

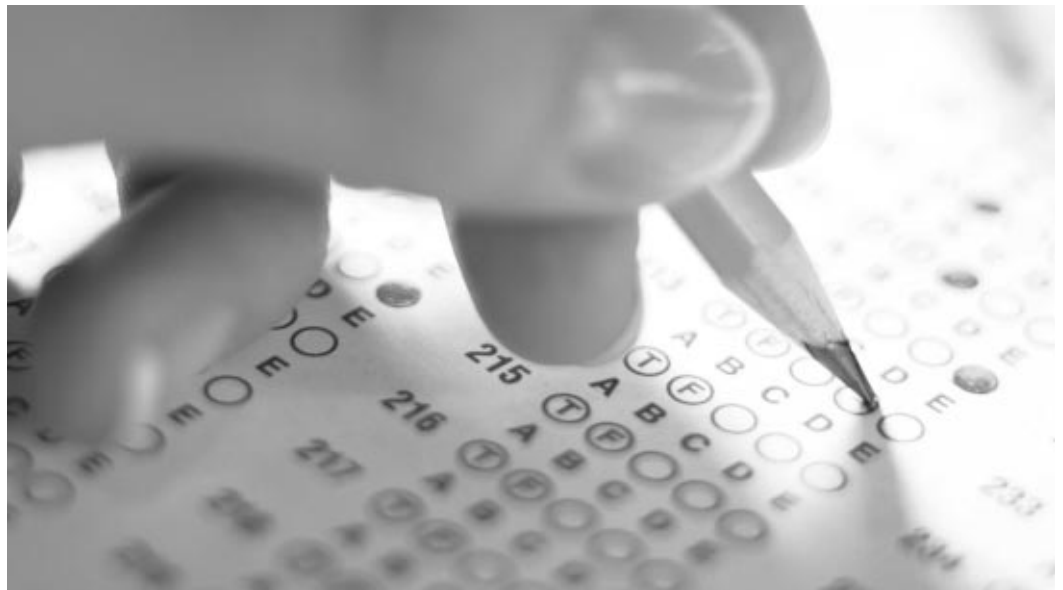
Standardization vs. Flexibility:

State Policy Options on Placement Testing for
Development Education in Community Colleges

By Heath Prince

An ACHIEVING THE DREAM Policy Brief

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Standardization vs. Flexibility: State Policy Options on Placement Testing for Developmental Education in Community Colleges

Introduction

Community colleges are historically open-access institutions, designed to serve young people and adults with a range of academic strengths and needs, but as the number of community college students has risen, post-secondary graduation rates have stagnated. A great many students are falling out of the system—at significant personal and public cost.

Many entering students are academically unprepared to succeed in college-level courses. To address their academic shortcomings, about one-third of community college students nationally take at least one developmental (or remedial) education course, a percentage that reaches as high as 90 percent in some community colleges. The need for such additional preparation is significant: a recent report cited inadequate academic preparation, especially in reading, as the most serious barrier to degree completion (Wirt et al. 2004). The results of remediation, though, are mixed. Many students who start community college in developmental classes never earn any college credential—and the more developmental courses a person takes, the less likely he or she is to complete a degree (Adelman 1998).

Given the importance of remediation—as well as its costs and often disappointing results—states are exploring ways to improve the performance and productivity of developmental education, particularly at the community college level. An important set of state policies toward this end focuses on decisions about which new students must enroll in developmental education courses.¹ States that are trying to systemize such decisions have pursued three related policies:

- Requiring community colleges to assess the academic preparation of incoming students and place them accordingly (but with no state-approved assessments or state-mandated passing scores);
- Specifying the academic tests and tools community colleges must use to make those assessments; and
- Specifying standard cutoff scores, requiring community colleges to place all students who do not test at a certain level into developmental education.

States approach these differently. They vary in the extent to which they pursue statewide standardization, dictate policy centrally or achieve it consensually through agreement among colleges, and encourage and grant waivers to individual institutions.

