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Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative Evaluation Report, Year 2

Acknowledgments

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Cover image: Healing Hands, student-led mural project at Auburn High School, Auburn WA, facilitated by teaching artist Elisabeth Ronley.

Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative Evaluation Report, Year 2
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About the Aurora Institute

The Aurora Institute's mission is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all. Aurora is shaping the future of teaching and learning through its work in policy advocacy, research, field-building, and convening. With a national and global view of education innovation, we work on systems change in K-12 education, promote best practices, examine policy barriers, and make recommendations for change to yield improved outcomes for students. Aurora envisions a world in which all people are empowered to attain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to achieve success, contribute to their communities, and advance society.

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Executive Summary

The Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative (MBLC) is a demonstration project taking place in 24 schools in Washington State. The schools receive funding and participate in professional learning and a statewide network to support implementation of mastery-based learning (MBL) and culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE). The initiative's overarching goal is "to inform future policy by helping decision makers better understand what quality mastery-based learning looks like, how long it takes to implement, and what resources are necessary."

The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) is leading the MBLC, with executive sponsorship from SBE, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The Aurora Institute is evaluating the initiative to identify effective policies, practices, and system changes that can support MBL implementation throughout Washington's K-12 education system.

This report presents evaluation activities and findings at the end of Year 2 of the initiative, with a focus on establishing a baseline for understanding changes during Year 3. The grant years covered by the evaluation are Year 1 (December 2021 to June 2022), Year 2 (July 2022 to June 2023), and Year 3 (July 2023 to June 2024). Year 1 focused on planning, Year 2 focused on professional learning (PL), and Year 3 will focus on deepening MBL and CRSE implementation. Most schools are just beginning or at early stages, but the initiative also includes well-established MBL schools.

As this report was nearing completion, SBE announced that funding had been approved for a second cohort of MBLC schools, which is expected to begin in January 2024. Funding was also approved for Year 4 of the initial cohort of schools that are the focus of this report.

Data collection activities in Year 2 consisted of surveys of educators and school leaders, observations of PL activities, and interviews of 26 educators, school leaders, PL providers, and SBE personnel. Survey responses were submitted by about 500 educators and school leaders from all MBLC schools.

Findings

The MBLC took important steps toward its objectives during Year 2 by sustaining its statewide network of schools, offering extensive professional learning and coaching opportunities, and providing funding and guidance for schools to engage in many activities to deepen their implementation of MBL and CRSE. The Year 2 focus on helping schools prepare to deepen implementation showed positive results, with many educators and school leaders feeling more prepared over the course of the year. The PL providers reported that "significant and successful" shifts are happening at many schools.

The MBLC's goals of implementing MBL and CRSE at progressively deeper levels over the next several years received nearly unanimous support from school leaders and support from most educators. Their concerns focused on implementation challenges such as capacity and the pace of change, but the majority of educators believe that implementing MBL and CRSE deeply will improve their school's

culture and climate, ability to prepare students for successful futures, and ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups.

SBE and the participating schools have a growing understanding that deep transformation will require consistent effort and resources well beyond the current grant period, particularly for schools that are new to MBL and CRSE. At the same time, the PL providers are conveying the message that each phase of the journey has benefits for students and the school. In Year 3, when the initiative will focus on deeper implementation, there is much still to accomplish in the areas of state policy, the MBLC network, school-level policies and practices, and educator practices.

State Policy – Several state policies support MBL implementation, including mastery-based crediting, equivalency crediting, and Alternative Learning Experience rules, as well as waivers from credit-based graduation requirements. However, some of these policies require further development to address misalignments with the education system that reduce their utilization.

SBE believes that the state should play a role in developing or vetting competency frameworks, learning progressions, and strategies for assessing student progress in relation to them, and that doing so would be one of the most effective ways to accelerate MBL implementation in Washington. Additional supportive policy reforms would be revising the state's standardized transcript format to fully support mastery-based grading and amending existing statutes to incorporate the field's updated MBL definition to reflect the importance of equity, student agency, and other key elements of MBL.

MBLC Network – School leaders said that the existence of a statewide network has helped them make a case locally for the value of transformation toward MBL and CRSE. Network events inspired and encouraged school staff and provided guidance that accelerated transformation efforts. A fundamental MBLC benefit is that the grant pays for professional learning and collaboration time for school staff.

The timing of the MBLC's funding and launch presented challenges, beginning with less time than anticipated for SBE to plan the initiative and select schools and professional learning providers. As a result, some schools didn't fully understand the substance or complexity of what they were taking on and may have overcommitted. SBE is planning a more in-depth and personalized selection process for the second cohort of MBLC schools. Another challenge has been specifying tangible goals for school progress and establishing clear points of accountability. One proposed solution has been to provide a set of concrete targets that schools could select from and tailor to their local needs and priorities.

Professional Learning – During Year 2, the network's PL providers facilitated 30 virtual and live events, provided individual coaching and supports for each school, and developed a website with extensive MBL and CRSE resources. Coaching was conducted primarily with members of each school's MBL team, a small group of staff that is leading transformation efforts and sharing their learning with colleagues to enable deeper implementation over time.

SBE said that there are competing priorities for schools' PL time and that participation in PL events has been lower than expected. Most schools fell below SBE's minimum requested participation level, which

raises questions about how PL should be structured to optimize participation, what level of engagement should be required, and how schools can schedule more protected and well-planned time for staff collaboration and professional learning. Essential conversations are taking place about the pace of change, recognizing the value of each step in the journey, and sustaining the vision and investment in change over the substantial time frame needed for deep transformation.

Educator and School-Level Attitudes, Policies, and Practices – The findings describe many current practices and establish a baseline that will be used to assess change over time in three MBL and CRSE dimensions:

1. **Knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes**, such as familiarity with MBL and CRSE principles, level of support for deeper implementation over time, and beliefs about potential impacts on equitable outcomes, postsecondary readiness, and school culture.
2. **School-level policies and practices**, such as structures for educator collaboration and support, school schedules, curriculum and materials, competency frameworks, and crediting and assessment practices.
3. **Educator practices** related to responsive pacing, differentiation, student agency, formative and summative assessment, grading, anytime/anywhere learning, and habits of success.

Aspects of MBL and CRSE are already happening in many schools, such as certain formative and performance-based assessment practices, personalized student supports, and developing an equity-focused school mission and vision. The findings also suggest many areas to focus efforts on deeper implementation in Year 3 and beyond, such as building a shared vision for change, improving curriculum and supports for CRSE, aligning school assessment policies with MBL principles, providing intervention and enrichment periods, and supporting out-of-school learning activities.

In addition to ensuring that key practices are happening, it will be important to assess the quality of implementation. For example, most educators reported that their students created knowledge and applied school learning to real-world contexts, but those activities can happen at many levels of quality. It will also be important to set goals for the extent of change, such as how much staff collaboration time should be scheduled or how much choice students should have in how to demonstrate their learning.

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education – There is substantial support for implementing CRSE among staff at MBLC schools. Educators and school leaders reported engaging in a wide range of activities to improve pedagogy and school structures and culture in relation to CRSE. In most schools, this work appeared to be in its early stages. Deep work is still needed to build familiarity with CRSE principles and practices, use school data to address inequities, and provide needed curriculum, resources, supports, schedules, and planning time.

Many interviewees felt that they and their school are not taking enough action to ensure equitable outcomes and do not have enough staff capacity to address students' needs. Several want to offer more culturally responsive education but lack the knowledge and, in some cases, the time to develop that knowledge. Some staff believed that prioritizing MBL over CRSE is a necessary or correct progression,

which is clearly different from the beliefs of SBE and the PL providers. Some staff were frustrated with the network's CRSE conversations, feeling that they were being blamed rather than receiving guidance about how to do better.

Managing Change – All MBLC schools are managing complex change processes, some of which were addressed earlier in relation to state policy, the MBLC network, and professional learning. An additional set of enablers, challenges, and needs for effective school transformation include developing a shared vision, making use of early adopters, supporting experimentation, planning and prioritizing, managing time, insisting on change, and celebrating change. Each MBLC school uses these strategies to different extents, depending on local circumstances.

The MBLC believes that shifting mindsets and building a shared vision of why, what, and how to change is a powerful strategy to build engagement of all stakeholder groups in the transformation process, and visioning work was central to the professional learning activities in Years 1 and 2. Developing clear goals and a coherent progression of change over time is essential for managing change, including a focus on sustainability beyond the grant period. The change management challenge mentioned most often was a lack of time, which leaders at MBLC schools are aiming to address by building the supports, policies, schedules, plans, and staffing that prioritize MBL and CRSE.

Recommendations

The evaluation findings suggest many strategies to improve MBL and CRSE implementation in the first MBLC cohort, future cohorts, and Washington's K-12 education system. Many of the broadest and highest-leverage strategies are gathered here as a series of recommendations for state policy, the MBLC network, professional learning, school-level policies, and educator practices.

State Policy

- Investigate and implement changes to state policies and structures such as time-based funding formulas and Alternative Learning Experience rules that would further encourage the adoption of mastery-based learning.
- Develop a set of mastery-based competencies, learning progressions, and assessments vetted by the state that mastery-based schools or districts could opt into as an alternative to the existing system.
- Create state reporting systems that fully support and accurately reflect the meaning of standards-based grades.
- Update state policies to incorporate the field's 2019 definition of mastery-based learning, rather than current use of the 2011 definition.

MBLC Network

- Revise the screening process to ensure that future MBLC schools have a fuller understanding of MBL and CRSE, the complexity of what they are taking on, and typical transformation stages, elements, and timelines.
- Revise the work planning process to require and support creating more tangible goals and to help schools locate their progress in relation to specific implementation milestones.
- Consider evidence for whether certain school activities and expenditures are more effective than others in advancing implementation. Encourage schools to adopt high-leverage activities.
- Reassess the required and minimum levels of participation in network professional learning activities that will be most beneficial to individual schools and to the network.
- Create more strategies to recognize and celebrate successes, lift up best practices within the MBLC network, and share inspiring resources from the field of mastery-based learning.
- Support schools in their sustainability planning to continue their MBL and CRSE transformation efforts beyond the MBLC grant period.

Professional Learning

- Assess the balance of virtual versus in-person PL activities and large-group events versus small-group coaching. Consider personalizing these to each school's preferences and needs.
- Prioritize discussions with schools about strategies to maximize the investment of well-protected and collaborative staff planning time focused on advancing MBL and CRSE.
- Support improvements in schools' mechanisms for disseminating learning from the MBLC school team to the rest of the staff.
- Facilitate more opportunities for MBLC schools to visit high-implementing, mastery-based schools in Washington and nationally. Try to match visitors with schools that are similar to their own school on dimensions they consider important and want to observe.

School-Level Policies and Educator Practices

- The findings on school-level policies and educator practices suggest many high-impact areas for focusing MBL and CRSE change efforts. Each school should assess their needs and set ambitious but achievable goals to improve the quantity and quality of their policies and practices over time in collaboration with their MBLC coach and other experts and informed by a growing body of self-assessment inventories and support resources.

Introduction

The Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative (MBLC) is a demonstration project taking place in 24 schools in Washington State. The schools are receiving funding and participating in professional learning and a statewide network to support implementation of mastery-based learning (MBL) and culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE). The initiative's overarching goal is "to inform future policy by helping decision makers better understand what quality mastery-based learning looks like, how long it takes to implement, and what resources are necessary."

The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) is leading the MBLC, with executive sponsorship from SBE, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The objectives of the initiative include:

- Establishing a statewide infrastructure to provide needed professional development, policy, and communications support to enable school districts and schools to implement MBL.
- Demonstrating that schools can successfully implement MBL with student learning and assessment that are authentic, engaging, and culturally connected and sustaining.
- Documenting the key steps that states, districts, and schools must take to transition to MBL successfully.
- Positively impacting student engagement and progress toward learning goals.

The state defined mastery-based learning in 2019 E2SHB 1599 as follows:

- Students advance upon demonstrated mastery of content;
- Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students;
- Assessments are meaningful and a positive learning experience for students;
- Students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs; and
- Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge along with the development of important skills and dispositions.[1]

The MBLC initiative also emphasizes CRSE, due to the recommendations of Washington's Mastery-Based Learning Work Group, which was enlisted by the state legislature to provide recommendations for the development of mastery-based pathways to earning a high school diploma. In the Work Group's 2020 report, they explain the need for CRSE in relation to "students who have not been well served by our education system because of the historical and present-day institutional racism perpetrated by society

[1] Adapted from Sturgis, C., Patrick, S., & Pittenger, L. (2011). It's not a matter of time: Highlights from the 2011 Competency-Based Learning Summit. Vienna, VA: iNACOL. https://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/iNACOL_Its_Not_A_Matter_of_Time_full_report.pdf

and reflected in our schools" (p. 6) and that MBL provides "an outstanding opportunity to develop culturally relevant, or sustaining, instructional practices that embed recognition of students' cultures in the learning process" (p. 8).[2] The initiative defines CRSE in reference to the New York State Department of Education's framework, with three main pillars – student learning, cultural competence, and critical or sociopolitical consciousness – organizing an education system that responds to and sustains students' identities.[3]

The Aurora Institute is evaluating the initiative for SBE. The evaluation is intended to contribute to the identification of effective policies, practices, and system changes that can support MBL and CRSE implementation throughout Washington's K-12 education system. The evaluation questions are:

1. What do evaluation participants report as the MBLC's benefits for schools?
2. What school conditions helped or impeded MBL implementation?
3. Was participation in the MBLC associated with changes in educator practice?
4. What was the quality of implementation of MBL at the selected schools?
5. To what extent did evaluation participants report that implementation of MBL had a positive impact on learning conditions?
6. What implementation practices or conditions contributed to the reported impacts or lack of impact?

This report presents evaluation activities and findings at the end of Year 2 of the initiative, with a focus on establishing a baseline for understanding changes during Year 3. The three grant years covered by the evaluation are:

- Year 1 – December 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022
- Year 2 – July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023
- Year 3 – July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Year 1 focused on planning, Year 2 focused on professional learning, and Year 3 will focus on deepening MBL and CRSE implementation. During Year 1, SBE provided initial supports to individual schools, began developing the statewide network, and structured a process for each school to develop customized Year 2 plans to move deeper into the work and identify indicators of progress over time.

During Year 2, schools began to implement these plans. The MBLC schools represent a wide range of MBL implementation, from beginners to well-established MBL schools. Each school's next steps on

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[2] Muller, A. (2020). Mastery-based learning in Washington state: 2020 report. Olympia, WA: Mastery-Based Learning Work Group. https://www.sbe.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/2020%20MBL%20Work%20Group%20Report.pdf

[3] Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative. (2023). Culturally responsive-sustaining mastery-based learning, implementation steps and frequently asked questions. https://docs.google.com/document/d/11f1i_G6z3pc4PNXV9AvP8mUEWAiH-FWWLjzB8V9l7sE/edit

planning, professional learning, and implementation are therefore built around their local needs and goals in relation to MBL and CRSE. Each school has an MBLC school team consisting of 3-6 teachers and one or more school leaders who lead the school's MBLC planning and implementation. They may also receive input from youth advisors.

Washington's biennial budget for SBE for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 included $5 million to implement mastery-based learning in school district demonstration sites for the purpose of addressing learning recovery and other educational issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional funding was appropriated by OSPI and the state legislature for fiscal years 2024 and 2025, with exact amounts not yet finalized. These funds will pay for school grants, professional learning, project evaluation, and administration. As this evaluation report was nearing completion, SBE confirmed that funding had been appropriated for Year 4 of the first cohort (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025) and the first year of a new cohort whose expected start date is January 2024.

Methods

Data collection activities in Year 2 consisted of surveys of educators and school leaders, observations of professional learning activities, and interviews of educators, school leaders, professional learning providers, and personnel of the Washington State Board of Education. The evaluation topics addressed by each data collection activity are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation Topics and Data Collection Activities in Year 2

Evaluation Topic	Educator Survey	School Leader Survey	Educator Interview	School Leader Interview	PL Obser-vation	SBE Interview	PL Partner Interview
Attitudes/Beliefs about MBL & CRSE	✓	✓					
Changes to Teaching/Learning Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Changes to School Structures & Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Progress Facilitators and Challenges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional Learning Experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enabling State and Local Policies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
State Structures and Support Activities	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Changes to Quantitative Indicators	✓	✓					

Educator and School Leader Surveys – The surveys were drafted by the Aurora Institute and modified based on feedback from SBE and the PL providers. Some items were used or adapted from sources cited in the survey instruments (Appendix A and B). Terms used in the surveys may have been

unfamiliar to some respondents or have different usages in different settings, and certain terms may be more applicable in traditional schools than in advanced MBL schools. To address these challenges, the meaning or usage of the following terms was provided in the surveys: learning outcomes, mastery, competency, competencies, courses, educators, credits, mastery-based learning, culturally responsive-sustaining education, habits of success, formative assessment, and summative assessment.

