



Oyster River Middle School

Grade Level Competencies

2022-2023

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Introduction

Several years ago, we identified challenges with our point-based grading system. Students were performing well on standardized assessments and earning “F’s” or were earning “A’s” and performing very poorly on standardized assessments. Another example, students were earning an “A” in grade 7 math but not qualifying for Algebra 1 in grade eight. A teacher group was formed to problem solve the disconnect with student achievement and traditional grading practices. In the 2018/2019 academic year, after years of professional development, school visits, collaboration, and dialogue, ORMS fully implemented its new Competency Based Education in all grade levels and content areas. ORMS students now have a clear understanding of what they are expected to know and be able to do. This improved and transparent grading process not only better reflects our students' academic performance, but it also empowers them to take ownership of their own learning.

CBE Resources

Below is a sampling of CBE resources and in no way reflects a complete list of resources regarding CBE. The resources are not intended to reflect the ORCSD educational philosophy or practices but to offer resources for further understanding of CBE at the state and national level.

Competency Education (General Information) -

https://www.education.nh.gov/innovations/hs_redesign/index.htm

<https://www.competencyworks.org>

<https://www.inacol.org/news/how-competency-based-education-differs-from-the-traditional-system-of-education/>

<https://www.ed.gov/oii-news/competency-based-learning-or-personalized-learning>

Competency Education (Assessment) -

Guskey, Thomas. (2015). *On Your Mark*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Wormeli, Rick. (2018). *Fair Isn't Always Equal, 2nd Edition: Assessment & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

<https://www.nciea.org/blog/education-policy/part-1-what-do-i-need-know-about-competency-based-grading>

Competency Education (Instructional Practices) -

Marzano, R. (2007). *The Art and Science of Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Understanding By Design -

https://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/UbD_WhitePaper0312.pdf

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design (expanded 2nd edition)*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2011). *The Understanding by Design: Guide to Creating High-Quality Units*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of competency-based education?

Competency-based grades better reflect what students know and can do because they clearly show what students learn, not what students earn. This grading process is transparent, accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supports education.

What is the goal of competency-based education at ORMS?

The primary goal of competency-based education is to increase transparency for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. It no longer averages various forms of accumulated points. Instead, it clearly communicates what each student knows and can do according to content standards. Habits of learning are reported separately. A notable example is several years ago we had students receiving an “A” in grade 7 math but not qualifying for Algebra 1 in grade 8. With CBE, we have doubled our Algebra numbers and have students taking high school courses.

How is feedback different in competency-based education?

Traditional grading averages all the work and other subjective factors (extra credit, effort, participation, behavior, homework completion, etc.). Competency-based education removes these factors and focuses on student learning. Competency-based education assesses a student’s overall work, using the most recent evidence. What this really tells us is what a student has learned, rather than an average of accumulated points.

Why are grades not averaged in competency-based education?

Students are to be assessed on the content standards in a variety of ways and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their level of mastery. This allows for a clear picture of current student achievements. An averaged grade does not give an authentic representation of what a student has learned and can do.

Why did we make this change?

ORMS’s mission is to provide a creative and developmentally appropriate learning environment recognizing the educational, social, and emotional needs of every learner. Our goal is that every learner will develop skills needed to become a responsible, lifelong learner who can serve the school, community, and/or the world. Competency-based education supports this mission. It emphasizes the importance of learning over earning points.

What does it mean to “meet” a competency?

To meet a competency, a student must demonstrate that she or he can consistently meet the criteria whenever it is assessed. Some competencies address skills and knowledge which may only have to be demonstrated once during a unit. Other competencies may be recursive and address skills which must be assessed multiple times throughout a unit or grading period.

Competencies are typically broken down into a progression of learning goals. Learning goals may gradually build on one another allowing students to demonstrate growth throughout the unit of study. To meet a competency, each supporting learning goal should be met at some point. This may happen with a single assessment, or more commonly, with multiple smaller assessments over time.

What if students are struggling to meet a competency?

It is critical to empower students to keep track of their own growth and provide them with multiple opportunities to make progress towards meeting the competency. Using clear rubrics, differentiated instruction, and continuous feedback, all students are encouraged to demonstrate growth in their learning. When students do not yet meet a competency they will be given the opportunity to create a plan with their teacher to continue working and take multiple/or alternative assessments. For some students this will mean dedicating additional learning time; during the school day, after school, or at home.

