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Evaluating Performance Based Demonstrations of Graduation Readiness in a Competency-Based and Personalized Learning Environment

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About CADRE

The Center for Assessment, Design, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) is housed in the School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder. The mission of CADRE is to produce generalizable knowledge that improves the ability to assess student learning and to evaluate programs and methods that may have an effect on this learning. Projects undertaken by CADRE staff represent a collaboration with the ongoing activities in the School of Education, the University, and the broader national and international community of scholars and stakeholders involved in educational assessment and evaluation.

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Executive Summary

This single case study of New Legacy Charter School (NLCS) in Aurora, Colorado examines how one alternative high school has developed and implemented a personalized, competency-based learning model that challenges traditional assumptions about graduation readiness. The study explores how NLCS defines and assesses readiness through authentic demonstrations of learning, and how both educators and students experience this model in practice. Data sources include observations of professional learning communities (PLCs), observations of school-wide exhibitions, and focus groups with students and staff.

Key findings include:

- Redefining Readiness: NLCS shifts the focus from meeting grade-level academic standards to supporting students in developing skills, mindsets, and purpose for life after high school. Readiness is evaluated through exhibitions, internships, and student-driven projects that reflect growth, self-direction, and real-world relevance.

- Student Voice and Agency: Students described NLCS as the first school where they felt seen and supported. They valued the opportunity to pursue meaningful topics, select their own internships, and receive feedback that emphasized growth rather than compliance.

- Educator Implementation: Teachers described their work as deeply relational and the instructional design as highly personalized. They acknowledged tensions between flexibility and rigor and emphasized the importance of shared calibration practices to ensure fairness and consistency.

- Assessment Calibration: PLCs play a vital role in aligning scoring expectations. Educators are actively working to balance the need for individualized evaluation with the need for clear and equitable criteria.

- Structural Challenges: Sustainability, transportation, and staff workload remain significant challenges. The school relies heavily on grant funding, and gentrification has increased barriers for students commuting long distances.

This case challenges policymakers and educators to rethink graduation requirements in alternative settings. It surfaces a different proposition: that readiness can be cultivated through growth-oriented learning in applied contexts, even if students are not meeting traditional grade-level standards. NLCS offers an example where success is evaluated not just by what students complete, but by who they become.

Introduction

Competency-based education (CBE), often embedded within personalized learning models, has long been advocated as a more equitable and student-centered alternative to traditional instructional approaches. In contrast to models that emphasize seat time and grade-level pacing, CBE enables students to progress based on demonstrated mastery of clearly defined competencies. Considerable agency and flexibility are often afforded to students in determining the most relevant pathways and modes of demonstrating what they know and can do (DeBacker et al., 2024). Proponents argue that success in today's complex world demands more than proficiency in traditional academic standards; students must also develop transferable skills that allow them to adapt, communicate, collaborate, and persist in the face of challenge (Surr & Redding, 2017; Conley, 2014).

As such, competencies in K–12 CBE models frequently extend beyond academic content to encompass areas such as critical thinking, problem-solving, self-direction, communication, social-emotional learning, and civic engagement (DeBacker et al., 2024; Surr & Redding, 2017). Key features of this approach include having students learn at their own pace, ensuring students receive timely support, and assessing student mastery through authentic tasks and performance demonstrations that reflect the demands of real-world expectations (Aurora Institute, 2021).

This report documents how the New Legacy Charter School (NLCS) in Aurora, Colorado implements a locally developed version of a competency-based learning model, with particular attention to graduation readiness determinations grounded in performance-based assessments such as exhibitions and student-driven projects. NLCS is an alternative education campus school, where students often enroll as a "last stop," after experiencing exclusion and/or disengagement from traditional schools. Many are parenting youth, working full-time, and/or navigating systemic barriers. At NLCS, graduation readiness is not determined by completing course credits or achieving grade-level benchmarks, but by a student's ability to meet competencies relative to their academic starting points, and to engage in student-centered demonstrations of learning.

This single case study, conducted by the Center for Assessment, Design, Research, and Evaluation (CADRE) at the University of Colorado Boulder, is part of series of case studies commissioned by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to surface lessons from innovative schools and districts experimenting with nontraditional pathways to graduation. A central focus of this study is to understand how models like that of NLCS can offer insight into how schools—particularly those serving students historically underserved by conventional education systems—can redefine readiness in ways that center purpose, agency, and growth.

CBE is gaining particular traction in alternative education settings, where personalization is not only a design principle but often a necessity for re-engaging students who may be overage, under-credited, or managing responsibilities outside of school. As Sturgis (2022) notes, the flexibility and responsiveness of CBE makes it especially well-suited for students whose life circumstances require schools to adapt around them, not the other way around. However, with this flexibility comes critical questions around academic rigor, disciplinary depth, and the clarity of expectations—especially when grade-level standards are not the primary benchmark for success.

This report addresses these tensions directly by exploring how NLCS defines, supports, and evaluates graduation readiness through its personalized, competency-based model. Through focus groups with students and educators, observations of PLCs and exhibitions, interviews with school leaders, as well as a review of key documentation and practices, the study examines not only how the model operates, but what it makes possible for students who had previously struggled to find success and purpose in school.

Research Questions

To guide this inquiry, the research team developed a set of research questions that both explore how the NLCS model operates in practice and situate it within larger conversations about equity, rigor, and personalization in competency-based education. The questions were designed to surface how graduation readiness is defined and experienced in this setting; how students engage with competencies in ways that shape their sense of purpose and future orientation; and how educators assess and support learning within a system that offers high levels of flexibility. In doing so, the study also probes key tensions, such as how to ensure rigor and clarity when standards are not defined by grade level, and the implications of such models for how schools serving alternative education populations might redefine success. Data collected to address these research questions, and the methods used to analyze the data are described in Appendix A.

RQ1: How is graduation readiness conceptualized and operationalized in this school's competency-based and personalized learning model?

- How do the design features of this model reflect or depart from prevailing definitions of competency-based and personalized learning in the literature?
- How is graduation readiness defined, assessed, and experienced in this alternative school setting, particularly for students with interrupted or nontraditional educational trajectories?

RQ2: In what ways does this model support the development of the skills, mindsets, and sense of possibility that students need to direct their own future?

- How do students describe the relevance of their learning to their personal goals, career aspirations, or postsecondary plans?
- What role do exhibitions, internships, and advisory structures play in shaping students' confidence, agency, and future orientation?

RQ3: How do educators implement and navigate a competency-based, personalized learning model that centers student agency and real-world readiness?

- How do teachers assess growth and graduation readiness in ways that account for variation in student background, trajectory, and capacity?
- What structures and supports enable teachers to calibrate expectations and foster student ownership of learning?

Background: NLCS

Much of the background information shared in this section came from interviews with the School Director and the Principal. According to them, the school was founded to meet a critical need in the community: creating a supportive educational environment for teen parents. The school opened its doors in August 2015 with a vision of being a "college prep high school" designed to serve young parents by providing on-site childcare. However, a few months before the school's launch, the early learning center partner organization withdrew and forced the school's board to take on the operation of the childcare facility to ensure that the school's core mission would not be compromised. At the school's opening, the high school and early learning center opened to support young families as intended.

The school leaders shared that in the early years, NLCS struggled with student behavioral challenges, inconsistent academic progress, and staff turnover. These challenges reflected the complexities of operating an alternative school with a clear intention and mission to serve disenfranchised and marginalized students. A critical shift in the school's direction took place in 2018 when the school's director engaged in a conversation with a high-achieving student. Despite having excelled on the academic front, the student expressed a profound sense of limitation and communicated to the Director, "I'm doing everything right, but I still don't know what's next for me." This exchange catalyzed a fundamental change in the school's direction. As the Director recalled, "we had to create a system where she can get out, shadow someone, and learn about future career opportunities." This moment of clarity propelled the school toward adopting a project-based, personalized learning model advanced by Big Picture Learning (BPL).

Since that period, the school leaders indicated that the school has steadily moved away from a traditional credit-based system toward an environment that emphasizes real-world learning, internships, and competency development. As the Director noted, "we were called a college prep high school, but almost none of our students were going to college." This realization led to a rebranding of the school as a "college and career prep high school," affirming a broader definition of postsecondary success that honors students' diverse aspirations. Under the leadership of a new principal hired during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school deepened its commitment to personalization. During this period, the principal piloted an advisory-driven structure that emphasized mentorship and individualized learning. This structure soon became a cornerstone of the model and aligned with a shared leadership vision for the school to become a Big Picture Learning school.

The transition to a competency-based model has required ongoing refinement. Abandoning credits necessitated significant shifts in how learning was structured, assessed, and supported. Teachers and advisors collaboratively developed rubrics aligned with Colorado's essential skills, worked to define what meaningful growth looked like, and calibrated expectations across advisory teams. The principal shared, "we didn't want to hold a kid back just because they were acclimating to a new system," highlighting the tension that still exists today between meeting competencies but prioritizing flexibility to meet the needs of each student.

The school leaders shared that since the inception of the school, NLCS has experienced changing demographics. While the original mission centered on teen parents, the school now serves a broader community that includes siblings and extended family members. Despite this

evolution, the school's core commitment remains to provide a safe, affirming, and empowering space for students. The school enrolls approximately 120-130 students each year and roughly 15-20 students each year comprise those who enroll for fewer than 10 days. This 2024-25 school year, the school had 125 students enroll for any period of time with five students moving out of state or country, and with 20 students dropping within five days of enrollment.

The principal shared that the school's relationship with Big Picture Learning has also deepened as the model has matured. While not every BPL school implements the model identically, NLCS has remained steadfast in its commitment to personalized, real-world learning. "Every step along the way, the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Charter School Institute [our authorizers] were informed and excited about what we were doing," said a school leader. This transparency has enabled NLCS to develop a novel competency-based transcript, which has earned recognition from local colleges (e.g., University of Colorado Boulder) and employers for its alignment to real-world skills.

Evaluating Graduation Competency

Graduation determinations at NLCS are based on multiple forms of evidence, reflecting both academic and real-world performance. Students demonstrate their learning through quarterly exhibitions, project-based tasks, completion of an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) internship reflections, and classroom artifacts aligned to school-defined competencies. A common competency rubric (see Appendix B) is used to evaluate student work on a 0–4 scale across key competency areas. Rather than relying on a single assessment or a fixed set of course completions, the school aggregates a body of evidence scored by teachers using the competency rubric. A compensatory approach is currently used to allow strengths in different areas to offset weaknesses in other areas.

A final judgment of graduation readiness is made collaboratively between the student's advisor and relevant teachers. These discussions focus on both essential skill development and academic growth, as demonstrated through a student's body of work over time. This body of work is inclusive of out-of-school experiences gained from internships and/or work opportunities some students experience as a result of having to contribute directly to household expenses. The process is deliberately holistic and includes attention to personal growth, application of learning, and readiness for postsecondary or career pathways.

Overview of the Literature

Competency-based education (CBE) and personalized learning are defined and implemented in diverse ways across educational contexts. In some models, competencies are closely tied to grade-level academic standards; in others, they reflect broader notions of personal development and postsecondary readiness. To situate NLCS's approach within this broader landscape, we examined national literature on CBE and personalization. This section maps the continuum of these two related but distinct approaches, and considers how NLCS's model reflects, departs from, or extends these conceptualizations. We also draw on reflections shared in a "think-aloud" interview conducted with the school principal, in which she articulates how the school's competency-based transcript captures the different learning pathways of different graduates, and the challenges and possibilities of interpreting growth in a system that values personalization over standardization.

Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education (CBE) is not a new concept, with its roots tracing back to the early 1970s when Oregon introduced minimum graduation requirements beyond regular coursework, emphasizing personal development, social responsibility, and career development (Spady, 1977). However, even then, definitions of CBE were inconsistent. Spady observed that "adherents and practitioners of current elementary and secondary school CBE efforts are marching (or parading) in different uniforms to different drummers playing different tunes. Basic definitions, conceptual clarity, and analyses of the organizational and social implications of various CBE approaches are badly needed" (Spady, 1977, p. 9). Early iterations of CBE generally emphasized a performance-oriented approach where learning outcomes were explicitly stated and agreed upon, complementing academic activities (Spady, 1977, p. 10).

Following the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, policymakers shifted their focus away from CBE toward systems of accountability (Evans, et al., 2020, p. 2; Surr & Redding, 2017). Since then, CBE has since re-emerged, and presently, CBE typically refers to a system where students progress based on demonstrated proficiency or mastery rather than "seat time" or time spent in class. Common CBE elements include breaking learning into core course competencies aligned with or connected to academic standards, grading by competency, offering opportunities to retake assessments, and allowing for individual pacing. Evans, et al., (2020) referenced a 2011 National Summit on K-12 Competency-Based Education that identified seven key principles of CBE:

1. Students are empowered to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate learning.

2. Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience that provides timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.

3. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.

4. Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.

5. Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.

6. Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy.

7. Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.

