

### CONNECTICUT

**Lead Organization:** Connecticut Community College System

#### Priorities

1. *Incorporate Achieving the Dream student success-related goals into the next version of the Connecticut Community College System strategic plan* to create unity of policy vision, and to focus the community colleges and the system on the urgent need for improved student outcomes in Connecticut.
2. *Strengthen system-level data capacity to provide longitudinal data tracking and analysis to the colleges* in order to improve institutional performance in increasing student success outcomes.
3. *Conduct a study of the effectiveness of ACCUPLACER as a tool for student placement* that can increase student persistence and completion. The study, being conducted by the Community College Research Center, will also assess whether there is a score below which students should be counseled to alternative options such as adult basic education.
4. *Study the longitudinal impact of student financial aid on persistence and completion*, including for part-time students and adult learners, to assess the adequacy of need-based financial aid programs.

### FLORIDA

**Lead Organization:**

Foundation for Florida's Community Colleges

#### Priorities

1. *Use data system to identify intermediate measures that can serve as early warning systems to identify students who are "off-track" and at high risk for non-completion.* The department will work to identify a set of intermediate milestones that are robust predictors of student success (e.g., successfully completing gatekeeper course) with a particular focus on student subgroups most at risk for non-completion. The department will attempt to identify student behaviors associated with those milestones (e.g., taking gatekeeper math course the semester following completion of the highest developmental math course) to help guide the design of effective interventions to improve student success.
2. *Work with K-12 system to develop and implement a plan to improve cross-sector alignment.* To improve alignment between high school and college-level courses, the Florida Department of Education's "Go Higher, Florida!" Task Force, comprised of representatives of K-12 and community college systems, will develop a clear definition of college readiness; develop reading, writing, and mathematics competencies; and engage K-12 and postsecondary institutions and leaders to share the definition and competencies.

3. *Create a task force to set standards for student learning outcomes* that each student should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the general education requirements so that expectations are clear to students.

### NEW MEXICO

**State Lead Organization:**

New Mexico Higher Education Department

#### Priorities

1. *Secure an additional \$50 million for need-based financial aid through the College Affordability Act.* The NMHED is asking the legislature to add an additional \$50 million to the existing College Affordability Act trust fund, which was first funded with \$49 million last year. The department expects that with the additional funding, \$89 million will be placed in an investment fund and \$10 million be available for need-based grants this year. The increased funding covers the cost of attendance: tuition, books, and fees, and it expands the length of time financial aid is available to students. Also, tribal colleges are included for the first time. The department's goal is to build the fund to \$250 million and serve 2,500 students per year.
2. *Continue the work of the joint Alignment Task Force of the New Mexico Higher Education Department and the Public Education Department to align high school competencies with college placement requirements.* The Alignment Task Force's work includes publishing a placement cut score matrix and standardizing dual credit arrangements. The Task Force will also implement new high school reform legislation that requires: identifying new high school assessments and college placement cut scores; and measuring their impact on preparing students for college-level work. The NMHED is also working to align high school exit-level assessments with college entrance requirements through working with the American Diploma Project's Alignment Institute.
3. *Leading a state-level dialogue to establish a common and shared student data system from pre-kindergarten to postsecondary levels of education, including adult basic education and training in response to House Memorial 42 (HM42).* A multi-agency, data-sharing task-force (comprising: NMHED; PED; the Office of Workforce Training and Development; Labor, Finance, and Administration; and Children, Youth, and Families) has been created to provide research capability to measure the results of education reforms and the effectiveness of education policies, as well as to develop a statewide plan for data sharing. The task force's goal is to provide standard protocols for exchange of student data among agencies. Its focus areas are tests/placement, curriculum, and dual credit.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Lead Organization:

North Carolina Community College System

### Priorities

1. *Co-lead a state-level effort to develop a comprehensive longitudinal data tracking system that integrates data from K-12, higher education, and workforce development sectors.* The State Board has provided seed funding to the University of North Carolina-General Administration to finance the planning and set-up phase of the *North Carolina Education Insight Project for Teaching and Nursing*, a state-level initiative that will allow North Carolina's K-20 education institutions to make informed decisions about programs and practices. The project starts with teaching and nursing because they are critical workforce shortage areas, but it will be expanded to provide information and analysis on a broad range of student outcomes to facilitate increased use of data to increase student success.
2. *Develop system-wide protocols and procedures to increase financial aid take-up rates and provide training to financial aid staff in the colleges to increase the number of students who apply for and are awarded federal and state financial aid.* The system office will broadly disseminate successful institutional practices.
3. *Implement a uniform, statewide assessment and placement cut score policy* to increase the probability of successful completion of developmental education. A committee has been created to regularly assess progress and problems in implementation and to suggest improvements. NCCCS will share lessons learned with other Achieving the Dream states that are considering implementing uniform assessment and placement cut score policies.
4. *Strengthen advocacy activities in support of Achieving the Dream goals and objectives* to increase awareness with multiple stakeholder groups, including the Governor's Office, legislative representatives, business, media, and the public, in order to generate support for institutional and state-level efforts to increase student success.

## OHIO

### Lead Organization:

KnowledgeWorks Foundation

### Priorities

1. *Partner with the Office of the Governor to promote higher education reforms that strengthen the community colleges' role in increasing statewide education attainment in service to the state's economic development goals.* KnowledgeWorks will work with the Office of the Governor in a review of the state's higher education governance structure, including making recommendations on the role and duties of the Ohio Board of Regents. Other success-related recommendations include the possible development of a cabinet-level P-16 office and recalibrating the state's degree attainment goals to better compete with other states and nations in today's global economy.

2. *Advocate for strengthening Ohio's state-level capacity to link data across education and workforce sectors* and increase the state's ability to provide longitudinal data analysis to the colleges in useful formats, so that data is used regularly to inform both state- and institutional-level practices.

3. *Improve services for underprepared students.* KnowledgeWorks will advocate for increases in funding for student support services that increase student success, including flexible scheduling, tutoring and counseling, learning communities, and other services that have holding power to retain students until they reach their education goals.

4. *Advocate for continued state-level investment in TANF funding to build incentives for persistence for low-income students.* KnowledgeWorks advocates for the state to use recently allocated surplus TANF funds for financial incentives for low-income student persistence a recurring investment, following the decision last year to promote innovative efforts modeled on MDRC's Opening Doors project in Louisiana. KnowledgeWorks recommends that unspent TANF funds be protected, and it will advocate for a third-party evaluation of results.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Lead Organization:

Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges

### Priorities

1. *Engage in a visible, statewide, developmental education communications campaign* to define developmental education needs to policymakers and opinion leaders in a way that demonstrates its value; and advocate for developmental education policy changes, including financial aid for developmental education students, to remove barriers to student success.
2. *Protect and extend funding for the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Program (Act 101)* that funds student support services in higher education institutions serving high proportions of low-income students who face barriers to successful postsecondary transitions. The commission will engage in a dialogue with the Governor's key education policy staff and the Public Department of Education around the issue of increasing funding for student support services, particularly for subgroups of students at high risk for non-completion. The commission will also support continued funding for the Workforce Advancement Grant, targeted to assist students who are transitioning from one career to another.
3. *Work with the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee to promote state policies that fully recognize the Associate's degree so that community college students are able to transfer to four-year institutions with junior status.* The commission is engaging in ongoing advocacy activities with the department, the state board of education, and other policymakers to provide information and data to inform state-level decisions on transfer policies.

## TEXAS

### Lead Organization:

Texas Association of Community Colleges

### Priorities

1. *Advocate for \$220 million for the biennium for an innovation- and data-driven incentive system to allow institutions to experiment and innovate to find better ways to increase student success.* The Texas Association of Community Colleges' *New Community Compact with Texas* calls for new funding incentives that are in proportion with the level of effort required to achieve meaningful student outcomes. It proposes tracking innovative efforts at the institutional level in order to hold institutions accountable for student success. The Compact also calls for overhauling the state's financial aid system to address unmet financial need in the community college sector.

2. *Assist in statewide implementation of the college readiness provisions of House Bill 1 (3rd Called Session, 79th Legislature), which includes participation on vertical teams made up of K-12, community college, and university faculty to define college readiness.* TACC will play a lead role in the state implementation of broad college readiness legislation stemming from House Bill 1 by representing the community colleges' unique perspective and the Achieving the Dream experience at multiple venues across the state, including legislative hearings, Coordinating Board committee meetings, and P-16 Council meetings. TACC will be particularly active in state-level deliberations to define college readiness standards and expectations and the implementation of the state's strategic plan to decrease the number of students entering developmental education.

