



# Assessing Readiness and Needs to Implement Systemic Developmental Education Reforms

Strong Start to Finish (SStF) is a national network of funders, state, system, institutional, and technical assistance leaders that are dedicated to increasing first-year student success in introductory college-level math and English courses through the implementation and scale of evidence-based developmental education reforms. We promote and support three strategies of developmental education reform that are proven to increase student completion of college-level (gateway) math and English courses:

- **Multiple measures placement** approaches that consider high school GPA when placing students into gateway math and English courses.
- **Corequisite learning support** models that replace prerequisite developmental education course sequences and are offered concurrently with student enrollment in gateway math and English courses.
- **Mathematics pathways** that ensure first-year, credit-bearing mathematics courses align with degree pathways.

These reforms remove barriers and create conditions that enable more students to pass gateway math and English courses in their first year of college. In our focus on these reforms, we are committed to pursuing equitable college success outcomes for Black, Brown, Asian American and Indigenous students, students with low incomes and returning adults who are historically underserved by the education system.

SStF curates and customizes technical assistance for sites (e.g., states, systems, intermediaries, institutions) that addresses the unique context and challenges to effective adoption and implementation of developmental education reforms. This assessment should be used by sites to help identify strengths and needs, and engage in meaningful reflection that can help to maximize the success of technical assistance services offered through the SStF network.

Visit [strongstart.org](https://strongstart.org) for more information about the services and resources we provide.

# Part I: Determining Your Enabling Conditions

Part I of the assessment is designed to help you determine your enabling conditions. At the end of Part I you will find a description of four implementation phases and will identify what implementation phase(s) you are in. Please complete Part I before continuing on to Part II. For background information on developmental education reform (e.g., multiple measures placement, adoption and implementation of corequisite support, establishment and implementation of math pathways), see the [Core Principles](#) for Transforming Remedial Education as Part of a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy and A [State Policy Framework](#) for Developmental Education Reform.

## Instructions for Responses

- For open ended questions, include all information you think is relevant to the problem you are trying to solve. This may focus on one or more of the reform strategies.
- For multiple choice questions, focus your response on the primary strategy for which you are seeking assistance. You can use the "Other" option to provide more detail on other strategies if needed.
- The response to some prompts may be that you have not considered the question or have not taken any action. This is to be expected and should not cause any concern. You may also respond "not applicable."
- You can see how to attach documents that may be relevant to your request for assistance at the end of this document.

- 1 | What is the problem that you are trying to solve through developmental education reform?
- 2 | What is the equity imperative or equity problem you seek to solve through developmental education reform?
- 3 | What are the outcomes you seek to achieve that will indicate you have made progress toward your equity imperative?
- 4 | What is the target student population being served by the developmental education reform approach? (e.g., race/ethnicity, income, gender, age.)
- 5 | What are the biggest challenges to developmental education reform your site is facing?

6 | What types of assistance do you think your site needs to design, implement and scale developmental education reforms?

7 | Do any system or state policies or funding formulas require or encourage institutions to implement developmental education reforms (e.g., your state funding formula rewards student persistence and completion and reforms show evidence of improving those metrics)?

Do any system or state policies or funding formulas discourage developmental education reform (e.g., your state funding model funds on a student credit hour basis and any reform would reduce the number of credit hours students take)? If so, please describe the policy and/or funding formula and how it either encourages or discourages developmental education reform.

