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This newsletter is published by Jobs for the Future for Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed (earn degrees, earn certificates, or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies). The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. See [www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org) for more on the initiative and [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org) for more on Jobs for the Future.



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## In this Issue

Welcome to the October 2007 issue of *Achieving Success*. This issue features:

- A description of the updated state policy framework that now guides Achieving the Dream states in identifying and setting policy priorities to support community college student success. Based on the experience of Achieving the Dream states, the framework specifies particular state policies and strategies that can help improve student outcomes. States can use it as a tool to assess their own goals and actions in support of student success. A related new brief identifies the elements of robust state performance measurement and data systems, as well as the research supports required to create and sustain a strong system.
- An interview with Sharon Fairchild and Jan Yoshiwara, board member and director of educational services, respectively, of Washington's State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. They discuss the state's recently launched Student Achievement Initiative, which will provide incentive funding to colleges for every student who successfully reaches key "momentum points" in their academic progress.
- Highlights from a new Achieving the Dream policy brief from Jobs for the Future on how state and system policies can support innovative developmental education programming, with a focus on accelerated remedial math. The brief draws on the experiences of Housatonic Community College in Connecticut, Mountain Empire Community College in Virginia, and the Community College of Denver.
- Updates from Achieving the Dream states—policy activities, reports, and other developments that relate to improving community college student outcomes.
- Resources that we think you'll find useful.

Please help us expand the readership of *Achieving Success*. Send email addresses for new (free) subscribers to our editor, Radha Roy Biswas, [rrbiswas@jff.org](mailto:rrbiswas@jff.org). Our subscriber base has doubled in the past year; we hope to double it again this year.

## The New Achieving the Dream State Policy Framework

In 2005, JFF and Achieving the Dream partners developed a framework to guide our efforts to remove state policy barriers to student success, as well as to secure policies that make it easier for colleges in Achieving the Dream states to improve student

outcomes. Based on what we have learned since then, JFF and participating states have sharpened the framework by identifying the highest impact policy levers. This more detailed framework includes a self-assessment tool that states can use to look at

their current policies, identify gaps, and set priorities.

The new framework lays out policies supportive of community college student success in five categories:

- Data and performance measurement systems;
- Incentives and mandates to support student success;
- College readiness and the alignment of K-12 and postsecondary expectations;
- Two-year to four-year transfer and articulation;
- Financial aid.

The framework specifies policy actions that can shape institutional and individual decisions in ways that increase persistence and completion. For instance, under “incentives and mandates to support student success,” the framework identifies specific incentives to institutions for improving student outcomes, mandates that can improve student academic behavior or decisions, developmental education placement policies, and developmental education funding policies that Achieving the Dream states believe can help drive improved student outcomes.

*To download the Achieving the Dream State Policy Framework, go to: [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org).*

Cross-state Data Work Group members identified the key elements of a robust performance measurement and data system that can give states the information they need to make effective decisions about how best to support the success of all students in their community colleges.

## Performance and Data Systems that Promote Success

Since 2005, seven Achieving the Dream states have been collaborating to test and refine measures of student success that can be more informative and helpful for institutional improvement purposes than the federally required Student Right to Know data. The states are Connecticut, Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. At least four additional states will join the JFF-facilitated collaborative effort this year: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, and Washington.

This Cross-State Data Work Group is committed to identifying a common set of intermediate and final indicators of student progress that states can use to more effectively to:

- Track student performance in achieving key milestones associated with degree completion, with a particular focus on student groups that face significant barriers to graduation;
- Evaluate the impact of state policy and institutional interventions designed to keep

more at-risk college students on track to degree completion; and

- Benchmark the performance of their community college systems against those of other states to help identify strengths and gaps and learn from their experience.

During the summer, Work Group members, led by JFF’s Susan Goldberger, identified the key elements of a robust performance measurement and data system that can give states the information they need to make effective decisions about how best to support the success of all students in their community colleges. The group specified the following as essential features of a quality state performance measurement system:

- An economical set of student performance measures tied to a clearly defined set of strategic priorities;
- Longitudinal measures that track student progress relative to key benchmarks;
- Measures that distinguish among students based on initial level of college readiness;

- Controls for other student characteristics associated with success, such as enrollment status, age at entry, and socioeconomic status;
- Controls for institutional characteristics (e.g., size, resources per student) that allow for appropriate peer group comparisons of performance;
- Goals and benchmarks that provide clear incentives for institutions to focus on raising the success rates of underprepared and underserved students;
- Reasonable time frames for achieving benchmarks that take into account the part-time attendance of many students and the longer amount of time needed by students who require remediation;
- Intermediate benchmarks that identify key first- and second-year predictors of long-term success;
- Reporting systems that allow consumers, policymakers, and practitioners to examine college and system performance and identify institutions that are achieving strong results with high-priority student subgroups; and
- A process for revising goals and measures in light of latest research evidence about key predictors of student success.

