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TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

PAT MCGUIRE

Illinois State Senator - District 43

June 30, 2020

Dear Governor Pritzker and Members of the General Assembly:

This report is a step toward equity in Illinois higher education.

Too many students in Illinois public community colleges and universities, predominately students of color, spend too many semesters in non-credit, high-school level classes, predominately math.

The SJR41 advisory council heard from students, examined data, and learned of individual campus efforts to help students proceed from developmental education classes to success in college credit classes.

The task now is for all Illinois community colleges and public universities to implement at scale accurate placement measures and effective developmental education instructional models.

We ask for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat McGuire".

Pat McGuire
Chief sponsor, SJR41



**Senate Joint
Resolution 41
Advisory Council**



**Scaling Developmental Education Reform
in Illinois: A Report of the Senate Joint
Resolution 41 Advisory Council**

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Introduction

Senate Joint Resolution 41 required that an advisory council be formed and that said advisory council deliver a “detailed plan for scaling developmental education reforms,” to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and the General Assembly (GA), by July 1, 2020. This report is the result of that requirement. Specifically, the resolution states:

RESOLVED, That on or before July 1, 2020, the advisory council must deliver to ICCB, IBHE, and the General Assembly, a detailed plan for scaling developmental education reforms, such that institutions improve developmental education placement measures and such that, within a timeframe to be set by the advisory council, all students who are placed in developmental education are enrolled in a developmental education model that is proven to maximize their likelihood of completing a college-level course within their first two academic semesters; and be it further

RESOLVED, That for the purposes of this resolution, "improved placement measures" is defined as measures that give greater opportunities to enroll directly into college-level classes, reducing the overall percent of students placed into developmental education, preferably through decreased reliance on high-stakes tests and increased use of high school GPA as a determining measure; and be it further RESOLVED, The implementation plan should include specific benchmarks and an estimate of funding required to meet established benchmarks that institutions must meet to stay on track to full-scale implementation on the timeframe set by the advisory council...¹

A significant level of statewide and institutional-level work has taken place to this effect already. For example, the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents (ICCCP) endorsed the implementation of the [Recommendations of the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers \(ICCAO\) & Illinois Community College Chief Student Services Officers \(ICCSSO\) on Placement Methods and Scores](#).² Similarly, the state passed the [Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Act](#)³ in 2016, which developed a system for transitional math and English that would address student preparation while still in high school, enabling graduating seniors to transfer more seamlessly to credit bearing coursework.

In addition, [The SJR 41 Inventory of Developmental Education](#) report details the many different ways in which developmental education is being implemented across the public higher education system, suggesting that significant innovation is already underway throughout the system. The report documents the implementation of models and approaches to instruction, as well as placement methods and measures that are being reformed, and these innovative changes can serve as models for other institutions in the future. The inventory report documents the current status of developmental education models (e.g., co-requisite, compressed, emporium, etc.) in both English/Language Arts and mathematics, as well as placement. These results are useful to the SJR 41 advisory council’s planning efforts, specifically in providing an up-to-date picture of on-going

¹ See the following link for the full text of the resolution:
<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/101/SJR/PDF/10100SJ0041sam001.pdf>

² https://www.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/academic_affairs/Final_Placement_Recommendations_Approved_6-1-18.pdf

³ <http://ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3722&ChapterID=18>

efforts at developmental education reform, as one form of data collection undertaken by the council. Through the inventory and other forms of research, the advisory council identified numerous reforms that deserve more extensive documentation and reporting to help scale improvements in developmental education statewide. In scaling reform, higher education institutions must use an evidence-based approach that ensures more equitable outcomes for students across the state.

At the core of all of this work is the desire to meet the individual needs of students and to do so appropriately, individually, and effectively. Indeed, Illinois' own math faculty professional organization recognizes this need stating many students have long histories of struggles with math and that "teaching these students using the traditional methods of their past is unlikely to be successful at the college level." And that "it is important that instructors consider adapting their teaching methods to meet the needs of students (Illinois Mathematics & Computer Science Articulation Guide, 2019, April)."

In addition, there is significant concern about the additional costs incurred by students who are required to take long sequences of developmental education courses and utilize their financial aid to do so, limiting their ability to complete.

The continuous improvement of policies, programs, and practices that meet the *individual needs of students*, are essential to address systemic inequities that include the disproportionate enrollment of first generation, low-income, and minority students in developmental education in Illinois. Among these needs is the ability to limit the cost to these students.

At the same time, it is vital to recognize the context within which we are currently living. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged colleges and universities, as well as all of their students, faculty, and staff in immeasurable and still fully indiscernible ways. In the initial stages of the pandemic, all public institutions of higher education made substantial operational and instructional changes by implementing work-from-home policies for faculty and staff, and rapidly moving all instruction to an alternative, remote, or online modality. From the perspective of higher education, perhaps the pandemic's starkest results were to shine a bright light on the endemic and structural disadvantages faced by Illinois' black and brown communities. Many students simply lacked the resources to continue with their schooling, needed to work to support their families, or did not possess the means to move to a remote learning stance, among many other challenges. All of this was aggravated by the rising unemployment that grew from 4.4% to 16.4% in just one month. Never before in history has Illinois experienced such an economic challenge. The efforts of higher education institutions in the state to support their students have been nothing short of Herculean. Faculty, support staff, and campus leaders worry how their students will do and are concerned about how inequities may grow if the state's already-strained capacity is further reduced. Education inequity has only rarely been spotlighted more clearly and poignantly.

These distressing injustices that were illuminated by COVID-19 became even more evident in May and June 2020 with the shocking killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In higher education, community colleges and universities decried law enforcement brutality on students of color and pledged their institutions to reform. Through their state leadership, both the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) issued statements condemning violence and systemic and structural racism, both reinforcing the need to take action.

These disturbing developments heighten the need for Illinois' community colleges and universities to change policies and practices to equitably serve students of color, to address structural inequities, and to close racial equity gaps in student success.

Guiding Principles for Transformative Change in Higher Education

Seven guiding principles are offered in support of advancing the reform of developmental education in public higher education in Illinois. These principles are derived from the academic research on scaling reform—also known as “transformative change”—in higher education, and they are also based on large-scale reform operating in practice, especially in the context of community colleges (for example, Bragg, 2016; Bragg, Richie & Kirby, forthcoming; Fullan, 2020; Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009; Kezar, 2014). It is hoped that these guiding principles provide clarity and direction for the fundamental efforts at transformative change that are required to scale developmental education reform in Illinois.

- 1) **Reform requires distributed, equity-minded, and results-oriented leadership.** Every day, on-going dedication to student success is pivotal to transforming higher education.
- 2) **Transformative change requires commitment to more equitable access and outcomes.** Disruption of systemic racism and structural inequities is necessary to improve the success of underserved student populations.
- 3) **Transformative change requires institutional and system-level capacity building.** Priority-setting and strategic resource allocation is necessary to scale large-scale reform.
- 4) **Individual and institutional networks and partnerships form the backbone of reform.** Peer learning through enhanced individual and organizational relationships provide the infrastructure needed to scale reform within and across institutions.
- 5) **Reform happens when intentional communications are used to help others learn and grow.** Individuals having deep knowledge of how transformative change works in their own institutions are the best conveyors of how others' can reform and improve student success.
- 6) **Transformative change is promoted through evidence and information sharing about what works.** The collection, analysis, and use of data is critical to understanding how reforms are impacting programs and practices, and ultimately also impacting student success.
- 7) **State support is instrumental to scaling reform.** Advancing a critical body of evidence and information statewide helps to reinforce shared priorities through technical assistance, professional development, research and information sharing, and enhanced accountability at all levels.

Working Assumptions

Additionally, it is critical to recognize four working assumptions that accompany these guiding principles. These must also be ever-present in the work.

- 1) **There is no “one best model” for serving developmental education students.** Meeting the individual needs of students requires considering appropriate teaching methodologies, appropriate models, appropriate placement instruments, and consideration of individual needs. The Final Placement Recommendations⁴ as approved do not preclude the use of locally developed placement instruments, particularly in disciplines heavy on writing, as one of several measures of readiness. However, institutions should engage in continuously improving these instruments and collect data to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of these approaches.
- 2) **Leading change in developmental education requires faculty leadership.** The expectation is that faculty will lead campus conversations on the appropriate teaching methodologies, appropriate models, and considerations of individual needs. They are the subject matter experts in their respective fields.
- 3) **All institutions of higher education are committed to students and their success.** Student success is supported by all stakeholders in the P-20 system, and institutions of higher education are committed to partnering with their P-20 colleagues to advance student learning. All institutions of higher education strive to deliver and create holistic approaches to student success in developmental education based upon individual student needs.
- 4) **All institutions of higher education are committed to equity.** Improved policies, programs, and practices are essential to address systemic inequities that include the disproportionate enrollment of first generation, low-income, and minority students in developmental education in Illinois.

Taken together, these seven guiding principles and four working assumptions enhance the scaling framework by showing aspects of reform that must be addressed if transformative change is to occur. By definition, transformative change requires that issues of systemic inequities be addressed to ensure that student success is more equitable, and also requires that reform is scaled so that it does not improve education for a few, but for all.

This scaling plan asks all public higher education institutions in Illinois to document their progress to date in reforming developmental education, including describing their implementation and evaluation of developmental models and approaches, placement methods and measures, student support services, and other changes associated with the on-going improvement of developmental education. This scaling plan includes an *Institutional On-going Implementation, Improvement, & Scaling Guide* that all institutions are asked to use to document past, current, and future plans to scale developmental education reform on their campus(es) (see Appendix C). This institutional guide is complimented by a plan to scale the state’s capacity to continuously improve

⁴ [Recommendations of the Illinois Community College Chief Academic Officers \(ICCAO\) & Illinois Community College Chief Student Services Officers \(ICCCSSO\) on Placement Methods and Scores.](#)

developmental education reform and student success in public higher education throughout the state.

The Scaling Framework

The on-going implementation and scaling of developmental education in public higher education is a complex, yet critically important endeavor. Large-scale reforms require a dedicated and sustained commitment of resources and time. They require individuals at all levels who understand why, what, and how to lead organizational and cultural change. Jeanne Century, director of the Outlier Research and Evaluation Center at the University of Chicago, has written extensively about scaling change in education, and her insights are useful to planning the on-going implementation, improvement, and scaling of developmental education in Illinois. She describes scaling as having two critical dimensions: spread and endurance. Spread refers to enabling reforms to grow within and across educational institutions. In the case of developmental education, an important aspect of spread is the sharing of evidence-based models and approaches that demonstrate equitable access, enrollment, and completion outcomes for racially minoritized students and other underserved populations. Endurance refers to sustaining changes associated with these more equitable outcomes so that student success does not ebb and flow but continues to grow over time. Resisting the notion of reform as a quickly employed solution, and instead as an evolutionary process that is grounded in deep and shared knowledge leading to evidence-based change, is required to ensure more equitable student success over the long term.

A graphic depiction of the framework undergirding this scaling plan for developmental education appears in Figure 1. Meant to depict two dimensions of reform in as clear and concise a manner as possible, the figure shows the importance of Illinois' public higher education institutions and the state agency leadership of Illinois forming a true partnership that leads to student success. The graphic suggests reform requires an equal commitment from institutions as well as the state to ensure developmental education reforms are scaled and successful. To expect institutions to scale developmental education reform without state agency leadership is likely to lead to disappointing results, as is the expectation that state agencies can reform without the dedicated efforts of the state's higher education institutions. Through an authentic partnership employing shared goals and collaborative processes grounded in open and accessible communications, networking, and knowledge sharing dedicated to evidence-based policies and practices, Illinois' developmental education reform agenda can move forward.

To this end, advisory council members have shared with one another their experiences with developmental education reform throughout the 2019-20 academic year, including sharing resources they have created and found effective. They have used their expertise to recommend a scaling process for the state that nurtures reform that is contextualized by institutional history, norms, and aspirations. Members of the advisory council have also urged the state to provide avenues for technical assistance, professional development of faculty and staff, and the documentation and dissemination of evidence-based policies and practices that demonstrate the greatest positive impact on student success. Without these actions to treat developmental education as the legitimate large-scale reform that it is, it is unclear how the transformative change that is needed can scale. The importance of rigorous research to assess the impact of reform and transmit knowledge about what changes optimize student success is irrefutable. Ultimately, whatever

reforms are scaled must be more effective and they must lead to on-going improvement that enhances the impact and accountability for all public higher education institutions in Illinois.

