



2011-15 Strategic Agenda

Focus on College Readiness

Goal: Kentucky will be stronger by ensuring more high school graduates, GED graduates, and working-age adults enter college prepared for credit-bearing work.

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)*.

- Council staff worked with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to design a **comprehensive process for revising literacy and mathematics standards and expectations** aligned from elementary to high school to postsecondary. The common standards are rigorous, in-depth, evidence-based, and consider international benchmarks.
- The Council convened a series of **postsecondary work team meetings** (comprised of teacher education and content faculty from all sectors, Kentucky Adult Education, representatives from K-12, and other statewide organizations) to review each draft of the common core standards and benchmarks for college and career readiness. These groups were assembled to create a broad-based understanding of Senate Bill 1, the progression and alignment of the English literacy and mathematics standards from elementary to high school to postsecondary introductory coursework ensuring that college readiness expectations were met.
- Council staff convened another series of meetings with campus college readiness representatives to create an understanding of Kentucky's revised standards and Senate Bill 1 and its impact for colleges and universities. These discussions led to a review of the literature of practices that impact student success, retention, and graduation rates. In addition, individual institutions identified and discussed evidence-based college readiness programs and services supporting high school and adult students entering college underprepared for credit-bearing coursework.
- The Council, in partnership with KDE, led the development of the ***Unified Strategy for College and Career Readiness***. Four goals were identified 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 without being prepared for credit-bearing coursework. The defined unified strategies include: (1) accelerated learning opportunities; (2) secondary intervention programs; (3) college and career readiness advising; and (4) postsecondary college persistence and degree completion.
- Council staff represents Kentucky higher education on **multi-state assessment consortia teams to build assessments around the common core standards** and to make sure that those assessments align to postsecondary introductory course placement expectations.
- The Council **convened placement and readiness work teams to define learning outcomes** for developmental, transitional, and supplemental courses that align with the common core standards and entry into college credit-bearing coursework. In addition, these teams have made decisions on common placement assessments and benchmarks for college readiness. By fall 2012, students who meet the defined learning outcomes through placement testing or coursework will be guaranteed placement into college credit-bearing coursework without need of remediation across the Commonwealth.



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- The **Commonwealth Commitment for College and Career Readiness** was signed by the presidents of all public colleges and universities. This initiative expands efforts to build stronger linkages between K-12 schools and postsecondary education, improve student transitions from high school to college, support an ongoing model of collaboration, and lead the postsecondary system in the successful implementation of Kentucky's Unified Strategy for College and Career Readiness.

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

- High school teachers and postsecondary faculty developed **transitional courses for writing, reading, and mathematics** during the spring 2010 and 2011. High school students who successfully complete the transitional courses or other intervention programs and score at pre-defined college readiness levels will be guaranteed placement into credit-bearing courses in college.
- An **Advising Toolkit for all middle and high school teachers** is being developed which focuses on the skills and attitudes needed to enter college or the 21st century workplace prepared. The toolkit will be completed and ready for use by fall 2011.
- **Eight educational leadership networks** have been established throughout the state to support the full implementation of the common core standards. The leadership networks and postsecondary faculty training are described in the overview of Policy Objective 3 (separate document).

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

- Students are encouraged to take advantage of **AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs**. In 2010, nearly 10,000 Kentucky students took AP courses. Nearly 5,000 of those students scored three or higher and will earn college credit. AdvanceKY, a statewide initiative lead by the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation, has expanded access to, participation in, and success of such programs for underrepresented students in the areas of mathematics, science, and English.
- **Dual credit opportunities** are being provided across the higher education system, and KCTCS has partnered with high schools to promote career readiness within dual credit programs. These programs create opportunities for students who may not consider college an option to receive a postsecondary credential and then continue the educational opportunities through degree completion.
- Kentucky recently became one of 41 states participating in a **Jobs for the Future (JFF) initiative to expand early college programs** for students who may not have considered postsecondary education. JFF develops, implements, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. Through this initiative, KDE and CPE will work closely with JFF advisors, postsecondary institutions, and school districts to expand effective early college options in Kentucky.



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- **Summer bridge programming**, offered on most public postsecondary campuses, builds skills for students entering college not yet prepared for credit-bearing coursework. Student mentoring, academic advising, and tutoring are essential components of these programs and have demonstrated success in closing the gaps for first generation students and other diverse student populations.
- **The Kentucky College Coaches program**, established in 2010, is a statewide, near-peer advising program for recent college graduates who help K-12 students navigate the steps from high school into college. In its first year, the program funded 65 full time and 19 quarter time AmeriCorps members to serve as College Coaches in high schools and middle schools across the Commonwealth. The coaches work alongside guidance counselors and other faculty and staff to support students as they transition from high school to college. The program will especially focus on students who might not envision themselves going to college, first generation college students, and/or populations with low rates of college enrollment.
- **Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) Kentucky** is a federally-funded program administered by the Council that encourages middle and high school students to stay in school, study hard, and take the right courses to go to college. GEAR UP Kentucky is focused on improving the skills of at-risk students and influencing their educational choices through enhanced guidance and support. GEAR UP also helps students prepare and plan for college and become aware of financial aid opportunities.