This policy brief, prepared for *Achieving the Dream*, a national initiative to increase the success of underserved groups in community colleges, describes the options and tradeoffs states encounter as they make state-level developmental education placement policy. It examines the range of policies in place in the five states participating in the *Achieving the Dream* initiative—Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Two of these states—Florida and Texas—have established minimum cutoff scores. A third—North Carolina—is actively debating whether to follow suit. This brief also highlights policy variations in Maryland and Minnesota, which illustrate approaches to standardizing placement policies and the pros and cons of different strategies.

States with both centralized and decentralized systems of community college governance can use this information as they design developmental education policies that promote student success. If more students entered community college ready to succeed in college-level work, the potential benefits would be significant. For example, one study projects that over \$74 billion in additional federal taxes and \$13 billion in state and local taxes would be generated if one-third of students taking at least one developmental course were to earn a Bachelor's degree, at a cost to taxpayers of only \$1 billion (Spann 2000).

The Rationale for Standardized Placement Tests and Cutoff Scores

States have a number of reasons to set standardized cutoff scores for placement into developmental education. Policies that are more consistent and predictable when implemented across a state's community colleges and that more accurately assess students' academic readiness for college work could:

- Help ensure that students who enroll in college-credit courses are prepared to benefit from and succeed in those courses, which would likely raise academic performance and persistence and graduation rates for less academically prepared students;



- Improve the ability of institutions to place students accurately in appropriate levels of developmental courses, making it more likely that students taking those courses will eventually earn college credentials;
- Establish a common definition of academic proficiency in college-level math, reading, and writing, which could accelerate the alignment of secondary and postsecondary academic requirements and expectations and enable colleges to send clear signals to high schools about the preparation students need to be college-ready;
- Help states measure the performance of community colleges based on common definitions of college-readiness, assessed with common tests and tools;
- Improve states' ability to track and analyze the effectiveness of developmental education programs, potentially increasing the productivity of state investments in community colleges and their students; and
- Facilitate transfer among community colleges and between two- and four-year institutions, removing a common barrier to continuing one's education after relocating or after completing a credential program.

These benefits would accrue to all students who take developmental education courses—but they would be particularly important to low-income, minority, and first-generation college-goers, who are traditionally overrepresented in developmental education programs and courses. Improvements in the quality and outcomes of developmental education—and in the alignment of K-12 and higher education systems regarding expectations for college-level preparation—would give a great boost to the prospects of many students who struggle academically.

Unless, of course, the policies have unintended consequences that undercut their potential benefits—a possibility that must be taken seriously. Significant risks can result from overly prescriptive and rigid policies. From the perspective of *Achieving the Dream* and its goal of increased student success, particularly for those groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, the great concern is whether standardized placement policies erect additional barriers to college success for low-income, minority, and first-generation college-going

students. Indeed, the number of students who enroll in developmental math, reading, and writing courses spikes when a state mandates testing and placement (Boylan 2002). If states and colleges do not take additional steps to help developmental education students succeed in those courses and move quickly into college-level courses, the result could be particularly detrimental for low-income and minority students.

Policymakers must weigh the benefits and potential costs of standardizing assessment and placement across their state—and look at ways to mitigate the potential negative impact of placement policies. Do these policies help more students enter college programs better prepared to succeed, or do they result in greater attrition as more students fail to advance from developmental education to programs yielding college credentials? Do mandatory policies make it easier for students to avoid duplication or arbitrary placement when they transfer to other postsecondary institutions? Do mandatory state policies make the system more rational and efficient, or do they stimulate institutions to seek frequent exemptions in ways that let many students avoid developmental courses?

The lack of solid research makes definitive answers difficult, yet the experience of *Achieving the Dream* and other states is instructive. States with both centralized and decentralized systems of community college governance should find this information useful as they redesign developmental education policies to promote student success.

An Overview of State Policy Patterns

Across the nation, fewer than half the states have policies regarding placement in developmental courses. In those that do, state-level policies are set by statute, the higher education board, or some combination of the two. However, only a small number of states have established minimum passing scores for entry into general education without referral to developmental education; more often, such decisions are left to institutional discretion.

States that are trying to systemize how local community colleges address placement into developmental

education have pursued three related policies, which range from those with more local flexibility to those with greater standardization (see Table 1) (Jenkins and Boswell 2002):²

- Over 20 states require community colleges to assess all new students to determine which need to be placed in developmental courses in English or math.
- Eleven of those states specify one or several assessment tests that colleges must use. These states have adopted common developmental education exams for reading, writing, or math, seeking to increase the transparency and rigor of the placement process.