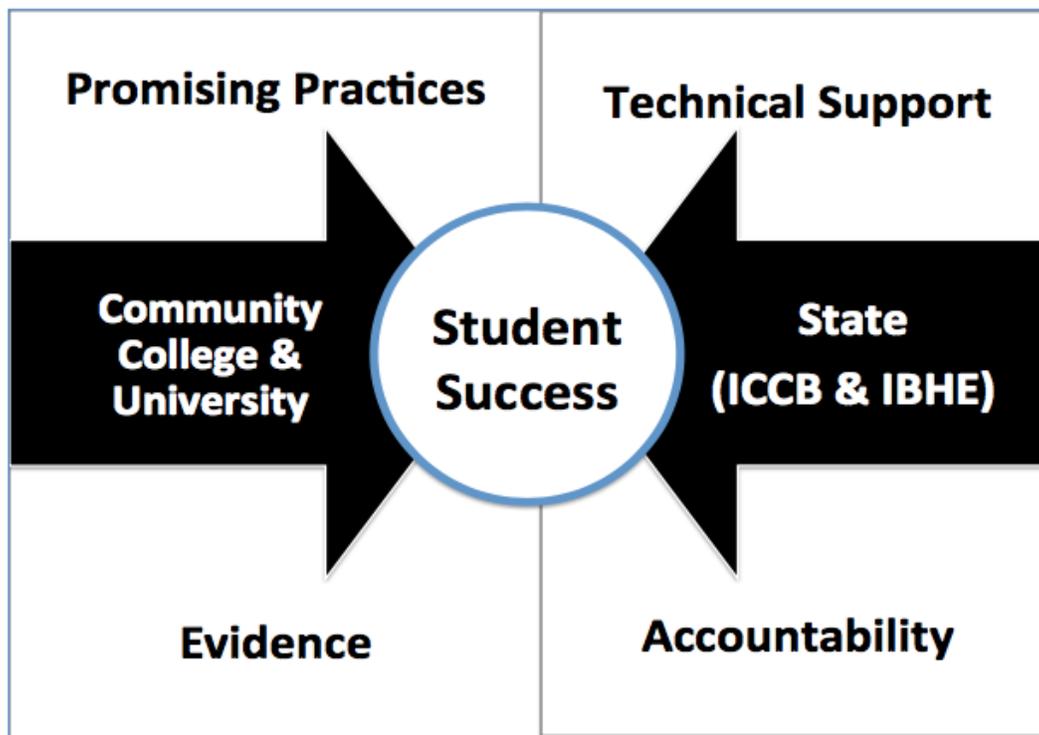


Figure 1. Forces driving developmental education reform in public higher education in Illinois.

Institutional On-going Implementation, Improvement, and Scaling

A key component of this scaling plan is institutional on-going implementation, improvement, and scaling. The institutional planning guide developed by the SJR 41 advisory council is intended for use by all public community colleges and universities. It offers a customized approach to engaging institutional personnel in a reflective and strategic process that builds on past efforts at improving developmental education in order to scale future developmental education reform. Appendix C provides a copy of this guide, and readers are encouraged to review and use it to engage in on-going developmental education implementation and improvement on their campuses. This process of institutional planning addresses the four requirements of SJR 41 to scale developmental education reform as follows:

- 1) **Reforms** – the guide enables institutions to specify developmental education models/approaches and placement methods and measures that it will implement, improve, and evaluate to ensure more equitable student outcomes are scaled. Consistent with this requirement of SJR 41, the ICCB and IBHE will gather a second wave of data pertaining to developmental education reform in fall 2020, and these results will be reported to the Governor and State Assembly by January 1, 2021. This continued data collection and analysis effort conducted through a partnership of researchers of the ICCB and IBHE will

also be documented, improved, and institutionalized so that the higher education system has up-to-date, evidence-based information on developmental education and associated student outcomes (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, Pell status, and other important student characteristics and attributes) for the entire state.

It is important to recall that there is no “one best model” for reform. Institutions, with faculty leadership, will need to make the choices about what models best advance the learning and credential attainment of students.

Timeline, Action, and Benchmarks

Timeline	Action	Benchmark
September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of the Implementation Guide to all public community colleges and universities (60 total institutions). • Institutions begin a yearlong planning and review process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides distributed. • Institutions kick off planning process.
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCB and IBHE, as a follow-up and enhancement to the data analyses for the April 1, 2020 Inventory Report, will develop a data collection mechanism to collect student enrollment and longitudinal outcomes by model, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and Pell status. • ICCB and IBHE will determine aligned development education student measures at the college-level to be annually generated and publicly available via public website and/or report at the institution-level. • Benchmarks for progress at each institution are determined in consultation with the institutions with reference to enrollment in non-credit classes, total credit hours accumulated, and time to degree; • ICCB and IBHE will review the developmental education sequences at the public institutions and provide feedback to the institutions on opportunities to include this information in implementation planning. • ICCB and IBHE will consider the cost for students who enroll in developmental education reform • ICCB will examine the relationship between Adult Education programs and lower-level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and complete the new data collection mechanism with planned release in late-October/early-November. • Complete the identification of ICCB and IBHE aligned developmental education measures. • Institutional sequences are reviewed based upon inventory report; feedback provided to institutions. • Cost data gathered and considered with reference to enrollment in non-credit classes, total credit hours accumulated, and time to degree. • Planning considered related to adult education and community college developmental students.

Timeline	Action	Benchmark
	developmental programs to look for cost-saving measures for students	
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public institutions will be asked to submit their completed implementation guide to ICCB/IBHE as appropriate. • From each institution, ICCB/IBHE will collect and validate the student enrollment and longitudinal outcomes by model disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and Pell status. • This will include an update on their implementation of developmental education reform, including the percentage of students initially enrolled in total and disaggregated, as specified by the SJR 41 resolution. <i>NOTE: These data will be considered preliminary based upon established data submission procedures at each agency.</i> • ICCB will assess the implementation of the Final Placement Recommendations (more than two-thirds of community college districts have already implemented the Recommendations on Placement Methods and Scores with the rest, delayed because of COVID-19, to be implemented during the 2020-2021 academic year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of institutions submitting implementation guides. • Finalize student enrollment and longitudinal outcomes by model disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and Pell status and complete the analysis for the January 1, 2021 Final Report. • Percent of institutions adopting the Final Placement Recommendations (multiple measures approach to placement).
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These results are to be presented in the SJR 41 final report by the ICCB and IBHE and submitted to the Governor and State Assembly by January 1, 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final report submitted.
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCB and IBHE will consider requesting the allocation of \$400,000 - \$500,000 in state funding for an Innovation Fund dedicated to scaling evidence-based models and approaches to developmental education. • Institutions applying for these funds must make a compelling case for how the added resources will help them advance a key aspect of their institutional plan that would not otherwise be possible. Successful grants must also provide a rigorous assessment of how the reform is working to improve outcomes for underserved student populations and is consistent with the above mentioned benchmarks in this plan (see page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests made and items considered for agency legislative agendas.

Timeline	Action	Benchmark
	<p>7), and articulate a clear and persuasive plan for scaling successfully reformed policies and practices in the institution and to other institutions in the state.</p>	
<p>January 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCB and IBHE will consider requesting the allocation of up to \$300,000 to support the development of a center focused on student success. • This center could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help to define and provide coordinated strategic direction for creating more equitable student success. ○ Convene faculty to share best practices and to steer reform conversations about developmental education. ○ Convene practitioners and offer them up-to-date, evidence-based professional development that they need to scale reform. ○ Offer technical assistance, including coaching, to institutions to ensure reform moves forward in a logical and sustainable way. ○ Advise on rigorous research designs and methods to assess the effectiveness of models and impacts on student outcomes. ○ Advise on state policy reforms that provide momentum to scale institutional reform without an overarching accountability framework for the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests made and items considered for agency legislative agendas.
<p>March 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third quarter assessment of progress. • Generate development education student measures at the college-level via ICCB and IBHE data systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of institutions adopting the Final Placement Recommendations (multiple measures approach to placement). • Validate and finalize development education student measures at the college-level and provide

Timeline	Action	Benchmark
		to each institution for review.
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year planning completed. • ICCB and IBHE will consolidate developmental education student measures at the college-level with baseline information deriving from agency data systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation plan on track assessment (what are colleges and universities doing to continuously improve). • ICCB and IBHE will make developmental education student measures at the college-level with baseline information publicly available via website and/or report. • Percent of institutions adopting the Final Placement Recommendations (multiple measures approach to placement).

Funding Estimates

Funding estimates to scale the two elements of reform mentioned in this document would include approximately \$700,000 annually to support the development of an innovation fund and a Center focused explicitly on student success. However, the challenge with funding developmental education is deeper than that. These are only small elements of what is needed and these dollars alone may be able to incent change, but to sustain it, fully funding developmental education instruction in the state is paramount.

In the community college system, developmental education is funded by tuition, property tax revenue, and state funds (as a part of the total community college funding approach). Setting aside tuition revenue and property tax revenue, both of which are projected to be down significantly in the COVID-19 era, the full amount of funding to meet the obligations in developmental education alone would require an additional \$20 million. This would be to meet the \$74.64 credit hour reimbursement rate for developmental education. The pro-rated payment for developmental education is \$16.45. Full funding is \$25.9 million. The state is paying \$5.7 million currently for developmental education in the 48 community colleges.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Senate Joint Resolution 41 Advisory Council members listed below for their thoughtful participation. Thank you to ICCB and IBHE staff for their work on the report and throughout the meeting, particularly, Mackenzie Montgomery, ICCB Director for Student Services, for coordinating the meetings throughout the last year.

Also, thank you to Dr. Debra Bragg, President of Bragg & Associates, Inc., and former Director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois for facilitating the meetings and the development of materials throughout the duration of the Council meetings.

A special thank you goes to Senator Pat McGuire for sponsoring this resolution and his tireless participation and leadership throughout the six meetings of the Council.

Name	Title	Organization
Emmanuel Awuah	Vice President of Academic Affairs	Illinois Central College
Stephanie Bernoteit	Executive Deputy Director	IBHE
Michael Boyd	President	Kankakee Community College
Brian Durham	Executive Director	ICCB
Mollie Foust	Senior Counselor to the Deputy Governors	Governor's Office
Gloria Gibson	President	Northeastern Illinois University
Emily Goldman	Policy Manager	Partnership for College Completion
Susan Grace	Associate Professor	Wilbur Wright College
Lisa Helm	Undergraduate Academic Advising Center	Governors State University
Bambi C. Jones	Math Instructor	Lake Land College
Diane Koenig	Math Faculty, IMACC Past-President	Rock Valley Community College
Meera Komarraju	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Sarah Labadie	Director of Policy	Women Employed
Deanne Mazzochi	State Representative, 47th District	Illinois General Assembly
Steve McClure	State Senator, 50 th District	Illinois General Assembly
Jackie McGrath	Professor	College of DuPage
Pat McGuire	State Senator 43rd District	Illinois General Assembly
Bob Navarro	Trustee	Illinois State University
Aaron M. Ortiz	State Representative, 1 st District	Illinois General Assembly
Ginger Ostro	Executive Director	IBHE

Bradley Peters	Professor and Coordinator of Writing Across the Curriculum	Northern Illinois University
Alison Reddy	Director of Mathematics Placement	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Normah Salleh-Barone	Vice President of Student Development	Moraine Valley Community College
Timothy Taylor	Director of Composition and Associate Professor of English	Eastern Illinois University
Wendy Yanow	Trustee	Oakton Community College

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Appendix A: Summary of SJR 41 Advisory Council Meetings

Date / Location	Primary Meeting Agenda Focus
September 9, 2019 Harold Washington College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJR 41 advisory council formation • Developmental education research briefing (ICCB & IBHE) • Introduction to the design thinking approach to public policy (see Koh, Chai, Wong & Hong, 2015) • Input from advisory council members on ground rules and guiding principles
November 1, 2019 Governors State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel of college students (community college and university) who participated in developmental education • Second data briefing, this time delving more deeply into equity gaps in developmental education enrollment and completion (ICCB & IBHE) • Presentations of developmental education reforms by: City Colleges of Chicago, Lewis & Clark Community College, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign • Formation of four design teams on developmental education models and approaches; data and information; implementation; and student voice and student success. • Initial vetting of guiding principles for the SJR 41 advisory council’s work
January 10, 2020 Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National research on placement reforms (Dr. Elisabeth Barnett, Teachers College-CCRC) • Presentation of Illinois Council of Community College Presidents’ statement placement and implementation reporting (ICCB) • Review and feedback of design teams on the statewide inventory survey instrumentation and process required by the SJR 41 resolution
March 6, 2020 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of student voices video produced by NIU • Review by design teams of initial inventory results • Initial deliberation of the SJR 41 advisory council on conclusions, implications, and recommendations for the <i>Developmental Education Reform Scaling Plan</i>
May 8, 2020 Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of major findings of the inventory • SJR 41 advisory council members provided verbal feedback on the inventory results, with commentary related to the <i>Developmental Education Reform Scaling Plan</i> • Design teams operating in online break-out groups provided feedback on a key component of the plan: the <i>Institutional On-going Implementation and Improvement Planning Guide</i>

June 18, 2020 Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory council members review a draft of the <i>Developmental Education Scaling Reform Plan</i>• Sharing of feedback schedule for integrating input into the final scaling plan by July 1, 2020
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APPENDIX B: Executive Summary: Inventory of Developmental Education in Public Community Colleges and Universities in Illinois.

Inventory of Developmental Education in Public Community Colleges and Universities in Illinois

This report describes results of an inventory of models employed by all public community colleges and universities in Illinois for students placed into developmental education or otherwise determined to need additional skills development in mathematics or English/Language Arts, as required by the Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 41 of the state of Illinois. The report includes course sequences associated with the developmental models studied through the inventory process as well as the placement policies that are used to determine where students enter their college pathway.

Data were gathered using a survey instrument distributed to all public community colleges and universities in Illinois in late January and continued through early March 2020. Feedback on various aspects of the inventory instrument and data collection process was incorporated into the final inventory process, including incorporating advisory council member recommended refinements to the definitions of developmental models and numerous aspects of implementation.