Although these principles guide many CBE implementations, definitions and approaches still vary across contexts. Moreover, despite assessment being explicitly mentioned in these principles, Evans et al. (2020) noted that discussions of CBE often overlook the role of assessment.

Beyond Academic Skills

Proponents of CBE argue that students need to develop more than traditional academic skills to thrive after graduation (Surr & Redding, 2017). According to Surr and Redding, "Competencies often include critical thinking, problem-solving, social-emotional learning, collaboration, communication, resilience, perseverance, and civic engagement" (Surr & Redding, 2017, p. 10). However, defining and measuring these skills remain inconsistent across states and districts, adding to the ambiguity surrounding the term "competency." For instance, Big Picture Learning's (BPL) model includes traditional categories such as empirical reasoning and quantitative reasoning alongside "personal qualities," "social reasoning," and "knowing how to learn" (Johnstown & Milligan, 2020). In Washington state, a working group was initiated to seek input from various stakeholders including students, families, educators, and postsecondary program representatives to create the state's "Profile of a Graduate". In their report, they strongly recommend academic grades and "Profile skills" (like "habits of success", "noncognitive skills", "transferable skills", "social and emotional skills", etc.) be reported separately, and that these skills be taught and tracked, but not given A-F grades (Muller, 2021). The variability found in how beyond-academic competencies are defined and how they are measured in different locations underscores the need for clearer definitions in CBE discourse.

Reimagining Transcripts

Due to the lack of standardized definitions and competencies, transcripts can be a challenge to design for CBE models. The traditional transcript model of one average grade per course does not always capture the intent of mastery, yet revised versions of transcripts may be challenging for external stakeholders like parents and institutes of higher education to interpret. Traditional transcripts may not adequately capture a student's skills and knowledge in a CBE system. One prominent reimagining is the Mastery Transcript, developed by The Mastery Consortium (now part of ETS). The Mastery Transcript is digital, layered, and interactive. It features:

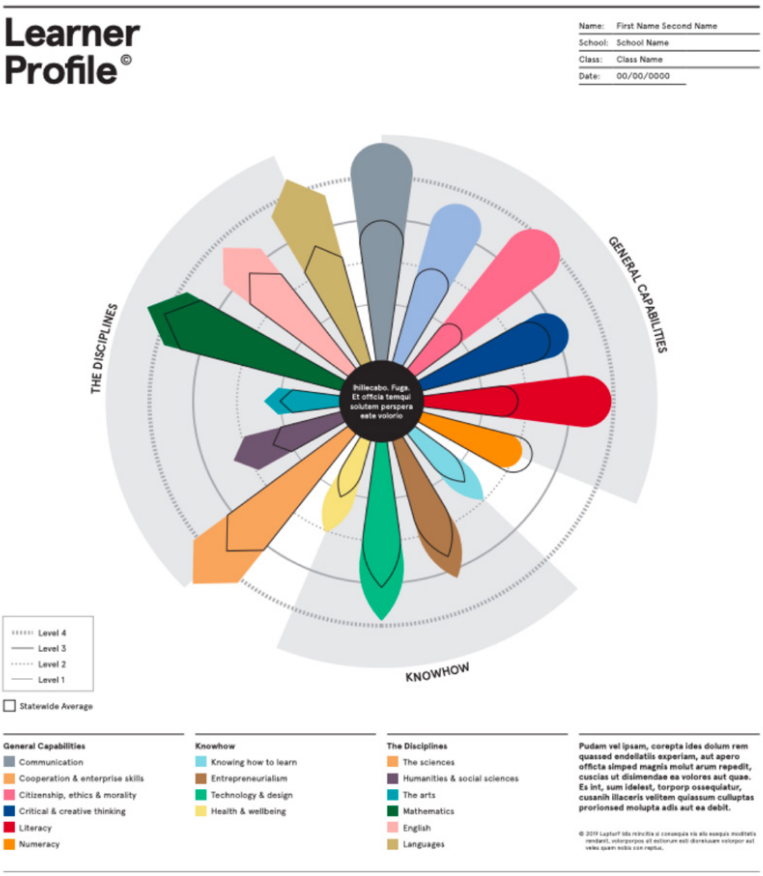
- **Layer One**: A summary of how well a student met various competencies.

- **Layer Two**: Clickable areas highlighting competency definitions and rubrics.

- **Layer Three**: Actual student work as evidence of mastery (Martin, 2019).

Similarly, some Big Picture Learning schools in the United States are piloting a "Learner Profile" that visually represents a student's competencies in a chrysanthemum figure, layered with evidence of student work. Figure 1 shows a visualization of the learner profile used by several sites throughout the country (Johnston & Milligan, 2020, p. 20). While promising, these alternative transcripts raise concerns about overburdening secondary schools and college admissions officers. Critics worry that abandoning traditional grades could disadvantage marginalized students in college admissions and affect eligibility for scholarships and athletics (Toch & Tugend, 2021; Martin, 2019).

Figure 1: Prototype of Big Picture Learning's Learner Profile



Measuring Effectiveness

Because of the wide variation in definitions, implementation, and assessment, CBE models show mixed results in terms of effectiveness. Measuring the impact of individual components is challenging. One study by Zeiser et al. (2014) examined outcomes at Deeper Learning network schools that emphasized core content mastery, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and academic mindsets. Matched against demographically similar schools, students in these networks demonstrated slightly higher outcomes on the PISA-Based Test for Schools (PBTS) and state math/ELA assessments, with average effect sizes of 0.11 SD, 0.10 SD, and 0.05 SD, respectively. While promising, these findings varied widely across sites, limiting the generalizability of results. Additionally, it is hard to know what aspects of the CBE work is impacting outcomes.

The lack of efficacy research in CBE is noted by DeBacker and colleagues in their 2024 paper "A Research Agenda for Competency-Based Education". They specifically point out that although the idea and vision of CBE is somewhat consistent, the lack of consistent definitions and implementation poses challenges to the estimation of program effects. When discussing variation in CBE models, they highlight that, "As practitioners, this fact pattern is liberating because it means your context and learner needs can drive your design; as scholars seeking to study those programs, this fact pattern is among our field's largest and most enduring challenges" (DeBacker et al., 2024, p. 3). They go on to call for additional research on the conceptualization, design, implementation, and ultimately efficacy/effectiveness of CBE, with

the goal of answering the question, “Does it work?” (DeBacker et al., 2024). While this is always the question of any educational program or intervention regardless of its marketing or uptake, in this case it can be more challenging to answer because of the widespread variation.

Challenges in Implementation

Implementation challenges also complicate CBE models. In New Hampshire, a state-level mandate required all schools to offer “competency-based options” for receiving credit. However, schools modified CBE implementation by limiting the number of times students could retake assessments, as high-achieving students were endlessly retaking assessments to compete for valedictorian status. These modifications raised concerns about teacher workload, technical platform adaptability, and the practicality of grading unlimited retakes (Scheopner Torres et al., 2018). Other consistent challenges in CBE implementation appeared across studies, including reluctance of teachers to change their methods, hesitation from parents who may not understand mastery and buy-in to a new model of grading, community beliefs about grading, inconsistent definitions of mastery and competency, and a lack of models for schools and districts to follow (Evans et al., 2020). Finally, to ensure that the qualifications that students receive are meaningful, assessments need to be high quality, and the evaluation of these assessments need to be calibrated across teachers and schools. Teachers need opportunities for moderation, especially considering that most teachers did not experience a competency-based education system themselves (Patrick et al., 2018). These issues emphasize the need for intentional design in competency-based systems.

Personalization

Similar to the varied interpretations of CBE in the field, the term “personalization” also has multiple interpretations across different locations and contexts. Generally, this term refers to tailoring a student’s process, product, and/or content to the individual’s interests and/or needs. While often used alongside CBE (Surr & Redding, 2017; Steele et al., 2014; Evans et al., 2020), personalization has a distinct framework.

Defining Personalization

The most widely referenced definition comes from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology, which defines personalization as: “Instruction that is paced to learning needs, tailored to learning preferences, and tailored to the specific interests of different learners” (Bernacki et al., 2021, p. 1679). This definition highlights individualized pacing, a feature that overlaps with CBE, but it also emphasizes learning preferences and interests—elements that may not always align with traditional CBE models. The Nellie Mae Education Foundation also identifies personalized learning, CBE, anytime-anywhere learning, and student-owned learning as four separate pillars under the broader term “student-centered learning” (Medina et al., 2020). That is, personalized learning models can complement CBE but can be implemented in ways that make this more or less present depending on where this is applied as discussed next.

Personalized Assessment

For some sites, personalization may be applied in the instructional approach taken, but not to the assessment used, and for other sites, personalization can apply to the assessment. Bennett (2024) argues that all assessments should be personalized, acknowledging that “standardization

as equal treatment is tenable to the degree that a test is insensitive to all differences among examinees except for those caused by the construct being evaluated" (Bennett, 2024, p. 119). He suggests that assessments should account for students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, using a mix of machine-driven personalization and student choice. Similarly, performance-based assessments, such as exhibitions and authentic demonstrations of learning, can naturally lend themselves to personalized approaches (Bushway et al., 2017; Surr & Redding, 2017). In fact capstones if defined as culminating projects pursued by students to reflect their personal interests and passion, these can be seen as personalized assessment.

Measuring the Impact of Personalization

A 2015 study by RAND, examined the effectiveness of personalized learning in 62 public charter and district schools. Although there were inconsistencies in how personalized learning was defined, the study established a working definition that included three key elements. First, personalized learning involves tailoring instruction to meet individual needs, skills, and interests. Second, it provides diverse learning experiences designed to prepare students for success in college and their future careers. Finally, it positions teachers as facilitators who design and manage the learning environment while supporting student autonomy (Pane et al., 2015, pp. 2–3).

While participating schools showed statistically significant gains in math and ELA achievement (effect sizes of 0.27 in math and 0.19 in ELA), results varied widely across sites. Isolating the most effective components remains difficult, but three factors - student grouping, learning space supports, and student engagement with data - were most commonly present in high-performing schools. Interestingly, when surveyed, students in personalized learning environments reported greater agency in their learning, but they were less likely to report enjoying school (based on the statements "The material I am learning in my classes is interesting", "I like the way we learn in my classes", and "In my classes, learning is enjoyable") or feeling comfortable (based on nine statements like "I am comfortable being myself at this school" and "Overall, I feel good about being in this school") (Pane et al., 2015). The findings from this study underscore the need for clearer definitions of personalization and more nuanced exploration of its impact.

The Intersection of CBE and Personalization

Any shift away from standardized models of education, results in an inherently less standardized approach. As discussed in the literature, CBE and personalization exist on a continuum moving from more to less standardization, with wide variation in definitions and implementation.

Where They Converge

Key areas of overlap between the two approaches include:

- Pacing: Both CBE and personalized models allow students to move at their own pace, demonstrating mastery before advancing (Surr & Redding, 2017).

- Choice: Both frameworks provide varying degrees of student choice in process (how knowledge is acquired) and product (how learning is demonstrated).

- Rubrics and Alternative Assessments: Both models often use rubrics to assess non-traditional forms of learning and demonstrations of mastery.

Where They Diverge

Despite areas of convergence, CBE and personalization diverge in some important ways. CBE prioritizes mastery with clearly defined competencies, while personalization emphasizes student choice, sometimes even in content selection. This creates tension between ensuring mastery of agreed-upon standards and honoring student autonomy. As the landscape of CBE and personalized learning continues to evolve, schools across the country implement these models in unique ways, reflecting their local contexts and student populations. The variation in definitions, implementation strategies, and effectiveness discussed in the literature underscores the complexity of blending these approaches successfully. Against this backdrop, NCLS offers one example of how these models can intersect in practice to evaluate graduation readiness. By examining NLCS's approach, we can better understand where it falls along the continuum of CBE and personalized learning and how its practices align with or diverge from the principles and challenges noted by the extant literature.

Situating New Legacy's Educational Model

New Legacy Charter School (NLCS) embodies a student-centered learning environment that blends competency-based education (CBE) with a high degree of personalization. The school engages students in internships, concurrent enrollment courses, and interdisciplinary projects to pursue the broader vision of the Big Picture Learning model to establish confident, connected, and capable high school graduates. The school strives to emphasize kindness, curiosity, and a fundamental belief in students' potential. These values in large part drive the school's focus on establishing strong relational connections with students to engage them in their learning.

CBE at New Legacy

NLCS aligns closely with several core principles of competency-based education, as described in the literature:

- Defined Competencies: Rooted in Big Picture Learning, the competencies are clearly articulated and consistently referenced across content areas.

- Flexible Pacing and Mixed-Level Grouping: Competencies apply across grade levels, allowing students to move at their own pace and work in mixed-age advisories—upending the traditional structure of seat time and Carnegie units.

- Authentic Assessments: Exhibitions and project-based learning function as performance-based demonstrations of student mastery.

