

# Competency-based Education Vista Unified School District – Connecting CBE Principles to Professional Learning

## How does your organization define competency-based education?

We are meeting children where they are and giving them the tools and resources that will allow them to master the standards and progress at a rate that will ensure they achieve mastery.

Currently our goal is to be a true one-to-one district where students can take their devices home. Right now we are not sending the computers home because of the Williams Act in California and some families do not have internet access.



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### URL

[http://digitalpromise.org/cbe\\_resource/vista-unified-school-district-cbe-principles-professional-learning/](http://digitalpromise.org/cbe_resource/vista-unified-school-district-cbe-principles-professional-learning/)

## Overview

Generally, our [Framework for the Future](#) drives the work that we do in Vista. Our students take online classes, and we offer online professional development for teachers. Currently, we have created 10 online classes that we offer to teachers, instructional assistants, media technicians and librarians.

We currently have the following classes: Project-Based Learning, Google Apps for Education (GAPE), Aspiring Teachers, Blended Learning, Deeper Learning, Design Thinking, and Personalized Learning. We have different levels for each of the classes we teach. Our teachers earn certificates and, based on the classes that are taken, they can be paid for up to 15 hours for their time. Through these classes we are working improve our pedagogy in the classroom and improve our

This toolkit was developed through a partnership between



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student achievement.

Currently, two teachers have created the content of the courses. These teachers have been teaching online independent study to high school students for years. The classes are hosted on a learning platform called Edivate. The program allows us to print out certificates and track teacher's progress.

## Beliefs

We need to bring the teacher up to a place where they understand what is expected of them and their students. Students also need to know what is expected of them and how they can progress.

## Rationale

We allocated funding due to a new funding formula from the state called Local Control Federal Funding (LCFF). The wish of the Vista Community of staff, students, parents and community members was to personalize instruction for our students. This came out at parent forums and through surveys given to parents as a requirement of the LCFF funding.

We do not have enough substitute teachers to pull teachers during the school day. So, we had to get creative about how we were going to implement professional learning.

## Outcomes

Our teachers are taking our online classes in groups and with their grade levels. Principals have said there is excitement on their campuses that they have not seen before and the conversations have changed to focus on student instead of the content.

Following each online class, the teachers are asked to give their input and answer questions on how the material in the class has impacted their practice and their students' engagement and progress. The data has been very positive.

## Surprises

- Last year, we sent 40 administrators to Lindsay, CA to see what they were doing as the only CBE program in CA. We were not expecting the excitement from our team when we got back from our trip to Lindsay. We also brought in Kim Carter of the QED Foundation for a full day of training for those who went to Lindsay.
- Each of our schools is allowed to "brand" itself in its own unique way. Some of our schools are personalizing their learning program using project-based learning and challenge-based learning as a vehicle for learning.
- Some schools have paid for additional "release" substitute teachers so that the regular classroom teacher can work on their grade levels to develop units of study.

## Trade-offs

As we have shifted professional learning to a virtual environment we're confident it's a good thing but it does take away the professional learning community feeling. We are still trying to tie the community aspect into the learning.

In general, we are focusing on the learning now, not on the teaching, and there has been a switch in both our teacher observations and in our evaluations. As we have focused on what the learner is doing conversations have changed. The teacher used to be able to say "I covered the standards." Now, however, we are ensuring that student has mastery as evidenced in portfolios, projects, formative assessments and summative assessments.

## Considerations

Definitely consider visiting other districts to learn from practitioners in the field. In addition, peruse the stories in this toolkit.

## Artifacts

Check out a sample of our online professional learning class we created for teachers, instructional aides and media techs.

Additional articles on Vista Unified can be found below:

- [San Diego Union Tribune Article](#)
- [KPBS Discusses San Diego Schools and Technology Needs](#)
- [Speeches given by two Vista Unified students from Rancho Minerva Middle School](#)