

Curriculum Review Executive Summary

Board of Education Brief

Center Cass School District 66 | June 2026

Purpose

Over the past several years, Center Cass 66 has made a significant investment in building a Competency-Based Education (CBE) system that reflects its mission to challenge, inspire, and empower every learner. This curriculum review was designed to celebrate that progress while identifying opportunities to strengthen and sustain the district's work over the next three to five years.

The findings are based on three complementary sources of evidence:

- Curriculum materials analysis
- Classroom learning walks
- Focus groups with teachers, instructional coaches, and interventionists

Together, these provide a comprehensive picture of the written, taught, and experienced curriculum across the district. Detailed findings are included in the accompanying report.

What We Celebrate

Perhaps the most important finding from this review is not what needs to change but it is what already exists.

Center Cass has established a strong foundation for competency-based learning. Across classrooms, educators demonstrate a deep commitment to students, and instructional practices consistently reflect high expectations and meaningful learning experiences.

Several strengths emerged consistently across every component of the review.

Strong Instructional Practice

Learning walks showed classrooms where students were doing the intellectual work, explaining their thinking, solving problems, and demonstrating understanding beyond simple recall. Assessment practices consistently emphasized evidence of learning rather than simply arriving at correct answers.

High-Quality Learning Experiences

Curriculum materials consistently provided developmentally appropriate tasks that encouraged reasoning, critical thinking, and real-world application. Teachers have built engaging learning experiences despite working across multiple curriculum resources.

Exceptional Educator Commitment

Perhaps the clearest message from staff was not resistance to Competency-Based Education but it was commitment. Teachers, instructional coaches, and interventionists have invested significant time creating alignment, developing resources, and refining instruction despite limited centralized systems. This level of ownership represents one of the district's greatest assets moving forward.

The district should recognize these accomplishments as evidence that its investment in Competency-Based Education is producing a strong instructional culture upon which future improvements can be built.

Looking Ahead: A 3-5 Year Strategic Opportunity

As with most districts implementing systemic instructional change, the next phase is less about launching new initiatives and more about strengthening coherence and consistency across the system.

Evidence from curriculum materials, classroom observations, and educator feedback points to one overarching opportunity: building on the district's strong foundation by creating a more coherent, districtwide instructional system. Doing so will help ensure all students experience high-quality, competency-based learning regardless of classroom or grade level.

This work should unfold thoughtfully over the next three to five years at a pace that aligns with the district's internal capacity, staffing, and available resources. Rather than prescribing specific implementation timelines, the Board's role is to monitor progress toward the strategic priorities, ensuring the district continues to build educator capacity, strengthen system coherence, and achieve its long-term vision for student learning.

Recommendation 1	Build the System: Strengthen Instructional System While classrooms consistently demonstrate high-quality instruction, students may experience different pathways to competency depending on grade level or classroom. Creating greater coherence across curriculum, learning progressions, and instructional resources will help ensure every student experiences the same high expectations and opportunities for success. By developing a coherent instructional system with clearly defined learning
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progressions, the district can ensure every student experiences a seamless path toward mastery from kindergarten through eighth grade while continuing to honor teacher expertise and flexibility in instructional delivery.

Next steps:

- Develop district-wide curriculum and pacing guides that align standards, competencies, and instructional resources.
- Create vertically aligned learning progressions that clearly articulate how knowledge and skills build across grade levels.
- Identify priority benchmarks and an implementation sequence that aligns with district capacity (e.g. calendar, knowledge, resources) and ongoing curriculum initiatives.
- Establish structures for teachers to collaboratively calibrate expectations and refine instructional alignment over time.

Recommendation 2 **Build the People: Long-Term Capacity Through Professional Learning**

One of the strongest themes across focus groups was appreciation for instructional coaching and collaborative learning opportunities. Staff consistently identified coaching, planning time, and job-embedded professional learning as essential to sustaining Competency-Based Education.

As curriculum systems mature, continued investment in educator learning will remain essential not as a short-term initiative, but as an ongoing organizational commitment.

Long-term success will depend less on adopting additional resources and more on strengthening educators' collective capacity to implement the district's vision consistently across classrooms.

Next steps:

- Develop a multi-year professional learning plan aligned to the district's strategic priorities and competency-based vision.
- Continue investing in instructional coaching and job-embedded learning that supports implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices.
- Establish regular opportunities for teachers to collaborate, calibrate expectations, and share effective practices across schools and grade levels.

Final Reflection

This review affirms the meaningful progress Center Cass 66 has made in building a strong foundation for Competency-Based Education. With committed educators, high-quality instructional practices, and a clear vision for student learning already in place, the district is well positioned for its next phase of growth.

The district's upcoming strategic plan provides an opportunity to establish a more coherent instructional system. Over the next three to five years, focusing on system coherence, learning progressions, and educator capacity can create more consistent learning experiences for students while building on the strong foundation already in place.