The implementation of CBE comes with many challenges as acknowledged by many others (Evans et al., 2020, Patrick et al., 2018; Scheopner Torres et al., 2018). While flexibility in competency descriptors allows for responsiveness, it can also lead to reduced transparency, particularly when expectations are not consistently communicated or calibrated. Similarly, variability in scoring practices across teachers and students—such as the use of half-point increments, inconsistent application of "N/A" scores, or omission of low scores—can

raise valid concerns about fairness and rigor. That said, the school has invested heavily in surfacing, examining, and adjusting these issues through ongoing professional learning and staff-wide dialogue.

Although the school is a Big Picture Learning (BPL) school, the school opted to not use the competency framework (see Figure 1) currently being piloted at various BPL sites for various reasons. According to the principal, NLCS preferred to use the original BPL competencies and modify those to include the twenty essential learning skills identified by the state to ensure that these competencies were more directly applicable to this state's context. Additionally, the principal had the student transcripts vetted through the local community college system where students take college-credit courses, and received feedback that the community college appreciated the clarity of the competencies defined.

Personalization at New Legacy

NLCS also exhibits a strong commitment to personalization across multiple dimensions of learning. During exhibitions, for example, students have full autonomy in selecting their topic (content), the competency they wish to address (selected from the school's list of competencies, e.g. Quantitative Reasoning or Social Reasoning), the process for exploring that topic, and the format of their final presentation (product). This degree of agency given to students for their projects and exhibitions fits the definition of personalization offered by Pane et al. (2015), who describe personalized learning as an approach that tailors instruction to students' interests, aspirations, and needs.

Students are also encouraged at this school to make their own decisions about whether to enroll in college courses, select internships aligned with their passions, and pursue self-directed learning opportunities outside of traditional coursework. These opportunities built into the educational model of the school offer students a degree of choice and ownership rarely available in conventional schools. At the same time, the model raises questions that echo concerns from the broader literature on personalized learning: How are students' needs and skill levels assessed? Who makes these determinations? And how is instruction adapted accordingly? In the absence of a standardized curriculum or district-defined course sequences, teachers must diagnose and address learning needs in real time, across highly diverse student profiles. This creates substantial cognitive and logistical demands—particularly in a school with limited formal teaching staff and a significant proportion of educators who entered the profession through nontraditional pathways.

While personalization is evident in exhibitions and internships, it is less consistently extended to daily instruction, with classes largely moving together as a class through content. Pane et al. (2015) highlight the importance of structures that enable teachers to provide expert guidance and manage learning environments effectively. Without such scaffolds, even highly personalized models can drift toward idiosyncrasy or inconsistency. The lack of clearly defined course standards and pacing expectations pose an ongoing challenge for educators seeking to ensure academic rigor, particularly in math and writing. Hence, more cohesion in classrooms makes sense and allows for more collaboration between students, though NLCS is still pursuing ways to make their content area classes more personalized as well. Despite these limitations, NLCS offers a level of personalization, especially in student voice and ownership, that is seldom observed in both traditional and alternative education models.

To learn about how competencies and personalization come together for students at this school, we carried out a think-aloud with the principal to walk through the transcripts of three students who graduated.

Student Profiles of Readiness

We asked the school principal to conduct a think-aloud using a purposive sample of three students and their transcripts. Each student had graduated with a distinct academic profile and unique postsecondary aspirations. The think-aloud provided insight into how the school draws on the competency-based and personalized learning model to inform judgments about graduation readiness. The conversation began with a review of each student's background, followed by a discussion of how readiness was demonstrated in their individual trajectories. Pseudonyms are used throughout this section to protect student privacy.

Student Profiles and Contexts

Shirley entered the school as a young parent, facing challenges related to motivation and balance. Over time, she exhibited substantial personal and academic growth. Her transcript reflects a trajectory of improvement, particularly in later quarters, with demonstrated strength in writing and professional demeanor. Shirley pursued her interests in interior design through an internship and successfully completed two certificate programs in AutoCAD and digital literacy, all while navigating parental responsibilities. According to the principal, her advisors noted that although she may not have consistently met expectations in early assignments, she took advantage of revision opportunities, a practice aligned with competency-based mastery learning principles (Sturgis & Casey, 2018).

Ricardo followed a markedly different path. He demonstrated strong entrepreneurial ambition and applied learning through the development and execution of a business plan. Though his formal academic performance, especially in mathematics and empirical reasoning, appeared uneven—partly due to gaps in course offerings—his work-based learning experiences were robust. Ricardo launched a mobile auto-repair business before graduation and had also mentored other peers who wanted to become mechanics. His competency profile was strengthened not through conventional academic products, but through real-world application of skills aligned to his postsecondary goals. The principal shared that in Ricardo's case, his advisors and teachers worked with him to create a crosswalk between his real-world deliverables and work in managing the auto-repair business to the academic competencies and essential skills.

Tracy was identified as the school's first Ascent student, simultaneously completing high school requirements and earning college credit. According to the principal, her case exemplifies a traditional academic success story within a personalized learning environment. The principal mentioned that Tracy excelled academically, maintained strong attendance, and participated in college-level coursework while fulfilling her parental responsibilities. Her transcript and exhibitions incorporated elements from both her academic and personal growth journeys, and she emerged as the school's valedictorian.

Understanding Graduation Readiness: A Personalized and Competency-Based Perspective

In the context of New Legacy's model, graduation readiness is not determined by a standard set of academic metrics but rather by an individualized and holistic evaluation of each student's growth, goals, and demonstrated competencies. Through a think-aloud exercise involving three graduate transcripts, a nuanced portrait emerged of how readiness is defined and enacted in a competency-based, personalized learning environment.

Graduation readiness at this school begins with the recognition that multiple pathways can lead to common outcomes. The school's model invites students to demonstrate mastery through diverse forms of evidence—including exhibitions, internships, and capstone projects—rather than confining them to conventional classroom products. Shirley, for instance, pursued her interest in interior design not only through traditional assignments but also through hands-on work in the field. As the principal explained, "She did get an internship working with an interior designer and actually got to help design a local community center... She took AutoCAD certificate program and a digital literacy program… she's so highly motivated when she's excited." These opportunities provided the foundation for her graduation readiness by integrating real-world learning into the school's competency framework.

A second defining feature of the model is its emphasis on goal-aligned personalization. Students' learning experiences and evaluations are closely tied to their postsecondary aspirations, allowing for more strategic use of instructional time. In Ricardo's case, rather than focusing narrowly on abstract mathematics, the curriculum was adapted to support his entrepreneurial goals. "Ricardo would be an example of someone who... took QuickBooks classes and accounting classes so that he could run his own business books," the principal noted. "For him, that was a more important piece of his math than sitting in a traditional math class." His eventual success in launching an auto repair business two months following graduation and his continued commitment to mentoring current NLCS students interested in auto industry careers, demonstrate how personalization can support and lead to meaningful, applied learning outcomes.

The school's model also foregrounds evidence-informed, calibrated judgment in assessing student readiness. Competency scores, which range from 0 (no evidence) to 4 (exceeding expectations), are contextualized through advisors' deep knowledge of each student's trajectory and circumstances. For example, in some instances, students can petition to graduate early if they have achieved graduation expectations and competencies. Other students who do not meet expectations in a given year can use the summer months to make up for missed time and work. This flexible approach allows for consideration of qualitative factors. As the principal explained, "If it's a student who is not coming in consistently and maybe they periodically have some quality work, there might be more conversation around it… those are things that would come back to the group to discuss." The principal emphasized that the intention of these conversations is to ensure that evaluation is not mechanistic but anchored in relational and developmental understanding of each student.

Finally, exhibitions and capstones function as integrative anchors within the graduation process, offering students structured opportunities to demonstrate their competencies through public presentations. These exhibitions evolve over time, beginning with more narrative and personal content in the earlier grades, and later expanding into more content-specific, academically

rigorous components in the later grades. Students are given significant ownership over these projects, with opportunities for self-direction and collaboration. As the principal shared, "Students can propose anything that they want to their advisor… and then they have to do a little self-evaluation on each other to make sure one person's not just carrying the load for the other." This structure not only encourages self-reflection and accountability but also ensures that students are demonstrating a wide range of transferable skills.

Across these features, graduation readiness at New Legacy is understood not as a fixed endpoint, but as a product of sustained growth, aligned effort, and authentic demonstration. The use of personalized learning plans, flexible pathways, and performance-based assessments reflects broader trends in competency-based education that seek to center student agency and relevance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014; Sturgis & Casey, 2018). By aligning evaluation practices with individual strengths and goals, the school affirms the legitimacy of multiple ways to be "ready" by factoring in the full range of student experiences and aspirations.

Based on our examination of CBE and personalization at NCLS, Figure 2 presents an estimation of where NLCS lies relative to these two approaches.

Figure 2. Locating NLCS relative to personalization and competency-based education

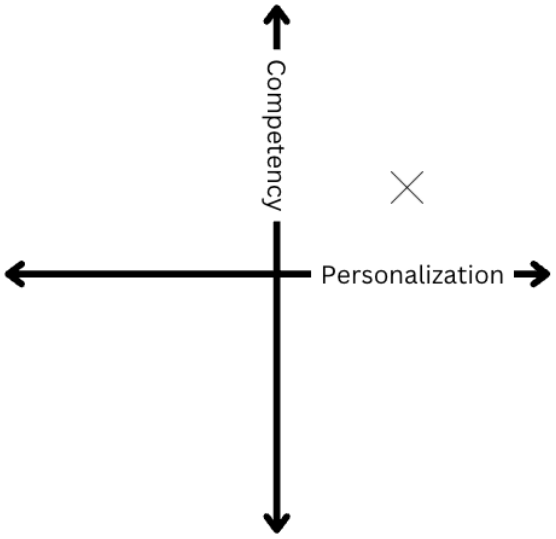


Figure 2 presents a two-axis framework. The horizontal axis represents the continuum of personalization, with the left side indicating lower levels of personalization (e.g., traditional pacing and one-size-fits-all instruction), and the right side reflecting higher levels of personalization (e.g., student-driven pathways and customized supports). The vertical axis represents the continuum of CBE, with the lower end reflecting a weaker competency model (e.g., seat-time driven, fixed pacing, low transparency in mastery, and traditional grading), and the upper end representing characteristics of strong CBE models found in the literature (e.g., demonstrated mastery before progression, varied supports, and meaningful assessments aligned to competencies). The "X" in the figure marks where NLCS is positioned along these axes, based on discussions with school leaders.

At NLCS, as noted by the principal during a review of student transcripts, mastery is well-defined in the school's competencies but functions more as an aspirational benchmark than a strict requirement. Due to the school's strong emphasis on personalization, especially given its academically diverse student population, growth is prioritized over uniform mastery. As a result, the school is not located at the top of the CBE continuum, since student progression is not strictly tied to achieving the same level of mastery across learners.

In terms of personalization, NLCS is positioned higher along the horizontal axis, particularly in how students demonstrate readiness for graduation. At the same time, the school maintains a degree of standardization in instruction to ensure equitable learning opportunities. For this reason, administrators believe the school should not be placed at the far-right end of the personalization continuum. Nonetheless teachers who participated in the focus groups we conducted shared that they frequently adapt and customize content to meet individual student needs, resulting in differentiated approaches to teaching and learning.

To further explore how this personalized competency-based model supports student growth and postsecondary readiness (Research Question 2), as well as how teachers implement and navigate CBE and personalization (Research Question 3), the study drew on multiple sources of evidence. These included observations of school-wide exhibitions, professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on the exhibition rubric and the competency rubric, and focus groups with students and teachers. The data sources together offered insights into how the school community defines, supports, and evaluates meaningful learning while negotiating the tensions between flexibility, personalization, and academic mastery.

Evaluating Student Learning through Performance-based Exhibitions

The exhibitions observed in different time points of the 2024-25 academic year (October, December, March, and May) offer important insights into both the strengths and the limitations of using performance-based presentations of learning in this school to evaluate student learning. Field notes collected systematically in the first three exhibitions by four different observers document consistent patterns regarding the benefits, challenges, and areas for refinement of these exhibitions. In May, two observers attended a small number of the culminating senior exhibitions. The observations, while varied in student focus and presentation context, reveal commonalities that can inform ongoing development of the regular exhibition process to better align with competency-based expectations.

Benefits of the Exhibition Model

Across all four observers and multiple observation periods, the field notes speak to the exhibitions as providing valuable opportunities for students to cultivate and demonstrate public speaking skills, personal reflection, and resilience. For a subset of students observed across the three time points, several showed increasing confidence in presenting their experiences, a growth trajectory that was explicitly noted by all four observers. The exhibitions allowed students to articulate personal narratives of challenge and growth, often anchored in lived experiences, internships, service learning, or passion projects.

Another strength observed by all four observers was the extent to which exhibitions revealed a strong sense of connection between the presenter and the school community. Students consistently referenced the role of peers, teachers, and family as sources of encouragement and support. For example, more than one student indicated that when they felt unmotivated to attend school, they often returned due to encouragement and support received from their peers, teachers and advisors. The field notes across observers frequently noted the importance of audience feedback in reinforcing students' sense of accomplishment and belonging. Moreover, the exhibitions provided a venue for many students to connect their real-world learning experiences to personal aspirations, an outcome viewed favorably across observers.

