



Gateways to Opportunity

*A Statewide Vision for
Gateway Course Success*

2024

About the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

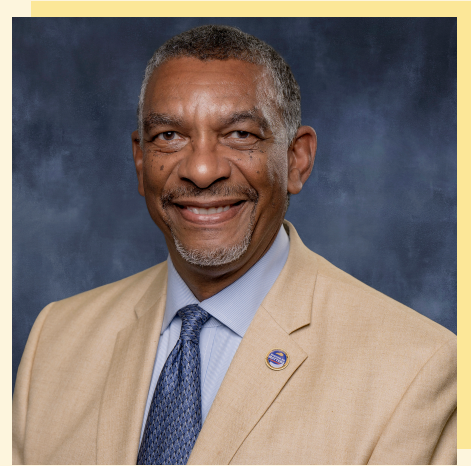
The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) is the state's higher education coordinating agency committed to strengthening our workforce, economy and quality of life. We do this by guiding the continuous improvement and efficient operation of a high-quality, diverse and accessible system of postsecondary education.

Key responsibilities include:

- Developing and implementing a strategic agenda for postsecondary education that includes measures of progress.
- Producing and submitting a biennial budget request for adequate public funding of postsecondary education.
- Determining tuition rates and admission criteria at public postsecondary institutions.
- Collecting and distributing data about postsecondary education performance.
- Ensuring the coordination and connectivity of technology among public institutions.
- Licensing non-public postsecondary institutions to operate in the Commonwealth.

Dear Colleagues,

In 2018, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education took the momentous step of requiring public universities to offer corequisite developmental education courses to students who fall below academic readiness benchmarks. Previously, underprepared students had to pay full tuition for remedial courses that didn't count towards their majors, resulting in additional time and costs to complete a degree. Now, university students can enroll in credit-bearing introductory courses with additional academic supports (like supplemental instruction or tutoring), which has dramatically increased retention and graduation rates. And community college students can take no more than one traditional developmental course and must have access to a corequisite course within their first academic year.



Still, there are steps we can take to further improve the corequisite developmental education model and ensure it works equally well for all students. Our innovative Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, a unit of CPE, has worked with higher education stakeholders over the last year to develop a statewide strategy to improve student outcomes in gateway courses – particularly those in mathematics and English.

This dedicated group of faculty, staff, advisors, and administrators have identified strategies that will make these courses more accessible and help all learners—including first-generation, low-income, minoritized, and adult learners—have the supports they need to enable them to complete a credential in a timely manner.

I am extremely proud of the work this group has accomplished, and I look forward to seeing these innovative strategies in action. Together, we can ensure that every Kentuckian has the resources and supports they need to secure a brighter future through postsecondary education and training.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aaron Thompson, Ph.D., President
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

What is a Gateway Course?

Gateway courses are foundational, college-level courses that apply to a student's program of study or to a college's general education requirements. These courses are typically considered first-year or lower-division courses and serve as a basis for more advanced studies. (See Graphic 1)

Why Gateway Course Success is a Top Priority

Research has demonstrated that completing gateway courses in two key disciplines—mathematics and English composition—are positively correlated with completing a degree or credential. Completing gateway courses during the first year of a student's enrollment can generate momentum toward degree completion, but far too many students do not complete these foundational courses during their first year, or at all. (See Graphic 2)

Nationally, only 16% of community college students complete gateway math and English courses in the first year. During the 2021 academic year, Kentucky's community college students fared better, with 21% completing college-level math and English courses in the first year. At public universities, 44% of students completed these courses within their first year. (See Graphic 1)

