In This Issue

Welcome to the fall 2010 issue of Achieving Success, the quarterly state policy newsletter of Achieving the Dream. In this issue, you’ll find:

- A profile of a new JFF publication, Taking the Next Step, about intermediate milestones for student completion and success.
- An interview with Rose Asera from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching about the Statway Project to redesign college math pathways.
- An update on the Developmental Education Initiative. This spring, JFF and the six DEI states finalized The Developmental Education Initiative State Policy Framework & Strategy, which guides the initiative’s state policy component. DEI states also completed their policy work plans mapping out the specific steps they will take to improve student outcomes in developmental education. This issue profiles in greater depth the work that DEI states are undertaking to implement the strategy’s second element: a state-level investment strategy.
- Updates on prominent activities in the ATD/DEI states.
- Links to useful resources on community college success.

We are always looking for new subscribers, particularly potential readers in state offices, two-year institutions, and education research and policy organizations. Please refer anyone you think should receive this free newsletter to our registration page on Jobs for the Future’s Web site: http://www.jff.org/media/newswire/subscribe

If you have questions about Achieving Success, please contact Katrina Reichert, kreichert@jff.org.

NEW ACHIEVING THE DREAM POLICY BRIEF FROM JFF

Taking the Next Step: The Promise of Intermediate Measures for Meeting Postsecondary Completion Goals

As educators, government officials, and foundation leaders embrace the agenda of dramatically increasing college success and credential completion, they have come to stress the need for better data on student outcomes to guide the improvement efforts of institutions, systems, and states. Tracking degree completion and other final outcomes provides too little information too late if the ultimate goal is improving outcomes.

To address this challenge, many state and national efforts are working to identify and make available good comparative data on intermediate steps toward completion that are associated with degree completion. Such measures are likely to include basic skills acquisition and the completion of a specific number of credits or particular gateway courses. In Taking the Next Step, Jeremy Offenstein and Nancy Shulock of the Institute for Higher Education Policy online.
Educational Leadership and Policy at Sacramento State University assess the emerging field of defining, measuring, reporting, and rewarding student progress toward achieving “intermediate measures of success.”

Taking the Next Step distinguishes between milestones that must be attained in order to reach completion and success indicators that increase a student’s chances of completion. The authors review 11 initiatives—multistate, single-state or single-system, and multi-institution—that use intermediate progress measures, noting differences in approaches, definitions, and uses of milestone data.

Taking the Next Step concludes with clear advice for the next generation of efforts to collect and report data on intermediate measures. The goal is to encourage common practices and definitions, as well as more thoughtful and effective uses of these data for institutional improvement, policy reform, performance funding, and accountability purposes.

This report, prepared for Achieving the Dream and JFF’s Time to Completion initiative, can be found on the JFF Web site at:

http://www.jff.org/publications/education/taking-next-step-promise-intermediate-me/1136

The report can also be found on the Achieving the Dream Web site:

http://www.achievingthedream.org/PUBLICPOLICY/POLICYBRIEFS/PUBLS/default.htm#Briefs

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**ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS FROM JFF**

### The Rallying Call: Bringing Game-Changing Results to Developmental Education

The Rallying Call summarizes the discussions at a May 2010 colloquium hosted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and JFF. The colloquium brought together representatives from some of Texas’s most innovative colleges to discuss policies needed to support more effective developmental education programs and add to the momentum in Texas for tackling this huge challenge.

This report can be found at:


### The Community College and Career Training Grant Program: Lessons Learned from the Field and Recommendations

In March 2010, Congress authorized the Community College and Career Training Grant Program in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, with appropriations of $500 million each year for fiscal years 2011 through 2014. Institutions can apply for grants for the purpose of “developing, offering, and improving educational or career training” for workers eligible for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act. Based on our experience in the field, JFF prepared this timely brief recommending how the grant program can encourage community colleges to help more dislocated and unemployed workers move quickly through effective programs that result in successful employment and educational outcomes.