The sense of school community and belonging was heightened during the culminating senior exhibitions (i.e., the last of four exhibitions held during the school year) in May. Across the five presentations observed, both observers noted that students demonstrated deep self-awareness, reflecting on personal growth, mental health, family challenges, and past mistakes. Students shared valuable lessons about resilience and responsibility, with recurring stories around taking initiative to improve on their academic and/or personal well-being, and reflecting on the benefits of these choices. While these presentations did not delve deeply into academic content, they fostered strong levels of emotional support and involvement among students, staff, and families. Emotional and heartfelt exchanges occurred in each senior exhibition, as participating audience members spoke to the courage and strength of each senior overcoming considerable personal challenges to successfully graduate and enter a new phase in their lives. These presentations also emphasized real-world experience gained through internships, with some students indicating that they were planning to enter new post-secondary careers from these internship opportunities. Unlike the regular exhibitions, the culminating senior exhibitions held prior to graduation are intentionally ceremonial, featuring U-shaped seating, a symbolic passing of the torch (where the graduating student offered well-wishes to a peer), and a closing circle in which the community shared affirmations and support for the graduate. Most of the elements shared during the culminating senior exhibitions (e.g. the ICAP) are also pre-graded prior to the presentation since these need to be completed beforehand.

Challenges Identified in the Structure and Academic Depth of Exhibitions

Despite these strengths, a substantial and consistent concern across all four observers was the limited extent to which the regular exhibitions elicited evidence of deep academic learning or rigorous demonstration of competency attainment. These concerns do not apply to the culminating senior exhibitions since these served a different ceremonial function. In many instances, the regular exhibitions emphasized personal growth, work completion, presentation skills, or general reflections without sustained attention to the disciplinary skills, knowledge, and inquiry processes expected of a competency-based system.

All observers noted that while students often described projects or shared artifacts, probing questions about research methods, critical analysis, and substantive understanding were inconsistently posed by faculty and advisors. In many cases, teacher and panelist questioning was observed to focus more on feelings, effort, or general experiences rather than challenging students to demonstrate deeper conceptual knowledge or application of disciplinary thinking. Where students were asked about research, sources, or the rationale behind their choices, responses often revealed superficial understanding and limited academic reflection.

Notably, the expectation that students present work samples from multiple academic domains frequently resulted in rushed, disjointed overviews presented on google documents, further diluting the opportunity to focus on depth in any single area. Three of the four observers consistently noted that the work sample component often appeared to be a compliance-oriented task rather than an authentic opportunity for students to demonstrate academic reasoning.

Finally, the field notes repeatedly highlighted that, while exhibitions were helping students develop public speaking competencies, the underlying design often did not create the conditions for rich demonstrations of learning aligned to the school's stated competencies. This tension was raised explicitly (e.g., observers noted in several exhibitions that no evidence or information shared that demonstrated quantitative reasoning) or implicitly (e.g., observers wondered in the reflection part of the template how competencies were evaluated based on the evidence shown in the exhibitions) across the observations of all four researchers.

Opportunities for Strengthening the Exhibition Process

To realize the full potential of the regular exhibition model, we highlight several areas for consideration. The culminating senior exhibitions observed served a distinct purpose to reinforce connections across the school community, and are therefore not addressed in this section. First, mapping a clearer and more structured alignment between exhibitions and competency expectations is needed. Students should be supported to frame their exhibitions not only around personal narrative, but also around demonstrating how their work products and experiences evidence specific competencies, inquiry processes, and critical thinking skills.

Connected to this first point is to support the process with consistent and more rigorous questioning protocol during exhibitions. Teachers and panelists can be provided with guiding questions that require students to explain reasoning, evaluate their learning process, and substantiate claims with evidence drawn from their work. Addressing the targeted questions would be better supported if students could present on a smaller number of carefully selected artifacts with greater depth, rather than a broad overview of many disconnected experiences. Restructuring the requirements may support a deeper, more coherent demonstration of learning.

Lastly, clarity regarding the purpose of exhibitions should be revisited. If the primary goal is to cultivate public speaking and personal growth, the current model is largely achieving that aim. However, if exhibitions are intended to serve as authentic summative assessments of learning across competencies, a stronger focus on academic inquiry and skill demonstration will be necessary.

Overall, the observations affirm that the exhibition model at New Legacy provides a meaningful forum for students to reflect on their growth, cultivate public speaking skills, and reinforce a strong sense of community. However, without adjustments, the exhibitions risk falling short as rigorous demonstrations of competency attainment. Strengthening alignment to academic and inquiry-based expectations, while preserving the supportive elements of the exhibitions, represents an important next step in the evolution of this model.

Professional Learning Communities: Refining and Calibrating Rubrics

At NLCS, the implementation of a competency-based and personalized education model is sustained not only through formal systems and structures, but also through the dynamic work taking place in the professional learning communities (PLCs). Within these communities, educators engage in ongoing collaborative inquiry to refine tools and practices that promote transparency and fairness across highly personalized assessments (e.g., exhibitions and projects). A central focus of this work at NCLS has been the development and calibration of rubrics used to assess student exhibitions and broader project-based competencies used to evaluate student projects and assignments.

This section shares findings from two major strands of PLC activity shaping the school's evolving approach to assessment. The first examines the iterative process used to develop and calibrate a newly developed exhibition rubric to evaluate students' quarterly exhibitions of learning. The second examines the school's efforts to norm scoring practices around broader competency rubrics cutting across content areas and project types. Together, these two strands illustrate the opportunities and complexities of building consistency with an educational model that seeks to honor individual student growth, agency, and authentic learning.

Refining Rubrics for Exhibitions and Projects

A critical dimension of NLCS's CBE implementation is the collaborative sensemaking that occurs within its PLCs. In particular, the work of advisors to develop and norm on a new exhibition rubric as well as to calibrate expectations on a general project competency rubric offers examples of how the school seeks to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency across a highly personalized assessment system.

First and foremost, these discussions reflected a culture of humility and shared ownership. Advisors used language like "That's on me" or "We need to teach them…" to frame moments of discrepancy or concern. While the Assistant Principal brought the agenda, format, and often some outside rubric examples to start, advisors were actively engaged in the discussions, driven to come up with a consistent and effective rubric. The phrase "I disagree…" was common, not in a confrontational manner, but rather in a way that allowed participants to safely share their thoughts and feelings honestly, allowing any discrepancies to come to light.

(Re)developing the Exhibition Rubric

A first task for this group of advisors was to re-work the rubric used for exhibitions. The prior rubric was limited to presentation skills and missed opportunities to discuss substantive content from these quarterly presentations. The redevelopment meetings were driven by time constraints and pressure to finalize a rubric by the end of the allotted period.

Much of the discussion centered on how many grades students will receive during an exhibition, where they are reported, and if/how they will be weighted. Advisors suggested tangible outcomes like separate grades for the presentation itself versus competencies, making

sure that scores aren't cross-contaminated by other factors (like rigor—which seemed to be defined as "effort" in this context). There was a strong desire to make sure that the rubrics are understandable and approachable, by teachers, observers, and especially students themselves. There was a goal that students be able to use the rubrics themselves for self-assessment, as well as for peer-assessment. At times, the conversation pivoted to be more focused on details like the formatting of the rubric (e.g. fitting to one page).

To address the many directions of conversation, the administrator re-grounded them by asking "What do you guys think is the most important part of the exhibition? I think very few exhibitions hit them all. Where would you be most stoked for a student to really thrive in an exhibition?" This was almost immediately met by an advisor replying, "Competency based, demonstrating skill" and another advisor immediately responding, "Yes". This exemplifies that the work was deeply grounded in competency-based goals and framing.

Yet, even though this was a very clear answer, it was almost immediately met with potential counterexamples. Are exhibitions just focused on academic competencies? What if a student learns to do a back flip, would that count for the personal growth competency?

Ultimately, in the version of the exhibition rubric agreed upon and used in the next quarter (see Appendix C), students were asked to define the purpose of their exhibition and then received grades for Competency, Creativity, and Facilitating and Presenting. The paper document also included a space for an Overall Exhibition Score and an Overall Facilitating/Presenting Score, as well as space for written feedback. While there is clear delineation between scores, there is still potential confusion around the way scores are compiled and recorded. The balance between simple and sufficient continues to be demonstrably challenging and this is an area that we plan to explore with the school further in the 2025-26 year.

Norming the Exhibition Rubric

During one observed PLC session, each advisor brought two student exhibitions: one they felt confident in scoring and one they found difficult to assess. Participants described the presentations, recorded scores individually on whiteboards, and then revealed and discussed their rationales. Notably, this process occurred both before and after revealing the student's identity—highlighting the degree to which knowledge of a student's context might (or might not) shape scoring decisions.

Conversations frequently circled around core questions: Should effort and growth influence scores? Is a 2.5 a valid compromise between recognition and rigor? Should a low score be recorded as a "1," marked as "N/A" if the work does not meet minimum expectations, or not recorded at all? While there was often consensus around scores that students should receive on an exhibition among advisors and administration, the rubrics were not always referenced in deciding these scores.

As mentioned, the grading process itself was deeply personalized. Advisors debated when to assign half-scores to reflect growth, when to emphasize effort and motivation, and when to withhold scores entirely to preserve student dignity or encourage resubmission. While this flexibility reflects the school's ethos, it also complicates the use of rubrics, especially when external observers (e.g., mentors or family members) are asked to use similar tools without the benefit of knowing students' histories or prior work. To this point, teachers raised concerns

about the usability of the rubric for external audiences and proposed a bifurcated model: one rubric for presentation quality, to be scored by observers, and another for competency mastery, to be scored by advisors and teachers. While logical, this proposal revealed another challenge: managing multiple types of scores across disconnected systems and ensuring that all stakeholders understand what those scores represent and where they are housed.

The PLC also touched on Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) as a potential solution to improve both learning transparency and communication with students. Advisors noted that ILPs, while time intensive, could serve as a shared reference point for goal-setting, tracking progress, and helping students anticipate how their work will be evaluated—especially in a setting where competencies are applied across diverse projects and subject areas.

Developing the Project Rubric

To address the need for rubrics used consistently across time and spaces, advisors created a second rubric based on a BPL Learning Through Internship (LTI) project rubric (see Appendix D). This multi-page document was simplified to focus on "Authenticity" (does a project matter to me? To others?) and "Academic Challenge" (does the project ask high quality questions? Does it provide high quality answers?). These two overarching categories are broken into seven subcategories (Relevance, Product Benefit, Essential Question, Competency Focus, Research/ Sources, Content Mastery, Feedback and Revision for Quality). Each subcategory can receive a score of No Evidence, In Progress, Meets Expectations, or Exceeds Expectations. Linked in the document are references to the competency specific rubrics. Finally, there is blank space to fill in the competency focus and specific criteria that will delineate between exceeding, meeting, and progressing toward expectations.

As advisors engaged in discussion about simplifying the sample rubric, making it most relevant to their school context, and ensuring the language was understandable to students, the idea of mastery and academic challenge continued to arise. It is clear that the goal of all student work is not compliance but deep learning, whether or not the project at hand is self-selected by the student or assigned by the teacher. As evidenced by their discussions, advisors want students to work hard and show content mastery. Capturing all these dimensions simultaneously, across competencies, while clearly communicating expectations to students, is no small feat. The work this group did to simplify the project rubric was substantial, and the flowchart overview on the first page aids in sensemaking for advisors, teachers, and students alike.

Still being developed is how and when each rubric will be used, and how they will (or will not) combine with each other. For example, on an exhibition, do students receive a presentation score from the exhibition rubric, a project score, and potentially competency scores? While this theoretically makes sense, it is unclear if that is what is currently happening and whether it is clear to students themselves.

Norming the Competency Expectations: Calibrating Fairness, Rigor, and Personalization

To further understand how educators at New Legacy Charter School (NLCS) define and assess graduation readiness (Research Question 3), we observed a PLC session focused on norming the school's broader competency-based rubric. The session, led by the Assistant Principal,

brought together advisors and teachers across content areas and advisories to evaluate student work using a common set of competencies. While norming sessions are standard practice in many schools, what unfolded at NLCS reflected the complexity of maintaining consistency, equity, and personalization within a highly flexible assessment system.

The session began with educators presenting samples of student work - often from students who had already "passed" or met expectations- and identifying the competencies to be evaluated. Colleagues then recorded their individual scores on personal whiteboards before revealing and discussing their judgments. While the structure was familiar, the conversations that followed surfaced a number of unresolved tensions: What counts as "meeting" versus "exceeding" a competency? Should effort and personal growth influence scoring? What happens when a student demonstrates content knowledge but minimal engagement or, conversely, shows exceptional effort but limited mastery?

Teachers repeatedly grappled with the dilemma of evaluating what a student produced versus what they are capable of. For example, one student received a 4 for personal growth and inquiry, but colleagues questioned whether the work truly exceeded expectations or simply reflected an improvement from prior performance. In other instances, students who completed the minimum requirements were scored more generously based on effort. These patterns revealed the degree to which scoring at NLCS is influenced not only by the quality of student work, but by teachers' deep knowledge of individual learners.

