



The Middle-Skill STEM State Policy Framework Self-Assessment Tool

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY

INSTRUCTIONS

- For calendar years 2014 and 2015, please answer each question with the appropriate number from the indicated scale.
- Each state will complete the tool differently, according to local circumstances. To maximize the tool's effectiveness as a discussion aid, we recommend scheduling a two-hour, focused retreat for a state team to complete the instrument together. State team roles might include association or system head, chief academic officer, chief student services officer, director of institutional research, and/or director of financial aid.
- If a policy change is a high priority for the future, please put "Yes" in that column.
- "State" is defined as the governing authority for community colleges in your state. Please see the glossary for more details.
- Comments are optional, but are encouraged so that team discussion is rich and forward-looking.

Purpose and Uses: This Self-Assessment Tool is exactly that—a tool to make the task of system-building easier, more efficient, and more accurate. The tool helps states to:

- Evaluate their current policy environment against a preferred policy set tested with state leaders and other experts.
- Discuss and prioritize needed policy changes (system and state) in order to better support student completion.
- Track policy changes over time, providing data on the scope and magnitude of policy changes underway vis-à-vis their peers in the Postsecondary State Policy Network. Aggregated state responses will be provided so that states can assess their progress relative to peer states.

With previous iterations of this tool, it has been exciting to be able to see and document state progress from year to year. We recommend using the tool in this longitudinal way.

THE MIDDLE-SKILL STEM STATE POLICY FRAMEWORK SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

We understand that state policies will not necessarily “require” all, or perhaps any, of the following. Please use the 5-point scale to indicate “the extent to which state policies require” the following actions. A (0) would mean state policy does not require the action at all. A (2) would indicate that state policy perhaps encourages, but does not require the action. A (4) would indicate that state policy fully requires an action.

If state policy encourages or requires an action for all programs (i.e., not necessarily just STEM programs), please consider that a policy that does still impact STEM.

1. CREATE PATHWAYS TO CAREERS: ENSURE THAT STEM PROGRAMS MEET EMPLOYER NEEDS (e.g., use of labor market information, career advising, work-based learning, employer engagement)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat (e.g., state encourages the action but does not require it), and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state require colleges to:			
1.	Develop shorter-term, highly structured STEM programs with clear labor market value?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
2.	Develop stackable STEM programs in which students can earn certificates and credentials on the way to an Associate degree and beyond?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
3.	Align programs with the job market through substantial involvement of employers in curriculum planning (i.e., more than employers serving on advisory boards for accreditation purposes)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
4.	Conduct prior learning assessment?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
5.	Partner with programs at external agencies such as Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Centers that deliver advising targeted to adults that is informed by labor market information?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
6.	Use labor market information when advising students intended to help students make good program choices linked to their career and educational goals in STEM?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
7.	Offer job placement programs that include counseling and advising on the labor market value of STEM credentials and degrees?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
8.	Directly engage employers in the counseling and placement process?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	

1. CREATE PATHWAYS TO CAREERS: ENSURE THAT STEM PROGRAMS MEET EMPLOYER NEEDS (CONTINUED) (e.g., use of labor market information, career advising, work-based learning, employer engagement)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat (e.g., state encourages the action but does not require it), and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state require colleges to:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
9.	Offer work-based learning options that combine credential attainment with work experience in STEM fields of study?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
10.	Form regional or sector-based partnerships that bring external partners such as CBOs, K-12, workforce, employers, and community foundations to the table to design strategies for meeting STEM workforce needs?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
11.	Align STEM programs with state economic development strategies?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
2. OPEN DOORS TO STEM: IMPROVE MATH PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION TO BOOST STUDENT SUCCESS (e.g., accelerated developmental education, differentiated math pathways, professional development)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat (e.g., state encourages the action but does not require it), and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state require colleges to:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
12.	Use multiple measures of student performance when placing students into developmental education and/or college-level courses (e.g., high school transcripts and GPA, diagnostics, non-cognitive measures such as study skills)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
13.	Make preparatory materials available to students in advance of taking placement tests?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
14.	Offer accelerated developmental education options (e.g., corequisite, modularization, compression)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
15.	Offer differentiated math pathways aligned with program content (e.g., statistics pathways, pathways for students in STEM programs that require an algebra-based pathway)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
16.	Allow students to take college-level courses at the same time that they take developmental education courses?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	

