

DIALOGUE TO IMPROVE  
COLLEGE READINESS  
**PROCEEDINGS**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## [ 4 ]

### **Planning for College and Career Readiness**

#### 4 **Welcome**

Walter Bumphus, President, AACC and Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA

#### 4 **Purpose of the Meeting and Review of Recommendation 2**

Kris Kurtenbach, Founding Partner, Collaborative Communications

## [ 5 ]

### **Section 1: Performance, Perseverance, and the Full Picture of College Readiness**

#### 5 **Research on College Readiness**

Kimberly O'Malley, Research & Innovation Network, Pearson

Katie McClarty, Center for College & Career Success, Pearson

#### 5 **Defining the Issue**

#### 5 **Research on the Dimensions of Readiness**

#### 6 **Predicting College Readiness in Middle School**

Matt Gaertner, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson Research

#### 7 **Clear and Actionable Feedback**

#### 8 **Getting Back on Track to College Readiness**

#### 8 **Recognizing Challenges in Implementation**

## [ 9 ]

### **Section 2: Reports from the Front Lines**

#### 9 **Promising K–12 community college partnerships focusing on reducing the number of underprepared students entering college**

E. Ann McGee, President, Seminole State College of Florida and Walt Griffin, Superintendent, Seminole County Schools

#### 9 **Surveying the Task**

#### 9 **Laying a Foundation for Success**

#### 10 **Building a Career Path**

#### 10 **Moving Forward in Florida Direct Connect**

#### 11 **Capping off with Success for Students and Schools**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

11 **Illinois Partnerships Draw a Road Map**

Ken Ender, President, Harper College and David Schuler, Superintendent, Township High School District 214

Julie Schaid, Vice President, Elgin Community College and Todd Stirn, Superintendent, Central School District 301

14 **Paying it Forward: Unifying Education in North Dakota**

David Clark, Interim President, Bismarck State College and Tamara Uselman, Superintendent, Bismarck School District 1

**[16]** **Identify Short-Term and Long-Term Strategies Where AACC/AASA Can Work Together to Support the Efforts of its Members to Improve College Readiness**

16 **What can we Learn from These Success we Heard About Today?**

16 **How Do We Help New Superintendents/Presidents Start a Meaningful Relationship with Other Institutions?**

16 **What is Needed to Change the Perspective of Community Colleges' Being the Last Resort?**

17 **Summary of Next Steps and How We Promote the Work**

**[18]** **Appendix A: Psychometric Evaluation**

Katie McClarty, Center for College & Career Success, Pearson

18 **Predicting College Readiness in Middle School**

Matt Gaertner, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson Research

18 **Getting Back on Track to College Readiness**

**[20]** **Appendix B: Attendees**

# Planning for College and Career Readiness

## WELCOME

**Walter Bumphus, President, AACC and Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA**

Over the last couple of years, The White House and US Department of Education have focused on college and career readiness. The partnership between The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is bringing together superintendents and community college CEOs who have made significant strides in establishing promising practices for college readiness. The purpose of this meeting is to shine a light on these practices so that they may become models for other secondary/postsecondary teams interested in improving the performance of their students.

We are not alone in these efforts. Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States, is involved in the Reach Higher Initiative (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/reach-higher>) campaign now and will be very interested in what we are doing here today.

## PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATION 2:

**Kris Kurtenbach, Founding Partner, Collaborative Communications**

The landmark effort from the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges is the 21st Century Commission Report, Reclaiming the American Dream, Community Colleges and the Nation's Future. From the report's seven recommendations, the AASA/AACC convening today focuses on Recommendation 2 and its emphasis on dramatically improving college readiness (<http://www.aacc21stcenturycenter.org/recommendations/recommendation-2/>).

The two key elements identified in Recommendation 2 are reducing the number of underprepared students who enter college (establish and support community partnerships) and doubling the number of students who complete developmental education and proceed to successful completion of college entry level courses (providing college transition support).

We are here today to explore these elements, to review their research bases, and to discuss successful implementation strategies.

## Recommendation 2

# TWO KEY ELEMENTS

Reducing the number of underprepared students who enter college (establish and support community partnerships) and doubling the number of students who complete developmental education and proceed to successful completion of college entry level courses (providing college transition support).