The educator and school leader surveys were designed to require no more than 15 and 20 minutes respectively to complete. SBE emailed MBLC school leaders three months in advance of the survey dates, recommending that they schedule a time for staff to complete the surveys during existing staff time to minimize burden on participants, and reminding school leaders that they had agreed, in the grant's statement of assurances, to participate in the evaluation surveys and interviews.

The educator survey was sent to all MBLC school staff who have direct responsibility for instructing, assessing, grading, and facilitating learning of students. The school leader survey was sent to all MBLC school leaders, guidance counselors, and MBLC school-team leads. Administered via an online platform (Qualtrics), the surveys were open for three weeks in March 2023, with several email reminders from Aurora and SBE to non-respondents and school leaders. Surveys were re-opened for one week for three schools with very low response rates. Survey analysis was conducted with SPSS and Excel.

Many Year 2 items will be compared with the same or similar items in Year 3 to provide indicators of change over time in areas including attitudes toward mastery-based learning, teaching and learning activities, and school structures and climate.

Educator and School Leader Interviews – Aurora and SBE developed a schedule to interview each MBLC school once during the three-year evaluation, including virtual interviews in Year 1 and in-person school visits in Years 2 and 3. The schedule was designed to maximize variation in each year's interviewees along dimensions including grade-levels served, geography, student race/ethnicity, and family income. The semi-structured interview protocols were drafted by Aurora and modified based on feedback from SBE. During visits to seven schools in March 2023 (Year 2), 45-minute interviews were conducted at each school with one school leader, one educator on the MBLC school team, and one educator not on the MBLC school team. Twenty interviews were conducted in person, and one interview was conducted virtually a week after the school visit. Interviewees were invited to ask for any comments to remain confidential, and many did request this for selected comments.

The seven schools that participated in Year 2 interviews were Auburn High School in the Auburn School District, GATES High School in the Franklin Pierce School District, Innovation Lab High School in the Northshore School District, Tumwater Middle School in the Tumwater School District, and Elma Elementary School, Elma Middle School, and Elma High School in the Elma School District.

Observation of Professional Learning Activities – Several MBLC network activities and school-level team planning sessions were observed live and virtually. Network activities included two webinars, a virtual site visit, a leaders' community of practice, and the winter gathering. The observations focused

on the MBLC's benefits for schools and whether and why participating in the MBLC was associated with changes in educator practice.

Professional Learning Partner and State Board of Education Interviews – The semi-structured interview protocols were drafted by Aurora and modified with input from SBE and the PL providers. The interviews were conducted via Zoom. The PL partner interview was conducted with Joy Nolan, Director of the New Learning Collaborative, and Kate Gardoqui, Senior Associate of the Great Schools Partnership. The SBE interviews were conducted with Seema Bahl, Senior Policy Analyst at SBE; Alissa Muller, Director of the Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative at SBE; and Randy Spaulding, Executive Director of SBE. Both interviews were about 90 minutes long and took place in April 2023. Qualitative analysis of all interviews focused on a set of themes drawn from the evaluation questions. Coding was conducted with NVivo.

Findings

Findings from Year 2 are presented to address the evaluation questions, beginning with the following factors that influence schools' implementation of MBL and CRSE:

1. The state policy context
2. The MBLC network
3. Professional learning
4. School-level policies and practices
5. Staff knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs
6. Culturally responsive-sustaining education

Those factors provide context for discussion of current educator practices and managing change across many dimensions relevant to MBL and CRSE. With Year 2 focused on professional learning and Year 3 focused on deepening implementation, many MBLC schools are in very early stages of implementing MBL and CRSE while others have been deeply engaged for years.

Information about school-level and educator practices establishes a baseline that will be used in Year 3 of the evaluation to identify changes that took place during the initiative. The Year 3 findings will also address the impacts of MBL and CRSE implementation on learning conditions such as student engagement, school climate, and cultural responsiveness.

Sample Characteristics

The interviews with 21 educators and school leaders included principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and classroom teachers across many subject areas. All of the school leaders and about half of the educators were members of their MBLC school teams.

Educator and school leader survey responses were received from all 20 grantees and all 24 schools. The educator survey had 429 responses, with an overall response rate of 76%. The response rate for individual schools ranged from 42% to 100% with a median of 85%. Ten percent of educators taught grades K to 5, 39% taught grades 6 to 8, and 62% taught grades 9 to 12. Most had been teaching for six years or more (77%), and only 6% were first-year educators. The majority taught in core academic subject areas, but respondents also taught in many other specialties.

The school leader survey had 47 responses, a response rate of 72%. Respondents' school roles were administrator (73%), guidance counselor (21%), or MBLC school team leader (6%). They were about evenly divided among three groups: those who were first-year school leaders, had two to five years of leadership experience, or had six or more years of leadership experience.

State Policy

Several state policy factors support implementation of mastery-based learning. Schools can apply for a waiver from credit-based graduation requirements, allowing them to develop ways for students to graduate based on mastery-based competencies and learning progressions. The state's mastery-based crediting, alternative learning experience (ALE), and equivalency crediting rules each create alternative mechanisms to provide credit for learning that takes place within or outside the school setting.

The waiver from credit-based graduation requirements enables high schools or school districts to create and implement alternative, performance-based graduation requirements that are more consistent with MBL principles than the credit-based system.[4] Mastery-based crediting enables students to earn credit for a variety of learning experiences that could take place inside or largely outside of traditional classroom instruction, such as ALEs, work-based learning, and equivalency courses of study.[5] (Mastery-based crediting is a key component of mastery-based learning, but the two are not the same.) ALEs are courses that are supervised and assessed by a certificated teacher but provided in whole or in part independently from a regular classroom setting or schedule and in accordance with a written student learning plan and school district policies.[6] Work-based learning provides career exploration and hands-on learning opportunities where students can apply their learning from career and technical education

[4] Washington State Legislature. (2023). Alternative high school graduation requirements. Washington Administrative Code 180-18-055. https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=180-18-055

[5] Washington State Board of Education. (2023). Mastery-based crediting Handbook 2.0: An implementation guide for school districts. https://www.sbe.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/MasteryBasedLearningWorkGroup/1.23.23.Mastery-based%20Crediting%20Handbook%202.0%20Final.pdf

[6] Washington State Legislature. (2023). Alternative learning experience requirements. Washington Administrative Code 392-550. https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-550

courses to real-life work experiences.[7] Equivalency crediting encompasses a wide range of opportunities to earn school-approved credit for learning experiences conducted away from school or by people not employed by the school district.[8]

Each of these policies enables more individualized, project-based, and place-based learning as part of students' public education. They have been essential for the MBL work of Washington schools. However, state and school leaders have reported that some of the policies need further development or are misaligned with the education system in ways that have reduced their utilization. For example, schools using the ALE model are funded at a different rate and have additional reporting requirements. School leaders also recognize that encouraging accelerated learning or learning that takes place outside the school building could reduce their funding, because funding is based on the number of students attending classes inside the school building. "You lose your FTEs when they do that," one school leader said, "and you don't want to lose your FTEs."

Responding to that comment, a state leader said that schools can't receive funding for students who accelerate and graduate early, because the school is no longer providing services to those students. The state leader also clarified that ALE does fund learning that takes place outside the school building, but not activities such as private classes, student life experiences, and home-based instruction that the school is not providing.

The state recently completed a pilot initiative to explore the impacts and costs of seven schools whose learning model combines classroom instruction with extensive off-campus learning experiences. The pilot allowed all schools to be funded at the same per-student rate as they would in a traditional school, known as the "prototypical rate." OSPI's review of data on state assessments, attendance, and graduation rates suggests that the pilot schools were "even with or improved from programs serving similar populations of students."[9] SBE is hoping that OSPI's rule-making following this pilot will eventually enable MBL schools to be funded at the prototypical rate even when students are participating in off-campus learning experiences.

Another MBL implementation challenge is the effort required to map the deeper, applied, and multidisciplinary learning that often takes place in high-quality MBL schools onto the specific number and distribution of credits that state policy requires students to earn. SBE noted that traditional seat-time approaches bypass this challenge based on the dubious assumption that students who pass a

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[7] Wallace, R., Sanders, S., and Diehl, J. (2023). Work-based & worksite learning guide: Career and technical education. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/careerteched/workbasedlearning/worksitelearningmanual.pdf

[8] Washington State Legislature. (2023). Courses of study and equivalencies. Washington Administrative Code 392-410. https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-410&full=true

[9] Wallace, R., Quayle, L., and Nelson, R. (2022). Innovative Learning Pilot Program: Report to the Legislature. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/communications/2023docs/02-23-Innovative-Learning-Pilot-Program.pdf

course have met all of the standards that it nominally encompasses.[10] Mastery-based learning aims to prevent the harmful learning gaps that accrue from seat-time approaches, but that same work foregrounds the impossibility of meeting the thousands of standards that comprise typical K-12 state frameworks.

Mastery-based learning addresses this challenge by creating a smaller number of higher-level competencies that students return to over time at more advanced stages of development or learning progressions. Creating competency frameworks is a major step in becoming an MBL school and was a focus of many MBLC schools during Year 2. This process can be so complex and time-consuming that it delays school transformation, and some schools have tried to expedite it by beginning with existing competency frameworks from other schools, states, and organizations.

SBE believes that there is a role for the state in developing or vetting competency frameworks, learning progressions, and strategies for assessing student progress in relation to them, and that doing so would be one of the most effective ways to accelerate MBL implementation in Washington. These resources would need to be a parallel set of requirements that existed alongside the current credit system, SBE explained, "because we don't want to force people into this framework. We only want it to be occurring where it's really occurring, not something that's like, 'Oh, yeah, we're doing that too.'" SBE has enlisted the PL providers to begin creating these resources for the MBLC schools, but SBE also believes that it's a long-term project that, over time, should be institutionalized within a state agency.

The state's requirements related to instructional hours and grading have also presented challenges for implementing MBL. One school leader said that the number of hours that teachers are required to spend providing direct instruction doesn't leave teachers enough time for the collaboration, professional learning, and review of student data needed to make deep shifts toward MBL and CRSE within a reasonable time frame. As one possible way to address this issue, a state leader pointed out that the state's definition of "instructional hours" allows personnel such as paraeducators to supervise students in instructional activities while the paraeducators are under the supervision of a certificated employee. The state leader also acknowledged the importance of maximizing the instructional time that students spend with certificated teachers and the need to continue innovating with the school calendar and schedules to build in more professional learning time.

An instructional coach and school leader recounted how their school developed a mastery-based grading system to help students, staff, and families move out of a traditional grading mindset. The system was based on four levels of demonstrated mastery – "exceeding proficiency," "proficient," "not yet proficient," and "unassessable." The district school board approved the change and translating the four mastery levels into the numbers 1 through 4 for report cards and transcripts.

Then the school learned that the state's standardized transcript format would process the grades the school submitted in ways that the school believed would distort their meaning and hurt students'

[10] Altbergs, J., and Gagnon, L. (2021). Let's just say it out loud: There isn't enough time to cover all the standards. Aurora Institute. https://aurora-institute.org/cw_post/lets-just-say-it-out-loud-there-isnt-enough-time-to-cover-all-the-standards

college admission prospects. The school could enter their 1-4 grades into the state system, but the system equates those numbers with letter grades (A=4, B=3, etc.) The school did not want to do this, because what they mean by a "3" is "proficiency," which they believe represents a higher level of achievement than a "B" at most schools. They did not see a valid translation between their mastery-based grades (which are based on proficiency) and traditional grades (which sometimes reflect "seat-time" or grading on a curve, rather than proficiency).

"We're hopeful that OSPI will let us report as 4321, which is more compatible with mastery-based learning," the school leader said, "because people have so much baggage around ABCD and so many pre-conceived notions about what it means …. As long as we have to report as ABCD, we have parents who tell us that they love the MBL work we're doing but they also want their child to get all A's – which isn't always realistic." To support his belief that 4321 grading would not harm students' college admissions prospects, he pointed out that the school brought a group of seniors to tour the University of Washington, and an admissions officer told them, "We have an admissions process for schools that don't give letter grades, because we've had schools doing that for decades." The admissions officer's statement is supported by a public letter from the six presidents of Washington's public four-year colleges and universities that states,

> "We accept a wide range of student transcripts that meet admissions requirements and provide a complete and accurate presentation of what a student has learned and accomplished prior to their arrival on our campuses. We assure Washington students and their families that students who apply to our campuses with a mastery transcript will not be disadvantaged in the admissions process."[11]

A final state policy issue relates to the definition of mastery-based learning. Washington was a leader nationally in incorporating the field's primary MBL definition into state policy. That step has been an essential element of the state's decisive progress and national leadership on MBL. At about the same time that Washington was adopting this legislation, the field updated the MBL definition to reflect new understandings and priorities, including the centrality of equity and student agency.[12] Due to the timing of the change, the updates are not reflected in state policy. The MBLC is placing a high priority on CRSE and student agency, but SBE believes that "the state does need to update [to] the current definition, although this would require a change in statute."

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[11] Washington State Council of Presidents. (2022). Washington's public four-year universities and college high school mastery transcript statement. https://councilofpresidents.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Mastery-Transcript-Statement.pdf

[12] Levine, E., and Patrick, S. (2019). What is competency-based education? An updated definition. Arlington, VA: Aurora Institute. https://aurora-institute.org/resource/what-is-competency-based-education-an-updated-definition/

MBLC Network

SBE continued overseeing the MBLC network in Year 2, coordinating the work of the participating state agencies, schools, and vendors. They visited all MBLC school districts, met with school leaders to discuss progress on work plans, and structured a process for schools to reflect on Year 2 and plan for Year 3.

The MBLC network currently consists of 20 grantees and 24 schools. (Three districts received a grant that covered two schools, and one district received three grants and is using them to support all four schools in the district.) Three schools have left the initiative. Two were in a district that had major staff turnover as the MBLC was beginning, leaving insufficient capacity to participate. The third school left when they realized that the initiative was not a good match for the after-school model they planned to implement. To replace the schools that departed, SBE awarded MBLC grants to three new schools. A final change during Year 2 is that one school was granted permission to pursue a more gradual implementation plan with reduced MBLC funding.

State funding to schools and the services provided by the professional learning providers are the two primary resources and activities that constitute the MBLC. In addition to the network-level events and school-level coaching from the initiative's PL providers, most schools received $40K in Year 1 and $125K in Year 2 for expenses such as staff stipends, materials, substitute teachers, consultants, and travel that supported their MBLC work. SBE expects Year 3 funding to be about $110K for most MBLC schools.

A fundamental MBLC benefit noted by several interviewees is that the grant pays for professional learning and collaboration time for school staff. School leaders also said that the existence of a statewide network of schools that are working toward deeper implementation of MBL and CRSE has helped them make a case locally for the relevance, value, and even inevitability of this transformation. One school leader said, "Knowing that there are other schools moving in this direction, and that the state is moving more in this direction, provides some more leverage in working with staff around it and knowing that we're not just doing this because it's the next fad, but it's actually meaningful work."

Another school leader said, "It's one thing if I'm saying, 'there's so much research that supports this.' But when it's endorsed from multiple avenues, that's going to help shift the tide." Two endorsements she mentioned are from a group of local Native tribal leaders and from Washington's Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), which has endorsed the state's MBL efforts.[13]

[13] Their 2021 report says, "The EOGOAC supports the creation of a mastery-based education system which treats each student as an individual, allowing them to set the pace for their learning, as an innovative model that has shown success in closing the opportunity gap. Mastery Based Learning (MBL) is an example of a systemic solution that addresses inequity. When done well, MBL includes authentic family engagement and a centering of student voice and experience. It also has the potential to eliminate the need for gifted and remedial programs and is focused on inclusion" (pp. 20-21). https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/workgroups/eogoac/pubdocs/EOGOAC%202021%20Annual%20Report.pdf

Multiple educators and school leaders said that the MBLC network events affirmed and inspired them and their colleagues. One educator said, "The [MBLC spring gathering] was great – just seeing all these schools that are trying to undertake this, and then doing all the online meetings where you can actually talk to folks who are in the same world you're in and talk to about their struggles. It helps me understand all this and somebody that's further along in the process. It's been very good. You're not on your own little island when you start going to these trainings."