This inventory reflects the current state of developmental education in public higher education in the state of Illinois to the extent institutions reported findings accurately and comprehensively.

The results provide a valuable baseline of descriptive information but should not be interpreted as evaluative of the impact of developmental models on student outcomes.

Notable results that reflect the current state of developmental education, including placement policies and practices, in public higher education in Illinois include:

- Developmental education is evolving in Illinois.
- Developmental education enrollment is declining in community colleges.
- Three models/approaches are implemented most frequently by community colleges in English/Language Arts: traditional, co-requisite, and compressed.
- Four models/approaches are implemented most frequently by community colleges in mathematics: traditional, co-requisite, compressed, and emporium.
- The traditional model/approach is implemented most frequently by universities in English/Language Arts and mathematics.
- Nearly all universities offer differentiated mathematics pathways that align to college majors.
- Enrollments in both community colleges and universities are highest in the traditional model.
- The co-requisite model/approach tends to show higher developmental course and related course completion than other models, in part because it offers simultaneous instruction in each.
- The placement framework is being adopted by community college districts, with most reporting full implementation by fall 2020.
- Universities report a wide range of placement methods and measures in English/Language Arts and mathematics.

Appendix C: Guide for Developmental Education On-going Implementation/Improvement in Illinois' Public Community Colleges & Universities

Guide for Developmental Education On-going Implementation/Improvement in Illinois' Public Community Colleges & Universities (6/22/2020)

This [Guide](#) is an integral part of the response of the SJR 41 Task Force to the need to improve developmental education (DE) in public higher education in the state of Illinois. The *SJR 41 Scaling Plan* provides an overarching framework for the on-going implementation and improvement of DE by Illinois' public colleges and universities, as well as enhanced technical assistance, professional development, and research and evaluation by state agencies (ICCB and IBHE) (see: https://www.iccb.org/academic_affairs/baccalaureate-transfer/sjr-41-advisory-committee/sjr-41-advisory-committee-reports/) This guide is intended for community colleges and universities to use as a plan to meet the recommended goals of Senate Joint Resolution 41. Institutions should do this work to address the needs of their local student populations and institutions and ensure the ongoing implementation and improvement of new methods of delivery and support to meet the needs of Illinois college students. Recognizing the rich diversity of the Illinois student population and the desire to ensure all students are provided with the high quality learning they deserve, institutions are encouraged to identify a team of DE faculty, staff, and other practitioners on their campuses to guide this planning process. Research shows change is more likely to be scaled and sustained when reforms are reflective of and responsive to the local context and led by practitioners who will lead the implementation process (see, for example, Kezar, 2014).

Building on lessons learned from past efforts at redesigning DE in Illinois, institutions are urged to reflect on and document their past efforts, including describing promising practices and opportunities for improvement to increase student success. While building on what has been learned from prior reform, it is imperative for institutions to embed on-going and future implementation efforts in meeting the needs of all of Illinois' diverse students. Indeed, one size does not fit all. By using this document as a guide, we believe institutions will be positioned well to move forward with student success-oriented processes, and we encourage institutional plans to reference past reforms with links and attach files that show how previous work informs on-going implementation.

Initial steps in the DE on-going implementation/improvement planning process may include:

- Forming a campus DE planning team, including DE faculty, support services personnel, and other practitioners who are knowledgeable about past DE redesign and vital to moving efforts forward.
- Gathering data from related foundational work on DE redesign, including noting evolving DE reform efforts, using data that institutions submitted to the state inventory of DE conducted by the ICCB and IBHE in January-February 2020, as appropriate.
- Reviewing self-study documents from accreditation and cyclical program review processes (i.e., the ICCB's program review and recognition processes for community colleges). The quantitative and qualitative data used in these self-study documents will be important to this institutional planning process for DE reform.

- Gathering data from institutional research and evaluation on past efforts at DE redesign.
- Seeking input and advice on promising DE redesign practices employed by other colleges and universities in the state.
- Engaging in benchmarking activities to ascertain what has worked and failed in the DE redesign efforts of other states (California, Colorado, Minnesota Ohio, and many others) may be useful to learning what to do and what not to do in the Illinois higher education context.

Using this planning approach, community colleges and universities can build on earlier work and envision what should be done in the future to improve student success and community colleges and universities should plan to advance DE leading to improved student success for DE students. State agencies will work together to support institutional efforts including supporting institutional reporting of common DE data. This DE plan should be initiated during the 2020-2021 academic year, with reporting to the state on developments in Spring 2020 (date to be determined). This information will be used to enhance the state's overall capacity to address institutional needs and coordinate professional development, technical assistance, and research and evaluation in an evidence-based approach to DE in public higher education statewide.

Sections to include in the On-going Implementation/Improvement Plan
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Community colleges and universities are encouraged to order the following sections of their plan in a way that best reflects their own prior efforts at DE redesign, as well as their current goals and intended outcomes. Some institutions may want to begin by describing their students while others may want to document the DE redesign efforts that have already taken place. Whatever ordering of sections that best meets institutional needs is encouraged and acceptable.

When planning, institutions are encouraged to take into account a set of guiding principles that the SJR 41 Task Force has used throughout its work during the 2019-2020 academic year. These guiding principles may be equally useful for institutions to consider during this planning phase, adopting the principles in total or in part. Institutions should also feel free to modify these guiding principles to make them their own.

1. Keep students and their success at the center of DE redesign.
2. Understand how past and present context and nuance impacts redesign decisions and actions.
3. Find common ground through honest dialogue, mutual respect, and relationship building.
4. Understand how DE is evolving and improving to close equity gaps in DE student outcomes.
5. Use data, evidence, and reflection to continuously improve DE.
6. Stay focused on implementing and scaling DE goals and outcomes in response to the local context.

Section 1: Student Access, Equity, and Engagement

This section should describe the institution's student population and student sub-groups that attend the institution, providing a detailed picture of students who participate in DE. Descriptions of students disaggregated by demographics, geography, prior academic preparation and academic goals, transfer and employment intent, and other important characteristics are encouraged. This section should also include a description of how students experience DE in the local context, including ways students have participated in prior DE reform efforts as learners and also as contributors to previous DE reforms. This section should also summarize ways in which student access, equity, and engagement will be improved through future DE redesign efforts.

Section 2: Progress on Prior DE Implementation/On-going Improvement

Use this section to report on what your institution has already done to redesign and improve DE, including changing placement policies and practices, supplementing instruction, tutoring and other instructional supports, enhancing student services, and any other redesign actions to advance effective DE models, policies, and practices on your campus. In addition to describing the actions taken, this section should report on quantitative and qualitative results of these prior reforms.

Section 3: Institutional and DE Programmatic Goals and Intended Outcomes

This section focuses on setting institutional and program goals and intended outcomes to continue to advance DE implementation/improvement. The goals should be oriented toward improving student success outcomes through more rigorous and supported learning experiences; improved DE course completion, including accelerated DE course completion: gatekeeper course completion; and other institutionally established and stated in outcomes, both qualitatively and quantitatively. This section should also detail how institutional commitments are expected to improve specific DE outcomes.

Section 4: The Integration of Holistic Student Supports into DE Reform

While the SJR 41 Task Force recognizes all learning is complex and recursive, we recognize the educational system has underserved many DE students, so DE reforms must establish circumstances, targets, and timelines that help maintain forward movement and growth. Therefore, this section should provide details on new advancements institutions intend to make in DE, including specific implementation of DE models and strategies, holistic student supports that complement and support these models and strategies, as well as a timeline for implementation and target dates for recommended improvements in DE programs and DE student enrollments and completions.

The section should also specify changes in how DE models, approaches, and holistic student supports (academic and non-academic), will be implemented to enhance student success. These details should describe how the total package of DE reforms would be integrated to meet students' needs and address intended outcomes outlined in this and other sections of this guide. Vital elements of institutional advancements include:

- DE models and approaches, including delivery strategies (classroom, online, hybrid, self-paced, and other characteristics)
- Placement methods and measures, including institutional placement examination policies

and practices

- Holistic student supports (pre-admissions and admissions, registration, academic and non-academic advising, college major choice, career assessments, student orientation, financial supports, including grants and scholarships, etc.)
- Student support services connected to student support such as: tutoring, embedded tutors, writing and math centers, mentoring etc.
- On-going professional development for the DE instructors (full-time and part-time) and other faculty, student support professionals, and others integral to institutional DE reform plans
- Institutional mechanisms for release time and other forms of compensation for faculty and staff to collaborate and coordinate DE reform on their campuses and across the state (these mechanisms should also be addressed in Section 8 on *Institutional Budget*)
- Deliberate efforts to assess and address inequities in DE enrollment and completion by student sub-groups

Section 5: Institutional challenges with implementing and scaling DE

This section is intended to provide a wider window on the context for DE redesign on your campus, including identifying the many ways COVID-19 is impacting campuses, especially the impact on students of color who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic's dire health, economic, and social consequences. Knowing the ways in which assessment policies are changing, how instructional delivery is being moved to online and technology-enhanced modalities, and how student supports are changing is critical to understanding how DE redesign is expected to advance. For example, the state's shift to online learning may challenge DE students who lack access to technology and connectivity, and who experience instructional modalities that do not maximize their learning potential. Knowing what other reforms are on-going on the campus will be useful to assessing risks, challenges, and other limiting factors to implementing and scaling DE.

Section 6: Research and Evaluation

Use this section to describe your institution's plan for collecting data related to student success that aligns with and supports your on-going DE Implementation/Improvement Plan. The documentation of student success should be multifaceted to ensure students' needs are addressed, relying on quantitative data, as well as qualitative data (using surveys, focus groups, and interviews). This section should also align to cyclical program review processes (e.g., the ICCB's program review and recognition processes for community colleges and review cycle that universities carry out in association with the IBHE).

Institutions should also detail the particular research and evaluation efforts that are used to gather data on specific DE implementation and improvement efforts on their campuses, as well as student outcomes related to those changes. Institutions are encouraged to use research and evaluation methods and measures applicable to changed DE policies and practices on their campuses and to report these results in their plan so that other campuses across the state can learn from their experiences at DE redesign.

With respect to reporting on DE implementation and student outcomes, institutions are asked to provide data on the following measures:

- DE course and gateway course enrollments, disaggregated by subject (English/Language Arts and mathematics) and student race/ethnicity, gender, age grouping, and other variables of interest;
- DE course and gateway course completion (grade of C or better), disaggregated by student sub-groups (race/ethnicity, gender, age grouping, and other), DE model and/or strategy, and other variables of interest;
- Other essential course enrollment and completion, including other courses in English/Language Arts and mathematics sequences pertaining to pathways and majors;
- Outcomes associated with DE student long-term success as established by institutional definitions for college completion, including transfer, making comparisons of DE reform to direct placement into gateway courses and progression through alternative pathways;
- Average time to successful completion of DE courses, gateway course, and degree completion, disaggregated by DE model, student sub-groups, and other variables of interest.

Note: the above list of outcomes will be refined to reflect ICCB and IBHE recommendations on outcomes, measures and operational definitions.

Section 7: Technical Assistance, Professional Development, and other Needed Resources

This section should describe what resources and supports in the form of professional development, technical assistance, and other needed resources to enable institutions to implement and improve DE and student success. Institutions should describe in detail the professional development needs of their leadership, faculty, and staff; technical assistance that is required to carry out on-going implementation/improvement, and other needs to enhance the opportunity for institutions to reform DE in their local contexts. Similar to the budget (see Section 8 below), providing a realistic, comprehensive, and compelling picture of what DE reform will require will be most useful to institutions as well as the state.

Section 8: Institutional Budget

This section should be used to create a budget for the on-going implementation/improvement plan. The budget should inform questions such as: What are college-specific costs (monetary, human, space, and others) associated with the plan? What sources of revenue currently fund DE, and how can these sources be reallocated to implement DE reform? What additional resources can be allocated to support the implementation of DE reform, and what can continue to be allocated to sustain the changes? Where do institutions fall short with resources, and by how much? By painting a realistic and comprehensive picture of what this change will require is beneficial to the institution and the state.

Senate Joint Resolution 41 Advisory Council
Developmental Education Reform in Illinois

MINORITY REPORT

June 30, 2020

Submitted to:

The Illinois Community College Board
The Illinois Board of Higher Education
The Illinois General Assembly

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Introduction

It has been an honor to participate in the important work of the Senate Joint Resolution 41 dedicated to improving developmental education (hereafter referred to as DE in this minority report) outcomes of all students across the state of Illinois. Much appreciation is warranted for the work of all members of the council and of ICCB who have coordinated the efforts and compiled the data. It is clear that our work has been tethered to the needs of DE students and that we aim to serve them with the best programs and practices available in the fields of DE English and DE Mathematics. The primary artifacts of our SJR41 Advisory Council, the Inventory, the Implementation Plan/Report, and the Implementation Guide found within the plan, capture the challenges of DE reform to attain real equity for *all* DE students and the meaningful DE redesign that has already been happening across the state without any top-down mandate.

However, if one is not well versed in DE reform, after reading these documents, one could easily reach the conclusion that DE needs “to be fixed” and that the best way to do so is: 1) by employing “multiple single measures” for placement and 2) by replacing all traditional DE programs with the co-requisite model. Indeed, in this minority report, we highlight our grave concerns over the single-minded pursuit of maximizing the number of students who are placed into college-level courses regardless of their academic preparation or ability. Both the recommended placement process and the emphatic preference for the co-req program design serve this primary goal.