# Performance, Perseverance, and the Full Picture of College Readiness

## RESEARCH ON COLLEGE READINESS

**Kimberly O'Malley, Research and Innovation Network, Pearson**

Even among students who successfully complete K–12 and earn a high school diploma, many still enroll in community colleges not ready to complete college-level course work. Clearly there is a gap between what high schools are doing and what colleges need them to do.

We are passionate about aligning those expectations to help students achieve their aspirations. We are excited about the potential to connect community colleges and high schools with data and research.

**Katie McClarty, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson**

In educational research and policy circles, the concept of postsecondary readiness is gaining significant attention. Thirty-five states have at least one college- and career-readiness indicator while many states have adopted rigorous college-readiness standards for their K–12 systems. However, forty states (80 percent) have high school graduation requirements that do not meet the minimum standards necessary for admission to their own state universities.

## DEFINING THE ISSUE

How many students graduate from high school ready for college success? The current estimate is about 40 percent. Although national graduation rates recently hit an all-time high at about 80 percent, half of high school graduates do not have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed at the college level.

These statistics are backed by national college-readiness assessment results: ACT and SAT reports show that only

43 percent of test takers met SAT college readiness benchmarks while a mere 26 percent met the ACT benchmarks. Moreover, of the 65 percent of high school graduates that enroll in college, 20 percent require developmental education classes.

If we know that, at best, 40 percent of high school students will graduate college ready, how can we identify and help the 60 percent who are off track? How can we reach them in time to make a difference in their readiness and support their success? By the time students take the ACT or the SAT, at the end of eleventh grade, it might be too late for parents, teachers, and students to take meaningful action.

## RESEARCH ON THE DIMENSIONS OF READINESS

Drawing on several models of student success, our research identified the most influential dimensions predicting student readiness for postsecondary learning. To quantify those factors, we used the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS), a nationally representative longitudinal study of educational inputs, contexts, and outcomes that tracked student progress beginning in eighth grade and for 12 years thereafter. We classified 140 middle school measures in the NELS data into six dimensions:

- ▶ **Academic Achievement.** In addition to grades and test scores, this dimension considered course rigor, grade skipping, and grade retention.
- ▶ **Motivation and Commitment.** Students confident in their academic abilities believe they can control their own outcomes and persist to their goals. They experience better grades and test scores as well as positive academic behaviors.

- ▶ **Behavior.** This dimension includes not just dropout factors such as attendance and disciplinary actions but also good study habits, tardiness, and suspensions.
- ▶ **Social Engagement.** Students who participate in social, volunteer, and extracurricular activities have higher educational aspirations and fewer delinquent behaviors. Positive relationships with teachers and peers can also further academic achievements and motivation.
- ▶ **Family Circumstance.** While students from disadvantaged backgrounds face a variety of challenges preparing for college, parental encouragement, reduced mobility, and college expectations can help students persevere and succeed.
- ▶ **School Characteristics.** A school's racial and socioeconomic composition, along with teacher factors (e.g., certification), learning opportunities, and an expectation of postsecondary learning can affect students' college aspirations and success.
- ▶ **Motivation and behavior** are pivotal and changeable middle-school characteristics that— independent of academic achievement—explain a lot of variation in college readiness and together, are more important than academic achievement. This seems like more actionable intelligence than what we typically learn from achievement results. (“Your low math scores now suggest low math scores in the future.”)
- ▶ The fact that motivation and behavior are so influential suggests middle-school college-readiness **interventions** should focus on these areas. Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset interventions (motivation) and Pearson's Review 360 product (behavior) represent two interventions that have such a focus.
- ▶ **Academic achievement** is still a big deal! If you want to get on a path to college readiness or if you are off track and want to correct course, your grades and test scores are unequivocally important.

For detailed psychometric information on how scores are calculated and what that means for the influence of the six dimensions, refer to Appendix A: Psychometric Evaluation.

### PREDICTING COLLEGE READINESS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle-school variables were synthesized into the six factors defined previously; every middle-school student has one achievement score, one motivation score, one behavior score, and so on. We estimated the relative importance of each of the six dimensions to determine which middle-school factors contribute heavily to college readiness and which are less important.