Although the exhibition and project rubric served as common references, they were not always consistently applied. Some scoring discussions leaned more on relational judgment than on rubric language, raising questions about whether competencies are sufficiently specific and whether scoring decisions are fully transparent or replicable, especially for external stakeholders. The staff acknowledged these challenges openly. One advisor noted that they were "building the plane while flying it" a phrase that resonated with others, who agreed that while foundational systems are now in place, implementation remains uneven. Several educators shared that they still struggle to internalize the competencies or to teach them explicitly. There was also consensus that some competencies, particularly research and inquiry or scientific reasoning, are more difficult to assess consistently, especially when taught outside traditional subject-area boundaries.

Teachers expressed enthusiasm for refining expectations moving forward. Suggestions included developing shared performance indicators, using competency flash cards with students, and refining ILPs to make expectations more visible and goal-setting more intentional. One promising idea was to host regular "competency spotlights" during weekly professional learning sessions, in which a teacher demonstrates how they are teaching and assessing a particular competency within their course. Another recommendation was to clarify when competencies can fairly be assessed, particularly in elective courses, and to avoid evaluating students on competencies that are not explicitly taught.

The norming session around competencies revealed much about how graduation readiness is enacted at NLCS, not just through exhibitions, but across a wide range of projects, subject areas, and instructional decisions. On one hand, the process reflected a strong culture of relational trust, shared responsibility, and critical reflection. Educators were candid about their uncertainties, open to revising their judgments, and deeply committed to maintaining fairness in a system designed to value both growth and personalization.

At the same time, the discussions about student work and competencies surfaced the underlying fragility of an assessment approach that relies heavily on teacher discretion in the absence of externally validated benchmarks or clearly defined performance standards. Educators acknowledged that some competencies (e.g., research and inquiry, writing for different purposes, and scientific reasoning) are more difficult to assess consistently, particularly in the elective or interdisciplinary contexts. The question of whether a competency should be assessed if it has not been explicitly taught emerged as a key tension, prompting a broader reflection on instructional alignment and the boundaries of fair evaluation.

Importantly, the session illustrated the ways NLCS educators are trying to strike a balance between honoring effort and upholding rigor. Teachers often referenced student growth, motivation, and prior history when justifying scores, but also expressed discomfort with how these subjective factors might inflate ratings. Several noted the difficulty of scoring students who meet the letter of the requirement but fall short of their known potential. Others worried about equity and whether the same work might be scored differently depending on who completed it.

Additionally, the underlying assumptions for scoring based on the competency rubrics is not transparent to an outside observer. For instance, after exhibitions, projects, and artifacts/assignments are scored, how are these weighted? It is reasonable that not all students receive the same grades on an exhibition or a project, given that they have choice over their competencies. However, does this flexibility muddle the expectations of a project or exhibition? More structurally, is there a minimum number of times students need to display competency to demonstrate graduation readiness or a maximum number of attempts? What artifacts count for the gradebook to determine a final grade in a course? Is there consistency in how teachers are evaluating assignments for grading? All of these questions are also deliberated by staff each year.

Ultimately, these norming experiences speaks to the core of Research Question 3: how educators at NLCS interpret and implement a competency-based, personalized learning model that demands both flexibility and coherence. While there is much still to clarify, particularly around grading consistency, rubric alignment, and cross-content calibration, what stands out is a school-wide commitment to doing this work transparently and collaboratively. With continued attention to systematizing practice and empowering both staff and students, NLCS is building a model where personalization and competencies are not opposing forces, but co-existing principles negotiated through ongoing, collective sensemaking.

To more deeply understand how these practices are experienced by those most directly involved, we now turn to the voices of teachers and students. The following section draws on focus groups conducted with students and educators to explore how they make meaning of the school's competency-based and personalized learning model: what it offers, where it stretches, and how it shapes their evolving sense of readiness for life after high school.

Student Perspectives: Centering Voice, Agency, and Readiness

To more deeply understand how NLCS's personalized, competency-based model is experienced by students, we turn to findings from student focus groups. These discussions provide a window into how students interpret the competencies, engage with exhibitions and internships, and begin to construct a sense of postsecondary purpose. In this section, we highlight common feedback received when articulated by more than two students in two of the four focus groups.

Students consistently described NLCS as a place of transformation—especially when compared to their experiences in traditional schools. Many came to the school after having dropped out, becoming disengaged, or feeling invisible in other learning environments. "At my old school, I walked around with my head down. Nobody knew my name," one student shared. "Here, they check in with me every day." Others cited being labeled as "bad students" elsewhere or being told they would never graduate. New Legacy, by contrast, was described as a space where students felt valued not for compliance, but for growth and resilience.

Across all focus groups, students emphasized the power of being known. Many described New Legacy as the first place where they felt seen, supported, and encouraged to pursue their own interests and ambitions. As one student put it, "I used to think I wasn't going to finish school. Now I'm a senior. That means something to me."

Students frequently connected their learning to personal growth and real-world readiness, rather than through benchmarks defined solely by academic proficiency expectations. Exhibitions were cited as both challenging and empowering experiences. That is, these provided opportunities to reflect on their learning journey and make it visible to others. One student explained, "it's not just about a grade…it's about showing who you are and what you've been working on." According to all students, what made exhibitions meaningful was not just the format, but the choice students had in shaping the experience. Students described selecting topics that mattered to them. Topics could range from parenting and identity to careers and personal challenges to aligning their work with competencies that felt relevant. The choice of topics given to students, gave them ownership and appeared to help them build confidence in communicating their learning. One student reflected, "When I get up there, I'm nervous, but I know it's my story. I know I'm not just repeating what someone else said."

Internships were also described as transformational. Students appreciated having control over where they applied and what field they explored, noting that this helped them see new possibilities for life after high school. One student shared, "they told me I could find my own internship if I wanted, and they would support it." Another student shared, "[the teachers] tell you that you only limit yourself [to internship opportunities]…that stuck with me." Additionally, a third student shared how an internship in early childhood education helped her decide to pursue a teaching assistant certification, which represented a goal she previously thought was out of reach.

Students described their college courses and community-based learning as empowering. Several students mentioned taking dual-enrollment classes or participating in career readiness programs

outside of school. These experiences not only deepened their academic skills but allowed them to imagine futures they had not previously considered. As one student said, “I never thought I’d be in a college class. But now I go twice a week, and I’m passing. That feels good.”

Opportunities for Growth

While most students found the educational model offered at NLCS to be empowering, some expressed confusion about how exhibitions were scored or how they could be improved, and others indicated a need for better elevating internships or career explorations. In reference to the exhibitions, students in two of the four focus groups described receiving scores that were difficult to interpret or felt inconsistent across advisors. In terms of interpretation, one student clarified, “If [the advisor] circled in the middle [of the rubric], I wouldn’t know what that’s supposed to mean. How’s that supposed to help me?” Students in three focus groups also pointed out that they would receive numerical ratings without any actionable comments or feedback. Other students situated in three of the four focus groups noted anxiety around exhibitions, especially when public speaking was not a personal strength. These students indicated that alternative formats or practicing in advisory may be helpful to mitigate public speaking anxieties.

In reference to the internships and career explorations, students in two out of four focus groups indicated that access and awareness to meaningful internship experiences felt uneven. To clarify, these students expressed a desire for more structure or visibility into available opportunities. A common suggestion made by these students was to generate “a list…so we can see the choices.” Although students largely appreciate the internship support, a subset of students pointed to the need to ensure that all students were made aware of the complete array of possible opportunities. These concerns shared by students highlight the importance of continued transparency and scaffolding to ensure that all students understand what is expected of them and how their work is evaluated.

Taken together, these findings speak directly to Research Question 2: In what ways does this model support the development of the skills, mindsets, and sense of possibility that students need to direct their own future? The student focus groups suggest that NLCS’s model offers a compelling vision of readiness marked by ensuring students leave the school with a sense of purpose, agency, and connection to others including the broader community. While some students questioned the consistency and clarity in assessment, they overwhelmingly described the school as a place that helps them see themselves not just as graduates, but as individuals with a future they can name, shape, and pursue.

These student reflections offered important viewpoints of how the model at NLCS supports individual growth and future readiness. To complement these perspectives and better understand how this model is interpreted and implemented from the instructional side, we shift to the voices of educators. The teacher focus groups conducted offer critical insights into how staff members navigate, refine, and sustain the school’s competency-based and personalized approach, while balancing competing demands of flexibility, coherence, and equity.

Teacher Perspectives: Navigating Complexity and Redefining Success

The teacher focus groups provided a deeper understanding of how NLCS educators make sense of and implement the school's personalized, competency-based learning model. Teachers described the work as deeply meaningful but also intellectually and emotionally demanding. More than four teachers shared how the model encouraged them to rethink not only how they assess learning, but also how they build strong relationships with their students, better tailor the instruction to meet the highly divergent and varied needs of this student population, and redefined what it means for a student to demonstrate "success."

There was broad consensus across the focus group participants that their role as educators at NLCS is fundamentally different from what this would look like in a traditional school setting. One teacher explained, "you are not just delivering [academic] content…but you're helping a student define their future…you're scaffolding their sense of who they can be." This perspective was echoed by all of the teachers who described their teaching in relational and personalized terms and one that needed to be grounded in students' real-world experiences. One teacher noted, "we try to [factor in] what's happening at home, at work, in their personal lives, and use it as material for learning…that's not just relevant…that's the work."

All of the teachers reflected on the challenges of ensuring consistency across such a flexible model. Several noted that scoring student work in a competency-based system is inherently subjective, especially when growth, effort, and context factor into assessment decisions. One teacher shared, "we have students who are parenting, who are working overnight shifts, who are navigating trauma…you cannot ignore that, but you also have to make sure you're not lowering expectations…that tension is always there." Additionally, teachers in both focus groups acknowledged progress made through PLCs to align on interpretations and assessing students on competencies in content areas or advisory groups, but pointed to the lingering inconsistencies. Several acknowledged that not all teachers are equally comfortable with the competencies, nor are they equally fluent in designing learning experiences that align with them. "I'm still learning what some of the competencies even mean," one newer staff member admitted. Others noted that professional learning is improving but needs to be ongoing and differentiated. One teacher summarized, "The plane is built, but some of us are still learning how to fly it." Another teacher acknowledged the implications of this inconsistency by stating, "We need to be on the same page. Otherwise, it's not fair to the students." Generally, teachers expressed consensus that ongoing professional learning with the competencies is essential, especially since the school has new staff joining each year.

The complexity of teaching within this model was heightened by the lack of a common or traditional curriculum and pacing guides to map out learning expectations. Three out of the nine teachers interviewed described the demands of designing learning experiences without fixed course standards or district pacing guides. While this autonomy was valued, it also required a high level of coordination and instructional expertise. One teacher shared, "You have to build your own roadmap…it's freeing but also overwhelming." Although these teachers valued the freedom afforded to personalize instruction, they pointed to challenges encountered in planning, scaffolding and assessing without common reference points.

Although all teachers experienced struggles with the CBE and personalized approach taken by the school, teachers clearly see real value in the model to benefit students. They described students who had previously disengaged now presenting confidently in exhibitions, leading discussions about their goals, and taking pride in their growth. One educator reflected, "Our students aren't just earning credits…they're learning how to advocate, reflect, and make choices…that's what readiness looks like here." The collective vision of readiness expressed by teachers was one that values durable skills, self-direction, and relational learning. As one educator put it, "It's not about finishing high school. It's about building a life."

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the successes experienced with re-engaging students, New Legacy continues to grapple with challenges. Gentrification has pushed families further away, making transportation a significant hurdle and increasing the cost of available housing near the school. The school director joked, "if I won the Powerball, I'd build an apartment complex behind the school" to underscore his concern for the longer commuting distances that have increased over the years. Financial sustainability also is a concern, as the school's innovative model relies heavily on grant funding to maintain its small class sizes and personalized approach. "We need stability for our staff," the principal emphasized, reflecting on the pressures of ensuring financial continuity in a grant-dependent environment.

But when looking to the future, the improvement vision for New Legacy appears to be clearer: to solidify the systems that have been built, continue fine-tuning competency assessments, and to ensure that the school remains a beacon of equity and opportunity for marginalized students. When asked to impart recommendations for other schools seeking to take up this mode, the principal advised, "be brave…take a chance, and build a good team…this isn't a one-person job." The various data points collected from multiple sources during the school year characterize a school that embodies a strong spirit of collective effort, courage, and continuous learning in the pursuit of establishing a student-centered learning environment.

The school's commitment to personalized, competency-based learning offers an important contrast to traditional criteria and measures of academic success. At NLCS, readiness is not narrowly defined by age-based benchmarks or grade-level standards, but by the ability of students to chart a purposeful future, communicate effectively, solve real problems, and reflect on who they are becoming. This reframing is especially significant for alternative education settings, where the focus groups with students confirmed that they often arrive having "failed" conventional standards and metrics used in traditional high schools. As affirmed by the students participating in the focus groups, NLCS offers a learning environment that meets students where they are and builds up from there.