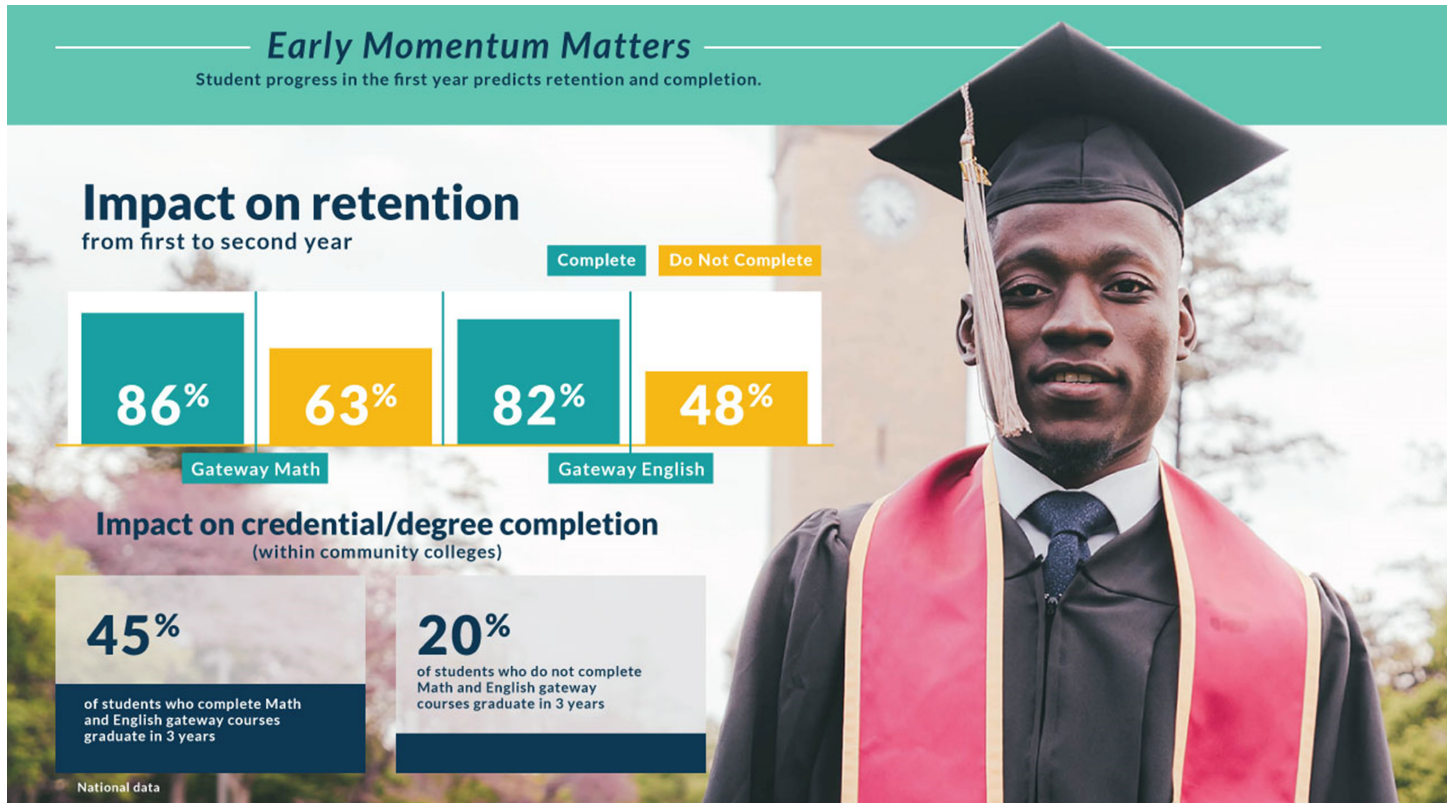
Early momentum in English and math improves a student's likelihood of retention and completion. National data trends confirm that for those who complete gateway math in the first year of college, 86%

Graphic 1



are retained to the second year. In contrast, those who do not complete gateway math in the first year are retained at the lower rate of 63%. There's an even greater premium for gateway English courses. For students who complete a college-level English course in the first year, 82% continue their enrollment compared to just 48% of students who do not complete college-level English. (See Graphic 2)

