



In 2013, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 1720, which called for all developmental education offered in the state to be accelerated, using one or more of the following instructional strategies: 1) co-requisite, 2) modularization, 3) compression, or 4) contextualization. The law also mandated changes in advising and student supports, and established meta-majors, which are a collection of academic programs that have common or related content. In addition, recent graduates of Florida public high schools (entering 9th grade in 2003-04 or later and graduating with a standard diploma) and active-duty military members are now exempt from assessment and placement into developmental education. Exempt students may still elect to be assessed, but they have the option to decline any referrals to developmental education. Students who do not meet the exemption criteria are required to be assessed, and if determined to have need must be presented with options for developmental education instruction. Colleges' responses to the legislation have varied greatly, with many examples of innovation. The goal of this series is to document how colleges have responded to SB 1720 in order to highlight the decisions and processes colleges consider when implementing developmental education reform at scale.

An urban institution with a large, diverse student population, Broward College stands out for the significant changes it has made to its intake system, its communication strategy around the changes brought on by Senate Bill 1720, and its ability to aggregate and leverage resources to implement its redesign plan quickly.

BEFORE SENATE BILL 1720

Prior to Senate Bill 1720, to access math and English gateway courses, Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033) or English Composition I (ENC 1101), students enrolling in one of the 28 Florida College System institutions were required by law to achieve the minimum cut scores on state-approved assessments.¹ Broward College used cut scores to assign students to college-level or developmental courses and to assign students to New Student Orientation (NSO). Together, the cut scores and NSOs provided an efficient means to place, orient, advise, and register students for classes.

Broward redesigned their developmental math program prior to SB 1720, which gave it a head start in meeting the legislative mandate. The math faculty, influenced by a 2006 report from the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC), *Beyond Crossroads: Implementing Mathematics Standards in the First Two Years of College*, and an internal college campaign to increase persistence and completion, *Finish What You Start*, decided to redesign the developmental mathematics course sequence leading up to College Algebra. After a long pilot phase, the math faculty settled into a redesigned model that compressed the developmental math courses—MAT 0018 and MAT 0028—leading to MAT 1033 from 16 to 8 weeks. Most class sections featured a flipped format where hands-on practice or take-home assignments are done in the classroom with the support of an instructor, and lectures take place via video outside of the classroom. The redesigned developmental math courses feature McGraw-Hill’s ALEKS adaptive technology. Success outcomes improved under the redesigned model.

Prior to SB 1720, students placing into developmental English were referred to a sequence of 16-week courses that served as prerequisites to ENC 1101. Students referred to the lowest levels in English were required to take two 16-week Developmental Reading

Quick Facts

Location: Fort Lauderdale, FL

Campuses: 4 (including 1 online) and 9 centers

Setting: Urban

Total Enrollment: 44,119*

Student Demographics:

- Average age: 22
- Gender: 59% female, 41% male
- Race/ethnicity:
 - » African-American: 33.2%
 - » White: 20.5%
 - » Hispanic: 34.1%
 - » Asian: 3.0%
 - » American-Indian: 0.2%
 - » Pacific Islander: 0.3%
 - » Multiple races: 1.7%
 - » Not reported: 4.0%

Source: NCES. (2015). *Schools and colleges. IPEDS College Data 2014-2015*. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator>; Broward College (2014). Quick View 2014. Retrieved from: <http://www.broward.edu/discover/Documents/QuickViewGuide2014Web.pdf>; www.broward.edu

* This data is from NCES; the college’s website reports 68,000 for total annual enrollment.

courses (REA 0007C and REA 0017C) and two 16-week Developmental Writing courses (ENC 0015 and ENC 0025). Thus, students referred to the lowest levels of developmental English faced two semesters—an academic year—before they could enroll in ENC 1101.

¹ <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/common-placement-testing.stml>

Pre-SB 1720, students received general advising through the NSO to which they were assigned. They completed a career assessment in the NSO, and first-time-in-college (FTIC) students were required to meet with an advisor and create an education plan. NSOs, however, did not provide in-depth career advising, and there were concerns that a single advising session is insufficient support to ensure students are in the programs that best meet their education and career goals.

