



# From Shared Purpose to Learner Impact

Partnering with South Carolina  
to Prepare Young People  
for the Future



## Bridging the Gap: Programs and Partnerships Turning Education Policy into Classroom Action

When a new education policy is adopted by a state, one frequent need is to bridge the gap between a policy's intended purpose and its impact on classroom practice. Within that gap, we often find a complex ecosystem of system transformation, resource design, and professional learning partners, who develop implementation tools, provide direct support to educators, and guide capacity-building and pilot research. Those programs and partnerships are at the heart of bringing policies from “sounds good on paper” to meaningful action and application.



## Unveiling the Blueprint of Competency-Based Education in South Carolina: A Five-Year Journey in Transforming Vision into Scalable Action

### *Case in point:*

South Carolina has been engaged in the development and rollout of a **competency-based framework** for putting the state's Profile of a Graduate into action. **reDesign** founder Antonia Rudenstine and Stephanie DiStasio, the Director of the **South Carolina Office of Personalized Learning**, sat down to unpack the nuts and bolts of the SC journey as a model for other states

taking on competency-based education within a large-scale system that includes a sophisticated web of transformation drivers.

**In this report, we offer a glimpse at the flagship elements of our shared strategy, looking back at five years of moving from establishing vision and purpose to sustaining and scaling the efforts of early adopters.**

### *Key Elements of Success*

- **Competency-Based Framework:** reDesign pivotal in developing and rolling out for South Carolina's Profile of a Graduate.
- **Expert Insights:** Antonia Rudenstine and Stephanie DiStasio provide in-depth analysis.
- **Model for States:** Blueprint for competency-based education at a large scale.
- **Transformation Drivers:** Navigating a complex web of influential factors.
- **Strategic Journey:** Five-year evolution from vision to sustained scalability.
- **Early Adoption Impact:** Learnings from and support for early adopters.

# VISION & PURPOSE STRATEGY

*“The coalition of the willing is a really good place to start.”*

- STEPHANIE DISTASIO, SC OFFICE OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

When South Carolina decided that they wanted to align their **Profile of a Graduate** with future-ready learning progressions, the state drew a clear line between the Profile’s end goals and a competency-based approach to getting there. But, the core **structures and tools** used to shape that path towards measurable learning outcomes weren’t mandated or set in stone - in fact, they were continually workshopped by stakeholders along with **reDesign as expert partners** on a collaborative, opt-in basis. Flexibility waivers for implementing this new personalized, competency-based learning (PCBL) system allowed early adopters to choose among multiple programmatic and coaching support options according to their readiness, which DiStasio believes contributed to a mindset of “we get to do this - we don’t have to do this”. She also emphasized that “the coalition of the willing is a really good place to start”. As Rudenstine echoed, those initial coalitions of highly interested educators then became part of “a vision for what adult **capacity-building**” can look like.

SEE THE SC GRADUATE COMPETENCIES

## What we did at the outset

- **Focused on the design** of an **aligned competency framework** that made the Profile **measurable**
- **Built state leader capacity** alongside educators in a co-learner model
- **Established frequent, transparent communication** about progress towards implementing the framework, along with support options



VISION & PURPOSE

STRATEGY

DESIGN & PRACTICES

LEARNING & IMPACT

SUSTAIN & SCALE

### VISION & PURPOSE

#### POLICY FOR PURPOSE

Prepare SC’s young people for the future

- **Require Outcomes:** Profile of a SC Grad
- **Opt-in Inputs:** Future-ready progression by competency

#### COLLECTIVE VISION

- Stakeholder development of Profile of a SC Grad
- ★ **Identify expert partners**
- Competency Framework Design
- Stakeholder feedback on future-ready Competencies

### STRATEGY

#### ALIGNED OPT-IN POLICY

- Teacher Evaluation by Competency
- Flexibility Waivers for PCBL implementing

#### STRATEGY

- ★ **Build SCDE capacity**
- Coalition of the WILLING & READY
- Multiple offerings at 3 levels
- ★ **Continually share the story, wins, and offerings**
- Continually connect SCDE initiatives

