

## Report on COLLEGE READINESS Prepared for the CPE Strategic Agenda Work Group

### Introduction

To be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kentucky must increase the educational levels of its workforce. According to the U.S. Census, only 22 percent of Kentucky adults (25 to 64) have a bachelor's degree, compared to 27 percent nationally. The global economy demands a highly skilled, educated workforce. Creating a seamless, integrated K-12 system that promotes college readiness is essential in enhancing economic development and quality of life.

The individual and collective benefits of postsecondary education are well documented. The College Board periodically publishes a report, "Education Pays," that details the economic and social benefits of higher education. Over their lifetimes, people with college degrees earn hundreds of thousands more dollars than those with just a high school diploma and contribute more taxes. States with more college graduates enjoy better health, higher levels of civic engagement, lower incarceration rates, and reduced spending on social welfare programs.

If Kentucky is to increase the number of students going to college and completing a degree, college readiness must be addressed. The gap between high school and adult basic education exit requirements and postsecondary entrance requirements must be closed. Additionally, the state's colleges and universities must create the academic supports needed to serve students who are underprepared for credit-bearing coursework, maximize student persistence, and minimize the time and cost of degree completion. These support systems not only will enhance the educational experience of underprepared students, but also will benefit students who minimally meet the readiness standards for placement in credit-bearing coursework.

### Problem Overview

The readiness challenge is not only a concern for Kentucky; nationally, around 58 percent of all community college students and 23 percent of all bachelor's degree seeking students take at least one developmental education course in college (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010 and National Association for Developmental Education, 2009). A 2010 report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board estimates that nearly 60 percent of first-year college students discover that they must take remedial courses in English or mathematics despite satisfying high school graduation requirements and in some cases, completing a pre-college curriculum.

A statewide look at college readiness reveals wider gaps than those observed at the national level. New statewide standards of readiness will go into effect in fall 2010 based on ACT benchmark scores of 18 for English, 19 for mathematics, and 20 for reading (13 KAR 2:020). (The previous standards were 18 for English, mathematics, and reading.) ACT data from the Kentucky Department of Education for the 2008-

09 junior class indicate that only 46 percent met the English ACT readiness score of 18, 34 percent met the mathematics ACT readiness standard of 19, and 38 percent met the reading ACT readiness standard of 20. The ACT results for 2009-10 show signs of improvement in math and reading, while English scores declined: 39 percent met the college readiness standard for English, 36 percent for mathematics, and 42 percent for reading. Additionally, more than 90 percent of students entering postsecondary education following adult education GED programming have developmental or supplemental education needs.

Students not meeting these readiness benchmarks will be given placement tests and, if a need is still indicated, will be placed into developmental courses or required to complete supplemental hours, tutoring, and/or coursework. Students who enter postsecondary education with developmental education needs are much less likely than academically prepared students to persist to degree completion. According to a June 2010 CPE report, over 77 percent of academically-prepared first-time, full-time college students were retained the following fall, compared to only 67 percent of underprepared students. Persistence gaps widen with each subsequent year. By the end of the fourth year, 24 percent of college-ready students graduate, while only 6 percent of non-college ready students graduate. After six years, nearly 57 percent of prepared students graduate, compared to 34 percent of underprepared students.

As one might expect, public colleges and universities with more selective admission requirements have smaller persistence and graduation gaps between prepared and underprepared students, largely because they have eliminated most underprepared students from the entry cohort. At less selective four-year and open access institutions, levels of readiness decrease substantially, along with persistence and degree completion rates. The high cost of providing the support systems needed to maximize underprepared students' opportunity for success at four-year colleges and universities warrants further study and consideration.

State level policy must lead the way in producing fundamental changes in teaching and learning across the state to build effective statewide college readiness initiatives and close gaps between college eligibility and readiness requirements.

## **Recent Statewide Strategies and Initiatives**

### **The Developmental Education Task Force**

The Developmental Education Task Force, appointed by the CPE's Quality and Accountability Policy Group, was formed to review issues and state-wide policies related to developmental education and recommend improvements. *Securing Kentucky's Future*, a statewide plan for improving college readiness and success, was approved by the Council on Postsecondary Education in 2007.