RESPONSE TO SENATE BILL 1720

When Senate Bill 1720 became law in May 2013, Broward immediately convened a college-wide task force that included, among others, student affairs and academic leaders. Various subcommittees were also convened to focus on specific dimensions of SB 1720's omnibus reforms. The exemption provision in the law required a comprehensive redesign of the college's intake process, including admissions, assessment, and placement, new student orientation, advising, developmental education, and student supports. After the redesigned policies, processes, and protocols were complete, the college developed a comprehensive communications strategy to inform faculty and staff, students and their families, and other relevant groups.

ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT

Broward quickly established new policies and procedures to clarify and communicate student exemption status and the indicators that would be used to make placement recommendations for non-exempt students. In addition to communicating the exemption policy to incoming students, the policy had to be communicated to continuing students who met the exemption criteria, over 4000 of whom were in developmental education when the bill passed. The college notified the students about their exemption status by email, mail, and phone, and set up group orientations in fall 2013 to advise students on the courses in which they should be placed for spring 2014. Broward officials use grades in current courses and other contextual information to make placement recommendations.

For incoming students, Broward set out to create a model to predict students' success in college-level courses for the purpose of making placement recommendations. Once the legislation became law, student affairs asked admissions to collect and record more indicators from students' high school background. The college is working to create a predictive model that will combine the following measures—unweighted high school grade point average, highest level math and English taken in 12th grade and grades earned in those courses, enrollment in intensive reading or ESL courses in 11th or 12th grade, and previous college placement or results on standardized tests—into a placement recommendation. In the interim, advisors are using these indicators and students' education and work goals to make placement recommendations.

STUDENT ADVISING

Broward held three advising training sessions in fall 2013 to inform the advising staff of the requirements of the new law. To address the meta-majors provision of the law, the college hired additional enrollment advisors to help students explore and select among the eight meta-majors. Students are now receiving more career pathway-specific advising as a result of the general academic advisors' increased knowledge of meta-major career pathways.² Broward is also working to organize NSOs around the meta-majors, so that students receive more detailed career-specific advising.

The college is in the early stages of testing an NSO designed for students who want to study business. When up and running, business students will attend an NSO organized around what students need to know to be successful in the business pathway (meta-major). The new NSO will go further than helping students select a program area and a major. It will help students understand the different types of degrees within each meta-major, the transfer requirements for students seeking bachelor's degrees at other institutions, and the requirements to earn a bachelor's at Broward College.

² The college prefers the term "career pathway" instead of meta-major because students are not familiar with the term "meta-major."

Grant funds were allocated in order to hire three Career Coach Specialists and expand the career exploration and development services across the college. Specialists hold career workshops, do classroom presentations, develop pathway-specific programming, and are able to build a student's academic plan once the student has selected a meta-major. The college also implemented Career Coach, an online student tool that matches student interests to current local labor market information on jobs and programs of study.

REDESIGNED COURSE OFFERINGS

In addition to the compressed developmental math course options Broward developed prior to Senate Bill 1720, students who are non-exempt and test into developmental math at Broward can also select modular strategies to complete their developmental math requirements. Students may opt to take MAT 0057, in which they complete all of their developmental requirements in one semester in a self-paced format. Students who enroll in MAT 0057 take a diagnostic assessment to determine the skills they need to master (from MAT 0018 and MAT 0028), create a personal learning plan, and work with instructors and tutors in the college's Math Success Center. Non-exempt students who select meta-majors that do not require College Algebra or Calculus have the option to take a contextualized pre-statistics math course (STA 1001).

While the English faculty had redesigned some of its developmental English offerings, SB 1720 forced more dramatic changes. Following in the footsteps of their colleagues in mathematics, the English faculty selected compressed and co-requisite strategies for developmental English. The college created a compressed, integrated reading and writing course. As with developmental math, it is now possible for students to complete a prerequisite developmental education writing course—Developmental Writing I (ENC 0015) or II (ENC 0025)—in 8 weeks instead of 16. This allows students who take both courses to complete the sequence in one semester rather than two. Non-exempt students who test into ENC 0025 also have the option of concurrently enrolling in ENC 1101, the English gateway course. This co-requisite course is modeled after the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) at the Community College of Baltimore County. ENC 0025 serves as the supplemental portion of the

co-requisite course where the developmental students receive “just-in-time” academic foundation supports. Non-exempt students who test into developmental reading may take the following options: a compressed (eight-week), contextualized flipped course (REA 0017C) or a compressed (eight-week) course that combines College Preparatory Reading I (REA 0007C) and II (REA 0017C). All of these redesigned course offerings, as well as those in math, are also available to exempt students.