TABLE 1.
State Policies on Developmental Education Assessment and Placement, 2002

	Requires Assessment and Placement in Developmental Education	Specifies One or More Approved Developmental Education Exams	Requires Institutions to Use Standardized Cutoff Scores
Florida	X	X	X
Maryland	X	X	X
Minnesota	X	X	X
Oklahoma	X	X	X
Texas	X	X	X
Georgia	X	X	
North Carolina	X	X	
South Dakota	X	X	
Tennessee	X	X	
Virginia	X	X	
Wyoming	X	X	
Alabama	X		
Arkansas	X		
Colorado	X		
Georgia	X		
Kentucky	X		
Massachusetts	X		
Nevada	X		
Virginia	X		
Washington	X		
West Virginia	X		

Sources: Jenkins and Boswell 2002; Martinez et al. 2003; and interviews with state officials and community college representatives by the author

- Five states take standardization one step further and require all colleges in the state to adopt the same policies for placing students into developmental education, based on how students perform on the placement test. That is, all colleges must use the same cut-off scores to determine which students must enroll in developmental courses.

Some states mandate that colleges use a single test; others let them choose among a few approved assessments. In still other states, as in Maryland, the community colleges have voluntarily agreed to administer the same exam to incoming students. Many states use one or more of a handful of major college placement exams, including ACCUPLACER and COMPASS for assessment. In addition, a growing number of colleges and states allow students who achieve a minimum ACT or SAT score to opt out of any placement exam.

Only Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Texas have set minimum passing levels that all colleges statewide must use in determining placement in developmental education. Three of these states are relatively small and have only a few community colleges. Florida and Texas are larger states with greater state-level coordination of higher education policy.

Advocates can be found for both positions: greater standardization and more local flexibility. The arguments for greater standardization revolve particularly around efficiency concerns. Shouldn't expectations about what it takes to move to the next educational level be clear and predictable for students? Wouldn't this address the problems many states face that set the cutoff score on the high school assessment exam so low that passing it says little about a student's college readiness.

At the same time, too much standardization can be a problem. In one *Achieving the Dream* state, for example, some community college leaders have expressed concern that a state-mandated score would diminish the quality of their own developmental and general education curricula. They feared that the state might adopt a "least common denominator" standard, setting placement cutoff scores low in order to secure support for the policy from colleges with weaker academic

performance. This would, they argued, increase the number of academically unprepared students enrolled in credit programs and courses.

Some states have tried to combine uniformity with flexibility. Texas and Minnesota, for example, have set a statewide floor for requiring placement into developmental education, but they leave individual community colleges free to set scores above this floor. Texas also makes it possible for students to delay taking the placement test and to re-test in their second semester.

Institutional leaders commonly articulate a fear that mandatory placement and standardized cutoff scores might be too rigid and constraining for local institutions. This could lead colleges to seek exemptions, waivers, or other exceptions that weaken the policy's intended impact. There is some evidence from Texas and Florida of this dynamic.

Some policymakers are also concerned about cost and capacity challenges that mandatory tests and placement scores pose, as enrollments in developmental education rise in response to required placement in remedial classes. Finally, philosophical objections arise based on the view that individuals should have the "right to fail" and that the public higher education system should limit its responsibility for ensuring that adult learners have skills that prepare them for college success.

From the *Achieving the Dream* perspective, the most important question about mandatory placement and cutoff scores is their impact on low-income and first-generation college goers and other harder-to-serve students. Will systematizing and extending state policy in these areas result in more success—or less—for these students? The experiences of *Achieving the Dream* and other states help answer this question. They point to policy approaches that can make mandatory placement and cutoff scores more likely to increase student success—as intended—rather than to lower expectations and depress student outcomes in college.