Graphic 2

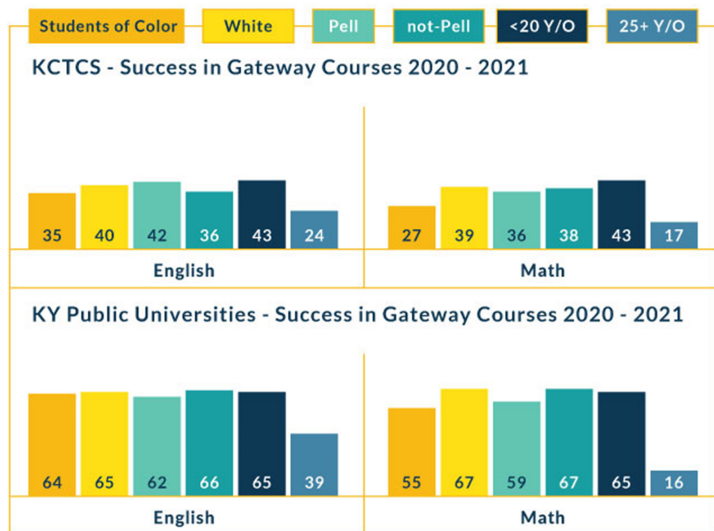


Gateway Course Completion is an Equity Issue

In Kentucky, institutional performance gaps in gateway course success exist by race, income, and age. Most significant, there are double-digit gaps in math for students of color and adult learners, which must be addressed if Kentucky hopes to improve academic success, momentum, and completion for all learners. (See Graphic 3)

Many unique strengths in Kentucky are foundational to the work of improving equity in access and outcomes. Through legislation and policy, CPE has worked for the past decade to create the conditions for better and more equitable outcomes in gateway math and English. Kentucky's strong data infrastructure, history of institutional innovation, and the statewide minimum admissions and placement regulation has focused on increasing access to college-level courses for all students. The regulation requires the use of corequisite education at all public universities for students not meeting academic readiness benchmarks and limits the use of traditional developmental education courses at community colleges, thus increasing access to corequisite courses for students in community colleges as well.

