

# Families' GUIDE

to

# Customized Learning

## What is Customized Learning?

Educators that use a Customized Learning approach know that everyone learns differently and at their own pace. With this approach, specific strengths, interests and needs of each learner are tied with a personalized pathway to success.

A unique learning path is created for the learner based on the whole child, not just their academic scores.



## Why do educators use Customized Learning?

- Each learner is given unique, individualized learning experiences.
- Learners are able to take more ownership in their learning and have a voice in their education.
- Each learner has a tailored pathway to success. This approach focuses on the individual child.

## Customized Learning Common Language

### Customized Learning

Also called personalized learning & competency based learning

### Whole Child

An educational approach that nurtures all areas of a child's development and growth, not just academics

### Blended Learning

Combines face-to-face and online learning experiences

For more examples of common language used, see the Families' Guide on Common Language

## What does Customized Learning look like?

Although it may vary by state, district, and school, here a few commonly found techniques and strategies:

### Learners set goals

for themselves with the help of their families and teachers.



### Learners are given many opportunities

outside of standardized testing to show their knowledge/understanding of a concept.

### Educators use digital tools

to enhance learning paths.





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## Customized Learning: Learner Lens

### What should learners in a customized learning and competency based setting be experiencing?

Below are some examples of what each student should experience in this type of setting.

→ I am given opportunities to learn skills that allow me to practice and take responsibility of my own independent learning.

→ I can take ownership in my own education by learning in ways that are most effective for me with guidance and support.

→ Rather than measuring my progress by time in the classroom, level of participation, or effort, my individual learning is measured through progress on specific learning targets.

→ I can dive deeper into interesting topics and advance to the next level as soon as I can show evidence that my skills are proficient in that area.

→ I can easily access my learning targets and I understand what it means to be proficient in each of those targets.

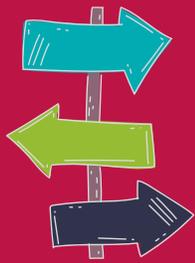
→ I have the opportunity to learn with flexibility at any time. I can take more time when I need it to go deeper, pursue different ways of learning that are relevant to me, and to master different skills.

→ My grades and scores help me to know what I need to do to reach my learning goals and to improve my learning process with help from my teachers and support system.

→ I feel safe and have a deep sense of belonging at my school. I feel that my culture, my community's culture, and my voice are valued. I see that everyone at the school is committed to helping me learn.

→ I know where I am on my learning path and my social-emotional development by receiving instruction, guidance, and timely feedback from my teachers.

→ I have full support from my teachers in developing knowledge and skills to apply what I've learned in real world situations, and to be a lifelong learner.



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# Common Language used in Customized Learning

## 20 Commonly Used Words & Phrases

Customized Learning includes many different terms and concepts. Check out this list of words and phrases you may hear!

### **Blended Learning**

Combines face-to-face and online learning experiences

### **Climate of a school**

The school's effects on students, including teaching practices, cultural sensitivity, and the relationships between school staff, teachers, parents, and students

### **Competency**

The ability to do something successfully or efficiently

### **Competency Based Education**

Also known as Competency Based Instruction, allows learners to move forward as they master skills at their own pace

### **Competency Based Learning**

The type of instruction, assessment, and grading that is based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education

### **Competency Based Grading**

A system of grading based on the knowledge and skills learners must demonstrate in each grade level and subject area

### **Culture of a school**

The set of beliefs, values, and common practices teachers and staff share and uphold in a school

### **Curriculum**

A collection of lessons, assessments, and other academic content for a certain subject area

### **Customized Learning**

Also called personalized learning. An educational approach, when specific strengths, interests and needs of each learner are tied with a personalized pathway to success

### **Growth Mindset**

The idea that, with effort, it's possible to increase a learner's intelligence levels, talents, and abilities

### **Knowledge Rich Instruction**

Lessons and other academic content designed to build on what learners already know as they progress

### **Learning Management System (LMS)**

Software for educators that tracks the learning and progress of students

### **Learning Tracks**

Specific classes, programs, and learning experiences that are tailored for individual learners based on their strengths, interests, and needs

### **Mastery Tracking**

A way of keeping track of learned (mastered) skills and knowledge gained by learners

### **Online Learning**

Also known as e-learning and distance learning, education that takes place online

### **Problem Based Learning**

Learners develop problem solving skills like asking critical questions, brainstorming, and using resources to find solutions and answers

### **Problem Based Teaching**

An educational approach that teaches problem solving skills and strategies for learners to apply in real world situations

### **Student Agency**

Gives students voice and often, choice, in how and what they learn

### **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Guidelines educators can apply to help learners access and participate in challenging and meaningful learning experiences

### **Whole Child**

An educational approach that nurtures all areas of a child's development and growth, not just academics





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## Customized Learning: FAQs

### What is the Difference between Standards-Based and Competency-Based Education?

Standards-based grading measures students' proficiency on well-defined course objectives.

Under a competency-based education system, learners advance through content or earn credit based on demonstration of their knowledge of the content or subject rather than seat time.

### What are the benefits of Competency-Based Education?

- This allows the educator to focus on the child individually, rather than just their test scores.
- Learners are given multiple opportunities to show their knowledge and understanding of content- not just a final test.
- Each learner has a tailored pathway to success.

### What does it mean when we talk about 'whole child'?

When educators talk about 'whole child', they are speaking about learners as people, not just as students. This approach to education fully encompasses the child, from their prior experiences, to their strengths and areas of interest.

It is important to help our children reach their full potential. The whole child approach teaches skills that go beyond academia and will help them in their future endeavors.

### Are computer adaptive programs the driving force here?

While computer adaptive programs are helpful tools when it comes to customized learning, they are not the driving force behind the personalization of your learners' education.

Learners can practice skills and gain confidence with those skills while using specific online programs. Educators will be the primary guide for each individual when creating a learning path for each child.