The report also lays out the essential elements of a state data system and the research capacity needed to support such a system.

This work has been summarized in a new publication, *Power Tools: Designing State Community College Data and Performance Measurement Systems to Increase Student Success*. The brief draws on examples from Achieving the Dream states to illustrate why these features are important.

To download *Power Tools*, go to: [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org).

Q & A

## Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative

*In September, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in Washington State approved a major new effort to improve student outcomes in the state's community and technical colleges. The Board voted to launch a Student Achievement Initiative that rewards colleges for students' progress past critical "momentum points" along the path to earning credentials. As students make progress toward their educational goals, the colleges will receive points for students' successes. The more students that progress, the more money colleges will receive. This innovative program is slated to start with a "learning year" so colleges can learn from each other how to best help students reach their goals.*

**Sharon Fairchild** is a member of the State Board for Technical and Community Colleges and chair of the board's Task Force on Student Achievement. **Jan Yoshiwara** is

*director of education services for the state board.*

*For more information, go to: <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentachievement.aspx>.*

### What were the origins of the Student Achievement Initiative?

**Sharon Fairchild:** About a year ago, the board agreed to a System Direction statement, designed to guide us for the next ten years. We looked at lots of data on Washington State trends and needs. We concluded that the economy will demand higher educational attainment and skill levels and that our population will be getting older and more diverse. One of the three goals of the System Direction is to increase educational attainment for all residents across the state. The Student Achievement Initiative is the system's response to addressing that goal.



Sharon Fairchild



Jan Yoshiwara

“This is a pretty groundbreaking idea: to change the incentives that institutions respond to.”

—Sharon Fairchild

We decided to focus on student success because we recognize that colleges everywhere face a challenge when it comes to retention. Community and technical colleges have to compete against family demands, economic pressures, and employment needs that might make retention hard. But we learned from a research study in 2005 that there is a “tipping point” for our students: if they earn at least a year of credits and a certificate of some kind, there is a significant economic benefit. We want to get more students to and past that tipping point.

The board has decided that the way to do that is to build a more accountable system—to be able to measure programs we institute and their effectiveness, as well as to provide guidance and support to colleges and their faculty so that strategies to improve effectiveness diffuse rapidly and deeply across our institutions.

#### How is the Achievement Initiative structured?

**Jan Yoshiwara:** Community colleges have three primary mission areas: adult basic education; workforce education; and transfer. We have identified four milestones across these missions that we will start measuring. We plan to reward colleges for every student who passes a milestone and for each milestone a student passes. The four milestones are:

- Improving preparation for college-level courses (skills gains in adult basic education; completion of pre-college courses in English and math);
- Building to a year of college credit;
- Completing a college-level math course; and
- Completing certificates, degrees, and apprenticeship training.

We did a lot of research before we settled on these milestones. We started with a literature review on student retention and the factors that promote it. We landed on the concept of “momentum points,” key points at which students can either get stuck or be propelled forward in our institutions. We received financial support from College Spark Washington and assistance from Columbia University’s Community College Research Center to do this work.

We took a hard look at our statewide data on student progress and sliced it in all kinds of ways: we looked at outcomes for students of color versus white students; part-time versus full-time students; students in rural colleges versus suburban schools; financial aid recipients versus non-recipients; older versus younger students. We looked at the progress of different groups of students in different schools. We found that these momentum points are consistent across populations and institutions.

We wanted to make sure we started with students’ pre-college preparation. Students who enter selective institutions start with momentum to succeed. We want more students to get on that path, which is why getting students college-ready is a momentum point.

We want to make sure that we design the incentives right, so we don’t encourage colleges to change their program mix or move to serve “easier to serve” students. So, we set up a systemwide taskforce—made up of state board members and staff, college trustees, presidents, college administrators, and faculty—to develop the initiative. A systemwide advisory committee, comprised of college staff and faculty from the system’s councils and commissions, also provided input.

We made sure to put critics as well as supporters of accountability on both groups. That proved to be an important move: it helped build buy-in and support early in the process. At the beginning, the task force members also sought advice from higher education experts across the country on potential funding models, measurements, and long-term stability. Additionally, we held teleconferences with all 34 colleges to introduce the proposal and get feedback from the field.

#### What resistance did the system encounter when it introduced this initiative?

**Fairchild:** This is a pretty groundbreaking idea: to change the incentives that institutions respond to. So there has been a lot of skepticism. Presidents were skeptical about the funding model: they were concerned about how the initiative would affect their budgets. Faculty were skeptical, too. They

“The experience of other states has led us to design something different. The measures are different: the whole notion of momentum points is fairly new. We didn’t design a ‘zero-sum’ game.”