Gateway course completion is an equity issue



In Kentucky institutional performance gaps exist by race, income, and age.

Double digit institutional performance gaps exist in **math** for students of color and adult learners.

**60
x30**

Improving gateway course success and closing equity gaps are essential to reach Kentucky's educational attainment goal of 60% of the population with a postsecondary credential or degree by 2030.

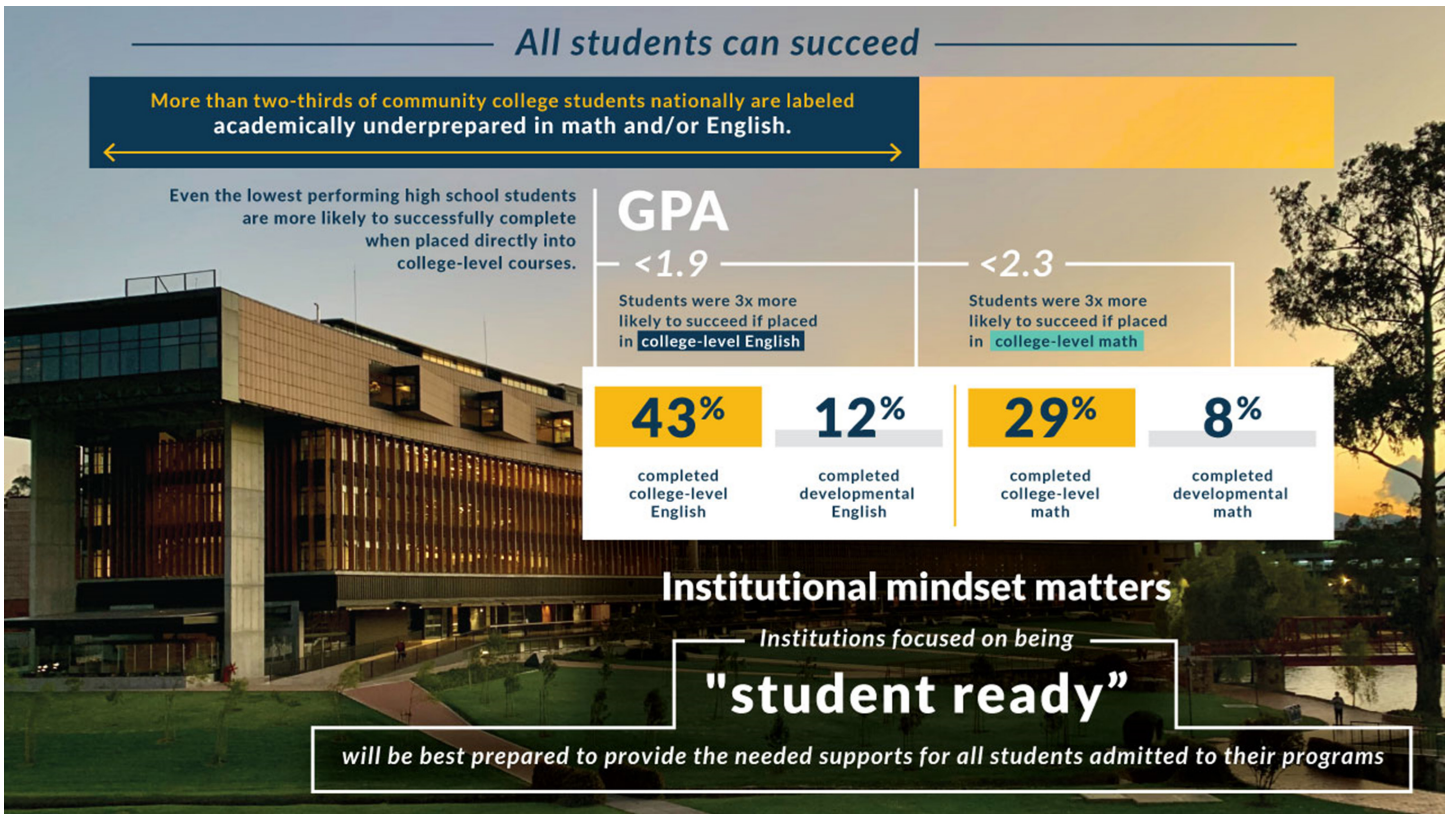
Evidence from around the country makes clear that traditional structures of prerequisite remediation that place underprepared students in non-credit developmental courses, despite being well-intended, prevent far too many students who are capable of success from ever accessing college-level courses and the supports needed for success. More than two-thirds of community college students nationally are labeled academically underprepared in math and/or English. But despite academic preparation, students placed directly in college-level courses are three times more successful than their peers placed in development courses. (See Graphic 4)

