

**THE NAVIGATOR**  
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Raising the Bar



## Essential Skills Framework is Key to YCCS Student Success

Three years ago, YCCS embarked on a serious mission. Executive Director Sheila Venson and her staff were concerned that while students were graduating high school with the necessary credits, many still lacked the reading, writing and math abilities to secure a good job or continue on to college. Venson's team decided to adjust YCCS curriculum to upgrade the skill level accomplishment. The result was the development of the Essential Skills Framework that is implemented on all 23 campuses.

"The Essential Skills Framework is unique to YCCS," said Dr. Linda Goodwin, Chief Education Officer. "By shifting focus from simple credit attainment to actual skill level attainment, we are better preparing our students for productive futures."

Since adapting and incorporating the Essential Skills Framework amongst all 23 campuses, YCCS student achievement has increased overall. As an example, in the 2010-2011 school year, average reading achievement increased by two years and four months; math achievements increased by two years and three months.

The framework ranks skill level attainment in three areas: basic, proficient and advanced. Basic equals attainment below the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level. Proficient reflects scores attained between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Advanced reflects 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade level attainment. The framework is applied to English, math, social studies and science curriculum, and is aligned with state of Illinois standards. Each YCCS campus has aligned its curriculum to this framework and standards.

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