We found that achievement, behavior, and motivation are all critical to college readiness. There are at least three important takeaways from that finding:

#### **Matt Gaertner, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson Research**

So, you are an eighth grader and we have calculated a middle-school index score for you: 1.346. What exactly does that mean? To make such scores more meaningful, we group them into defined categories.

**CLEAR AND ACTIONABLE FEEDBACK**

College readiness categories, and our ability to predict success in each, fall into four general groups: Well Prepared, Prepared, Partially Prepared, and Inadequately Prepared. The following figure provides greater detail about each category and its measures.

It is important to note that these classifications will not necessarily tell students and educators something they already know.

For example, in the NELS data we identified high school students who thought (or whose teachers thought) they had a very high chance of attending college, yet did not attend any postsecondary institution in the year after high school graduation. Ninety percent of these students would have been flagged in eighth grade by the middle school index.

More startlingly, 45 percent would have been flagged as Inadequately Prepared. For these students, an off-track diagnosis might have been useful earlier, at a time when appropriate interventions could have been applied.

COLLEGE READINESS CATEGORIES		
Category	What does it mean?	
	Conceptually	Empirically
<b>Well Prepared</b>	At this level/rate student is well prepared for college upon high school completion.	When we say a student is on-track to college readiness, we are right 95 percent of the time. About 9 percent of students fit in this category
<b>Prepared</b>	This level/rate should result in a student's being prepared for college upon high school completion.	On average, the students is college ready upon high school completion. About 13 percent of students fit in this category.
<b>Partially Prepared</b>	Students in this category are partially prepared for future studies. They are not yet on-track to college readiness, but they are close. Students will need to make some changes to be prepared for college upon high school completion.	Students do not meet the Prepared standard, but are above the Inadequately Prepared category. About 38 percent of students fit in this category.
<b>Inadequately Prepared</b>	A student in this category has not received adequate preparation for future studies. They are not yet on a pathway to being college-ready. Students will require significant interventions to get back on track and be prepared for college upon high school completion.	When we say a student is not on-track to college readiness, we are right 99 percent of the time. About 40 percent of students fit in this category.

### GETTING BACK ON TRACK TO COLLEGE READINESS

The preceding table makes clear that roughly 78 percent of middle school students are not currently on track to succeed in college-level education (sum of the percentage of students in the *Inadequately Prepared* and *Partially Prepared* categories). Still, early identification and intervention might help increase their chances of educational success. To investigate this issue more thoroughly, refer to further the analysis in Appendix A: Psychometric Evaluation.

There are at least two important takeaways from the category rankings:

- ▶ **Actionable factors** such as motivation, behavior, educational encouragement, and parental support can help students get back on track to college readiness. Taken together, these factors are more than twice as important as academic achievement.
- ▶ **Academic achievement is still the most important single contributor** to getting back on track. If a student wants to achieve college readiness, course performance (as measured by grades and assessment results) is critically important.

By identifying which students are off track to college readiness according to a variety of middle school dimensions and examining the changes that help get students back on track, we can better design and identify early interventions and targeted programs that stand the best chance of supporting college readiness.

### RECOGNIZING CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Attendees shared major challenges they have experienced in helping students turn around their academic performance to become more prepared for postsecondary education:

- ▶ Data privacy, political sensitivities, and state graduation requirements
- ▶ Be clear when we say college that we mean both the associate's- or bachelor's-degree level
- ▶ Multiple constraints on resources
- ▶ Many middle schools do not even have to counselors to collect these data and evaluate results



### **PROMISING K–12 COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS FOCUSING ON REDUCING THE NUMBER OF UNDERPREPARED STUDENTS ENTERING COLLEGE**

After years of talk about K–12 community college collaboration, new evidence suggests these partnerships are real—and yielding real benefits for learners.

**E. Ann McGee, President, Seminole State College of Florida and Walt Griffin, Superintendent, Seminole County Schools**

#### **SURVEYING THE TASK**

While Florida is fourth in population in the US, it is 30th in the nation in bachelor's degree attainment. These statistics are in part why community colleges were authorized to begin offering bachelor's degrees. The impact of this expanded mission made the relationship between K-12 and the community college more important.