Offering corequisite supports for gateway courses, along with redesigning gateway courses to provide a more inclusive, student-centered experience, have proven to be effective strategies to increase the numbers of students who pass their first required courses thereby increasing their access to more advanced courses in their programs of study. In 2016, with funding support from the James Graham Brown Foundation, CPE led the implementation of a pilot project on corequisite course design in partnership with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Within one year, course completion in gateway English and college algebra courses jumped 20 to 30 percentage points for participating campuses. This successful project led to the corequisite policy update in 2018. (See Graphic 5)

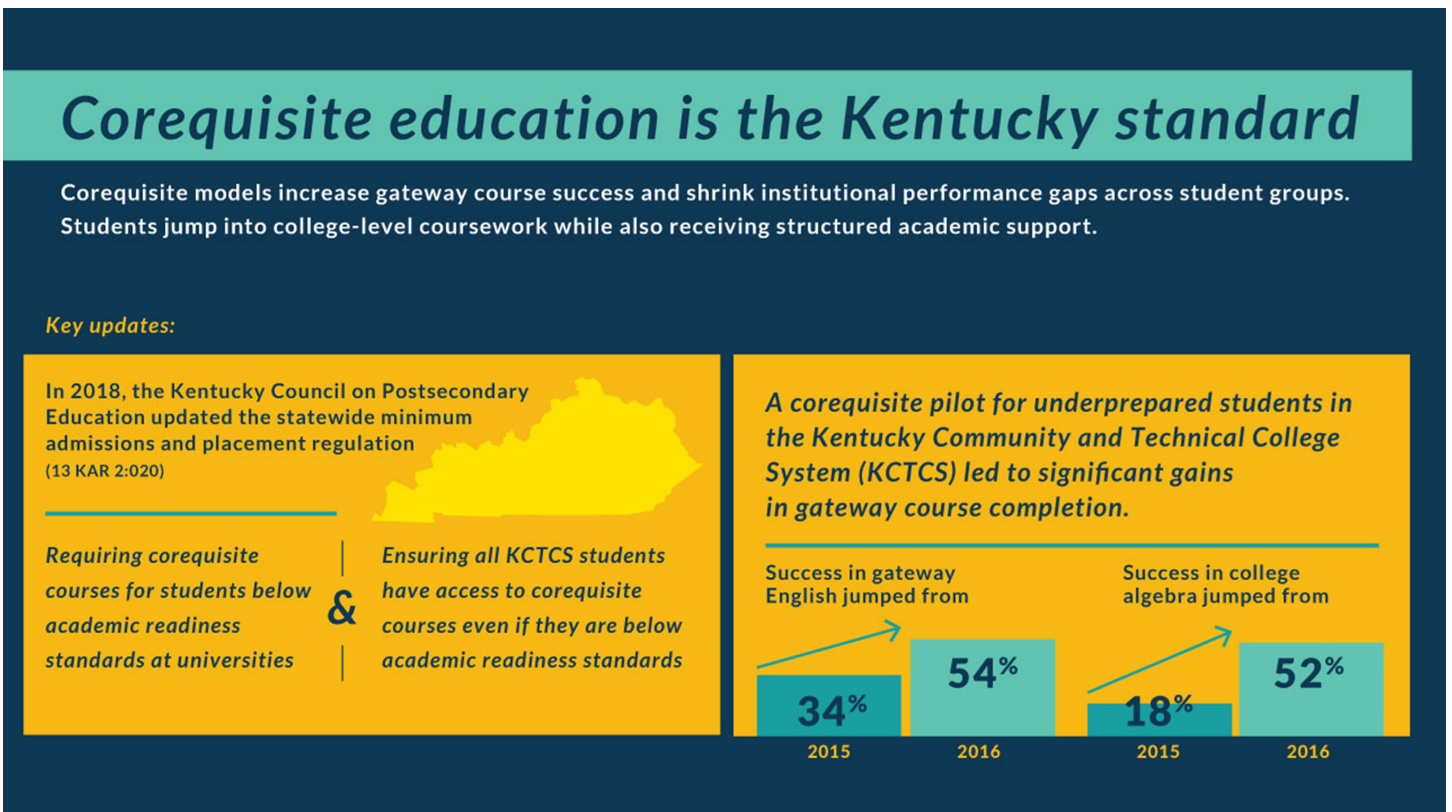
Prerequisite remediation: Under prerequisite remediation, students who do not meet college readiness benchmarks must first complete non-credit remediation courses before enrolling in credit-bearing, entry-level college courses.

Corequisite courses: In corequisite courses, students who may not meet college readiness benchmarks enroll directly into college-level courses and receive academic support alongside their regular classes.

Graphic 4



Graphic 5



Vision for Gateway Course Success

Now, more than ever, gateway course success is an essential piece of the attainment puzzle, as passing gateway courses in math and English is the first academic milestone on the road to completion. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, gateway courses were a growing focus of interest for student success advocates, with strong evidence from many states showing the need for wholesale reform of how gateway math and English courses are accessed and taught. But in the aftermath of the pandemic, with the downstream effects of lockdown-related learning loss apparent across the nation and educational spectrum (from elementary school to college), the focus on gateway course success has never been more important.

The Council on Postsecondary Education launched the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) in 2021 to bring together campus partners to collaborate on shared priorities and common challenges in order to accelerate our progress on student success. In June 2023, the KYSSC convened stakeholders across the state—including faculty, staff, advisors and administrators—to identify barriers and solutions to improve students’ academic success in critical “gateway courses” taken during the first year.

As with the broader statewide postsecondary education strategic agenda, the gateway course success strategy was developed through an equity lens. CPE defines equity as the creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs. Making progress on Kentucky’s strategic objectives and priorities requires a clear-eyed focus on operationalizing our commitment to equity. The KYSSC’s Equity Accountability Principles serve as a foundational resource for institutional partners as we seek to make progress on our shared priorities.

Equity Accountability Principles:

1. Center student voice
2. Build diverse project teams
3. Disaggregate data
4. Promote culturally responsive solutions

This work begins from a strong foundation of partnership, collaboration, and continuous improvement, which will be essential to the success of Kentucky’s efforts to improve academic success for all students.

Kentucky’s Gateway Course Success Strategy

To build on our strengths and move forward with urgency and intentionality, the following objectives and recommended strategies provide a new statewide vision for gateway course success. Campus partners and the KYSSC will focus its work over the next three years on prioritizing state and institutional resources toward strategies that will build a community and culture of stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement to improve equitable outcomes through research, engagement, and action.