The MBLC network's resources helped educators feel valued, respected, and appreciated. "I really appreciate the funding and getting paid to do this work," one educator said. "Being able to go away for a couple days and listen to experts and different people gives you this huge sense of motivation and inspiration. Because we're in the trenches, doing the long list of everyday things for students. It's just nice to be given that opportunity, because we really haven't been anywhere since even before COVID. It's been nice to hear, 'Hey, you want to do more? I'm gonna give you this opportunity to go do more.' So that's inspiring, and we come back all excited."

Participating in the MBLC has helped schools that were already working on reforms that had elements in common with MBL. An instructional coach said that finding the MBLC helped give greater form to their general vision for their school. Without MBLC, he said, reaching their vision "would have taken much longer and involved a lot more flailing about."

The timing of the MBLC's funding and launch has presented challenges, beginning with less time than anticipated for SBE to plan the initiative and select schools and professional learning providers. The shortened time for screening and selection meant that some schools didn't fully understand what they were agreeing to do. Some schools thought of MBL and CRSE as something they were going to "pull off the shelf" and may not have realized that "this project is more complex, because MBL and CRSE are really two big shifts in what they're doing," SBE said. "Most of the districts that were doing this kind of overcommitted, because they were doing this and a bunch of other things too, and it wasn't fully integrated into their own plans in most cases." SBE is planning a more in-depth and personalized selection process for the second cohort of MBLC schools, which will take place in late 2023, to ensure that schools have a better understanding of the initiative when they decide to participate.

Another challenge for the initiative has been specifying tangible goals. "We are still trying to figure out the actual points of accountability," SBE said. Each school developed a Year 2 work plan and needed to reflect on their progress in their Year 3 work plan, but SBE said that so far they have not taken a stance of "You have to be this far by this timeline." SBE appears to be more focused on creating the conditions for schools to move ahead successfully than on creating a culture of compliance.

Setting goals has been challenging for many schools in part because they don't fully understand what deep implementation of MBL and CRSE looks like, the PL providers explained. As a result, the work planning process has required schools "to engage in backwards planning before they can … imagine the place they're trying to get to."

The PL providers recommend "making the work plan document a little bit more standardized. It requires very complex, multidimensional thinking that was a little too open ended …. It would be a supportive scaffold for schools that are new to the work to tell them, 'It can look one of these three ways, or one of these five ways.' It would probably be helpful to get a little more focused about what we're aiming for, and helping schools pick something and then put their own spin on it, so there are still significant choices they can make."

Professional Learning

This section provides an overview of MBLC network events, coaching, and online resources, followed by findings on participation in network events and feedback from educators and school leaders on the professional learning they have participated in to advance MBL and CRSE implementation.

Events – The following 30 professional learning events took place during Year 2. All were virtual unless specified as in-person:

- **Community Gatherings** for school MBL teams included a two-day summer institute, a two-hour after-school event in fall and winter, and a five-hour in-person event in the spring. The spring gathering included students from nine schools.
- **Webinars** were offered monthly for an hour after school, on different days of the week, and were archived for online viewing. The nine topics were: First Steps in Shifting Practice, Building on Learning Outcomes, Systems for Supporting Students, How Students Become Expert Learners, Youth Leadership, Assessment, The Power of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Learning Experiences, and two virtual visits to MBL schools in New York and Vermont.
- **Professional Learning Communities** – Five 90-minute meetings after school hours convened school staff, mostly educators, working in groups of 6-7 schools. They learned from each other's questions and experiences on MBL and CRSE topics of greatest interest to the group. Schools were asked to send at least three members of their MBL school teams who could attend all five sessions and share later with their schools.
- **Leaders' Community of Practice** were quarterly 90-minute meetings during the school day for school leaders who are directing their school's MBL work to share successes and resources, as well as discussing problems of practice and examples of student work.
- **Youth Advisor Sessions** were three 75-minute sessions offered during school hours for MBL youth advisors and one adult ally per school. The purpose was to create a space where youth could be in a space not dominated by adults to connect with each other, practice leadership skills, and develop critical consciousness while sharing their ideas and experiences related to MBL and CRSE.
- **School's Out Washington**, an MBLC partner focused on building school-community partnerships, offered three 90-minute, after-school sessions focused on culturally responsive programming, exploring structural racism, and school-community partnerships.

- **School Visits** – The PL providers arranged and facilitated in-person visits to two MBLC schools. One visit invited two staff from each MBLC school, and the second visit was limited to 12 guests.

Coaching – Each school was assigned a coach from one of the two organizations providing professional learning for the MBLC. Coaches met virtually with each of their schools about once per month, mostly with school leaders and MBL school team members. The coaches – who are all located in northeast states – visited each school in person twice during the school year, typically for a half day. They also provided virtual, drop-in "office hours" three times per month for 90 minutes after school. Several schools elected to use some of their grant funds to arrange for extended or additional in-person visits with their MBLC coach or with other outside consultants and vendors to advance their MBL and CRSE implementation.

The coaches described carrying out a variety of activities tailored to each school's needs and preferences. In meetings with MBL team leaders and full MBL teams, coaches worked to plan next steps in MBL and CRSE development, looking at implementation road maps and working through questions such as "Where are you now? When should we do this piece of it? Who will benefit? Who should be involved? What at your school clashes with this plan? What is the unlearning we need to do?"

These conversations led to coaching support on mindsets, principles, and practices. Coaches described working with schools to help them reframe their beliefs about students (such as students' capacity to be leaders of their own learning) and trying to foster an ability to talk about race and culture and power dynamics. They worked with schools to build the impulse of asking, "What are our guiding beliefs? Why do we use this particular practice? Is there a guiding principle or research behind it, or is it because it's the way it has always been done?"

Coaches also provided support on deepening specific practices and structures, such as project-based learning, designing competencies, innovative scheduling, responsive pacing, and differentiated supports. For example, the staff at two middle schools wanted to map the Next Generation Science Standards onto a coherent set of competency-based learning outcomes with "kid-friendly scoring criteria," but they were struggling to find the time for such an ambitious project. The coach provided intensive supports to find existing models nationally and worked with staff to tailor the models to the needs of the two schools. Then she met with all the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade math and science teachers in small groups to work toward turning those learning outcomes into culturally responsive, project-based units with authentic products for the following semester. "Not all of the units were completely, radically different," she said, but with each group she worked to figure out what piece they could focus on to transform or redesign. More generally, the coaches have asked, "What can I take off your plate, so instead of starting with a blank page, you just need to improve it?"

Educators and school leaders said they collaborated with coaches to revamp grading systems, develop new competencies and proficiency scales, explore new technology platforms, and make progress on other aspects of their MBL implementation plans. Typical comments about their coaches were, "She has really good, poignant questions that make us think about … different ways of grading" and "He helped

us get the standards aligned and showed us new tools, so we didn't have to reinvent them. It's been great." Comments from school staff and PL providers made it clear that coaching has been focused on MBL school teams, not on the entire staff, with the intention that school team members will share their learning with colleagues to enable deeper implementation over time.

Website – The two major supports provided by the MBLC Community website[14] are the Events and Resources pages. During Year 2, the Events page featured upcoming events, registration links, a summary of the year's 30 events, and links to video recordings, slide decks, and other resources from past events. The Resources page links to extensive MBL and CRSE overview documents, FAQs, practice templates and exemplars, and a glossary of key terms. The website also has a blog with five posts relevant to MBLC schools. The home page includes an overview of the MBLC, a link to a resource library for building school-community partnerships, and a land acknowledgment. The site's content expanded substantially throughout Year 2.

Participation in Professional Learning – At the beginning of Year 2, SBE conveyed expectations to MBLC schools for requested and minimum levels of participation in the network's professional learning events and coaching. These expectations and actual levels of participation are shown in Table 2. Schools varied widely in the number of individuals who attended events. For example, just two grantees accounted for about 40% of webinar and PLC attendees. To illustrate this variation, the tables provide both the mean and median number of attendees. The variation was not related to school size, and SBE's expectations for participation were the same for all schools, regardless of size.

Events not shown in the table are youth/adult ally sessions, office hours with coaches, and school visits, all of which were optional but encouraged. Participation data were not available for youth/adult ally sessions (N = 3) or office hours with coaches (N = 30). Participation data were available for one of the two school visits, which reached its maximum capacity of 12 participants drawn from seven grantee schools.

The PL activities with the highest levels of participation were coaching, summer institute, community gatherings, and PLCs. The summer institute was the activity with the highest rate of participation (100%) and where the highest number of schools met SBE's minimum expectations for participation (83%). Webinars and PLCs had the lowest level of participation (59%), and webinars had the lowest percentage of schools meet minimum expectations for participation (37%). The archived online webinars were watched by staff from three schools, and in each case the webinar had also been attended by staff from the same schools.

A shortage of substitute teachers made it difficult for many schools to participate in PL activities during school hours, and the PL providers responded by shortening some activities and rescheduling others to take place after school. SBE said that that there are competing priorities for schools' PL time and that participation has been below expectations.

[14] https://sites.google.com/greatschoolspartnership.org/mblc-community/home?pli=1

There was broad agreement that the availability of time is a major challenge, and this applied very much to professional learning. Many educators and school leaders said they needed the initiative's coaching, events, and resources. At the same time, several interviewees were frustrated that being expected to attend all of the MBLC network events used up much of the time that their MBL school team had available for collaboration.

These concerns are understandable, given the intense demands on educators and school leaders. At the same time, participating in all MBLC events at the "requested level" in Table 2 would require roughly 150 person hours during the school year and an additional 100 hours during the summer. For a five-person MBL school team, this would require just under an hour per week per team member during the school year, on average, plus two days in the summer. Most schools participated below this requested level and also below the minimum level. This raises important questions about how professional learning should be structured to optimize productive participation. For example, some school leaders recommended the option of attending only the PL activities most relevant to their needs. Others said

Table 2: Participation in MBLC Network Professional Learning Activities

Activity	Requested Level of Participation	Minimum Level of Participation	# of Individuals Participating	School/Grantee Participation
Coaching	Three or more MBLC team members monthly	Same as requested level	Data not available	Mean = 9.6 check-ins Met Minimum = 65%
Summer Institute (N = 1)	Full MBLC team	Two MBLC team members	Mean = 5.6 Median = 4.5	Attended[1] = 100% Met Minimum = 83%
Community Gatherings (N = 3)	Full MBLC team	Two MBLC team members	Mean = 2.9 Median = 2.0	Attended = 88% Met Minimum = 69%
PLCs (N = 4)[2]	Three or more MBLC team members	Two MBLC team members	Mean = 3.0 Median = 1.0	Attended = 76% Met Minimum = 45%
Leaders Community of Practice (N = 4)	One or more school leaders	Same as requested level	Mean = 0.9 Median = 1.0	Attended = 59% Met Minimum = 59%
Webinars (N = 9)	Three or more MBLC team members live	One or more team members live and rest watch later	Mean = 2.3 Median = 1.0	Attended = 59% Met Minimum = 37%
Schools Out Washington Events (N = 2)	Three or more MBLC team members	One or more team members live and rest watch later	Data not available	Data not available

[1] Schools with at least one attendee. [2] Data available for 4 of 5 PLC sessions.

that direct coaching from the PL providers was more helpful than some of the network-level events. But it also raises questions about what level of engagement with the MBLC network should be required to participate in the initiative. SBE and the PL providers are discussing these issues as they plan the content and delivery of professional learning for Year 3.

A related issue is how to translate the network's PL activities into engagement by the whole school. One of the PL providers said,

> I think one factor that is extremely important is having very well-planned and protected collaborative, professional time. If our schools are going to succeed at this, they've got to have regular chunks of time built into their schedule when people can actually work together. Ideally it would be stipended. And it definitely needs to be guarded, so it can't be like "the principal asked us to do this other task during our MBLC time" … It's got to be like, "This is sacred. We only do the MBLC work during this time." That is really essential.

Many educators and school leaders agreed, recognizing that they have too many conflicting demands on their time but also that moving into MBL and CRSE more deeply and quickly requires more collaboration time. Some schools are prioritizing this work and reporting substantial progress.

Another issue that SBE and the PL providers are trying to balance is the pace of progress. It's clear that becoming a deeply implementing MBL school takes years, well beyond the current length of the MBLC initiative. "Many of the schools … that we look at as models took somewhere between five and 10 years to completely reorganize their systems," a PL provider said, "…. [but] I think we are already seeing really significant and successful moves happening at many, many of the schools, so I'm excited about where the project is right now." Describing the types of progress she anticipated seeing during the grant period, another PL provider said,

> We may see schools that in June 2024 struggle to really point to, "Here's a specific way that our grading and reporting system changed," for example. But the same schools might be able to say, "Here are the 10 things we've done to make our school more welcoming. Here are the things we've done to really focus on kids having a sense of belonging. And here are five practices we've instituted across the board to ensure that kids are reflecting, setting goals, and monitoring their own progress." I think there's a good chance we're going to see a lot of that. Out of all the things that schools could have done, each school is going to have an array of things they did.

Conveying this pace to the schools – encouraging ambitious progress and celebrating successes while also having achievable goals – is an important but challenging part of the work. The PL providers want to convey to schools and communities, "We're building a cathedral. We're doing something that we want to do well. It's a really big project that's going to take time."

At the same time, "It's important to frame the work so it doesn't feel like Mission Impossible," one PL provider said. "Making sure that we're not conveying, 'You're a beginner in this million-mile journey. There's 40,000 things to learn about. There are all these technical shifts and adaptive shifts, so it's going

to take you five years.' So making sure that there are things that folks can use today. And that's been a big focus of ours in our webinars, like three things you can do tomorrow."

Professional Learning Topics and Usefulness – Educators were asked what topics were addressed during the current school year and how useful the PL activities were for deepening MBL and CRSE (Table 3). Most educators are not on the teams of three to six staff at each school that attend MBLC network events, so their responses mostly reflect school-level PL activities. Some of these were led by the MBLC coaches, but most were led by MBLC school-team members sharing what they learned at network events.

Table 3: Usefulness of Professional Learning Activities (N = 407 educators)

In your professional learning activities this year, how useful were the following topics for deepening your work in MBL and/or CRSE?	Not Addressed[1] (%)	Not Useful (%)	Moderately Useful (%)	Very Useful (%)
Using a variety of summative assessments, including performance-based assessments	22	8	47	45
Using a variety of formative assessments	21	9	50	41
Helping students develop "habits of success" such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, etc.	23	9	44	47
Implementing strategies that give students more voice and choice in their learning	22	10	52	38
Implementing project-based learning	23	11	45	44
Organizing learning around higher-level competencies that describe the transferable knowledge and skills students are expected to master	27	11	49	40
Implementing strategies for equitable, culturally responsive-sustaining education	18	12	57	31
Developing personalized learning goals with and for students	30	12	48	40
Implementing multidisciplinary learning with your colleagues	29	15	52	33
Managing a learning environment where students are working at different paces and on different learning outcomes	32	15	46	39

[1] The respondents in this column are excluded from the final three columns, which sum to 100% in each row.

For each topic, 85% to 92% of PL activities were rated as moderately or very useful. The highest rating was for PL on using a variety of summative assessments, including performance-based assessments, and the lowest was for managing a learning environment where students are working at different paces and on different learning outcomes. The three columns containing usefulness ratings do not include the "Not Addressed" column. Including that column and recalculating would show that 60% to 70% of educators had the opportunity to participate in PL on each topic that they rated moderately or very useful.

School leaders responded to this same list of topics but were asked how useful each PL topic was for deepening their school's – rather than their own – MBL and CRSE implementation. Their ratings of whether activities were moderately or very useful (not shown) averaged seven percentage points higher than educators' ratings. One possible contributor to this difference is that school leaders were more likely than educators to attend MBLC network events, so the two groups were reflecting on overlapping but somewhat different sets of professional learning events.

School-Level Policies and Practices

School-level policies and practices that influence MBL and CRSE implementation include structures for educator collaboration and support, school schedules, available curriculum and materials, development and transparency of competency frameworks, and crediting and assessment practices, each of which are discussed in this section.

Many tables presented in this and subsequent sections imply a preferred direction of change, such as toward deeper staff collaboration or more personalized supports for students. In some cases, MBL has specific targets for what schools should eventually achieve, such as all competencies being expressed in language that students can readily understand. But other areas lack specific targets, such as how often PLCs should meet or how much choice students should have in how to demonstrate their learning. In these latter areas, the evaluation findings will indicate the direction of change over time, but setting goals for the extent of change requires decisions at the school and district level.

