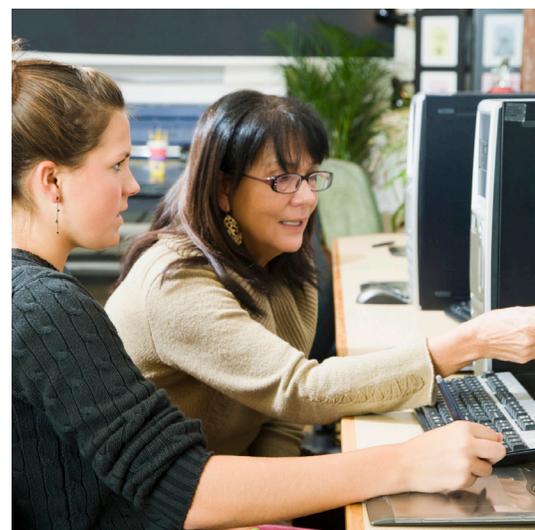


# SEIZING the Moment

Community  
Colleges  
Collaborating with  
K-12 To Improve  
Student Success



**HIGHER ED**  
*for*  
**HIGHER STANDARDS**

FEBRUARY 2016



### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. The association represents nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC promotes community colleges through five strategic action areas: recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education.



### **ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES**

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond. For more information, go to [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org). Follow ACCT on Twitter at [twitter.com/CCTrustees](https://twitter.com/CCTrustees).



### **ABOUT HIGHER ED FOR HIGHER STANDARDS**

Higher Ed for Higher Standards is a growing coalition of college and university leaders who believe college- and career-ready standards are critical to improving student success. Higher Ed for Higher Standards supports K–12 efforts to raise academic standards in the classroom and urges policymakers to stay the course on standards-based reforms and the alignment of higher education policies and practices to improve student transitions and success. For more information, go to <http://higheredforhigherstandards.org>.

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# Executive Summary

With the national spotlight on community colleges, the sector has a unique opportunity to seize the moment and collaborate with K–12 to increase student success. Efforts to increase community college access and open doors to more students must include a complementary focus on improving readiness. Otherwise, remediation rates will remain unacceptably high, and our efforts to increase access may amount to an empty promise for many young people.

K–12 is raising standards to ensure that students are better prepared for college and careers. High schools are poised to use the new standards to both accelerate those students who are ready for college-level coursework and to deliver extra support for those students who need it to be college ready by the time they graduate. But K–12 cannot close the gap without higher education's help. Community colleges have a clear role to play and much to gain by forming stronger partnerships with their K–12 schools. With the leadership of presidents and trustees, community colleges can leverage the higher expectations in K–12 to improve the preparation and success rates of incoming students.

The American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, and the Higher Ed for Higher Standards coalition are calling on community college leaders nationwide to take the following actions to close the preparation gap:

- 1 Partner with K–12 to bring more substantial college readiness supports** and interventions into high schools.
- 2 Identify college readiness measures** that can be used in high school to trigger these supports and acceleration strategies for students.

- 3 Revise institutional placement practices** to honor college-ready achievement on these new measures, and provide schools and students consistent signals by establishing common placement standards among all community colleges in a state.
- 4 Provide first-year students** who are not yet college ready with **co-requisite and other evidence-based remediation opportunities** as well as guided pathways to support their success.
- 5 Work with system leaders and policymakers** to adopt statewide policies that encourage these practices.

The programs highlighted in the report show what is possible when community colleges collaborate deeply with K–12 schools to align expectations and promote college readiness for all students. The time to close the preparation gap is now.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Stakes Are High

By 2020, 65 percent of all new jobs in the United States will require at least some postsecondary education and training.<sup>1</sup> Community colleges are a critical part of the education pipeline to meet the demands of a 21st century economy and open the doors of opportunity to all citizens. There is considerable momentum behind efforts to increase access to community colleges by more clearly communicating the value of a community college education and removing financial barriers, but increasing access alone is not sufficient. Unless community colleges put as much energy into increasing college readiness, they will not be successful.

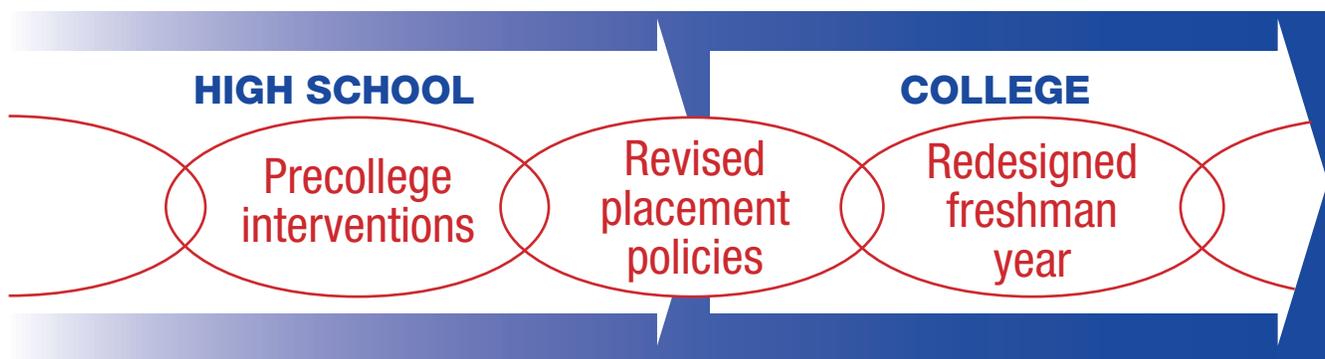
Why? Because remediation rates are high, and students who take remedial courses do poorly. A study using national data found that 58 percent of recent high school graduates who entered community colleges took at least one developmental course. Only about one-quarter of these students (28 percent) went on to earn any degree or certificate within 8.5 years.<sup>2</sup> In some of our institutions, the need for remediation is much higher and the success rates much lower. Despite efforts to support them, most underprepared students will not complete a degree. In a recent national study, of the students who needed remedial education courses as freshmen, fewer than one out of 10 graduated with a postsecondary credential.<sup>3</sup>