TABLE 2.1

Developmental Education Placement Policy in Achieving the Dream States, part 1

	State-Mandated Assessment and Placement	State-Specified Exams	State-Established Cutoff Scores
Florida	Since 1985, the state has required colleges to assess entering freshmen for academic preparedness and to place students in remedial courses if they do not achieve a state-defined minimum passing score.	Since 1996, Florida has required the State Board of Education to implement a common placement test, the Florida College Entrance-Level Placement Test. The test assesses college-readiness skills in English, reading, and math for students who intend to enter a postsecondary degree program. Referred to as the Computerized Placement Test, the exam is a component of the College Board's ACCUPLACER exam. (High schools are encouraged to administer the test at the beginning of the tenth grade so that students who require remediation can obtain instruction prior to entering public postsecondary education.) College students requiring additional preparation are directed to community colleges to develop college-entry skills. State universities, with the exception of historically black colleges and universities, can not offer college preparatory classes except by contracting with a community college to provide such instruction on the university campus. Students in these developmental courses can enroll in lower-division courses within their degree programs while enrolled in college-preparatory instruction, as long as those courses do not require the skills addressed in the developmental course. A student aspiring to an Associate's or Bachelor's degree must complete required college-preparatory studies before accumulating 12 hours of lower-division college credit. Students who present SAT-I or ACT scores that meet state requirements are exempted from taking the test.	The state has established a minimum passing score on the Florida College Entrance-Level Placement Test. Students must achieve this score to demonstrate basic computation and communication skills.
New Mexico	No state statute addresses remediation directly. However, the Commission on Higher Education allows institutions to collect state funding for developmental and adult basic education instruction. The commission prohibits state funding for remediation at doctoral institutions.	None	None

Developmental Education Placement Policy in *Achieving the Dream States*

Remediation assessment and placement policies vary widely in the *Achieving the Dream* states. One important source for this variation is the degree of state-level control over community college policy. Another is leadership: the commitment of institutional leaders to improving the success rate in college for less-skilled students. In every state in which developmental education figures prominently in the community college policy agenda, a group of institutional leaders has consistently advocated for the state to provide resources and support for developmental education.

Four *Achieving the Dream* states—Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia—have identified one or

more common assessment tools that all colleges must use to determine whether students need to enroll in developmental education. Florida and Texas have established minimum passing scores for developmental education assessments. New Mexico does not have a statewide policy regarding assessment for developmental education (see Table 2).

Two Different Approaches to Standardized Cutoff Scores

Both Maryland and Minnesota decided that their efforts to improve the educational attainment of students taking developmental courses would include a policy standardizing placement cutoff scores across the state's community colleges. Yet these two states have

TABLE 2.2

Developmental Education Placement Policy in Achieving the Dream States, part 2

	State-Mandated Assessment and Placement	State-Specified Exams	State-Established Cutoff Scores
North Carolina	The state requires assessment and placement for all community college students. All institutions must report data regarding entering students who need remediation.	The state has specified three assessment tools for colleges to use: ACCUPLACER, ASSET, and COMPASS. It exempts students who present SAT-I or ACT scores that meet institutional requirements.	The state is considering establishing minimum cutoff scores.
Texas	As part of the Texas Success Initiative, each undergraduate student who enters a Texas public institution of higher education, unless otherwise exempt, must be assessed for reading, writing, and mathematics skills prior to enrolling in collegiate-level coursework. Institutions must advise and assist students who do not demonstrate college readiness, providing appropriate support, such as course-based or non-course-based developmental education. Students can choose to delay their remedial education and try to pass the exam again the following semester. Institutions can determine the curriculum and number of remedial courses offered.	The state has created the Texas Higher Education Assessment placement test for assessing student proficiency in math, reading, and writing. The state also permits the use of ACCUPLACER and COMPASS. Students who achieve state-specified scores on the ACT, SAT, or exit-level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills tests may be exempt from all or part of the Texas Higher Education Assessment.	To enter general studies, students must achieve state-set minimum scores for each of its assessment tools. An institution can set higher scores. The state sets how many levels of remedial education an institutional type can offer. Four-year schools can only offer two levels; community colleges can offer three levels.
Virginia	The state requires institutions to assess incoming students with a state-specified assessment tool, and then to place students into developmental courses based on institutional policy. There appears to be significant leeway at the institutional level for students to avoid mandatory placement. Virginia mandates that remedial education at public institutions be taught solely at community colleges.	The state uses COMPASS and ASSET but leaves the responsibility for establishing passing scores to individual institutions. Students who present SAT-I or ACT scores that meet institutional minimum requirements are exempt from taking the COMPASS or ASSET assessment.	None