Seminole County Schools and Seminole State College of Florida have enjoyed a 50-year relationship. In its infancy the community college was actually administered by the school board. The college currently has a "partnership building," housing partnerships with the University of Central Florida (UCF).

UCF now has 62,000 students and is maintaining its enrollment by placing a partnership building on campuses of Brevard, Valencia, Lake Sumter, and the Seminole community colleges. The building houses 14 bachelor's degrees and one master's degree from UCF and five bachelor's degrees from Seminole State

College of Florida. Students can ride their bikes from an associate's degree all the way to a doctorate without ever having to leave their community.

When Dr. McGee began her tenure as president of Seminole State College of Florida, the college was receiving only 20 percent of the graduates from Seminole County Schools; now the college receives 40 percent of the graduates. When the school and college started working together on college readiness, 78 percent of high school students needed at least one math remedial course in college; today, 87 percent are college ready.

#### **LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS**

Seminole County Schools drilled down to looking at student performance in kindergarten and first grade. As a result, the county has quadrupled its pre-kindergarten program.

By looking at students in the third grade that may be in need of course correction, the schools can determine where best to expend the most effort and emphasis. This bottom up approach has changed their work significantly.

Although the State of Florida requires only three years of math education, Seminole County Schools now requires students to take four years of high school math. It does not matter with which math course (i.e., geometry, trigonometry, etc.) a student starts. This requirement has been in place for six years. "That has improved math education in the entire pipeline," Griffin said.

Each meeting of the board for Seminole County Schools begins with a focus on achievement. The emphasis on expanded math requirements has reduced the number of college students needing developmental math from 78 percent to only 13 percent. Similarly, only

nine percent of students in the district currently need a course in reading remediation, and only 6.6 percent need a remediation course in writing.

Forty percent of Seminole County Schools' graduates enroll at Seminole State College of Florida. Implementing an automatic transfer of transcripts from the high school into the college has expedited the acceptance of students and created a seamless transition for students among the cooperating educational groups.

### **BUILDING A CAREER PATH**

Superintendent Griffin sees career pathways as a very important component for secondary schools. The county works closely with Seminole State College of Florida to make certain the programs they offer are the ones that businesses in the community indicate that they need.

With its trademarked ePathways™ program, each high school has a program emphasis and/or a magnet program as well as career and technical education. All programs are designed in partnership with Seminole State College of Florida which is involved in course selection and development.

The Seminole County Public Schools and Seminole State College of Florida's dual enrollment program allows students to earn credit toward high school completion, a career certificate, or an associate or baccalaureate degree at a Florida public institution. Through this program, students can experience the challenge of college-level courses while still in high school. As a result of the partnership, enrollment went up 53 percent overall and an astounding 300 percent for engineering. Seminole once had the lowest dual enrollment of all colleges due to localized opposition; however, now the dual enrollment program is being expanded.

School district and community college dual enrollment offers both academic and financial benefits:

#### ▶ **Career pathways (e-pathways):**

- Explore multiple careers (including career and technical education)
- Earn up to 12 college credits
- Save up to \$1,000 on tuition

#### ▶ **Honors articulation**

- "Scholars of distinction", directly accepted into honors institute
- Honors grad guaranteed admission to University of Central Florida honors college

### **MOVING FORWARD IN FLORIDA: DIRECT CONNECT**

DirectConnect in Florida establishes a student path from the Seminole County Public Schools, to Seminole State College, to UCF. By aligning expectations and curriculum standards, educators in Florida can guide student learning to yield successful postsecondary achievement.

After community colleges were given the authority to offer bachelor's degrees, UCF agreed to accept Seminole State College of Florida graduates if the community college did not offer a bachelor's degree that the university has not approved. There are currently 10,000 students in the DirectConnect pipeline; after those students complete 30 hours with Seminole State College of Florida, they receive a UCF advisor. This advisor assignment helps the student to stay focused, to stay on track, and to get through UCF as quickly as possible.

Seminole County Schools has 65,000 students in the district, including 20,000 high school students. The county gives over 13,000 advanced placement exams annually. The county offers an AP™ 1,2,3,4 program, in which students self-select to participate. Most students who demonstrate proficiency take one AP course in their freshman year, two in their sophomore year, and so on. The county begins marketing Seminole State College of Florida to those students in their freshman year.