This education model aligns with extant literature that challenges the sufficiency of academic performance as sole indicators of postsecondary and workforce readiness. Conley (2014), for instance, emphasizes the importance of cognitive strategies, academic behaviors, and contextual skills, such as goal setting and navigating systems, as central to college and career readiness. Similarly, Fergus & Noguera (2014) underscore that when schools build student aspirations, engagement, and resilience, these sites can better prepare marginalized students for life beyond high school. Glavan et al. (2022) found that student growth in motivation,

belonging, independence and emotional regulation was central for students in an alternative education program to achieve better academic and life outcomes. In line with this literature, NLCS's focus on exhibitions, internships, and student-driven projects redefines the priorities of schooling as one that centers on ensuring that all students come away with essential skills, relevant learning, and career experiences to give them the flexibility and adaptability to better navigate challenges after high school.

As Sturgis (2016) and the Aurora Institute have argued, competency-based education models are most impactful when they enable students to progress and when assessments are aligned with real-world applications. NLCS puts these principles into practice through a flexible structure that prioritizes growth, choice, and performance. At the same time, the school's internal conversations around rubric calibration and equity of scoring reflect Ewell's (2013) caution that flexibility must be matched with strong structures for quality assurance and teacher collaboration.

The tension between flexibility and rigor has not been resolved, and the school's own calibration processes shows that maintaining equity and consistency in a personalized model requires continuous attention. Yet the culture of shared ownership and transparent reflection evident in NLCS's PLCs suggests that this tension is not only acknowledged but actively engaged. Teachers do not claim to have all the answers, but they share a common goal to ensure that students graduate not only with a transcript, but with a sense of direction and capability.

NLCS offers a valuable case study in what it means to reimagine high school for students who need something different. Rather than asking whether students meet traditional benchmarks, the school asks: are students discovering who they are? Are they developing skills that will help them thrive in a complex world? Are they ready to take the next step with confidence and purpose? At New Legacy, these are the questions that matter most; and the answers are unfolding in every exhibition, advisory meeting, and student reflection. These questions will also be explored in 2025-26 when we have the opportunity to discuss these with alumni, and understand how the school prepared them for post-secondary and/or career opportunities following graduation.

In this way, the model at NLCS contributes meaningfully to the national conversation about graduation readiness, particularly in alternative education contexts. Their model challenges practitioners and policymakers to consider whether standardized approaches to evaluating graduation readiness serves as the most optimal pathway for evaluating students, or if it may be more equitable to support approaches that are responsive to students' lived experiences, aspirations, and learning needs. For practitioners and policymakers concerned that such flexibility compromises rigor, NLCS puts forth a different proposition: that readiness can be cultivated through growth-oriented learning in applied contexts, even if students are not meeting traditional grade-level standards. Rather than claim equivalence to traditional benchmarks, NLCS emphasizes relevance, engagement, and performance-based assessment as valid and meaningful alternatives. Although still being finessed at the school, their internal efforts and processes to calibrate expectations and build clarity across competencies demonstrate how schools can strive for consistency and integrity within a more flexible framework. As the school continues to evolve, its story offers a blueprint and a challenge for policymakers: what if we evaluated school success not solely by test scores or credit accumulation, but by whether students emerge prepared to navigate complexity, advocate for themselves and their communities, and build meaningful futures?

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Appendix A: Data Collection and Methods

Data Collection

We drew on multiple sources for this qualitative study to inform our understanding of New Legacy's competency-based model. We describe the various data collection procedures below:

Interviews

We conducted a formal, hour-long interview at the beginning of the study with the Executive Director and Principal to gain preliminary information and context about the school. A semi-structured interview protocol guided our conversation with the two school leaders. We also engaged the Principal in an hour-long "think-aloud" using three different competency-based transcripts to articulate the process through which competency determinations were made for three students with different academic profiles and career interests. This think-aloud provided insights into how the school evaluated a body of evidence to determine students' progress toward competency goals. All interviews took place at the school and were audio-recorded and transcribed using Rev for analysis.

Focus Groups

We conducted focus groups at the school to gather perspectives from both educators and students. For the student focus groups, 24 students participated across four separate sessions held on the same day. Although the participating students were drawn from a convenience sample of volunteers, this sample represented just over a quarter of the total population enrolled in the school at that time (n=88). A semi-structured protocol guided discussions, asking students to reflect on their prior schooling experiences and share their perspectives on the school's competency-based model for evaluating graduation readiness.

Nine high school teachers participated in the teacher focus groups, four of whom were in their first year at the school. A semi-structured protocol was used to gather teacher insights on their understanding of the competencies used within their respective disciplines and their perspectives on the personalized, competency-based approach used to assess student progress toward graduation. Both student and teacher focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed via Rev for analysis.

Observations

Observations conducted by the CADRE team focused on understanding how teachers made sense of competencies within professional learning communities (PLCs) and on the exhibition presentations made by students throughout the school year. For the PLCs, the CADRE team observed six different sessions held periodically beginning in November 2024 through February 2025. Each PLC observed focused on different aspects of evaluating competencies. Five sessions centered on developing new rubrics connected to competencies for evaluating exhibitions and norming expectations using the general project competency rubric. The sixth session focused on norming competency expectations through student work analysis.

For the exhibitions, the CADRE team observed presentations by 23 unique students across four exhibition cycles scheduled for October, December, March, and May of 2025. Four of the 18 students were observed at multiple time points (October, December, and March); and

the remaining students were observed only once. Across all exhibition and PLC observations, a consistent template was used by all four observers to capture field notes documenting conversations and interactions in each setting.

Methods

We employed content analysis as a systematic method for interpreting qualitative data through classification, coding, and the identification of recurring patterns (Schreier, 2012; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This approach enabled us to distill large volumes of qualitative material into organized insights, surfacing patterns and themes relevant to the research questions. Content analysis also attends to the context in which frequently occurring concepts and ideas appear, supporting a nuanced interpretation of the data (Krippendorff, 2018).

Analytical Process

Our analysis of data collected from interviews, focus groups, and observations began with a close reading of each transcript and the field notes generated during data collection. CADRE researchers first independently and manually flagged initial ideas and patterns related to students' experiences with personalized learning, exhibitions, internships, competencies, and postsecondary aspirations, as well as teachers' experiences with instructional adaptation, competency calibration, and assessment challenges.

Following this initial review, the PI conducted AI-assisted secondary reviews to check preliminary findings identified in the manual reviews. Using the AI tool *Notebook LM* (Google), the PI scanned de-identified transcripts for additional patterns, recurring concerns, and subtle variations that might not have been fully surfaced during the manual review. *Notebook LM* was used to augment the human analytic process and to serve as an impartial check on the project team's interpretations This process enhanced the rigor of the content analysis by providing a secondary check to conclusions drawn, helping to ensure the breadth and depth of perspectives and ideas in the data were fully captured or not missed. While final interpretive decisions rested with the project team, AI-supported findings proved especially useful as prompts for further reflection, discussion, and triangulation across interviews, focus groups, and observations.

The Principal Investigator emphasized identifying:

- Patterns emerging across multiple focus groups and levels (teachers, students, and school leaders)
- Specific illustrative quotes providing texture and nuance
- Areas of tension, inconsistency, or unresolved challenges identified by participants

Interviews and Focus Groups

For interview and focus group data, initial manual coding focused on identifying recurring ideas, sentiments, or experiences tied directly to constructs such as graduation readiness, competency-based education (CBE), personalized learning, and postsecondary aspirations. For instance, segments where students described growth in self-confidence, skills gained through applied learning experiences (e.g., internships, projects), or reflections on graduation were coded under themes like "future orientation," "applied learning," and "personalized supports."

Similarly, educator focus groups were coded for discussions about competency calibration, challenges in ensuring fairness and rigor, instructional adaptations, and reflections on student growth. Special attention was paid to identifying convergence across focus groups, with findings noted as particularly salient when they appeared across multiple sessions. However, the PI also sought out discrepant data points to surface alternative perspectives. Discrepant viewpoints rarely surfaced within and across each grouping (students, educators, and school leaders). A secondary check was then conducted using *Notebook LM*.

Quotes were selected from transcripts to enrich findings by illustrating key points in participants' own words. Rather than aiming to generate new theory, the analysis prioritized faithfully describing the most prominent and cross-cutting patterns, while also highlighting critical tensions and areas for growth that emerged from participants' reflections. Findings aim to provide a structured yet nuanced portrayal of student, educator, and school leader perspectives, directly addressing the research questions guiding this case study.

Observations

For the observations (student exhibitions and PLC sessions focused on rubric development) observers independently documented field notes using open-ended recording protocols to capture the structure, content, and dynamics of each observation.

To identify common patterns, field notes were systematically reviewed for recurrent observations across different sessions and dates. For student exhibitions, findings were prioritized when observed independently by two or more researchers and when they reflected substantive aspects of exhibition design, student demonstration of learning, or audience engagement. For PLCs, findings were prioritized when they reflected meaningful sense-making opportunities related to shared interpretations or challenges associated with evaluating student projects or exhibitions. The goal of the analytical work for the observations was to provide a structured and descriptive synthesis of observable regularities in exhibition practices and competency sense-making in PLCs.

Appendix B: Competency Definitions and Frames

Learning Goals and Competency Definitions

New Legacy Charter School
Impacting Two Generations at a Time

Personal Qualities and Empowerment

Students will be able to identify personal strengths and areas of need through character exploration, health and wellness initiatives, and active reflection. They will demonstrate empathy for others and take responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. Lastly, they will continually plan for their future and build workforce readiness skills and qualities.

Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Students will demonstrate the ability to make themselves understood, both orally and in writing, and will employ active listening skills to understand peers and instructors.

Quantitative Reasoning

Students will utilize their understanding of mathematical concepts and critical thinking to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

Empirical Reasoning

Students will use the scientific method to conduct observations, make predictions, and test hypotheses through projects and personal experimentation.

Social Reasoning

Students will be able to critically analyze historic and current events, while identifying social inequities and propose plausible solutions.

Personal Qualities and Empowerment Learning Progression

Demonstrates an understanding of self and others, and takes social action

3

Exceeding Expectations

Students at this level are confident and insightful, holding themselves accountable for their actions.

They are resilient and take responsibility for their continued personal growth and wellbeing. They act in informed and ethical ways and accept responsibility to lead, inspiring others to challenge inequality and improve their world. They take initiative and are sufficiently organized on a personal level to effectively facilitate positive, culturally responsive social change. They advocate for themselves and others and demonstrate courage when faced with challenges. They continue to build and access strong networks with mentors and others.

2

Meeting Expectations

Students at this level are developing increased personal, physical, and social awareness and are able to analyze their strengths and draw from their experience to prioritize what is required for personal growth.

They demonstrate increasing confidence and independence and they persevere to achieve their goals. They know how to utilize support networks and take responsibility for their own continued wellbeing. They are establishing their values system through relationships with others and through self-reflection. They are receptive to, and respectful of, diverse perspectives and are positive role models when engaging in social action in their communities. They are proactive and organized and hold themselves accountable for deadlines and outcomes.

1

In Progress

Students at this level are starting to develop awareness of themselves and their potential, and to pursue opportunities for personal growth.

They are coming to recognize the importance of attending to their own health and wellbeing needs. They understand the importance of belonging and supporting others, and they will contribute as members of a group. They understand that their views count and they acknowledge the views of others. They are aware of their impact on others and will accept feedback in relation to taking responsibility for their own behavior.

Reading, Writing, and Communicating Learning Progression

3

Exceeding Expectations

Students at this level use a blend of tools to design and refine their communication in order to deliver a compelling message that expands perspectives.

They design, modify, and manage their communication strategies to suit a range of audiences and purposes in complex situations. They create multi-modal products to increase impact and can articulate how their choices enhance their communication. They engage peers and experts in the community to broaden their perspectives and solve problems through collaborative discussion and critical conversations. They synthesize different perspectives and facilitate the group to move towards shared understanding, knowing how to challenge thinking to gain insight. They seek opportunities to engage in analysis of their communication and use constructive criticism to revise and improve.

2

Meeting Expectations

Students at this level communicate with presence and purpose.

They choose from multiple communication modes and tools to convey their ideas. They are strategic in their choices, taking into account context and audience. They engage with others, using active listening strategies and sharing ideas, showing awareness of the needs of others and an openness to thoughts and opinions other than their own. They maintain lines of communication with experts in their area of interest. They incorporate feedback to tailor their communication.

1

In Progress

Students at this level use familiar communication tools in order to convey their ideas and opinions.

Drawing on what they already know, they are aware that there are multiple ways to communicate, according to text and purpose. They can identify and use familiar digital technologies. They are prepared to talk about their learning and are developing confidence to engage with adults in discussing areas of interest. They listen in group discussions and contribute their own ideas.

