

**ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
BOARD**

Press Release

Contact: Matt Berry
Phone: 217/785-7411
Email: matt.berry@illinois.gov

401 East Capitol Avenue
Springfield, IL 62701-1711

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Community Colleges Focus on Reforming Developmental Education

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois community colleges across the state have implemented a variety of reforms to developmental education. Promising strategies including co-requisite developmental education, summer bridge programs, and fourth year high school courses are providing a pathway to success for underprepared students. In the last five years the number of students enrolled in at least one developmental course decreased nearly 24 percent.

Developmental education is often thought of as refresher courses in English, math and reading for underprepared college students. However, courses often come at a high price for students who must expend precious financial resources on non-credit developmental courses. Students enrolled in developmental education courses are less likely than their peers to complete a degree or certificate.

“The Illinois Community College Board supports colleges in their exploration of innovative strategies and reform efforts to improve remediation and reduce time-to-degree,” said ICCB executive director Dr. Karen Hunter Anderson. “I am proud of the work going on in our community colleges to improve student successes and reduce college costs, especially for those students graduating from high school not ready for college-level coursework”.

Nearly half of the state’s 48 community colleges have implemented co-requisite remedial courses in English, math, or reading that place college students into remedial and college-level courses in the same subject at the same time. These co-requisite courses allow students to receive targeted support to help boost their understanding and learning of the college-level material. For example, Heartland Community College (Bloomington) is piloting a program where students enrolled in the developmental course are also enrolled in a college-level course with other students who directly placed into that course. With this model, students do not feel segregated and both courses are taught by the same instructor.

Summer bridge programs are designed to reduce remediation by providing a short refresher for students prior to their first college semester. Through various ICCB-funded projects, several

community colleges have designed and implemented summer bridge programs. Richland Community College (Decatur) saw great success by utilizing a “boot camp” model for both math and English, specifically designed to assist students who barely missed the college-level cutoff score. At the end of the boot camps, the average math exit exam score was 27% higher than upon entry and 87% of enrollees passed the English exit exam.

Developmental course offerings taught at the high school during the regularly scheduled school day, also referred to as fourth-year courses, are an effective method of removing the need for remediation by providing coursework and early interventions prior to students exiting high school. Elgin Community College (Elgin) has implemented a fourth-year math course taught at six high schools throughout their district. The individual high schools identify and recruit students into the course which is aligned with the Illinois State Learning Standards and Elgin’s highest developmental course. Sixty-five percent of the participating students moved up at least one course level. Illinois Central College (East Peoria) partnered with East Peoria High School to offer a fourth-year math course that also mirrored the college’s highest level developmental math class. With student success rates similar to Elgin’s, this type of alignment and remediation strategy proves to be a strong strategy for students on the cusp.

The Illinois Community College Board is the state coordinating board for community colleges. Illinois is home to 48 community colleges in 39 districts and has the third largest community college system in the nation serving close to 1 million residents each year in credit and non-credit courses.

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