Misaligned Transitions

Students with advanced math knowledge in high school continue to be enrolled in developmental math courses in college

![Bar chart showing the percentage of undergraduates who took remedial math in their first year by highest high school math course completed or planned to complete.]

Source: NPSAS data analyzed for Strong Start to Finish by Research Triangle Institute
Notes: The data comes from a nationally representative sample of college students collected by the US Department of Education called the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS). This chart depicts the percentage of 2011-12 and 2015-16 first-year undergraduates under age 30 who took a remedial math course in their first college year, by highest high school math course completed or planned to complete. *statistically significant differences between years were only observed for the pre-calculus group. Data are not available for students under age 30.

The connection between high school and college is a vital part of a student’s transition. The alignment of learning objectives and standards supports academic momentum and provides efficient use of resources. Yet, in this examination of trends in developmental math course taking for a nationally representative sample of students under age 30, descriptive data suggest first-year students who have taken calculus in high school are still enrolling in developmental math courses in college. The reasons lie in system and institutional policies and practices that have a direct impact on student success. This Points of Interest suggests that students with advanced math knowledge in high school continue to be enrolled into developmental math courses in college.

For more information, contact Christopher M. Mullin at cmullin@strongstart.org

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