The good news is there is a golden opportunity if colleges capitalize on it now. K–12 is raising standards to ensure that students are held to more rigorous academic expectations. High schools are poised to use the new standards to both accelerate students who are ready for college-level coursework while in high school and deliver extra support for students who need it to be ready for college-level coursework by the time they graduate from high school. New statewide assessments capable of measuring college readiness are providing information to determine whether a student is on track to being college and career ready while in high school. But K–12 cannot close the preparation gap without help. Community colleges have a clear role to play and a short window for presidents and trustees to step up.

This paper frames the opportunity and lays out a series of action steps community college presidents and boards of trustees can take to seize the moment. It focuses on three areas of policy and practice that directly affect the success of students prior to their leaving high school and creates a clear pathway into community colleges and ultimately to a certificate or degree:

- ◆ **Providing precollege interventions to help students become ready for college by the time they graduate from high school,** including collaboration with K–12 school districts to design 12th grade bridge courses and support programs based on areas of student need revealed through the new college-ready assessments.
- ◆ **Revising placement policies and practices to put incoming community college students into appropriate courses and, consequently, on a path toward persistence and completion.** This includes using the new high school assessments and other measures to determine if entering students are ready for credit-bearing college courses.
- ◆ **Redesigning first-year experiences to support students' transitions into credit-bearing coursework and reduce time to a degree.** Efforts include establishing default course schedules for each program of study, providing customized and co-requisite remediation, improving advising and academic planning, and scheduling classes in more cohesive and convenient blocks.

## CREATING A CLEAR PATHWAY INTO COLLEGE



### What Community College Presidents and Trustees Can Do

The American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, and Higher Ed for Higher Standards are calling on community college leaders nationwide to take the following actions to close the preparation gap:

- 1. Partner with K–12 leadership** to bring more substantial college readiness supports and interventions into the high schools. These supports and interventions should include 12th grade bridge courses and summer programs for students who are not yet college ready and dual enrollment and other acceleration strategies for those who are.
- 2. Identify college readiness measures** that can trigger supports in high school, signaling aligned expectations between K–12 and colleges. Engage college and high school English and mathematics faculty to develop/ recommend a clear policy that defines readiness for credit-bearing coursework based on high school assessment results and other measures of student academic performance.
- 3. Revise institutional placement practices** to honor college-ready achievement by students on these new measures, thus enabling students to enroll directly in credit-bearing coursework in their freshman year if they have met standards in high school.
- 4. Provide first-year students** who are not yet college ready with **co-requisite and other evidence-based remediation opportunities** as well as guided pathways to support their success.
- 5. Work with system leaders and policymakers** to adopt statewide policies that encourage these practices.

# ACTION AREA 1

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## Precollege Interventions To Help Students Speed Up and Catch Up<sup>4</sup>

A key element to improving student success and decreasing remediation rates is making the most of all four years students spend in high school — particularly the senior year. When students are already accepted to college or think the door is already shut for them, “senioritis” sinks in as opportunities for growth slip by. What can be done to accelerate those students who are ready for college-level coursework, and how can we bring developmental strategies and content into high schools so that students who need more support get it before they graduate?

While most states now administer college- and career-ready assessments in high school, very few have used the results to trigger supports, interventions, and acceleration strategies before students graduate. Because the assessments are generally administered in 11th grade, the information they reveal about students’ knowledge and skills provides an opportunity for community colleges to work with high schools to make the most of 12th grade.

As the following examples show, community colleges and high schools that have stepped up their partnerships are changing the senior year by:

- ◆ Providing students who have mastered the content required for college and career readiness the opportunity to *speed up* by earning college credit before they leave high school; and
- ◆ Providing students who need to *catch up* the chance to fill gaps in their learning in 12th grade so they are ready for credit-bearing college courses, ultimately eliminating the need for remediation and improving the chance that they will go on to earn a certificate or degree.

Precollege interventions come in a variety of formats and levels of intensity and may be offered in one- or two-semester courses or as standalone modular units. The instruction may be delivered in person, online, or as a hybrid.

