

Policy Objective 1: Increase the number of college-ready Kentuckians entering postsecondary education.

Strategy 1.1: Align K-12, adult education, and postsecondary education standards, curriculum, and assessment processes as directed by Senate Bill 1 (2009).

- **The Kentucky Core Academic Standards**, the common core standards for English literacy and mathematics, **continue to act as a shared reference point for what constitutes college readiness across the K-12, adult, and higher education systems.** The Council staff convened a work team meeting to create a broad-based understanding of the progression of the English literacy and mathematics content standards from elementary to high school to postsecondary introductory coursework.
- **The Council staff convened postsecondary science and social studies work teams comprised of faculty, adult educators, and K-12 content leaders to discuss expectations of students entering credit-bearing coursework in those content areas.** These teams reviewed and reacted to released frameworks and draft standards to ensure alignment of standards and expectations. Once these content standards are adopted, online modules will be built and provided at www.kycorestandards.org to inform postsecondary faculty of the standards and their impact on college entry-level curriculum.
- The Council continues to provide information about **evidence-based college readiness programs**, bridge programming, and services supporting high school and adult students entering college underprepared for credit-bearing coursework.
- The Unified Strategy for College and Career Readiness is being implemented collaboratively at K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions. State goals are to reduce the need for remediation of recent high school graduates by 50 percent by 2014 and to increase college completion rates of students entering with remediation needs. Two recent reports indicate marked improvements in the readiness of recent Kentucky graduates. The Kentucky Department of Education indicated a readiness improvement from 34 percent of the 2010 graduates to 47.2 percent in 2012 and the Council reported a 6.2 percent decrease in the need for remediation of recent Kentucky graduates between fall 2010 and fall 2011.

- The Council has supported the development of KYOTE placement exams for mathematics (college readiness and college algebra), writing, and reading. The exams were designed around the Kentucky key learning outcomes for college and career readiness and act as one of the readiness indicators used by all Kentucky public postsecondary institutions. These exams are available at no cost to any Kentucky K-12 or postsecondary institution.

Strategy 1.2: Support effective intervention strategies for underprepared students prior to postsecondary admission.

- **A college readiness module is under development** and will be available to K-12, adult, and postsecondary educators with resources and data on the progress in meeting college readiness and developmental education goals. This information will be available on the www.kycorestandards.org website by June 2013.
- **CPE staff and postsecondary faculty supported the Kentucky Department of Education in designing middle school and high school senior year course frameworks for mathematics, writing, and reading.** Students not meeting benchmark scores for readiness are required to receive intervention programming based on 8th grade ACT EXPLORE scores and 11th grade ACT scores. Students can demonstrate readiness for credit-bearing college courses in the senior year by completing transitional course or intervention programming and meeting benchmark scores on placement exams recognized by every public postsecondary institution. Kentucky is working with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to develop senior year transitional courses and related curricula and assessments that will be used across states in the region.
- **Eight educational leadership networks** have been established to support the full implementation of the Kentucky Academic Content Standards. Each network includes two full-time postsecondary faculty who work with KDE leadership and school leaders to provide professional development training on the standards and related assessments for teachers and school leaders.
- In 2011, the Council received federal grant funding for **GEAR UP Kentucky 3.0 (2011-2017)**, which helps students plan for, apply to, and pay for college. The program serves 30 middle schools in 22 Kentucky counties and their corresponding high schools.
- **GEAR UP Kentucky developed a customized college readiness curriculum for middle school students** focused on developing the learning skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP-2-Learn is a 20-hour curriculum per grade level that supports the development of learning skills such as goal setting, problem solving, time management, financial literacy, and more. This curriculum is currently being

delivered to 7th and 8th graders in all GUK middle schools by GUK school-based staff. **GEAR UP Kentucky also developed and is currently implementing a comprehensive student advising model** in participating schools called GEAR UP-2-Success. This data-driven advising model utilizes an early warning system to monitor student performance. The model provides individualized advising for all students while flagging students who are at risk of falling off track to graduate college-and-career ready and matching them to appropriate targeted interventions. In addition, all 8th grade students will have the opportunity to visit at least one college campus.

Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the college-going and completion culture in Kentucky.

- A **College and Career Readiness Advising Toolkit** for all middle and high school teachers was developed and implemented in 2012. The toolkit has been used extensively in the college readiness Operation Preparation initiative supported by K-12 and postsecondary education. The focus is on the skills and attitudes needed to enter college or the 21st century workplace prepared.
- **GEAR UP Kentucky** and its partners have been implementing a series of school improvement activities to support the creation of a sustainable college-going culture in participating middle and high schools. Last spring classroom walkthroughs were completed in all 52 middle and high schools including science, ELA, and math classes; this baseline data included a school self-assessment process utilizing the GUK School Performance Guide. Using the data collected, GUK 3.0 worked with schools to develop school sustainability plans targeting strategies for improvement. A series of regional two-day Transition Workshops was offered in March. The workshops promoted vertical conversations around 8th grade student preparation for high school. The workshops included the opportunity to examine EXPLORE assessment data, make connections between EXPLORE results and emerging student needs, and plan for support systems for the rising 9th grade students.
- In summer 2013, GEAR UP Kentucky 3.0 hosted a statewide **Institute for a College-Going Culture** which brought together nearly 300 college access professionals, school leaders, and postsecondary education faculty to provide a broader context for college access and readiness. The two-day conference provided sessions on a range of topics designed to clarify roles in promoting a college-going culture in Kentucky schools and clarify pathways for new or expanded collaboration.
- GEAR UP Kentucky 3.0 publishes the **GEAR UP Gazette**, a monthly insert in the Lexington Herald-Leader through a partnership with its Newspapers in Education program. The *Gazette* includes articles on a range of college readiness topics for students and parents, including the benefits of earning a college degree and how to plan, pay, and apply for college. The *Gazette* is provided in every issue of the newspaper statewide and distributed to all GEAR UP schools.

- Students are encouraged to take advantage of AP, IB, dual credit, and early college opportunities. Council staff convened a dual credit work team to **create a statewide dual credit policy and a chart standardizing the awarding of AP and CLEP credit across public postsecondary institutions**. The statewide dual credit policy will be fully implemented in fall 2013.
- **Summer bridge programming**, offered on most public postsecondary campuses, builds the needed skills and attitudes for success for students entering college not yet prepared for credit-bearing coursework. Student mentoring, proactive academic advising, and tutoring are essential student success components of these programs that have demonstrated success in closing the gaps for first-generation students and other diverse student populations.