—Jan Yoshiwara

wondered whether the incentive would actually drive greater student success. Smaller colleges worried that the design might favor stronger colleges.

**Yoshiwara:** There were a few major debates over design. One key question addressed by the Advisory Committee was: Do you measure *practices* and reward their implementation? Or do you reward *outcomes*? Many thought we should reward “what works.” But we got advice from national consultants that the focus should be on outcomes. The reward funding should be used by colleges however they want; the state shouldn’t be in the business of telling colleges what practices they should implement. It would be tremendously costly for colleges to collect data on practices (i.e., on which students get which services). Also, the state would have to keep updating the list of “approved” practices. It makes much more sense to reward outcomes: course completions; accumulation of credits; retention.

A second big debate: how much money should be made available to colleges—and where should the funding come from. We got an appropriation from the legislature, which will help us launch this initiative. They appropriated \$4 million for student persistence over the biennium. The state board held \$500,000 for the first round of incentive rewards. The remaining \$3.5 million is being made available to all the state’s community and technical colleges (about \$51,000 per college) for student persistence activities—so the colleges can frontload some innovation prior to the incentive rewards being granted. We’ll need to go back to the legislature for future funding after 2009, but this gives us an opportunity to look at funding models in the interim.

**What have you learned from the experience of other states?**

**Yoshiwara:** We spoke with a number of national experts about the experience of other states with performance funding: people like Peter Ewell at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and Kay McClenney at the University of Texas. Here is what we learned:

- Don’t make it too complicated. If you have too many measures, you’re likely to lose focus and weaken the effect of the incentive.
- The funding level should be big enough to get the attention of college leaders.
- Structure performance funding to reward not just ultimate outcomes (i.e., degrees) but also intermediate steps along the way, so that colleges will find the reward compelling and immediate enough to affect their choices and decisions.
- Try to provide college resources up front, so they feel supported in trying to create change in their institutions.

The experience of other states has led us to design something different. The measures are different: the whole notion of momentum-points is fairly new. We didn’t design a “zero-sum” game. Colleges are not competing against one another. They are competing against themselves: the reward payments will be made for progress above their institution’s baseline, established at the beginning of the initiative. Finally, we haven’t set any targets for the colleges or any limits. They will get a payment for every student who passes every milestone above their baseline. This opens more possibilities and more powerful incentives for the colleges.

**What are the next steps?**

**Yoshiwara:** We have a lot of things to work out still—that’s why we are making this year a “learning year” for the initiative. We want to build more buy-in and be able to fine tune and improve the design. We are educating the right people across the community and technical college system about the initiative, doing interactive TV sessions on how to look at and use their student data. We want to ensure that college staff are comfortable with the measurement issues and with the relevant data and its use.

We are using enrollment and transcript data. The colleges’ capacity to analyze data is uneven. So we want to work on that this year, to get the colleges on a more even playing field in regard to data capacity. The “learning year” will also give the colleges a chance to make some budgeting decisions

early, ahead of the rollout of the rewards, which can increase investment in promising practices and strategies.

This initiative will force us to engage partners outside the community and technical college system on how to streamline and align the various accountability systems that are pulling colleges in many different directions. We want the Student Achievement Initiative to be the foundation for public accountability systems that are led by the legislature, the governor, or accrediting agencies. This will take some work on our part, but we want to move others onto this new way of measuring and rewarding results.

**Fairchild:** We need to be careful. We need to give ourselves enough time to do it right the first time. Measuring the right things in the right way is critical. I work in the health care field. We understand how important it is to be using the right metrics and making those metrics clear and obvious to others. We have been inclusive in our process—going to the presidents’ and trustees’ groups, holding video conferences so people could jump in and raise questions. We need to make sure that we keep building the engagement and support of institutional leaders, as we are asking them to take the lead in making this work.

We are preparing for some fundamental change; this is very important, very difficult work. We owe it to our students, our institutions, and our taxpayers to get this right.

## NEW ISSUE BRIEF

# Developmental Education Innovation, State Policy, and Institutional Practice

Some colleges have begun experimenting with alternative delivery and design approaches for remedial math in order to respond to different levels of student need and circumstance.

In the July *Achieving Success*, we previewed a new Jobs for the Future brief prepared for *Achieving the Dream: Accelerating Remedial Math Education: How Institutional Innovation and State Policy Interact*. This report takes a close look at how state or community college system policy can interact with institutional practice to promote or constrain promising approaches to serving community college math students.

