Competency-Based *Equity*: Questions to Ask to Ensure CBE Works for *All*

Guadalupe Alvarez, Lindsay Unified School District
Melissa Gedney, Digital Promise
Nate Harrison, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Kim Smith, Digital Promise

Who We Are

Guadalupe Alvarez
Learning Facilitator
Lindsay Unified School
District
@Lupiea

Melissa Gedney
Senior Program Manager
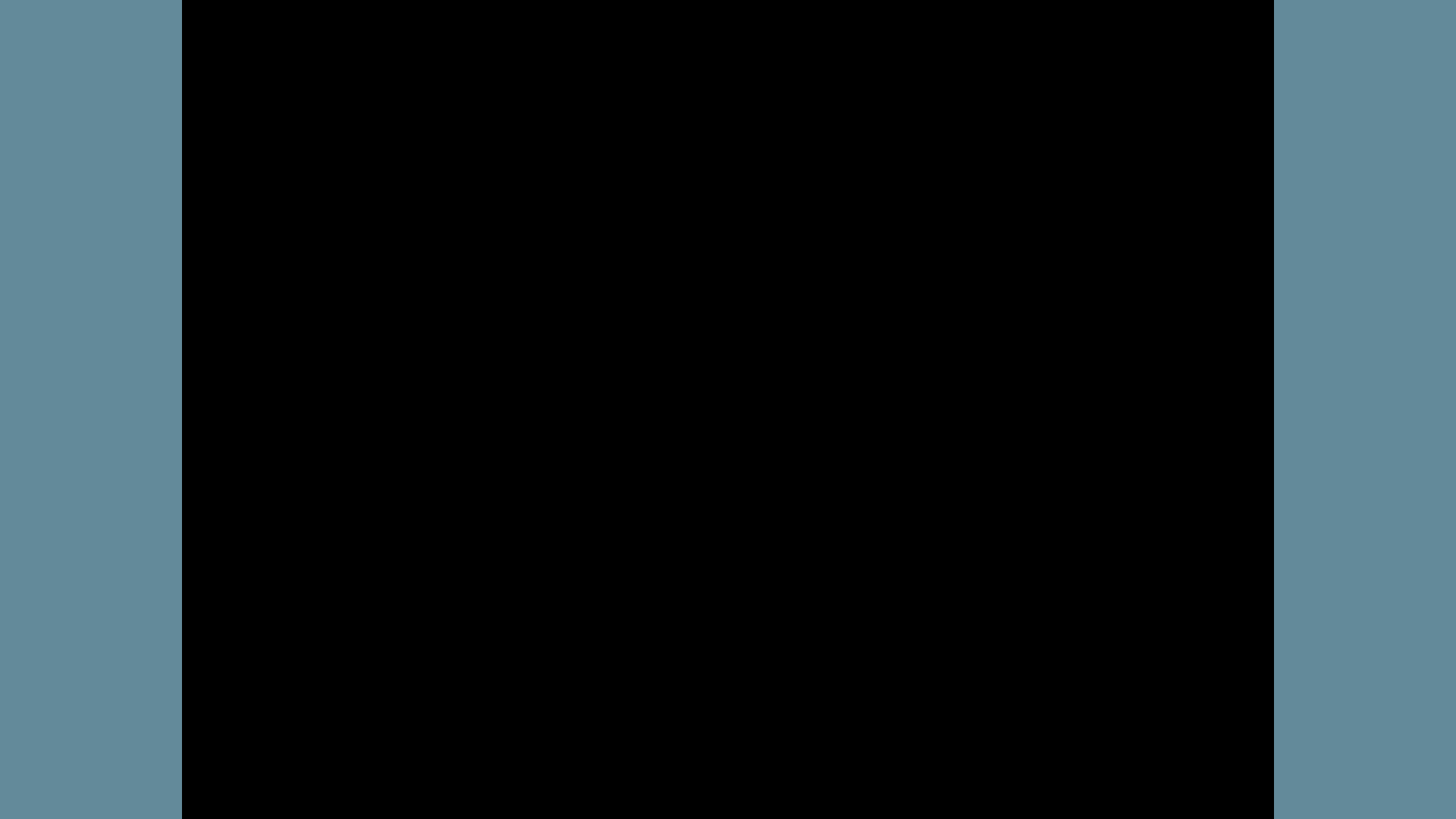**Digital Promise**
@melissaged

