

Curriculum Corner



THE OFFICIAL CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER OF SAU 7

INFORMATIVE COLLEGE PANEL ZOOM

On the evening of January 16, 2025, approximately nine parents, one principal, and one student attended a Zoom meeting where four college admissions officers answered questions for several concerned parents following SAU 7's transition to Competency-Based Education. Representatives from the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, Colby-Sawyer College, and St. Anselm's College were in attendance and answered questions for approximately 30 minutes. During that time, the following questions and answers were asked and received of the college representatives:

- *Do you see a variety of transcripts? What are the main components you absolutely need to see on a transcript?*
 - **Colby Sawyer:** We see all transcripts you can imagine- 4.0, 5.0, competency-based, transcriptional.... We absolutely do not penalize students for being on a competency based scale.
 - **UNH:** No transcript has ever been held negatively against a student, we just need to make sure we have the information to make that good decision.
 - **PSU:** We have to trust the schools that send students. We rely on schools to provide information we need. We use the 4.0 rubric for scholarships and for schools that don't already have it, we have to do a lot of work on the back end to translate it.
 - **St. Anselm:** Territory managers read transcripts for particular areas and we are not afraid to reach out to school counselors with clarifying questions. We will never penalize a student for their transcript. We have seen it all!
 - **UNH:** We've seen a big push in New Hampshire in the last 10 or so years where there are several schools that have gone to competency based scales. It's not just New Hampshire; we have students from out of state schools as well applying from competency based schools. We just need to have the information available regarding the context of the courses and the grading scale.
- *Will a competency-based transcript create confusion in the admissions process? Will a student coming from a competency based system in any way harm a student's chances of admittance?*
 - Collective "no" from the group.
- *Do you find students come from a competency based high school arrive more/less prepared?*
 - **Colby Sawyer:** We don't see students more nor less prepared. A competency-based transcript is another way to get insight into the student as to their academic development over the years. Competency based transcripts allow us more detail and insight on their academic career more-so than just seeing an A or B or a 100 point scale but again, it's not held against a student in any way.

- **St. Anselm:** We look at each student on an individual basis.
- *Does a competency based transcript affect students with disabilities in any way?*
 - Collective “no” from the group.
- *Is there anything else you would like to share that has not already been said?*
 - **PSU:** Place trust in the school. A shift like this is not made lightly and I’m sure a lot of research and discussion has gone into this with the ultimate goal being the success of the students. When something like this happens it’s not taken lightly; have trust with the school that they’re headed in the right direction.
 - **St. Anselm:** We are in this field because we care about students and their education. We would never do anything to penalize students and are always looking to do what’s in the best interest of the student.

Following these questions, several parent inquiries were met with very informative and helpful responses. I highly recommend taking a few minutes to listen to the Zoom recording and review the brief slideshow, which includes additional information from the colleges and universities that attended, as well as those unable to attend. To access this content, visit sau7.org, navigate to “Departments” > “Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment” > and click on “Presentation Recordings” at the top of the page.

The admissions officers shared that they see a wide variety of transcripts but emphasized that as long as the school details, GPA, and scale are clearly presented and easy to read, they can work with them. They also mentioned their comfort level in reaching out to school counselors with any questions and appreciated having as much information as possible to help in their evaluations.

As a reminder, in SAU 7, all Standard/General courses are weighted on a 4.0 scale, all Honors/Challenging courses are weighted on a 4.5 scale, and all Dual Enrollment/Early College Classes (Running Start) are weighted on a 5.0 scale. This information, along with the total number of credits attempted, total credits awarded, and student GPA are listed on our transcripts. We are also working closely with Alma to learn how to add information such as student assessment scores (i.e., SAT scores) and extra-curricular activities, such as clubs and athletics, to student transcripts.

If you still have questions about college admittance or would like to discuss this further, please feel free to reach out to Curriculum Director Jenn Mathieu, your school principal, or your school counselor. We are here to help!

~ In Our Schools ~

Former middle school English teacher at Colebrook Academy & Elementary School Kathi Lawton-Haynes shares, “I have taken a new position this year as a Title I teacher. I am really enjoying working with the younger students in grades K-5. I work with these students to help them improve their Reading and Math skills. It has been exciting to work more closely with students individually or in small groups. My favorite thing about teaching is watching these students learn and grow!”