Educator Collaboration and Supports – Educators share the frequency of supports they received in Table 4. Professional learning appears again briefly in this section, because each school engages in local PL activities in addition to the state-level ones discussed earlier. Some of the local PL activities are led by MBLC school team members who have attended MBLC events and are sharing what they have learned at PLCs, department and grade-level meetings, schoolwide activities, and in one-on-one conversations.

Most educators had no opportunities to observe other educators working with students, and half had looked at student work with other educators at least once to develop a common understanding of what proficiency looks like. About 40% of educators said they had participated in professional learning focused on MBL and CRSE practices four times or more during the current school year, and 20% said they had not participated in any PL on these topics.

The most common form of collaboration was working in common planning groups or PLCs, which three-quarters of educators did at least once per month (Table 5). Only about half that many collaborated with other educators at least monthly to design learning opportunities across academic subject areas or review student data to discuss how to support individual students most effectively.

Table 4: Educator Supports (N = 413 educators)

How often did you receive each of the following supports this school year?	Never (%)	1-3 Times (%)	4-6 Times (%)	7-9 Times (%)	≥ 10 Times (%)
Professional learning opportunities focused on MBL practices	20	40	19	11	11
Professional learning opportunities focused on CRSE practices	20	43	22	9	6
Release time to observe other teachers working with students	71	22	5	1	1
A teacher, administrator, mentor, or coach observing my work with students, followed by one-on-one feedback and discussion	26	62	8	2	1
Time devoted to looking at student work across teachers to develop a common understanding of what proficiency looks like	50	32	9	5	4

Table 5: Educator Collaboration (N = 415 educators)

How often on average have you collaborated with other teachers to do the following during the current school year?	Never (%)	Less Than Once Per Month (%)	At Least Once Per Month (%)	Once Per Week (%)	Twice or More Per Week (%)
Work in common planning groups or professional learning communities	4	20	37	31	8
Design lessons, units, or projects across academic subject areas	27	30	24	12	7
Meet to review student data and discuss how to support individual students most effectively	20	39	27	11	4

CRSE – Educators and school leaders were asked several questions about the school's CRSE structures and strategies, and their responses are presented in pairs (Table 6). A low percentage of educators agreed or strongly agreed that they are provided with curriculum and materials that support culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy (37%), that they are provided with sufficient resources and supports to deepen their cultural competence (42%), and that their schedule includes sufficient time for effective planning and delivery of culturally responsive, mastery-based learning (25%). School leaders were asked to assess these same topics at the school level, and their levels of agreement were somewhat higher but still only about 50%.

Table 6: CRSE Resources and Structures (N = 422 educators and 47 school leaders)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school? (E = educators, SL = school leaders)	**Strongly Disagree** (%)	**Somewhat Disagree** (%)	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree** (%)	**Somewhat Agree** (%)	**Strongly Agree** (%)
(E) I'm provided with curriculum and materials that support culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy	14	21	28	27	10
(SL) Curriculum and materials provided to teachers support culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy	2	13	34	43	8
(E) I'm provided with sufficient resources and supports to deepen my cultural competence	12	20	26	31	11
(SL) Teachers are provided with sufficient resources and supports to deepen their cultural competence	6	11	30	42	11
The teacher schedule includes sufficient time to ensure effective planning and delivery of culturally responsive, mastery-based learning	E: 30	27	18	18	7
	SL: 11	23	21	32	13
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student access to opportunities	E: 9	21	31	30	9
	SL: 6	19	11	55	9
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student outcomes	E: 9	20	31	31	9
	SL: 4	17	15	55	9
(E) An equity-focused mission and vision drive school policies and practices	3	7	22	41	28

The gap between educator and school leader agreement was larger on whether the school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student access to opportunities (educators 39%, school leaders 64%) and to address inequitable student outcomes (educators 40%, school leaders 64%). The final item, asked only of educators, was whether an equity-focused mission and vision drive school policies and practices. Notably, their level of agreement (69%) was substantially higher than on any other item in this section. This suggests that many educators may see their schools as having an equity-focused mission and vision that currently falls far short of being fully realized.

Competencies – School leaders were asked where their school is in the process of organizing learning around competencies (Table 7), and most said they were in an early or intermediate phase of this process. A small number of schools either haven't started yet or are already fully organizing learning around competencies. Notably, no school said that they do not plan to organize learning around competencies.

Table 7: School's Extent of Organizing Learning Based on Competencies (N = 47 school leaders)

We do not plan to organize learning around competencies	0%
We plan to shift to competencies but haven't started yet	11
Early phase of shifting to competencies	40
Intermediate phase of shifting to competencies	30
Fully organizing learning around competencies	13
I don't know where our school is in this process	6

About a third of school leaders said their schools have written most or all of their competencies in language that students can readily understand and have organized the competencies into learning progressions that reflect students' deeper knowledge and skills over time (Table 8).

Transparency – Transparency of expectations and progress are important in MBL schools. About one in four school leaders said that students always or most of the time receive a list of learning outcomes they must meet to pass and receive credit (Table 9). Fewer said that all students have learning outcomes listed in personalized learning plans. Another form of transparency is being able to track progress on learning outcomes at any time, such as through an online platform, and this option was available often, most of the time, or always for about 40% of students and 30% of families.

Table 8: Competency Language and Learning Progressions (N = 39 school leaders)[1]

To what extent is each of the following statements true about your school's competencies?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
The competencies are expressed in language that students can readily understand	0	41	28	28	3
The competencies are organized into learning progressions that reflect students' deeper knowledge and skills over time	0	51	23	23	3

[1] Includes only those who said that their school has begun shifting learning to competencies.

Table 9: Transparency of Learning Expectations and Progress (N = 46 school leaders)

How do students in your school and their families know what knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to receive credit in their courses?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
Students receive a list of learning outcomes they must meet to pass and get credit	20	43	11	17	9
All students have learning outcomes listed in an individual or personalized learning plan (not just students with IEPs)	37	41	9	4	9
Students can track their level of progress on each learning outcome at any time, such as through an online platform	26	33	26	6	9
Families can track their student's level of progress on each learning outcome at any time, such as through an online platform	33	37	13	11	6

Schoolwide Credit Policies and Practices – Crediting policies in MBL schools are essential for enabling responsive pacing and anytime/anywhere learning. Policies for responsive pacing are not currently in place at most MBLC schools (Table 10). At most schools, student can never or occasionally get credit as soon as they meet all required learning outcomes in a class (73%), and students are never

or occasionally placed in classes based on their demonstrated mastery rather than age or grade level (75%).

Policies that allow credit for learning that happens outside school depend on the type of learning. More than half of school leaders said that students can often, most of the time, or always earn full credit for courses they take outside school, such as summer, online, or college courses. However, this drops to about a third when students demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes through out-of-school service learning, work-based learning, projects, or activities.

Table 10: Crediting Policies and Practices (N = 45 school leaders)

How much do the following statements reflect current schoolwide policies and practices in your school?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
Students can pass and get credit as soon as they meet all required learning outcomes in a class or course, even if it's not the end of a marking period or school year	39	34	4	7	16
Students are placed in classes based on the level of mastery they have demonstrated, not based on their age or grade level	29	46	7	11	7
Students can earn full course credit toward in-school promotion or graduation for courses they take outside of school, such as summer, online, or college courses	11	33	20	14	22
Students can earn school credit for demonstrating mastery of learning outcomes through activities they do outside of school, such as independent or group projects or activities, service learning, or work-based learning	29	39	11	5	16

Schoolwide Assessment Policies and Practices – Schools with well-developed competency frameworks and MBL assessment systems report student progress on specific learning outcomes, and 40% of school leaders said they do this most of the time or always at their schools, compared to about 70% who report progress with traditional A-F letter grades (Table 11). Many MBLC schools use both systems, which, as discussed earlier, can reflect school preferences that differ from state reporting requirements. About a quarter of school leaders reported that their schools most of the time or always use the MBL practices of requiring students to demonstrate mastery of all competencies and giving

credit for outcomes students have already mastered rather than assigning failing grades or requiring students to repeat a grade level.

Table 11: School Assessment Policies and Practices (N = 45 school leaders)

How true are the following statements about your school's grading practices?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
Student progress is reported to students and families with traditional letter grades (A-F)	16	11	4	16	53
Student progress is reported to students and families on whether or not the student has demonstrated mastery of specific learning outcomes	23	30	7	20	20
Students at our school do not "fail" courses or have to "repeat" a grade level. Instead, they receive credit for learning outcomes they have already mastered, and they need to work toward mastery of the remaining learning outcomes	48	20	9	7	16
To pass and receive credit, students must demonstrate mastery of ALL learning outcomes in a course. For example, if they have an "F" or "Insufficient Evidence" grade on some learning outcomes, they have to improve their mastery of those learning outcomes, even if they have an "A" or "Meeting" grade on all of the other learning outcomes in the course	48	21	12	7	12

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs About MBL and CRSE

The knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that staff in each school have about MBL and CRSE are influenced by the state and local structures discussed in previous sections. They are an essential aspect of the school context that guides educator practices in MBLC schools.

More than two-thirds of school leaders agreed that their school staff are familiar with the main principles of MBL (73%) and CRSE (68%) (Table 12). More than a third of school leaders agreed that their school is already deeply implementing MBL (38%) and CRSE (39%), although far fewer strongly agreed.

Table 12: Current Knowledge and Implementation of MBL and CRSE (N = 47 school leaders)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MBL and CRSE in your school?	Strongly Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Most teachers and school leaders at our school are familiar with the main principles of MBL	4	6	17	52	21
Most teachers and school leaders at our school are familiar with the main principles of CRSE	2	13	17	49	19
Our school is already implementing MBL deeply	21	28	13	32	6
Our school is already implementing CRSE deeply	9	30	23	30	9

Most educators and school leaders support implementing MBL and CRSE at progressively deeper levels over the next several years. School leaders agreed almost unanimously (96%), while educators' agreement was somewhat lower (72% MBL and 75% CRSE) (Table 13). The majority of school leaders appeared uncertain about families' support for MBL and CRSE. This may reflect that many schools are at an early stage of their transformation process and have not yet communicated much with families about MBL and CRSE. The 15% of families who school leaders believe don't support the schools' focus on CRSE may reflect currently prominent cultural and political discussions about the proper role of public education in topics such as systemic racism and equity.

The majority of educators believe that implementing MBL and CRSE deeply will improve their school's culture and climate, ability to prepare students for successful futures, and ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups. A quarter to a third of educators disagree or are unsure that these outcomes will occur (Table 14). These survey findings are consistent with comments that educators and school leaders made during interviews. Their concerns focused on implementation challenges such as capacity and the pace of change, but they believed that MBL and CRSE would be beneficial for students.

Table 13: Support for Implementing MBL and CRSE (N = 425 educators and 47 school leaders)

I support my school's intention to implement at progressively deeper levels over the next several years:	Strongly Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Mastery-based learning (educators)	5	7	16	33	39
Mastery-based learning (school leaders)	2	0	2	17	79
CRSE (educators)	4	5	16	29	46
CRSE (school leaders)	2	0	2	19	77
The parents/guardians of our students support our school's intention to:					
Implement MBL deeply	2	2	55	38	2
Implement CRSE deeply	0	15	49	28	9

Table 14: Attitudes About Impacts of Implementing MBL and CRSE (N = 426 educators)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MBL and CRSE in your school?	Strongly Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's ability to prepare students for successful futures	4	6	21	36	33
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's culture and climate	5	9	24	35	27
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups	6	6	22	35	32
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's ability to prepare students for successful futures	4	6	17	36	37
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's culture and climate	4	5	16	39	36
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups	5	5	16	35	40

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education

CRSE was integrated into the four previous sections – on professional learning, school-level policies and practices, knowledge and attitudes, and educator practice – but it also cuts across those broad domains. Those cross-cutting issues are pulled together in this section.

A variety of factors influence CRSE implementation. Recapping earlier comments on Tables 12 through 14, there is substantial support for implementing CRSE among staff at MBLC schools, but deep work is still needed to build familiarity with CRSE principles and practices, use school data to address inequities, and provide needed curriculum, resources, supports, schedules, and planning time.

Educators and school leaders reported engaging in a wide range of activities to improve pedagogy and school culture in relation to CRSE. Educators described activities that exposed students to a wide range of cultures, through films, books, projects, and collaborative group work, including activities that meaningfully engaged student voice and choice and built positive mindsets. Selected examples of these activities include:

- Advisory activities to get students to think about how to embrace and validate differences.
- Focusing class discussion and themes on identity, different cultures, social justice, and marginalized groups, and "creating opportunities for students to engage with histories that have been unknown or whitewashed."
- Doing a project on the immigration stories of every student and educator in a grade, or the stories of famous immigrants, including presentations and a book that gathers their stories. A school leader said, "That's CRSE in action. It's every student being seen and heard and feeling like they have a piece of belonging in the community of the school."
- Asking a parent to give feedback on a movie the educator was interested in showing, to be sure it was culturally appropriate, saying "That's something I never would have done before."
- Celebrations focused on cultural traditions, food, dress, and history.
- Expanding the use of multiple assessments to draw on a range of student strengths.
- Collaborative group work in which students work with students from other cultures, yielding what the educator described as a less stereotyped view of people from that group, saying "Building that culture in the classroom has been my biggest thing for CRSE."
- Engaging in daily affirmations that welcome all students into the community and express confidence in their abilities to succeed.
- Using a social-emotional learning curriculum to develop classroom norms that center student preferences and build skills for navigating common interpersonal challenges.

Many CRSE-related activities are also taking place at the school level. Selected examples of these activities include:

- Offering professional learning activities locally and through the MBLC network.

- Conducting focus groups with students about their experiences of bias and what changes they want to see in the school, reporting the findings to the faculty, and holding a full-day equity summit led by students.
- Creating structures to enable awarding credit for academic knowledge demonstrated through activities not sponsored by the school, such as to a student who used work with a tribal wildlife department to demonstrate mastery of standards in an environmental biology course.
- Hosting cultural nights for families.
- Supporting students in creating culture-specific clubs.
- Amplifying voices of students from different cultures, such as through who leads the school's daily announcements.
- Offering all clubs during the school day so all students have the opportunity to participate. Some clubs identified academic competencies embedded in their activities that enabled students to receive credit for club activities.
- Conducting an equity inventory with staff, then putting key findings into an improvement plan, such as bringing in more professional supports for trauma-informed practice and settings goals such as educators becoming well informed about the influence of racial and intersectional diversity on student outcomes.
- Creating an equity team that worked with an outside consultant to increase their cultural proficiency and responsiveness. The equity team facilitated schoolwide books groups on the *books Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* and *UDL Equity by Design: Delivering on the Power and Promise of UDL.*
- Sponsoring programs that help students get ready for college and careers and are staffed by mentors from diverse cultural backgrounds who had "struggled in school but then turned their own lives around."
- Role modeling scenarios such as how educators can respond when they hear a racist comment in the hallway, and "reinforcing that non-responding is not an option."
- Incorporating educators' CRSE activities into the school's teacher evaluation rubric as required elements of receiving a rating of "proficient" or "distinguished."

Some educators and school leaders reported looking at outcome disparities between student subgroups, including Black, Latino, Native, and LGBTQ students, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from families with low income. One school leader said that they are working to begin administering interim assessments that provide actionable data more often than is available from state tests. Others are seeking feedback from students, through conversations and formal assessments, to improve school culture, sense of belonging, and other aspects of student wellbeing.

Despite substantial evidence of positive staff attitudes toward CRSE and numerous examples of improving structures, culture, and pedagogy to deepen culturally responsive learning, this work appeared to be in its early stages. One educator said, "We've had some inservices, and we talk about

this a lot, but we haven't gotten to a deep – you know, we're not there yet." Another educator explained that they have pockets of people doing deep work on diverse curriculum, but "as far as that commitment across the campus and across disciplines, I wouldn't say we have that." When asked about a school's CRSE-related professional learning activities, such as to deepen staff or students' cultural proficiency or sociopolitical consciousness, one school leader said with frustration and regret, "No, not yet." Many interviewees felt that they and their school are not taking enough action to ensure equitable outcomes and do not have enough staff capacity to address students' needs.

Several educators said that they want to offer more culturally responsive education but lack the knowledge and, in some cases, the time to develop that knowledge. One educator who was focusing intensively and creatively on implementing mastery-based learning described CRSE strategies as "by far my weakest place. Right now, embarrassingly enough, I'm just not prepared to do anything more than things like putting diverse names into my word problems … I would love to know more, but I haven't had that training yet."