These recommendations can be found at:

http://www.jff.org/publications/education/community-college-and-career-training-gr/1119

The six states in the Developmental Education Initiative have collaborated with Jobs for the Future to produce The Developmental Education Initiative State Policy Framework & Strategy, which will guide the state policy component of the initiative through 2012. Additionally, each DEI state has completed a policy work plan, mapping out the specific steps they will take to improve student outcomes by 2012. The framework and state work plans are available at http://www.deionline.org or www.jff.org.

In our last newsletter, we detailed the first part of a three-part strategy that JFF and DEI states have designed in order to guide states’ efforts to support and drive improved institutional completion rates for students in need of remediation:

1. A data-driven improvement process that enables the states to benchmark the performance of all their two-year institutions in serving low-income and minority students, and to surface high-performing colleges;
2. A state-level innovation investment strategy that helps the states identify and align internal and external resources for the development, testing, and scaling up of effective institutional practices; and
3. Policy supports that facilitate the implementation of new models and encourage the spread of successful practices by removing barriers to innovation and providing incentives for colleges to implement interventions that can deliver better results.

In this issue, we profile in greater depth the work that DEI states are undertaking to develop the second element: a state-level innovation investment strategy. Each state has identified an innovation priority (see table on page 4) with steps to address the following three elements:

• Establish demonstration grants that provide resources and support for alternative delivery of developmental education;
• Seek and secure funds from state and external sources to support an innovation agenda; and
• Fund research and dissemination of results that can guide and reshape institutional approaches to improving outcomes in developmental education.

The innovation investment component of the DEI policy strategy was partly influenced by the prospect of a major infusion of federal resources for community college innovation through the Obama Administration’s American Graduation Initiative. Unfortunately, AGI did not pass, reducing the prospect for innovation funding. Still, even in this stringent fiscal environment, the DEI states have secured funding to provide incentives for developmental education innovation.

Most DEI states are investing their own funds to provide incentives for institutional innovation. They are providing mini-grants and seed funding and developing RFPs for colleges to try new ways of serving students who test into developmental education.

The most prevalent areas of innovation include acceleration, modularization, and math and English course redesign. We can also look forward to innovations that embed developmental education and lead to a career or industry certificate, and innovation focused on aligning Adult Basic Education and community college developmental education.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Investments in Innovation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>The Connecticut Community College system will provide each of the 12 colleges $50,000 as incentive seed money to continue the advancement of student success, with a particular focus on developmental education. The leadership of the colleges will determine what intervention or initiative best supports their goals of addressing the needs of their student populations most effectively, and they will also prepare college funding plans for the 2010-11 academic year.</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>The Florida Division of Colleges offered mini-grants to colleges that demonstrated an interest in broad-scale innovation in developmental education course delivery, and specifically a willingness to pilot a modularized system of instruction. The division identified six colleges of varying demographics to redesign and implement pilot models for developmental education course delivery using a modularized format.</td>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>The North Carolina Community College System will develop an RFP for a statewide Curriculum Improvement Project for developmental math and academic support services. The system office will use the project’s findings to make recommendations regarding organizational structure, curricular changes, and academic support services for developmental math. North Carolina will then identify elements of the project that can be applied to other developmental education disciplines.</td>
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<td>Ohio</td>
<td>To better align funding and programming between ABE and community college developmental education, the Ohio Board of Regents is conducting a study of innovative partnerships between the two sectors. All community colleges and 68 ABE programs were invited to participate in this study to better coordinate the delivery of remedial education services to students. Recommendations will address placement thresholds to determine which students would be more appropriately served in ABE, as well as which programmatic supports and procedures appear to be most effective in helping students accelerate their advancement into credit-bearing classes.</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas invested $5 million in developmental education innovation and $10 million to align ABE to postsecondary standards. The developmental education demonstration grants provide $1.5 million for two years to five colleges for comprehensive developmental education redesign. The ABE innovation funding provides incentives to increase the number of partnerships between community colleges and ABE providers to encourage aligned programming and smooth the transitions among ABE, developmental, and college-level programming. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Association of Community Colleges are collaborating to provide support for the new developmental education demonstration colleges and the four DEI colleges that are in the second year of implementing their innovations.</td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
<td>The Chancellor’s Program Innovation Fund CEED grants will be directed in 2010 to the implementation of the math redesign efforts at the colleges. The Virginia Community College System will redesign mathematics, English and reading developmental education with a focus on increasing student success and the ability to complete all developmental requirements within one year.</td>
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The states and colleges in Achieving the Dream and the Developmental Education Initiative have been exploring ways to redesign or restructure the delivery of developmental education to accelerate the progression of underprepared students into college-level coursework. In related work, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is testing several bold new approaches for delivering developmental mathematics.