2. OPEN DOORS TO STEM: IMPROVE MATH PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION TO BOOST STUDENT SUCCESS (CONTINUED) (e.g., accelerated developmental education, differentiated math pathways, professional development)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat (e.g., state encourages the action but does not require it), and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state require colleges to:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
17.	Participate in partnerships with K-12 schools/districts to improve college readiness?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
18.	Align Adult Basic Education exit standards with college entrance standards?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
19.	Offer professional development activities that help STEM faculty improve teaching and learning?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
3. FOCUS ON STUDENT COMPLETION: CREATE NEW MODELS THAT LEAD TO DEGREE ATTAINMENT (e.g., structured pathways, career clusters, dual enrollment, transfer pathways)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat (e.g., state encourages the action but does not require it), and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state require colleges to:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
20.	Partner with K-12 to offer dual enrollment and/or early college opportunities that encourage students to accumulate credits in STEM programming?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
21.	Create structured programs of study in STEM (e.g. clearly articulated academic requirements and suggested course-taking patterns for programs of study)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
22.	Create career clusters/meta-majors/program areas (e.g., allied health, IT) that students enter early in their academic careers and are designed to introduce them to more specific majors over time?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
23.	Provide frequent and regular advising that includes educational planning that helps students map out their pathway, register for courses that count toward their major, and stay on track to completion?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
24.	Clearly articulate transfer pathways in individual STEM program areas that include general education and program area requirements?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	

4. MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS: IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND USE TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND EQUITY (e.g., public goals, data transparency, disaggregated data with equity lens)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
25.	Set clear targets and goals for increasing community college credentials in STEM fields?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
26.	Convene a STEM advisory committee or taskforce focused on improving student success in STEM fields?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
27.	Maintain a community college data system that tracks student outcomes by declared program or major, allowing for comparable data by STEM program or major?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
28.	Maintain a community college data system that disaggregates student outcomes by subgroups and report on them at least annually (examples of subgroups include gender, race, income, developmental education placement, etc.)?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
29.	Support college access to both traditional and real-time labor market information?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
30.	Seek out ways to support community colleges with limited institutional research capacity?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
31.	Maintain a community college data system that links to at least 3 of the following data systems: K-12, 4-year colleges and universities, adult education, workforce, employment and earnings, and/or social services?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
Please identify which systems are linked to the community college data system:					

5. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR SUCCESS TO BOTH STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES: ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND REWARD BETTER OUTCOMES FOR STEM STUDENTS AND THE STEM WORKFORCE (e.g., weighting for STEM credentials, innovation funds, STEM scholarships and tax breaks)		2014	2015	FUTURE PRIORITY?	COMMENTS
		On a scale of 0 to 4 (where 0 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, and 4 = fully), to what extent does the state:		(Yes/No)	(Optional)
32.	Have an outcomes-based funding system that specifically rewards colleges for student completion of STEM credentials?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
33.	Have an outcomes-based funding system that specifically rewards colleges for positive outcomes in STEM fields for low-income, underrepresented, underprepared, and first-generation students?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
34.	Provide competitive or incentive funding to encourage colleges to be innovative and test new strategies to improve student outcomes in STEM?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
35.	Offer special financial aid options or scholarships for STEM students in community colleges?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	
36.	Offer tax breaks designed to incent community college STEM graduates to stay and work in-state?	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	Y N	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

STRUCTURED PATHWAYS

A term suggesting that a college is seeking to increase student success by implementing multiple, integrated initiatives that typically ensure students receive supports such as: adequate advising and guidance, retention and student support services, clear and visible academic requirements, recommended course sequences, educational planning, and career guidance.

META-MAJORS

A set of courses that meet academic requirements across a broad discipline grouping such as health sciences, business, or education, to guide students through their early academic requirements.

STATE

“State” is defined as the governing authority for community colleges in your state. Examples include: Ohio Board of Regents and the Virginia Community College System.

INCENT

When a state offers a reward (financial or other) for compliance with a state policy.

REQUIRE

When a state requires compliance with a policy, with the assumption of penalties for non-compliance.



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