In brief, the task force report identified six core recommendations for further action:

- Update college admissions regulations.
- Create an integrated accountability system tied to performance funding .
- Fund infrastructure improvement.
- Align college readiness standards and tie to educator professional development.
- Better link educator preparation to college readiness.
- Develop early student interventions.

While some of these initiatives have not been achieved, the Developmental Education Task Force laid the groundwork for future progress in this area. The first recommendation led to new readiness standards that will go into effect in fall 2010. Other recommendations are being addressed through statewide committees implementing Senate Bill 1 and other reform efforts.

### **Senate Bill 1 of 2009**

Senate Bill 1 (2009) was passed to address the need for unified strategies to improve the college readiness of recent high school graduates. The Unified Strategy for College and Career Readiness, developed by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education, includes specific targets and strategies to meet the goals outlined in Senate Bill 1 (2009):

*Whereas, the General Assembly finds the continuing high rates of high school students who require remediation at the postsecondary education level totally unacceptable and an unwarranted additional expense to the state, students, and parents who expect that completion of high school coursework should lead to successful entry and success in postsecondary education, the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education are hereby directed to develop a unified strategy to reduce college remediation rates by at least fifty percent (50%) by 2014 from what they are in 2010 and increase the college completion rates of students enrolled in one (1) or more remedial classes by three percent (3%) annually from 2009 to 2014.*

Using national and state research and evidence-based practices, the document outlines four key strategies to promote college and career readiness and degree completion:

- Accelerated learning opportunities focusing on the expansion of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) program access, as well as early college and dual credit opportunities.
- Secondary intervention programs focusing on the development of transitional coursework.
- College and career readiness advising focusing on the full implementation of the Individual Learning Plan and a comprehensive advising program.
- Postsecondary college persistence and degree completion focusing on bridge programming, accelerated learning opportunities, and student support and intervention systems.

In order to prepare Kentucky's students for college or the skilled workforce, public postsecondary institutions and adult education programs must commit to improving the preparation and sustained professional development of classroom teachers and school leaders. In Kentucky, public postsecondary institutions prepare approximately 70 percent of Kentucky's P-12 teachers for credentialing, while adult education programs train and develop all adult educators. Recently, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) unveiled a draft of teaching standards (the Model Core Teaching Standards) that should serve as the starting point for redesigning more rigorous teacher preparation and credentialing programs. Incidentally, CCSSO is the same organization that led the development of the common core standards for English/language arts and mathematics that are being incorporated into the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for K-12 and adult education preparation programs.

## Proposed Statewide Objectives and Strategies

Closing gaps in preparation and addressing the need for enhanced student support systems for underprepared students are at the center of these proposed objectives and strategies. This college readiness agenda builds on the growing research consensus that there is a common set of readiness standards for entry into postsecondary degree programs, whether they are at the associate, baccalaureate, or skilled trade level.

The objectives and strategies outlined below address college readiness for all students entering postsecondary institutions, including but not limited to recent high school graduates. The Kentucky system of education must, at every level, promote a culture where education is valued, readiness benchmarks are communicated through the standards and assessments, and teachers and faculty are highly effective in meeting the needs of their students.

### **Objective 1: To increase the number and percent of students entering postsecondary institutions prepared for credit-bearing coursework.**

#### **Potential Strategies**

- Provide leadership in the alignment of K-12, adult education, and postsecondary standards, curriculum, and assessment processes.
- Enhance college awareness and access by:
  - Communicating the expectation that all students need some postsecondary education and training.
  - Communicating college readiness benchmarks and expectations and defining college readiness skill attainment levels for students and families.
  - Communicating that access to postsecondary education and training programs are based on meeting system-wide standards of readiness.
  - Collaborating with all statewide agencies to enhance and support early outreach efforts and programs (e.g., GEAR UP, KnowHowToGo).
  - Creating a resource catalog of institutional programs and services for students who do not meet readiness benchmarks.
- Fully develop and implement the P20 data collaborative to enable richer reporting systems that better inform state policy decisions.
- Support the creation and implementation of high school to college and career readiness advising and transitional course programming.
- Increase concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students (dual enrollment and dual credit).

