AURORA INSTITUTE

SYMPOSIUM BREAKOUT SESSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2022 | 12:00-1:00 PM ET

Changing Practice and Mindset: Implementing Competency-Based Grading Practices Schoolwide

PRESENTERS:
- Sarah Peterson, Denver Public Schools
- Melissa Boyd, Denver Public Schools
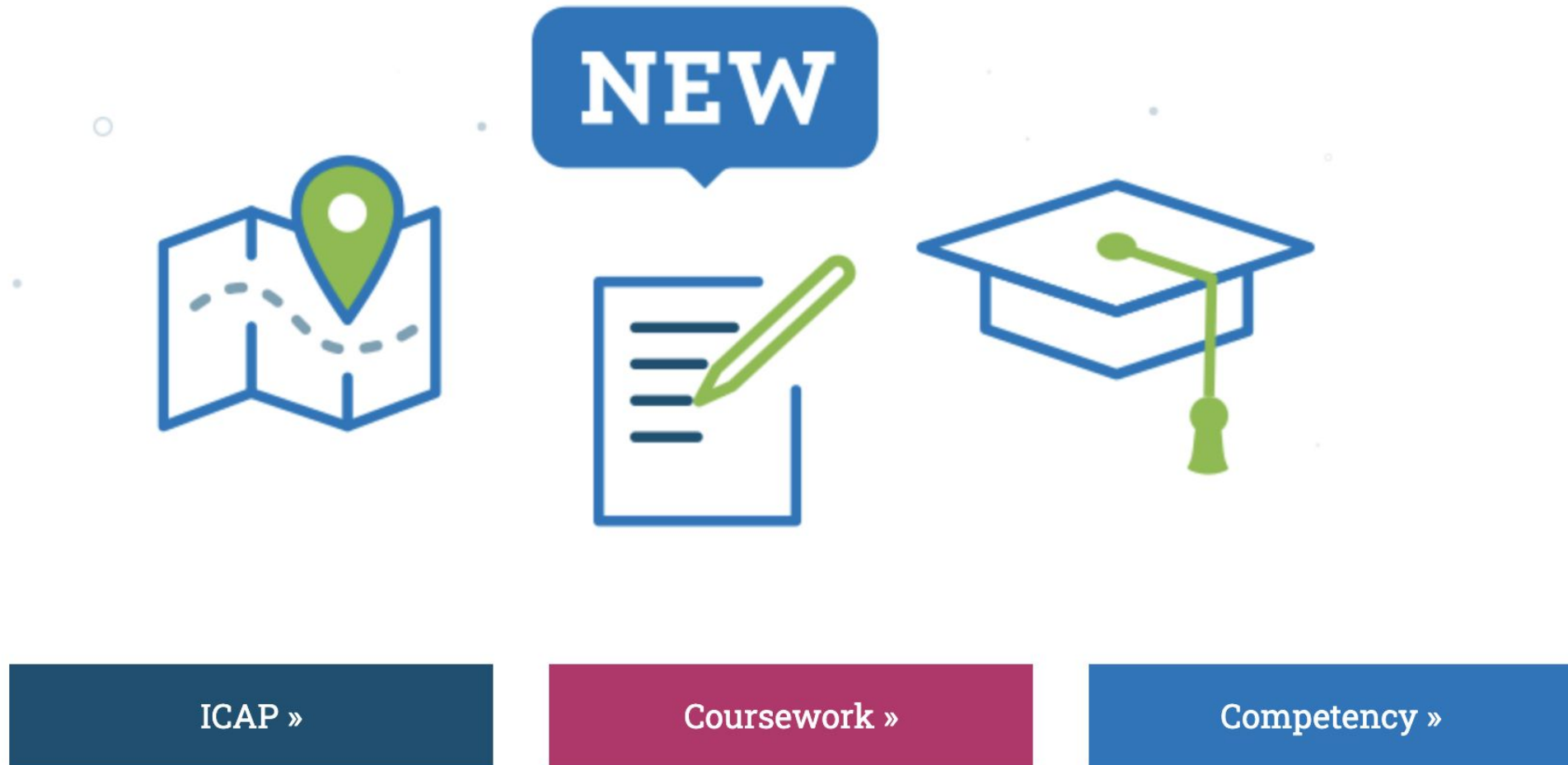
Problem of Practice

Our Black and Latinx students are not demonstrating competency in math on the seven required Performance Indicators (PIs) by the conclusion of 10th grade.