The favored placement process uses a long list of possible measures to place students (a co-opting and corruption of the actual method of multiple measures placement). Its aim is not to improve the accuracy of placement; instead, it’s designed to increase the chance of college-level placement: from the various measures, colleges are directed to identify the one measure that results in the highest possible placement, preferably of course college-level classes.

The lauding of the co-req model (despite the significant limitations of this design and the lack of evidence to support its effectiveness) also aligns with the goal of college-level placement for as many students as possible. The co-req model is *itself* a type of college-level placement: students enroll in the college course, and receive additional support “on the side.”

Pushing students into college-level classes via a specious placement process or an all-co-req design reflects the “right to fail” approach to placement: students (it’s argued) should be able to choose their class level and not be forced into DE. However, like so many proposals in the DE conversation, this is deceptively framed. The bald phrase “right to fail” is an insincere attempt to convey respect for a student’s right to decide, but in reality it is another path to maximizing college-level placement.

Not only are these recommendations unsupported by the evidence and likely to cause harm to countless students, there is a clear sense that both recommendations are made to serve a prior goal; this possibility is deeply unsettling. At the least, it undermines the sincere commitment and hard work of those who served on the advisory council in order to improve DE in Illinois.

While all members of the advisory council embrace the purported ends of DE reform – to help more at-risk students to be successful in college – the majority report reveals a lack of understanding of the field’s fundamental components: DE program design, DE placement; and DE students. At this juncture, it is everyone’s responsibility to be informed of the complete picture of DE reform, to understand that many claims are unsupported by any evidence, and to find and read the research studies that are deliberately excluded from those offered by organizations with their own agenda. This minority report aims to help others achieve these ends.

When the motion to include a minority report was in discussion at the June 18th SRJ41 meeting, it was remarked that including a minority report would undermine the work of the task force by revealing fissures within the group. This notion is unreasonable. The work of all members of the committee is essential for understanding the complexities of DE; what is more troubling is the effort to suppress any one voice. This is a democratic entity and process – both paid for with public funds. Any meaningful decision-making over public policy should indeed be inclusive of rigorous debate that analyzes all views, basic tenets, and unforeseen consequences. The potential negative impact for human beings is far too great not to. [Note: the vote to be inclusive and present a complete picture via a minority report was 10 in favor and 7 oppose.]

Additionally, it is important to remember that SJR 41 was the result of Senate Bill 446 having received *widespread* backlash from institutions and organizations across the state – from two and four-year colleges and from rural, suburban and urban districts – concerning the very issues stated above and others (local autonomy, simplistic one-size-fits-all thinking, use of placement measures without valid research, and lack of funding). And so, the concerns expressed here have not been manufactured; they represent concerns that have been present from many constituents in Illinois, and in fact, have been part of an on-going debate within the field of DE reform for over ten years when the latest reform buzzwords (acceleration, scale-up, college ready, DE as barrier, co-requisite model as a magic bullet, and the co-opting of the term equity) first emerged.

Note: *This note is in response to the revised SJR 41 Majority Report received on June 29. After receiving the SJR 41 Minority Report on June 26, 2020, the authors of the majority report added the section “Working Assumptions,” which address some of the concerns contained in this minority report. This addition is greatly appreciated, especially with the explicit use of the language “no one best model” and “faculty leadership.”*

However, the concerns expressed in this minority report will remain as previously written and submitted on June 26 because they: 1. are representative of the concerns of constituents across Illinois; 2. are present in the SJR 41 Inventory Report that was submitted earlier; and 3. provide a clear counter narrative to the mainstream DE reform rhetoric and to the platform of PCC, who actively lobby for its policies.

*Additionally, if placement concerns are not examined and are deemed “already determined,” and the majority of students are placed directly into college-level classes (or co-reqs) via “multiple single measures” (potentially circumventing DE courses that students need), **then the DE program design is rendered irrelevant.** Indeed, placement and DE program design cannot be separated for the aim of long-term student success.*

While the ICCCP approved the implementation of the placement RECOMMENDATIONS of the ICCCAO and the ICCSSO, the approved recommendations are not equivalent to being decided upon by two and four year public institutions. Furthermore, faculty (e.g. Jacob Winter, Jessica Nastal-Dema, and Keith Sprewer) for this initial review were not brought into the discussion until the very end and were told that the document “would not be reopened.” This is true of the advisory council as well. So while the authors of the majority report have added the language of “faculty leadership,” this has not been demonstrated when addressing placement, an essential component of DE reform.

An Overview of the Primary Concerns Motivating This Minority Report

The decision to submit a minority report was primarily driven by the following four concerns:

CONCERN ONE: *The Majority Report’s goal for placement is to maximize the number of students who are put directly into college-level courses (whether or not they are prepared). Our goal is to improve the accuracy of placement.*

The accurate placement of students into either a DE program or college-level classes is crucial if a DE program is to be successful. Students who require the academic preparation DE classes provide must be accurately identified; equally important, students who are prepared to enter college-level classes must also be accurately identified. This is a difficult and complex task, and many placement methods are deeply flawed. Nevertheless, any DE plan for Illinois *must* emphasize the need to develop and evaluate placement practices that could help increase the accuracy of student placement.

Unfortunately, the SJR 41 Majority Report does not share our goal of improving placement’s accuracy; instead, their goal is to place as many students as possible into college-level coursework by any means available. The report advocates for the single use of “multiple measures” (the latter a term co-opted from a respected placement method using multiple measures; adding “single use” results in an oxymoronic phrase that we must endure). The conscious appropriation of a legitimate approach to placement is likely intended to add a veneer of legitimacy to their chosen method, albeit a short lived one given the linguistic contortions behind the new name. The “single use of multiple measures” method lists numerous possible measures that may be used, including standardizes tests (with arbitrary cut-off scores set low at the start and the lowered again); high school GPA; etc. The measure that will put the student in the highest possible level is the one that must be used. Our greatest concern with this recommendation is the reason for their choice: their actual goal to maximize college level placement regardless of student ability is why this so-called placement exists: it is deliberately designed for just such a goal. Nothing in this placement method has anything to do with improving accuracy in student placement.

By offering as many different measures they possibly can, the hope is that one of the results will ensure college-level placement. The ultimate aim is to obviate the need for DE through the use of a placement method *designed* to lower the bar to college-level classes, and lowered to such a degree that college-level classes become the *de facto* default placement for the majority of

students. We also find their goal and placement method (which work in sync) are insincerely presented as selections made thoughtfully and in good faith. We do not accept this representation.

A final concern involves the process of SJR 41 meetings: While there was a presentation on placement at the January 2020 meeting, there was no meaningful dialogue on how to improve the accuracy of placement measures. When members attempted to raise the placement issue, they were summarily informed that the 2018 placement recommendations approved by ICCB “were a done deal.” This response disregards language in SJR 41 directing that the benchmarking report include “an analysis of DE placement practices and policies” and that the final SJR 41 Advisory Council report offer “a detailed plan” for DE reform “such that institutions improve developmental education placement measures.”

CONCERN TWO: The majority report’s favored DE program design is the co-req model despite the lack of any evidence to support this choice.

The co-req model is repeatedly praised in the Inventory Report as the most effective in Illinois, despite the fact that the report’s data is wholly inadequate to serve as the basis of any claims. The co-req model cannot be supported by any research findings despite the ten years that have passed since the ALP co-req model was first celebrated. In fact, recent research finds a demonstrable lack of data in support of the co-req design. Oddly, the Inventory Report presents these numerous baseless claims, but states emphatically and repeatedly that the data included in the report “should not be used to determine which developmental models are working and for whom.”

While claiming the superiority of the co-req model without any supporting evidence, at the same time other robust program designs were given little to no attention by the council leadership or by any reports (given to members before this report). This privileging of the co-req model of reform would potentially push out 25% of students who fall at the lower end of placement cut-offs. These are our most at-risk, first-generation students, students of color, and low-income students and it is our ethical imperative to not simply disregard them.

Indeed, one size does *not* fit all. Diverse students in diverse contexts need differentiated programming. This is a basic pedagogical principle.

CONCERN THREE: In the majority report, a lack of adequate understanding of the DE student population and the nature of DE itself is displayed, and poorly informed policy recommendations may be the result.

DE students enroll in higher education for the same enormous range of reasons and diversity of hopes and dreams as any other student population. Too often, however, people with decision making power have little to no experience with or knowledge of this student population. As a consequence, the entire population of DE students may be viewed as an abstraction, and gross generalizations (often fueled by biased assumptions regarding income status, nationality, or an uneducated family background) will drive important decisions.

A personal knowledge of DE students – through teaching, advising, coaching, and community organizations is essential to a fully informed and well-considered plan for DE reform. The misapprehensions and stereotypical views among those who have never set foot in a two-year college (let alone a DE classroom) are unfortunately common; like all stereotyping and biased judgments, the lack of knowing any actual individuals in this abstracted group is likely to blame. Regardless, however, it must be understood by those determining DE reform that no plan or recommended program will be adequately vetted and understood without the contributions of people with direct knowledge of and experience with DE students.

Further, the rhetoric of current DE reform is that DE programs themselves are the source of “DE student failure,” and there is no recognition of the *known risk factors* (minority, low-income, first-generation, under-resources schools, poor academic preparation and systemic racism) of the typical DE student that impair success and not the DE program itself. This is a classic confusion of causation with correlation, which leads to the final faulty premise that DE is completely ineffective: Numerous rigorous studies have found that DE is indeed effective in helping the less prepared students achieve academic success; however, the DE reform narrative has been controlled by outside entities who claim that “DE is a barrier,” “DE is a bridge to nowhere,” and “DE is one big leaky pipeline.” This is patently untrue.

CONCERN FOUR: *The language of the majority report is too prescriptive and exceeds the charge of the advisory council to recommend.*

Top-down mandates with prescriptive language are problematic. If the state of Illinois wants to see any kind of meaningful and lasting reform in DE, the role of the local institution and faculty should be primary as they occupy the center of academic activity, know their students and local context the best, engage in the research and facilitate the implementation. Any recommendation to legislate and regulate what happens with prescriptive language not only undermines local expertise, but it is also shortsighted, simplistic, and restrictive.

In other words, to be clear, innovation and reform should be local: Ceding authority to state agencies and outside philanthropic entities, such as those who have led the DE reform movement, is counterproductive and not in the best interest of students. Agency and autonomy are imperative for any investment that will lead to authentic, reflective, long-term success.

Further, arbitrary thresholds and scaling up are not appropriate. “Scaling does not honor the local context – the unique mission, scope, and learner population. ... Learning in college is not some monolithic endeavor to be prescribed. [Scaling] denies the reality of the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of college learners through a privileging of sameness.” (Armstrong, 2020) The academic landscape in Illinois is diverse and complex: we comprise two- and four-year institutions; rural, suburban, and urban locales; first-generation, students of color, and international students; part- and full-time students; students who work; degree and certificate seeking students – all with their own needs and definition of success.

The Aims of Developmental Education Reform

What are the original, primary aims of DE reforms?

This is a complex, interrelated, and economic-driven piece. The quick and simple version is this: the stated aims of DE reform are to eliminate barriers of “problematic” remedial education and place students directly into college-level courses with clearly structured course offerings and prescribed defined “Pathways” so as to help students overcome barriers and navigate the many challenging choices of academia in order to increase the completion/certificate rates. While the seeds of reform began after the 2000 census, the effort became more defined by those who are leading it and who are in control of the narrative (Gates, Lumina, Complete College America, Jobs for the Future, Partners for College Completion, CCRC) around 2010, and it is now in full swing.

It is important to note here that these are all outside entities (not local researchers or practitioners), who wield unchecked influence. Researcher Megan E. Tompkins-Strange in *Policy Patrons: Philanthropy, Education Reform, and the Politics of Influence* reveals: “Gates attitude toward grantees is described as one of employer/employee: We’ll hire [grantees] the way you hire a contractor, and we’ll specify exactly what we want from them” (70). And, as one would expect, the Gates Foundation Policy on Developmental Education is “Enrollment in college-level math and English courses ... is the default placement for the vast majority of students.” If one does due diligence by briefly searching on the websites of all the above-stated groups, the same templates and messages can be found nearly verbatim. This is of great import particularly when public funds are being used for public institutions for the purported common good of the communities and human beings that they serve. We are responsible to the public of Illinois and so we must be aware of the undemocratic influence and connection of these groups to our very charge. We must operate with integrity and transparency, and we must privilege rigorous research over philanthropic power.

60% College Degrees by 2025 (originally 2020)

The United States no longer ranks number one of citizens with a college degree out of OCED countries. In 2008, 39% of young people (or a ranking of 15) had a postsecondary credential – a bachelor’s degree, an associate’s degree or a certificate. In response, Gates, former President Obama, Lumina, and Complete College America and others made increasing this statistic a national goal, and in 2009, the Obama administration announced the “60% by 2020” college completion initiative: “60% of the young U.S. adult population Americans should have a postsecondary degree by 2020.” In *Getting to Graduation: The Completion Agenda in Higher Education*, Bailey explains that the most viable strategy to attain this completion goal focuses on community colleges because with their low graduation rates (39% in six years for full- and part-time students), they provide an *available* pool of students who simply need help *completing* their degree and not in recruiting, enrolling *and* completing. It is the most “feasible and economically realistic” tactic to take (76-77). Therefore, if the increased graduation rate depends on community colleges, then these low rates must be addressed.

