

2026 FEDERAL & STATE

Policy Agenda

Shift the Landscape Toward Personalized, Competency-based Learning (PCBL) Models and Tools, Assessments, and Accountability Systems

This document articulates what we believe to be the best policy levers to empower our public education system to better serve all students. These policy shifts are focused on removing barriers to innovation, ensuring instructional coherence, and improving how we assess student learning and measure performance.

Accomplishing these priorities will require a sustained and integrated effort on the part of federal and state policymakers, whose collective work can enable a student-centered system of learning to ultimately emerge.



Accelerate the Growth of the Personalized, Competency-based Learning (PCBL) Sector

Create a robust and sustainable ecosystem to develop, adopt, and implement innovative learning models and PCBL tools at scale.

Federal Policy Priorities:



FUND THE SUPPLY for the development of K-12 innovative learning models and PCBL tools through targeted federal investments.



PROMOTE THE DEMAND for K-12 adoption of innovative learning models and PCBL tools through targeted federal investments.



CREATE REGULATORY SPACE for innovative learning models and PCBL tools to emerge.

State Policy Priorities:



ADOPT STATE CURRICULUM POLICIES that promote PCBL solutions and ensure instructional coherence, including the use of skill-level diagnostic screeners, math frameworks, skill maps, and a high-quality core and supplemental materials rubric.



CREATE REGULATORY SPACE through state policy, including PCBL math legislation and math innovation zones, that allows for aligned curriculum policies, innovative learning models, and PCBL tools to emerge.



INVEST IN MATH INNOVATION with dedicated state funding that promotes the adoption of aligned curriculum policies, innovative learning models, and PCBL tools.





Create Innovative Assessments

Modernize assessment systems to support PCBL learning pathways for students.

Federal Policy Priorities:



FIX THE INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT DEMONSTRATION AUTHORITY (IADA) under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to allow for assessments that create the space for aligned innovative learning models and PCBL tools.



FULLY FUND IADA to encourage the development of PCBL assessments.



REAUTHORIZE AND EXPAND ESSA to implement newly developed PCBL assessments.

State Policy Priorities:



BUILD PCBL ASSESSMENTS including through the use of federal funds that could also be used for summative purposes.



APPLY TO AN AMENDED IADA to implement newly developed PCBL assessments.



Strengthen Accountability to Enable Innovation

Overhaul the federal and state accountability system to maintain the overall objective of college and career readiness while better supporting the adoption of innovative learning models and PCBL tools.

Federal Policy Priorities:



APPROVE STATE ESSA PLANS that weigh key transition years, like grades five and eight, more heavily.



FIX IADA to allow states to develop alternative accountability pilots to complement PCBL assessments.



REAUTHORIZE AND EXPAND ESSA to allow for alternative accountability systems that support PCBL assessments.

State Policy Priorities:



DESIGN NEXT GENERATION ACCOUNTABILITY to create alternative systems that support PCBL assessments.



MODIFY ESSA PLANS to incorporate multi-year growth metrics in school rating systems.



MODIFY ESSA PLANS that weigh key transition years, like grades five and eight, more heavily.