Another teacher said, "It's hard to come up with [CRSE] things that fit into a systematic curriculum …. I've been putting all my energy into making learning mastery-based and authentic, and not how that relates to culture and inclusiveness. So that's been my priority." Several educators and school leaders said that they and their school are prioritizing MBL over CRSE. Some expressed that this is a necessary or correct progression. One school leader said, "I need to bring CRSE into the building, but I have to get them to the mastery-based point first." This is clearly different from the MBLC's intentions.

One of the PL providers emphasized the importance of working on CRSE mindsets from the outset. In her experience, schools that "get it" about equity, CRSE, responsiveness, and other sustaining values learn mastery-based learning quickly, because MBL is an academic expression of those same values. Conversely, she said, schools that want to implement MBL without examining their beliefs and biases leave harmful practices in place.

Some educators simply believed that it was more effective to focus on MBL than CRSE. One educator explained that he hasn't participated in his school's cultural proficiency trainings, because they were optional, and he didn't think they were the most effective use of his limited time. "I'm definitely not perfect in terms of cultural awareness," he said, "but I think I'm adequate, and where I make a difference to my students is being an effective teacher in [my subject area]."

Other staff expressed a mixture of interest in deepening their CRSE work with frustration at how CRSE conversations have been framed. One educator said,

> When we get into those [CRSE] conversations, it's like, "yeah, I get your point. We're all evil. We're all bad. Okay, great, but what do you want me to do with that information?" Because all too often, the message I'm hearing is just "Shame on you," instead of "let's move on." Where are we going? I feel like I'm constantly being sold on "this is important," and I agree that it's important, but nobody is telling me "Okay, here's what you should do differently."

An educator from another school has appreciated PL activities that have improved her cultural proficiency but added,

> I've been to meetings with the MBLC where I was basically shamed for being white. And I was like, "thank you for making me aware of it, but you're starting to get my hackles up." So that's been a problem for me. I know that I need to work on it. I'm trying. I think I get annoyed too easily on things that I don't quite understand. And so I need to broaden that and have more patience. But I don't like you putting in my face that I am the reason that this happened. I wasn't even there.

One school leader speculated that some of the CRSE messaging could undermine change efforts:

> If my general teaching population was listening to the presentations that have been provided by the State Board of Education … it would be like "No go. Not doing." Because it's right there in your face, "You are the people who slaughtered us." … I acknowledge that this was their land, but I did not slaughter them. Please stop telling me that I slaughtered them and making me recite that I slaughtered them. I carry my own shame for what my ancestors did. And when I say this, I fear that I would be deemed as a racist or not open to diversity, and that is so the opposite of who I am and what I love and what I support.

Sharing the previous quotations is not intended to endorse or reject their content, but to inform efforts to deepen CRSE by revealing staff perceptions that were provided under conditions of anonymity. (As one way to understand the final quotation, I reviewed several of the land acknowledgments from MBLC events that are archived on the MBLC website, and none claimed that contemporary Washington educators had slaughtered anyone.)

The PL providers described some schools that initially thought they were a very culturally responsive environment but have realized, as they have engaged in learning related to CRSE, "Oh my gosh, we have a long way to go." The PL providers believed that before engaging in some of the challenging conversations raised by CRSE transformation efforts, it would be valuable for every school to engage in a half-day or longer interactive equity training, book groups, or similar activities that would help to build a common language and shared understanding of equity and CRSE.

They also described some significant challenges of making transformative change, such as influential opponents on school faculties and in local communities, as well as entrenched mindsets of people who are "used to winning games real easy, because they have certain advantages and are used to attributing disparities to mistaken reasons." They believed that many faculty don't see how traditional school practices unfairly advantage certain groups of students and that many faculty understandably feel upset by the suggestion that certain practices they have used throughout their careers are unjust.

Another challenge they described is that "it's very hard to do equity work with one's colleagues, when you have to come back into the building tomorrow" and work with them. "It's hard to raise issues at a staff meeting about 'this colleague was marginalized' or there was a racist event. Schools have racist

events all the time, from microaggressions to very aggressive aggressions, that people are very upset about. How do you make it so you can grapple with that?"

Each MBLC school is working to deepen their CRSE implementation, and there is substantial support for these efforts among school staff. The issues and practices discussed in this and previous sections suggest a variety of strategies to advance that work that will require engagement from all stakeholder groups in the MBLC initiative.

Educator Practice

Educator practice is influenced by each of the sets of conditions discussed earlier – state policy, the MBLC network, professional learning, school-level policies and practices, and knowledge and attitudes about MBL and CRSE. This section addresses changes in level of preparedness to implement MBL and CRSE, investments needed to deepen implementation, as well as many aspects of practice including responsive pacing, differentiation, student agency, formative and summative assessment, grading, anytime/anywhere learning, and habits of success.

Preparedness to Implement MBL and CRSE – Changes in educator practice will primarily be assessed in Year 3, but the Year 2 surveys included one set of items that asked educators and school leaders to rate their level of preparedness to implement MBL and CRSE at the beginning of Year 2 and in late March of Year 2 (Table 15). Many school leaders felt that they became more prepared during this period, with those rating themselves as moderately or very prepared increasing from 40% to 76% for MBL and from 49% to 76% for CRSE. However, a quarter of school leaders still rated themselves as not prepared or a little prepared in March of Year 2.

Educators also felt that they became more prepared during this period, with the percentage moderately or very prepared going from 31% to 44% for MBL and from 36% to 48% for CRSE. However, they felt less prepared at the end of the school year than school leaders felt at the beginning of the school year. One reason for this difference may be that most school leaders had more exposure than educators to the MBLC network's PL activities and resources, which were focused primarily on the MBLC school teams rather than the full school staff.

Table 15: Change in Level of Preparedness to Lead School in Implementing MBL and CRSE

School Leaders (N = 45)	**Not Prepared** (%)	**A Little Prepared** (%)	**Moderately Prepared** (%)	**Very Prepared** (%)
How well prepared were you to lead your school in implementing MBL practices at the beginning of this school year?	31	29	33	7
How well prepared are you to lead your school in implementing MBL practices today?	11	13	67	9
How well prepared were you to lead your school in implementing CRSE practices at the beginning of this school year?	21	30	49	0
How well prepared are you to lead your school in implementing CRSE practices today?	11	13	74	2
Educators (N = 421)				
How well prepared were you to implement MBL practices at the beginning of this school year?	33	36	23	8
How well prepared are you to implement MBL practices today?	18	39	32	12
How well prepared were you to implement CRSE practices at the beginning of this school year?	30	35	31	5
How well prepared are you to implement CRSE practices today?	20	33	40	8

Responsive Pacing – About half the educators reported that, on a typical school day, most students in the same course are working on the same material (Table 16), suggesting that responsive pacing is not a common feature of these classrooms. (Even in high-implementing MBL schools and classrooms, many students work on the same material at the same time, such as for group projects or curriculum units. However, the opportunity to move at different paces is also present.) The other items in the table make it clear that a substantial percentage of students can never or only occasionally move more slowly than other students without penalty (34%), move on to other topics if they demonstrate mastery sooner than other students (48%), or have opportunities to go deeper and exceed the minimum required level of performance (42%).

Table 16: Responsive Pacing (N = 419 Educators)

How often are the following statements true for the courses you teach?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
On a typical school day, most students in the same course are working on the same material	2	18	29	42	9
Students have the option of moving through course material more slowly than other students without penalty if they need more time to achieve competency	5	29	17	22	27
Students who have demonstrated mastery of a learning outcome move on to other topics sooner than students who have not yet demonstrated mastery	13	45	15	17	10
Students who have demonstrated mastery of a learning outcome have opportunities to go deeper and exceed the minimum required level of performance	5	37	21	21	16

These practices seem to be influenced by the school context, not just an educator's personal pedagogical decisions. Most school leaders said that allowing students to advance at different paces based on demonstrated mastery was either not allowed (30%) or allowed but not encouraged (44%) in their schools (Table 17).

Table 17: School Stance on Responsive Pacing of Summative Assessments (N = 46 school leaders)

How would you describe your school's policies and preferences about the following summative assessment practices at the end of a unit, project, or course?	Not Allowed (%)	Allowed, But Not Encouraged (%)	Encouraged (%)	Strongly Encouraged (%)	Required (%)
Students are able to take summa-tive assessments when they are ready to demonstrate their learning, even if that is earlier or later than other students do the same.	30	44	15	2	9

Differentiation – Many educators are already providing differentiation in some areas (Table 18). They said that students often, most of the time, or always receive personalized supports regardless of how well they are doing in school (73%) and as needed to make timely progress (70%). Less differentiation is apparent in other areas, with many educators saying it's never or only occasionally true that they meet individually with each student to discuss their work and progress (37%) or that students have the opportunity to choose different ways to learn the same material (52%).

Table 18: Differentiation and Personalized Supports (N = 424 educators)

How often are the following statements true for the courses you teach?	Never True (%)	Occasionally True (%)	Often True (%)	True Most of the Time (%)	Always True (%)
All students receive personalized supports based on their individual learning needs, regardless of how well they are doing in school	3	27	26	24	20
Students receive personalized supports as needed to make timely progress	1	26	28	26	19
I meet individually with each student to discuss their work and progress	7	30	33	18	12
Students have the opportunity to choose different ways to learn the same material	11	41	23	19	6

Student Agency – As student voice and choice expand in MBL schools, the balance of decision-making shifts from educators to students to varying extents in several domains. In most MBLC schools, students already have at least some input (Table 19). However, the educator remains the primary decider of which topics and activities students focus on in class (78%), how students will demonstrate their learning (65%), and when each student will take an exam or other final assessment (80%). The one area where half of educators say that students have at least equal voice in decision-making is in what schoolwork they will do outside of class (50%).

Formative Assessment Practices are widely used by educators in MBLC schools (Table 20). Practices used at least monthly – and more often by many educators – are quick check-ins for understanding such as exit slips or thumbs up/down (91%), students formally assessing their own work (73%), students taking a practice quiz or other check for understanding to see if they are ready to take a summative assessment (71%), and students reviewing and giving feedback on their peers' work (59%).

Table 19: Student Agency in Learning and Assessment Decisions (N = 420 educators)

Please tell us about the respective roles that students and adults typically play in making decisions in your courses	I (teacher) decide (%)	I decide with some student input (%)	The student and I decide together (%)	The student decides with some teacher input (%)	The student decides on their own (%)
Who decides which topics and activities each student focuses on in class every day?	33	45	13	9	1
Who decides how each student will demonstrate what the student has learned (such as via a project, test, paper, or presentation)?	29	36	22	12	2
Who decides when each student will take an exam or other final assessment?	52	28	13	6	1
Who decides what schoolwork each student does outside of class (such as homework)?	30	20	12	17	21

Table 20: Formative Assessment Practices (N = 417 educators)

How often do you use the following practices for formative assessment?	Never (%)	Less Than Once Per Month (%)	At Least Once Per Month (%)	Once Per Week (%)	Twice or More Per Week (%)
Asking students to indicate their level of understanding using quick check-ins such as exit slips or thumbs up/down	3	6	12	25	54
Students formally self-assess their own work	5	22	33	22	18
Students take a practice quiz or other check for understanding to see if they are ready to take a summative assessment	10	19	34	27	10
Students review, discuss, and give feedback on their peers' work	14	27	33	16	10

When formative assessments show that students have not reached the minimum required performance level, most educators gave them more time to work on the learning outcomes (71%) and helped them learn the material in a different way (57%) most of the time or always (Table 21). Less common strategies were having students work with another student who understands the material well (45%), directing the student to use the school's support and enrichment period to receive additional supports (40%), or directing the students to use the school's writing center, math center, or other program to access additional support (22%).

Table 21: Strategies Used When Formative Assessment Shows Need for Additional Learning (N = 414 educators)

When a student takes a formative assessment and has not yet reached your school's minimum required performance level, how often do you engage in the following practices?	Never (%)	Occasionally (%)	Often (%)	Most of the Time (%)	Always (%)
Give the student more time to work on the learning outcomes	0	10	18	27	44
Help the student learn the material in a different way	1	16	24	29	28
Have the student work with another student who understands the material well	1	23	29	27	18
Direct the student to use the school's support/enrichment period to receive additional teaching, tutoring, or other support[1]	20	21	19	20	20
Direct the student to utilize the school's Writing Center, Math Center, or other program to access additional support[1]	43	19	16	11	11

[1] Included the response option "Not Available At My School," which was selected by about 1% of respondents.

The enrichment period and writing/math center questions gave the option of responding "Not Available At My School." While this option was selected by only 1% of respondents, the substantial percentage of respondents who responded "Never" may have been indicating that their schools did not have support/enrichment periods or math/writing centers. School leaders were asked how often their school has scheduled support and enrichment periods where students can receive personalized supports from their educators or other school personnel (Table 22). The majority said their schools offer these once or more per week, but 11% offer them less often than that and 24% never offer them.

Table 22: Frequency of Scheduled Intervention/Enrichment Periods (N = 45 school leaders)

	Never (%)	Less Than Once Per Month (%)	At Least Once Per Month (%)	Once Per Week (%)	Twice or More Per Week (%)
How often does your school offer scheduled intervention/enrichment blocks where students can receive personalized supports from their teachers or other school personnel?	24	4	7	18	47

Summative Assessment – Performance-based assessments that involve complex real-world tasks or personally meaningful projects are an essential component of mastery-based learning. Two-thirds of educators say they use these for summative assessment often, most of the time, or always, compared with about half who use traditional tests that often (Table 23).

Table 23: Summative Assessment Practices (N = 417 educators)

How often do you use the following summative assessment practices at the end of a unit, project, or course?	Never (%)	Occasionally (%)	Often (%)	Most of the Time (%)	Always (%)
Students are assessed with performance-based assessments such as complex real-world tasks or personally meaningful projects.	6	26	31	26	10
Students are assessed with traditional tests (such as multiple choice, true-false, short answer questions).	17	33	22	22	8
Students can choose how they want to be assessed from multiple options (such as taking a written or verbal test, writing a paper, completing a project, or making a presentation).	31	38	21	8	2

About one-third of educators often, most of the time, or always allow students to choose how they want to be assessed from multiple options, such as taking a written or verbal test, writing a paper, completing a project, or making a presentation (31%). A higher percentage of school leaders said that this practice is encouraged or required in their schools (54%) (Table 24).

Table 24: School Stance on Students Choosing Summative Assessments (N = 46 school leaders)

How would you describe your school's policies and preferences about the following summative assessment practices at the end of a unit, project, or course?	Not Allowed (%)	Allowed, But Not Encouraged (%)	Encouraged (%)	Strongly Encouraged (%)	Required (%)
Students can choose how they want to be assessed from multiple options (taking a written or verbal test, writing a paper, completing a project, making a presentation, etc.)	9	37	35	13	6

When summative assessments show that students have not reached the school's minimum required performance level, two-thirds of educators most of the time or always allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date with no penalty for needing the reassessment (Table 25). Far fewer educators most of the time or always arrange for the student to receive additional learning supports during school, after school, or during the summer (32%), allow the student to demonstrate understanding using a different type of assessment (26%), or allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date but reduce their grade because they didn't pass the first time (16%).

Table 25: Strategies Used When Students Don't Pass Summative Assessments (N = 416 educators)

When students do not meet your school's minimum performance levels on the summative assessments in your course, how often do you take the following actions?	Never (%)	Occasionally (%)	Often (%)	Most of the Time (%)	Always (%)
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date with no penalty for needing the reassessment	3	14	14	20	49
Arrange for the student to receive additional learning supports during school, after school, or during the summer.	12	30	26	15	17
Allow the student to demonstrate understanding using a different type of assessment	10	43	21	16	10
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date, but reduce their grade because they didn't pass the first time	65	12	7	8	8

School leaders were asked to comment about their school's policies and preferences for these same four summative assessment practices. One way to consider whether educator practices and school policies are related is to compare the percentage of educators who responded Most of the Time or Always (Table 25) with the percentage of school leaders who responded Strongly Encouraged or Required (Table 26). These percentages are nearly the same for allowing students to use a different type of assessments (26% versus 29%) and reducing grades if students are reassessed (16% versus 12%). The gaps are a bit larger for offering retakes or revisions without penalty (69% versus 53%) and arranging for students to receive additional learning supports (32% versus 51%). These findings suggest that school policies and preferences influence educators' summative assessment practices (although the surveys do not formally address the issue of causality).