Here’s a summary of the research questions and findings:

One of the most pressing challenges facing community colleges is improving outcomes for students who place into developmental math courses. For example, an analysis of the progress of 46,000 students enrolled in the first 27 institutions to participate in *Achieving the Dream* found that over 70 percent were referred by faculty to developmental math, compared to 34 percent referred to developmental English. The analysis, conducted by the Community College Research Center, also found that nearly half of those referred to developmental math were referred to courses three levels below college-level math. Of those,

fewer than a fifth (18 percent) attempted a college algebra course, and only 14 percent completed that course.

No wonder, then, that success in developmental education has emerged as a top priority for *Achieving the Dream* institutions and states. Some colleges have begun experimenting with alternative delivery and design approaches for remedial math in order to respond to different levels of student need and circumstance. These program models typically allow students the option of pacing their own learning or accelerating their progress. However, in doing so, institutions are guided and sometimes limited by system and state policies—around enrollment, financial aid, funding, data systems, and accountability.

This policy brief looks at efforts in three community colleges, two of which are *Achieving the Dream* institutions, to revamp their remedial math programming. It focuses on the ways in which state and system policies interact with institutional reform efforts—and how state policies can either support or slow institutional change.

The efforts of three community colleges highlight the importance of enrollment policies and student data systems to innovation—and to the institutional flexibility that can help some students move faster through developmental requirements.

*Housatonic Community College*, an Achieving the Dream college in Connecticut, is piloting a self-paced, modularized, competency-based, developmental math course offered in a lab setting, with open entry and exit so that students can start and finish their coursework at their own pace. State and institutional leaders are looking for ways to overcome obstacles that HCC has encountered in overcoming financial aid and other policy constraints, even as the college is trying to expand this program model more broadly across the institution.

*Community College of Denver* has developed “Fast Start,” a developmental education design that enables students to take modules of two different courses in the same semester. State system policies around managing enrollment data have made it easier for CCD to offer this option.

*Mountain Empire Community College*, an Achieving the Dream College in Virginia, has developed short refresher courses for developmental math students. Students can move through more than one of the short courses in a single semester. As in Denver, Virginia’s enrollment, financial aid, and student data system policies have not slowed Mountain Empire’s innovations.

These three colleges and their efforts to accelerate developmental math provide an important and instructive window on how institutional practice can be shaped by state and system policies—and by shifts in policies. They also demonstrate how important it is for college innovators to work closely with state and system policymakers to protect and promote efforts that show promise to improve student success at the college level.

These efforts highlight the importance of enrollment policies and student data systems to innovation—and to the institutional flexibility that can help some students move faster through developmental requirements. In all three states, policies allow for flexible calendaring and course scheduling by individual institutions. But variations in data systems and nuances in enrollment census and reporting policies make the critical difference in capturing the student information needed to run such programs easily and to maximum advantage for students and institutions.

To download *Accelerating Remedial Math Education*, go to: [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org).

## STATE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### CONNECTICUT

#### How well does ACCUPLACER predict student success?

In November, the Connecticut Community College system is sponsoring a developmental education forum that will review ACCUPLACER validity research and ask a broader question about assessing student success. With technical support from the Community College Research Center, the system office will explore a number of different methodologies for defining and measuring the success of developmental education students. The Council of Presidents has been spending time looking at this question and assessing data models in preparation for this convening.

**Chancellor’s priorities again emphasize student success:** Marc Herzog, chancellor of the Connecticut Community Colleges, reports

that the Council of Presidents has established five strategic priorities that will be the framework for the next stages of the system’s strategic planning efforts. These are: expanding access to educational opportunities by supporting student success; maintaining affordability; improving accountability; improving learning and assessment; and ensuring a safe, secure, inclusive campus environment. Establishing goals and objectives in each of these areas will be the focus of the coming year’s planning and will align college- and system-level efforts to advance student success and serve student and state needs.

### FLORIDA

**Grants for colleges to identify and implement student success practice:** Community colleges that attended the 2007 Connections conference

on developmental education will receive small grants if they can show how their participation in the conference led to changes in the college's strategic plan or policies and can demonstrate progress on implementing the planned changes. The Florida community college system will hold a follow-up conference in May 2008.

**Leadership transitions proceeding:** Florida's community college and state education leadership continues to change. David Armstrong, former chancellor of the state community college system, has been installed as president of Broward Community College, one of Florida's Achieving the Dream colleges. He has been replaced on an interim basis by Dr. Willis Holcombe, who had previously served as Broward's president from 1987 to 2004. The state recently named a new commissioner of education (P-20), Eric Smith. Smith is a former superintendent in Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, and he also taught in Florida. Most recently, he was senior vice president at the College Board. Smith expects to start his new job before January.