What is the difference between a formative and summative assessment?

Formative assessments are used regularly throughout a unit to guide instruction and to give important feedback for student growth and learning. Summative assessments are used at the end of a unit to evaluate student learning.

How are high achieving students challenged within a competency-based system?

All students are challenged to reach their full potential. When a student “meets” a competency, it means they have achieved high expectations and have demonstrated deep learning. Assignment extensions, enrichment activities, and activity modifications provide opportunities for various levels of rigor.

What is the difference between a standard and a competency?

A standard is a specific learning target developed at the state or national level. Math and Language arts use Common Core State Standards, science uses Next Generation Standards, and social studies uses College, Career, and Civic Life (C3). A competency is an overarching theme that includes multiple standards which are thoughtfully connected.

ORCSD Terms and Definitions

Common Assessments – Common assessments are collaboratively created assessments to measure student understanding and provide collective feedback. Common assessments could be either formative or summative.

Competency - Competencies are designed as broad, overarching concepts that encompass multiple learning standards which are interconnected and require a student to transfer learning in the curriculum. The **competencies** describe what a student should know and be able to do.

Formative Assessments - Formative assessments are used to evaluate student understanding and provide feedback. Information gathered through formative assessments can help students move forward in their learning and provide teachers with valuable information for instruction. Formative evaluation allows for “snapshots” of student learning to help them progress in the learning process. They could include: classwork, activities, learning log, journal entries, homework, and quizzes.

Habits of Learning - A set of work habits and behaviors on which life-long success is built, reported separately from academic progress. 21st Century Learning Expectations are similar to Habits of Work or Work Study Practices and Graduation Outcomes. These are the foundational expectations that all students will be exposed to and acquire (at different mastery levels) as they progress through their years at ORHS.* *The ORHS Faculty and Administration is currently examining our 21st CLE, Habits of Learning and Graduation Outcomes to create one set of foundational qualities.

Learning Targets are learning goals that are targeted to a daily lesson and are worded for students. Learning targets should be sequenced as well as linked to a performance task to allow students to assess their mastery of the target and in-turn standard. “Every lesson needs its own reason to live.”

Rubrics & Assessments are designed as tools to reflect a student’s level of mastery of standards and in turn competencies. The **assessments** that a teacher uses along the way measure the extent to which a student has met the competencies. (See Formative Assessment & Summative Assessment)

Standards are specific measurable phases of student achievement. Standards are non-negotiable, measurable learning objective that guides instruction. Standards help guide instruction for competency-based curriculum. These content specific standards have been developed either at the state or national level. They are “I can” statements (goals for learning) that are course specific and content driven. Completion of competencies for each course reflects a student’s ability to master the standards.

Summative Assessments - Summative assessments are used to measure student mastery of the competencies. Summative assessments are aimed at the extent to which educational goals “have been attained over an entire course or program of study”. Summative assessments are usually cumulative and focus on transferable abilities, often cognitive in nature, which allow students to demonstrate mastery of concepts, skills, and knowledge embedded in competencies and standards. Summative assessments are typically weighted more heavily than formatives. They could include: tests, writings (essays), labs, tests, performance tasks, projects, exhibition, etc.

Art

Competency 1: Creating - Students will conceive and develop new artistic ideas and work. Competency 2: Presenting - Students will interpret and share artistic work.

Competency 3: Responding – Students will understand and evaluate how the arts convey meaning.

Competency 4: Connecting – Students will relate artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

Health Education

Competency 1: Comprehending Concepts - Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Competency 2: Analyzing Influences - Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Competency 3: Accessing Resources - Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.

Competency 4: Interpersonal Communication - Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

Competency 5: Decision Making - Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Competency 6: Goal Setting - Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Competency 7: Practicing Health - Enhancing Behaviors

Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Competency 8: Advocacy - Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for person, family, and community health.

Language Arts

Competency 1: Students will read and comprehend independently and proficiently.

Competency 2: Students will comprehend, analyze, and compare within and across texts.

Competency 3: Students will communicate effectively as a writer by using a writing process to plan, draft, revise, and edit.

Competency 4: Students will communicate effectively as a writer by using the characteristics of a particular genre.