### CAPPING OFF WITH SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

The high school district started making Seminole State College of Florida the “college of choice” for its graduates. Students from the district who went to Seminole State College of Florida became more successful at achieving higher graduation rates. Seminole State College of Florida students who went on the UCF did as well as or better than those students who started their education at the university.

Community involvement is also important to the success of these initiatives. A donor provided Seminole State \$1 million to upgrade the Honors Institute. In addition to scholarships, the students also have the opportunity to travel internationally. Subsequently, Seminole State College of Florida has become one of three colleges in the nation which has graduated eight Jack Kent Cooke scholars during the nine years of the program. The award provides \$30,000 for a bachelor’s or \$50,000 toward a master’s degree.

### ILLINOIS PARTNERSHIPS DRAW A ROAD MAP

By examining the causes of students’ academic struggles in postsecondary education, educators

identified four principles for intergroup cooperation to develop student postgraduate readiness:

- ▶ Establish a working relationship based on mutual understanding and trust
- ▶ Link district and community college governance structures, both formally and informally
- ▶ Lay the groundwork for student success with four years of math, regardless of state policy mandates
- ▶ Build postsecondary pathways between high school and college
- ▶ Leverage external resources to seed innovation

### Ken Ender, President, Harper College David Schuler, Superintendent, Township High School District 214

It’s all about building relationships. When Ken Ender was hired at Harper College, he worked with David Schuler at the school district to create a partnership that benefited all their students and both institutions. They want to ready students for college and to recreate the middle class.

### ALIGNING GOALS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Drs. Ender and Schuler created the Northwest Educational Council for Student Success Partnership, founded on their belief that to succeed in a 21st century world economy, every high school graduate would need postsecondary education, a certification, or a military career. The partnership focused not on any one subset of students, but rather on ensuring that all students are college ready.

When approaching this partnership, both Drs. Ender and Schuler realized that based upon the state’s finances there would be no new money available to fund the project. Early on, the partners committed to staff time to support the project. Also, the Harper College

Board of Trustees and the school districts each agreed to put up \$250,000 which created \$1 million to finance the project.

### FOCUSING ON TRANSITIONS

The partnership focuses on the gray area between high school and college. To determine how to proceed, the partners conducted a correlation study to determine which students from the 12 high schools served would be placed into developmental math courses.

For this partnership, it did not matter which math course was taken in the student's senior year. Those students were placed into developmental math at the college regardless.

Their initial goals were to ensure curriculum alignment; to increase the percentage of students who begin college-ready for college-level work; to leverage their current resources; and to create pathways that lead to postsecondary credentials.

The resulting Northwest Educational Council for Student Success undertook a number of steps:

- ▶ Creating a [joint governance structure](#), including the president of Harper College and the three superintendents
- ▶ Creating a [coordinating council committee structure](#), consisting of associate superintendents, provosts and chief of staff
- ▶ Developing [intergovernmental and data sharing agreements](#), a guiding document that shapes how both entities will handle career and transfer dual credit
- ▶ Approving the [agreements by the boards of the school district and the college](#)

- ▶ Ensuring that [staffs of the school district and the college understood the goal](#) of the initiative and that the project was to be embedded and ongoing
- ▶ [Aligning curriculum](#) of the school district and the college
- ▶ Focusing on [transfer and dual enrollment](#), and not just for technical vocational programs which had been the historical focus

### IMPLEMENTING PLANS TO SUPPORT GOALS

Their first project was to improve the high school math proficiency rate and reduce the need for remediation in college. When they determined that many seniors were actually not taking math, they shifted the emphasis to the junior year in high school, employing ACT Compass to assess math readiness.

Those seniors doing well in math take a dual math class; those seniors needing more support take a newly developed course equivalent to Algebra 3, created by faculty from the college and the three school districts. Although the students taking Algebra 3 receive high school credit, they do not receive college credit. Over the past four years, the new program resulted in a 21 percent increase in college readiness in postsecondary math since initiating the partnership.