★ *Flagship Elements of reDesign Strategy*

DESIGN & PRACTICES

*“This was going to be an iterative process from the start.”*

- ANTONIA RUDENSTINE, REDESIGN

Much of the support offered to K-12 educators, coaches, and leaders in South Carolina was intended to evolve over time as teachers used the competencies as a frame for skill and strategy development within their instruction and assessment. As Rudenstine emphasized, “this was going to be an iterative process from the start”, allowing for the **design of toolkits**, asynchronous learning modules, micro-credential libraries, and policy flexibility guidelines that aligned with the realities of implementation. Stephanie noted that being comfortable with “not knowing” exactly what teachers would need right away created a sense of openness and responsiveness that became a guiding principle. Even though “we didn’t know how to design for that” combination of uncertainty and possibility, it allowed for refinements and resource additions within varied communities of practice as they tried out pieces of the puzzle. Our coaching pilots also incorporated career & technical education, in recognition of those fields as an valuable forum for competency development.

*What shaped our journey:*

- **Designing implementation toolkits** to equip educators to take ownership of the work
- **Providing intensive coaching supports** across multiple sites and contexts
- **Creating a blended fellowship** that **supported leaders** in competency-based learning in parallel with educator coaching



DESIGN & PRACTICES

**DESIGNS**

- ▢ Policy Flexibility Guide & Playbook
- ▢ Async modules
- ★ **Toolkits for teachers & system leaders**
- ▢ Micro-credential library

**PRACTICES**

- ★ **Blended CBL Leader Fellowship**
- ▢ Communities of Practice
- ★ **K12 District & School Coaching Pilots:**
  - ▢ Instructional coaches
  - ▢ Teachers
  - ▢ CTE Teachers

★ *Flagship Elements of reDesign Strategy*



LEARNING & IMPACT

SUSTAIN & SCALE

*“When we take next steps, districts won’t have to figure out measuring and reporting out on their own”*

- STEPHANIE DISTASIO, SC OFFICE OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished as we move closer to the eventual goal of 100% district engagement across the state and the growth of our coaching network. As with many school-based programs and partnerships, DiStasio emphasized that, “by their very nature, these things are not static”. But at the same time, because of what we’ve been able to test-drive and operationalize in service of meaningful, competency-based learning, “when we take next steps, districts won’t have to figure out measuring and reporting out on their own”. In addition, because we know a great deal more about educators’ needs and pain points than we did at the outset, we’re better equipped to address them as SC continues to **iterate our designs and practices**, balancing local context with policy and program cohesion.



LEARNING & IMPACT

LEARNING

- ★ **Piloting & Iterating on Designs & Practices**
- ★ **Adapting, adding and ending programs**

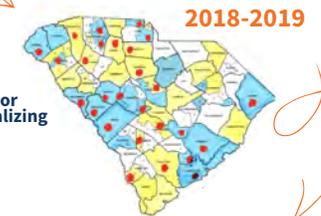
- Identifying needs & pain points to address

IMPACT

- ★ **Toolkit: Measuring PCBL**
- Continuous Data Collection & Analysis
- Annual Impact Reporting

★ *Flagship Elements of reDesign Strategy*

SUSTAIN & SCALE



**THE GOAL IN 2022-2023**  
**100% DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT**

*Next* { **Statewide** Reporting on Outcomes  
**Statewide** Competency-based CARES Initiative

*What we did at the outset*

- **Importance of being open to adaptation** as new programs joined, others phased out, and we contended with the implications of COVID on coaching models
- **Key role of continuous data collection and analysis** in reporting on outcomes
- **Need for a toolkit that guided educators** through how to measure PCBL in their own settings



# Design Principles

## FOR ROBUST, SYSTEMIC, CAPACITY-BUILDING MODELS



### Design for your context

Figure out what will work **politically, culturally** and **systemically**



### Strategically collaborate with partners

to **develop leadership capacity, materials, models,** and **existence proofs**



### Ensure your model can evolve and change

as **new outcomes, needs,** and **initiatives** emerge



### Continually engage

a **broadbase of stakeholders**



### Create multiple entry-points with different:

- content,
- levels, duration, pace, and intensity
- For **adults** with **different band-width, understandings** and **competencies**



### Develop multiple pathways with multiple modalities:

- Modules & Tools:** Text, video, audio, mixed-media
- Learning Opportunities:** synchronous, asynchronous & blended



### Bring research and data to bear



### Solicit & respond to feedback

Want to read more about national trends in competency-based education and models of co-learning that engage both system leaders and educators?

Check out **our piece in Getting Smart**, which provides examples from **Wyoming, South Carolina,** and **Massachusetts**.

