

FACT SHEET: Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program *Eliminating the Exit Point on the Path to Success*

The 2015-16 State Budget provides \$60 million in one-time Proposition 98 funding to assist California community colleges in improving delivery of basic skills instruction by adopting or expanding the use of evidence-based models of placement, remediation, and student support that accelerate the progress of underprepared students toward achieving their college and career goals.

BACKGROUND

California community colleges are the gateway to opportunity for nearly 2.3 million students each year, promising access to the California Dream. Unfortunately, the troubling reality is that too many students will never achieve that dream. Over 70 percent of students entering California community colleges are assessed as underprepared for college-level English or math and roughly two-thirds of these same students-- who are then placed in remedial courses-- will fail to complete a degree/certificate or transfer to a four-year college. Students placed in remedial courses get caught in a basic skills bottleneck that too often does not let them enter college level classes that will ensure they can reach their college dreams and be prepared for good jobs.

However, promising national and statewide initiatives aimed at increasing student completion of remedial education have demonstrated great gains. Across the country, courageous educators have crafted innovative ways to assess and place students, deliver math and English remediation, and provide student supports. In these pilot efforts, students' odds of completing college-level English and math and/or achieving a certificate or degree increased significantly. Yet, despite their success less than a third of the 112 campuses offer new approaches. Furthermore, where community college campuses are engaging in these new approaches, their efforts are often limited to one or two course sections and are not available for the benefit of all students in remedial classes.

THE PROGRAM

Originally proposed in Assembly Bill 770 (Irwin, 2015), the *Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program* takes a comprehensive approach to the challenge of implementing practices that improve basic skills delivery by investing in campuses to bring those practices to scale. The voluntary program provides a framework for colleges to either implement, or expand the use or application of, two or more of the following promising practices:

1. Adopt assessment and placement test policies that review multiple student readiness indicators – including grades in high school and input from counselors;
2. Increase placement of students directly in gateway English and math courses and career pathways with supplemental remediation support;
3. Align remedial course content to a students' program of academic or vocational study to better target students' actual needs;
4. Contextualize remedial instruction in foundational skills for the industry cluster, pathways, or both in which the student seeks to advance;

5. Provide proactive student support services that are integrated with the instruction provided; and
6. Develop two- and three-course sequences for completion of a college-level English or mathematics course, or both, for underprepared students-- utilizing technology or other proven practices to enhance the adoption of high impact basic skills practices.

Additionally, the program calls for participating colleges to develop proposals aimed at improving student success and significantly increasing the number of underprepared students who complete college-level English and mathematics courses, use grant resources to ensure that faculty participates in critical professional development related to the proposed practices, and report to the Legislature and the Chancellor's Office on program outcomes.

The more "exit points" where students can fall away by not passing or enrolling in the next course, the smaller the number of students who will complete the final course. The *Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program* dramatically redesigns the way community colleges deliver remedial education to eliminate exit points and put students on the path to success.

STATUS: The Chancellor's Office released a request for Applications on January 21. Applications are due back to the Chancellor's Office by March 25. To assist colleges in the development of their funding application (plan), the Chancellor's Office's Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) is sponsoring four workshops featuring practitioners and other experts who will provide information on a variety of evidence-based and nationally recognized principles and practices related to basic skills (such as contextualizing instruction and offering statistics-based remedial pathways to students). These workshops will be held February through early March 2016.

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