## NEW MEXICO

**Student data sharing across K-12 and higher education moving forward:** In recent sessions, the New Mexico legislature has passed three laws that have dramatically changed higher education data collection processes. HM 42 requires the creation of a student data sharing system. SB 211 mandates that higher education institutions use the K-12 student identification number so that student progress can be tracked into postsecondary institutions. SB 943 requires higher education institutions to do a better job of tracking dual-credit enrollment by high school students. At statewide meetings in July and September, researchers and administrators from New Mexico's higher education community, including the state's community colleges, discussed how to implement data sharing across education sectors. The goal is to craft a proposal for the legislature to consider in its next session, beginning in January. The key concern is how best to migrate the unique student identifiers in K-12 into higher education's data system: K-12 currently uses numbers only, while higher education uses alphanumeric identifiers.

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Critical Success Factors to add ABE progress:** North Carolina's Critical Success Factors is the annual performance and accountability report for all 58 community colleges. Achieving the Dream has influenced changes in these performance and accountability factors. Plans are underway to reduce the current set of factors from 12 to 8. The updated factors include a new "progress/tracking" element for Adult Basic Education students, similar to that now required for developmental education students: colleges will track satisfactory performance of ABE students in subsequent credit-bearing courses. Colleges that meet or exceed the standards embodied in the success factors are allowed certain flexibilities and secure additional discretionary spending. To download the 18th annual report on Critical Success Factors, go to: [www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Publications/docs/Publications/sf2007.pdf](http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Publications/docs/Publications/sf2007.pdf).

**Strategic plan to define goals for serving underrepresented students:** The North Carolina Community College System's latest five-year strategic plan directly links the goals of student success and institutional capacity to the priorities of Achieving the Dream. During the coming year, a task force on serving "underrepresented and underserved" students will define and identify goals for serving these students across NCCCS institutions. Achieving the Dream team members Keith Brown and Vonna Viglione will staff the task force. Members will be drawn from the four colleges involved in Achieving the Dream and will also include appointees from the North Carolina Association of Community College Presidents, the state board of education, and other stakeholders.

## OHIO

**Board of Regents directed to create new public higher education system:** Ohio Governor Ted Strickland has directed Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut to establish the University System of Ohio, which will combine Ohio's 13 public universities, 23 public two-year colleges, and some other specialized institutions. This directive is aimed at unifying resources and increasing collaboration and cooperation among public colleges and universities. The directive will

not change the governance structure of the university system or of individual institutions. The state's 2008-09 biennial budget has already invested additional resources in public institutions by providing additional state funding, freezing tuition for two years, and increasing scholarships for students pursuing the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines. Strickland also directed the Board of Regents to develop a 10-year plan for the University System of Ohio, including clear benchmarks and a timeline for advancing a collective system of higher education in the state. *For more information, go to: [www.universitysystem.ohio.gov](http://www.universitysystem.ohio.gov).*

## PENNSYLVANIA

**College leaders focus on K-12/higher education data system:** Pennsylvania's community colleges are beginning to engage in strategies to strengthen and build a robust data system for the state. The colleges have entered into a dialogue with the state to become part of the single student identifier system across K-12 and higher education. The community college presidents believe that their participation in the student identifier system will strengthen Pennsylvania's efforts to catch up to and leapfrog other states on data system comprehensiveness and quality.

**Community colleges hold summit on student success:** Pennsylvania recently hosted a statewide summit on student success built around the key policy targets of Achieving the Dream. Representatives from all 14 colleges, including presidents, faculty, and others, participated in the Summit, along with superintendents of many school districts. Dr. Irwin Kirsch of the Educational Testing Service delivered the opening address and set the stage for the discussions by presenting his work on *America's Perfect Storm*.

## TEXAS

**Community college budget issue still unresolved.** For several months, the main policy issue facing Texas community colleges has been the governor's veto of community college funding that could be used toward group health insurance funds. Earlier this year Governor Rick Perry cut \$154 million from the community college budget to stop funds from being used to pay health benefits for

non-state employees. However, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst tried to reinstate the funds by issuing emergency spending authority. The emergency funds have not been approved. In two legislative hearings on the issue, legislators indicated their intent to restore the funds to community colleges. A proposed solution from the legislature is expected in October.

## Achieving the Dream Colleges Receive Planning and Implementation Grants:

In September, five Achieving the Dream colleges in Texas—Houston Community College System, South Texas College, Alamo Community College District, Paris Junior College, and Victoria College—received College Connection Grants from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The legislature created the College Connection Program in 2006 through House Bill 1, designed to address public school finance and accountability. This major pieces of legislation included initiatives for high school success and college readiness. The College Connections Grants go to colleges and universities for planning or implementing high school summer bridge programs, intensive summer programs, math, science, technology teacher prep academies, and other college-readiness initiatives specified in the legislation.