Bruce Randolph School
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Colorado Graduation Requirements

ICAP »

Coursework »

Competency »

Denver Public Schools Math Competencies

- Students solve single-variable quadratic equations. **(C_1PI_1)**
- Students write and solve systems of two linear equations. **(C_1PI_2)**
- Students solve systems of linear inequalities on a coordinate plane. **(C_1PI_3)**
- Students create, interpret, make predictions for, and justify conclusions about linear models. **(C_2PI_1)**
- Students represent quadratic relationships through tables, graphs, equations, and scenarios. **(C_3PI_1)**
- Students compare/contrast key features of two quadratic functions represented in different ways. **(C_3PI_2)**
- Students apply geometric relationships in right triangles including trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to model and solve problems. **(C_7PI_1)**

Data Illustrating Problem

Students Demonstrating and Not Demonstrating Competency in Math by May of 2021

	Total Students	Met Math Competency (n)	Met Math Competency %	Did not yet meet Math Competency (n)	Did not yet meet Math Competency %
Class of 2023	83	7	8%	76	92%
Class of 2024	92	1	1%	91	99%

Data reflects students not yet meeting competency by the end of the 10th grade

Impact of the Problem

Students Demonstrating and Not Demonstrating Competency in Math by May of 2021

	Total Students	Met Math Competency (n)	Met Math Competency %	Did not yet meet Math Competency (n)	Did not yet meet Math Competency %
Class of 2023	83	7	8%	76	92%
Class of 2024	92	1	1%	91	99%

For 92% of students exiting 10th grade…
1. *They have not yet demonstrate competency of the major content of grades 9 and 10*
2. *They will receive additional opportunities in grade 11*
3. *The additional opportunities to demonstrate competency results in below grade level instruction.*

School Specific Questions Guiding Inquiry

- How can we increase competency-based learning practices to lead more Black and Latinx students to demonstrate competency in math?

- What would it look like if we increased competency-based learning across content areas so that by the conclusion of 10th grade 75% of students are demonstrating competency in Math and English?

- What impact can competency-based grading practices have on teachers as they provide feedback to students, and on students as they apply feedback to increase their mastery of competencies?

Leadership Questions Guiding Inquiry

- What leadership skills do I need to develop in order to set up the conditions that:

  1) Deepen educators' skill to engage students in competency-based learning feedback and revision cycles.

  2) Develop a competency-based grading practice for the school.

- What needs to be done so that by June of 2022, 40% of students are demonstrating competency in English and math? And so that we are prepared to implement both technical and adaptive changes to engage students with a competency-based grading practice?

Measures Used to Track Progress

- Students' demonstrations of competency by the end of grade 10 by the 7 Performance Indicators.
  - Goal of 40% of students meeting competency in math by May of 2022 - 10th grade
  - Goal of 75% of students meeting competency in math by May of 2023 - 10th grade

- Development of a system for competency-based grading by August 2022.

Stakeholders

- Students
- Pilot Group
- Teacher community
- Leadership Team

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Bruce Randolph School Context

Demographics:

- **6-12th grades**
- **90% of students receive free/reduced lunch**
- **98.3% students of color**
- **41% of students who are MLL**

Known for:

➢ **"Daddy" Bruce Randolph**

➢ **Innovative Practices**

➢ **President Obama's State of the Union Address**

➢ **Graduation Rate at 95% or higher**

Bruce Randolph School

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School Context

2020-21 Interim Math Data - % of Students Meeting Expectations

	Overall	Multilingual Learners Expectations	Black Students	Students with IEP
9th grade	23%	20%	27%	17%
10th grade	25%	23%	23%	13%
11th grade	29%	23%	29%	22%

% of Students Meeting the College-Ready Benchmark in Math SAT

	% Did not Meeting	% Approaching	% Meeting	% Exceeding
2017-2018	66%	21.5%	11.8%	.4%
2018-2019	64.9%	16.2%	18.5%	.4%

Most students at Bruce Randolph School are *not yet* meeting expectations on the math interims or meeting the college-ready benchmark on the SAT.

