SPRING LAKE PARK SCHOOLS

Terms to Know
Comptency-Based Learning

Spring Lake Park Schools takes a personalized, competency-based approach to learning. This focus makes sure each learner experiences success and is prepared for their unique next steps. These are terms we use.

Competency: The most enduring concepts from each content area and the skills and mindsets needed to be successful in school and beyond. These are the big ideas, often interdisciplinary, that answer for learners "why" something is worth learning. Because competencies are the deepest level of learning, they cycle through all grade levels and grow and develop throughout their time at Spring Lake Park Schools.

Competency-Based Learning: An approach to learning and teaching that centers around deep learning experiences, personalization, and equity to ensure a student learns each concept deeply before moving to the next. The approach focuses on:

- being transparent with students, staff and families about what the learning outcomes are and the progress being made
- personalizing the learning to each learner by providing opportunities to take more time on things that are difficult and go faster through things understood quickly
- requiring learners to apply and transfer their learning to real situations and in authentic ways

Academic Competencies: Competencies specific to each academic content area (Math, Science, English Language Arts, Social Studies, etc.) and aligned to Minnesota state standards. Competencies represent the most critical concepts from that discipline. There are typically 4-8 competencies in each content area. Competencies are consistent from Kindergarten through 12th grade and grow in complexity as students progress.

Career and Life Competencies: Competencies specific to the skills and mindsets needed for success in school and beyond. These competencies span all content areas and grade levels. Spring Lake Park Schools has identified seven career and life competencies: self-direction, collaboration, digital citizenship and wellness, civic and cultural awareness, communication, critical thinking, and creativity and innovation.

Competency criteria: The smaller learning goals within an overall competency.

Performance levels: Indications of where a student is at in their learning for each competency criteria. Teachers indicate where they see a student is at in their learning for each piece of evidence and at points in time overall (end of a timester). Performance levels include:

- Beginning: Starting to grasp concept
- In progress: Showing growth and learning of concepts
- Proficient: Showing strong understanding and application of concepts
- Extending: Making connections between your learning and other concepts, real life situations, etc.

Over time, the goal is to gain proficiency. Students might gain proficiency for some concepts quickly and for others more slowly.

Rubric (or competency rubric): A tool tied to competency criteria that clearly describes what the learning looks like at each performance level. Students and teachers use rubrics to assess student work, determine where the student is at in their learning, and identify next steps.

Evidence of Learning (or evidence): Anything a student produces to demonstrate their learning. This might be a project, test, quiz, paper or a simple observation or conversation that shows what the learner knows and/or can do.

No Evidence (or NE): A way to report when students have had an opportunity to show their understanding of a concept but have not shared any evidence with their teacher.

Not Introduced (or NI): A way to report when content has not yet been introduced or taught to a student.

Not Yet (or NY): A way to report when content has been taught but a student has not yet demonstrated a level of learning that meets any of the performance levels.

Learning Progression: The most foundational knowledge and skills for a particular grade level and content area. When they are missing, learning progressionis can create a gap for a learner as they move to the next course or grade level.