8 | What strategies to support developmental education reform are being considered or are currently being implemented? *(Select all that apply.)*

- State, system or institutional policy requiring implementation of any of the three developmental education reforms (multiple measures placement, corequisite supports or mathematics pathways).
- Financial incentives for institutions or departments to implement and scale developmental education reform.
- Charging a cross-institutional committee or group to oversee implementation.
- Public accountability through required data reports submitted to state or system postsecondary leadership, state legislature, etc.
- Technical assistance for institutional or departmental leaders designing developmental education reforms.
- Professional learning on effective developmental education practices for faculty and advisors.
- Providing implementation guidelines to institutions or departments.
- Have not considered this yet.
- Other/comments:

9 | Communication and collaboration across stakeholders are critical to any change effort. Service providers can help you think about how to leverage structures within your state or system. What structures exist that can be used to support communication and collaboration across institutions or departments? *(Select all that apply.)*

- State or system leadership groups, e.g., state higher education executive officers, board or council, president's council, chief academic officers group, chief financial officers group, student success center, cross-functional student success teams, general education council, etc.
- Institutional leadership groups, e.g., president's cabinet.
- Faculty senate or faculty council.
- Content-specific faculty groups such as state, system or institutional curriculum committees.
- State, system or institutional student support staff committees, e.g. registrars, advisors, admissions staff, developmental education coordinators.
- State, system or institutional student government associations or other student organizations.
- External groups or organizations like employers council, unions, community-based organizations, professional associations or policy advocacy organizations
- Other/comments:

10 | Data is the foundation for an effective change effort, and it is helpful for service providers to know what data will be available to support your work. What are the data capacities of the state, system or institution? *(Select all that apply.)*

- State or system longitudinal unit record database for public postsecondary education students with the following data. *(Please check all that apply.)*
  - Percent of new entering students who complete college-level math and English in the first academic year.
  - Percent of new entering students who enroll in prerequisite developmental education and/or corequisite support.
  - Success of students in college-level math and English by their placement level.
  - Success of students in college-level math by college-level course taken (i.e., college algebra, statistics, etc.).
  - All of the above data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, age, Pell Grant eligibility.
- Survey or focus group data from students placed into prerequisite developmental education courses, corequisite courses and/or college-level math and English courses.
- Survey data from advisors, developmental/corequisite faculty and/or faculty from other disciplines.
- Other/comments:

11 | What other major student success initiatives are you implementing with your institutions?  
(Select all that apply.)

- Guided Pathways.
- 15 to Finish.
- Advising reform.
- Course redesign (other than for gateway mathematics and English courses).
- Core curriculum redesign.
- First Year Experience.
- Other/Comments:

## Instructions for Assessment

Assess your current progress on implementation of developmental education reforms. This assessment defines four broad phases of implementation. The phases represent a continuum of implementation, and a site is likely to have characteristics of more than one phase. Review the following descriptions of the phases of implementation with your team and identify the phase that best describes your site's current progress for each of the three reform strategies.

### The Four Implementation Phases



#### Exploring

The site is in the process of learning about one or more of the developmental education reform strategies — multiple measures placement, corequisite supports, or mathematics pathways. The goal is to make a decision on how to engage in a reform process. This phase largely focuses on building awareness and support among key stakeholders.

The primary needs for technical assistance are leadership development, case-making, coalition-building, equity-centered data support to examine state, system or institutional data, and providing information on evidence, models and implementation strategies to stakeholders.



#### Designing

The site has made a commitment to systematically implementing one or more of the developmental education reform strategies. This might be a new initiative, or it might build upon small-scale or localized implementations. An effective systemic approach in a state or system would mean supporting a majority of institutions to design and implement developmental education reforms with common resources, guidance and opportunities for cross-institutional learning and support.

A systemic approach at the institutional level would mean situating the work as an institutional initiative, engaging stakeholders in a variety of roles and providing institutional leadership and support to design and implement reforms. The goal in all contexts is to lead an effective process that builds on strengths, leverages resources, and supports the people closest to the work to make evidence-based decisions regarding the design and implementation of reforms. Effective design positions the site to eventually move to scale.

The primary needs for technical assistance are for leadership support to lead implementation efforts, equity-centered data support and evaluation, models and tools for policy, advising practices, and course design, and faculty and staff training.



### Scaling

The site is in the process of implementing one or more of the developmental education reform strategies and is ready to scale up to the state, system or institution-wide level. Scaling in a state or system would mean working with all institutions that place students into some form of developmental education to implement developmental education reforms for all students.