One of the important changes in dual and concurrent enrollment programs to watch in the future is how states are moving from enrollment in courses to enrollment in programs, which provide pathways that connect to program pathways in community colleges. In addition, community colleges and high schools are working together to enrich dual and concurrent enrollment by ensuring that high school students have early career exploration and counseling as well as college success courses and support for completing financial aid applications, among other resources, while still in high school.

## PROMISING PRACTICES



### CHATTANOOGA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Providing Remedial Education in High School

In 2011, Chattanooga State Community College launched the Tennessee SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support) program to deliver remedial mathematics courses to seniors in high school who need to *catch up* to be ready for college-level math. The goal is to partner with high schools to get more students college ready before they graduate, which could reduce the need for remediation in the community college.

Students who participate in SAILS receive the Learning Support Math curriculum, designed and endorsed by community colleges, which means upon their successful completion, students may enter directly into credit-bearing coursework when they enroll in the community college. The program relies on ACT scores from 11th grade to determine whether students need the additional supports. A score of less than 19 triggers the intervention. As the state moves to a new high school assessment system, which has been endorsed by the higher education system as adequately measuring college readiness, those tests may be used for this purpose.

The SAILS model uses a hybrid format of blended learning so students work online but have a teacher on hand for guidance and individual support when they encounter difficulty. Software is used to provide

continuous assessment and instant feedback, allowing teachers to focus on individual student needs. By incorporating a diagnostic assessment into the program, students receive an individualized program of study, which allows them to concentrate on filling gaps in their learning needed for college readiness.

SAILS is part of the governor's Drive to 55 initiative, which seeks to get 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by 2025.

Launched in 2011 with one area high school, the Chattanooga State Community College model was so successful that the state has committed to its expansion. Participation is expected to increase to more than 17,000 students in 239 high schools across the state in 2015–16. And with a 91 percent success rate, the Tennessee State Assembly has budgeted \$2.5 million in recurring funding from the state's dual enrollment funds for the project.

The successful launch and quick ramp-up of the program were possible because the state was able to make the case for the program by demonstrating the significant cost of remedial education for both individuals and the state. The state also partnered with the business community to highlight workforce demands and the essential role of community colleges in better preparing students for postsecondary education.

#### FIND OUT MORE

[www.chattanoogaastate.edu/sails](http://www.chattanoogaastate.edu/sails)

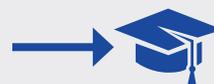
### SAILS Students Are On Track for College Success

**91%** of high school seniors who complete the program



Are ready to take college-level math without having to retake the ACT or COMPASS test

Avoid the financial and time burdens of math remediation in college



**GREATLY** increasing their chances of earning a degree and graduating on time



## EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE Enabling Students To Earn College Degrees While in High School

For students who are ready to *speed up* beginning in the freshman year and take on the challenge of college-level coursework, El Paso Community College's Early College High Schools (ECHS) are showing how it can be done successfully. Ten years ago Texas' El Paso Community College (EPCC) began partnering with local schools to improve students' access to college-level coursework while in high school as part of a broader strategy to improve college access and success. Through the ECHS program students are able to obtain a high school diploma and an associate degree (60 fully transferable college credit hours in a variety of fields) in the years they would have spent earning just a high school diploma.

EPCC relies on marketing and outreach to raise awareness among those students who need the program most. The program is designed for first-generation college-going students who are economically disadvantaged. While more than 10 years ago the first ECHS struggled to fill 125 spots, the schools now have more applicants than they can accommodate and employ various selection processes, from lotteries to rubrics, while maintaining the original design of targeting first-generation, economically disadvantaged students.

EPCC's early college programs are taking big strides in addressing the achievement gap that exists for low-income and minority students. In fact the schools enroll more than 80 percent first-generation students, and 87 percent are economically disadvantaged. Aligned expectations and strong collaboration between the community college and high schools are one key factor.

Another is ensuring that students do not carry the cost of the program: EPCC waives tuition and fees, and instructional materials are provided by the district. Especially for first-generation students, the confidence and motivation that this program provides students are unmistakable. And since students take college courses both in their high school classroom and on the college campus, the exposure to campus alone can address some of the barriers these students so often confront.

The ECHS program now serves thousands of students at eight high schools with two more locations opening by 2017. Achieving this success required a major culture shift. EPCC was able to build a coalition of the willing and foster K–12 and higher education partnerships by empowering the Early College High School Leadership Council. This joint leadership team, which includes K–12 school and district leaders as well as postsecondary leaders, provides a forum to discuss topics and issues of common interest and concern across all El Paso area ECHS schools. Additionally, the Council facilitates the coordination of activities and events (such as joint professional development) across the schools.

More than 1,550 students have received their associate degrees at the same time as their high school diploma. Without this program, these students may never have entered or successfully completed an associate degree in a traditional track.

### FIND OUT MORE

[www.epcc.edu/earlycollegehighschool/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.epcc.edu/earlycollegehighschool/Pages/default.aspx)

[www.epcc.edu/dualcredit/Pages/FAQs.aspx](http://www.epcc.edu/dualcredit/Pages/FAQs.aspx)

## El Paso Early College High Schools Help Students Succeed

More than 1,550 students have received their associate degrees at the same time as their high school diploma through the ECHS program.