The Things that Matter: Objectives

1. Center students' needs in the pursuit of scalable improvements in gateway courses.
2. Strengthen communication and collaboration within and across institutions.
3. Remove barriers to equitable access and success in gateway courses across modalities.

Recommended Strategies – Implementation Timeline 2024 - 2027

1. Center students' needs in the pursuit of scalable improvements in gateway courses.

Listening to student voices and understanding students' experiences are essential to better understand the impact of gateway courses on student success and to identify institutional barriers to success in those courses. Through faculty-led quantitative and qualitative research focusing on students' experiences and the strengths students from all backgrounds bring to their classrooms, faculty and staff will center students' experiences and build a foundation of goodwill to engage in improvement and redesign of gateway courses.

CPE will pursue funding and support research collaboration to better understand the impact of policies and practices on student enrollment and success in gateway courses across our institutions. This research will include an examination of practices inside and outside of classrooms. Since gateway courses constitute a student's first substantive experience with the institution, identifying practices that result in better and more equitable outcomes will help institutions remove barriers to student success.

Timely access to early momentum metrics, such as enrollment in and completion of gateway courses, will be essential to monitoring the effectiveness of the statewide strategy and impact on student success. To facilitate this access, CPE will develop a dashboard to track disaggregated data on student enrollment and success in gateway courses across all institutions. Disaggregating data can reveal equity gaps and opportunities for improvement. It will also identify and highlight institutions making progress on equitable student success. The Corequisite Community of Practice will leverage the data dashboard to inform professional development needs, instructional design efforts, and all other solution areas.

2. Strengthen communication and collaboration within and across institutions.

The KYSSC was created to bring campus partners together to accelerate progress on common priorities and challenges facing students. Toward that aim, the KYSSC will partner with national experts and Kentucky institutions to provide high quality, inclusive, and culturally relevant faculty development opportunities for gateway and corequisite courses. Connecting with national partners and colleagues

from other states to promote the spread and scale of evidence-based strategies will be essential to exploring innovative approaches and increasing access to and success in gateway courses.

The KYSSC will convene one or more communities of practice focused on analyzing data, identifying best practices, and developing successful strategies for the design and delivery of both gateway and corequisite support courses. These communities of practice will be comprised of faculty instructors, faculty development professionals, student success professionals, and equity champions from across Kentucky who will provide change leadership for the state and within their institutions. Through these efforts to build community among faculty, staff, and administrators, we will work to advance a culture of student-focused collaboration within and across institutions.

Partnership opportunities abound to leverage resources for the shared goal of increasing postsecondary education and attainment for adults in the Commonwealth. For instance, the Kentucky Office of Adult Education (KYAE) is a key stakeholder with a substantial infrastructure in place, including a presence at 14 of the 16 Kentucky community and technical colleges. The KYSSC and campus partners will explore opportunities to amplify support services for adult learners in partnership with KYAE and identify other partners and collaborative opportunities.

3. Remove barriers to equitable access and success in gateway courses.

Today's students face barriers both inside and outside of the classroom. Well-designed gateway courses, taught by well-prepared faculty who are invested in student success, along with appropriate academic support when needed, have been shown to decrease barriers and increase students' momentum toward a credential. To this end, colleges and universities will leverage technical assistance support to engage faculty and administrators in redesigning instruction in gateway courses, emphasizing the faculty role in creating equitable learning environments while protecting rigor. Active learning, growth-mindedness among faculty, redesign of assessments and faculty-led improvements in instruction will be prioritized in these engagement activities.

Academic advisors are key stakeholders to removing institutional barriers for students. The relevance of gateway courses to students' chosen programs of study is often unclear, particularly for students who are the first in their families to attend college. To improve students' understanding of the key role of these courses, advisors and other campus leaders will engage in professional development and develop clear messaging for students and families that emphasizes the importance and relevance of gateway courses in overall student success. The KYSSC will also create learning opportunities for advisors and student support professionals to ensure students are provided with advising experiences that strengthen their sense of purpose and self-efficacy. Knowledgeable advisors who bring a strengths-based view of students are essential for today's students to achieve their potential.