Current projects include improving English alignment and a partnership on a common student data warehouse. The Power of 15 project allows high school students to earn 15 college credits, saving families money and speeding students to program completion. In a similar vein, the Harper Promise permits students that meet five pre-established criteria to take the first 15 hours at Harper College free, if they work hard and show up every day—rewarding commitment and perseverance.

**Julie Schaid, Vice President, Elgin Community College and Todd Stirn, Superintendent, Central School District 301**

Elgin Community College and Central School District 301 are in the western suburb of Chicago. The region consists of Districts 246, 300, and 301; District 246 is the second largest school district in the State of Illinois. While once rural, the area is quickly becoming suburban. Elgin is currently the fastest growing community in the state.

Superintendent Stirn shared that the collaboration between the college and the school district is forged in the common belief that all students should graduate prepared for college and career.

**MOVING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS**

The school district formed the faculty-led Alliance for College Readiness with Elgin Community College to support projects developed by both institutions. This partnership started eight years ago to prepare students for career and college life after high school. Goals included increasing academic success, improving college readiness, and increasing the district’s college enrollment rate. Students needed help in not only content knowledge but also key critical knowledge.

The group meets three times a year with superintendents and the college president attending each meeting. In addition, the college trustees and school board members participate in discussion.

**STARTING AT THE BEGINNING**

An advisory council consisting of seven teams assists the Alliance:

- ▶ Kindergarten
- ▶ Reading and Writing
- ▶ Math
- ▶ STEM
- ▶ ELL
- ▶ Data
- ▶ Student Services

The newest team is Kindergarten, recognizing that to foster success at graduation; schools must start at the foundation of education.

**DESIGNING PROJECTS TO MATCH GOALS**

The Alliance based its approach on the research of Dr. David Conley in helping students understand and surmount the differences between high school level- and college-level courses, materials, workload, and expectations. They focus on how to become more strategic in preparing students.

It is not about either institution blaming the other for lack of preparation or failures of expectations; they work toward student success no matter where students go or what they decide to do with their futures.

Current projects help achieve the transition goals while recognizing that some students will need more support to complete their programs:

- ▶ **Traditional Summer Bridge Program** is a three-week summer boot camp in English and math, reading, literacy, and study skills co-taught by college and high school teachers. At the end of the boot camp students retake the placement test; 72 percent have moved up at least one college level.

- ▶ **Transition Academy** targets the achievement gap of students of color and first-generation students who might not be living up to their academic potential. Modeled after the Academy of College Excellence in California, the program features affective attributes and “hero’s journey”—a framework developed by scholar Joseph Campbell—and is team taught with high school and college faculty. During the school year, students in grades 9–12 come to the college one Saturday per month. Seniors participate in college orientation so they leave the program with one college credit. There is also a parent program, and a two-week summer session with corporate partners who provide the students with a challenge for which they develop a solution.
- ▶ **First Lecture** is modeled after Dr. Randy Pausch’s last lecture at Carnegie Mellon. Five-hundred high school juniors experience a “traditional” college lecture. The first lecture includes an activity co-created by the high school and college faculty. It will also be co-evaluated.
- ▶ **Kindergarten Readiness** checklist of basic skills serves as an in-service for providers. Other projects include the Dolly Parton Imagination Library where

students from birth to age five are sent a book every month to develop literacy skills, and the United Way-sponsored Calendar Project, a kindergarten readiness calendar with daily activities.

Again, the Alliance recognizes that the earlier postsecondary expectations are established and supported, the more likely students are to achieve those goals.

**ACHIEVING INTERMEDIATE GOALS**

The State of Illinois requires only three years of math, but students needed pre-calculus to handle college-level classes. Acknowledging that more math was critical to success, the school district added a fourth-year math class to establish the basis for the next level of difficulty. Of those who placed into college level math, 84 percent took math their senior year.

**PAYING IT FORWARD: UNIFYING EDUCATION IN NORTH DAKOTA**

Recognizing the importance of ongoing education for its future, North Dakota is using its new energy industry prosperity to put financial resources into learning.

**CHANGES IN STUDENT READINESS RATES**

Subject	2006	2013
Math	27	42
Writing	57	65
Reading	73	78
College-Ready	24	37

**Achieving Academic Readiness.** Through the work of the Alliance over seven years, 65 percent of students moved up at least one readiness level.