Nineteen institutions in five states—California, Connecticut, Florida, Texas, and Washington—will participate in a peer-learning network to drive toward measurable improvements in student success in development mathematics through the creation of two newly designed integrated pathways. The Statistics Pathway (Statway) is designed to advance developmental math students to and through transferable college statistics in one year. The Mathematical Literacy Pathway (Mathway) will be a one-semester course, replacing elementary and intermediate algebra, followed by completion of a college-level mathematics course.

During the next two academic years, Carnegie will work with participating institutions to design Statway and Mathway. The initiative will develop a base of freely available tools and materials for use by other colleges. Carnegie will also identify champions and leaders for rapid expansion of Statway and Mathway in other community colleges across the country.

Achieving Success recent spoke with Rose Asera, director of Pathway Connections for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Before taking a leadership role in this work, Ms. Asera directed the Carnegie project on Strengthening Pre-collegiate Education in Community Colleges, a multisite, action-research project focused on teaching and learning in pre-collegiate mathematics and English language arts courses at 11 California community colleges.

http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/statway

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has made a significant investment in developing a new route to math proficiency in community college curricula. Please describe the Pathways Initiative, including the developmental education challenges that it addresses.

The Statistical Pathway (Statway) creates a one-year statistics course with requisite arithmetic and algebra embedded in the context of, and in the service of statistics. Students would be recruited for the full year and take it as a continuous course. A second new pathway, the Mathway, maintains the semester structure. It has a redesigned one-semester intro to college math called Mathematical Literacy for College Students. It would give students the flexibility either to move to a non-STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] college-level course or back into a STEM path.

We want to be sure that these pathways don’t limit students. So whatever new pathways are created need to include bridges to other paths. It does happen that students who have not succeeded at math in the past get excited and pretty involved when they start to succeed in mathematics or statistics. Their aspirations change. Whatever the starting point, there need to be bridges to the STEM path and other pathways as they get created.

Uri Treisman, at a meeting organized by the Hewlett and Gates foundations two or three years ago, suggested that community college students needed a one-year course that takes them directly to and through college-level statistics. At the same time, the American Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges, through its developmental mathematics committee, was looking at the same question: What can we do that would more effectively serve more community college students? They came up with another idea: a first-semester course that also would prepare students directly for quantitative reasoning, statistics, or redesigned college algebra.

Developmental math really is a barrier. Students are not getting through the developmental sequence as it is currently structured. The typical developmental
sequence now retraces the route from middle school, or even before, through all the algebras as if students were still moving toward calculus. But that’s not where a lot of the students are going. Some students know they are not going there, and they wonder why they have to retake these courses. Many of them don’t know what their options are, and they need to see other possibilities.

Emerging research is pointing out that the length of the sequence itself is a problem. So we wanted to think about a way to shorten the timeframe: shorten the time in developmental education, move students more quickly to college-level work, and in particular let them engage with relevant mathematics. In doing that, the place to start is to reexamine the content and see what’s useful and serves a subsequent purpose (content used in later courses or in majors) and what has been included for historical reasons. We are asking: What is there just because it has always been there and maybe is not as useful anymore? To redesign the developmental sequence, we need to reconsider the content and intensify the instruction and student support. This will also entail creating better standards of evidence.