3. *Work with the Community and Technical College Formula Advisory Committee on its developmental education cost study and explore alternative funding strategies for accelerated developmental education models.* TACC will broadly disseminate the findings of the committee's *developmental education cost study* and engage in discussions with higher education policymakers about the implications for state- and institution-level policy on developmental education and acceleration of student progress into credit courses.

4. *Continue to work to align the state accountability system with Achieving the Dream indicators* and measure institutional performance to evaluate and compare the impact of institutional policies, practices, and interventions on student success outcomes.

## VIRGINIA

### State Lead Organization:

Virginia Community College System

### Priorities

1. *Create a VCCS enterprise level data warehouse that will be user-friendly for colleges and will be able to grow to include and align with additional data sources.* VCCS has made important strides in moving the state's 23 community colleges to collect common data

elements and report them in a form and with software that greatly simplifies statewide longitudinal data analysis. VCCS will continue to strengthen the data warehouse and to make it available for use by colleges this year. VCCS wants to ensure that data from other sources will be added to the warehouse, including, among other sources, data from North Carolina on transfers and employment and data on performance of transfers to public four-year institutions in Virginia. Through the state P-16 Council, VCCS is also talking with K-12 and higher education systems to ensure compatibility across systems as the state moves toward a K-20 warehouse system.

2. *Examine patterns in the transition from high school to community college and contribute to the Commonwealth's initiative to identify college readiness standards.* VCCS is an NGA Honor State committed to improving college readiness. The NGA grant has enabled VCCS to develop a study that will review the academic weaknesses of high school graduates. The results will inform state efforts to define college-readiness in math, reading, and writing; this is a high priority for the state, which has joined the American Diploma Project. As a result of the P-16 Council's work, college-readiness standards will be developed in consultation with a team of high school, community college, and university leaders and faculty. This will be in preparation for a decision by the State Board on adopting a common, statewide standard in 2008. VCCS's commitment to expand dual enrollment in its colleges will be boosted by the Career Coach program, which locates college employees in high schools, a dual enrollment Web site, and a cross-college staff discussion of best practices.

3. *Examine placement policies across the state's colleges and the performance of developmental education students across the system.* VCCS has initiated a descriptive study of placement scores and of student success in developmental education and subsequent math and English college-level "gatekeeper" courses. Together with the NGA-funded study, this analysis will provide the basis for dialogue among the colleges and their local school systems regarding students' academic preparation. It will inform policy deliberations about whether to make placement policies consistent throughout VCCS.

4. *Advocate for passage and funding of the Transfer Scholarship proposal.* The Chancellor's Transfer Scholarship proposal failed to pass the legislature last year. This year, VCCS has made reintroduction and passage of the bill a priority. The bill will provide a guarantee to lower-income students who transfer to four-year institutions in Virginia: tuition for the remainder of their college program at the community college rather than four-year rate. VCCS will work for its passage, funding, and implementation. In addition, VCCS plans to explore other ways to lower the cost of college for its lower-income students, including approaches developed in Connecticut to improve financial aid administration and, as a result, take-up by VCCS students.

## WASHINGTON

### State Lead:

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

### Priorities

1. *Identify points along the educational pipelines where students leave without completing their goals and identify incentives and momentum-builders for interventions at critical points to improve student success.* SBCTC is using its funding lever to create incentives for improvements in student achievement. SBCTC will convene a committee to identify points at which students leave without accomplishing their goals and will design incentives for interventions in critical points through external research. The committee will identify how an incentive system might be implemented and will use the system's Student Retention Study and the Student Pathways and Milestone Study to inform its decision making process.

2. *Conduct exploratory research on the relative success of part-time versus full-time students and explore the likely impacts of incentives and requirements that encourage full-time enrollment over part-time enrollment for younger students.* The findings will be used as a fact base to inform the consideration of a policy to improve the success of younger students who enroll full time. The policy implications of the findings will be shared with other Achieving the Dream states also dealing with the disparity in outcomes between part-time versus full-time enrollment.

3. *Identify and eliminate overlap in developmental education and adult basic education that results in inappropriate placements.* SBCTC will work to ensure and improve alignment between developmental education and adult basic education so that successful transitions from non-credit to credit courses can be increased.