Quantitative Reasoning Learning Progression

Demonstrates the disposition, confidence, and capability to use mathematics for life, learning, and work.

Exceeding Expectations

Students at this level are competent and confident users of mathematics in their lives.

They appreciate that mathematics is helpful in making sense of the world and can explain how seeing the world mathematically opens up new possibilities. They can interpret unfamiliar formulae, transform mathematical information, and explain/justify their decisions as they work. They persist when problems are challenging and are willing to ask for help when they don't understand. They analyze the mathematics they or others choose to use.

Meeting Expectations

Students at this level make use of their growing repertoire of mathematical strategies to explore unfamiliar situations.

They can identify and describe when mathematics is used in a situation, task, or problem. They look for mathematical solutions. They can identify and organize mathematical information and use mathematical techniques unprompted. They will respond to mathematical claims made by others and seek to help make sense of them.

In Progress

Students at this level are willing to have a go at using mathematics they are familiar with to understand situations.

They are beginning to identify mathematical ideas within their interest areas. With prompting, they will consider whether mathematics might help in tackling a problem. They are willing to follow familiar mathematical steps to solve problems or tackle practical tasks. They regularly check their work and that their answers are accurate and make sense.

Empirical Reasoning Learning Progression

Uses observation, experience, and experimentation to explain phenomena and make decisions

3

Exceeding Expectations

Students at this level pose and test hypotheses, applying investigative methods to clarify and explore their new understandings.

They formulate testable inquiry questions in response to complex issues and ideas. They identify patterns or themes within the data and use this evidence to draw conclusions. They notice errors in their own processes and suggest improvements. They ask questions to clarify the reasonableness of others' claims.

2

Meeting Expectations

Students at this level ask questions and plan and undertake processes to explore their areas of interest.

On the basis of their observations, they can design and carry out processes that show they recognize causal relationships. They collect and record data in order to share their findings and make decisions. They question some assumptions and viewpoints within a claim.

1

In Progress

Students at this level notice and explore phenomena and ideas, making connections to their own experience.

They are curious about the world around them. They make predictions based on their observations and use strategies such as trial and error to check them.

Social Reasoning Learning Progression

Contributes to society through a deep understanding of social issues.

Exceeding Expectations

Students at this level define and analyze social issues using relevant frameworks and perspectives and take responsible social action.

They apply their understanding of the levers of sustainable development to propose ethical solutions and they commit to working collectively to advance social justice and equity. They demonstrate a commitment to developing ongoing respectful relationships with people from different backgrounds and are prepared to challenge bias and discrimination.

Meeting Expectations

Students at this level investigate social issues in depth by applying a range of tools.

They have an understanding of multiple perspectives. They can analyze significant past and present events in order to identify trends and patterns in society. They recognize the strengths of different cultural groups. They can describe the effects of unequal access to resources in their community and look for ways to address this.

In Progress

Students at this level can describe the frameworks and systems they are embedded in.

They can identify ethical concepts such as equality, respect, and connectedness and describe some of their attributes. They notice that people have different perspectives. They demonstrate an awareness of different cultural groups. They are engaged with their community and identify social issues they would like to address.

Personal Qualities and Empowerment						
Quality Criteria	Actively participates in New Legacy clubs, art, exercise, community meetings Actively engages in mindfulness / movement during advisory	Actively participates in parenting class activities & discussions Increases the use of language (talk, reading, play, etc.) with children in innovative ways Plans activities that nurture children's growth and development in the 4 Child Development Domains Finds & accesses information and support with regard to baby and child care needs Articulates and demonstrates the ability to create a loving/safe base for family's social & emotional development (routines, positive discipline, reading, self care, stress management, etc.)	Stays in class & is productive with class time Uses cell phone responsibly Does not use cuss or use derogatory slurs in the presence of children, or during class time Is able to self regulate, identify appropriate coping skills and uses resources and resource staff appropriately	Shows consistent attendance of 80% or higher Demonstrates professional and reliable/timely communication Student effectively utilizes resources Student reliably produces high-quality work with little provocation from staff	Articulates career interest Identification and explanation of requirements to enter a career of interest Has taken measurable steps towards career goals	**Exceeding Expectations** **Students at this level are confident and insightful, holding themselves accountable for their actions.** They are resilient and take responsibility for their continued personal growth and wellbeing. They act in informed and ethical ways and accept responsibility to lead, inspiring others to challenge inequality and improve their world. They take initiative and are sufficiently organized on a personal level to effectively facilitate positive, culturally responsive social change. They advocate for themselves and others and demonstrate courage when faced with challenges. They continue to build and access strong networks with mentors and others.

Quality Criteria	Participates in New Legacy Clubs Participates in art, exercise, community meetings, and mindfulness and movement	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Stays in class and uses work time productively Uses cell phone responsibly Does not use derogatory slurs or cuss in the presence of children Uses resources and resource staff when dysregulated	Shows consistent attendance of 70% Demonstrates professional communication (phone, email, in-person, etc.) Student reliably produces work	Articulates career interest Identification and explanation of requirements to enter a career of interest	**Meeting Expectations** **Students at this level are developing increased personal, physical, and social awareness and are able to analyze their strengths and draw from their experience to prioritize what is required for personal growth.** They demonstrate increasing confidence and independence and they persevere to achieve their goals. They know how to utilize support networks and take responsibility for their own continued wellbeing. They are establishing their values system through relationships with others and through self-reflection. They are receptive to, and respectful of, diverse perspectives and are positive role models when engaging in social action in their communities. They are proactive and organized and hold themselves accountable for deadlines and outcomes.
	Periodically participates in New Legacy clubs, art, exercise, community meetings, and mindfulness and movement	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	Leaves class frequently Needs reminders about cell phone usage Needs reminders to use respectful language in the presence of children Struggles to identify coping strategies when dysregulated, seldomly uses resources	Shows attendance of 60% or higher Student produces work with consistent provocation from staff	Expresses vague interest in post-secondary planning Currently unable to articulate requirements to enter a career of interest	**In Progress** **Students at this level are starting to develop awareness of themselves and their potential, and to pursue opportunities for personal growth.** They are coming to recognize the importance of attending to their own health and wellbeing needs. They understand the importance of belonging and supporting others, and they will contribute as members of a group. They understand that their views count and they acknowledge the views of others. They are aware of their impact on others and will accept feedback in relation to taking responsibility for their own behavior.
	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	
Indicators	Personal growth and well-being	Commitment to family and community	Decision making and self-regulation	Effective workplace habits	Career awareness and post-secondary planning	

Reading, Writing, and Communicating						
Quality Criteria	Utilizes active reading strategies (i.e. annotating, skimming & scanning, etc.) Uses textual information to formulate opinions Compares & contrasts different sources & points of view Identifies author purpose, bias, etc.	Asks questions that lend themselves to research Finds and uses academic and reliable sources when researching Identifies fake or misleading information	Writes with strong grammar and punctuation Uses appropriate formatting and structure (i.e. paragraph/essay organization) Cites and analyzes relevant evidence to support claims Understands audience & genre, and experiments with style Effectively utilizes proofreading, revising, and editing skills	Uses active listening skills Collaborates with peers professionally Asks appropriate and relevant questions of peers & provides constructive feedback relating to topic Cites textual evidence in class discussions	Articulates and enunciates properly, and can be heard by entire audience Uses body posture, eye contact, and hand gestures Is not overly reliant on visual tool Incorporates a variety of appropriate mediums into presentation	**<u>Exceeding Expectations</u>** **Students at this level use a blend of tools to design and refine their communication in order to deliver a compelling message that expands perspectives.** They design, modify, and manage their communication strategies to suit a range of audiences and purposes in complex situations. They create multi-modal products to increase impact and can articulate how their choices enhance their communication. They engage peers and experts in the community to broaden their perspectives and solve problems through collaborative discussion and critical conversations. They synthesize different perspectives and facilitate the group to move towards shared understanding, knowing how to challenge thinking to gain insight. They seek opportunities to engage in analysis of their communication and use constructive criticism to revise and improve.
	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	**<u>Meeting Expectations</u>** **Students at this level communicate with presence and purpose.** They choose from multiple communication modes and tools to convey their ideas. They are strategic in their choices, taking into account context and audience. They engage with others, using active listening strategies and sharing ideas, showing awareness of the needs of others and an openness to thoughts and opinions other than their own. They maintain lines of communication with experts in their area of interest. They incorporate feedback to tailor their communication.
	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	**<u>In Progress</u>** **Students at this level use familiar communication tools in order to convey their ideas and opinions.** Drawing on what they already know, they are aware that there are multiple ways to communicate, according to text and purpose. They can identify and use familiar digital technologies. They are prepared to talk about their learning and are developing confidence to engage with adults in discussing areas of interest. They listen actively in group discussions and contribute their own relevant ideas.
	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	
Indicators	Text comprehension and analysis	Inquiry, research, & digital literacy	Writing for different purposes	Cooperative learning and discussion	Presenting and facilitating	

Quantitative Reasoning				
Quality Criteria	Looks for entry points into problems and develops a "plan of attack" Makes predictions and assumptions about meanings of solutions to problems Identifies potential constraints Uses appropriate tools to aid in problem solving process (i.e calculator, protractors, etc.) Uses appropriate resources (i.e. peers, teacher, notes, internet, etc.)	Makes sense of quantities and their relationship in problem solving situations Deconstructs problems and understands what each piece means Sees the big picture and provides understanding of what each solution means Understands the importance of using correct units in various situations Uses different properties of operations and objects	Analyzes situations and can recognize and use counterexamples Compares the effectiveness of two reasonable arguments Justifies conclusions and conducts mathematical argumentation & collaboration with peers Utilizes mathematical structures like tables, equations, graphs, etc. to model thinking and explain their functions within a given context	**Exceeding Expectations** **Students at this level are competent and confident users of mathematics in their lives.** They appreciate that mathematics is helpful in making sense of the world and can explain how seeing the world mathematically opens up new possibilities. They can interpret unfamiliar formulae, transform mathematical information, and explain/justify their decisions as they work. They persist when problems are challenging and are willing to ask for help when they don't understand. They analyze the mathematics they or others choose to use.
	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	**Meeting Expectations** **Students at this level make use of their growing repertoire of mathematical strategies to explore unfamiliar situations.** They can identify and describe when mathematics is used in a situation, task, or problem. They look for mathematical solutions. They can identify and organize mathematical information and use mathematical techniques unprompted. They will respond to mathematical claims made by others and seek to help make sense of them.
	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	**In Progress** **Students at this level are willing to have a go at using mathematics they are familiar with to understand situations.** They are beginning to identify mathematical ideas within their interest areas. With prompting, they will consider whether mathematics might help in tackling a problem. They are willing to follow familiar mathematical steps to solve problems or tackle practical tasks. They regularly check their work and that their answers are accurate and make sense.
	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	
Indicators	Perseverance in problem solving	Abstract and quantitative thinking	Mathematical reasoning and argumentation	

Empirical Reasoning			
Quality Criteria	Asks compelling questions that are equally open-ended and conducive to effective/meaningful research Utilizes "best practices" of research when finding answers to difficult questions Relies heavily on factual evidence and data science to prove/disprove hypotheses Synthesizes information from various sources to form a position and/or draw conclusions	Designs projects that follow an essential question and utilize the scientific method Writes project proposals that are detailed and sufficiently thought-through Self-evaluates the direction and effectiveness of projects during and after—tweaks and revises as necessary Articulates the flaws and successes of a project when complete	**Exceeding Expectations** **Students at this level pose and test hypotheses, applying investigative methods to clarify and explore their new understandings.** They formulate testable inquiry questions in response to complex issues and ideas. They identify patterns or themes within the data and use this evidence to draw conclusions. They notice eros in their own processes and suggest improvements. They ask questions to clarify the reasonableness of others' claims.
	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	**Meeting Expectations** **Students at this level ask questions and plan and undertake processes to explore their areas of interest.** On the basis of their observations, they can design and carry out processes that show they recognize causal relationships. They collect and record data in order to share their findings and make decisions. They question some assumptions and viewpoints within a claim.
	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	**In Progress** **Students at this level notice and explore phenomena and ideas, making connections to their own experience.** They are curious about the world around them. They make predictions based on their observations and use strategies such as trial and error to check them.
	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	
Indicators	Asks questions, makes predictions, and draws conclusions	Designs investigation and evaluates process	