Scaling for an institution would mean providing all students access to reforms. The specific goal for scaling each strategy is described below.

- **Multiple measures placement:** The placement for all new students in mathematics and English is based first on high school GPA using evidence-based metrics. Other measures are used when they provide evidence to move a student to a higher placement or when high school GPA is not available.
- **Corequisite supports:** The default placement for every student is the gateway English or mathematics course aligned to their meta-major or program of study. Multiple measures, as described above, are used to determine whether a student needs corequisite supports.
- **Mathematics pathways:** Every student is provided with support and information to select a mathematics pathway and gateway math course aligned to their meta-major or program of study.

The primary needs for technical assistance are for faculty and staff training, using data to plan for scaling and leadership support to lead implementation efforts.



### Refining

The site has implemented one or more of the developmental education reform strategies at a large scale and is ready to assess and refine their efforts, especially in making sure all student populations are benefitting from the reforms. The goal of sites in this stage is to engage in an effective, efficient, equitable and evidence-based continuous improvement process.

The primary needs for technical assistance are for using data for evaluation and continuous improvement, faculty and staff training, design support for improvements and leadership support to lead improvement.

For each of the three reform strategies, select the phase of implementation of developmental education reforms your site is currently in. If you are not working on a particular reform strategy, select not applicable.

	Exploring	Designing	Scaling	Refining	Not applicable
<b>Multiple Measures Placement</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Corequisite Supports</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Math Pathways</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Part II: Selecting Your Phase

Part II of the assessment has four sections based on the phase of implementation. To simplify the use of the assessment, you will only complete the section for one of the phases. Select the phase ([1. Exploring](#), [2. Designing](#), [3. Scaling](#), or [4. Refining](#)) that best describes the focus area requiring technical assistance. There will be opportunities in the prompts to provide additional information related to your current progress on different strategies.

You may want to refer to The Four Implementation Phases above to decide which section to complete. Instructions for each phase are included below.



## Exploring

- For best results, discuss responses to the questions with key stakeholders. This might include institutional administrators, student support staff and faculty who are helping lead state, system or institutional efforts.
- For open ended questions, include all information you think is relevant to the problem you are trying to solve. This may focus on one or more of the reform strategies.
- For multiple choice questions, focus your response on the primary strategy for which you are seeking assistance. You can use the "Other" option to provide more detail on other strategies if needed.
- The response to some prompts may be that you have not considered the question or have not taken any action. This is to be expected and should not cause any concern. You may also respond "not applicable."
- You can find how to attach documents that may be relevant to your request for assistance at the end of this document.

1 | Indicate which reform(s) you are exploring (*select all that apply*):

- Multiple measures placement.
- Corequisite supports for college-level mathematics and/or English.
- Mathematics pathways.

2 | What has prompted your interest in these reforms?

3 | Case-making is important through all stages of implementation. How well-informed are the following stakeholders about the evidence supporting the reform(s) you are exploring?

	Highly aware	Somewhat aware	Little-to-no awareness	Not applicable
Leadership of my organization or institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional or department leaders (presidents, CFOs, CAOs, deans, department chairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Math faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other/comments:

4 | How well-informed are the following stakeholders about the developmental education reforms your state, system or institutions are pursuing?

	Highly aware	Somewhat aware	Little-to-no awareness	Not applicable
Leadership of my organization or institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional or department leaders (presidents, CFOs, CAOs, deans, department chairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Math faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other/comments:

5 | How supportive are the following stakeholders of the developmental education reforms your state, system or institutions are pursuing?

	Highly supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not supportive	Not applicable
Leadership of my organization or institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional or department leaders (presidents, CFOs, CAOs, deans, department chairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Math faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other/comments:



- 6 | The SStF network takes an asset-based approach by helping sites build on their strengths. What are the strengths of your state, system or institution that will enable you to pursue reform?
  
