



Personalized Education Components Chart

Components	Clarifications & Cautions
<p>Small Class Size: Teachers are better able to personalize learning if they do not have too many students on their roster.</p>	<p>Be careful with student/teacher ratio numbers, and instead insist on finding out how many students a teacher typically has (total, not per class taught). For example, one particular school claiming a 21:1 ratio in reality had teachers with over 200 students each.</p>
<p>Self-paced means self-paced: Students are able to move at an accelerated pace when able, but work more slowly through challenging concepts. Arbitrary due dates are not set except for specialized courses such as those that require team work (and students can opt to not take these types of courses).</p> <p>Also, students are allowed to take just one, two, or three classes at a time. Upon finishing one class, another can be started immediately.</p> <p>Students have access to course 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. Vacations can follow a calendar or be taken when convenient.</p>	<p>Some schools claiming “self-paced” in truth employ due dates. Their definition of self-paced is that the student can perhaps work a little ahead or at times of day they choose, or perhaps get a week extension on a due date. Ask if there are any set due dates for specific assignments or course completion. Also, ask if vacation time can be taken when convenient for the student and family.</p> <p>Most schools use a traditional model of six classes at a time. Ask if a student can just focus on completing one or two classes at a time. In addition, ask if a new class can be added at any point in the year, including the summer.</p>
<p>Teacher Access: Teachers are available through multiple means, meeting student scheduling needs and personal preferences. Live online classroom, email, telephone, and instant messaging are included in contact methods. Teachers connect with students weekly or more as needed; mentors/coaches connect with parents at least monthly; and both students and parents can also contact teachers as needed.</p>	<p>Some schools claiming weekly contact mean a contact from just one teacher even if the student has six. When evaluating teacher access, ask how often <i>each</i> teacher will be in contact with the student and parents. Also, ask how students and parents are able to reach teachers. Is a toll-free number made available?</p>
<p>Response Time: Teachers and support staff respond within one business day, usually same-day.</p>	<p>Always ask what the school policy is for turn-around time for emails and voice messages.</p>
<p>Tailored & Customized Instruction: Courses are able to be adjusted to better meet a student’s learning styles or specific goals/preferences, with active student input in the process. The same course competencies (goals) are mastered as would be through the pre-made course, maintaining rigor and quality while improving relevancy and meaningfulness for the student.</p>	<p>Determine if a course can have one or more lessons or units tailored to the student’s learning styles or interests, just so long the same learning goals are being met. Also, ask if a customized version of the course can be built from the ground-up, with active student input, just so long the same learning goals are met. Finally, ask if this can be done for all courses.</p>
<p>Mastery-Based Learning & Iterative Process: Students master each competency at 80% or greater. Students at less than 80% mastery are given extra support and learning opportunities, perhaps learning in a new way, until the student reaches the 80% mark. Students can also opt to continue learning to an even greater level of mastery, earning a higher grade.</p>	<p>When exploring programs, ask if students are able to redo lessons and continue working on a unit until achieving an A or B. Also ask if the teacher will modify the instruction or provide alternate means of learning the material, working with the student until he or she reaches mastery. In addition, ask if this can be done for every single lesson in every single class, guaranteed.</p>
<p>Authentic Learning Opportunities: Students are able to incorporate current life activities and experiential learning such as educational travel into their studies.</p>	<p>Ask if a course can be tailored or customized from the ground-up to include current student activities such as travel, community service, athletics, performing arts, and more.</p>
<p>Student Empowerment: Students are involved in their own education process, ranging from course election to customization.</p>	<p>Determine how much influence a student can have in selecting courses or even in designing learning options to meet course goals.</p>