AURORA INSTITUTE

*Competency*Works & Coffee
Discussing Deeper Learning in Kentucky

June 24, 2025

Introduce yourself in the chat!

Share your:

- Name
- Role
- Org
- Location
- What brings you here today

Meeting Invitations

- ❖ Bring good intentions & pay attention to impact
- ❖ Engage with agency and an open mind
- ❖ Accept and expect non-closure
- ❖ Have fun while doing good work

Aurora Institute Mission, Vision, & Values

Our Mission

The mission of the Aurora Institute is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all.

Our Vision

We envision a world where all people are empowered to attain the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to achieve success, contribute to their communities and advance society.

Our Values

Student-Centered

Equity-Driven

Future-Focused

Credible

Knowledge-Driven

Collaborative

Aurora Institute acknowledges that this virtual webinar takes place on lands that have been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. By focusing on the whole child, real-world application, and learning in context, competency-based education (CBE) uses similar principles to traditional Indigenous education. Whether intentional or not in the initial design, we acknowledge that CBE ideas reflect traditional Indigenous education approaches that long pre-date CBE. We want to take a moment to honor the ancestral grounds that we are collectively gathered upon and support the resilience and strength that Indigenous people have shown worldwide. Specifically, we reflect on the impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples through education systems that marginalized and suppressed their traditional knowledge systems and ways of being.

Explore native land maps:
https://native-land.ca

Case Studies Overview

Four Meta Themes

Shared Visions Unite the Community

Clear Expectations Enable Flexibility

Student Demonstrations Unlock Authentic Applications of Knowledge and Skills

Opportunities for Teacher Learning and Leadership Lay the Groundwork for Sustainability

Shared Visions Unite the Community

Case study sites have leaders that engaged their communities in building a shared vision for student learning and experiences.

Clear Expectations Enable Flexibility

Each level of the system in KY (state, regional, district, and school) has a parallel dynamic in which leaders provide a balance between shared vision and flexibility on implementation.

Student Demonstrations Unlock Authentic Applications of Knowledge and Skills

Each site focused on student presentations and work for authentic audiences as part of their assessment systems, underscoring value of practical application of competencies.

Opportunities for Teacher Learning and Leadership Lay the Groundwork for Sustainability

Moving to deeper learning requires educators to shift pedagogical practices and take on new roles.

Sites thoughtfully designed opportunities for teacher leadership.

Networking Breakout Discussions

Featured Breakout Examples

1. **Beechwood Independent Schools** - Justin Kaiser, Sarah Schobel
2. **Metcalfe County Middle School** - Jennifer Stotts-Lundy
3. **Woodford County Public Schools** - Scott Hundley, Susan Tracy

Discussion Guide

- Chat intros: Name, role, org & why you picked this room
- Featured example shares
- Open discussion
- Summarize: pick 1-3 ideas/question & add to the slides below

Beechwood Independent Schools

Summarize (1-3 takeaways/questions)**:**
- Beechwood centers learning on the core concepts: think critically & creatively, reflect & grow, sustain inquiry, communicate & collaborate, plan & be strategic, pursue excellence of outcomes, research & analyze data
- It's important to infuse core concepts throughout learning experiences and provide opportunities for regular feedback.
- Collaborating with communities and partners is essential to build buy-in and support growth of the model.

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Metcalfe County Middle School

Summarize (1-3 takeaways/questions)**:**
- Catalyst for change at MCMS was some concerning outcomes data for students, and identifying a need for increasing engagement among students→PBL and CBE were the vehicle toward this goal.
- Interested in examples of how to weave PBL into existing curriculum→ Metcalf has examples of how they've done this
- How do we get teachers to buy-in to these approaches and the changes? → Identified two teachers that were already bought-in and using these practices. Supported their development and had them come back to the staff to share their "why", experiences, and process

Woodford County Public Schools

Summarize (1-3 takeaways/questions)**:**

- A collaboratively designed Portrait of a Learner creates the foundation for all their subsequent design work
- Spending time just letting people get familiar with the Portrait is a foundational step – all sorts of fun ways they did that
- Then, using the Portrait as the guiding goal, they developed a series of pathways and possible strategies for teachers to try out
- They've also developed a multi-year strategic plan for how they want to build out & implement those pathways

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We Want Your Feedback!

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🌐 www.aurora-institute.org

✉ communications@aurora-institute.org

📞 (703) 752-6216

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