Early College Campus	Current Enrollment	Total Associate Degrees Awarded
Burges Early College High School	222	2nd year of operation
Clint Early College High School	360	37
Cotton Valley Early College High School	242	62
Mission Early College High School	464	684
Northwest Early College High School	282	165
Socorro Early College High School	121	1st year of operation
Transmountain Early College High School	463	264
Valle Verde Early College High School	407	339





## ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE Aligning the 12th and 13th Grades

Since 2004, Elgin Community College (ECC) has been a leader in Illinois around creating partnerships with local high schools to deliver bridge courses and create curricular alignment between the 12th and 13th grades to improve students' readiness before they enter community college. The Alliance for College Readiness, a collaborative partnership between ECC and the public school districts in Community College District 509, ensures that all young people are ready for college-level courses and can experience success after high school.

The Alliance's goals are mutually beneficial and student centered. It seeks to increase academic success, improve college readiness, and increase districts' college-going rates. Members of the Alliance work in faculty and staff teams to establish a common understanding of college and career readiness; better align curriculum and instruction; and foster effective communication systems among students, educators, and parents. The Alliance developed a 12th grade math course to help students who were not college ready based on their ACT subscores. Twelve high school and college faculty members developed the course and made sure it aligned with the Common Core State Standards and college entrance standards.

Another successful program, the P-20 Academy, brought together high school and community college faculty to develop a three-week summer bridge course, a refresher boot camp that focuses on the mathematics, writing, and reading skills students need based on their 11th grade ACT scores or ECC placement scores. The course is co-taught by high school and ECC faculty members in small sections leading to greater integration of the high school standards with the expectations of first-year, credit-bearing coursework.

The culture of collaboration built by ECC and its 18 high school partners will be leveraged in a number of ways in the coming year. In particular, they will consider how to best use the statewide community college placement policy that was adopted in January 2015, which allows scores on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test to be used as indicators of college readiness. (See pages 12-13 for more information on this policy.)

### FIND OUT MORE

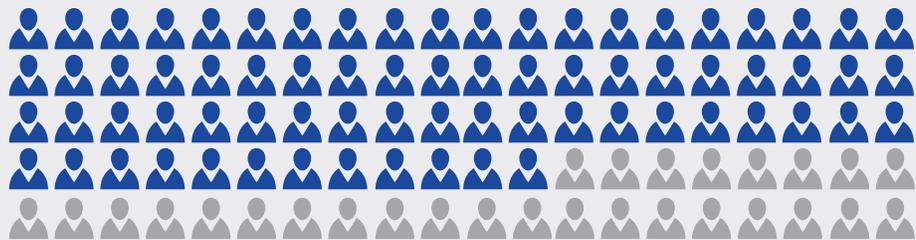
<http://elgin.edu/community.aspx?id=3912>

<https://faculty.elgin.edu/dkernler/handbook/a/bridge.html>

### Summer Bridge Course Leads to Credit-Bearing Course Placement

Of the 220 students who participated:

**72%**  
placed into credit-bearing courses



## ACTION AREA 2

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# Streamlined Postsecondary Placement Practices To Smooth Student Transitions

With the new college- and career-ready standards and assessments that most states are implementing, community colleges have an opportunity to strengthen outreach and streamline the placement process for students. Community colleges that agree to honor the “college-ready” scores on high school assessments can place students directly into credit-bearing courses and remove at least one additional set of tests that students must take. Not only is using the tests for more than one purpose more efficient, but it also is an opportunity to enhance outreach to potential students and increase their chances of being successful by aligning with high school assessments and communicating these clear, consistent expectations to students and families. The use of these scores also provides the opportunity to identify those students who need catch-up work while still in high school.

Having community colleges use these scores for placement highlights for students, families, educators, and policymakers the rigor of the high school standards and courses *and* the reliability of the new assessments. It also likely will motivate students to work harder to meet the standards because they will see a more direct connection to their next steps after high school.

Notably, recent research has pointed to the value of using more information than scores on a single test alone — through “multiple-measures assessment” — to ascertain students’ readiness for college-level work. To the extent that high school grades reflect student achievement of higher standards for college and career readiness, both high school GPA and course-taking patterns can serve as valuable information in the college placement process.

State-level policies can accelerate colleges’ efforts to improve the pipeline for high school students. Washington and Illinois, for example, have

implemented new assessments that were designed to measure college readiness in high school (Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments, respectively). Confident in these assessments’ ability to measure student readiness for credit-bearing coursework, the community college systems in both states have adopted policies for using scores on these tests as college-ready indicators. Most states have implemented new high school assessments designed to measure college readiness, but higher education systems have agreed to honor the PARCC and Smarter Balanced scores in only 10 of those states. This collaboration and engagement around standards and assessments has served as a springboard for systems and institutions in the 10 states with placement policies that use aligned assessments (Alaska, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia). There is a great amount of hope to see these numbers increase in the near future.