Nate Harrison
Innovations Specialist
Utah Schools for the Deaf
and Blind
@NateEducation

Kim Smith
Executive Director
Digital Promise
@k12ksmith

Session Outcomes

- Participants will learn **what big questions to ask to account for equity** in a competency-based implementation

- Participants will **learn concrete ideas, strategies and solutions for adapting CBE for all students** from some of the nation's leaders in competency-based education

- Participants will **leave with a CBE equity audit framework and a conversational format** to pilot in their districts to tackle big questions around equity in CBE implementation

Advancing Equity in the League

- The Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools is 102 districts (45% FRL) in 33 states

- Over 50% are implementing CBE in some way shape or form

- Looking at the opportunities and gaps in the League's work and being very intentional about addressing gaps

- Implementing and sharing practices to center work on equity

The League and Competency-based Education

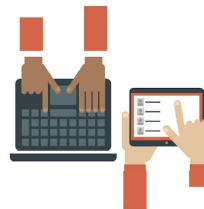**Competency-based Education Working Group formed to share best practices internally**

CBE Working Group creates internal resource and begins work on Toolkit 2.0
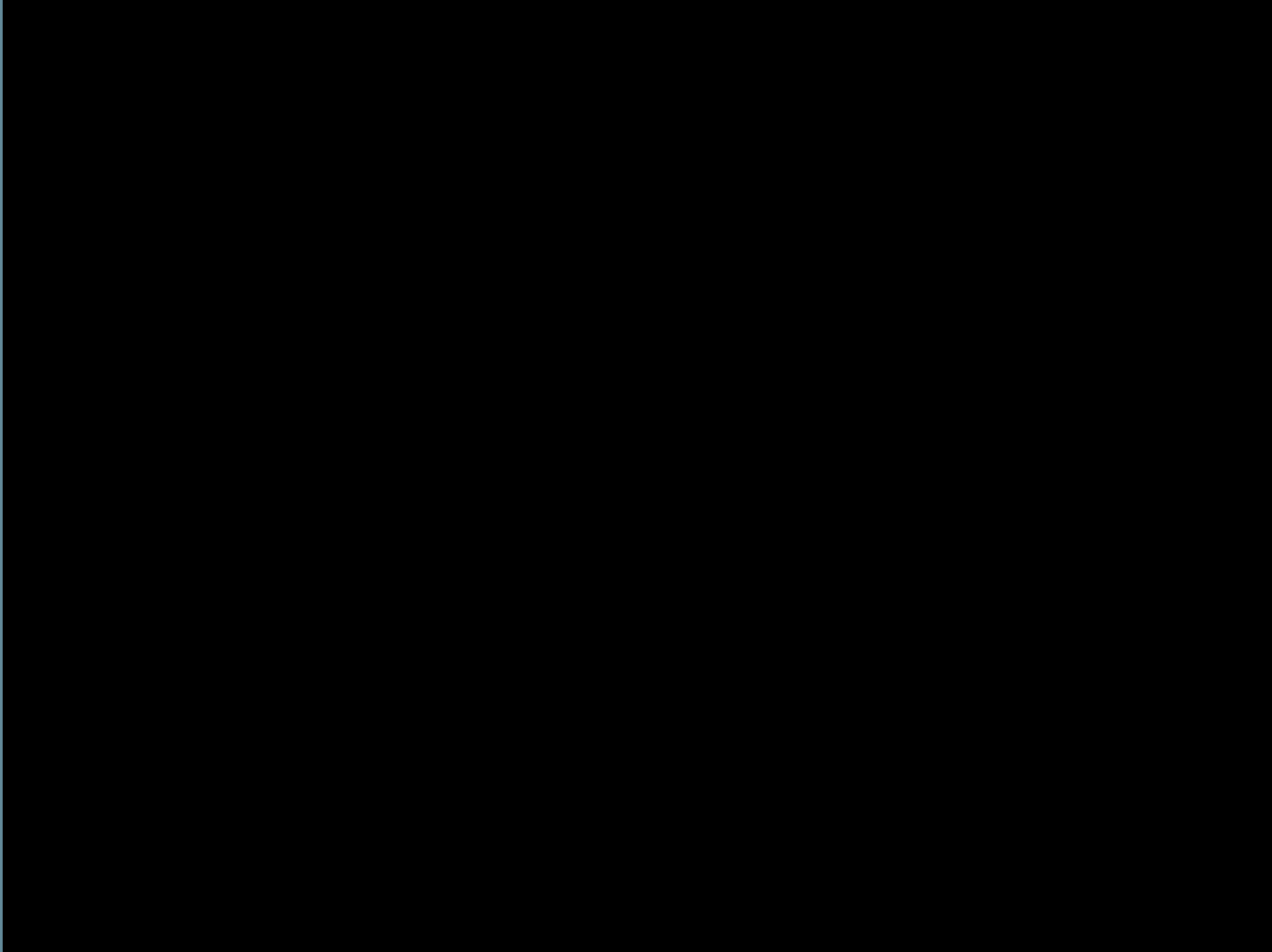
CBE Working Group publishes Toolkit 2.0