Among the many nonacademic barriers faced by today's students, the KYSSC's Student Basic Needs Initiative is focused on food security, housing security, childcare solutions, and emergency financial assistance. Adult learners, who will make up a growing share of our state's population in the coming years, have complex lives and often struggle to balance meeting their basic needs with family, work, and school. Recognizing that nonacademic barriers can have a significant impact on academic success, the KYSSC will work with campus and community partners to develop robust basic needs services that are promoted to students enrolled in gateway and corequisite courses. A college credential is a path to financial stability for families, and successfully completing gateway courses is the first academic milestone along that journey.

Conclusion and Next Steps

College and university stakeholders engaged in the development of Kentucky's Gateway Course Success Strategy are a group of passionate faculty, staff, advisors, and administrators dedicated to student success. The KYSSC is grateful for their partnership and thought leadership, and we are eager to move forward with broadened and deepened engagement across the Commonwealth. To jumpstart these efforts, our immediate next steps are:

1. Share the strategy and opportunities to engage in the work with all campus partners.
2. Convene stakeholders in January 2024 to begin developing action items to implement the strategy over the next three years.
3. Connect with state and national organizations and funders to build the resources and human capacity needed for success.

Gateway Course Success Strategic Plan Overview

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p>We will center students' needs in the pursuit of scalable improvements in gateway courses.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize student voices in qualitative research about the impact of gateway courses on student success. 2. Research the impact of various policies and practices on student enrollment and success in gateway courses and identify strategies that result in better and more equitable outcomes. 3. Develop a dashboard to track disaggregated data on student enrollment and success in gateway courses across all institutions.
<p>We will strengthen communication and collaboration within and across institutions to promote better and more equitable outcomes in gateway courses.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide professional development to support faculty to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and culturally relevant instruction in gateway and corequisite support courses. 2. Convene one or more communities of practice to identify best practices and develop successful strategies for the design and delivery of gateway and co-requisite support courses. 3. Explore partnership development with KY Adult Education to leverage resources and increase support for all adult learners who do not meet college-ready benchmarks.
<p>We will remove barriers to equitable access and success in gateway courses across modalities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage institutions and faculty in redesigning instruction in gateway courses, emphasizing the role of faculty in improving student success. 2. Develop comprehensive training for advisors and messaging for students emphasizing the importance and relevance of gateway courses in overall student success. 3. Promote wraparound basic needs support for students in gateway and corequisite support courses.

Sources

- [Strong Start to Finish: Corequisite Works | Student Success Models at the University System of Georgia](#)
- [CCA Launches New Report on Corequisite Support: No Room for Doubt](#)
- [Complete College America \(CCA\) Data Dashboard](#)
- [Improving Equity through Corequisite Support](#)
- [Success Rates Estimates \(California Community Colleges\): Estimating Success Rates for Students Placed Directly into Transfer-level English and Math Courses](#)
- [Early Momentum Metrics: Leading Indicators for Community College Improvement](#)
- [Institute for Higher Education Policy: Postsecondary Data GPS](#)
- [Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Data Dashboard](#)
- [Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education: Guiding Principles on Developmental Education](#)
- [Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education: Corequisite Education in Kentucky](#)
- [Strong Start to Finish: Core Principle 2 | Enroll in College-level Math and English](#)



The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative

In 2021, CPE created the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, a first-of-its-kind statewide program, to accelerate transformational change on strategic student success priorities critical to the [60 x 30 goal](#). Through broad stakeholder engagement, the KYSSC facilitates strategy development, continuous improvement implementation, collaborative learning networks, and capacity building for campus partners to lead transformational change.

Resources on Gateway Course Success

The KYSSC launched the Impact exChange, an online statewide resource repository, designed for higher education faculty and practitioners to share resources, ask questions, and support one another in our common goal of student success.

The Impact exChange is full of resources, articles, toolkits, and conversations among Kentucky stakeholders focused on the topic of Gateway Course Success. To check out these resources go to tinyurl.com/KYImpactexChange and select the topic “Gateway Course Success” from the drop-down menu.



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
100 Airport Road, Third Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
cpe.ky.gov



The Kentucky
Student Success
Collaborative

Kentucky Student Success Collaborative
kystudentsuccess.org

The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) is made possible through a partnership and financial investment from the James Graham Brown Foundation with the goal of engaging Kentucky's postsecondary partners with nonprofit, workforce and governmental stakeholders to address the state's most pressing challenges and barriers to student success.