Competency 5: Students will communicate effectively as a writer by using appropriate grammar and conventions. Competency 6: Students will communicate effectively as a speaker and listener.

Math

Math Competencies Grade 5

Competency 1: Numbers and Operations

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply and extend previous understandings of operations to include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division rational numbers.

Competency 2: Ratios and Proportions

Students will demonstrate the ability to understand proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Competency 3: Expressions and Equations

Students will demonstrate the ability to use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions and to solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities.

Competency 4: Geometry

Students will demonstrate the ability to draw, construct and describe geometric figures to solve real-world problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.

Competency 5: Statistics and Measurement

Students will design investigations, gather, and represent data involving a group of objects or individuals.

Math Competencies Grades 6-8

Competency 1: Numbers and Operations

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply and extend previous understandings of operations to include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division rational numbers.

Competency 2: Ratios and Proportions

Students will demonstrate the ability to understand proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Competency 3: Expressions and Equations

Students will demonstrate the ability to use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions and to solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities.

Competency 4: Geometry

Students will demonstrate the ability to draw, construct and describe geometric figures to solve real-world problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.

Competency 5: Statistics

Students will demonstrate the ability to use random sampling to draw inferences about a population, draw informal comparative inferences about two populations, and investigate chance processes and develop, use and evaluate probability models.

Algebra Competencies

(As Aligned with Oyster River High School)

Students will demonstrate mathematical skills and communicate their understanding of mechanics of various mathematical topics.

Students will reason abstractly or quantitatively through problem solving.

Students will model and apply mathematical concepts via functions, graphical representations, or data collection.

Music

Chorus

Competency 1: Students will demonstrate musical *literacy*.

Competency 2: Students will demonstrate correct vocal *technique*.

Competency 3: Students will make musical *connections*.

String Orchestra

Competency 1: Students will demonstrate musical *literacy*.

Competency 2: Students will demonstrate correct instrumental *technique*.

Competency 3: Students will make musical *connections*.

Band Competencies

Competency 1: Students will demonstrate musical *literacy*.

Competency 2: Students will demonstrate correct instrumental *technique*.

Competency 3: Students will make musical *connections*.

Physical Education

Competency 1: Students will demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Competency 2: Students will apply knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance.

Competency 3: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

Competency 4: Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.

Science (Grades 5-8)

Competency 1: Students will ask questions, plan, and carry out investigations

Competency 2: Students will define problems and design solutions

Competency 3: Students will develop and use models

Competency 4: Students will analyze and interpret data

Competency 5: Students will gather, evaluate, and use evidence to construct explanations and build arguments

Social Studies

Competency 1 – **Research & Inquiry**: Students will construct questions necessary for critical thinking, evaluating sources of information and conducting research

Competency 2 – **COMMUNICATE CONCLUSIONS**: Students will interpret and analyze information to reflect new learning through writing and/or other forms of communication.

Competency 3 – **GEOGRAPHIC LITERACY**: Students will analyze the physical, human, and environmental geography of the United States and various regions of the world.

Competency 4 – **HISTORICAL THINKING**: Students will investigate the cause-and-effect relationship of historical events and influences over time.

Competency 5 – **CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP**: Students will apply an understanding of the principles and structures of government

Competency 6: **ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES**: Students will understand basic economic systems and the roles they have played socially, politically, and geographically.

World Language

Competency 1: Interpersonal Communication – Students will be able to express self in conversation on very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions that have been highly practiced and memorized. [ACTFL Performance Descriptors](#)

Competency 2: Presentational Communication (Speaking and Writing) – Students will be able to communicate information on very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, and sentences that have been practiced and memorized. [ACTFL Performance Descriptors](#)

Competency 3: Interpretive Communication (Reading and Listening) – Students will be able to understand words, phrases, and formulaic language that have been practiced and memorized to get meaning of the main idea from simple, highly-predictable oral or written texts, with strong visual support. [ACTFL Performance Descriptors](#)

S.T.E.M

Competency 1: Engineering Design

Competency 2: Digital Literacy and Responsibility

Competency 3: Technology's Influence on Society

Competency 4: 3D Modeling

Competency 5: Computer Science

Competency 6: Competent Use of Hand Tools and Machines

Competency 7: Safety

Competency 8: Technology's Influence on Society