The problem of developmental mathematics has come out of the shadows. Community College Research Center studies, some state efforts (including California and Tennessee), and some national interventions (including ATD and DEI) are seriously addressing developmental math.

**Where are you working on this project right now? Who is involved?**

It’s a big group. Carnegie Foundation President Tony Bryk’s view of design development research involves collaboration of practitioners, researchers, developers, policymakers, and students. We need all the parties at the table. There are reasons that these people have not necessarily worked together in the past; they have different perspectives. We need to find a way to surface the generative differences in these views and use them as a resource for growth.

We have a group of senior partners that includes researchers from four-year institutions and an advisory committee that includes people who are working in a range of national community college programs—people who think hard about this issue from different points of view. We have generous support from the Hewlett Foundation, the Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, and Carnegie Corporation of New York; the external funders all think this is an idea worth trying. The way Uri Treisman describes it is to invite everyone to join us in this “joyful conspiracy.”

We are starting Statway in five states [California, Connecticut, Florida, Texas, and Washington]. Some are the likely suspects. They are Achieving the Dream states and states in the Developmental Education Initiative because they have already been doing some of the work. And the five states have different policy climates. We chose 19 colleges that were nominated from different points of view and have a number of strengths, including mathematics capacity, leadership, and research capacity. Each campus team includes three faculty members, a dean or other lead administrator, and the institutional researcher. The faculty will be working with us to actually co-develop the instructional materials. We will be starting with draft ideas, but the materials and the assessment will be co-developed in a practice setting. At the same time, the campus administrators and institutional researchers will be working in parallel to address campus and state policy issues.

**What is the timeframe of the project?**

We can see the first two to three years mapped out. In the first year of co-development, this coming academic year 2010-11 while the materials are being developed, the campuses will also be addressing all of the campus committees and the articulation agreements. Statway will be taught for the first time at these colleges in academic year 2011-12. And it will be more widely available for other colleges to prepare to teach it in academic year 2012-13. During this first year or two, we want to find other campuses and individuals to prepare for 2012. We know this is not a three-year project; we are really thinking of a ten-year horizon.

—Rose Asera
The first time these materials are developed, we will be working with faculty in a way that incorporates constant dialogue. Ultimately, the instructional materials will be designed to generate data that goes back to the teacher and informs instruction. The work is also being designed for continuous improvement, so data will inform the ongoing development of the content itself. By working in these focused laboratories on a common project with common assessments and common outcomes, we have a chance to build something that can be refined over time.

One other important group is involved: the professional associations. One of the driving factors of this work is to have common outcomes that are recognized. One of our strategies for taking on resistance to this project is to have something that is worth sanctioning by the discipline and the field. It has to be seen as rigorous mathematics and statistics. We started with a group of individuals who are very active in the professional associations. Then a number of associations organized review panels for the outcomes. If we’re going to advocate for this being a transfer-level course with transfer-level outcomes—demonstrable outcomes—we want to be able to say to the transferring institutions: This is real mathematics, this is real statistics, and we can demonstrate it. We will connect with a broader range of professional association and their members as well. They will be powerful allies for broader dissemination.

Are there particular students that you think this approach will be more attractive and helpful to, or will it equally benefit the general population?

In general, if community colleges look at their data, they would see how many (or actually how few) of the students who start anywhere in the developmental sequence go toward calculus and STEM majors. Many more are likely to go toward statistics or college algebra; these are students in social sciences and humanities. We are looking at a great number of students who come into community college and either don’t know who they are yet and want the flexibility to try out a new identity, or know who they are and really know that they are not going the STEM route. It is a large chunk of the community college-entering population. I think the real clarity on which these students are will be shaped as this idea gets tested in the field. The course may serve new students when they enter college, but it may also be effective for students who have been in college and taken everything except their math requirements.

