

KENTUCKY DIVES INTO BADGING!

*High School Micro-Credential Algebra 1 Pilot -
changing how students learn and earn grades*



Moving to Micro-Credential Badging

Written By Madison Baker- KCM Events Coordinator

An exciting new badging initiative is currently in the works for high schoolers in the state of Kentucky. On Monday, July 18th, educators from 7 districts in the commonwealth gathered with members of the Kentucky Department of Education, KCM, as well as XQ Institute and partners, to launch an innovative two-year pilot micro-credential badging system that will shift the learning in schools to a more equitable mindset. Gathered together in Lexington, district leaders and Algebra 1 teachers worked through thought provoking activities to brainstorm the best ways to improve Kentucky learning.

The framework will include six achievable badges that are based on Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS). It enables educators to collaborate and co-create methods for implementing the badging curriculum while aligning the classes to best meet the students' needs. Each badge framework features three central components: Mathematical Content and Practice Expectations, Learning Principles, and Evidence of Learning. With these three components, each badge a student earns will demonstrate their learning without

"I also love that the badging framework makes learning incremental, iterative, and allows students to see and take pride in their progress. Each badge a student earns demonstrates their learning without attaching qualifiers like a letter grade."



***- Rob Collins,
Kentucky Department of Education***

attaching qualifiers like a letter grade, and will provide motivation to learn. According to Rob Collins of the Kentucky Department of Education, "the badging framework honors and prioritizes student learning above all else". When you consider that in traditional systems a students' grades for an entire school year can be impacted by a variety of factors that are not always related to learning rather than focusing on

whether the students have mastered the content or not, it brings up the issue of equity in that some of these factors disproportionately affect our most disadvantaged students. With the badging framework in place, educators can put emphasis on what really matters; that students are demonstrating their learning and mastery of content.

In other words, rather than making a student re-take an entire course due to a poorly reflecting grade, a student can instead simply go back to re-learn the topic in which they struggled, while receiving positive and encouraging feedback. After mastery of all topics in the course curriculum, a student will earn a badge that shows their achievement. This will encourage students' motivation to learn, as well as allow for more personalized learning to assure that each students' different learning needs are being met.

Jennifer Carroll, Director of District-wide programs and Assistant Superintendent of Carter County, says they have already used micro-credentialing for educator professional learning in Carter County. After having their educators experience competency-based learning, Carroll says it has prompted them to wish they had micro-credential learning for their students, and they are excited to have that wish come true through this program. This new initiative is promising and will be the beginning of very exciting times for Kentucky educators and learners.

Teachers will be able to ensure the diverse needs of all students are being met with high-quality mathematics instruction while receiving the necessary support to be successful. The goal is to eliminate students being rushed through content without mastery of the topic for the sake of assessments. Mathematics is a subject area in which the content builds upon itself and prerequisite skills. Justin Arms, Principal of Johnson Central High School, says "students will now have evidence of those prerequisite skills being mastered before moving forward. I truly think this initiative will afford students the opportunity to really *learn* these fundamental concepts, close achievement gaps, and be put on a path to be successful".

Throughout the first year of this pilot, educators will gain a clearer understanding of this transformative initiative, and how to best implement it. "This new architecture for meaningful and engaging learning experiences is dedicated to rethinking high school so all students graduate ready to succeed in college, career and real life", says Ursulina Ramirez, Chief Program Officer of XQ Institute. "We are thrilled that Kentucky is taking on math, specifically Algebra 1, to improve outcomes and advance equity through the math micro-credential initiative."



Kentucky educators collaborating on the Micro-Credentialing initiative