## VIRGINIA

In August, the Virginia Community College System published *College Readiness Report: How Virginia's Colleges are Addressing the Academic Weaknesses of Recent High School Graduates*. This report, prepared for the National Governors Association Honor States Grant program, uses quantitative and qualitative methods to present a clear picture of the extent and character of remediation in community college among recent Virginia high school graduates. The quantitative analysis looked at the college placement test records of students in four cohorts of recent high school graduates (2003 through 2006). For the qualitative aspect of the study, all 23 of Virginia's community colleges were surveyed to examine how each college determines the need for developmental education and what strategies they use to address the academic weaknesses of currently enrolled students and high school students in their service regions. The results of this study will be shared with school divisions and institu-

tions of higher education to inform them where additional collaboration, policy decisions, or program adjustments should be considered. To download the College Readiness Report, go to: [www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/AcademicServices/NGAReportAugust\\_final20070912.pdf](http://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/AcademicServices/NGAReportAugust_final20070912.pdf).

**WASHINGTON**

**Need-based aid for low-income adults expanded:** In 2006, Washington State piloted an \$8 million Opportunity Grant Program, that

made funds available to students at or below 200 percent of poverty in select, high-demand workforce programs. The students can use the grants for tuition, mandatory fees, educational supplies, emergency child care, and transportation expenses. Colleges could also use funds to provide needed wraparound services. In 2007, all 34 community and technical colleges will have access to \$23 million to implement Opportunity Grants for eligible students in their institutions, thanks to legislative action in its last session.

**RESOURCES**

**Student Success and Engagement**

**Student Success in California Community Colleges**

*Beyond the Open Door: Increasing Student Success in the California Community Colleges*, published by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership Policy, provides a more detailed analysis of policy barriers to student success identified in *Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in the California Community Colleges*, published earlier this year. Nancy Shulock, who authored the first report and coauthored this new report, was interviewed for the April issue of *Achieving Success*. This new technical study identifies probable factors of student success, as well as student characteristics and patterns of enrollment that are related to higher levels of success and completion. The report offers broad outlines of new policy directions aimed at increasing student success. [www.csus.edu/ibe/PDFs/R\\_Beyond\\_Open\\_Door\\_08-07.pdf](http://www.csus.edu/ibe/PDFs/R_Beyond_Open_Door_08-07.pdf)

**CCSSE Survey to Track Students' First Weeks in College**

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement, which is part of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, is about to launch a new survey focusing on institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college. CCSSE will administer the pilot survey—called the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)—

directly to students at 22 colleges during the fourth and fifth week of the fall 2007 academic term. Participating colleges will receive their results in early 2008, along with tools they can use to improve their programs and services for entering students. The survey, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education and the Houston Endowment, will be field tested in 2008 and should be ready for nationwide participation in 2009. SENSE is aimed at helping colleges improve course completion rates and rates of student persistence through their second year of college and beyond, according to CCSSE. [www.enteringstudent.org](http://www.enteringstudent.org)

**Do We Have a College Access Problem?**

Clifford Adelman, late of the U.S. Department of Education and now a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, has written a provocative article in the July/August issue of *Change*. Taking a careful look at NELS data on student access and success, Adelman distinguishes among different kinds of access to postsecondary learning and then goes on to disaggregate the data in ways that highlight factors that contribute to student success. As in the past, Adelman emphasizes the critical importance of academic preparation to college success, particularly the patterns of first-year performance. Adelman concludes: “In short, do we have an access problem? Not really. Do we have a participation problem? Oh yes!” [www.carnegiefoundation.org/change/subasp?key=98&subkey=2385](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/change/subasp?key=98&subkey=2385)





**Importance of First Semester to Success**

A policy brief by Anne Driscoll of the University of California at Davis advocates for greater access to California community colleges. *Beyond Access: How the First Semester Matters for Community College Students' Aspirations and Persistence* shows that fewer than half of the young high school graduates who entered California community colleges with the goal of transferring to four-year colleges in 1998 made it through their first semester with their goals intact. The brief illustrates the importance of the first semester in students' postsecondary academic careers, and it suggests that providing additional guidance and support to students as they enter college for the first time could potentially help in terms of student persistence and eventual transfers. [click.icptrack.com/icpl/relay.php?r=1018198581&msgid=3684361&act=0T2Z&c=6530&admin=0&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fpace.berkeley.edu%2Fpace\\_publications.html%23PB072](http://click.icptrack.com/icpl/relay.php?r=1018198581&msgid=3684361&act=0T2Z&c=6530&admin=0&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fpace.berkeley.edu%2Fpace_publications.html%23PB072)