## PROMISING PRACTICES

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### WASHINGTON COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM **Aligning Expectations with K–12 To Smooth Student Transitions**

Washington state is an early adopter when it comes to efforts to align K–12 and postsecondary expectations. Higher education has been involved in the state’s K–12 standards and assessment development process since it began in 2009, and as a show of confidence, the community and technical college system (34 colleges across the state) has forged a consistent, statewide agreement to use the Smarter Balanced assessment scores for decisions about placement into credit-bearing coursework. The policy will be reconsidered formally in winter 2018 based on student performance data.

Starting with the graduating class of 2016, students who score at levels 3 or 4 (out of 4) on the new high school assessment are automatically granted placement into first-year, credit-bearing courses. However, depending on what college math course they want to take, students who score at level 3 in mathematics may be required to take math courses as seniors to maintain their placements.

As part of the overall agreement, the community and technical college system, in partnership with the state K–12 system, has developed and implemented senior-year Bridge to College courses in English and math. These courses, currently being offered by 114 high schools in 74 districts across the state, provide students who score at level 2 and earn a B or better the opportunity to get college ready while in high school and receive the same placement agreement as students who score at level 3. Students who achieve a level 3 or 4 are eligible to speed up through dual enrollment courses, providing them an opportunity to earn college credit before they arrive on campus.

The new bridge courses are being developed and supported through local and regional partnerships that have been vital to building consensus and buy-in from the field for the new policy. They also will be critical as the state refines further which senior-year courses “count” for maintaining students’ placement eligibility.

#### FIND OUT MORE

[www.sbctc.edu/about/agency/initiatives-projects/bridge-to-college.aspx](http://www.sbctc.edu/about/agency/initiatives-projects/bridge-to-college.aspx)

[www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/BridgetoCollege/pubdocs/CTC-SBAplacementagreement.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/BridgetoCollege/pubdocs/CTC-SBAplacementagreement.pdf)



### ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS **Adopting a Statewide Placement Policy for PARCC Assessments**

In January 2015, the community college presidents in Illinois took an unprecedented action by adopting a statewide policy for the use of new high school PARCC assessments so students who earn a certain score on the test are placed directly into credit-bearing coursework.

The policy decision came after months of deliberation by chief academic officers, chief student services officers, and faculty from across the community college system and builds upon the successful engagement of higher education in previous years with the adoption

of the K–12 standards and development of the aligned PARCC assessments.

The PARCC assessments are aligned with the new Illinois Learning Standards, and they emphasize higher-order thinking, application of knowledge, and college and career readiness. Third through 8th graders and some high school students are taking this summative assessment, used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement, for the second year in a row this spring.

The PARCC assessments use college- and career-ready determinations, which outline the academic knowledge, skills, and tasks that students must demonstrate in English language arts and math to show their ability to

succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses. A goal of the PARCC exam is that students who earn this determination will be admitted to two- or four-year higher education institutions without having to take and pass a college placement test.

The new policy reflects a commitment by Illinois community colleges to accept a performance level of 4 or 5 (out of 5) in math or English language arts on the PARCC assessment to place students directly into credit-bearing classes, beginning in fall 2015 for most institutions. Additionally, community colleges may develop policies to accept a PARCC assessment

score of 3 for placement into a college-level general education math or English course when the student has demonstrated other indicators of readiness as determined by that institution.

By developing this policy voluntarily and as a system, Illinois community colleges have sent a clear signal to students that meeting standards in high school will prepare them for postsecondary success.

#### FIND OUT MORE

<http://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/2015/03/illinois-council-of-community-college-presidents-response-to-parcc>



### LONG BEACH COLLEGE PROMISE Using Early Assessments To Increase Readiness and Success

In 2008, leaders from the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD); Long Beach City College (LBCC); and California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) came together in an innovative, award-winning partnership to provide all local students the opportunity to receive a college education by measuring and identifying student readiness early in high school rather than waiting until they get to college.

Known as the Long Beach College Promise, the program helps LBUSD students prepare for, enter, and succeed in college. The Promise builds on the

foundation provided by the state's Early Assessment Program (EAP) — an evaluation of students' readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing courses at California State University (CSU) and participating California community colleges that is administered in the spring of 11th grade using the Smarter Balanced assessments. Students who take the exam receive early feedback on potential remedial needs so they can address those needs before they leave high school and have the opportunity to be exempt from developmental education based on their test scores. LBUSD mandates that all eligible students take the test in their junior year, and LBCC was one of the first community colleges in the state to accept the EAP as a measure of student proficiency.



Benefits and services include:

- ◆ Early and continued outreach for students and families to raise awareness and provide targeted support for first-generation college-going students using statewide high school standards and assessments as readiness indicators;
- ◆ Guaranteed college admission at CSULB for students who complete minimum college preparatory or community college transfer requirements; and
- ◆ A tuition-free semester for all LBUSD high school graduates who enroll in LBCC within one year, beginning in the 2015–16 academic year.

The program seeks to reduce average time to bachelor's degree for LBUSD students by one-half semester and average time to transfer for LBCC students. Results already show a reduction in time to transfer in terms of units completed. For students taking a load of 12 units, this reduction equates to just under a full semester reduced time to transfer.