Social Reasoning			
Quality Criteria	Investigates and takes positions on major social issues and various forms of inequality challenging American society Routinely reads and analyzes national and world news from academic sources Traces the historical context of current events	Understands/critiques the structures and complexities of American government Identifies major trends and events in U.S. and world history Analyzes and contextualizes current events from an historical perspective	**Exceeding Expectations** **Students at this level define and analyze social issues using relevant frameworks and perspectives and take responsible social action.** They apply their understanding of the levers of sustainable development to propose ethical solutions and they commit to working collectively to advance social justice and equity. They demonstrate a commitment to developing ongoing respectful relationships with people from different backgrounds and are prepared to challenge bias and discrimination.
	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	Steadily moving towards proficiency in some/all of the areas above	**Meeting Expectations** **Students at this level investigate social issues in depth by applying a range of tools.** They have an understanding of multiple perspectives. They can analyze significant past and present events in order to identify trends and patterns in society. They recognize the strengths of different cultural groups. They can describe the effects of unequal access to resources in their community and look for ways to address this.
	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	At the beginning stages of proficiency in most/all of the areas above	**In Progress** **Students at this level can describe the frameworks and systems they are embedded in.** They can identify ethical concepts such as equality, respect, and connectedness and describe some of their attributes. They notice that people have different perspectives. They demonstrate an awareness of different cultural groups. They are engaged with their community and identify social issues they would like to address.
	Not yet evident	Not yet evident	
Indicators	Analysis of social issues and events	Civic and historical mindedness	

Appendix C: Exhibition Rubric

Panelist:

Presenter:

Targeted Competency Areas:

Defining Purpose. The goal of this exhibition is to highlight…

Project Type (select one)	To what degree does the exhibition…
☐ Passion	…teach us about the student's hobby or interest? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Identity	…explore an aspect of the student's race, gender, culture, etc. that defines them? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Life Experience	…reflect on a life experience that impacted them? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Learning Something New	…study a new topic or practice a new skill and document the journey? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Service Learning	…create and implement a plan for improving the school or local community? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Real World Learning	…reflect on an internship or real world learning experience & project? **Not at all —----------Deeply**
☐ Career Exploration or Planning	…explore or create a plan for after high school? **Not at all —----------Deeply**

Goals for Quarter 3:

Place an x on the assessment scale from No Evidence > In Progress > Meets Expectations > Exceeds Expectations

Assessment Area #1: Competency

Student named a competency focus area and created a product that clearly demonstrated growth. Student was able to speak to their growth.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - - 4
No Evidence In progress Exceeds

Assessment Area #2: Creativity

Exhibition artifact is creative and unique.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - - 4
No Evidence In progress Exceeds

Student dedicated thought and effort (over time) into creating said exhibition artifact.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - - 4
No Evidence In progress Exceeds

Assessment Area #3: Facilitating & Presenting

Student utilized best practices of public speaking: volume, eye contact, posture, hand gestures, movement, etc.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - - 4
No Evidence In progress Exceeds

Student created an exhibition that was highly interactive–panelists were substantially involved..

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - -- - - - - - - - 4
No Evidence In progress Exceeds

New Legacy Charter School
Impacting Two Generations at a Time

Notes/Grows & Glows

Overall Exhibition Score_____/4

Overall Facilitating/Presenting _____/4 Score

Miembro del jurado:

Presentador:

Áreas de competencia específicas:

Definición de propósito. El objetivo de esta exposición es resaltar…

Tipo de proyecto (seleccione uno)	¿En qué medida la exposición…
☐ Pasión	… enseña sobre el pasatiempo o interés del estudiante? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Identidad	…explora un aspecto de la raza, género, cultura, etc. del estudiante que lo define? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Experiencia de vida	…reflexiona sobre una experiencia de vida que los impactó? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Aprendiendo algo nuevo	…estudia un tema nuevo o practica una nueva habilidad y documenta el viaje? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Aprendizaje de servicio	…crea e implementa un plan para mejorar la escuela o la comunidad local? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Aprendizaje del mundo real	…reflexiona sobre una pasantía o una experiencia y proyecto de aprendizaje en el mundo real? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**
☐ Exploración/ planificación profesional	…explora o crea un plan para después de la secundaria? **En absoluto----------Profundamente**

Coloque una x en la escala de evaluación de Sin evidencia > En progreso > Cumple con las expectativas > Supera las expectativas

Área de evaluación n.º 1: Competencia

El estudiante nombró una área de enfoque de competencia y creó un producto que demostró crecimiento claramente. El estudiante pudo hablar de su crecimiento.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4
No hay evidencia En progreso Excede

Área de evaluación n.º 2: Creatividad

El artefacto de exhibición es creativo y único.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4
No hay evidencia En progreso Excede

El estudiante dedicó pensamiento y esfuerzo (a lo largo del tiempo) a crear dicho artefacto de exhibición.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4
No hay evidencia En progreso Excede

Área de evaluación n.º 3: Facilitar y Presentar

El estudiante utilizó las mejores prácticas para hablar en público: volumen, contacto visual, postura, gestos con las manos, movimiento, etc.

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4
No hay evidencia En progreso Excede

El estudiante creó una exposición que fue altamente interactiva: los panelistas fueron sustancialmente involucrado..

0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 2- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 4
No hay evidencia En progreso Excede

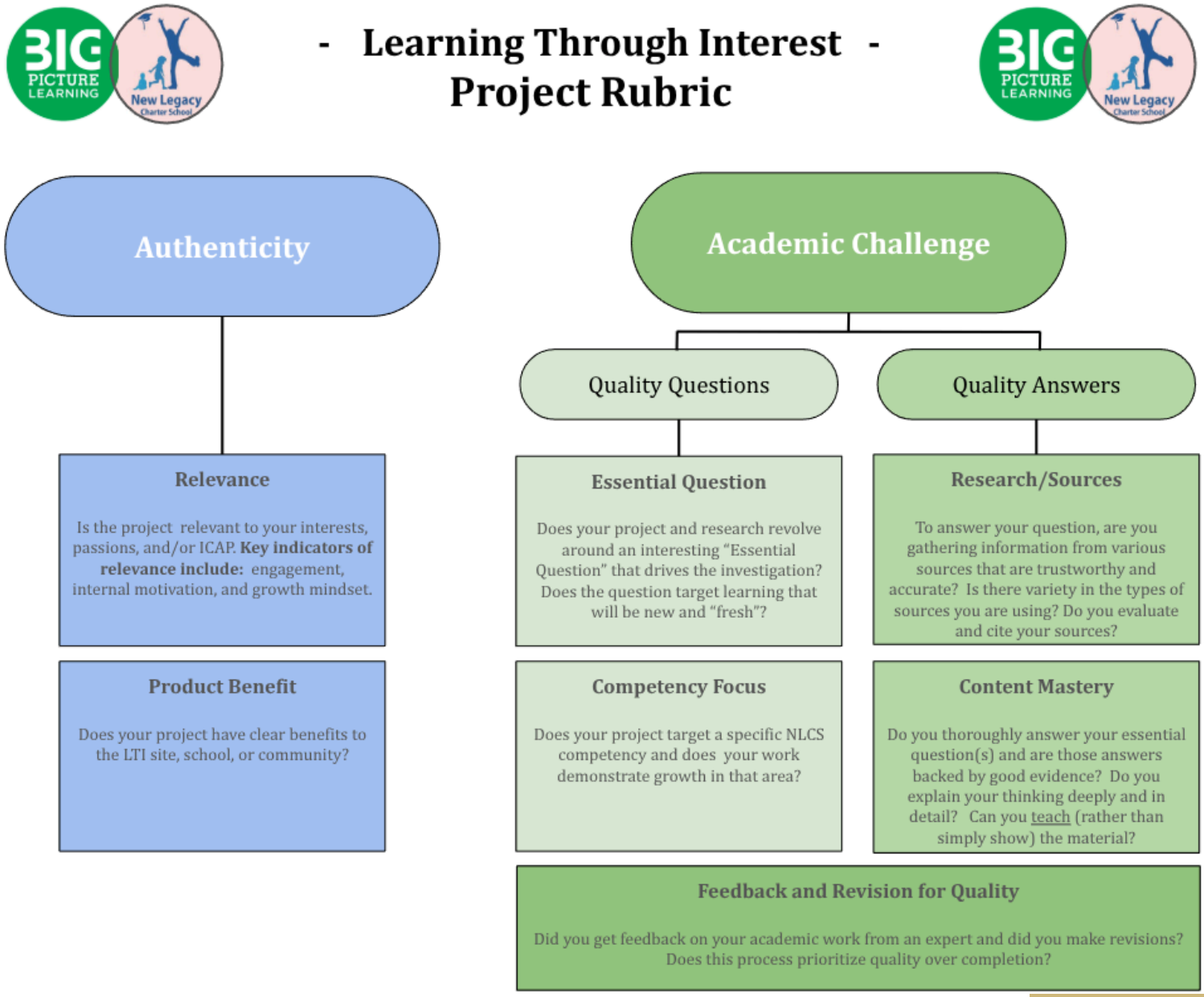
Notas/Crece y Brilla

Puntuación general de la exposición _____/4

En general Facilitar/Presentar Puntaje _____/4

Objetivos para el tercer trimestre:

Appendix D: LTI Project Rubric



LTI Project Rubric

Student: **Project Topic:**

Authenticity	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	In Progress	No Evidence
Relevance: The project is **relevant** to the student's interests and passions. **Indicators of Relevance include**: students': engagement, internal motivation, and growth mindset.	• Explicitly and intentionally demonstrates the ways in which the project is **highly relevant** • Interest is reinforced by deep engagement	• Demonstrates the ways in which the project is **relevant** • Interest is backed by engagement	• Vaguely and superficially demonstrates the ways in which the project is **relevant** • Engagement is spotty	• **Does not demonstrate** the ways in which the project is relevant
Product Benefit: The project has clear **benefits** to the LTI site, school, or community.	• Student is able to explain the project's use clearly, and may connect it to related issues • The impact of the project is strong and wide • There is a tangible product that can continue to be used in the future	• Student is able to explain the project's use • The impact is evident • There is a tangible product that can continue to be used	• Vaguely able to explain the project's use • The impact of the project is minimal	• The project is **not useful/valuable** to the LTI site, school, or community

Academic Challenge	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	In Progress	No Evidence
Essential Question Project and research revolves around an "Essential Question" that drives the investigation. The question targets learning new content that is "fresh" for the student.	• Formulates a **high-level** open-ended and **thought-provoking** "Essential Question" that guides the inquiry • Question pushes student deeply into new frontiers of learning	• Formulates an **open-ended** "Essential Question" that guides the inquiry • Question pushes student into new frontiers of learning	• Formulates **close-ended** questions that guide the inquiry • Question keeps student in his/her comfort zone	• Inquiry is **not guided** by specific questions
Competency Focus* The project targets at least one NLCS competency and work demonstrates skill in that area.	• Explicitly states and intentionally targets competency area(s) • On average, performance in chosen competency areas Exceeds Expectations (4)	• States and targets competency area(s) • Performance in chosen competency areas Meets Expectations (3)	• Vaguely and superficially targets competency area(s) • On average, performance in chosen competency areas remains In Progress (2)	• Student does not show evidence of a competency focus or engagement with competencies
Research/Sources Information is gathered from at least two sources that are both trustworthy and accurate. Sources are evaluated and cited. There is variety in the types of sources used.	• Gathers relevant information from varied, credible sources, both primary and secondary, multiple points of view/bias • Sources are evaluated and cited	• Gathers relevant information from varied, credible sources • Sources are cited	• Gathers relevant information from a single source, which is not evaluated for credibility • Source is not cited	• Does not conduct academic research/gather information from sources
Content Mastery The Essential Question (EQ) is answered thoroughly and claims are backed by evidence. Thinking is explained deeply and in detail. Student can teach (rather than simply show) material.	• Content is both broad and detailed, as well as accurate and helpful in answering the essential question • Student thoughtfully and skillfully incorporates research into EQ answer • Student learns content deeply so that it may be taught expertly	• Content is either broad or detailed, as well as accurate and helpful • Student incorporates research into EQ answer • Student learns content so that it may be taught	• Student does not incorporate research into EQ answer or answer is not FULLY paraphrased • Some learning of content is happening but not much	• Content is neither broad nor detailed, and has many inaccuracies • Active plagiarism has occurred • Student has not learned the content
Feedback and Revision for Quality: Did you get feedback on your academic work and products from an expert and did you make revisions? The revision process emphasizes quality over completion.	• Questions and answers received substantial feedback and revisions were made carefully and diligently to generate a high quality product • Project deadlines were consistently met	• Questions and answers received feedback and revisions were made to improve the final product • Deadlines consistently met	• Feedback was given but limited revisions were made; the goal seemed to be completion over quality. • Some deadlines met	• No products have been revised • No feedback was sought • Deadlines not met

***Competency Focus and Student-Centered Rubric:** *Which NLCS competencies are you most deeply utilizing in your project and how will you demonstrate growth?*

Reading, Writing, Communicating			Quantitative Reasoning	Empirical Reasoning		Social Reasoning		Personal Qualities	
Text comp. & analysis	Writing for different purposes	Research & inquiry	Abstract & quantitative thinking	Scientific thinking, inquiry, & knowledge	Designing investigation & evaluating process	Analysis of social issues & events	Civic & historical mindedness	Family and community	Career & postsecondary planning

Competency focus area & characteristics of success	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	In Progress

Advisor/Teacher Assessment

	Competency Area	Score
Overall project score	**Designing Investigation and Evaluating Process**	**____/4**
Selected competency focus area #1:		**____/4**
Selected competency focus area #2:		**____/4**
Selected competency focus area #3:		**____/4**