The group wanted to hear all opinions. The college and the school district processes were deliberate when defining the knowledge and skills student need when they leave high school. North Dakota is a small population, populist state; developing an education plan meant allowing everyone to have a voice in charting a new path.

**David Clark, Interim President, Bismarck State College and Tamara Uselman, Superintendent, Bismarck School District 1**

Dr. Clark began the discussion with background about the energy industry’s positive economic environment in North Dakota and its resulting focus on career and technology education. Many students who promote within the existing system do not succeed in completing their academic program.

While Bismarck State College has been around 75 years, two-year institutions became a part of the university system about 30 years ago. A unified governance board was dominated by a former chancellor who supported an admissions index. Implementing the index would have affected 30%-40% of incoming freshman with a significant financial impact on students, families, and institutions.

**SETTING GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

The group focused on promoting what they termed executive functioning skills. Starting with twelfth grade, they initiated a very personalized system and worked backwards to the feeder goals for elementary and secondary schools. They are also involved in the statewide initiative dealing with vertical alignment of math education.

The largest minority group in North Dakota is American Indian, but only 50 percent of American Indian children graduated. Existing processes might have cut some

families out; these strictures need to be re-examined and reworked so all students can achieve their potential. The team acknowledged the need to tighten up the family component of educational support.

Additionally, the team is reaching out to rural schools in this traditionally farming state. The Bismarck School District is the largest district with about 12,000 students of a statewide total of 750,000.

Venturing out into the less populated districts and taking field notes, the team developed a plan to acquire appropriate professional development to support teachers.

**IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

Current plans include sharing space between the school district and the college; about one-fourth of students will be on the campus daily. This will allow students to become familiar with the college system and environment while promoting attendance at college-level classes. Successfully completing some high school programs will permit students to earn a semester of college credit. Scholarships could be offered to students who achieve defined ACT scores.

Offered in one of the shared spaces between Bismarck State College and Bismarck Public Schools, the Career Academy houses technical and vocational courses, including the following:

- ▶ Aviation
- ▶ Horticulture/Botany (with a greenhouse)
- ▶ Pre-Engineering/Tech Ed
- ▶ Medical Related Careers II
- ▶ Electronics
- ▶ Graphic Design/Digital Design

# Identify Short-Term And Long-Term Strategies Where AACC/AASA can Work Together to Support the Efforts of its Members to Improve College Readiness

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE SUCCESS WE HEARD ABOUT TODAY?

Through the presentations, patterns and consistencies emerged that can be transferred to other settings:

- ▶ **Forge** new relationships, structures, and revenue streams
  - Form working relationships with meaning, not just at the highest level of leadership, but also in teams, including the faculty
  - Foster mutual understanding
  - Integrate governance structures for sustainability
  - Identify external funding sources or reallocation of funding to create money to fund the initiative
- ▶ **Innovate** visionary policy and programming
  - Support early intervention
  - Implement four years of math regardless of whether your state requires it
  - Create career and postsecondary pathways among cooperating institutions
- ▶ **Focus** on results
  - Focus on community college success leading to four-year college success
  - Analyze early data to demonstrate tangible results

## HOW DO WE HELP NEW SUPERINTENDENTS/PRESIDENTS START A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS?

- ▶ Take advantage of a change in leadership to build that relationship

- ▶ Host meetings to introduce each other
- ▶ Look for meaningful opportunities to do things jointly
- ▶ Releases from AASA and AACC on best practices for college- and career-readiness

## WHAT IS NEEDED TO CHANGE THE PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES' BEING THE LAST RESORT?

- ▶ **Redefine** college
  - Educate students and families that community college is college; community colleges educate half of the undergraduates in this country
  - Rethink perception of the community college
  - Acknowledge change can be difficult until community colleges provide a bachelor's degree
- ▶ **Promote** benefits of career path
  - Evolve into career programs-show
  - Demonstrate that the numbers will dictate we are being noticed
  - Distribute information on who graduates are and what salaries they make
  - Educate students on potential college debt; how a community college degree can provide value
  - Promote number of graduates
- ▶ **Integrate** into community education systems
  - Work with high school guidance counselors to change attitudes about community college
  - Rethink perception and role of the superintendent