Today

2015

2016

2017

2018

digitalpromise.org/cbe

Quality and Equity by Design: Charting the Course for the Next Phase of Competency-Based Education via *CompetencyWorks*

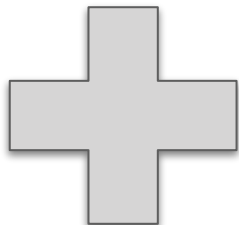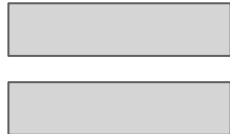| Traditional Education	Competency-Based Education	Examples of High-Quality Competency-Based Education with Equity at the Center
Students advance upon the end of a fixed period of time regardless if they fully learned the concepts and skills.	Students continue to receive instructional support until they fully learn the concepts and skills and then advance after demonstrating mastery. This requires additional instructional support, not retention.	Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate of progress designed to result in students achieving mastery of college and career readiness by graduation.
Learning targets are organized around age-based grade levels and provide key skills/knowledge that may be used later in higher-level courses.	Measurable learning targets are transparent to students. Schools ensure students have the opportunity to apply or transfer a learning target to new contexts. Schools monitor student growth and pace within pathways to master standards and competencies.	Individual pathways take into consideration students' zone of proximal development, build upon students prior knowledge and experience, and address disparities in foundational knowledge.
The school and instruction are designed to deliver a single curriculum to all students based on age.	Districts and schools are organized with greater flexibility to provide instruction and learning opportunities to meet students where they are and take advantage of anytime, anywhere learning.	Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.
Students may receive targeted supports when their academic or behavioral needs are identified as significantly above or below the norm (i.e. SPED, gifted).	Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their learning needs.	Students receive culturally responsive support and instruction. Students who are off-track to graduation by 18 have an academic pathway that enables them to complete their secondary education.
Assessment is used principally for summative purposes. Assessments are conducted at pre-determined points of time or at end of unit and are administered to all students at the same time and in the same format on the same content.	Assessments are embedded throughout a student's learning cycle, and are used primarily to orient a student along their individual learning pathway, as well as inform next steps. Students have options for providing evidence of learning.	Assessments for learning include applying knowledge in novel contexts and providing evidence. Assessment cycles include coaching students on building the skills needed and increasing student agency including developing growth mindset, habits of success and learning skills.
Learning outcomes emphasize academic skills, memorization and comprehension of content. May or may not be aligned to higher order skills or require demonstrations of how to use skills and knowledge.	Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include deep understanding of content knowledge demonstrated through application as well as the skills to be lifelong learners.	Students are recognized for the assets they already possess and encouraged to develop their interests and talents, while building academic knowledge, skills and competencies.
Grades reflect a combination of completing assignments, scores on tests and other assessments, and behavior. Grades are used to create grade point averages to rank and sort students.	Schools know the performance levels of each student and closely monitor growth and progress of students. Scoring is used to communicate with students about their progress in learning.	Monitoring how students progress is key to ensuring all students meet high levels of rigor. Teachers use data on student progress to collaborate and use research-based strategies to help students progress.

CBE Toolkit via *Digital Promise*

Video Series
Learn about the power of competency-based education, cross-district collaboration, and open education resources from leaders in Kettle Moraine School District, Mentor Public Schools, and Vista Unified School District.