- 7 | What challenges do you anticipate in the reform process?
  
- 8 | What timeline are you considering for your reform efforts?
  
- 9 | Attach any documents that provide additional information about your request for technical assistance. (State/system/institutional/departmental policies or reports, chancellor's memorandum, etc.)

Once you're done filling out this section, jump to [next steps](#).



## Designing

- For best results, discuss responses to the questions with key stakeholders. This might include institutional administrators, student support staff and faculty who are helping lead state, system or institutional efforts.
- For open ended questions, include all information you think is relevant to the problem you are trying to solve. This may focus on one or more of the reform strategies.
- For multiple choice questions, focus your response on the primary strategy for which you are seeking assistance. You can use the “Other” option to provide more detail on other strategies if needed.
- The response to some prompts may be that you have not considered the question or have not taken any action. This is to be expected and should not cause any concern. You may also respond “not applicable.”
- You can find how to attach documents that may be relevant to your request for assistance at the end of this document.

1 | Describe the current status of implementation of placement reforms, mathematics pathways alignment and/or implementation of corequisites. You can attach documents with your submission if that is simpler. (Limit 200 words.)

2 | Who will be engaged in the design process? *(Select all that apply.)*

### State or System

- State and system leaders.
- Policymakers (e.g., regents, trustees, legislators).
- State or system staff.
- State or system-level math faculty groups, i.e., faculty representing multiple institutions working together.
- State or system-level English faculty groups, i.e., faculty representing multiple institutions working together.
- State or system-level groups representing advising and other student support services.
- Institutional teams.
- Representatives of partner organizations such as community-based organizations, advocacy groups, etc.
- Students.

### Institution or Cohort of Institutions

- President or chief academic officers.
- Chief financial officer.
- Deans.
- Mathematics faculty.
- English faculty.
- Advisors.
- Institutional researchers.
- Representatives of community-based organizations, advocacy groups, etc.
- Students.

- 
- Have not decided yet.
  - Other/additional comments.

- 3 | What data do you have on enrollment and completion of developmental and gateway mathematics and English courses? Describe what data you are collecting and what it tells you about the need to reform developmental education.
- 4 | Full scale implementation of reforms seeks to ensure every student has equitable access to effective practices. A further consideration is whether reforms are implemented in such a way that all student populations benefit. What strategies are being considered to ensure that Black, Latine, Indigenous students, students with low incomes and returning adult students benefit from reforms? *(Select all that apply.)*
- Review of disaggregated data to identify and address equity gaps.
  - Use of qualitative data on student experiences to inform the design, implementation and scale of effective practices.
  - Intentional strategies to engage representatives of minoritized populations or experts on these populations.
  - Evidence-based strategies for targeted populations of students, e.g., culturally sustaining instructional practices, language support for English-learners, supports for rural colleges, etc.
  - Have not decided yet.
  - Other/additional comments.
- 5 | What financial or staff resources are dedicated to the design and implementation of reforms? Are you assessing the expense and revenue impacts of implementation?
- 6 | Attach any documents that provide additional information about your request for technical assistance. (State/system/institutional/departmental policies or reports, chancellor’s memorandum, etc.)

Once you’re done filling out this section, jump to [next steps](#).



## Scaling

- For best results, discuss responses to the questions with key stakeholders. This might include institutional administrators, student support staff and faculty who are helping lead state, system or institutional efforts.
- For open ended questions, include all information you think is relevant to the problem you are trying to solve. This may focus on one or more of the reform strategies.
- For multiple choice questions, focus your response on the primary strategy for which you are seeking assistance. You can use the "Other" option to provide more detail on other strategies if needed.
- The response to some prompts may be that you have not considered the question or have not taken any action. This is to be expected and should not cause any concern. You may also respond "not applicable."
- You can find how to attach documents that may be relevant to your request for assistance at the end of this document.