**Shopping for Courses: Does It Help or Hurt Students?**

A new study, one of the largest ever of students' "course shopping" behavior, looks at the Los Angeles community college district. Course shopping is defined as the period in which colleges have designated it as appropriate to add and drop courses as a student finalizes his or her schedule. An official "drop," in contrast, takes place after that time. The study suggests that course shopping is widespread, comes in different identifiable patterns, and that in moderation it's not always harmful, although it increases the workload for college officials. Linda Serra Hagedorn, chair of educational administration and policy at the University of Florida, was the lead author of the study, which was published in *The Journal of Higher Education*. The study notes that while more intensive advising to guide students in their course selection is an obvious course of action for colleges, most community colleges lack the resources to step up advising efforts. Hagedorn suggests that colleges post syllabi online, so that students can get a better understanding of what a course is about before registering. [insidehighered.com/news/2007/08/21/shopping](http://insidehighered.com/news/2007/08/21/shopping)

**College Readiness**

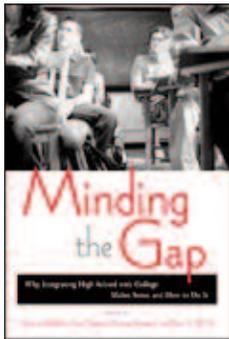
**Assessing Ohio's Early College Access Policy**

A report from KnowledgeWorks Foundation is the first to collect and analyze available data on Ohio high school students' dual enrollment, made possible by the Ohio Post-Secondary Enrollment Options policy adopted 18 years ago. *The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio's Early College Access Policy* finds that high school students who take college courses through PSEO may be more likely to attend college and get degrees faster than the general population of high school graduates. However, only 5 percent of Ohio's high school students take advantage of the policy. The report calls for additional research to determine the policy's effectiveness, because data are not available to determine whether the positive outcomes reported are a result of early college access. The report comes at a time when policy-makers are seeking to expand access to college through an expansion of PSEO. [www.kwfdn.org/high\\_schools/early\\_college\\_press/press\\_release.asp?prID=172](http://www.kwfdn.org/high_schools/early_college_press/press_release.asp?prID=172)

**Dual Enrollment Reviewed**

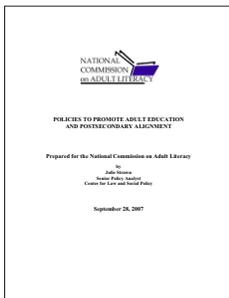
Over the past decade, dual enrollment programs and policies, through which students can earn college credit while still in high school, have received attention as a means of accelerating educational advancement. Much of the focus has been on the expansion and funding of dual enrollment programs. As programs have proliferated, a quality issue has surfaced. States want to promote courses that are challenging enough to warrant college credit and that can effectively prepare students for higher education. Interviewed by *Education Week* (August 1, 2007), Melinda Mechur Karp, senior research associate at the Community College Research Center, notes that states face a challenge balancing expanded access with a commitment to learning quality. To help guide states' efforts, policy experts are identifying promising practices, beginning with an intensive and sustained collaboration between high schools and colleges on course content, standards, and pedagogy. [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/08/01/44\\_dualenrollment.h26.html?tmp=1077274308](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/08/01/44_dualenrollment.h26.html?tmp=1077274308)





### Improving College Readiness and Success for Low-Income Students

Harvard Education Press recently released Jobs for the Future's latest book, *Minding the Gap: Why Integrating High School with College Makes Sense and How to Do It*. The volume, edited by JFF's Nancy Hoffman, Joel Vargas, and Marc S. Miller, and Andrea Venezia of WestEd, provides context, arguments for, and evidence of changing policies and practice in the ways that secondary and postsecondary learning are connected. The contributors argue that in today's highly competitive, global economy, all young people need a postsecondary education; yet only one in ten students from the lowest economic quintile in the United States currently earns a postsecondary credential. *Minding the Gap* explores policies and practices that can enable a larger number of low-income and first-generation college students to earn postsecondary degrees more quickly. It calls for a system that integrates secondary and postsecondary education into a seamless progression toward a college credential for all students. [www.hepg.org/hepg/Book/70](http://www.hepg.org/hepg/Book/70)