- Increase support for adult student readiness through an emphasis on adult basic education and GED completion, financial aid, and support services.
- Ensure local P-16 Councils are developing and advocating for a comprehensive, systemic college readiness agenda that reflects common core standards and assessments.

**Potential Metrics**

- Number of students (traditional and/or non-traditional) entering postsecondary institutions college ready.
- Number of students entering postsecondary institutions college ready as a proportion of all students entering postsecondary institutions.
- Number of GED graduates and percent transitioning to postsecondary education.

**Objective 2: To increase the persistence and graduation rates of underprepared college students.****Potential Strategies**

- Improve remediation programs by:
  - Ensuring high-quality transition and bridge programming opportunities exist for all students not meeting readiness benchmarks.
  - Expanding online and hybrid program and class options for developmental education and transitional coursework.
  - Tailoring student support systems and advising, tutoring, and mentoring services for students not meeting college readiness benchmarks.
- Align student profiles at Kentucky public postsecondary institutions with those at peer institutions.
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of college admission standards across the public postsecondary system.
  - Increase the capacity of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to deliver college readiness coursework and services.

**Potential Metrics**

- Underprepared students' persistence rate.
- Underprepared students' graduation rate.

**Objective 3: To redesign teacher preparation, school leadership, and professional development programs to more clearly reflect college and career readiness standards and goals.****Potential Strategies**

- Support the creation of preparation and professional development programs for teachers, school leaders, and adult education instructors that:
  - reflect college and career readiness standards and expectations.
  - provide the clinical experiences and opportunities needed for continued growth and development.
- Support the creation of professional developmental programs that provide all full- and part-time postsecondary faculty access to PK-12 and college readiness standards to ensure alignment of expectations.
- Facilitate partnerships between Kentucky's teacher and school leadership preparation programs and research-based education initiatives, including the Kentucky P20 Innovation Lab, to provide research-based educational programming statewide.

**Potential Metrics**

- Number of redesigned teacher and school leader preparation programs approved by the Education Professional Standards Board.
- Number of teacher education candidates meeting and exceeding teacher admission standards.
- Number of faculty, teacher, and adult education providers participating in professional development activities related to new college and career readiness standards and goals.
- Performance of students taught by graduates of Kentucky teacher preparation programs.
- College readiness of students taught by graduates of Kentucky teacher preparation programs.

**Appendix A**  
**Members of the College Readiness Subgroup**

**Co-Chairs:** **Lisa Osborne**, Member, Council on Postsecondary Education and  
**Joe Weis**, Member, Council on Postsecondary Education

**Meryl Becker-Prezocki**, Senior Associate, Kentucky Adult Education

**Gayle Box**, Associate, Kentucky Adult Education

**Bruce Brooks**, Senior Associate, GEARUP-KY

**Dale Brown**, Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs/Enrollment Management, Western Kentucky University

**Dan Connell**, Assistant Vice President Adult Education and College Access, Morehead State University

**Gary Cox**, President, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU)

**Cris Crowley**, Hopkins County Program Director (Madisonville CTC), Kentucky Adult Education

**Felicia Cumings Smith**, Associate Commissioner, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

**Mason Dyer**, Director of Communications and Research, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities (AIKCU)

**Randolph Hollingsworth**, Assistant Provost for Integrated Academic Services, University of Kentucky

**Lana Jennings**, Director, Murray State University Community College

**Rubye Jones**, Student Affairs, Kentucky State University

**Molly Kerby**, Western Kentucky University, Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leadership (COSFL) Representative

**Cathy Leist**, Executive Director, REACH, University of Louisville

**Yvonne Lovell**, Executive Director, GEARUP-KY

**Marcie Lowe**, Executive Office, Education Professional Standards Board

**Nicole McDonald**, Systems Director, Transfer and Retention, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

**Pat Moynahan**, Vice Provost University Programs, Northern Kentucky University

**Peg Munke**, Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leadership (COSFL) Chair

**Benton Shirey**, Director, Advising, Eastern Kentucky University

**Mordean Taylor-Archer**, Vice Provost for Diversity and International Affairs, University of Louisville,  
Campus Diversity Coordinator Representative

**Marilyn Troupe**, Director, Division of Educator Preparation, Education Professional Standards Board

**Ruth Webb**, Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education