We are starting with a hypothesis and I think as it gets built and examined, campuses will have a chance to look more deeply at their students and understand whom this pathway will serve. We are talking about a large chunk of the general education students who are pretty sure they are not going the STEM route and don’t need the details of intermediate algebra because these students are not going to end up taking calculus.

People are rightly concerned about STEM majors. Creating a pathway for non-STEM students would also mean that colleges could design courses that concentrate on students who are interested in STEM. The one-size-fits-all path now neutralizes and lowers some of the intensity on all sides. So if we rethink pathways in general, then it is also possible to build a STEM pathway that intensifies the experience for students. I think an overall re-conception of the developmental mathematics landscape will help faculty see and understand the students better and connect them more directly to mathematics that will support their educational and career goals.

What would success look like 10 years down the road if you get traction and things proceed as you hope?

There will not be a singular route where all developmental students move through the same sequence as it is now, but there will be a chance for students on entry to figure out where they want to go and consider their options. It will mean more detailed advising about the implications of the options and the possibilities for flexibility.

Uri Treisman has talked about four pathways: a Statway for students likely to transfer and go into social sciences and some of the humanities; a Mathway general liberal arts math that would start
“There is a growing voice calling for acceleration in developmental education. . . . It is not just moving through material faster but more strategically.”

—Rose Asera

with the Math Literacy for College Students and move to a transfer-level quantitative literacy class or a reworked college algebra or statistics course; a STEM pathway that would look at what kind of intensive experience would get students more directly to calculus and STEM-related math; and probably a pathway for elementary school teachers. There would be more differentiated groups of students moving through the landscape.

**What do you see as the biggest obstacles to success? And what are you doing to minimize resistance and maximize success and outreach?**

One of the big obstacles is a policy obstacle. In many states and systems, intermediate algebra is a requirement for an Associate of Arts or a prerequisite for a transfer-level math course. A number of states and colleges are encountering this as an issue. We want to raise the question respectfully. Prerequisites are there for important reasons. They protect quality and portability. On the other hand, a lot of the prerequisites were shaped by history. The question is whether intermediate algebra is really something that content-wise students need for these different pathways, or is it a proxy for a certain type of quality and rational thinking?

That could be examined. I don’t want to just say get rid of the policy, get rid of the prerequisites, get rid of the barriers. But we need some spaces for serious, responsible testing of alternate ideas and innovations, and then base recommendations on evidence. Some people have figured out local “workarounds,” but we would like to actually take on the question of what role the prerequisite plays and can it be met in different ways of equal rigor.

Another is that we are going against the grain and asking people to do something different. We are asking for a big change, for a different pedagogical mindset—more of a co-requisite approach instead of a prerequisite approach.

What do you think state-level community college officials and leaders most want to know and should know about this initiative?

We want a space to respectfully try out a new idea where we will pay attention to standards of evidence. Sometimes we see people moving to some simple and blanket solutions in policies without the needed expertise and long-term vision. I am nervous about a policy that will say students have to complete all their developmental education requirements before they take college-level courses. There are real reasons for thinking that way; it would maximize the current system. But as a blanket policy, such a statement—without the capacity to try it other ways as well—could block innovation and potentially effective changes.

If you are working locally, you want the system to be maximally flexible and reflective of every student’s particular strengths and needs. If you are working at the system level and you are seeing large patterns, you make very different decisions. So we need to think about balancing the large pattern needs with space for local flexibility.

Many states are setting goals to increase the number of students completing college. How can this alternative pathway be helpful to policymakers so that they can reach the goals they have set?

A major goal is to get more students to graduate, compete a certificate, or transfer. A move to rethink the length of the developmental sequence could make a big difference in those goals. We know a lot of students leave early. We know math is a barrier. We know that development education in general is a barrier because the people teaching developmental English are saying the same thing. There are some studies that indicate that just shorter time in the sequence can get more students into the college-level classes almost regardless of placement scores. This will raise natural questions about the placement process and the length of the sequence. There is a growing voice calling for acceleration in developmental education, but we are looking for another term, because it is not just moving through material faster but more strategically.
How else can state higher education departments, system offices, coordinating boards, etc., be helpful to the Statway teams as this moves forward?