- Collaboration Project
- Competency-based Education
- Open Education Resources

Stakeholder Outreach & Input
Shared purpose and vision established across the community

- Student/Family Input
- School Leader/Teacher Input
- District/School Board Input
- Community/Business Input

Curriculum & Instruction
Targeted support and resources available for all students; learning occurs independently & collaboratively

- Timely, Differentiated Support for Students
- Modular Content Aligned to Learning Objectives
- Collaborative Learning Experiences for Students
- Students as Self-Directed Learners

Standards & Assessment
Flexible assessment of clear learning targets is focused on transferable knowledge

- Flexible Assessment Schedule
- Assessment Experiences Focused on Knowledge Transfer
- Defined Learning Objectives
- Defined Rubrics for Demonstrating Understanding

Infrastructure & Policy
Advancement through system is based on mastery, not seat time

- Hardware, Software, & Network investments
- District Policies for Grading, Credits, & Advancement
- Data, Systems to Track Progress
- State Waivers, Higher Education Connections

Support, Staffing & Scheduling
Professional learning, roles, and schedules are designed to support CBE

- Professional Learning Plans Mirroring CBE Principles
- Coaching for CBE Teaching, Curriculum, & Assessment
- Staffing Models to Support CBE
- Schedules & Calendars Designed for CBE

Quality and Equity by Design: Charting the Course for the Next Phase of Competency-Based Education via *CompetencyWorks*

Traditional Education	VS.	Competency-Based Education	Examples of High-Quality Competency-Based Education with Equity at the Center
Students advance upon the end of a fixed period of time regardless if they fully learned the concepts and skills.		Students continue to receive instructional support until they fully learn the concepts and skills and then advance after demonstrating mastery. This requires additional instructional support, not retention.	Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate of progress designed to result in students achieving mastery of college and career readiness by graduation.
Learning targets are organized around age-based grade levels and provide key skills/knowledge that may be used later in higher-level courses.		Measurable learning targets are transparent to students. Schools ensure students have the opportunity to apply or transfer a learning target to new contexts. Schools monitor student growth and pace within pathways to master standards and competencies.	Individual pathways take into consideration students' zone of proximal development, build upon students prior knowledge and experience, and address disparities in foundational knowledge.
The school and instruction are designed to deliver a single curriculum to all students based on age.		Districts and schools are organized with greater flexibility to provide instruction and learning opportunities to meet students where they are and take advantage of anytime, anywhere learning.	Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.
Students may receive targeted supports when their academic or behavioral needs are identified as significantly above or below the norm (i.e. SPED, gifted).		Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their learning needs.	Students receive culturally responsive support and instruction. Students who are off-track to graduation by 18 have an academic pathway that enables them to complete their secondary education.
Assessment is used principally for summative purposes. Assessments are conducted at pre-determined points of time or at end of unit and are administered to all students at the same time and in the same format on the same content.		Assessments are embedded throughout a student's learning cycle, and are used primarily to orient a student along their individual learning pathway, as well as inform next steps. Students have options for providing evidence of learning.	Assessments for learning include applying knowledge in novel contexts and providing evidence. Assessment cycles include coaching students on building the skills needed and increasing student agency including developing growth mindset, habits of success and learning skills.
Learning outcomes emphasize academic skills, memorization and comprehension of content. May or may not be aligned to higher order skills or require demonstrations of how to use skills and knowledge.		Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include deep understanding of content knowledge demonstrated through application as well as the skills to be lifelong learners.	Students are recognized for the assets they already possess and encouraged to develop their interests and talents, while building academic knowledge, skills and competencies.
Grades reflect a combination of completing assignments, scores on tests and other assessments, and behavior. Grades are used to create grade point averages to rank and sort students.		Schools know the performance levels of each student and closely monitor growth and progress of students. Scoring is used to communicate with students about their progress in learning.	Monitoring how students progress is key to ensuring all students meet high levels of rigor. Teachers use data on student progress to collaborate and use research-based strategies to help students progress.

14 | Quality and Equity by Design: Charting the Course for the Next Phase of Competency-Based Education

Competency-based *Equity:* Questions to Ask

The following examples were pulled from the *Quality and Equity by Design: Charting the Course for the Next Phase of Competency-Based Education* report from CompetencyWorks. Please take the time to evaluate your district's work. Do the categories on the left reflect where your district is at this point?

Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate [...] upon students prior knowledge and experience, and address disparities in foundational knowledge.	**Not Doing Yet**		**Doing it Well**
Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.	**Not Doing Yet**		**Doing it Well**

This Session's Rubric

Assess yourself.

Conversation Cafe Carousel

In Conversation Cafes, **EVERYONE** talks.

Conversation Cafe Principles

EQUAL SHARE TIME PER PARTICIPANT

Participants should aim to approach CCs with:

- **Open-mindedness:** Listen to and respect all points of view.
  Acceptance: Suspend judgment as best you can.
- **Curiosity:** Seek to understand rather than persuade.
- **Discovery:** Question assumptions, look for new insights.
- **Sincerity:** Speak from your heart and personal experience.
- **Brevity:** go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.

Conversation Cafe Prompts

Round 1: What do you do really well? What don't you do yet?

Round 2: What do you hope to do next?

Traditional Education	VS.	Competency-Based Education	Examples of High-Quality Competency-Based Education with Equity at the Center
Students advance upon the end of a fixed period of time regardless if they fully learned the concepts and skills.		Students continue to receive instructional support until they fully learn the concepts and skills and then advance after demonstrating mastery. This requires additional instructional support, not retention.	Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate of progress designed to result in students achieving mastery of college and career readiness by graduation.
The school and instruction are designed to deliver a single curriculum to all students based on age.		Districts and schools are organized with greater flexibility to provide instruction and learning opportunities to meet students where they are and take advantage of anytime, anywhere learning.	Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.

Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate of progress designed to result in students achieving mastery of college and career readiness by graduation.

Not doing yet

Doing really well

Lindsay Unified School District

- **Demographics (2016 via Rooney, Brown, Lopez pg 5)**
  - 83% Low Income
  - 100% Free and Reduced Meals
  - 93% Latino
  - 52% English Language Learners
  - 500 Learners homeless
  - Average Community education is 5th grade

- **Learning pathways** in Math and ELA
- **Learners work at their own pace**
- **Redesign curriculum to meet learner needs**

Pathways of Curriculum

- **Pathways are built on viable learning outcomes**
  - Intended (Written curriculum)
  - Implemented Curriculum (Taught)
  - Attained Curriculum (Tested)
- **Structures of Instructional Support**
  - Personalized learning Plans (PLP's)
  - Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's)
- Empower
- SRI, IReady

empower

Pathway Support and Progress
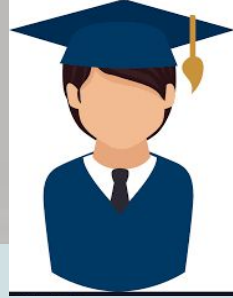
- **Pivotal point**
- **Prepare learners to enter high school**
  - Deeper pathways- Agricultural Science, Agricultural Mechanics, Health Science, and Human Services Pathways
- **38% of learners graduate and attend a four year college**
  - This is more than double our area average of 18%.
  - Above the state and national average for our demographics

Students' learning pathways and the amount of instructional support reflect a pace and rate of progress designed to result in students achieving mastery of college and career readiness by graduation.

Not doing yet

Doing really well

Conversation Cafe Prompts

Round 1: What did you notice?

Round 2: What ideas emerged? For your district or education at large?

Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.
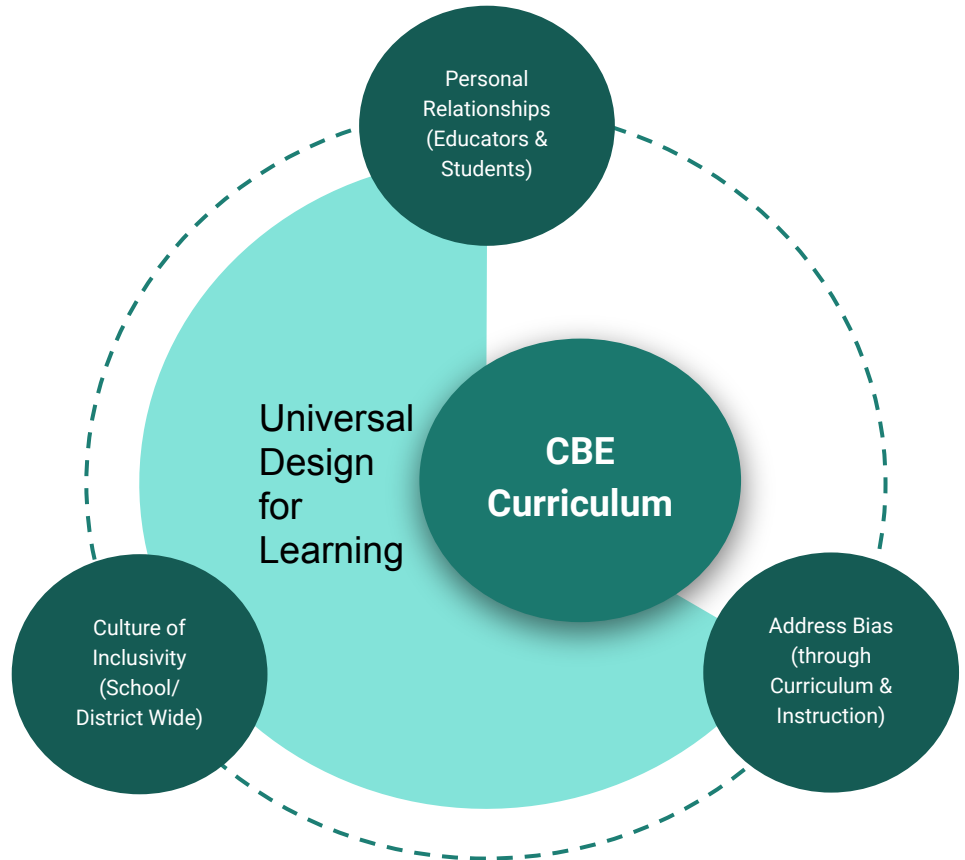
Not doing yet

Doing really well

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.

At USDB, all students have an IEP, as we serve a unique special needs population. In the past several years we have been putting stronger emphasis on the "I" - individual - part of the IEP.

Merely setting individual goals for student achievement is not going to arrive at full CBE principles; rather, we need to be willing to adjust curricula, schedules, pacing, style, and other educational factors to meet the needs of students <u>based on understanding students through personal relationships, addressing bias, and being willing to be inclusive of all students' needs.</u>

Personal Relationships (Educators & Students)

CBE Curriculum

Universal Design for Learning

Culture of Inclusivity (School/ District Wide)

Address Bias (through Curriculum & Instruction)

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Case Study #1

- A senior came to his teachers and principals in the fall and stated he planned to drop out of school. This student has a history of homelessness and a low academic level. His entire family had dropped out of school before him. To support him, he was given choices of plans and he chose an alternating day school plan that only focused on graduation. His art teacher adapted his projects to ones that captured his interests (graffiti), his English teacher focused more on workplace reading/writing, his financial literacy teacher focused on overcoming barriers, and his computer teacher sought student input for lessons.

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Case Study #2
- At the end of her junior year, a student with mental illness and eating disorders lost 70db of hearing and transferred to USDB. Initially, teachers were upset about her spotty attendance and low grades. After looking at her history, we realized that her attendance and performance were vastly superior to previous years. Attendance become non-penalized and some classes were changed to self-pace to encourage the student. The student had initially assumed she would need be able to graduate; but became willing to return for one more semester to be able to graduate.

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Case Study #3
- A 6th grade boy (elementary in this school system) has a multi-year history of being bullied by some classmates. He also does well academically and prefers makerspace to playground recess time. To meet his needs more and to limit bullying, he is now taking one class per day at the middle school and thriving.

Instruction is grounded in personal relationships and curriculum is intentionally examined to address bias and create a culture of inclusivity. Instruction incorporates Universal Design for Learning strategies.

Not doing yet

Doing really well

Conversation Cafe Prompts

Round 1: What did you notice?

Round 2: What ideas emerged? For your district or education at large?

What will you do differently?
Tell a new friend.

Share with the group.

"Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it."

- James Arthur Baldwin
(August 2, 1924 – December 1, 1987)

Thank you!

Guadalupe Alvarez, Lindsay Unified School District
Melissa Gedney, Digital Promise
Nate Harrison, Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Kim Smith, Digital Promise