



College Readiness

Placing college students into traditional remedial courses [dramatically decreases](#) their chances of completing college-level courses and attaining postsecondary credentials valued in the labor market. Fortunately, there is mounting evidence that supports the use of alternative methods to assess whether students are ready for college and to remediate gaps in academic skills, thereby reducing the need for developmental education.

JFF calls on states to change the way students are deemed college ready, reconsider what math classes are required for graduation, and redesign the ways in which colleges address students' academic needs. States should encourage colleges to use multiple measures to assess college readiness. For example, instead of relying solely on scores on high-stakes tests, colleges could evaluate students' high school coursework, grades, and grade point averages. Assessments that take a range of factors into account have been shown to reduce unnecessary placements into remedial courses. Moreover, states should encourage community colleges and universities to set different math requirements for STEM and non-STEM programs of study, so students who won't need calculus in their careers won't have to face the hurdle of completing default algebra prerequisites, when taking statistics or quantitative reasoning may be more suitable. In addition, states should support implementation of high school English and math transition courses that, upon successful completion, enable students to begin college-level work. States also should push for wider use of co-requisite and integrated education and training models, which can decrease the time it takes to remediate students' academic shortcomings.

Findings from 15-State Study



On average, two-thirds of the five recommended college-readiness policies have been adopted per state.



Signs of progress: All of the states have at least two of the five recommended college-readiness approaches in place. A large majority of them have expanded the use of multiple measures of assessment, co-requisite remediation, and differentiated math pathways.

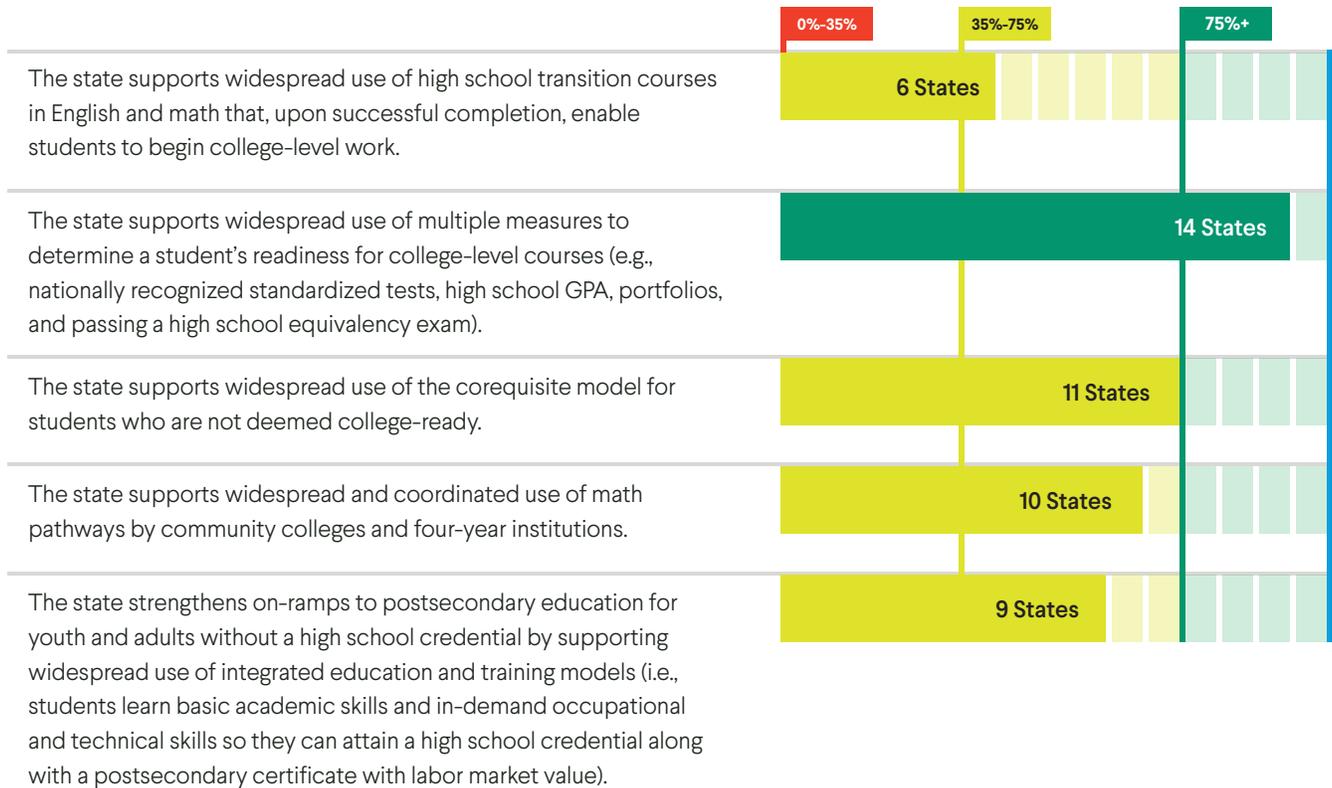


Critical gaps: Fewer states have policies designed to strengthen college readiness and college connections for high school students and adults lacking basic skills via the use of high school transition courses and integrated education and training programs, respectively.



Ahead of the curve: Arkansas, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

The state supports college readiness approaches that accelerate entry into college-level courses as quickly as appropriate.



State Spotlight: **California**

Two years ago, more than 75 percent of California's incoming college students were deemed underprepared for postsecondary education, and many had to begin college in remedial courses. Embracing evidence that shows more students would succeed in transfer-level courses if given the opportunity, and that assessment tests tend to under-place students, California passed a law that requires community colleges to maximize the probability that every student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within one year. The law, [AB 705](#), prohibits colleges from requiring students to enroll in remedial English or math courses and authorizes colleges to require students to enroll in additional concurrent support if it will increase their likelihood of passing transfer-level courses. The state also mandates use of high school coursework, grades, and/or grade point averages to determine whether students should be placed in these courses. All community colleges had to comply with AB 705 by the fall of 2019.

