

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE**

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Dear Colleagues,

The recent article by Larry Gordon of *EdSource* (read [here](#)), should cause all of us some concern. Since the passage of the Student Success Act of 2012, college faculty, staff, and administrators have been working hard to design and implement policy changes and interventions based on the recommendations of the Board of Governors' Student Success Taskforce. Our colleges have made great strides--improving their ability to assess student outcomes, evaluating achievement across our diverse student population, and implementing local initiatives and interventions aimed at improving student success. During this time, the State of California has supported these efforts by investing well over \$1.5 billion in initiatives, such as Student Equity, Student Success and Support Programs, Basic Skills Initiative, Career Pathways Trust Fund, and the Strong Workforce all targeted at increasing the number of students obtaining a quality community college credential or becoming transfer ready. Despite our great strides as a system, the article in *EdSource* demonstrates the unacceptably slow pace at which we are seeing meaningful improvement in our student completion data. For instance, the article highlights that overall completion rates for our six-year cohorts have not improved:

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|---------|-------|
| 2010-11 | 48.8% |
| 2011-12 | 49.2% |
| 2012-13 | 48.6% |
| 2013-14 | 47.5% |
| 2014-15 | 47.3% |
| 2015-16 | 48.0% |

While we could choose to respond to this assessment with explanations of why completion outcomes have not improved, I urge that we instead use it as an opportunity to re-double our efforts and approach our work with renewed urgency and intentionality. In this spirit, the Chancellor's Office has proposed implementing the Guided Pathways framework as one solution. The Guided Pathways framework will assist colleges in improving student achievement outcomes by focusing efforts throughout the system on practices and interventions that work at scale, integrating planning across all divisions and silos on college campuses and in the Chancellor's Office, and leveraging all of the state investments made in pursuit of improving student outcomes. As we work with the governor and Legislature to clarify the legislative language and intent, I will be organizing the Chancellor's Office to effectively implement this framework and to identify the regulatory changes that need to be made in order to support this work at the college level. This effort will take the experience gained from the Foundation for the California Community College sponsored California Guided Pathways Project and use it to

inform implementation of the Guided Pathways framework across the entire community college system.

While Guided Pathways is a powerful framework, it is by no means the only one. That is why I am actively soliciting your input for the ongoing strategic visioning process. I want your best and most innovative ideas to help develop a strategic, long-term vision for the California Community Colleges that identifies clear goals for the system and provides broad recommendations for how to accomplish those goals. I encourage you to submit your input through our [online portal](#).

While we work to develop the strategic vision, I urge you to focus on some immediate steps that you can take to help spark the improvements in student achievement that we all want to see. Below are three strategies, developed and tested by community college practitioners, that have been shown to “move the needle” on student retention and completion. It is only through a relentless and sustained focus on practices and policies such as these that we will accomplish meaningful increases in student achievement.

Multiple Measures Placement

The use of high school transcript data, along with other student data such as grade point average, has demonstrated stronger predictive value than using standardized placement exams alone in placing students in college courses. Across the state, California colleges piloting the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) have been able to access the necessary data and are reporting improved student outcomes with the use of multiple measures in their own local experience. Other institutions such as Sierra College and College of the Canyons have developed highly effective multiple measures placement models on their own. Further, research from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University continues to support this practice. With this mounting evidence and experience, it is time for more colleges to adopt this proven student success practice.

Action Recommended: Colleges should end the use of standardized placement exams as the primary tool to place students in college courses. Colleges are recommended to design and implement a multiple measures placement model using high school transcript data and/or other locally available student data that demonstrates predictive value.

Implementation Support Resources: The Chancellor’s Office recommends the following resources to support the design and implementation of multiple measures placement models.

- The Research & Planning (RP) Group [Link](#)
- Cal-PASSPlus [Link](#)

In addition to these recommended support providers, colleges are encouraged to partner with the California Colleges Guidance Initiative (CCGI). Beginning Fall 2017, students accessing CCGI will be able to launch their CCCApply applications. For high school students from a partnering CCGI district this functionality enables a “hard match” between students’ K-12 unique identifier with their community college identification number. This will allow colleges to access demographic data and transcript data that is updated monthly throughout their high school experience. Such data can assist a college in implementing multiple measures placement models as well as dual enrollment programming.

For colleges that do not currently have local access to high school transcript data, we recommend reaching out to local high school and K-12 districts and develop data sharing agreements.

Remedial Education Reform

Even with improved placement models, a significant number of students lack the basic skills necessary to succeed in college-level credit courses and are in need of remedial education. The Student Success Taskforce and the Basic Skills Initiative called for significant reform of basic skills education. In addition, several faculty led efforts, locally and system-wide, have achieved important improvements. Both the California Acceleration Project and 3CSN are Chancellor’s Office supported, faculty-led efforts that have developed effective local and system-level strategies and provide faculty professional development in this area.

Action Recommended: Colleges should take an aggressive and intentional approach in implementing remedial education reforms that significantly reduce the types and number of basic skills sequences a student must complete, that consider co-requisite models, which maintain a student’s momentum toward achieving an educational outcome, and that rely on scalable models of interventions that are integrated across the college and supported by college-level strategic planning.

Implementation Support Resources: The Chancellor’s Office recommends the following resources to support the design and implementation of remedial education reforms.

- The California Acceleration Project [Link](#)
- 3CSN [Link](#)
- The RP Group [Link](#)
- The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges [Link](#)
- Institutional Effectiveness and Partnership Initiative [Link](#)
- Complete College America [Link](#)
- Carnegie Foundation, Math Pathways [Link](#)

College Promise

Many colleges, in partnership with K-12 districts, universities, and local government are establishing College Promise initiatives across the state. These efforts were recently supported by the distribution of California College Promise Innovation grants. College Promise initiatives have been shown to improve college-going rates and completion of post-secondary credentials. The Chancellor's Office is working with members of the Legislature and other policy leaders to support a statewide framework for College Promise initiatives that focus on improving student outcomes and reducing the cost of attending college.

Action Recommended: Colleges involved in establishing College Promise initiatives are encouraged to continue to build on their efforts and bring together local K-12, university, philanthropic, and municipal partners for the purpose of streamlining pathways from pre-K to a bachelor's degree. Colleges should place an emphasis on system alignment and implementing practices that improve student outcomes. Examples range widely, but include: improved curricular articulation, dual enrollment, and summer bridge programs. A secondary emphasis should be creating low to no-cost pathways for local students that leverage the BOG Fee Waiver and other aid programs. For students who do not qualify for fee waivers or need-based aid programs, colleges are encouraged to seek philanthropic support to cover the remaining local students, or leverage existing scholarship resources through college foundations. Colleges can access College Promise Innovation grants, Innovation Award resources, as well as SSSP and Equity fund to support students that are part of College Promise cohorts.

Implementation Support Resources: The Chancellor's Office recommends the following resources to support the design and implementation of College Promise initiatives.

- Legislative Analyst's Office Overview of Tuition-Free Programs [Link](#)
- LongBeachCollegePromise.org [Link](#)
- College Promise Campaign [Link](#)
- WestEd REL West [Link](#)
- Community College League of California [Link](#)
- Career Ladders Project, Dual Enrollment Toolkit [Link](#)