Since the Promise began in March 2008, the number of LBUSD students enrolled in LBCC has grown each year. Through 2015, nearly 12,000 students have

received a free semester at the school, and the Promise is seeking to expand to cover costs of the full first year. LBUSD students also are being admitted to CSULB at a higher rate, with admission increasing 43 percent between 2008 and 2013, even as CSULB admitted fewer students overall. In addition, nearly 80 percent of LBUSD applicants gained admission to CSULB compared to just 25 percent of nonlocal freshmen applicants. LBCC transfer students are admitted to CSULB at a rate that is 18 percent higher than that of transfer applicants from other community colleges.

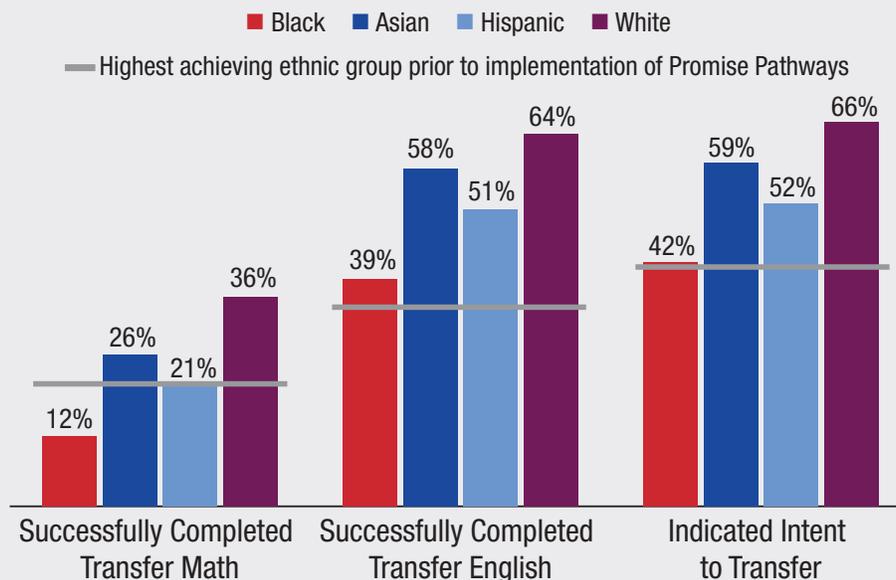
Simultaneously, the percentage of students requiring math and English remediation has decreased substantially due to targeted advising and initiatives such as CSU Early Start, which helps admitted CSU freshmen fill gaps identified by EAP results before the beginning of the fall term. In addition, Promise Pathways, launched in fall 2012, uses predictive placement, so LBUSD graduates who enroll in CSULB and LBCC are placed into English and math courses based on their high school grades, and prescriptive scheduling, so these students also enroll in foundational courses beginning in their first semester.

#### FIND OUT MORE

[www.longbeachcollegepromise.org](http://www.longbeachcollegepromise.org)

### Promise Pathways Lead to Higher Achievement

Achievement of educational milestones in first two years for fiscal year 2012 Promise Pathways students, by ethnicity



## ACTION AREA 3

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# Redesigned Freshman-Year Experiences To Meet Student Needs

The data are clear that students who are placed in developmental education coursework upon enrolling in community college have a much lower chance of completing their degrees. So even as they are working with K–12 systems to support higher standards and smoother transitions for students, a growing number of community colleges are simultaneously rethinking how they can better support entering students to ensure that they persist and ultimately earn their postsecondary certificates or degrees.

Community colleges' student populations include a large number of nontraditional students, including those who are working while attending college, single parents, and those who are changing professions or re-entering the workforce after a long absence. This diverse population means that community colleges can benefit from redesigning the student experience to accommodate students' differing needs and reduce time to degree.

These efforts specifically include redesigning developmental education as an accelerated and contextualized on-ramp to programs of study. Academic supports include co-requisite courses that allow students

who need remediation to take remedial and college-level courses concurrently so they do not become discouraged about how long it will take to earn their degrees.

Effective strategies also include systemic changes such as developing guided pathways to help students understand exactly what courses they will need to take and in what order to meet their educational goals. Structured schedules also are a way to keep students on track and connect them with their faculty and one another. Community colleges are also specifically addressing math pathways in the freshman year and incorporating statistics and differentiated placement practices, determined by the student's course of study.

### PROMISING PRACTICES

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#### LEHIGH CARBON COMMUNITY COLLEGE Customizing Remedial Education To Meet Student Needs

In 2014, Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) in Pennsylvania launched two unique programs to dramatically change the way it delivers developmental education in English and math. Through these programs, the school provides customized learning to meet students' individual needs and shorten their time to degree.

In English, the school offers the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which is used by more than 200

colleges across the country. In ALP, students enroll in a double class session that includes both a credit-bearing English course and a companion course that provides one-on-one customized support to improve students' writing skills. LCCC modified the national ALP model by creating one consistent syllabus and course pacing guide for all faculty to use concurrently.