Sources: State Policy Issues Database Online; accessed September 12, 2004, www.wiche.edu/policy/SPIDO; Martinez et al. (2003); Kansas Department of Education and University of Kansas Chancellor's Advisory Council of Presidents, meeting minutes from February 18-19, 2003, www.so.cc.va.us/conferences/acop/ACOPMinFeb2003.pdf, accessed on November 11, 2004

chosen different approaches to achieving similar goals. Maryland, where local control is relatively strong, seeks to use tests and statewide cutoff scores as a way to raise quality standards. Minnesota, which has a centralized state governing board, has established a floor that leaves individual institutions the option of raising the bar for its students.

Maryland: Local Control and Raising Standards

In 1992, the Maryland General Assembly abolished the State Board for Community Colleges and moved the community colleges under the oversight of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, while preserving local governance. The commission serves as a

coordinating board with responsibilities for system-wide accountability systems, system planning, capital and operating budgets review, and academic programs approval. Each community college is governed by a local board whose members are appointed by the governor.

In 1996, when the commission studied developmental education practices in Maryland's community colleges, it found widely varying policies and practices regarding the identification and placement of developmental students. In the commission's annual report to the legislature, this variation was reflected in the number of high school students who were required to take developmental education—and the remediation record in college of

graduates of each of the state's school districts. The annual report raised policy issues because, as school district administrators pointed out, several high schools with relatively high percentages of students requiring developmental education were in districts that also had community colleges with more demanding developmental education cutoff scores. In other words, developmental education policy had a perverse effect, skewing high school performance data in favor of those schools located near community colleges with less demanding cutoff scores and against schools located near community colleges with high cutoff scores.

The commission proposed standardizing both the placement exams and the cutoff scores used to measure minimum college preparation. Because Maryland's community colleges are locally governed, though, the commission left the decisions regarding standardizing exams and cutoff scores in the hands of the community colleges. The resulting collaboration among college deans and faculty led to a consensus on making the developmental education cutoff score more stringent than it had been for most institutions. After several years of meetings and debate, by 1998 all 18 Maryland community colleges had agreed to adopt uniform standards for assessing students and placing them in college-level courses, based on recommendations from the faculty in reading, writing, and mathematics.

An immediate outcome of the new standards has been an increase in the number of students required to pass one or more developmental courses before beginning the general education curriculum. However, by standardizing the cutoff scores, the institutions now send a consistent message to K-12 public education systems regarding the reading, writing, and math skills and knowledge that are required for success in college-level coursework.³

That message is clear: high school graduates need better preparation for college-level work. In 2002, the Maryland Higher Education Commission reported that a consistently high percentage of high school graduates who had completed a college-recommended curriculum ("core" students) needed remediation in college: as high as 46 percent in math, 29 percent in English, and 27 percent in reading between 1994 and 2001. And the

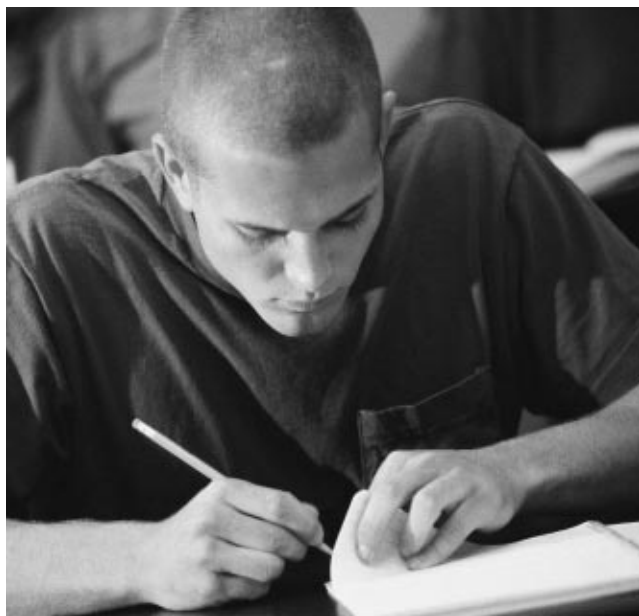


statistics were even worse for students who had not completed a college-recommended curriculum in high school: as high as 56 percent required remediation in math, 41 percent in English, and 38 percent in reading. The commission also noted that the percentage of core students requiring remediation in math rose between 1998 and 2001, from an average of 39 percent before 1998 to 45 percent after 1998—which “may be due to the standardization of placement tests and cutoff scores at the two-year institutions.” However, the number of core community college students requiring remedial education in English trended down, from 29 percent to 25 percent, between 1999 and 2000, after the policy went into effect (Maryland Higher Education Commission 2002).