It is notable that 42% of educators never or only occasionally arrange for students to receive additional learning supports and 13% of school leaders say that doing so is not allowed or not encouraged. A shift to a higher level of differentiation and personalized supports would be expected with deeper MBL implementation.

Table 26: School Policies and Preferences When Students Don't Pass Summative Assessments
(N = 45 school leaders)

How would you describe your school's policies and preferences about teachers taking the following actions when students do not pass (or meet minimum performance levels on) summative assessments in a course?	Not Allowed (%)	Allowed, But Not Encouraged (%)	Encouraged (%)	Strongly Encouraged (%)	Required (%)
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date with no penalty for needing the reassessment	7	18	22	29	24
Arrange for the student to receive additional learning supports during school, after school, or during the summer.	2	11	36	42	9
Allow the student to demonstrate understanding using a different type of assessment	4	41	26	20	9
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date, but reduce their grade because they didn't pass the first time	35	33	20	6	6

In high-implementing MBL schools, academic grades are based on demonstrated mastery of academic competencies. Formative assessments are essential, but, by definition – due to being formative rather

than summative – are not counted in final grades. Non-academic factors such as attendance, participation, and timeliness are essential to promote, and many schools also assess them, as discussed later, but they are not counted in academic grades either.

Educators were asked to what extent they count each of these factors when determining whether a student will pass and receive credit for a course or set of learning outcomes (Table 27). Most educators don't count attendance (73%), but the majority do count participation (62%), meeting deadlines (43%), and formative assessments (85%) toward final grades. Follow-up discussions with some respondents could be helpful, such as to understand responses that attendance, participation, or meeting deadlines could count for 100% of the grade, or that summative assessments would count for less than 20% of the grade.

While it's clear that many or most educators' grading practices are not fully aligned with MBL principles in this domain, non-academic factors are important and can have consequences in MBL schools, such as delaying when a student will have an opportunity to demonstrate a particular competency. However, in an MBL system, that would lead to a grade of "not yet" or "insufficient evidence," rather than, for example, an academic grade being reduced from a "B" to an "D" due to missing deadlines.

Table 27: Factors Included in Grades (N = 401 educators)

When determining whether a student will pass and receive credit for a course (or set of learning outcomes), how much do you count each of the following toward their grade?	**Doesn't Count at All (0%)** (%)	**Counts a Little (1-10%)** (%)	**Counts Moderately (11-20%)** (%)	**Counts Substantially (21-99%)** (%)	**Counts for All (100%)** (%)
Attendance	73	10	8	8	1
Participation in class	38	25	17	17	3
Meeting deadlines (i.e., the grade is lowered if work is not submitted by a date you set)	57	22	14	5	2
Student performance on formative assessments	15	16	30	33	6
Student performance on summative assessments (i.e., demonstrated mastery of learning outcomes).	3	4	11	69	13

School leaders were asked about their school's policies related to these same grading practices (Table 28). A third to a half of school leaders said their school doesn't have a policy, leaving educators to decide how much to count participation, attendance, timeliness, and performance on formative assessments toward students' academic grades. Of the respondents whose schools did have policies, almost none

allowed counting attendance toward final grades (10%), but many allowed counting participation in class (52%), meeting deadlines (45%), and student performance on formative assessments (88%) toward final grades.

Similar to the discussion of the previous table, follow-up discussions with some respondents could be informative. For example, one school leader said that formative assessments, summative assessments, and meeting deadlines can each count for up to 10% of the grade, and attendance or participation can't be counted, which raises the question of what determines the other 70% of the grade. This pattern of responses may reflect a mistake or a different interpretation of the question.

Table 28: School Policies About Factors Included in Grades (N = 44 school leaders)

When determining whether a student will pass and receive credit for a course (or set of learning outcomes), what is your school's policy about the maximum amount that teachers are allowed to count each of the following toward the final grade?	Not allowed to count toward course grade (%)	Allowed to count up to 10% of course grade (%)	Allowed to count up to 20% of course grade (%)	Allowed to count more than 20% of course grade (%)	School does not have a policy about this (%)
Attendance	90	3	7	0	32
Participation in class	48	14	33	5	52
Meeting deadlines (i.e., the grade is lowered if work is not submitted by a date you set)	55	15	15	15	41
Student performance on formative assessments	12	36	8	44	43
Student performance on summative assessments (i.e., demonstrated mastery of learning outcomes).	8	8	4	80	42

Note: The final column includes all 44 respondents. The values in the other columns – which sum to 100% in each row – include only respondents whose school has a policy corresponding to that row.

Applied and Anytime/Anywhere Learning – MBL schools provide opportunities for students to learn through creating and applying knowledge inside and outside the school building, as well as recognizing demonstrated mastery wherever and whenever it takes place. Educators reported that at least once per month students created and applied knowledge (78%) and participated in learning activities at school that they applied to real-world contexts outside the school building (63%) (Table 29). Much lower percentages of students at least once per month participated in course activities outside the school building during the school day (29%) or participated in applied learning activities that count toward school credit but take place outside the school building (23%).

Table 29: Applied and Anytime/Anywhere Learning Activities (N = 419 educators)

How often do students in your courses typically engage in the following activities?	Never (%)	Less Than Once Per Month (%)	At Least Once Per Month (%)	Once Per Week (%)	Twice or More Per Week (%)
Students create and apply knowledge, such as through research or applied learning activities	3	19	28	29	21
Students participate in learning activities at school that they apply to real-world contexts outside the school building	13	24	26	20	17
Students participate in course activities outside of the school building during the school day	37	34	12	10	7
Students participate in applied learning activities that count toward school credit but take place outside the school building – such as independent or group projects, service learning, or internships	53	24	11	7	5

Table 30: Priority Placed on Habits of Success (N = 423 educators)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree (%)	Somewhat Disagree (%)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (%)	Somewhat Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Helping students build habits of success is a high priority for me as a teacher	0	1	3	11	85
Helping students build habits of success is a high priority for my school	2	10	14	36	39

Habits of Success – In addition to academic knowledge and skills, MBL schools intentionally support students' development of essential "habits of success" such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, and others. Almost all educators somewhat or strongly agree that helping students build habits of success is a high priority for themselves (96%), and most agree that it is a high priority for their school (76%) (Table 30).

One way that many MBL schools recognize the importance of helping students build habits of success is by assessing and reporting on student progress. About a third of school leaders said their school does not report progress on habits of success (Table 31). The other school leaders said their school uses one or more of three reporting strategies with roughly similar frequency: numeric or letter grades, descriptive terms (such as "developing" or "extending"), and personalized comments.

Table 31: Reporting Progress on Habits of Success (N = 47 school leaders)

Using numeric or letter grades	32%
Using categories such as "developing," "applying," and "extending" or similar descriptive terms	23
Using written comments that are customized to each student	32
Progress on habits of success is not reported to students or families	30

Note: Total exceeds 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

Investments Needed to Deepen Implementation – School leaders were asked to rate the relative investment of time, resources, and/or supports needed to deepen their school's implementation of MBL and CRSE (Table 32). The four topics that at least half the school leaders rated at the highest level of need were building curriculum and assessments (60%), devoting enough time (56%), engaging in enough professional learning (53%), and revising grading and reporting processes (51%). Almost every topic was rated at the highest level of need by at least one-third of school leaders. Two exceptions were obtaining or integrating technology (22%) and obtaining support from district administrators and/or the school board (18%), but even these were both rated as at least a moderate need by many school leaders.

Managing Change

All MBLC schools are managing complex change processes, some of which were addressed earlier in relation to state policy, the MBLC network, and professional learning. An additional set of enablers, challenges, and needs for effective school transformation are discussed here, including developing a shared vision, making use of early adopters, supporting experimentation, planning and prioritizing, managing time, insisting on change, and celebrating change. Each MBLC school uses these strategies to different extents, depending on local circumstances.

Developing a Shared Vision – Several interviewees feared that detractors or staff who were unwilling to change would undermine their school's transformation, and some offered examples of how that is already happening. "I feel like some teachers are going to have a really aggressive stance about why it won't succeed," one educator said, "They'll try to promote a negative misrepresentation of what mastery-based learning is …. and they'll try to find the bits they don't like to try to use as ammo." Other

staff, having seen reform efforts come and go, “might feel … I'll just wait a little bit, and you'll change your mind. And then I won't have to change my mind.”

Table 32: Investments Needed to Deepen MBL and CRSE Implementation (N = 45 school leaders)

To deepen your school’s implementation of MBL and CRSE, how would you rate the relative investment of time, resources, and/or supports needed in the following areas?	Lower Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)	Highest Need (%)
Building curriculum and assessments that support MBL and CRSE	9	31	60
Devoting enough time to deepening MBL and CRSE	4	40	56
Engaging in enough professional learning to deepen MBL and CRSE	9	38	53
Revising grading and reporting processes to support MBL and CRSE	9	40	51
Increasing families’ belief in the importance of MBL and CRSE	11	49	40
Securing funding needed to implement MBL and CRSE	16	44	40
Increasing staff’s belief in the importance of MBL and CRSE	22	40	38
Creating a school schedule that supports MBL and CRSE	22	42	36
Securing staff needed to support MBL and CRSE implementation	16	49	35
Building staff understanding of what MBL and CRSE are	22	47	31
Revising school policies to support MBL and CRSE	18	51	31
Obtaining or integrating technology that supports MBL and CRSE	25	53	22
Obtaining support for MBL and CRSE from district administrators and/or the school board	49	33	18

The MBLC believes that shifting mindsets and building a shared vision of why, what, and how to change is a powerful strategy to counter concerns such as these and build engagement of all stakeholder groups in the transformation process. Visioning work was central to the MBLC’s professional learning activities in Years 1 and 2, and it underlies the Washington State Profile of a Graduate that is guiding MBL and CRSE development in some MBLC schools. Maximizing progress requires balancing efforts to build favorable mindsets with moving forward on developing essential school structures and pedagogy, a balance that needs to be personalized to each school.

Using Early Adopters – Some schools, particularly larger ones, focused their Year 1 and 2 change efforts on early adopters who are the most willing and enthusiastic about change, such as one in every grade level or every department. An early adopter in one school, who was also a very experienced teacher and a department chair, dramatically changed his approach during Year 2, doing just about everything he believed was possible within the school’s structures to implement what he saw as MBL practice. He invited his team to join him but emphasized that, for now, it was optional. “If you’ve chosen

not to be [an early adopter], we all respect that," he told them, "but don't bash it. If you don't want to do it, leave it alone. Give us a chance to do some legwork and work out the bugs before we give it to you, and you have to do it."

He described the demands of his first year implementing MBL as "brutal," but he was excited about its many successes and benefits for students. He served as an encouraging and enthusiastic ambassador – another change strategy employed by multiple schools – letting colleagues know that MBL strategies were making teaching more fun and rewarding, and sharing his belief that what he is doing and learning will help him reduce some challenges of his colleagues' transitions.

An educator at another school said her colleague on the MBL school team was also an effective ambassador: "She has done an excellent job of introducing us to things when we were ready to see them and explaining them in a way that is enticing and makes you want to learn more about it." School leaders can serve this role too, as one educator explained: "Starting something completely new is frightening, but nothing rattles our administrator … His unshakeable belief in the value of MBL and in our staff and students transforms panic and frustration into excitement and determination."

Encouraging Experimentation – Permission and encouragement from school and district leadership to experiment, fail, and improve was seen as essential for advancing transformation. "It's really great that our district allows us to experiment and to explore," an educator said. "In fact, they're looking to us to see what this might all look like … They're really supportive when we say we want to try something, even if it's really different than what's going on anywhere else in the district."

"Asking the adults in the building to take the same risk we're asking kids to take has been a big part of the conversation this year," a school leader added:

> We're asking teachers to take risks and be uncomfortable – to be uncomfortable with not having hard deadlines, to be uncomfortable with classroom practices that may not feel as tidy and structured – but there are some other structures we can put in place instead. And of course, we need to give them permission to try new things, letting them know we might fail with it, and that's okay. We're going to pick ourselves up, and we're going to try again.

Planning and Prioritizing – Managing change requires planning and prioritizing, or what one school leader called "keeping the main thing the main thing," which "requires us to say 'no' to some initiatives." He said his school took on too much in Year 2, and "when you try to focus on everything, you focus on nothing. In Year 3, we plan to focus on two elements of MBL: 'assessments are meaningful and positive learning experiences' and 'students receive rapid differentiated support based on individual learning needs.'" Another school leader said, "This year we created vision and learned broadly about MBL. Next year we will focus on students' agency."

"We need to develop coherent, clear goals of what we plan to achieve," one PL provider agreed, "But we also need to know that we're not going to change everything at once. For example, if you change grading systems before your whole school has that shared commitment and understanding of what

you're doing, you're going to get teachers saying, 'Yeah, they told me to do this, but I don't know why. It doesn't make any sense.' And that doesn't work out well."

Planning for sustainability was emphasized by school leaders, SBE, and the PL providers, who all agree that schools who are new to MBL and CRSE will need more than the current grant period to transform deeply or fully. "We've determined that three years isn't enough," SBE said, "and we didn't even give these schools three years, because they didn't have their full planning year. So we think it's essential to give them more intentional planning time." Some school leaders agreed, with comments such as "Getting this massive shift accomplished in three years is not doable; we need another three years funded to be able to reach a genuine positive outcome" and "We are experiencing a financial strain that will make this work difficult to sustain if we don't get it completely off the ground before the grant ends." SBE anticipates being able to fund the schools at a reduced level for an additional (fourth) year. Planning for sustainability is an essential topic for network discussions during Year 3 and beyond.

Managing Time – The change management challenge mentioned most often was a lack of time. Comments from educators and school leaders ranged from frustrated to overwhelmed:

> I'm just beginning this journey. The most important thing I need right now is release time to work on this with my colleagues.
>
> Finding time to do the work continues to be the greatest challenge; putting out fires can use all available time.
>
> It's a common frustration for all teachers that there simply isn't enough time to do what we need to do. This means we don't ever have time to learn how to do our work better. I've been continually frustrated that any time dedicated to MBL needs to be carved out of this already insufficient time. I don't have a solution for this.
>
> With over 100 students a day, when would I and my colleagues have time to create and keep track of multiple assessments? I feel like this will take years to prepare before we are ready to implement it in our school, yet we are being rushed towards this in one year. We don't have enough time to do what we are already attempting. How can we, without significant release time, create a quality, functional system in less than a year?

Time will always be a challenge, but leaders at MBLC schools are focusing on building the supports, policies, schedules, plans, and staffing that prioritize MBL and CRSE. Several schools reported building collaboration and professional learning time into the weekly or monthly schedule through frequent late-start or early-release days. Schools used MBLC grant funds to provide stipends for staff to advance MBL and CRSE work after school or during the summer, to participate in professional learning events and school visits, to hire substitute teachers that enabled this work to take place during school hours, to hire consultants, and to purchase educational technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of MBL implementation. Several schools have used (or will use in Year 3) a substantial portion of their funds for an existing staff member to become a part-time or full-time MBL specialist within the school, both developing elements of the system and supporting educators and school leaders. MBLC schools continue to learn from the PL providers, each other, and other established MBL schools what changes they have made to school structures, culture, and pedagogy to create more time for transformation.

A comment from one of the PL providers resonates with the overwhelmed tone of the educator above who feels the staff are being asked to do the impossible: "When you share out to the whole staff, 'This is the direction our school is going,' it can create waves of anxiety unless you're very, very explicit about what is the ask of who and when. So that piece needs to be managed super carefully, or there are real problems and a lot of stress on staff that doesn't need to happen."

Insisting on Change – Several educators and school leaders emphasized that managing transformation also requires staff to know that change is not optional. The goal is for all teachers to become invested in the change, but "For the last few stragglers, I think at some point they're just going to have to be told that this is the way we're moving …. Those conversations can be unpleasant sometimes, but I think that's going to have to happen, and those teachers are going to need lots of support."

Celebrating Change – Finally, managing change requires appreciating the effort and courage that transformation requires, as well as celebrating successes and recognizing positive impacts on student outcomes and school culture. An educator who worked hard in Year 2 to transform his practice said,

> I've become more of a facilitator. The kids now are 100% taking ownership about what they know. We're also using peer-to-peer instruction, for kids who are comfortable with that, because if you can teach it, that is the true mark of mastery. It's a lot of work, but I'm getting a tremendous amount of progress from these kids. They're learning more than they've ever learned, and they're absolutely empowered by that.