The Mathematical Literacy Program is a six-credit, single-semester course that replaces three, three-credit courses. At the start of the course, students take a diagnostic exam to determine their particular gaps in basic mathematics and algebra. They then receive an

individualized curriculum designed to fill those gaps. Lectures are delivered online while an in-classroom instructor can step in to answer questions as needed. Students move as quickly or as slowly as they need to get through the material, based on their mastery of 22 objective levels.

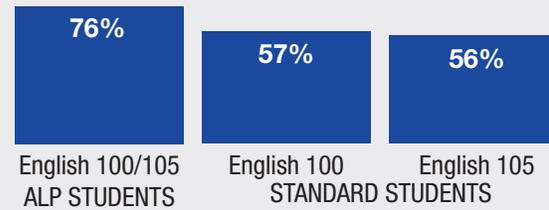
The programs, implemented with funding from a Title III grant, were piloted in 2014–15 on two campuses and were expanded in 2015–16 to four campuses. The math and English faculty led the development and implementation of the new courses, but a key to success was involving a cross-sector team including advising, academic affairs, admissions/placement, institutional research, and other faculty to ensure a smooth rollout and to address any ongoing implementation issues. Next steps include continuing to scale up and implement the programs in very urban and very rural campuses.

**FIND OUT MORE**

[www.lccc.edu](http://www.lccc.edu)

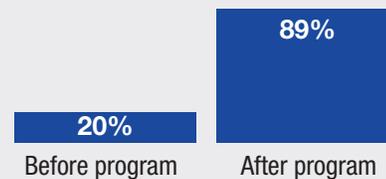
### ALP Students Outpace Students in Standard Developmental Classes

Overall Success Rate in English 100 and English 105, Fall 2014



### Developmental Education Dramatically Improves Student Knowledge and Skills in Math

Average Score of Program Completers on Diagnostic Exam



### IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE Reducing Time to Degree To Improve Completion Rates

Currently, only 4 percent of community college students in Indiana complete an associate degree within two years. This low completion rate is due to a number of factors, including outside demands such as child care and work that lengthen the time it takes students to earn a degree. To help improve completion rates and fulfill the Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s “15 to Finish” Initiative, which is focused on encouraging more students to take at least 15 credits each semester, Ivy Tech Community College offers the Associate Accelerated Program. The goal of the program is to reduce the time to earn an associate degree from two years to 11 months.

The recruitment process for the program starts in high school. Students are nominated for the Associate Accelerated Program by their guidance counselors, and they receive counseling and support to ensure that they are ready for college without the need for remediation. To qualify, students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5, have a

### Associate Accelerated Program Increases Completion Rates

Fall 2011 Cohort, Percentage of Ivy Tech Students Who Earned Degree



strong attendance record, and be under 21 years old. They also must sign a pledge to be on campus from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and not work during the week. While federal grants cover tuition and expenses, a parent/guardian must agree to provide housing and board.

Associate Accelerated Program courses begin days after high school graduation and include 60 hours a week of engagement, including class time, service learning, and homework, which are organized in blocks to facilitate scheduling. Students attend classes with other members of their program cohorts, and all classes and supports are in a single building to provide easy access and build camaraderie. The close bonds formed by the program's intensity are key to student success.<sup>5</sup>

Started in 2010 on two campuses with a grant from Lumina Foundation and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Associate Accelerated Program has now expanded to 14 campuses and has enrolled more than 600 students. As of 2014, the program has a 66

percent graduation rate, one of the highest graduation rates in the nation for first-generation college students. The ultimate goal is to produce 1,000 graduates a year.

Almost nine out of 10 program students earn a degree or are still enrolled after 12 months — a rate five times higher than the average for all Ivy Tech students. In addition, many students aim to use the program as a springboard for further learning. Seventy percent of program participants report that they plan to earn a workforce credential and start a career in their chosen field while pursuing additional postsecondary education.

**FIND OUT MORE**

[www.ivytech.edu/asap/](http://www.ivytech.edu/asap/)



### NEW YORK Increasing Degree Completion Through Redesigned Remediation, Block Scheduling, Intensive Advisement, and More

**State University of New York (SUNY):** Of the 13 million community college students from across the country who end up in developmental mathematics courses, only 5 percent go on to earn college-level credit within one year.<sup>6</sup> At the community colleges within the SUNY system, up to 70 percent of students enroll in remedial courses each year, with most requiring multiple levels of mathematics.<sup>7</sup>

To combat this remedial mathematics challenge, two community colleges in New York (Onondaga and Westchester), along with a cohort of other institutions, implemented new Quantway and Statway courses. Their goal was to increase the percentage of students who achieve math credit within one year of continuous enrollment from 5 to 50 percent.

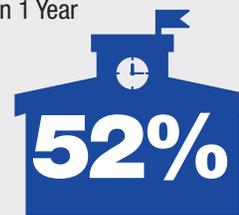
Statway is a year-long pathway to and through college statistics that takes students from developmental math through a college credit-bearing course in mathematics in one year and serves as a gateway to further academic study. Quantway is a two-semester pathway that replaces the developmental algebra sequence and allows students to earn credit for a college-level quantitative reasoning math course.