Minnesota: State Minimum But No Maximum

In 1998, the Board of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, which governs all community and technical colleges and the Minnesota State University system, established a policy that led to the creation of the system-wide “Assessment for College Readiness.” Postsecondary institutions must assess the reading, writing, and math skills of entering students, meet statewide minimum standards for access to the college-level curriculum, and create developmental education courses to bring students with inadequate skills to the minimum standards. Following implementation of the assessment, enrollment in developmental education courses increased slightly: from 43.2 percent of students entering college in 1999, the first year of the new policy, to 44.7 percent in 2000 (Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota 2002).

Upon recommendation of the board’s Assessment for College Readiness Committee, colleges can adopt an alternative to the system-endorsed instrument in one or two of the three subject-area measures (reading, writing, and math). Each college and university must develop campus guidelines that exempt some students from all or portions of the incoming student assessment, based on the presentation of transcripts or equivalent evidence showing adequate preparation or prior education, enrollment in non-credit continuing educa-



tion or customized training, or enrollment in a one- or two-course program of study. However, colleges cannot use the incoming student assessment to make admissions decisions.

The board has also established minimum standards on the assessment test for access to general education courses. Colleges and universities may set standards that are higher than the minimum established by the state board. Students who score below the minimum standards must complete the appropriate developmental education curricula, either through courses or other means, before enrolling in selected general education courses.⁴

Recommendations: Policies to Minimize the Negative Consequences of Mandatory Placement

Mandatory placement tests and mandatory cutoff scores can help colleges place less academically prepared students in classes at levels appropriate to their skills, which should make them more likely to succeed in college courses. There is growing evidence, from community colleges and state agencies, that students who start in developmental education and make it to college-level courses have academic success rates on a par with students who enter credit programs directly. Robert McCabe (2000) estimates that 34 percent of students who completed developmental education courses went on to receive an Associate’s (14 percent), Bachelor’s (16 percent), or graduate (4 percent) degree.

However, developmental education policies are more likely to succeed if they are part of a coherent package of policies designed to ensure that students entering developmental education are supported and guided long enough to succeed in such courses and to move quickly to desired college programs. On their own, mandatory developmental education placement and cutoff scores run the risk of driving up the number of individuals who enroll in developmental education without increasing their success in either developmental or credit programs.

How can this potentially harmful impact on low-income and minority students be mitigated? There is

little solid research on how best to strengthen developmental education—or on state policies that can drive such improvement. There is especially little empirical evidence on the effect of a policy of mandatory cutoff scores on remediation rates and college success. A research agenda on these issues is needed.

Nevertheless, based on the experience of the *Achieving the Dream* and a few other states, several guidelines for effective policies emerge:

The longer it takes a student, particularly a low-income student with family and other responsibilities, to move through developmental education into a credit program, the more likely he or she is to drop out. For this reason, states should be careful that mandating cutoff scores does not lead colleges to set up rigid, long, sequential ladders from remediation into college courses.

States should encourage colleges to explore and experiment with accelerated preparation models, particularly for those with less severe basic skill gaps. States must balance their encouragement of accelerated, time-efficient models with the establishment of more uniform definitions of college-ready and remediation need.

States have several options that they could make explicit in policy. One such model arises because a significant number of incoming students place out of English developmental education while their test scores require them to take remedial math. Florida and some other states have tried to promote institutional flexibility that can speed progress to college courses by allowing students who pass one segment of the assessment test (e.g., reading and writing) to take credit-bearing courses in that subject even if they need remediation in another area (e.g., math). Texas recently eliminated a policy that prohibited students from taking both developmental and college-credit courses at the same time. And other states, like New Mexico, leave this decision to institutional discretion. Tallahassee Community College in Florida allows students taking developmental courses in all areas to also take a companion credit-bearing course to reinforce their skill development and allow them to get on the college track.