One of his school leaders said, "Some of our teachers have done the same thing for many years because they believe it has worked for them. We're asking them to try something different, and they don't know if it will work for them … because we believe it's what best for kids … I think we need to remember that making this kind of change requires a high level of vulnerability, and we need to admire the teachers who are willing to do it."

"There are educators who are deeply dedicated to really bringing change," one of the PL providers added. "They are working really hard and willing to be courageous in spite of everything … There are lots of things that have just gotten harder about being in education – we all know that. And a constant question for me is, 'How can we build more things into the project that uplift those people? That celebrate them, that support them, that help them keep going?' I think that's really important."

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative took important steps toward its goals and objectives during Year 2 by sustaining its statewide network of schools, offering extensive professional learning and coaching opportunities, and providing funding and guidance for schools to engage in many activities to deepen their implementation of MBL and CRSE.

The MBLC schools came to the initiative with a wide range of prior knowledge, experience, and level of implementation, with some schools just beginning the journey and others already deeply engaged with the work. In Year 2, the evaluation focused on understanding the conditions that facilitated or challenged progress. It also established baseline data to identify changes in policies and practice during the current grant period.

The MBLC's goals of implementing MBL and CRSE at progressively deeper levels over the next several years received nearly unanimous support from school leaders and support from most educators. Moreover, the Year 2 focus on helping schools prepare to deepen implementation showed positive results, with many educators and school leaders feeling more prepared over the course of the year, and the professional learning providers reporting that they are observing "significant and successful" shifts happening at many schools.

For Year 3, when the focus will be on deeper implementation and continued professional learning, there is still much to accomplish in the areas of state policy, the MBLC network, school-level policies and practices, and educator practices. SBE and the MBLC schools also have a growing understanding that, particularly for schools that are new or relatively new to MBL and CRSE, the journey to deep implementation will require consistent effort and resources well beyond the current grant period. At the same time, the PL providers are conveying the message that each phase of the journey has benefits for students and the school community. Many educators and school leaders agree, and many also expressed the need to transition at a manageable pace of change with enough capacity to meet the demands of change.

Recommendations

The evaluation findings suggest many strategies to improve MBL and CRSE implementation in the first MBLC cohort, future cohorts, and Washington's K-12 education system. Many of the broadest and highest-leverage strategies from the report are gathered here as a series of recommendations for state policy, the MBLC network, professional learning, school-level policies, and educator practices.

State Policy

- State policies and structures that currently enable mastery-based learning also create obstacles in some cases, such as additional reporting requirements and different funding levels. Schools may also risk losing some funding if they enable accelerated pacing and awarding credit for some types of learning conducted outside the school building, two key features of mastery-

based models. The state should investigate these policies and consider changes that would facilitate mastery-based learning policies and practices.

- Develop a set of mastery-based competencies, learning progressions, and assessments vetted by the state that mastery-based schools or districts could opt into as an alternative to the existing system.
- Create state reporting systems that fully support and accurately reflect the meaning of standards-based grades.
- Update state policies to incorporate the 2019 definition of mastery-based learning, rather than current use of the 2011 definition. This update would make explicit the importance of student agency, varied pacing and pathways, transparent competencies, timely and actionable assessments, and embedding strategies to ensure equity for all students in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.

MBLC Network

- Revise the screening process to ensure that schools have a fuller understanding of what they are agreeing to do. Provide clear definitions and explanations of MBL and CRSE, detailed examples in multiple media of what they look like in practice, and typical transformation stages, elements, and timelines. Tell schools and districts that they will need to provide the resources to sustain the initiative after three or four years of state support – and that providing internal support from the outset, or as soon as possible, will accelerate the process of change. Identify or develop case studies of MBL schools that have successfully transitioned away from external funding over time.
- Revise the work planning process to require more tangible goals and to help schools locate their progress in relation to specific implementation milestones. Provide menus of suggested goals that align with well-known phases of MBL and CRSE transformation, such as those in the MBLC's Implementation Steps document and graphic. Provide models of those goals framed in a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based) format to encourage more systematic thinking about what steps will be taken to achieve them, how much time is needed, whether the steps were in fact taken, and whether intended outcomes were achieved.
- Consider evidence for whether certain school expenditures of grant funds are more effective in advancing the school's progress toward deeper MBL and CRSE implementation. For example, multiple schools felt that it has been very effective to create part-time or full-time staff positions whose primary role is to advance MBL and CRSE at the school level and support educators in advancing their practice. Share the findings with MBLC schools and encourage them to adopt high-leverage activities.
- Reassess the required and minimum levels of participation in MBLC network professional learning activities. Knowing that most schools didn't meet the minimum level for several categories of activities, consider what changes to PL offerings that may suggest, what level of participation should be required, or both.

- Create more strategies to recognize and celebrate successes, lift up best practices within the MBLC network, and share inspiring resources from the broader field of personalized, mastery-based learning.
- Support schools in their sustainability planning to continue their MBL and CRSE work beyond the MBLC grant period.

Professional Learning

- Reassess the balance of virtual versus in-person professional learning activities and of large-group events versus small-group coaching. Consider strategies for personalizing these more to each school's stated preferences and needs. One way that the MBLC network has already begun this process is by asking schools at the end of Year 2 to report which past PL activities have been most helpful and what factors have supported or impeded the school's participation in network PL activities.
- Prioritize discussions with schools about strategies to maximize the investment of well-protected and collaborative staff planning time focused on advancing MBL and CRSE. Share best practices in this domain from schools and districts in the MBLC and nationally. The PL providers named this as an essential success factor, and more school leaders rated this as a moderate or high need than any of the other dozen categories they were asked about in terms of the need for investment of resources and supports.
- Discuss with schools their mechanisms for disseminating learning from the MBLC school team to the rest of the staff and whether they are adequate for successful transformation. Support improvements in dissemination as needed. Consider whether the MBLC should communicate strategies and/or expectations across the network, not just to individual schools, for involving staff who are not on the school team.
- Facilitate more opportunities for MBLC schools to visit high-implementing mastery-based schools in Washington and nationally. These visits can be deeply inspiring, energizing, and informative, transforming a school's understanding of what is possible. Many educators and school leaders appreciated the in-person and virtual visits during Year 2 and want more. Consider requiring every school to send a team on an in-person visit. To the extent possible, match visitors with schools that are similar to their own school on dimensions they consider important and want to observe. (Some school staff doubted that MBL can be successful in schools as large as theirs or with the sociodemographic backgrounds of their students.)

School-Level Policies and Educator Practices

The evaluation findings suggest dozens of potential areas for schools to focus their efforts on during Year 3 and beyond. The surveys asked about many of the key school and educator shifts in structures, culture, and pedagogy. Some of these focused on earlier stages of transformation, such as developing competencies, and some on later stages, such as calibrating assessment across teachers. Every shift has potentially high impacts, and each school's needs and priorities are different.

Each school should assess their own needs and set ambitious but achievable goals in collaboration with their MBLC coach and other experts. The survey identifies many potential areas for growth. A growing body of MBL and CRSE self-assessment inventories are available, as well as resources to improve policies and practices in every domain assessed by the inventories. Many of these resources are referenced on the MBLC website and others are available from organizations nationally that focus on advancing MBL and CRSE.

As schools put MBL and CRSE policies and practices into place, an important focus area is quality. For example, most educators reported that students created knowledge and applied school learning to real-world contexts at least monthly. These are important MBL practices that can be carried out at many levels of quality and depth. The same is true of student agency, culturally responsive curriculum, meaningful assessment, personalized supports, and many other areas. Over time, all stakeholders in transforming education should continue to assess and, as needed, strive to improve the quality of these MBL and CRSE policies and practices.

Appendix 1 – MBLC Educator Survey

Aurora Institute for the Washington State Board of Education
March 2023

Thank you for taking this survey. It asks about your experiences and practices as a teacher. The survey's purpose is to learn from teachers in schools that are participating in Washington's Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative (MBLC).

We are not evaluating you, your students, or your school, and there are no correct or incorrect answers to the survey questions. Implementing mastery-based learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education deeply takes years of effort, and different MBLC schools and staff are at different stages of this journey. This survey seeks to understand where everyone is on that journey now, which will help us understand changes in the years ahead. We have explained some key terms, but if there's anything unfamiliar, please respond to the best of your ability.

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. It is voluntary and confidential. Your participation serves as your consent for your responses to be used in the study. We will not share your individual responses with anyone. If you do not want to answer a question, you may skip it, but your perspective is important, so we hope you will answer every question.

Thank you for contributing to the MBLC's efforts to improve learning for all students!

Key Terms Used in the Survey

Different MBLC schools use different terms for various education elements. The terms used in the rest of the survey for these elements are described next.

Learning Outcomes are knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate. (Also known as "standards," "competencies," "learning targets," and "learning objectives.")

Mastery and **Competency** are used interchangeably for when students have demonstrated that they have met learning outcomes at a satisfactory level.

Courses are opportunities for students to participate in a set of learning tasks and other activities designed to advance their knowledge and skills in a specific subject or skill area. (Also known as a "class," "seminar," "competency set," etc.)

Teachers are adults who facilitate student learning in school settings. This includes adults who may be called "educators" or "advisors."

Credits are units of measure that indicate whether a student has successfully satisfied course requirements and/or demonstrated mastery of a set of learning outcomes.

About You and Your School

Are you a teacher who has direct responsibility for instructing, assessing, grading, and facilitating learning of students?

- Yes
- No

[Skip Logic] If "no," skip to thank you / end-of-survey message.

What is your school?

- Dropdown list of MBLC schools

What is/are your primary area(s) of teaching / facilitating learning? [select all that apply]

- Elementary education
- English language arts
- Foreign language
- Instructional coach
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social studies
- Special education
- The arts (e.g., music, visual art)
- Other (please specify _____)

What grades of students do you teach? If your school doesn't assign grade levels, please indicate the ages of the students you teach, shown in parentheses. (Check ALL that apply.)

- Kindergarten (age 5 or younger)
- 1st grade (or age 6)
- 2nd grade (or age 7)
- 3rd grade (or age 8)
- 4th grade (or age 9)
- 5th grade (or age 10)
- 6th grade (or age 11)
- 7th grade (or age 12)
- 8th grade (or age 13)
- 9th grade (or age 14)
- 10th grade (or age 15)
- 11th grade (or age 16)
- 12th grade (or age 17 or older)

How many years have you been teaching at this school?

- One year or less
- Two to three years

- Four to five years
- Five or more years

How many years have you been teaching at this school and any previous schools combined?

- One year or less
- Two to three years
- Four to five years
- Five or more years

Schools in the MBLC are working toward deeper implementation of **mastery-based learning** (MBL). In MBL, students advance when they master knowledge, skills, and dispositions tied to state learning standards. They demonstrate mastery through meaningful, authentic assessments. Students take ownership of their learning and receive timely, differentiated support based on their needs and interests.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about mastery-based learning in your school?

	Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's ability to prepare students for successful futures.					
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's culture and climate.					
Implementing MBL deeply will improve my school's ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups.					
I support my school's intention to implement MBL at progressively deeper levels over the next several years.					

Schools in the MBLC are also working toward deeper implementation of **culturally responsive-sustaining education** (CRSE). The aim of CRSE is to elevate historically marginalized voices and affirm racial, cultural, and linguistic identities. CRSE prepares students for rigorous learning, connecting across differences, and becoming agents of positive social change.

There are many ways that CRSE can happen in schools, but a few brief examples are:

- A variety of instructional strategies are used to connect with different students' strengths, needs, and interests.
- The teacher helps students develop a growth mindset and builds on students' cultural identities and knowledge to help them engage with new concepts.
- High-quality instructional materials reflect diversity of race, ethnicity, language, gender, etc. and prominently display pictures of diverse students, their families, and their community.
- Teachers name and critically reflect on inequities in society and schooling in ways that make sense developmentally for students.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) in your school?

	Strongly Disagree	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's ability to prepare all students for successful futures.					
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's culture and climate.					
Implementing CRSE deeply will improve my school's ability to achieve equitable outcomes for students from historically marginalized groups.					
I support my school's intention to implement CRSE at progressively deeper levels over the next several years.					

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
An equity-focused mission and vision drive school policies and practices.					
I'm provided with curriculum and materials that support culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy.					
I'm provided with sufficient resources and supports to deepen my cultural competence.					
The teacher schedule includes sufficient time to ensure effective planning and delivery of culturally responsive, mastery-based learning.					
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student access to opportunities.					
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student outcomes.					

Please describe your level of preparedness to implement CRSE practices.

	Not Prepared	A Little Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Very Prepared
How well prepared are you to implement CRSE practices today?				
How well prepared were you to implement CRSE practices at the beginning of this school year?				

Learning and Assessment Practices

1. **How often are the following statements true for the courses you teach?**

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
On a typical school day, most students in the same course are working on the same material.					
Students have the option of moving through course material more slowly than other students without penalty if they need more time to achieve competency.					
Students who have demonstrated mastery of a learning outcome move on to other topics sooner than students who have not yet demonstrated mastery.					
Students who have demonstrated mastery of a learning outcome have opportunities to go deeper and exceed the minimum required level of performance.					

How often are the following statements true for the courses you teach?

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
Students have the opportunity to choose different ways to learn the same material (such as lectures, small-group discussions, group projects, independent projects, online work, etc.)					
All students receive personalized supports based on their individual learning needs, regardless of how well they are doing in school.					
Students receive personalized supports as needed to make timely progress.					

How often do you engage in the following activities for the students in your courses?

	Never	Less Than Once Per Month	At Least Once Per Month	Once Per Week	Twice or More Per Week
I meet individually with each student to discuss their work and progress.					

How often do students in your courses typically engage in the following activities?

	Never	Less Than Once Per Month	At Least Once Per Month	Once Per Week	Twice or More Per Week
Students create and apply knowledge, such as through research or applied learning activities.					
Students participate in learning activities at school that they apply to real-world contexts outside the school building.					
Students participate in applied learning activities that count toward school credit but take place outside the school building – such as independent or group projects, service learning, or internships.					
Students participate in course activities outside of the school building during the school day.					

In addition to academic content knowledge, some schools focus on **"habits of success"** such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, and others. (Some schools call these "personal success skills," "work habits," "habits of work and learning (HOWLs)," "social-emotional skills, and other names.)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about habits of success?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Helping students build habits of success is a high priority for me as a teacher.					
Helping students build habits of success is a high priority for my school.					

Please tell us about the respective roles that students and adults typically play in making decisions in your courses.

	I (teacher) decide	I decide with some student input	The student and I decide together	The student decides with some teacher input	The student decides on their own
Who decides which topics and activities each student focuses on in class every day?					
Who decides what schoolwork each student does outside of class (such as homework)?					
Who decides how each student will demonstrate what the student has learned (such as via a project, test, paper, or presentation)?					
Who decides when each student will take an exam or other final assessment?					

Now we want to learn about your **formative assessment** practices – practices that monitor student progress and help students reflect on their learning and adjust their strategies as needed to meet learning expectations.

How often do you use the following practices for formative assessment?

	Never	Less Than Once Per Month	At Least Once Per Month	Once Per Week	Twice or More Per Week
Asking students to indicate their level of understanding using quick check-ins such as exit slips or thumbs up/down.					
Students formally self-assess their own work.					
Students review, discuss, and give feedback on their peers' work.					
Students take a practice quiz or other check for understanding to see if they are ready to take a summative assessment.					

When a student takes a formative assessment and has not yet reached your school's minimum required performance level, how often do you engage in the following practices?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Most of the Time	Always
Give the student more time to work on the learning outcomes.					
Help the student learn the material in a different way.					
Have the student work with another student who understands the material well.					

When a student takes a formative assessment and has not yet reached your school's minimum required performance level, how often do you engage in the following practices?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Most of the Time	Always	Not Available at My School
Direct the student to use the school's support/enrichment block or period to receive additional teaching, tutoring, or other support.						
Direct the student to utilize the school's Writing Center, Math Center, or other program to access additional support.						

Now we'd like to learn about how you use **summative assessments** – assessments such as end-of-unit tests or performance-based assessments that assess a student's final level of learning on a set of learning outcomes and become part of their final grade.

How often do you use the following summative assessment practices at the end of a unit, project, or course?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Most of the Time	Always
Students are assessed with traditional tests (such as multiple choice, true-false, short answer questions).					
Students are assessed with performance-based assessments such as complex real-world tasks or personally meaningful projects.					
Students can choose how they want to be assessed from multiple options (such as taking a written or verbal test, writing a paper, completing a project, or making a presentation).					

