

Maryland

2016 College- and Career-Readiness Policies and Practices

The Southern Regional Education Board has long emphasized the critical need to strengthen students' readiness to succeed after high school. SREB's recommendations to improve readiness (SREB.org/Readiness) cover standards, assessments, transitional courses, postsecondary placement and remedial education. To support states' efforts, SREB compiled information through interviews of P-16 education agency staff and review of numerous documents to determine state progress as of fall 2016 on the recommendations. This state profile summarizes selected findings for each of the five areas. SREB plans to update this information annually.

Standards

Does the state have statewide college- and career-readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics? Do K-12 and postsecondary education agree on the same standards?

College- and career-readiness standards in Maryland align with the Common Core State Standards via State Board of Education action in 2010. In 2013, the Maryland General Assembly adopted comprehensive college- and career-readiness and college completion legislation (SB 740) requiring 11th grade students to be assessed for college readiness beginning with the 2014-15 school year. Local school districts determine curriculum. Postsecondary education supports the Maryland standards.

Readiness Assessments

How does the state assess high school students' readiness? What are the options for students who do not meet them?

Secondary schools use the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests to assess college- and career-readiness. In 2016-17, PARCC English Language Arts and Math tests became graduation requirements. Individual postsecondary institutions continue to use SAT, ACT, AP IB, and Accuplacer. The Maryland Association of Community Colleges and the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland entered into a Memorandum of Understanding for the 2016-17 school year regarding placement cut scores for English language arts and math.

Community colleges may establish a college readiness score for the new GED test, and stakeholder groups will continue to evaluate the assessment measures. Degree pathways will link student readiness in math to certain credentials and degree programs; rigorous math pathways in statistics and quantitative literacy align with non-STEM majors to prepare students for non-STEM majors. Students who meet college- and career-readiness standards are eligible to enroll in dual and concurrent courses in their senior year of high school.

Transitional Courses and Interventions

Does the state require transitional readiness courses or other interventions for students who are not ready to succeed in college-level courses?

Senate Bill 740, the College- and Career-Readiness Act of 2013, also stipulated that high school seniors have the opportunity to remediate while in high school and required the Maryland State Department of Education, in collaboration with public community colleges, to develop and implement transition courses or other instructional opportunities. While legislation requires that transitional courses be offered statewide to help underprepared students, there is no statewide format. Individual school districts, in consultation with local postsecondary institutions, determine implementation.

Approximately half of the local school districts across the state use a community college developmental course as their high school transitional course. Beginning in 2016-17, students who do not meet readiness standards by the end of their junior year must enroll in transition courses aligned to college- and career-standards. The transitional math course meets the math requirement for the 12th grade and carries credit. All teachers and administrators receive professional development for teaching the courses. Course redesign data will inform best practices.

Postsecondary Placement

How do institutions place a student who is not ready for college-level work? Are the same standards, assessments and qualifying score levels applied statewide or systemwide? Are multiple criteria and measures used in placement decisions?

Each Maryland postsecondary institution establishes standards for college readiness and determines if students will be placed in remedial or credit-bearing courses. Community colleges assess students for course readiness and placement using placement testing (most commonly Accuplacer). Community college chief academic officers, working with subject matter experts, established standards adopted by the 16 community colleges; a memorandum of understanding establishes placement criteria. All community colleges are considering high school GPA as a criterion for college readiness. Community college chief academic affairs officers monitor the effectiveness of placement standards.

Remedial and Developmental Education

Are there state or system policies for remedial and developmental education in colleges? What curricular and support paths are available for students? Is corequisite instruction—an academic course taken in conjunction with another course—required or optional? How do institutions and the state monitor student progress? What evidence is available on the effectiveness of these interventions?

Maryland does not have uniform policies governing remedial and developmental instruction; each institution establishes its own practices and procedures. Each institution may establish pathways for students needing remediation, but institutions are not required to do so. As the K-12 college-readiness standards are implemented, validated and refined, community colleges will establish remediation policies aligned with the college-readiness standards and more consistent across institutions. While many students are expected to take corequisite remedial courses, some are required to take free-standing developmental courses.

In addition to the corequisite model adopted by some institutions, the University System of Maryland, in collaboration with 12 colleges and universities, won a First in the World Grant to develop new math pathways and track the progress of cohorts of students taking them. Community colleges track developmental and regular credit coursework to ensure that the mathematics and English general education courses are both completed within a student's first 24 credits.