Taking Action: PDSA Cycles
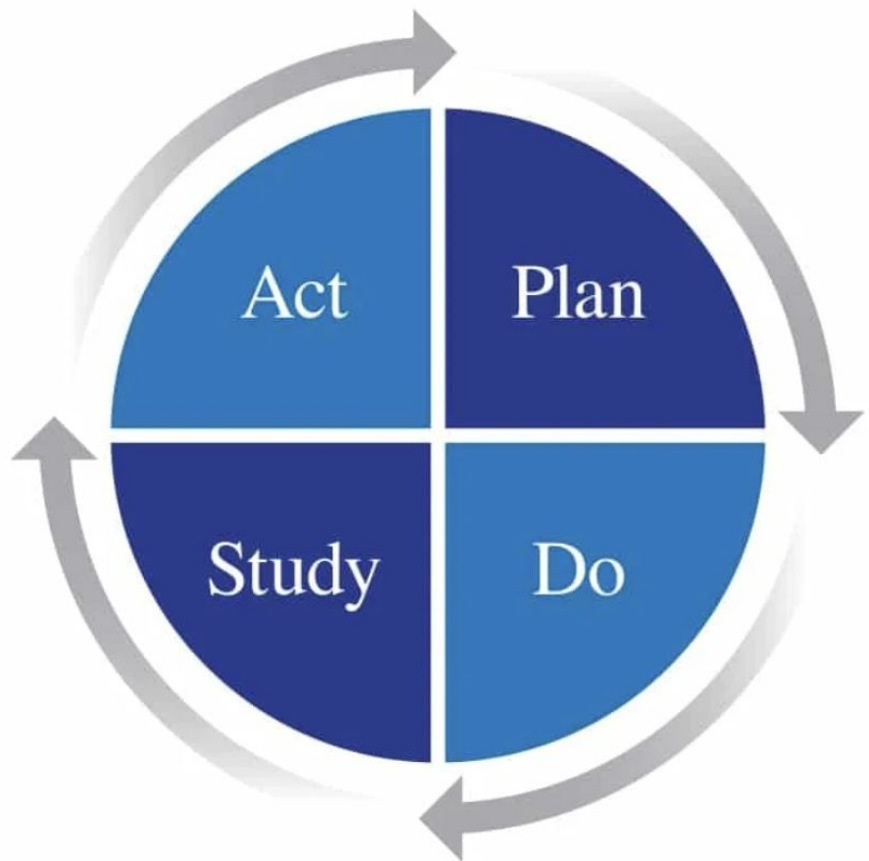
Three Key Change Ideas:

★ Pilot Group to Implement Practices from *Grading for Equity* as a part of the College-Ready On Track Network Improvement Community

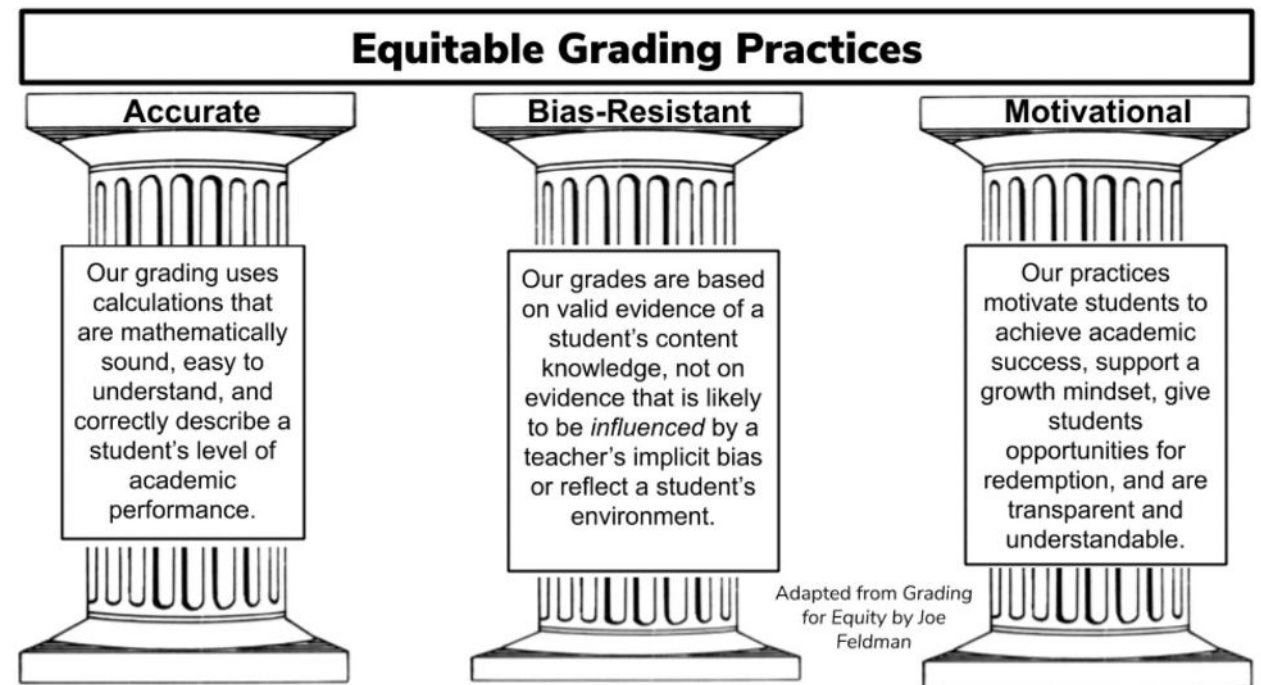★ Whole School Book Study to Develop a Competency-Based Mindset