Increase the Economic Efficiency of Publicly Funded Higher Education

In addition to the completion agenda, the DE reform is guided by a cost efficiency paradigm. According to KcKinsey & Company, a college's effectiveness is measured by dividing the total expenditures by the total number of degrees and certificates completed. **To be clear, success = cost / # of degrees/certificates awarded** (*Winning by Degrees, 2010*). Therefore, in order to be successful, an institution must figure out how to produce more graduates with a set amount of resources.

Additionally, a leading DE reformer unabashedly captures this cost efficiency in the following statement:

“CCRC research associate Davis Jenkins states, “ Students who first enter into remediation are less likely to complete and more likely to drop out. ... If students are to ultimately drop out, it is better that they do so earlier – before the college has allocated substantial resources to them – that later.” (Belfield et al. 2013, p.12)

Reform/Eliminate Remedial Education & Enroll Directly in College-Level Classes

Enter the attack on developmental education and its accompanying “abysmal” rates of success, which hold the completion rates down and whose students provide a ready pool of potential degree/certificate completers. It is posited that DE is too costly and ineffective, and that there are superior program options: “Enrollment in college-level math and English courses [should be] the default placement for the vast majority of students” (Gates Foundation, CCA, AACC, Achieving the Dream, Jobs for the Future).

Implement GPS, or Guided Pathways to Success

Another means to facilitate completion is to make the process more transparent and navigable for students. Guided Pathways to Success aims to do just this. As the Complete College America website explains, GPS provides students with clear structured programs and course sequences, eliminates too much overwhelming choice, and minimizes mistakes and wasted credits - all resulting in better chances in completion.

Equity

DE is disparaged as a primary threat to equity in higher education. The claim is made that all of the major components of DE reform, including default placement into college-level courses, use of co-requisite courses and Guided Pathways, will facilitate more equitable outcomes for at-risk students and students of color.

SIX FLAWED ARGUMENTS OF THE DE REFORM MOVEMENT

The reform agenda's relentless push to eliminate developmental education or limit it to "co-reqs" has generated several flawed arguments in support of its position. We present them one by one in roughly the order they appeared on the landscape; we then explain the significant misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the research connected to these claims, which through sheer repetition, have passed into the realm of conventional wisdom for so many involved in shaping developmental educational policy.

"It is either idiotic or deceitful to misrepresent developmental education and then blame it for the complexity of student attrition and assume the problem is solved by getting rid of it."

-Hunter R. Boylan, in a 2017 interview published in *The Journal of Developmental Education*

Flawed Argument One: Developmental education costs too much.

The claim:

Remediation is too expensive; students, their families, and taxpayers pay millions of dollars every year for classes that do not even count for college credit.

Developmental education "is costing students time and money and actually preventing some of them from getting degrees."

The Hechinger Report, "College students increasingly caught in remedial education trap" (July 2, 2018)

The reality:

In his report entitled "College Remediation: What It Is, What It Costs, What's at Stake," Ronald Phipps notes the contentious policy debates surrounding remedial (developmental) coursework, with critics initially focusing primarily on the cost. As Phipps describes, the loudest cries came from the opposition, who stayed on message faithfully until sheer repetition turned their arguments into "presumptions in state and national policy debates."

Phipps writes that prevailing wisdom now took as fact that "remediation is too expensive, that it is an inappropriate function of colleges, and that it amounts to 'double billing' from a societal standpoint, since the skills that are being developed should have been learned earlier in the educational process." This report, from the Institute for Higher Education Policy, was published in 1998; yet the climate it describes is unchanged to this day. The same claims about the exorbitant cost of developmental education are repeated again and again. Yet the available facts tell a different story.

"National data regarding the costs of remediation are limited. The most recent analysis of remediation costs suggests that remediation absorbs approximately \$1 billion annually in a public higher education budget of \$115 billion - less than 1 percent of expenditures... Even if

remedial education were terminated at every college and university in the country, it is unlikely that the money would be put to better use.”

-Phipps (1998)

In most cases, “Statewide remediation costs are... in the 1% to 2% range... [I]f any credibility at all is given to the available research, it appears that relatively little money is being invested in raising the academic standards of a significant number of entering college students.”

-Hunter Boylan and D. Patrick Saxon

Less than 1% of expenditures is hardly a crisis; it is a fabricated austerity cry to justify cuts to education.

The primacy of economic efficiency:

The argument involving cost is also connected to maximizing economic efficiency in publicly-funded education, a central tenet of the reform agenda, which stretches back more than twenty years. Organizations including Jobs for the Future, the National Center on Education and the Economy, the Community College Research Center, and the Gates Foundation have argued for many years that developmental education was a poor use of public funds and should be eliminated or “contextualized” in college-level classes (or in other words, in co-reqs).

To understand the relentless push to divest community colleges of developmental education, we must understand that *the fundamental principles of the reform movement are economic: economic efficiency is a chief pursuit*, and this means producing the most units of production (i.e., degrees and certificates) for the least possible cost. One of the key designers of the developmental education reform movement, KcKinsey & Company, expressly states that a college’s effectiveness, or success, is measured by dividing the total expenditures by the total number of degrees and certificates completed. (*Winning by Degrees*, 2010). Therefore, in order to be successful, an institution must figure out how to produce more graduates with a set amount of resources. Under this view, any spending on developmental classes is simply not cost effective.

First, developmental classes *are* adding to the overall number of classes taken even when students are successful; thus these classes do add some cost to the “unit” produced. Also, if it is true that developmental students are more likely to quit before they complete (although considerable research suggests this is not the case), then this population on average offers a lower return on investment than their nonremedial counterparts. As stated previously but worthy of repetition:

CCC consultant and CCRC research associate Davis Jenkins holds this view: “Students who first enter into remediation are less likely to complete and more likely to drop out... “If students are to ultimately drop out, it is better that they do so earlier – before the college has allocated substantial resources to them – than later” (Belfield et al. 2013, p. 12).

This requires a detailed response:

Jenkins's claim that developmental students are more likely to drop out is undermined by a 2016 statistical analysis published by the National Center on Educational Statistics, which found that students who completed developmental classes were *less* likely to drop out and *more* likely to earn a degree or certificate than students who were not required to take developmental education. It is therefore disconcerting that Jenkins's position is not only a draconian approach to spending resources on less advantaged students, but is moreover based on faulty assumptions about the abilities of these same students.

Nevertheless, given Jenkins belief that developmental students are less likely to complete, a "sink or swim" curriculum design wherein underprepared students are placed into college-level English – possibly with additional support in the form of a co-req model – corresponds with their pursuit of economic efficiency or the most units of production per resources spent. Also known as the "right-to-fail," this model will improve a college's return on investment since the students who fail will drop out before resources are squandered on them, and those underprepared students who manage to succeed will have done so without the extra cost of earlier developmental classes.

This "right-to-fail" move also overlooks the fact that the cost of implementing the Baltimore ALP model of co-reqs as presented by the CCRC are actually *double* the cost of traditional remedial courses due to the supplemental course only having eight students.

Flawed Argument Two: Developmental education is unique to our historical moment and is the result of an unconstrained push to increase access to higher education. Too many students require developmental classes at too great a cost.

Implicit in this argument is the belief that too many students, who have no business being there, are allowed to enroll in college. Worse, some hold the view that this influx of unprepared students is the result of over-reaching attempts to provide all people with access to higher education, a view often accompanied with an allusion to low-income students of color (who of course previously faced much higher hurdles getting in the door of higher educational institutions).

A related argument is made repeatedly by several key reform groups, such as Jobs for the Future: Hilary Pennington, CEO and Founder of JFF, wrote in a 2002 seminar paper that "given the current cost structures of higher education and the nation's patterns of demographic growth, we are on a collision course with the public unless we fundamentally rethink and restructure our system for a 21st century education." Pennington argued that "the destiny of demography" (i.e., the rapidly growing groups of Latinos and other people of color) and the "rising public demand for higher education and the limited resources available to finance its large-scale expansion" will require a complete restructuring of public education, including the elimination of developmental education.

Ronald Phipps, however, offers a welcome corrective to this unsavory position in his article, "College Remediation: What It Is, What It Costs, What's at Stake." Stating that "remediation is a core function of higher education," he notes that "there has never been a golden age in American

educational history when all students who enrolled in college were adequately prepared... Remedial education has been part of higher education...beginning with Harvard College in the 17th century, where tutors in Greek and Latin were provided for underprepared students.”

Further, we must be mindful of the social and economic cost of *not* giving everyone a shot at a college degree; it is indeed great. Research shows that poor literacy skills cost business and taxpayers \$20 billion in lost wages, profits, and productivity annually. The social benefits of higher education are also great and include lower crime rates, higher tax base, lower unemployment, better-informed citizens, and a happier people.

Flawed Argument Three: Developmental education is not only ineffective but is the reason students do not complete, otherwise know as the “remediation as barrier” claim.

The claim:

This argument rests on repeated claims similar to that made by Jobs for the Future Vice President Richard Kazis in “Opening Doors to Earning Credentials” (2003): Kazis writes that an “important barrier to low-wage workers earning a college credential [is] remediation. The more remedial courses a student needs to take, the less likely he or she is to earn a degree.” We therefore must “redesign Community College programs to embed developmental education into occupational or academic programs.” (Note: “embedding” here means either a type of co-req model or merely sprinkling some instruction into other classes.)

Davis Jenkins, researcher with CCRC and longtime consultant to the City Colleges of Chicago, has written numerous articles about the failings of remedial education. In 2003, for example, Jenkins wrote that “community college developmental education has...become a dead-end for tens of thousands of students, particularly many disadvantaged individuals who enter community colleges seeking an affordable route to higher education.”

To support his claim, Jenkins cites Clifford Adelman’s 1998 article on the correlation between remedial coursework and lower graduation rates: “Adelman found that the more remedial courses students are required to take, the less likely they are to earn a degree.” A version of this statement has been circulating ever since, usually presented as reason to eliminate developmental classes or limit remediation to co-reqs. There are two critical points this raises about the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the legitimate research on developmental education.

The confusion of correlation with causation:

Correlation is not causation. The reform agenda’s highly marketed notion that developmental coursework is the reason students fail to complete a degree is illogical and exhibits a classic confusion of causation with correlation. If a person with asthma is less likely to finish a marathon than a non-asthmatic runner, we don’t say her inhaler is the reason and whisk it away. Yet this is precisely what has become conventional wisdom among many critics, who appear to believe that the remedial classes themselves are *causing* students’ lower graduation rates.

Davis Jenkins is one example: after describing remedial coursework as a “dead-end” for students, Jenkins then states that developmental education is “clearly a key cause of the low degree completion rates for which community colleges are often criticized.” (*Actually, a number of studies suggest that the majority of students who take remedial classes have completion rates comparable to or even slightly better than their counterparts at two-year colleges. We’ll review this point below.*) To be sure, a poorly designed curriculum and a program riddled with misplacements could easily discourage students, but this is not what is meant when developmental coursework is called “the Bermuda Triangle of student success;” “Dante’s Inferno”; “a black hole;” or “the bridge to nowhere.”

So if the remedial classes themselves aren’t causing the comparatively lower completion rates, what is? There is an obvious answer, or at least discussions among faculty find it obvious.

Poor academic preparation:

Poor academic preparation may hinder students’ progress toward completion. Assuming accurate placement, students who enroll in developmental coursework are -- by definition -- less academically prepared than their counterparts who begin in English 101 or a college-level course. It is reasonable to assume that those who begin an endeavor (of any kind) with a lower level of skill or ability will, *on average*, be less likely to progress as far as those who do not. Yet this point is elided in the voluminous articles and proposals aimed at eliminating developmental education.

One article that does highlight this point explicitly is “New Evidence on College Remediation” (2006), published in *The Journal of Higher Education*. Like Jenkins, the authors also reference Adelman’s work on remediation and graduation rates, but they point to Adelman’s important but “less well-known” finding that “*college remediation ceases to predict graduation*” after students’ incoming level of academic preparedness is controlled for. This means, according to the authors, that it is the inadequate preparation of students placed into remedial classes, and not the coursework itself, that “reduces students’ chances of graduating from college.”

The study presented in this article explains that much of what appears to be disparate rates of completion between developmental students and their nonremedial counterparts is due to the circumstances pointed out by Adelman: *the lower levels of academic preparedness among the developmental population and not an intrinsic feature of developmental coursework itself.*

Known Risk Factors:

In addition to poor academic preparation, DE students have many known risk factors, such as being a minority, low-income, or first-generation. These risk factors impact success, not participating in a DE course, which has been designed with the intention to level the playing field so that these at-risk students have a shot at being successful in a college-level course.

Positive contributions of remediation:

After controlling for selection biases, the study’s authors found that “remediation did make a positive contribution.” For example, students at CUNY who were placed into and passed one or more remedial classes were compared to similarly low-skilled students who did not take remedial classes (this was prior to mandatory placement). Students enrolled at two-year colleges “who passed at least one of their remedial courses (85% were in this category) were more likely to stay in college, and were more likely to graduate or to transfer into a bachelor’s degree program than were otherwise similar students who did not take remedial coursework” (8).