The exemption policy also had major implications for the mathematics and English gateway courses. A large proportion of students enrolled in Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033) and English Composition (ENC 1101) would have been referred to developmental education under the previous law. There was a debate about whether or not the course outlines should be altered to acknowledge the potential influx of academically underprepared students in the math and English gateway courses. For the time being, the math and English faculty decided to keep their current course outlines and to add supplemental supports for students who might need additional academic foundations support to be successful in college. However, future curricular reforms—particularly with regard to the algebra-based mathematics courses—are being considered, so that the competencies in courses like MAT 1033 better align to those in higher-level mathematics courses (e.g., MAC 1105 College Algebra) and better serve the quantitative-readiness needs of students' academic and career aspirations.

CHALLENGES

Multiple Broward officials communicated that among the greatest challenges presented by Senate Bill 1720 was the exemption policy, specifically the prohibition on assessing students. Introducing greater numbers of students into gateway courses, which typically have high failure rates even among students who are presumably college ready, presented operational challenges around course loads and scheduling. In addition, the introduction of multiple measures assessment presented operational challenges; the collection and analysis of multiple measures is not yet automated. Advisors are required to assess the many indicators manually, which is time intensive—especially given the college's large size—but must be completed within a short timeframe to make a placement recommendation.

College officials also noted that while meta-majors help students select a pathway, there are challenges with their implementation. There is no way to declare a meta-major within the student information system. Moreover, students may indicate a meta-major and a major but still end up in the wrong degree program for their goals. To mitigate this, Broward has instituted multiple advising check points to ensure that students are in the right programs and are on-track as specified in their individual degree plans. But challenges to ensuring students are in the right degree paths remain. The high student-to-advisor ratio exacerbates these challenges, as the time advisors can spend with each student is limited.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Senate Bill 1720's impact on student outcomes is not yet clear. However, if changes in policies, procedures, and practices are evidence of the impact of the of the new policy, there have been appreciable results. Broward's intake system, including admissions, assessment, advisement, and placement, has undergone demonstrable change. The new policies are being widely communicated through the institution's website, course catalogue, and student outreach materials. The substantial results that Broward has been able to achieve reflect the college's ability to aggregate and leverage its resources to implement substantial reforms within a short timeframe.

It is too early to understand the specific results of the changes brought on SB 1720 on student completion. Anecdotally, college officials reported that many exempt students are not taking the recommendations to enroll in developmental courses, especially in reading. As one administrator noted, "Some exempt students choose developmental and then go home and talk to their families and change their minds." There is preliminary evidence that more students,

some of whom presumably would have been referred to developmental education under the previous law, are successfully completing the mathematics gateway course MAT 1033. This preliminary finding comports with the evidence from a seminal research study, which analyzed enrollment in developmental and gateway courses, which found an increased probability of completion as a result of enrollment in a gateway course.³ Similarly, while the impact of the English developmental education redesign is not fully known, applying a similar logic, one could reasonably expect positive effects from students who would have been referred to developmental English under the previous law enrolling in the English gateway course. While it is likely that success for former developmental math and English students who enroll in gateway courses may increase, overall success rates in MAT 1033 and ENC 1101 may decrease as a result of greater numbers of students, including those who are significantly underprepared enrolling in gateway courses. For students formerly mired in developmental education, however, this is huge success.

GOING FORWARD

Broward faculty, staff, and administrators are continuing to look at data—both cross-sectional and longitudinal—to better understand the results of the college's redesign plan, and they will continue to make adjustments and revisions as necessary. To greatly enhance the college's ability to do so, three years ago, Broward adopted *The 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX)* management principles.⁴ As with many of the colleges interviewed, Broward expressed that it agrees with much of the spirit behind Senate Bill 1720, but would have preferred a different process. One administrator described the bill as a "catalyst for change" with "obvious gaps," adding that, "Certainly there are things we would like to have happened differently, but we needed this shock to our system."

³ Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2010, April). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 255-270.

⁴ McChesney, C., Covey, S., & Huling, J. 2012. *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*. New York, NY: Free Press.

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