★ Leadership Coaching

Pilot Group: *Grading for Equity*

Participants: 4 high school teachers, 1 facilitation lead, principal

Plan: Text study in 20-21

Do: Implemented practices from GFE in 21-22
- ➤ Scoring products using competency rubrics
- ➤ Utilizing a 4-8 scale on all products
- ➤ Engaging students in reteach & revision cycles
- ➤ Eliminating process grades

Equitable Grading Practices

Accurate
Our grading uses calculations that are mathematically sound, easy to understand, and correctly describe a student's level of academic performance.

Bias-Resistant
Our grades are based on valid evidence of a student's content knowledge, not on evidence that is likely to be *influenced* by a teacher's implicit bias or reflect a student's environment.

Motivational
Our practices motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, give students opportunities for redemption, and are transparent and understandable.

Adapted from Grading for Equity by Joe Feldman

Taking Action: Book Study

Participants: all teachers and staff; facilitated by principal, assistant principal, facilitation lead

Plan: Text study in 20-21 from pilot group

Do: Engage whole staff in book study of *GFE* focusing on chapters 1-5.
➢ Staff assigned to small groups of 4-5
➢ Pre-reading and reflection questions assigned
➢ Met monthly for a whole-group session launch & small group discussion
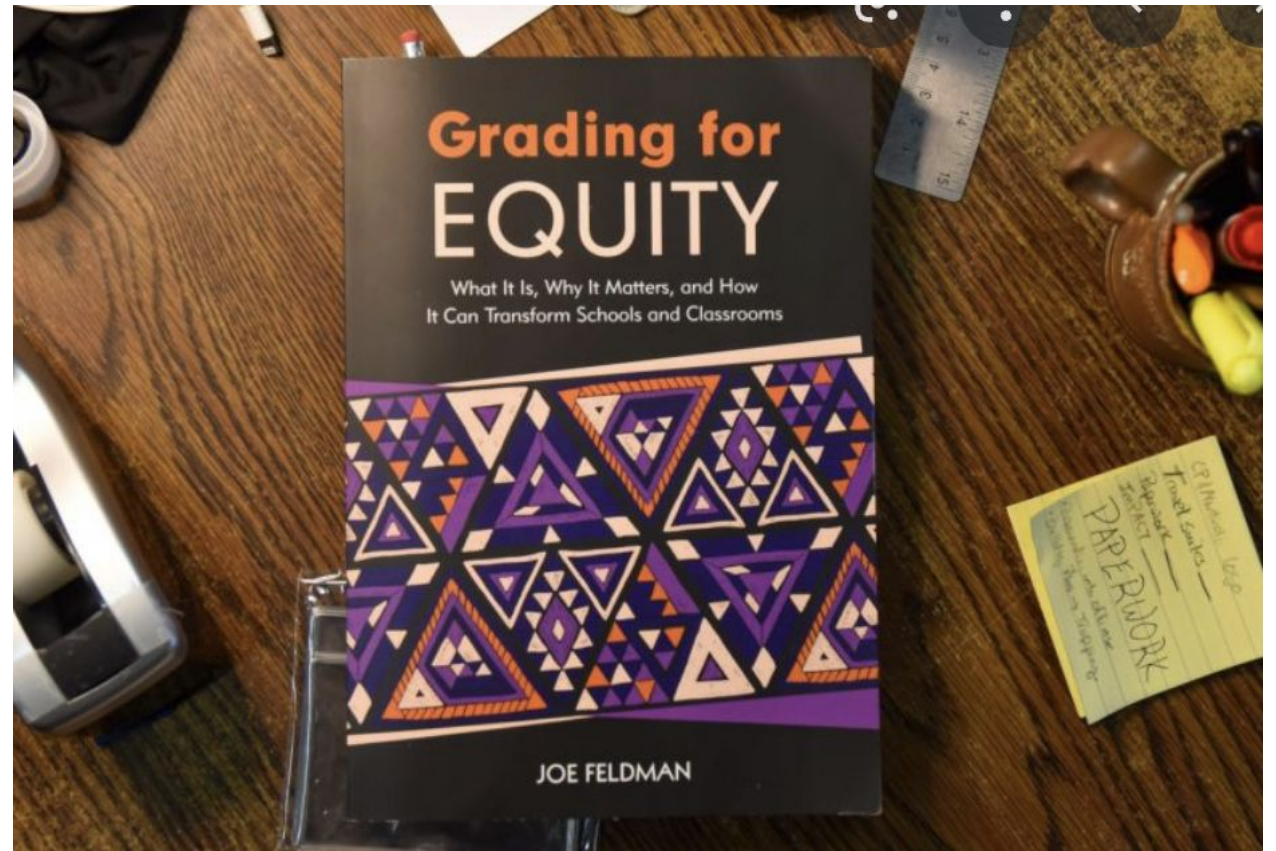
Taking Action: Leadership Coaching