Most assessment instruments, particularly those that are multiple choice, are imperfect for assessing student strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, states should identify a number of different tests that colleges can administer. They should also consider how to use as assessment tools tests that students already take in high school.

The City University of New York accepts the state Regents English test as a placement exam for incoming students: a student with a score of 75 or above automatically places out of remedial English. This approach furthers the alignment of high school exit and college entrance requirements, and it provides useful signals from colleges to high schools of what college-ready means. All of the *Achieving the Dream* states with policies on placement testing allow for the use of ACT or SAT scores in place of the college placement exam. This can save money and time for students and the state—and it can help high schools focus on preparation that pays off in the state’s colleges.

States might also want to allow colleges to consider other measures of student readiness, including high school grades in relevant subjects. States might look to the example of the NCAA and its consideration of some grades in setting the SAT requirements needed for freshmen to qualify to play in Division I sports. For example, if a student received an A or B in twelfth-grade English, the college might require a lower score on the placement test than if the student had a C or D.

States need to improve their collection and analysis of data on developmental education enrollments and outcomes if they are to know whether cutoff score and other policies are having the intended—or unintended—impact on student entry into and success in college programs.

States that have implemented mandatory placements and standardized cutoff scores generally lack sufficient data from their colleges to know whether the policy is improving student outcomes—or whether it is having unintended negative impacts on some population groups. Many states, such as Maryland, have a solid understanding of enrollment trends in developmental education from year to year and can track the ebbs and

flows of enrollment levels. Fewer track the outcomes of developmental education students in ways that reveal how placement in different levels of developmental education affects eventual entry into and completion of college programs.

Developmental education policies need to be designed as part of a K-16 approach to state policy.

Developmental education policies must be part of a consistent, comprehensive approach to preparing students to succeed in college. In recent years, many states have pushed responsibility for remediation to the community colleges by forbidding four-year public institutions from offering it. At the same time, community colleges would like to see fewer high school students coming to them in need of significant remediation. Standardized cutoff scores are likely to increase enrollment in community college developmental courses. In the longer run, though, standardized scores might be part of a set of policies that can reduce the percentage of high school students who graduate poorly prepared for college success.

In Maryland and Minnesota, the adoption of standardized placement exams and cutoff scores has occurred in

the context of broad K-16 reform, which is designed, at least in part, to reduce the number of students requiring developmental education. The Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16 and Minnesota's P-16 Education Partnership are system-wide initiatives to align academic preparation along the entire education continuum and increase the likelihood of postsecondary success. States should implement cutoff score policy and other developmental education policies with this broader K-16 "pipeline" approach in place.

Developmental education policies are at the core of efforts to help more students, particularly students from underserved populations, to succeed in college. Placement and cutoff score policies are a potentially important lever that states have to drive improvements in educational quality. They can send a strong and consistent signal to high schools regarding what it means to be academically prepared for college work. But that signal will only be powerful if it is part of a set of policies that align college expectations with high school standards and create opportunities for high school students to learn the reading, writing, and math skills they need to succeed in college programs.

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Endnotes

- ¹ This brief looks at the use of standardized assessments as determinants of who must take developmental education courses. Of course, other state policies also have potential for improving developmental education or controlling its costs. Summarized by Jenkins and Boswell (2002), these include: putting the responsibility for remediation back on high schools or prohibiting developmental classes in public four-year institutions, thereby reducing the costs; limiting the number of times the state will pay for a student to take the same course, thereby controlling costs and encouraging students to succeed; supporting professional development and other approaches to strengthening developmental education instruction; improving the reporting and tracking of student progress in and through developmental education; and reassessing the formulas by which the state funds developmental education. JFF plans to address additional issues in state developmental education policy in future *Achieving the Dream* briefs.
- ² The lack of a state policy on placement does not mean that colleges do not establish their own mandatory policies.
- ³ Personal communication, Dr. Michael Keller, Maryland Higher Education Commission, September 28, 2004
- ⁴ See: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Web site, accessed September 30, 2004, <http://www.mnscu.edu>