive feedback, identify actionable next steps, and sharpen cognitive and metacognitive skills.
- Learners access their learning data in real time, and can discuss, reflect, and evaluate their work and progress relative to their goals; they benefit from timely, responsive attention to their needs as learners.
- Learners participate in an array of learning activities and flexible groupings based on specific goals, needs, and interests.

### Core Teaching Standards: **INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE**

- Standard 6: Assessment. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
- Standard 7: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
- Standard 8: Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.



## APPENDIX B: INDICATORS OF MASTERY

# CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT OF MASTERY: STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS & CORE TEACHER STANDARDS

### Student Learning Indicators: **COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED & CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

- Learners experience a curriculum with clear connections to their lives, interests, and goals, and which positively relates to aspects of their social and community identity.
- Learners can describe the underlying structure and processes that support their learning, including both cognitive and metacognitive skills and strategies.
- Learners have both opportunity and capacity to select from a range of developmentally appropriate, meaningful choices within and among culturally responsive units of study; choices are designed to increase relevance, foster self-regulatory capabilities, and support interest-based learning.
- Learners can articulate the connections between the competencies or skills they are developing, the content they are learning, performance-based assessments they are working on, and how each of these relates to their learning goals and personalized pathway.

### Core Teaching Standards: **THE LEARNER AND LEARNING & CONTENT**

- Standard 1: Learner Development. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- Standard 4: Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- Standard 5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.



# POLICIES & SYSTEMS FOR MASTERY: STUDENT LEARNING INDICATORS & IDAHO STATE POLICIES

## Student Learning Indicators: **MASTERY RECOGNIZED** and **SYSTEMS & POLICIES**

- Students learn in an environment that is equitable, growth-oriented, responsive, flexible, and transparent.
- Learners build and demonstrate their growing competence at the time and the pace appropriate to their needs.
- Students access learning partners, resources, tools, and supports they need when they need them.
- Learners and adults collaborate to build a shared understanding of the competencies, which they use to equitably identify goals, communicate growing competence, determine advancement, and certify achievement.
- Learners and adults collaboratively and continuously gather, document, and analyze, in real time, an array of student data to respond to learner needs, supporting their growth.

The Core Teaching Standards rely on policies to support the mastery-aligned teaching practice needed to create systems which recognize mastery. State policies that define and advance mastery enable local mastery education policy.

### **IDAHO STATUTE 33-1632: MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION**

(click for the full Statute)

- (1) The legislature finds that moving toward mastery-based education where students progress as they demonstrate mastery of a subject or grade level is in the best interest of Idaho students. The legislature further finds that moving from the current time-based system to a mastery-based approach will allow for more personalized and differentiated learning; create a focus on explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students; and emphasize competencies that include application and knowledge along with skill development.
- (2c) Create a sustainability plan for statewide scaling of mastery-based education and ensure that all public school districts and charter schools participating in the Idaho mastery education network develop plans that describe how the public school district or charter school will maintain a mastery-based approach to education. Plans must include a process to develop the rubrics and assessments necessary to determine mastery and award credit.

### **IDAHO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, Section 105 High School Graduation Requirements:**

- 1b. Mastery. Notwithstanding the credit definition of Subsection 105.01.a., a student may also achieve credits by demonstrating mastery of a subject's content standards as defined and approved by the local school district or LEA.



# APPENDIX C

## MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION

### RECOMMENDED READING

## MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION RECOMMENDED READING

### STUDENTS EMPOWERED: CULTURE

- [Improving Schools from Within](#), Roland Barth
- [The Human Side of School Change](#), Robert Evans
- [Cultures Built to Last](#), Richard DuFour & Michael Fullan
- [Transforming School Culture](#), Anthony Muhammad
- [Mathematical Mindsets](#), Jo Boaler
- [Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain](#), Zaretta Hammond
- [Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World](#), Django Paris & H. Samy Alim

### COMPETENCIES DEMONSTRATED: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENTS

- [Understanding by Design, Expanded 2nd Edition](#)
- [Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding](#)
- [Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment](#)
- [How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School: Expanded Edition](#)
- [How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures](#)
- [Making the Mathematics Curriculum Count: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals - Revised](#)
- [Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards](#)
- [How to Assess Higher-Order Thinking Skills in Your Classroom](#)

### LEARNING PERSONALIZED: INSTRUCTION

- [Strategies That Work](#), Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- [How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students](#), Susan M. Brookhart
- [Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning](#), Doug Buehl
- [Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner](#), Pérsida Himmele and William Himmele
- [The Formative Assessment Action Plan: Practical Steps to More Successful Teaching and Learning](#), Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher
- [Leaders of Their Own Learning](#), Ron Berger, Leah Rugen, Libby Woodfin
- [Students at the Center: Personalized Learning with Habits of Mind](#), Bena Kallick and Allison Zmuda
- [Quality and Equity By Design](#), CompetencyWorks
- Find additional resources in the [Instructional Practices Essential Reading List](#)

## MASTERY-BASED EDUCATION RECOMMENDED READING

### MASTERY RECOGNIZED

- Beyond Classroom Walls: Developing Innovative Work Roles for Teachers, Julie Kowal and Dana Brinson
- Toward the Structural Transformation of Schools: Innovations in Staffing, Jane Coggshall, Molly Lasagna, Sabrina Laine
- Starting the Conversation About Grading - Educational Leadership, Susan M. Brookhart
- On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting, Thomas Guskey
- Developing Standards-Based Report Cards, Thomas Guskey & Jane M. Bailey
- What We Know About Grading: What Works, What Doesn't, and What's Next. Thomas R. Guskey & Susan M. Brookhart
- A Repair Kit for Grading: Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades, K. O'Connor
- Anytime, Anywhere: Student-Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers. Wolfe, R., Steinberg, A., & Hoffman, N.
- Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why it Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms, Joe Feldman
- Student-Centered Learning: Functional Requirements for Integrated Systems to Optimize Learning. Elizabeth Glowa and Jim Goodell
- "Helpful Tools for Developing Effective Competency-Based Education." Getting Smart
- "Innovative Dashboards." Building 21
- "Competency-Based Education Landscape." XQ Institute



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education was convened in 2012, the diverse, 30-member group of stakeholders met for eight months and ultimately delivered twenty recommendations. At the top of the list was a call for transitioning the state's public education system to a mastery-based system.

The Legislature passed enabling legislation and funding for mastery-based education in 2015 and shortly thereafter 19 districts or schools raised their hands to pioneer mastery-based education in Idaho. The Idaho Mastery-Based Education Network was created to give teachers the tools and training they needed to successfully implement mastery learning in their classrooms. The information provided in this Staging Guide would not be possible without the pioneering work of the 19 districts and schools who led the way as the Idaho Mastery-Based Education Network (IMEN).

Regardless of what point you entered into this work, or where you are now in the making the shifts to mastery, we applaud your leadership in Idaho schools and your commitment to building equitable, mastery learning environments for our students.

**Thank you!**

*This Staging Guide was designed and developed as a collaboration between Idaho State Department of Education and reDesign, an education design company that has served as the mastery learning technical assistance provider since the launch of IMEN in 2016.*

