

The Dangers of Competency-based Education and How H. 4596 Will Fail SC Children



What is Competency-based Education (CBE)?

Imagine 5th Grade students learning how to divide. Under CBE, each child logs in to a computer which guides them through (Common Core) concepts of division. The computer system regularly checks to see if the child has understood what has been “taught” by testing their competency. If an expectation is not met, a child must repeat the drill again and again until they meet the predetermined outcome. No need to prepare and no need to strive to do better; just do enough to get by and move on to the next standard.

The CBE model further undermines parental authority and data privacy.

H. 4596 mandates emphasis on “World Class Skills and Life and Career Characteristics.” The required competencies are values, attitudes and beliefs. Historically, parents have been responsible for teaching these subjective matters, but under Common Core and CBE, a computer teaches and evaluates competency for values, attitudes and beliefs.

H. 4596 mandates students continue to take federally-mandated, Common Core-aligned tests. The child’s computer collects data with every keystroke, and students are included in the federal, seamless P-20W education data base to develop human capital for the workforce.

CBE restricts innovation and flexibility, erodes local control, and increases spending.

Measuring mandated competencies and complying with state guidelines under CBE will remove what little local control is left for communities to determine what is in the best interest of their students. Furthermore, the bill’s impact statement admits the costs to local districts are unknown. H. 4596 is an unfunded mandate for local districts and will cost taxpayers at least \$7 million in new state education spending each year.

CBE ultimately eliminates the need for teachers.

Students no longer learn from teachers – they are taught and graded by a computer. Common Core and CBE relegates a teacher to facilitator. A teacher’s professional knowledge is no longer necessary, and a lower paid clerk could be hired to facilitate the computer-based learning.

CBE, like Common Core is unproven, and H. 4596 renders South Carolina children guinea pigs.

There is no evidence of improved academic achievement with this latest, Gates-funded, national education fad. In fact, a two-year study done after a similar law was passed in Maine demonstrates lower academic performance among students taught with the CBE model.

If not CBE, what policies would improve South Carolina’s education system?

1. To return local control and foster innovation, SC must wean itself off federal funds starting with a cost analysis for federal compliance. 8% of SC education \$ are federal.
2. To enable local incubators for excellence, remove most state-level mandates and bureaucracy. Cost savings should be returned to communities for local education needs.
3. To foster accountability and decentralize education, elect State Board of Education members and eliminate the Education Oversight Committee.
4. Return to the proven Classical Education model.