There are not any incentives in the system for student success or for improving instruction. Right now the policy rewards enrollment. Every time I raise this question, I get community college people saying, “Be careful what you ask for.” And I am being careful what I ask for, but there are no incentives, even at the campus-level, for improving teaching. There is always a danger of people short-circuiting the intent of any policy: “If you want more students to get through, then we’ll get more students to get through.” We know people can get around policy, but we need policies that can support the kind of culture of evidence—at the system level, the institutional level, and the classroom level—that is needed.

I’ll say one more thing, which is a little out on a limb. Policy—for example, the accreditation process—has made education more accountable (reluctantly, I will add). But when and where do policies become accountable? Will we see statements saying, “This is the intent of the policy,” “This is what we think the outcomes will be,” “This is how we will measure it,” and “This is when we will reconsider if it is not working?” That feedback loop doesn’t exist now. That is another way that policy could be really helpful. I think all the policymakers know there are unintended consequences, but when and how do you bring those back to the conversation and say it is time to rethink the policy?

To get at what the student experience is and really understanding what it is like, we need to understand more about the students who go to community college—which is everyone—and why they choose it and what they will do to get their education. I think it would help them shape their policies to make it possible.

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**Connecticut**

**Success Incentive Funding**

A recent meeting of the Connecticut Community Colleges Chancellor’s Task Force on Developmental Education with the system’s presidents, deans of academic affairs, and deans of students enabled colleges to share promising practices and progress in advancing its student success agenda. At the conclusion of the meeting, Chancellor Marc Herzog announced a developmental education funding initiative that will provide $50,000 for each college as seed money. In addition, a new apportionment of funding through the system’s budgeting distribution process will recognize improvements in developmental education outcomes to encourage student success. The linkage of success data to the development of the budgetary success formula is based in large part on the measures developed by the Achieving the Dream Cross-State Data Work Group.

**Florida**

**FYI: College Early and Career Readiness Initiative Report**

Florida launched the College and Career Readiness Initiative to improve college readiness and success after high school graduation. During the 2008 legislative session, Senate Bill 1908 provided an opportunity for postsecondary readiness testing of high school students and remediation prior to graduation. This report explores the initial College Placement Testing outcomes in mathematics, reading, and writing for “SB 1908” students. This legislation, which requires cross-sector collaboration, expands college- and career-readiness testing to eleventh-grade students who express a desire to attend a postsecondary institution. It also provides opportunities for students with deficiencies to receive remediation during the twelfth grade.

Massachusetts
The Vision Project: Aspiration, Accountability, and Unity
Hundreds of delegates from the state’s 29 public colleges and universities gathered in September to chart a new course for aspiration and accountability in the public higher education system and launch the Vision Project, a plan to position Massachusetts for national leadership in post-secondary learning. The goal of the Vision Project is to demonstrate that public higher education can act in a unified and focused way to ensure the future well-being of Massachusetts, and that the sector can be held accountable for results to the people of the state. Implementation began in earnest as delegates addressed ways to measure college readiness, graduation rates, efforts to close persistent achievement gaps, and the degree to which the higher education system is meeting the state’s workforce needs.
http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/visionproject.asp

Michigan
2010 Student Success Summit
On August 18, the Michigan Community College Association and the Michigan College Access Network sponsored a statewide Student Success Summit with over 300 policymakers and practitioners. The event launched a community of practice and provided an opportunity for sharing of strategies, promising practices, and innovative models to improve student success. Participants chose from five thematic tracks: college readiness, developmental education, and equity; student retention and community engagement; pathways for adult learners with low basic skills; college access; and the role of state policy. The summit was designed to building bridges across several major national initiatives underway in Michigan (i.e., Achieving the Dream, Breaking Through, Shifting Gears).