“One theme in the controversy around remediation portrays students taking many remedial courses. Our analyses show that such students...are a numerical minority among students who take remedial courses.”

“[A]fter we add controls for family background and academic performance in high school,” the graduation rate of two-year college students who took remedial classes was essentially the same as that of students who did not take remedial coursework. This means “that taking one or more remedial courses in a two-year college does not, in itself, lower a student’s chances of graduation. Causal factors that do reduce one’s chances of graduating include low family SES, poor high school preparation, and being Black,” all of which are risk factors for requiring remediation in the first place.

Further rigorous, scholarly evidence of the positive impact of DE:

Numerous other studies have found that developmental education is effective in helping less prepared students achieve academically, including most notably a rigorous statistical analysis performed by the National Center on Educational Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education and published in 2016. (“Developmental Education Coursework: Critical Findings on Key Positive Outcomes for Students.”)

Summary of Key Findings:

- **College-level English enrollment and success:**
 - *Remedial completers are more likely to enroll in a college-level English class than nonremedial students.*
 - *Remedial completers are more likely to successfully complete a college-level English class than nonremedial students.*

- **Attrition rate:**
 - *Remedial completers are less likely to drop out of college in any given year than nonremedial students.*

- **Degree or certificate attainment:**
 - *Remedial completers are more likely to attain an associate’s degree or certificate than nonremedial students.*
 - *Remedial completers are more likely to transfer to a four-year college than nonremedial students.*

- Remedial completers are more likely to attain a bachelor's degree than nonremedial students.
- **Student persistence:**
 - Remedial completers are more likely to continue to be enrolled in college (if no degree or certificate is attained) than nonremedial students.
 - Remedial completers earn more total college-level course credits than nonremedial students.

Flawed Argument Four: The under-placement of students who could succeed in English 101 (or a college-level course) is a significant problem.

The necessity of valid placement:

We know that the effectiveness of any developmental education program depends on two crucial and interconnected pieces: A strong curriculum design and a valid placement method. Each element is necessary (though not sufficient) to establishing a successful program. Thus even assuming an optimum curriculum is in place, if students aren't placed appropriately, the program overall has failed.

The issue of under-placement:

One argument that has gained considerable traction involves the purported under-placement of many students into developmental classes who could have succeeded in college-level English. (Although it does not cause the same level of concern, frequent instances of *over*-placing students are also problematic.) Certainly a regular misplacement of students is a serious problem, but clearly one resulting from a flawed placement process and not developmental education *per se*. Nevertheless, the conflation of problems with a placement tool and the overall effectiveness of developmental education more generally is common.

For example, a 2012 *New York Times* article reports that recent studies show that “community colleges unnecessarily place tens of thousands of entering students in remedial classes who “could have passed college-level courses.” This, the article notes, reflects the “intractable problem” found in colleges everywhere: “the dead end of remedial education.”

The *Times* article does note in passing that the colleges involved in the studies used “the leading placement tests – the College Board’s Accuplacer and ACT’s Compass.” This is unsurprising: for far too long, the majority of two-year colleges used ACT’s *Compass* test for reading placement and their automated essay scoring tool called *e-Write* for writing placement.

The use of multiple measures to place students and NOT ‘multiple single measures’:

In response to the growing evidence of the poor predictive value of the leading standardized tests, researchers began to study the use of multiple measures in order to improve placement accuracy. A student’s high school GPA, in particular, was shown to be very useful as one

measure that could be used *in conjunction* with others. However, the use of ‘multiple measures’ has morphed into ‘multiple single measures.’

Goudos writes in “Multiple Measures in College Placement” that the original and legitimate move toward the use of multiple measures has become so distorted that it can no longer lay any claim to the advantages of the true use (and meaning) of multiple measures. Goudos makes clear that what is now promoted is actually “the use of ‘multiple single measures.’ *This fundamentally serves to reduce placement into remediation and to put as many students as possible into college-level courses*, and it is not actually based on hard data because no research has been done tracking the outcomes of students who place into college-level courses” on the basis of high school GPAs “as low as 2.6-2.9.”

The 2018 ICCB recommendations on placement are precisely this oxymoronic “multiple single use measure” process of placement Goudos decries. It is possible that the process of what a *true* use of multiple measures entails is simply not understood by those making these recommendations. It is not unusual to see evidence that those making or influencing policy decisions in developmental education do not understand the research on the various issues, even when they cite it themselves.

For example, consider the Partnership for College Completions assertion that students’ high school GPA is a highly effective placement measure even when used alone. Anticipating the objection that the meaning of a certain GPA varies too much across individual schools to ensure accurate placement based only on this measure, PCC’s website included the following on its FAQ page for SB 446:

Question: *Doesn’t the difference in high school characteristics affect the validity of high school GPA as a stand-alone measure?*

PCC’s response: “Though this sentiment is commonly expressed, research from the University of Chicago’s Consortium of School Research considers this ‘one of the most pervasive myths in secondary education,’ and counters it with CPS data on the similarities of GPA across high schools for students with similar ACT scores.”

This statement misrepresents the findings of the paper, “Are GPAs an Inconsistent Measure of College Readiness across High Schools? Examining Assumptions about Grades versus Standardized Test Scores” (Allensworth and Clark, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research).

What does the paper actually say?

- Higher GPAs are correlated with higher college completion rates.
 - On average, CPS high school students with higher GPAs are more likely to graduate from college than students with lower GPAs.
 - *Note: This is not news: it merely shows that grades aren’t given to students randomly or arbitrarily: on average, an “A” is better than a “B.”*

And within a school an “A” is better than a “B.” But across school, an “A” is not necessarily better than a “B.”

- The same GPA at one school can reflect a much lower chance of graduating from college compared to another school.
 - “There is significant high school variance in college graduation rates for students in each HSGPA bin.” (*Bin* refers to the GPA ranges established by the paper’s authors, e.g. 3.25-3.5.)
 - “[S]tudents with a 3.25-3.5 HSGPA at schools with very negative school effects ... have college graduation rates that are similar to students with HSGPAs of 2.75-3.0 at more typical schools (where the odds of graduating are 0.72).”
 - “[There is] considerable variation in college graduation rates by high school for students with the same HSGPA.”

Conclusion: GPAs are correlated with academic success and college completion, but as a single placement measure GPA is *not* valid. More information, as intended with the notion of “multiple measures,” is required for accurate placement into English courses.

Flawed Argument Five: The disproportionate numbers of low-income students of color in developmental education is an urgent issue of equity, one that requires eliminating mandatory developmental coursework or limiting developmental support to a co-req model.

The equity argument against developmental education:

Educational achievement gaps between white students and students of color and between higher and lower family income levels are well established. Reducing these gaps is the focus of numerous efforts to promote equity in higher education and specifically community colleges. Some people now point to the disproportionate number of low-income, students of color enrolled in developmental classes and argue that eliminating such classes is therefore necessary to improve equity. This position seems to afford two possible interpretations, one that makes sense and one that does not.

1. One interpretation is that people making the equity argument believe that all developmental programs are inevitably flawed – that there are no effective curriculums or valid placement methods – and therefore eliminating all programs is called for. This would be the case *even if* low income, students of color were not disproportionately affected but this latter fact adds greater urgency to the move. This position at least makes some *prima facie* sense; but *is* that the argument? If it is, than the same evidence that shows the need for and effectiveness of remedial classes undermines the claim.

Drawing attention to such equity concerns is, however, critical to ensure we implement well-designed programs and not tolerate substandard curriculum and placement methods. But the *possibility* of inferior medical treatment doesn’t eliminate the need for good medical treatment,

even if certain populations require treatment more often than others. In other words, we *need* well-designed developmental models and placement methods in order to mitigate real equity concerns.

2. The other interpretation is one that makes little sense, but seems to be the position many people hold. It runs like this: Students who enroll in remedial classes are on average less likely to graduate. Since low-income students of color are disproportionately represented in these classes, equity demands they be eliminated. The problem with this interpretation appears to be a variant of the “correlation is not causation” problem discussed above in *Flawed Argument Three*, or it’s an unarticulated belief that effective remediation is an impossibility.

The real problem with the equity argument, however, is not merely that it is based on faulty premises, but that *it may lead to systemic policy change that will harm the very people it purports to help*. The peer-reviewed rigorous research that captures this harm of a “one-size fits all” application of the of co-req model is summarized below in *Flawed Argument Six*.

Flawed Argument Six: The best and only necessary form of developmental education is the co-requisite model.

The “Dev Ed is a Barrier” narrative and the accompanying co-req reform movement in higher education has been trending since the early 2010s and has been picked up and parroted by numerous wealthy philanthropic organizations while McKinsey consultants script bills to legislate academic policy across the country. If one follows the breadcrumbs of references, they all inevitably lead to two CCRC articles.

The two CCRC articles that are repeatedly cited as evidence for implementing the ALP Co-req Model at Baltimore Community College:

- The 2010 article by Jenkins, Belfield, Jaggars, and Edgecombe is: *A Model for accelerating academic success of community college remedial English students: Is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) effective and affordable?*
- The 2012 article by Cho, Kopko, Jenkins and Jaggars is: *New evidence on the success for community college remedial English students: Tracking the outcomes of students in the Accelerated Learning Program.*

The essential claim of these two CCRC studies is that ALP students’ pass rates in college-level English dramatically improve – there was a 31.1% increase in DE (developmental English) students passing English 101 compared to non-ALP DE students. If valid, this is impressive indeed.

There are several important components of the ALP co-req model that are essential to these stated results (and that are often disregarded in various applications of co-req reform across the country):

- All ALP students have *increased instruction and time* on task, from 3 (for the non-ALP DE students in English 101) to 6 (for the ALP students in English 101) credit hours. This is double the classroom time spent together.
- In the ALP co-req model, all ALP students receive *more individual attention* in the supplemental support course that has a student teacher ratio of 8:1. This more than halves the typical number of students in a class.
- The above-two points also translate into greater cost, and so if cost is used as an argument against DE, this is negated.
- Instructors chose to participate in the cohort on which these studies were based, and were thus invested in its success and were *specifically trained* to teach it. This is indicative of selection bias.

The Unmentioned Results in the Same Two CCRC articles:

What is essential to the counter narrative of the co-req movement is what is NOT reiterated in countless articles. This concerns the negative impact of co-reqs on a large number of students – those students who have the most to lose from an elimination of developmental courses, and the failure of the co-req model to improve college completion rates.

Unacknowledged Result #1: Doubled failure rates

The raw data in CCRC's 2012 article show that the ALP model ALSO increases the college-level fail rates (from 14 – 25 %) of DE students. In other words, twice as many ALP DE students fail the college-level English course. This failure rate gets worse in English 102. 42% of ALP DE students failed both English 101 and 102, while 19% of non-ALP DE did. Again – this is a doubling of the failure rate with the co-req model. This pattern continues in other college-level courses. What happens to these students who fail? What are their options? To repeat a course for which they are underprepared? What is the “cost” of this failure for schools, for institutions, for communities?

Unacknowledged Result #2: Outcomes in college courses are not better.

ALP students did *no better* than non-ALP [traditional DE] students in the outcomes of course grades, persistence, and success rates in college courses. Furthermore, there is no evidence of an “increased likelihood to take and pass other college-level course.”

Unacknowledged Result #3: Completion and transfer rates are not better:

“ALP and non-ALP [traditional DE] students were *equally likely* to earn an associate degree, earn a certificate degree, or transfer to a four-year college. Note: The study followed a 2007 ALP cohort and was written in 2012 allowing for five years to measure completion or transfer.

Unacknowledged Result #4: Those who benefit are white, richer, full-time, high-scoring on placement exams.

ALP students were whiter, more likely to receive financial aid, more likely to be enrolled full-time, and had higher placement scores on all three placement tests in English, reading, and math. These are not the demographics for the majority of CCC students.

Unacknowledged Result #5: There is a negative impact on students who placed directly into English 101:

“For ... college-ready students, there was a negative relationship between taking ENGL 101 with ALP students and certain outcomes, such as attempting and completing college courses and credits after ENGL 101.” This leads to a downward spiraling of expectations and standards – impacting all college-level courses as students’ reading, writing and critical thinking skills are insufficient to meet the course demands.

And there is the very misleading data: Cho et al. claim, “Results suggest that ALP students were much more likely to attempt ENGL 101.” Since ALP students are *directly* placed into ENGL 101, this is simply true by design and is quite misleading.

The lack of rigor of the CCRC studies and the questionable research design:

In addition to the buried results of these two studies, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) (the statistics, research and evaluation arm of the Department of Education), has **not classified the research done on ALP as meeting “rigorous research standards”** and has **“minimal evidence” to support its use** (Bailey et al, 90-92).

Further, even CCRC in *Is Co-Requisite Remediation Cost Effective?* has more recently acknowledged that “the co-requisite model has not yet been subjected to rigorous evaluation” (Belfield, Jenkins, & Lahr 2016).

