The Developmental Education Initiative is a groundbreaking effort led by MDC and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education to scale-up developmental education innovations within the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative. Helping students progress through developmental education more quickly—or bypass it altogether—reduces students’ financial burden and increases the likelihood they’ll stay in school and receive a postsecondary credential.

**The Developmental Education Challenge**

Many entering college students must take developmental education—preparatory classes often referred to as “remedial education”—before they are eligible for credit-bearing courses. Too many students don’t complete their developmental education, quitting college before they ever really start.

Nearly 60 percent of students enrolling in the nation’s community colleges must take developmental education courses. For low-income students and students of color, the figure tops 90 percent at some colleges.

Only 46 percent of students referred to reading remediation and 33 percent of those referred to math remediation complete their sequence of developmental education.

**National Goals**

President Obama has committed to ensuring that America will regain its lost ground and have the world’s highest proportion of students graduating from college by 2020.

By 2025, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation aims to double the number of young people who earn a postsecondary degree or certificate with value in the marketplace by the time they reach age 26.

Lumina Foundation for Education aims to increase the proportion of the U.S. adult population who earn college degrees to 60 percent by 2025.
Our Approach

DEI colleges tailor their individual approaches to the following strategic areas:

■ Institutional Policy
■ Acceleration
■ Student & Academic Support Services
■ Curriculum & Instruction

DEI is working to improve state developmental education policies in six states. Primary strategies include:

■ Using performance benchmarks to drive institutional improvement
■ Documenting promising practices
■ Building public support
■ Identifying policies that support institutional innovation

Scaling Up

Colleges in the Developmental Education Initiative are working to reach as many of their students as possible with appropriate and effective interventions. Common methods for scaling up:

■ Adding more sections of a successful course
■ Adding supportive interventions to more sections
■ Requiring participation to ensure that more students receive supportive services
■ Applying tested strategies to new disciplines
■ Instituting policies that support the success of all developmental education students
■ Expanding effective programs to a college’s multiple campuses or to multiple colleges throughout a state or region.

Seven organizations comprise the national partnership supporting DEI: the American Association of Community Colleges; Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin; Community College Research Center of Teachers College at Columbia University; Jobs for the Future; MDRC; Public Agenda; and MDC (managing partner).

DEI’s member colleges are:

Coastal Bend College, TX
Cuyahoga Community College, OH
Danville Community College, VA
Eastern Gateway Community College, OH
El Paso Community College, TX
Guilford Technical Community College, NC
Housatonic Community College, CT
Houston Community College, TX
North Central State College, OH
Norwalk Community College, CT
Patrick Henry Community College, VA
Sinclair Community College, OH
South Texas College, TX
Valencia Community College, FL
Zane State College, OH