Ohio
Governance Institute for Student Success
In September 2010, Ohio community college trustees and presidents participated in the first of the Governance Institutions for Student Success. Ohio is one of the pilot states for this initiative (led by the Association of Community College Trustees and the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin). The institutions will prepare trustees and presidents to set goals for improving student outcomes. The model features expert resident faculty, a state-based strategy targeting all colleges within each state, board self-assessments to determine effectiveness, a close examination of student success data, a review of implications for policies and practices; and commitment-to-action reports.
http://www.governance-institute.org/

North Carolina
2010 Critical Success Factors Report
Each year, the North Carolina Community College System evaluates colleges’ performance in eight core areas. The accountability and performance measures for North Carolina’s community colleges capture outcomes such as the percentage of degree students graduating, the percentage of returning or transferring students, the performance of developmental students who went on to complete college-level courses, and the satisfaction of students with their community college experience. The college performance is published in the Critical Success Factors report for 2010, which is based on data collected during the 2008-09 academic year; 11 community colleges met the standards for “Exceptional Institutional Performance.”
http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Publications/docs/Publications/csf2010.pdf
Virginia

The Critical Point: Redesigning Developmental Mathematics in Virginia’s Community Colleges

This report of the Developmental Mathematics Redesign Team presents recommendations to refocus the goal of developmental mathematics to prepare students for college work and enhance student support services surrounding the delivery of developmental mathematics.

http://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/AcademicServices/The_CRITICAL_POINT-DMRT_Report_082010_pdf.pdf

Student Success and Completion

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Completion by Design Request for Applications

As part of the White House Community College Summit, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a five-year $34.8 million investment to help dramatically increase the graduation rates of today’s community college students. The Completion by Design program will award competitive grants to groups of community colleges to devise and implement new approaches to making the college experience more responsive to today’s student. The Request for Applications seeks submissions from groups of community colleges in nine states: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. Up to five multi-campus groups of community colleges will be selected in early 2011.

http://www.completionbydesign.org/

Aspen Institute

Aspen Prize to Reward Community College Excellence

A $1,000,000 prize competition to recognize community colleges with outstanding academic and workforce outcomes was announced by President Obama at the October White House Community College Summit. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is a project of the Aspen Institute, in partnership with the Joyce Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, and the JP Morgan Chase Foundation. The Aspen Prize will honor excellence, stimulate innovation, and clearly define success. It will be awarded annually beginning in fall 2011. Over the next year, the Aspen Institute will convene leading researchers and community college leaders to help design and administer the prize competition, with an emphasis on making the competition fair, inclusive, and comprehensive.

http://www.aspeninstitute.org/policy-work/aspen-prize

Lumina Foundation for Education

A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education

At a time when the United States urgently needs to increase the number of Americans who hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential, a report released by Lumina Foundation for Education shows that the rate of higher education attainment has barely moved. The Stronger Nation report tracks progress toward Lumina’s “Big Goal”: 60 percent of Americans hold high-quality degrees by 2025. It measures progress at the national, state, and county levels, with profiles for each of the 50 states. For the first time, readers will be able to compare local attainment with that of their county, state, and the nation. To reach 60 percent attainment by 2025, Lumina’s report shows that the United States will need to increase the number of high-quality degrees or credentials awarded annually by 278,000.

http://www.luminafoundation.org/state_data/index.html
National Governors Association

**Complete to Compete**
In July, National Governors Association chair and West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin, III, announced his chair’s initiative, Complete to Compete. The focus is on increasing the number of U.S. students who complete college degrees and certificates and on improving the productivity of the country’s higher education institutions. In addition to raising awareness about the need to increase college completion and productivity, Complete to Compete aims to create a set of common higher education completion and productivity measures. Governors and higher education leaders can utilize these measures to monitor state progress and compare performance to other states and between institutions. *Complete to Compete: Common College Completion Metrics* presents the NGA’s recommendations regarding common metrics that states should adopt, which are aligned with those of Complete College America. 

