



Building momentum for postsecondary success

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UPDATED CORE PRINCIPLES FOR REMEDIATION UNVEILED AT ANNUAL STRONG START TO FINISH LEARNING NETWORK CONVENING

The joint statement from the field reflects input from Achieving the Dream, American Association of Community Colleges, Carnegie Math Pathways at WestEd, Charles A. Dana Center, Complete College America, Education Commission of the States, Jobs for the Future, and Sova

(MIAMI) – March 4, 2020 - The developmental education field has an updated Core Principles document to guide its implementation of remediation reform. *The Core Principles for Transforming Remediation within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy: A Statement from the Field* was unveiled at Strong Start to Finish's (SSTF) annual Learning Network Convening. Strong Start to Finish is a national initiative of the Education Commission of the States aimed at significantly increasing the number and proportion of low-income students, students of color and returning adults who succeed in college math and English. The updated Principles are a joint statement from several partners that work closely and collaboratively in the developmental education field, including Achieving the Dream, American Association of Community Colleges, Carnegie Math Pathways at WestEd, Charles A. Dana Center, Complete College America, Education Commission of the States (ECS), Jobs for the Future, and Sova.

According to the document, not only have policy and practice advanced in significant ways, but the research base has grown tremendously since *Core Principles for Transforming Remediation Within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy* was published in 2015. That version introduced the importance of situating developmental education reform within a comprehensive student success strategy, which remains the anchoring commitment of the updated version.

By comparison, the latest version places greater emphasis on the equity imperative of developmental education redesign and on the conditions for effective implementation of promising reforms. The update highlights the need for ongoing professional development and institution-wide commitment to removing barriers to student success through the systematic reform of policies and practices. Noting that scaled reform depends on the commitment from not just the faculty and staff serving students in developmental education, but from *all* members of the campus community, the 2020 update brings a sharper focus on what it means to scale reform.

The updated Seven Core Principles are:

- **Principle 1:** Every student's postsecondary education begins with a well-designed process that empowers them to choose an academic direction and build a plan that starts with passing credit-bearing gateway courses in the first year.
- **Principle 2:** Placement of every student is based on multiple measures, using evidence-based criteria, instead of through a single standardized test.
- **Principle 3:** Campus communities transform policies and practices to ensure that every student is provided with high-value learning experiences and with the supports needed to remove barriers to success—especially students from historically underrepresented, disenfranchised, and minoritized communities.

- **Principle 4:** Program-appropriate college-level math and English courses are offered to every student through evidence-based, integrated support models designed to accelerate gateway course success.
- **Principle 5:** Every student is provided access to multiple pathways, such as statistics and data science, that integrate rigorous math appropriate to different disciplines and to the well-paying careers of today and tomorrow.
- **Principle 6:** Every student is supported in staying on track to a postsecondary credential through the institution's effective use of early momentum metrics and mechanisms to generate, share, and act on finely disaggregated student progression data.
- **Principle 7:** Efforts to improve the student experience, meet the evolving needs of students, and remove barriers to student success are visibly prioritized by the institution through the use of mechanisms that elevate the voices and lived experiences of students—and the entire campus community.

Notably, Principle 7 is new, and reflects an equity-minded focus on honoring the experiences of students themselves, and those who directly support students, through the prioritization of qualitative research.

“Much has been learned since the field released its Core Principles in 2015,” said Brian Sponsler, ECS vice-president of policy. “We have updated the principles to focus even greater attention on the design, implementation, and scaling of practices that lead to significantly improved and more equitable outcomes for today’s students. Today’s students are unprecedentedly diverse and our approaches to ensuring their success must be too, which is why the Principles were both updated and expanded.”

The update and expansion are based on deep listening across the field, with input from researchers, practitioners, advocates, policymakers and philanthropies focused on increasing upward mobility through the reform of remediation at scale. The Core Principles is first and foremost a statement from the field, though individuals and organizations long devoted to increasing student success through the reform of developmental education played a particularly strong role informing and guiding the creation of the update.

SSTF began working with four initial systems in early 2018 -- City University of New York (CUNY), Ohio Department of Higher Education, State University of New York (SUNY) and University System of Georgia (USG). Since then it has added Arkansas Community Colleges (ACC) and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and most recently, California Community Colleges, which is spearheaded by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) and the Foundation for California Community Colleges. In total, SSTF’s work impacts an estimated 3.7 million students across 250 institutions.

“This is enormously complicated work that challenges deeply entrenched structures, practices, and mindsets,” said Christopher M. Mullin, director of Strong Start to Finish. “Notably, it is clearer than ever before that we need to stop using high-stakes, single-element tests to place students. Likewise, while there is much to be learned about what models work for which students, particularly for students facing the greatest barriers, research definitively shows that students are harmed by even the best-intentioned multi-level prerequisite developmental reading, writing, and math course sequences.”

The document continues by acknowledging high-quality integrated support models are costly and labor intensive, and therefore require both long-term commitment to the professional development of

practitioners and an understanding of the long-term financial benefits to the institution of retaining and graduating more students.

“Our students can’t afford for us to wait any longer to implement reforms,” continued Mullin. “While the work is complicated and costly, the research shows us it is necessary. With the collaborative approach that is underway, it is also achievable.”

For more information on *Core Principles for Transforming Remediation within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy: A Statement from the Field, or Strong Start to Finish*, please visit www.strongstart.org or call (303) 299-3683.

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