- 1 | What goals have been set for scaling multiple measures placement, implementation of corequisites, and/or mathematics pathways alignment? Include as much specificity as possible regarding outcome goals, implementation goals, timeline, etc. You can also find how to attach documents at the end of this document. Goals might be based on implementation such as "All students will be placed directly into gateway mathematics and English courses." Another approach is to set goals based on outcomes such as "at least 60% of the students will successfully complete a gateway English course in their first year."
- 2 | What successes and challenges have emerged in the process of scaling reforms?
- 3 | What evidence of success have you collected?

**4 |** Full scale implementation of reforms seeks to ensure every student has equitable access to effective practices. A further consideration is whether reforms are implemented in such a way that all student populations benefit from them. What strategies are being used to ensure that Black, Latine, Indigenous students, students with low incomes, and returning adults benefit from reforms? (Select all that apply.)

- Review of disaggregated data to identify and address equity gaps.
- Use of qualitative data on the student experience to identify and implement effective practices.
- Intentional strategies to engage representatives of minoritized populations or experts on these populations.
- Evidence-based strategies for targeted populations, e.g., culturally sustaining instructional practices, language support for English-learners, supports for rural colleges, etc.
- Have not decided yet.
- Other/Comments:

**5 |** What financial or staff resources are dedicated to the scaling of reforms?  
Are you assessing the expense and revenue impacts of scaling?

**6 |** Attach any documents that provide additional information about your request for technical assistance. (State/system/institutional/departmental policy or reports, chancellor's memorandum, etc.)

Once you're done filling out this section, jump to [next steps](#).



## Refining

- For best results, discuss responses to the questions with key stakeholders. This might include institutional administrators, student support staff and faculty who are helping lead state, system or institutional efforts.
- For open ended questions, include all information you think is relevant to the problem you are trying to solve. This may focus on one or more of the reform strategies.
- For multiple choice questions, focus your response on the primary strategy for which you are seeking assistance. You can use the "Other" option to provide more detail on other strategies if needed.
- The response to some prompts may be that you have not considered the question or have not taken any action. This is to be expected and should not cause any concern. You may also respond with "not applicable."
- You can find how to attach documents that may be relevant to your request for assistance at the end of this document.

1 | What goals have been set for scaling multiple measures placement, implementation of corequisites and/or mathematics pathways alignment? Include as much specificity as possible regarding, outcome goals, implementation goals, timeline, etc. You can also find how to attach documents at the end of this document.

2 | What quantitative data are you using to assess progress in implementation and outcomes?

3 | What qualitative data have been collected or will be collected in the future?  
(*Select all that apply.*)

- Student surveys.
- Student interviews or focus groups.
- Faculty and staff surveys.
- Faculty and staff interviews or focus groups.
- Have not made decisions on this question.
- Other/Comments:

4 | What successes and challenges have emerged in the process of scaling developmental education reforms?

5 | How have the impacts of reforms on sub-populations of students been assessed?

6 | How are you using data to drive continuous improvement? *(Select all that apply.)*

To refine state, system or institutional policy.

To identify and address equity gaps.

To improve instructional practices.

To refine placement practices.

To improve advising practices.

To refine course content and design.

Other/Comments:

7 | What financial or staff resources are dedicated to the ongoing evaluation of reforms?

8 | Attach any documents that provide additional information about your request for technical assistance. (State/system/institutional/departmental policy or reports, Chancellor's memorandum, etc.)

Once you're done filling out this section, jump to [next steps](#).

# What's Next?

## Reflect

All sites should consider how they can use this assessment to inform their next steps. Consider the following reflection questions:

- What prompts could we not answer?
  - What would it take to answer them? Do you need support to answer them?
  - Does this tell us anything about people we have not included in the process?
- What ideas or questions were prompted by the assessment?
- What would it take for us to move from one phase to the next?

## Submit Responses

Please submit your responses via email to [info@strongstart.org](mailto:info@strongstart.org). You can attach this completed document, along with any supporting documents, if applicable, to an email. Please include "Readiness Assessment" in your subject line.