When students do not meet your school's minimum performance levels on the summative assessments in your course (i.e., they do not pass), how often do you take the following actions?

	Never	Occasionally	Often	Most of the Time	Always
Allow the student to demonstrate understanding using a different type of assessment.					
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date with no penalty for needing the reassessment.					
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date, but reduce their grade because they didn't pass the first time.					
Arrange for the student to receive additional learning supports during school, after school, or during the summer.					

When determining whether a student will pass and receive credit for a course (or set of learning outcomes), how much do you count each of the following toward their grade?

	Doesn't Count at All (0%)	Counts a Little (1–10%)	Counts Moderately (11–20%)	Counts Substantially (21–99%)	Counts for All (100%)
Attendance					
Participation in class					
Meeting deadlines (i.e., the grade is lowered if work is not submitted by a date you set).					
Student performance on formative assessments.					
Student performance on summative assessments (i.e., demonstrated mastery of learning outcomes).					

Please describe your level of preparedness to implement mastery-based learning practices.

	Not Prepared	A Little Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Very Prepared
How well prepared are you to implement mastery-based learning practices today?				
How well prepared were you to implement mastery-based learning practices at the beginning of this school year?				

Collaboration and Supports

How often did you receive each of the following supports this school year?

	Never	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	7-9 Times	10 Times or More
Release time to observe other teachers working with students.					
A teacher, administrator, mentor, or coach observing my work with students, followed by one-on-one feedback and discussion.					
Time to look at student work across teachers to develop a common understanding of what proficiency looks like.					
Professional learning opportunities focused on mastery-based learning practices.					
Professional learning opportunities focused on culturally responsive-sustaining education practices.					

How often on average have you collaborated with other teachers to do the following during the current school year?

	Never	Less Than Once Per Month	At Least Once Per Month	Once Per Week	Twice or More Per Week
Work in common planning groups or professional learning communities (PLCs).					
Design lessons, units, or projects across academic subject areas.					
Meet to review student data and discuss how to support individual students most effectively.					

In your professional learning activities this year, how useful were the following topics for deepening your work in mastery-based learning and/or culturally responsive-sustaining education?

	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Not Addressed
Implementing strategies that give students more voice and choice in their learning.				
Implementing project-based learning.				
Implementing multidisciplinary learning with your colleagues.				
Using a variety of formative assessments.				
Using a variety of summative assessments, including performance-based assessments.				

In your professional learning activities this year, how useful were the following topics for deepening your work in mastery-based learning and/or culturally responsive-sustaining education?

	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Not Addressed
Implementing strategies for equitable, culturally responsive-sustaining education.				
Managing a learning environment where students are working at different paces and on different learning outcomes.				
Developing personalized learning goals with and for students.				
Organizing learning around higher-level competencies that describe the transferable knowledge and skills students are expected to master.				
Helping students develop "habits of success" such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, etc.				

As a final question, we welcome any comments about what is helping or challenging your efforts to move toward or deepen your work in MBL or CRSE, or anything else you want to share related to your MBL/CRSE journey.

This is the end of the survey.

Thank you very much for sharing your opinions and experiences, which will support MBLC schools and inform mastery-based learning efforts in Washington and beyond. To learn more, visit the MBLC website, https://sites.google.com/greatschoolspartnership.org/mblc-community/home?pli=1

End-of-Survey Message If Responded "No" to Question 1

Thank you for your willingness to participate, but this survey is intended for teachers in MBLC schools who have direct responsibility for instructing, assessing, grading, and facilitating learning of students. To learn more about mastery-based learning in Washington, visit the MBLC website, https://sites.google.com/greatschoolspartnership.org/mblc-community/home?pli=1

Some survey items were used or adapted from the sources below. We appreciate the contributions of the authors and their organizations.

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Appendix 2 – MBLC School Leader Survey

Aurora Institute for the Washington State Board of Education
March 2023

Thank you for taking this survey. Its purpose is to learn from administrators in schools that are participating in Washington's Mastery-Based Learning Collaborative (MBLC).

We are not evaluating you, your students, your staff, or your school, and there are no correct or incorrect answers to the survey questions. Implementing mastery-based learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education deeply takes years of effort, and different MBLC schools and staff are at different stages of this journey. This survey seeks to understand where everyone is on that journey now, which will help us understand changes in the years ahead. We have explained some key terms, but if there's anything unfamiliar, please respond to the best of your ability.

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. It is voluntary and confidential. Your participation serves as your consent for your responses to be used in the study. We will not share your individual responses with anyone. If you do not want to answer a question, you may skip it, but your perspective is important, so we hope you will answer every question.

Thank you for contributing to the MBLC's efforts to improve learning for all students!

Key Terms Used in the Survey

Different MBLC schools use different terms for various education elements. The terms used in the rest of the survey for these elements are described next.

Learning Outcomes are knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate. (Also known as "standards," "competencies," "learning targets," and "learning objectives.")

Mastery and **Competency** are used interchangeably for when students have demonstrated that they have met learning outcomes at a satisfactory level.

Courses are opportunities for students to participate in a set of learning tasks and other activities designed to advance their knowledge and skills in a specific subject or skill area. (Also known as a "class," "seminar," "competency set," etc.)

Teachers are adults who facilitate student learning in school settings. This includes adults who may be called "educators" or "advisors."

Credits are units of measure that indicate whether a student has successfully satisfied course requirements and/or demonstrated mastery of a set of learning outcomes.

About You and Your School

Are you a school administrator or guidance counselor?

- Administrator
- Guidance counselor
- Leading my school's MBLC team but not an administrator or guidance counselor
- None of the above

[Skip Logic] If "None of the above," skip to thank you / end-of-survey message.

What is your school?

- Dropdown list of MBLC schools

How many years have you been an administrator at this school?

- One year or less
- Two to three years
- Four to five years
- Five or more years

How many years have you been an administrator at this school and any previous schools combined?

- One year or less
- Two to three years
- Four to five years
- Five or more years

Schools in the MBLC are working toward deeper implementation of **mastery-based learning** (MBL). In MBL, students are able to advance at different paces as they master knowledge, skills, and dispositions tied to state learning standards. They demonstrate mastery through meaningful, authentic assessments. Students take ownership of their learning and receive timely, differentiated support based on their needs and interests.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about mastery-based learning in your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Most teachers and school leaders at our school are familiar with the main principles of MBL.					
I support my school's intention to implement MBL at progressively deeper levels over the next several years.					
The parents/guardians of our students support our school's intention to implement MBL deeply.					
Our school is already implementing MBL deeply.					

Schools in the MBLC are also working toward deeper implementation of **culturally responsive-sustaining education** (CRSE). The aim of CRSE is to elevate historically marginalized voices and affirm racial, cultural, and linguistic identities. CRSE prepares students for rigorous learning, connecting across differences, and becoming agents of positive social change.

There are many ways that CRSE can happen in schools, but a few brief examples are:

- A variety of instructional strategies are used to connect with different students' strengths, needs, and interests.
- Teachers help students develop a growth mindset and build on students' cultural identities and knowledge to help them engage with new concepts.
- High-quality instructional materials reflect diversity of race, ethnicity, language, gender, etc. and prominently display pictures of diverse students, their families, and their community.
- Teachers name and critically reflect on inequities in society and schooling in ways that make sense developmentally for students.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) in your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Most teachers and school leaders at our school are familiar with the main principles of CRSE.					
I support my school's intention to implement CRSE at progressively deeper levels over the next several years.					
The parents/guardians of our students support our school's intention to implement CRSE deeply.					
Curriculum and materials provided to teachers support culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy.					
Teachers are provided with sufficient resources and supports to deepen their cultural competence.					
Our school is already implementing CRSE deeply.					

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The teacher schedule includes sufficient time and resources to ensure the effective planning and delivery of culturally responsive, mastery-based learning.					
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student access to opportunities.					
The school uses data to implement effective and well-considered plans to address inequitable student outcomes.					

Please describe your level of preparedness to lead your school in implementing CRSE practices.

	Not Prepared	A Little Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Very Prepared
How well prepared are you to lead your school in implementing CRSE practices today?				
How well prepared were you to lead your school in implementing CRSE practices at the beginning of this school year?				

Learning and Assessment Policies and Practices

Some schools organize student learning around **"competencies"** that describe the skills and knowledge students are expected to master. The competencies draw higher-level connections across content areas, such as "Students will compose informative text to clearly convey focused ideas and information." Each competency also has subcomponents or learning outcomes that are typically based on state standards.

It often takes years to make the shift to organizing learning around competencies. Where is your school in the process of organizing learning around competencies?

a. We do not plan to organize learning around competencies.
b. We plan to shift to competencies but haven't started yet.
c. Early phase of shifting to competencies.
d. Intermediate phase of shifting to competencies.
e. Fully organizing learning around competencies.
f. I don't know where our school is in this process.

[skip logic: If selected options a, b, or f above, skip the two questions in the following table.]

To what extent is each of the following statements true about your school's competencies?

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
The competencies are expressed in language that students can readily understand.					
Competencies are organized into learning progressions that reflect students' deeper knowledge and skills over time.					

How do students in your school and their families know what knowledge and skills students must demonstrate to receive credit in their courses?

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
Students receive a list of learning outcomes they must meet to pass and get credit.					
All students have learning outcomes listed in an individual or personalized learning plan (not just students with IEPs).					
Students can track their level of progress on each learning outcome at any time, such as through an online platform.					
Families can track their student's level of progress on each learning outcome at any time, such as through an online platform.					
Teachers meet one-on-one with each of their students to discuss learning outcomes.					

We want to learn about your school's policies and preferences related to **summative assessments** – such as end-of-unit tests or performance-based assessments that assess a student's final level of learning on a given set of learning outcomes and become part of their final grade.

How would you describe your school's policies and preferences about the following summative assessment practices at the end of a unit, project, or course?

	Not Allowed	Allowed, But Not Encouraged	Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged	Required
Students can choose how they want to be assessed from multiple options (such as taking a written or verbal test, writing a paper, completing a project, making a presentation, etc.)					
Students are able to take summative assessments when they are ready to demonstrate their learning, even if that is earlier or later than other students do the same.					

How would you describe your school's policies and preferences about teachers taking the following actions when students do not pass (or meet minimum performance levels on) summative assessments in a class or course?

	Not Allowed	Allowed But Not Encouraged	Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged	Required
Allow the student to demonstrate understanding using a different type of assessment.					
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date with no penalty for needing the reassessment.					
Allow the student to retake or revise the assessment at a later date, but with a penalty (i.e., reducing their grade) because they didn't pass the first time.					
Arrange for the student to receive additional instructional support (such as during school, after school, or during the summer).					

When determining whether a student will pass and receive credit for a course (or set of learning outcomes), what is your school's policy about the maximum amount that teachers are allowed to count each of the following toward the final grade?

	Not allowed to count toward course grade	**Allowed to count up to 10% of course grade**	**Allowed to count up to 20% of course grade**	**Allowed to count more than 20% of course grade**	**School does not have a policy about this**
Attendance					
Participation in class					
Meeting deadlines (i.e., the grade is lowered if work is not submitted by a date set by the teacher).					
Student performance on formative assessments (i.e., practices that monitor student progress and help students reflect on their progress).					
Student performance on summative assessments (i.e., demonstrating mastery of learning outcomes).					

How much do the following statements reflect current schoolwide policies and practices in your school?

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
Students can pass and get credit as soon as they meet all required learning outcomes in a class or course, even if it's not the end of a marking period or school year.					
Students are placed in classes based on the level of mastery they have demonstrated, not based on their age or grade level.					
Students can earn full course credit toward in-school promotion or graduation for courses they take outside of school, such as summer, online, or college courses.					
Students can earn school credit for demonstrating mastery of learning outcomes through activities they do outside of school, such as independent or group projects or activities, service learning, or work-based learning.					

How true are the following statements about your school's grading practices?

	Never True	Occasionally True	Often True	True Most of the Time	Always True
Student progress is reported to students and families with traditional letter grades (A-F).					
Student progress is reported to students and families on whether or not the student has demonstrated mastery of specific learning outcomes.					
Students at our school do not "fail" courses or have to "repeat" a grade level. Instead, they receive credit for learning outcomes they have already mastered, and they need to work toward mastery of the remaining learning outcomes.					
To pass and receive credit, students must demonstrate mastery of ALL learning outcomes in a course. For example, if they have an "F" or "Insufficient Evidence" grade on some learning outcomes, they have to improve their mastery of those learning outcomes, even if they have an "A" or "Meeting" grade on all of the other learning outcomes in the course.					

How often does your school offer scheduled intervention/enrichment blocks where students can receive personalized supports from their teachers or other school personnel?

- Never
- Less Than Once Per Month
- At Least Once Per Month
- Once Per Week
- Twice or More Per Week

In addition to academic content knowledge, some schools focus on **"habits of success"** such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, and others. (Some schools call these "personal success skills," "work habits," "habits of work and learning (HOWLs)," "social-emotional skills, and other names.)

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Helping students build habits of success is a high priority for my school.					

Student progress on developing habits of success (such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, or others) is reported to students and/or families in the following ways: (check all that apply)

a. Using numeric or letter grades.
b. Using categories such as “developing,” “applying,” and “extending” or similar descriptive terms.
c. Using written comments that are customized to each student.
d. Progress on habits of success is not reported to students or families.

Please describe your level of preparedness to lead your school in implementing mastery-based learning practices.

	Not Prepared	A Little Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Very Prepared
How well prepared are you to lead your school in implementing MBL practices today?				
How well prepared were you to lead your school in implementing MBL practices at the beginning of this school year?				

Resources for Deepening Mastery-Based Learning

To deepen your school's implementation of mastery-based learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education, how would you rate the relative investment of time, resources, and/or supports needed in the following areas?

	Lower Need	Moderate Need	Highest Need
Building staff understanding of what MBL and CRSE are.			
Increasing staff's belief in the importance of MBL and CRSE.			
Increasing families' belief in the importance of MBL and CRSE.			
Building curriculum and assessments that support MBL and CRSE.			
Revising grading and reporting procedures to support MBL and CRSE.			
Revising school policies to support MBL and CRSE.			
Creating a school schedule that supports MBL and CRSE.			

To deepen your school's implementation of mastery-based learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education, how would you rate the relative investment of time, resources, and/or supports needed in the following areas?

	Lower Need	Moderate Need	Highest Need
Engaging in sufficient professional learning to deepen MBL and CRSE.			
Obtaining or integrating technology resources that support MBL and CRSE.			
Devoting sufficient time to deepening MBL and CRSE.			
Securing funding needed to implement MBL and CRSE.			
Securing staff needed to support MBL and CRSE implementation (such as coaches or instructional leaders).			
Obtaining support for MBL and CRSE from district administrators and/or the school board.			

In your school's professional learning activities this year, how useful were the following topics for deepening your school's work in mastery-based learning and/or culturally responsive-sustaining education?

	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Not Addressed
Implementing strategies that give students more voice and choice in their learning.				
Implementing project-based learning.				
Implementing multidisciplinary learning with collaboration between teachers.				
Using a variety of formative assessments.				
Using a variety of summative assessments, including performance-based assessments.				

In your school's professional learning activities this year, how useful were the following topics for deepening your school's work in mastery-based learning and/or culturally responsive-sustaining education?

	Not Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Not Addressed
Implementing strategies for equitable, culturally responsive-sustaining education.				
Managing a learning environment where students are working at different paces and on different learning outcomes.				
Developing personalized learning goals with and for students.				
Organizing learning around higher-level competencies that describe the transferable knowledge and skills students are expected to master.				
Helping students develop "habits of success" such as communication, collaboration, self-direction, etc.				

What are three or more of the most important factors that are facilitating your school's transition to mastery-based learning?

What are three or more of the most important challenges you face or supports you need to facilitate your school's transition to mastery-based learning?

As a final question, we welcome any other comments you want to share related to your school's MBL/CRSE journey.

This is the end of the survey.

Thank you very much for sharing your opinions and experiences, which will support MBLC schools and inform mastery-based learning efforts in Washington and beyond. To learn more, visit the MBLC website, https://sites.google.com/greatschoolspartnership.org/mblc-community/home?pli=1

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End-of-Survey Message If Responded "None of the Above" to Question 1

Thank you for your willingness to participate, but this survey is intended for administrators, guidance counselors, and leaders of MBLC school teams. To learn more about mastery-based learning in Washington, visit the MBLC website, https://sites.google.com/greatschoolspartnership.org/mblc-community/home?pli=1

Some survey items were used or adapted from the sources below. We appreciate the contributions of the authors and their organizations.

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