Competency-Based Pathways

Meet Gabriela, Carla and Justin

Carla

Carla was able to build on her strong math aptitude and fuel her passion for science. When she entered high school, she worked with her teacher to develop a plan. Carla learned that if she showed progress in math, she could take an advanced math course that would allow her to graduate two months earlier. Carla's teacher, Mr. Ford, was very pleased with Carla's progress. She was happy to place her first sticker, showing that she had met the required standards. Later in the year, Carla was able to move up to the 8th-grade math class, telling her she'd be behind at first but should catch up by the end of the year. Carla was prepared to meet the challenge, knowing that her strong math aptitude could help her succeed in college algebra course offered at a nearby community college.

Gabriela

At Gabriela's school, targeted learning levels or "teacher pace" equals two "levels" per year. At the end of 1st grade, students should be at least at Level 2 in each subject, at the end of 2nd grade, at Level 4 and so on to be on track to demonstrate college and career readiness by the time they graduate. If they fall behind teacher pace in a subject they need to be in English language arts, but Justin's biggest learning gap was in math, where he was about two years behind. He had become discouraged back in 7th grade and decided he couldn't "do math." He was a little weak in English too. Justin described himself as someone who likes "hands-on" learning, and his favorite class was metalworking.

Justin

Justin had decided he just couldn't "do math." He was a little weak in English too. Justin described himself as someone who likes "hands-on" learning, and his favorite class was metalworking. This traditional school and parent-posed track made it hard for him to meet the standards in math. Justin's hands-on learning preference. He put him in a special program with some other students – and at first they didn't know what to do. But after a while, they began to see it as an opportunity to explore their interests. They started a project to design a skate park, explaining the difference between a "growth mindset" and a "fixed mindset," then they started a project to design a skate park, explaining the difference between a "growth mindset" and a "fixed mindset." It was amazing to see how much they could accomplish when they were given the freedom to explore their interests.

Beyond College and Career Readiness

Individual Needs and Journeys Toward a Common Goal:

More states, school districts and schools are exploring how competency-based pathways can help far more students reach and exceed the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. The stories of Gabriela, Carla and Justin are typical of how competency-based pathways can help more students meet their unique needs and pathways can help far more students reach and exceed the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. More students can finish on time and graduate ready for college and career.

Grading Proficiency with the 4-Point Scale

Grading proficiency with the 4-point scale allows students to be assessed at different levels. Students demonstrate progress more quickly than others. They receive extra attention. But students are also encouraged to participate in the graduation ceremony but defer receiving his diploma until he had met all the required standards through East High allowed him to participate in the graduation ceremony and receive his diploma two months later.

For a special project, Carla and her teacher, Mr. Ford, decided they wanted to explore the use of advanced math concepts using a computer program. Carla was able to build on her strong math aptitude and fuel her passion for science. Carla's teacher, Mr. Ford, was very pleased with Carla's progress. Carla was happy to place her first sticker, showing that she had met the required standards. Later in the year, Carla was able to move up to the 8th-grade math class, telling her she'd be behind at first but should catch up by the end of the year. Carla was prepared to meet the challenge, knowing that her strong math aptitude could help her succeed in college algebra course offered at a nearby community college.

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