## Identify Short-Term And Long-Term Strategies Where AACC/AASA can Work Together to Support the Efforts of its Members to Improve College Readiness

- Bring superintendents to community college campus so they see that their kids are your kids
- Create a shared structure for dialogue
- Go deeper with relationship (faculty-faculty and deans-superintendents)
- Co-present to leadership groups
- Integrate STEM in high schools and early college
- Co-design courses and solutions
- Share data
- Drive home multi- faceted role
- Address statewide initiatives
- ▶ **Reach out** to industry and community
  - Engage industry, such as KPMG
  - Conduct national marketing campaign
  - Regional conferences
  - Best Practices
  - Evolving role

### SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS AND HOW WE PROMOTE THE WORK

- ▶ Focused statewide initiatives
- ▶ Partnerships between K–12 and community colleges
- ▶ Knowledge share of Best Practices, including case studies
- ▶ State Directors for Community College meet with AASA
- ▶ Track within AACC/AASA convention about importance of partnerships
- ▶ Share websites between AACC and AASA

**Katie McClarty, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson**

### **PREDICTING COLLEGE READINESS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Using the six dimension scores, we can (in eighth grade) explain 69 percent ( $r^2=0.69$ ) of the variation in high-school measures of college readiness: SAT, ACT, and cumulative high school GPA.

This level of predictive power is quite high in the context of behavioral science research, but it requires a bit of explanation. Mathematically speaking,  $r^2$  is the square of the correlation between two variables, and we use it to understand the predictive power of a statistical model.

An  $r^2$  can range from 0 to 1; a value of 0 means the predictor explains nothing about the outcome, whereas a value of 1 means the predictor explains the outcome perfectly. Conceptually, imagine you are asked to guess an eighth grader's student's eventual SAT score given no prior information about that student. You would probably guess the overall mean SAT score, and on average you would be off by about 200 points above or below. If, however, you knew that that student's middle school index score, you could make a much more educated and precise prediction. The error around your prediction would be reduced by 69 percent. On average you would then be off by about 62 points.

Another way to think about  $r^2$  is to consider the statistic in other contexts. When the SAT or ACT is used to predict freshman-year grades, their  $r^2$  is between 0.20 and 0.25—substantially lower than the middle school index (0.69).

**Matt Gaertner, Center for College and Career Success, Pearson Research**

### **GETTING BACK ON TRACK TO COLLEGE READINESS**

The table on page 7 makes clear that roughly 78 percent of middle school students are not currently on track to succeed in college-level education (sum of the percentage of students in the *Inadequately Prepared and Partially Prepared* categories). Still, early identification and intervention might help increase their chances of educational success.

To investigate this issue more thoroughly, we began with a simple question: What differentiates the students who were off track in middle school but succeeded in high school from the students who did not get back on track?

To answer this question, we examined data from students' ninth and tenth years to determine which factors were the strongest predictors of getting back on track to college readiness. As with the original index, ninth and tenth grade data were condensed into a few common factors.

Those factors are listed from most to least important:

- ▶ Achievement
- ▶ Motivation
- ▶ Educational Encouragement
- ▶ Behavior
- ▶ Parental Support
- ▶ School Characteristics
- ▶ Peer Influences

Many of the preceding factors above (e.g., achievement, motivation, behavior, school characteristics) are carried over from the original middle school index.

Two are new, and bear some discussion. Educational encouragement captures the encouragement students receive at both the classroom and school levels:

students in this school are encouraged to enroll in academic courses, students feel their teachers listen to them. Parental support captures a variety of parental encouragement and involvement variables: attending school events, establishing high expectations, having access to technology at home.

There are at least two important takeaways from the category rankings:

- ▶ **Actionable factors** such as motivation, behavior, educational encouragement, and parental support can help students get back on track to college readiness. Taken together, these factors are more than twice as important as academic achievement.
- ▶ **Academic achievement is still the most important single contributor** to getting back on track. If a student wants to achieve college readiness, course performance (as measured by grades and assessment results) is critically important.

By identifying which students are off track to college readiness according to a variety of middle school dimensions and examining the changes that help get students back on track, we can better design and identify early interventions and targeted programs that stand the best chance of supporting college readiness.

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