### Statway Helps Students Earn College Credit More Quickly

Percentage of Developmental Math Students  
Who Earn College Credit within 1 Year



Community college  
students nationwide



SUNY Statway students

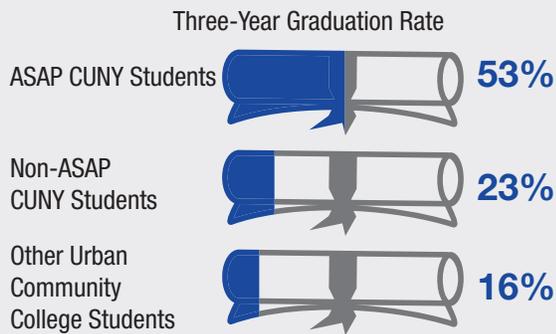
The pilot was a success, with 57 percent of students in Quantway completing their developmental math requirements in one semester, and 52 percent of Statway students receiving college credit in one year. In December 2015, SUNY committed to offering the programs at all 30 of its community colleges and any four-year campuses over the next three years.

SUNY's effort to support 20,000 students through redesigned remedial mathematics is part of a larger initiative to boost degree completion to 150,000 graduates by 2020. This effort also has the potential to affect the way students spend state resources, as approximately 20 percent of financial aid — \$93 million in 2009–10 — was used to pay for remediation at SUNY community colleges.<sup>8</sup>

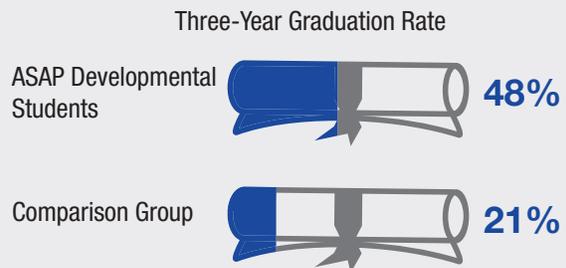
## ASAP Benefits Taxpayers and Students



## ASAP Increases Graduation Rates ...



## ... Even Among Developmental Students



**City University of New York (CUNY):** The CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) is designed to help motivated community college students earn their degrees as quickly as possible, with a goal of graduating at least 50 percent of students within three years. To participate in ASAP, students must commit to attending college full time and have no more than two developmental course needs based on their skills assessment test scores. They also must commit to participating in mandatory program services and plan to graduate within three years.

To support students, the program provides comprehensive and mandatory advisement, academic support, and career-development services. All students work with one adviser from entrance through graduation who meets with students monthly for individual and group sessions. ASAP students also receive consolidated course schedules (i.e., morning, afternoon, evening, or weekend schedules) throughout their time in the program to help balance their school, work, and domestic responsibilities.

Launched in 2007 with funding from the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, more than 12,780

students have enrolled in the program to date across nine participating CUNY colleges. CUNY's goal is to serve up to 25,000 ASAP students by 2018–19, including a full-college expansion at Bronx Community College to serve most incoming first-time, full-time freshmen.

Results show that the program works. The ASAP three-year graduation rate (53 percent) is more than double the graduation rate for non-ASAP CUNY students (23 percent) and three times the national average for other urban community colleges (16 percent).<sup>9</sup> The program also improves outcomes for students with developmental needs. A random assignment study found that ASAP more than doubled three-year graduation rates for developmental education students (48 percent for ASAP students vs. 21 percent for comparison group students).<sup>10</sup>

### FIND OUT MORE

**SUNY** [www.suny.edu/suny-news/press-releases/dec2015/12-7-15/chancellor-zimpher-announces-18-million-to-support-math-competency-decrease-remediation.html](http://www.suny.edu/suny-news/press-releases/dec2015/12-7-15/chancellor-zimpher-announces-18-million-to-support-math-competency-decrease-remediation.html)

**CUNY** [www.cuny.edu/asap](http://www.cuny.edu/asap)

# Conclusion

With the national spotlight on community colleges, the sector has a unique opportunity to seize the moment and increase student access and success by collaborating with K–12. In the wake of high remediation rates and low completion rates, the stakes are high for both higher education and K–12. The programs highlighted in this report show what is possible when community colleges lock arms with K–12 schools to align expectations and promote college readiness for all students.

In working together to support student success, higher education and K–12 partnerships hold great promise for colleges, schools, and students. This report highlights how partnerships in Tennessee, Texas, and Illinois have made a difference through precollege supports that seek to help students speed up and catch up before they graduate from high school. Clear and consistent placement policies that use high school assessments in Washington, Illinois, and California offer lessons learned from their unique state contexts and varying degrees of implementation. The work by Ivy Tech, Lehigh Carbon, and New York’s community colleges to overhaul first-year experiences for students also holds great promise in supporting student success.

Building off of new college- and career-ready standards and assessments in place in most states, community colleges can take a series of concrete steps to advance these strategies on their own campuses and empower their students through innovative supports.

While there is not one single solution that can address an issue as complex as student success, this evidence points to several promising practices in K–12 and higher education alignment if community college leaders are ready and willing to scale them up in their own institutions and states. Now is the time to build on this foundation and continue to develop and scale promising practices to ensure that all students are prepared for success in our community colleges.



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