Participants: principal, assistant principal, facilitation lead for pilot group

Plan: Empathy interviews & focus group in May of 2021

Do: Support leadership of pilot group and whole school learning
➢ Bi-weekly sessions
   ○ Reflection on impact of pilot group work & book study
   ○ Identification of next steps
   ○ Creation of agendas

reDesign

reDesign is an education design lab committed to meaningful, positive, joyful learning for all young people. We help build and support inclusive *learner-centered communities* so that education becomes a pathway to liberation.

Impact of 3 Change Ideas

- Pilot group made recommendations for whole-school adoption of competency-based grading practices.

- Teacher feedback from book study indicated a shift in mindset to reflect questioning previous letter-grade based grading systems.

- Collaborative and reflection based leadership of whole-school change efforts that center on the user experience.

The Results: Competency in Math

Students Demonstrating and Not Demonstrating Competency in Math by May of 2022

	Total Students	Met Math Competency (n)	Met Math Competency %	Did not yet meet Math Competency (n)	Did not yet meet Math Competency %
Class of 2023	83	43	51.8%	39	46.9%
Class of 2024	92	35	38%	57	61.9%

- By the conclusion of 10th grade, the class of 2024, 38% of students demonstrated competency in math by May of 2022. Previously, 8% of the class of 2024 demonstrated math competency by the end of 10th grade.
- By the conclusion of 11th grade, the class of 2023, 51.8% of students demonstrated competency in math. The class of 2023 increase their percentage of students demonstrating competency from 8% in May of 2021 to 51.8% in May of 2022.

The Results: Competency in Math

Subgroup from Class of 2024	% of Students Demonstrating Competency in Math
Hispanic Students	38%
Black Students	50%
Multilingual Learners	13%
Students with IEPs	0%

Additional scaffolds and strategies appropriate for Multilingual Learners and students with IEPs are needed during instruction and assessment.

The Results: Competency-Based Grading System

Consistent Expectations for 2022-23:

- Utilizing the competency rubrics across grade levels and content areas to score and provide feedback to students.
- Utilization of a consistent scale when giving feedback using competency rubric

Teachers can choose to…

➢ Utilize the 4-8 scale when giving feedback

➢ Omit process grades

➢ Practice minimum grading

Ah-Ha!

★ "Pilot" Groups
  ○ Important user-focused strategy to enlist the best thinking of early adopters.
  ○ Work evolves and informs future strategy

★ Group Leadership Coaching
  ○ Builds capacity
  ○ Supports reflection

★ Change really does take time!

Q and A with Stakeholders

★ Students
- ○ How did this grading change impact your learning?
- ○ What recommendations do you have for teachers and schools implementing this type of change?

★ Teacher
- ○ How did this impact your instruction?
- ○ How did this change support learning in your classrooms?
- ○ What recommendations do you have for teachers and schools implementing this type of change?

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