



# CHARLESTON

C U S D N U M B E R O N E

District Administration Office • [www.charleston.k12.il.us](http://www.charleston.k12.il.us)

Phone: (217) 639-1000

410 West Polk Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920

Fax: (217) 639-1005

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am excited to share with you that your child is in a Competency Based “Pilot” Classroom. Don’t worry! That doesn’t mean it’s an “experiment” or that it’s “new” standards. In fact, your child may have had a Competency Based Pilot teacher last year, so you may already be excited about this fact. The teachers are still following district curricula and your child will still learn what other students in the same grade will be learning...AND MORE! Being in a “pilot” classroom means that your child’s teacher has volunteered to be a leader for the Charleston School District. He/She will work towards developing competency-based practices throughout the year, with plenty of support.

I will say, however, that this school year is different than any other school year, isn’t it!? Our teachers are currently preparing for remote learning. They are also faced with the challenges of a shortened day, catching students up from learning loss from last Spring, and developing a classroom community without students physically present at school. The Competency Based pilot teachers are under additional stress with the added responsibility of teaching during a global pandemic while trying to implement innovative practices. We ask that you face this year with extra patience and forgiveness for the teachers’ implementation of Competency Based Education, in particular.

I have prepared some *information* to share with you (attached), to help you better understand what this means, what the benefits are, and what you and your child might expect. Please read and reflect on this information. I’d be happy to answer any questions you may have. You may not recognize any difference in your child’s classroom at all, especially not right away. CUSD1, like many other districts across the country, is transitioning away from “seat time” or traditional time-based education. Competency Based Learning will provide opportunities and increased flexibility for our students. Allowing students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of both academic content and personal skills will mean that our students should be fully prepared for success in life after high school.

There were 24 teachers in Grades K-12 who participated last year. This year 26 teachers will be part of the Competency Based Education “pilot program”. These teachers may begin implementing personalized learning into their instructional practices for *one subject area*. They will provide leadership and guidance for the rest of the district in future years, as we implement Competency Based Education throughout the district. These teachers have participated in summer professional development, including book study and collaboration to develop plans and materials. The pilot teachers will continue to work together throughout the year. I will provide ongoing support for their work every step of the way. Your child’s teacher is innovative and passionate about implementing change!

Some important things I would encourage you to do this year:

- Be patient if routines or communication changes. The teachers are trying new ways to better meet the needs of their students and that might look different as the year goes on.

LEARNING AND LEADING EVERY DAY



# CHARLESTON

---

C U S D N U M B E R O N E

**District Administration Office** • [www.charleston.k12.il.us](http://www.charleston.k12.il.us)

Phone: (217) 639-1000

410 West Polk Avenue, Charleston, IL 61920

Fax: (217) 639-1005

- Be supportive of their efforts. This is difficult, yet very meaningful and beneficial for your child. They decided to do this because they strongly believe it is best for students. It shows they are committed to their work. Please support them along the way.
- Keep lines of communication open with both the teacher and your child. If concerns or questions arise, please contact them directly to avoid frustration setting in. Talk to your child about their experience and what information they might share about the classroom.
- Continue to be partners in your child's education. One of the major changes with competency-based practices is increased student awareness of their academic strengths and needs, student ownership of growth goals, and student independence. These are all important life skills that we will be promoting as the year goes on. Please ask your child about their progress in meeting their learning goals and ways they can show their teacher evidence of learning.

We are so genuinely grateful to work in a community with such supportive families and such innovative teachers. This is truly an exciting initiative that will have significant benefits for Charleston School District students.

Yours in Education,

Kristen Holly

Asst. Superintendent for Student Services