

Scaling Guided Pathways Reforms

Providing structured support for community colleges improved credential attainment in Texas

Student Groups	Credentials Awarded		% Change from 2014 to 2017
	2014	2017	
All community college students	123,061	151,367	23% increase
Economically disadvantaged	47,481	58,115	22% increase
African American students	14,957	18,034	21% increase
Hispanic students	47,957	65,314	32% increase
Asian students	5,052	6,663	38% increase
White students	48,442	53,580	9% increase

Source: Baldwin, C. (2019). [All are welcome: Creating statewide capacity and structure to implement evidence-based reforms across all colleges](#). *Steps-to-Success*. Denver, CO: Strong Start to Finish, Education Commission of the States.

Note: The information is replicated from Table 3 in the paper.

State-wide reform efforts can result in uneven outcomes because of the different capacities of institutions to adopt systemic reforms with limited resources. To account for the varied readiness and ability for institutions to scale reforms like guided pathways, the Texas Success Center (TSC) created a multi-tier strategy. With the Texas Pathways Project, the TSC divided 48 college systems into four cadres with tiered supports tailored to the needs and readiness of each cadre. Institutions were assigned to cadres after completing an assessment to determine their commitment to and preparation for implementing and scaling guided pathways. Colleges identified as most prepared were placed into cadre one. The remaining institutions were assigned to cadres two through four based on their commitment and readiness for scale. This tiered approach provided opportunities for colleges with different capacities to benefit from the pathways project. A new report published by Strong Start to Finish addresses how this strategy promoted holistic guided pathways reforms in Texas community colleges. Colleges that participated in this scaling effort benefited from supports such as pathways institutes, face-to-face coaching, and ongoing technical assistance.

As featured in the table, the pathways strategy has created notable improvement in outcomes for low-income students and students from all racial groups. For instance, the number of low-income students who received credentials statewide increased by 22% percent and the percentage of Hispanic students who received a credential improved by 38%. This Points of Interest highlights how providing a structured implementation process that includes tiered supports for community colleges was associated with improved credential attainment across student groups.

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