http://www.subnet.nga.org/ci/1011/index.htm

Center for Law and Social Policy

**Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges: A Federal Policy Toolkit for States**
This toolkit is designed to help interagency state teams identify and facilitate the “braiding” of federal resources to develop career pathways and bridges to them for adults and out-of-school youth. The toolkit also will help state teams identify state policy barriers to using federal resources for career pathways and bridges and, ideally, address them. Using the Funding Options Worksheet, teams can identify a specific target population and list the key tasks for building career pathways under the appropriate headings. Sample tasks are provided in the Funding Options Worksheet, but teams may want to customize their tasks based on specific opportunities or limitations in their state.

http://www.clasp.org/postsecondary/pages?id=0003

Institute for Higher Education Policy

**A Portrait of Low-Income Young Adults in Education**
This brief takes a broad look at low-income young adults in an effort to contribute to the national discussion on improving degree completion by increasing participation among all disadvantaged populations—especially those who attempt to succeed in postsecondary settings under financial stress. Understanding the linkages between low-income young adults’ involvement in postsecondary education and their transition to the labor market is critical to improving the value of these experiences.

http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/m-r/(Brief)_A_Portrait_of_Low-Income_Young_Adults_in_Education.pdf

Adult Students

Lumina Foundation for Education

**Adult Degree Completion Grants**
Lumina Foundation for Education announced a significant new commitment to advancing adult degree attainment through a series of interconnected projects that aim to engage, motivate, and help students who had previously attended college to actually earn degrees. Lumina’s commitment includes support for 19 large-scale projects that will provide leverage to efforts to educate and retrain workers who need up-skilling in order to compete for the jobs that will be created in the next decade—the majority of which will require some form of postsecondary education degree or credential. Lumina expects these grants, totaling $14.8 million over four years, to reach some 6.6 million adults who have some prior college credits. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education will develop a learning network to support Lumina’s Adult Degree Completion commitment, implementing mechanisms for effective, national-level networking, communication, and dissemination of adult completion efforts for grantees and others working to increase adult degree completion.

Data and Performance Measurement Systems

Committee on Measures of Student Success

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently announced the appointment of the 15 members and chairperson to serve on the Committee on Measures of Student Success. Created under the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the committee will develop recommendations for two-year degree-granting higher education institutions to comply with the law’s graduation and completion rate disclosure requirements. The committee will also develop recommendations regarding additional measures of student success that are comparable alternatives to the completion or graduation rates, taking into account the mission and role of two-year-degree-granting higher education institutions. Committee members include experts in the field of higher education policy, state higher education officials, students, and other stakeholders in the higher education community. It will submit its recommendations to the secretary no later than 18 months from the date of its first meeting. The first meeting of this group was held on October 20, 2010.

http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acmss.html

State Higher Education Executive Officers

Stronger Foundations: The State of State Postsecondary Data Systems

This SHEEO report describes state postsecondary student-level data systems and provides examples of how they have been used. The study included 59 data systems in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Key findings include:

• All 45 states collect student demographic and postsecondary enrollment data.
• Of the 23 states that collect K-12 data elements, 20 have access to that data through a relationship with the state education agency (K-12); the other 3 collect these data directly from the students.
• Of the 26 states where the postsecondary agency/entity has a relationship with the state labor/workforce agency, 23 have access to workforce data elements and 3 provide postsecondary data to the workforce agency.
• There is great similarity among states in definitions and code structures for 15 data elements, most of which are demographic in nature.

http://www.sheeo.org/sspds/default.htm

Financial Aid

College Board

The Financial Aid Challenge: Successful Practices that Address the Underutilization of Financial Aid in Community Colleges

This report can guide community college leaders interested in increasing the number of students applying for and receiving financial aid. Included are examples of successful programs, policies, and approaches, as well as recommendations on financial aid administration that are specific to community college students. The report recommends that in the short term, community college leaders review and reevaluate their policies and procedures surrounding financial aid administration. In the long term, community colleges must actively promote and financially support student access programs.