Alexandros Goudas in “The Co-Requisite Reform Movement: An Education Bait and Switch” elaborates on numerous flaws in the studies and the bait and switch strategies used to push the completion and co-req agenda. They include:

- the small sample study on which all claims are made;
- the apples to oranges comparisons between ALP and non-ALP DE students that artificially exaggerate success rates;
- the classic correlation versus causation confusion – as if participation in DE courses causes lower completion rates in college;
- the selection bias since students self-selected for the ALP cohort that was followed and were not randomly assigned – and thus positive results could be attributed to non-cognitive abilities of motivation and confidence of this choice
- the fact that Complete College America repeatedly touts ALP success rates by comparing dissimilar pools of students across institutions;
- the alarming fact that Complete College America provides no original data;
- the changing the original goal of the ALP model and metric used to assess it as *college completion* to simply *passing the gateway college-English course*, the metric now employed in the 2017 Bailey and Jenkins studies, as it is becoming more apparent that co-reqs are NOT increasing college completion rates, the purported original goal.

Nearly Ten Years Later: Where's the Proof of the Co-Req Completion Success?

The same two CCRC articles continue to be used as evidence, and it is time for an update. While reports and accessible info sheets from CCA and PCC are plentiful, rigorous, scholarly, peer-reviewed studies are not. Perhaps this is because it is not working as planned.

As a matter of fact, college completion rates are not increasing with co-reqs. Furthermore, the stated aim of DE reform has quietly moved from “attaining a college degree” to “completion of gateway course (college-level math or English).” This switch reveals the continuing lack of evidence to support an all co-req design.

More recent findings on the effectiveness of co-reqs are briefly explained below. These articles and the perspectives they present will not be found on the websites of PCC, CCA, the Lumina Foundation, or any mainstream discourse or policy papers.

CCRC researchers themselves in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research* are now conceding that co-requisites “are unlikely to substantially improve graduation rates” (Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018).

In CCRC’s “The Effects of Co-requisite Remediation: Evidence from a Statewide Reform in Tennessee,” it is acknowledged that there were no significant effects of co-requisite remediation on enrollment persistence, transfer to four-year colleges, or degree completion. “This suggests that improvements in gateway courses [limited to “students at the margin of the college readiness threshold”] are important but insufficient barometers of academic momentum and college success.” (Ran and Lin, 2019)

Hunter Boylan contends in *College Completion: Focus on the Finish Line* that the 60% college completion goal is highly unlikely to be reached with any quick fix approach without looking more broadly at the real lives and academic needs of at-risk students. He posits that DE reform needs to focus more on pedagogy, institutional support, and connections to the larger community of community colleges. This focus will address the real reasons a student is at risk of dropping out: his life circumstances and money.

To be clear: there is no robust, rigorous research that can support the massive curtailing of DE options that an all co-req system would entail. Making any sweeping change to educational policy is fraught with risk, but to do so with little to no supporting evidence or research is incomprehensible. Such an ill-considered and hastily contrived public policy, if adopted, carries the real risk are harming thousands upon thousands of Illinois students and dimming their hopes for a higher education.

Data Collection & Misrepresentation (Unintentional or Not)

When using data for formulating policy, it is imperative to rely on rigorous, peer-reviewed, statistical research and analysis, such as performed by the National Center on Educational

Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education. Unfortunately, in all the various writings and reports on DE, along with countless media pieces, a disconcerting pattern of misrepresentations regarding DE research, baseless claims that are repeated incessantly, and a misuse of data so egregious that either the authors are unaware of basic statistics or there is conscious intent.

Examples of the misuse of data include claiming correlations despite the lack of statistical significance; basing claims on sample sizes too small to assert anything; presenting claims based on a comparison of items too unlike to meaningfully do so (i.e., an apples-to-oranges comparison); omitting essential information about the data or some of the data itself; and performing illegitimate data analysis (“data fishing”).

Additionally, when false claims or misleading data is repeated often enough, it is eventually taken to be true – without question – as is the case in the co-req reform movement. [Note: for in depth explanation and unpacking of this data issue for DE, see: <http://communitycollegedata.com>, a site moderated by Alexandros M. Goudas.]

The problems with the data driving DE reform are indeed problematic, as was evidenced in the previous section. It is even more complicated by the numerous ways in which co-requisite courses have been implemented and/or supported across the country. Making strong conclusions, therefore, is quite problematic.

Unfortunately, this misrepresentation (unintentional) of the success of the co-req model is also present in the SJR 41 Inventory Report. There are repeated claims that co-reqs are more successful than other models. However, the data presented represents only 15% of all Illinois DE students (AY2018), and the data regarding co-reqs represents only 1.1% of all IL DE students. It is impossible to draw any conclusions on such a small sample size, and it is certainly not a sound basis for a sweeping reform.

Clean, statistically sound, comprehensive data analysis of long-term and impactful success of DE students requires sufficient time and consistency of variables. It should also be inclusive of *both* quantitative and qualitative data. Looking only at numbers (or IPEDS in particular) is reductive and incomplete. This is especially true when there are many moving parts and uncertain socio-economic conditions (or pandemics).

Conflicting Statements in the SJR 41 Inventory Report

On page 2 of the SJR 41 Inventory Report, a crucial caveat is explicitly put on the record. The authors write that the results of the statewide inventory “should not be interpreted as evaluative of the impact of developmental models on student outcomes.” This same point is made again later in the report: The authors again unequivocally state that the information gathered through surveys and presented in the SJR 41 Inventory Report “should not be used to determine which developmental models are working and for whom.” Moreover, the authors emphasize that “establishing the impact of developmental education models at Illinois' public higher education institutions” requires “research designs that measure enrollment and completion on a student

level” and that “account for numerous contextual factors that could potentially affect both short- and long-term outcomes.”

The authors also stress that such rigorous research is essential in order to determine the future direction of DE, and the results of this research must inform any plan for DE reform, especially one that purports to advise the entire state of Illinois. The authors bring this imperative directly to those capable of initiating the necessary research: “Because of the importance of this matter, we urge Illinois to support more rigorous study of developmental models in public higher education.”

These careful statements are in sharp contrast to claims made elsewhere in the report. These claims (presented below) are not only in direct conflict with the points discussed above, but their assertions cannot be reconciled with the more studied conclusions examined above. This suggests a covert struggle over the inventory report’s content.

Excerpts:

The report states that the inventory results “will be used by the SJR 41 Advisory Council to develop an implementation plan for public higher education.” But if the data says nothing valid about a program’s effectiveness or student outcomes, why would it inform the implementation plan for all of Illinois?

“In nearly all analysis of cohort enrollments and course completions, the co-requisite model showed the highest developmental course completion and related-gateway course completion rates... the consistency of higher completion outcomes for the co-requisite model is noteworthy and important to recognize.”

“The co-requisite course completion rate is higher than the other models, at approximately 80% in the developmental course and the related gateway course... This promising finding... is similar to results reported in the empirical literature that show immediate positive outcomes for students in the co-requisite model.”

“Results reported on the 2018 cohort over one academic year replicate the positive results for the corequisite model that we saw for the 2017 cohort.”

“Results for developmental models in mathematics show favorable results for the co-requisite model, and less positive results for the ‘other’ models and the traditional model.”

To review, the authors note repeatedly that the inventory results cannot be a valid basis for any evaluative claims. Yet as the report continues, numerous evaluative claims are presented based on this data. Additional statements tout the importance of the inventory results, suggesting the results have a critical role to play in the public record, to guide future research, and to develop a baseline for all future DE discussions. (None of this can be reconciled with the previous statements about the lack of meaningful data.)

Revisiting the Aims of DE Reform (Stated and Unstated)

Let's revisit the publicly stated aims of DE reform – to increase college completion rates and thus improve equity. The reform movement began quite a while ago with ample time to demonstrate an increase in college completion rates, but this has not occurred, nor is it likely as evidenced above. Additionally, the well-funded machinery which controls the narrative has suppressed the research on the positive impact of remediation and has doggedly privileged the co-req model while recognizing that the weakest 25% of students will be pushed out the door (after all it is present in the research, just not underscored). This means that the gains in college-course completion are knowingly endorsed at the expense of the students who fall under the “doubled failure rate.”

Further, and it beggars belief that this must be pointed out, but let us recall that the word “multiple” and “single” have different (indeed mutually exclusive) meanings. The pretense of calling ICCB's proposed method of placement “multiple measures” is adhered to with a straight face. Employing a long list of measures (the so-called “multiple measures”) in the hope that one of them will get the student into college-level classes is simply an end run around DE classes with a disingenuous “placement process” designed solely to maximize the number of students who enter directly into college-level classes.

Again, we should note the obvious: placing a student into a course for which she is not prepared is not only imprudent but terrible public policy. According to results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the 2019 test results showed that “two out of three children did not meet the standards for reading proficiency” (Green and Goldstein, 2019). As reading ability is paramount to academic success, it is certain that students need more opportunities for meaningful learning and not fewer, especially with the tremendous learning loss of the past year.

Goudas aptly concludes that “one of the greatest ironies and reversals in education today” is that developmental education is disparaged as a *primary threat* to equity in higher education.

So what is going on? Why the takedown of DE programs state by state across the country? Why the collapsing of time spent in public education via the elimination of DE courses and the rapid increase in dual credit? Why the direct placement into college-level classes –if students are academically prepared for them or not? Why the rapid growth in dual credit courses for college credit even though many participants are not remotely prepared for them? (*See: Appendix A. Comparison of % of students earning college credit through dual credit courses and the % meeting Illinois HS State standards in English.*)

What is going on?

The answer: we are in the midst of a massive re-structuring of public education driven by a cost efficient allocation of resources in a rapidly changing world. This conclusion can be discerned from a few significant and revealing statements.

Starting in 2000, the census demographic projections showed massive expansion of minority youth of 3.5 million or 40%, and analysts warned of a “demographic tidal wave” seeking access to higher education. What an economic challenge! Tough decisions would have to be made!

In 2004, Hillary Pennington of Jobs for the Future framed this challenge: “In an ideal world, we cannot achieve the quantum leap in educational attainment that the nation needs without reconfiguring the use of time and money across the K-16 system.” In other words, the rapidly growing numbers of non-white youth seeking access to higher education, especially given the lower academic achievement of these groups, is a threat to our nation’s ability to fund higher education. The solution to this crisis requires a restructuring of secondary and postsecondary education in order to get more young people more credentials more quickly *and* with certain groups of students getting a larger share of the resources and more education than others.

This restructuring includes the use of structured career Pathways and the collapsing of high school into two-year colleges via a massive growth of dual credit courses and co-reqs.

(See the artifacts included in the Appendices, including two artifacts for greater clarity: Appendix B: An Adaptation of the Tucker Model (with its clear return to student tracking) and the original model; and Appendix C: The McKinsey/Gates Value Proposition Model for Higher Education, which recommends a sorting of students according to income status and their accompanying opportunities.)

A 2005 Chicago Fed letter provides more evidence: Michael McPherson of the Spencer Foundation asked this revealing question: “Is it more efficient to invest in our most talented students and our best institutions or can gains be made for the economy by increasing resources to community colleges and nontraditional student populations? Since student success is closely tied to parental income and education, poor students should be satisfied with job training and certificates and not insist on academic programs.” Or in the words of Davis Jenkins (CCRC, Pathways, CCC Reinvention), “[If] students are to ultimately drop out, it is better that they do so earlier than later. ... Community colleges may have to limit access for disadvantaged students.”

In a nutshell: Based on a doctrine of economic efficiency, we are witnessing a massive restructuring of public higher education – without public input -- into two tracks: higher education for the haves who get knowledge, book learning and degrees and certificate workforce training for nearly everyone else. While certificate workforce training is undoubtedly valuable and is in no way being denigrated here, eliminating years of education (via the collapsing of high school into the community college), lowering the ceiling of possibility for youth and tracking them into programs based on the proximity and circumstances of their birth are unacceptable. Is this equity?

Once again, we must take responsibility to ensure that access to higher education is available to *all*. If we don’t, who will?

Final Comments & Recommendations:

Please know that our aim in this report has been to explain the faulty assumptions and misleading arguments that are rampant among critics of DE. These have influenced the conventional wisdom on DE as well as policy makers, among many others. It is therefore crucial that these arguments be debunked so we can move on. One example that has caused tremendous damage is the claim that DE itself is the cause of students' failure. Variants of this claim include calling DE "the bridge to nowhere" (Complete College America); "the Bermuda triangle" of education (*The New York Times*); and "One of Dante's Circles of Hell" (Davis Jenkins, CCRC researcher and CCC consultant).

It has not been our intention to malign the co-requisite model, quite the contrary. The co-req model is an effective and thoughtful design, and can be very effective for certain students. *But not for all.* The exclusive use of co-reqs in a DE system is, we suggest, promoted most emphatically by those whose actual goal has been to eliminate DE, not develop the best possible programs for students' success. Surely it is obvious that the enormous range of academic ability and diversity of backgrounds among our student populations require more than one model, and one best suited for students on the border of college readiness.

It is unclear how one can reasonably deny this obvious reality. Three possible reasons for this denial include: 1. Like CCC consultant Davis Jenkins, you want students who drop out to do so sooner rather than later, before resources are "squandered" on them. Placing them in a class for which they are unprepared is a pretty good way to hasten their departure. (This is similar to Mayor Daley's failed 2010 attempt to end open admissions at the City Colleges; this was his way of eliminating DE.) 2. Like many critics of DE, you hold a strong but unvoiced belief that those who enroll in two-year colleges do not need the same level of rigor in their college classes; therefore college-level English should be taught at a lower level so most community college students will pass, without the need for DE beforehand, but you will concede to offering a co-req design to appease DE fanatics. 3. Your goal is to eliminate DE, and promoting the co-req design as the best possible design for any and all students moves you up to the edge of your real goal.