**How to Improve the Alignment of Adult Education and Postsecondary Education**  
*Policies to Promote Adult Education and Postsecondary Alignment*, prepared by Julie Strawn of the Center for Law and Social Policy for the National Commission on Adult Literacy, describes the lack of alignment between federal and state adult education, job training, and postsecondary education policies. Strawn also emphasizes challenges working adults face in trying to pursue higher education and the lack of capacity of postsecondary education and training institutions to respond effectively to adults' financial, personal, and family challenges. Recommendations fall into three categories: increase state capacity to track individual outcomes across adult and postsecondary education and use this data for improvement; integrate adult education and English language services with postsecondary credential courses and programs to increase attainment of credentials; and adapt financial aid policies to the needs of lower skill adults—and support their success once they are enrolled. [www.clasp.org/publications.php?id=7](http://www.clasp.org/publications.php?id=7)

### Transfer and Articulation

#### SREB Report Looks at State Efforts to Improve College Transfer Policies

A new report from the Southern Regional Education Board, *Clearing Paths to College Degrees: Transfer Policies in SREB States*, looks at actions that its 16 member states have taken in recent years to improve connections between two-year and four-year public colleges. The report addresses two key questions around transfer: What are the key statewide agreements and policies that help students move from one college to another; and how does a state know whether students are able to transfer smoothly? The report finds that 13 states have enacted legislation specifically to create statewide policies for transferring credits between the two-year and four-year colleges. While the remaining three states do not have specific legislation related to transfer policies, postsecondary institutions and governing or coordinating boards have established transfer policies and procedures. [www.sreb.org/main/Goals/Publications/ClearingPaths.asp](http://www.sreb.org/main/Goals/Publications/ClearingPaths.asp)

#### Easing Transfers for New Jersey Students

A New Jersey law aims at improving access to a four-year degree for many community college students and saving them the cost of additional course work after transfer. The law mandates that credits from an Associate's degree earned from any of the 19 public community colleges in the state will be equivalent to the first two years of coursework in a public four-year institution. The law does not guarantee admission, because the students must be accepted by the four-year institution. Upon acceptance, credits transfer fully. The new law replaces various inter-institutional agreements, which also made credit transfer subject to faculty review committees. The new transfer program begins in the 2008-09 academic year. [www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2007/09/state\\_colleges\\_to\\_accept\\_count.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2007/09/state_colleges_to_accept_count.html)

#### Tuition Support for Immigrant Students

##### Colorado Okays In-State Tuition for Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The state's attorney general recently issued a ruling that would allow Colorado residents

who are children of illegal immigrants, but who themselves were born in the United States, to pay the cheaper in-state tuition rate at the state's public colleges. However, House Bill 1023, enacted in 2006, prohibits taxpayer dollars from being used to benefit illegal immigrants, complicating colleges' ability to interpret what to do. Colorado's higher education authorities have asked the attorney general to issue an opinion. [www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_6620468](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_6620468)

### Kansas Court Decision Upheld

A federal appeals court upheld a lower court dismissal of a 2005 lawsuit challenging the Kansas law extending in-state tuition eligibility to illegal immigrants who met residency criteria. The plaintiffs, a group of parents and students, had argued that the law was discriminatory toward non-Kansas residents. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit found that the plaintiffs failed to provide evidence they were injured by the statute. The case has been eagerly watched for its effect on states' behavior on policy regarding in-state tuition for undocumented students.

<http://insidehighered.com/news/2007/09/04/qt>

### Arizona Law Takes Effect

In Arizona, Prop 300, banning undocumented immigrants from receiving state-funded services, took effect in January 2007, with the result that nearly 5,000 people were denied in-state college tuition, financial aid, and adult education classes this year, including 1,790 community college students. Those figures come from a study by the state Joint Legislative Budget Committee. The

committee had received reports from colleges and other programs as required under the new law. Proposition 300, one of four immigration-related ballot measures approved last November by Arizona voters, requires undocumented immigrants to pay the out-of-state tuition rate at the state's public institutions of higher education. It also prohibits students from receiving any type of financial assistance that is funded with state money and requires schools to determine and report to the state legislature twice a year how many undocumented immigrants are attending their education institutions.

[www.communitycollegetimes.com/topic.cfm?TopicId=21](http://www.communitycollegetimes.com/topic.cfm?TopicId=21)

### Overview of State Policies for Tuition for Immigrant Students

A brief from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities reviews the latest trends and activities in state policy regarding in-state tuition rates for undocumented immigrants. The brief argues for the need to establish federal policy in this area in order to provide greater direction and clarification to states in this matter and to support state efforts to promote higher education access and affordability to all students. The brief points out that bills introduced in Congress, if enacted, would make it easier for states to charge in-state tuition rates to undocumented students, but they would not require states to do so. Thus, such legislation would clarify the legal ambiguities but would not end debate in states.

[www.aascu.org/policy\\_matters/pdf/in-state\\_tuition07.pdf](http://www.aascu.org/policy_matters/pdf/in-state_tuition07.pdf)