And so, there is more work to be done. While continuing this important work, we must all remain true to the first guiding principle of the charge of the SJR41, which is to keep students and their success at the center of all DE redesign. This is imperative for any and all meaningful reform.

With that, we make the final recommendations for moving forward:

1. Top-down decision-making thwarts innovation: Respect the autonomy of each institution of higher education in Illinois who know best the needs of their own communities.
Recommend: Local institutions and Math and English faculty should be in charge of the research, implementation, timeline, and ongoing assessment of their own DE reform.

2. DE is a catapult, not a barrier: Ignoring the true causes behind student failure rates will not make their problems go away.

Recommend: Retain and develop robust DE programs/instruction as an investment in young people, particularly people of color and those students most at risk.

3. Improve placement measures by improving their accuracy: Default placement into college-level Math and English courses is a de facto “right to fail” move that harms students.
Recommend: Use accurate placement measures that put students into the classes they need for long-term academic success.

4. One size does NOT fit all: Diverse students in diverse contexts need differentiated programming; arbitrary thresholds of reform adoptions without consideration of local contexts are inappropriate and harmful to students.
Recommend: Adopt differentiated DE programs with rigorous student support systems to meet the needs of all students in the diverse communities across the state of Illinois.

4. The answer to underpreparedness is not cutting instruction time, cutting meaningful learning opportunities, and cutting necessary DE programs: The idea that students are more likely to succeed by being given fewer opportunities in which to do so is absurd.
Recommend: Adopt differentiated DE programs with rigorous student support systems to meet the needs of all students in the diverse communities across the state of Illinois.

5. The “right to fail” ethos of DE reform is fundamentally racist and classist since those most likely to ‘exercise’ this right — those most likely to fail and drop out — will be precisely those for whom DE is a necessary first step: first-generation students, working students, immigrants, students of color. These students, like all entering college students, deserve more than a one-shot, sink-or-swim chance to succeed in college.
Recommend: Students should have the resources to success and not the right to fail.

6. Access to higher education in general and the open-access mission of community colleges in general are democracy in action: Illinois should lead the way in shoring up, not undermining, access to higher education for all residents.
Recommend: Adopt robust DE programming based in best practices and rigorous research along with crucial academic, financial, and advising support.

7. Properly vet and discuss the joining of the Student Success Network before committing to and partaking in its agenda. The recommendation to join this network was included in the report without any dialogue or investigation by the entire council. While it is surely seems ridiculous to question supporting IL students’ success, one must be informed and ferret out any other ties to the “placement into college-level courses for all students at all costs” agenda.

Final Call to Action! Students in higher education have experienced trauma as a result of Covid 19 and its resulting impacts, such as the loss of face-to-face educational experiences, food insecurity, housing insecurity, grief, loss and illness of family and friends. Colleges and

universities need to focus on providing supports to help mitigate students' trauma as they return to school post Covid 19.

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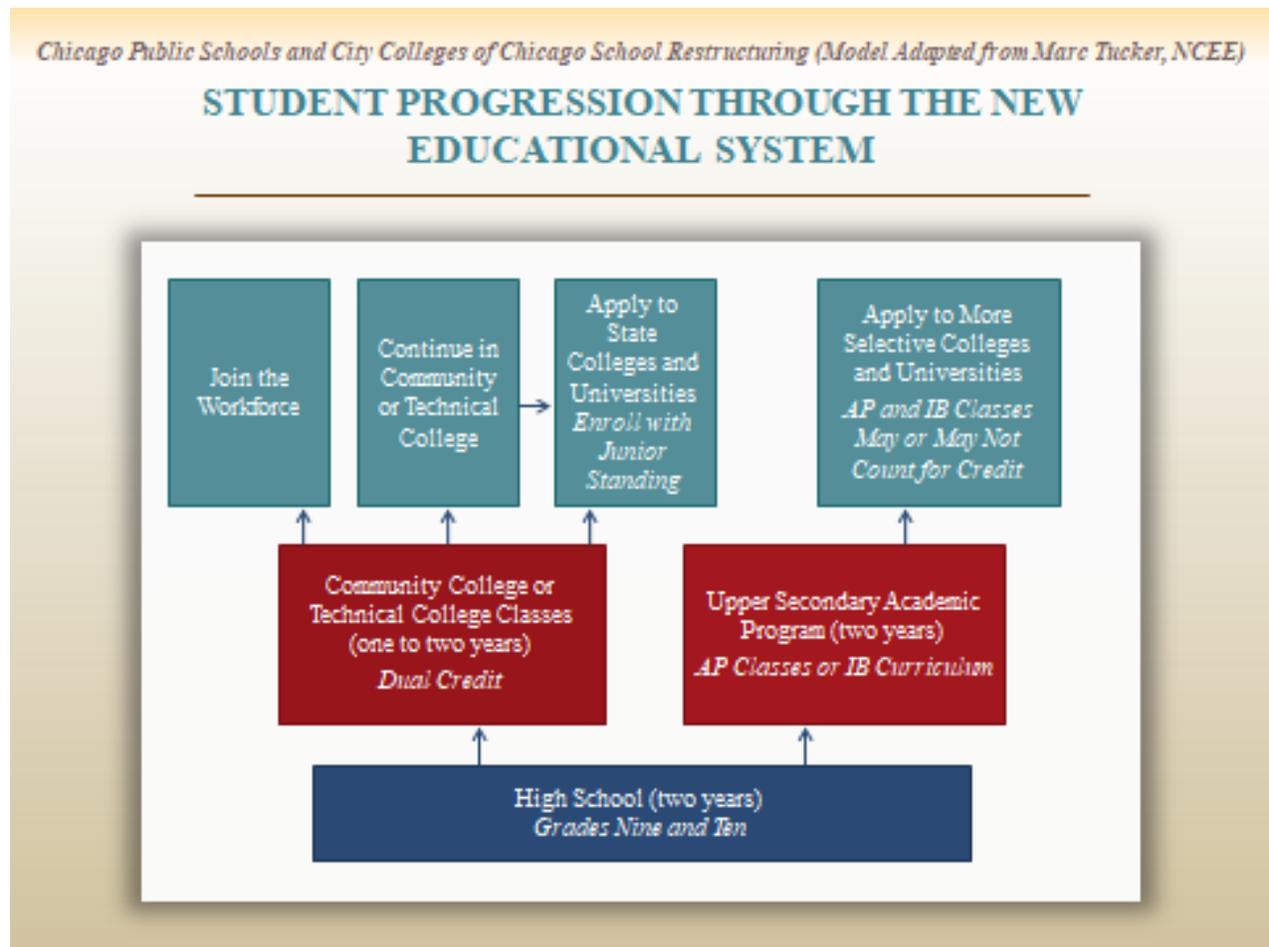
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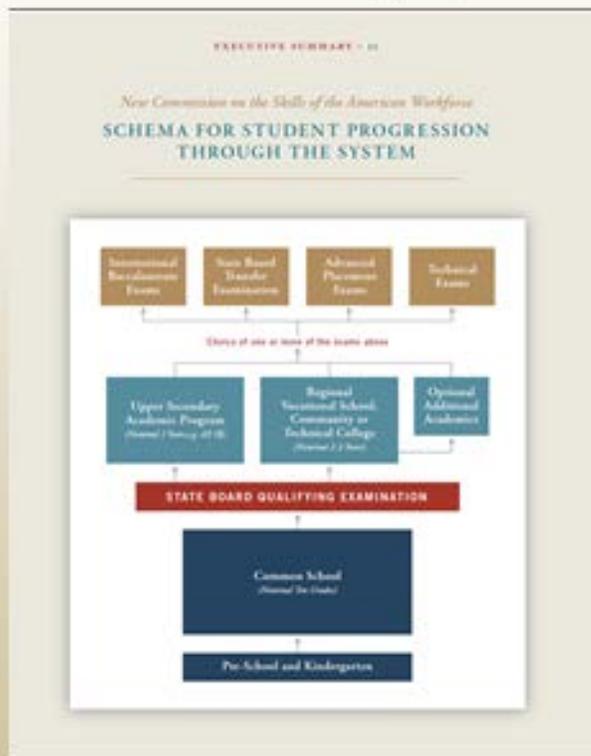
- In 28 of the 45 high schools, less than 10 percent of the students met IL high school standards, while on average more than 40 percent of these same students earned college credit through dual credit classes.

Source is: <https://cps.edu/SchoolData/Pages/SchoolData.aspx>

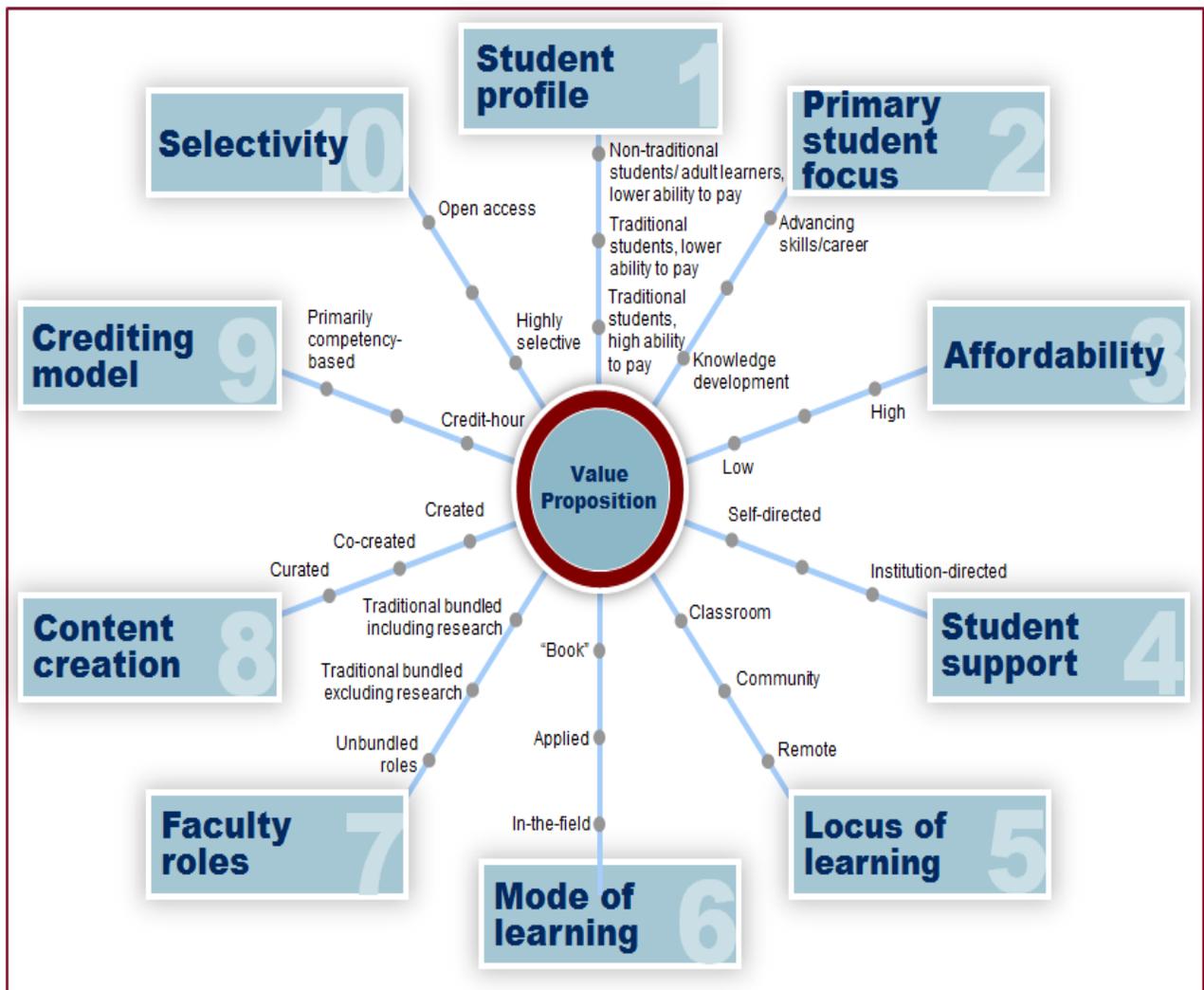
Appendix B: Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago School Restructuring (Model Adapted from Marc Tucker, NCEE)



**The Original Model from *Tough Choices or Tough Times*:
The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce**
National Center on Education and the Economy (2008), Marc Tucker, President



Appendix C. Gates and McKinsey Value Proposition Model of Higher Education



The graphic above illustrates a framework of issue areas for institutional leaders to consider

explicitly and in relationship with each other to ensure they make decisions that best align with their institution's goals and help each institution organize and operationalize a value proposition.

Note: read the framework in circles. The inner circle value for high selectivity comprises: traditional students with a high ability to pay, knowledge development, self-directed support, classroom learning with books, funded faculty, and creative content. Conversely, the outer circle with open access selectivity comprises: non-traditional learners with low ability to pay, focus on skills and career, with institution-directed support via remote modality and in the field, with adjunct faculty using prescribed or curated content aimed primarily at competency.

<https://postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/McKinsey-Article-Condensed-11.25.14.pdf>