Postsecondary Success
Scaling Developmental Education Reforms Convening

Overview

Welcome and thank you for committing your time to attend the Developmental Education convening held in Seattle from December 15th – December 17th. Each participant at this convening has demonstrated enormous commitment to addressing our nation's remediation problem. Further, you have each generously engaged with us in the past months to think together about what it may take to scale developmental education reforms nationally – whether participating in ongoing dialogue or hosting a visits to your campuses. We are excited to have the opportunity to come together as a collective group of leaders and continue the conversations we began this fall.

The convening will bring together nearly 70 participants – faculty and college leaders, researchers, funders, technical assistance providers, and policy experts – to engage in conversations about the state of remediation reform today and ways to build on the field's momentum around a suite of evidence-based solutions that help ensure the acceleration of student success. We see the current moment as a pivotal inflection point for being able to integrate, and bring to scale, interventions that support the success of students requiring remediation. We see the convening as an opportunity to sit alongside you as a collaborator and partner in the process of crafting a shared vision for the field. Our role within the convening will be as equal participants during the discussion. And, it is our hope is that we can emerge from the discussion with a concrete sense for how each of us—as influencers and actors within the field—can collectively take steps to support systemic changes for students on campuses throughout the country.

The **goals** of the convening are to:
- Build a shared understanding of what it takes to implement effective *integrated* developmental education practices that cut across the experience of a student on campus
- Surface areas where additional supports are needed to enable and accelerate the scaling of integrated approaches to developmental education reforms
- Generate concrete ideas on what type of national and state/regional infrastructure supports are required to foster greater scaling of effective integrated practices across multiple institutions
- Create opportunities for participants to reflect on and define their individual and collective role in supporting scaling of integrated developmental education reform

As we mentioned in the invitation to the convening, the format of this convening is designed to support a very high degree of interaction. As a "design lab," we will be asking that we all roll up our sleeves and engage in a range of large and small discussions anchored in producing concrete ideas. Our shared participation will be vital to a successful convening. We look forward to a lively set of discussions in which we will each share opinions, knowledge, insight, and accountability to taking steps to scale integrated developmental education practices.

Over the last six months, the Gates Foundation has engaged in *over 100 conversations* with various stakeholders in the field to deepen our understanding of what it takes to support the scaling of developmental education reforms. In these conversations, we had the benefit of learning from many of you about the progress, challenges and opportunities confronting developmental education reform efforts.

The **purpose of this document** is to provide a synthesis of what we've heard from you regarding:

- The state of developmental education reform today
- Areas of focus to support greater integration and scaling of effective practices
- Preliminary thoughts on required infrastructure supports

We hope this document will serve as a vehicle to build a shared understanding of the conversations that have taken place to date, and we look forward to using the convening as an opportunity to discuss how to support the scaling of integrated developmental education reforms a reality.
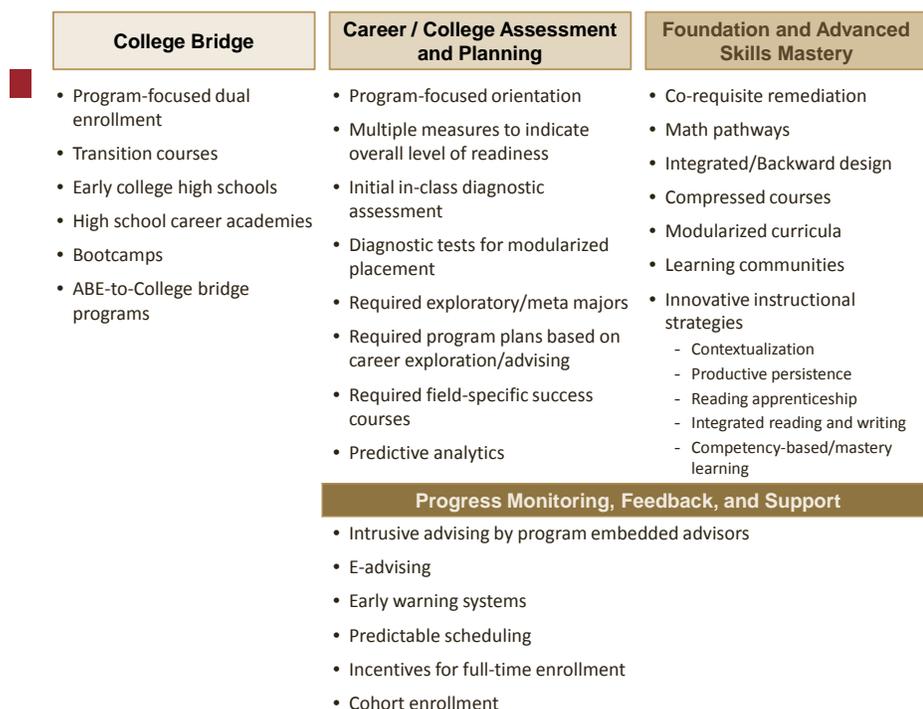
State of developmental education reform today

We all realize remediation is one of the most significant challenges to student completion of postsecondary education and entrance to the workforce. Excitingly, the field has made significant progress and built momentum towards reforming developmental education practices to achieve higher student success rates in the past several years.

In particular, the field has made important progress in the following ways:

- There is widespread awareness of the size of the remediation challenge and the need for reform
- A range of state policies encouraging or mandating elements of developmental education reform have been enacted and continue to be implemented
- The field has begun to make an important paradigm shift from seeing developmental education as a separate endeavor to one linked to the fundamental educational mission of the institution
- A significant number of institutions, academic departments, and organizations are piloting discrete interventions designed to specifically support developmental education students. Many of these interventions—which touch on multiple points in a student's career—have shown impressive results for developmental education students (see illustration below)

Figure 1: Four components of developmental education reform[1]

College Bridge	Career / College Assessment and Planning	Foundation and Advanced Skills Mastery

• Program-focused dual enrollment
• Transition courses
• Early college high schools
• High school career academies
• Bootcamps
• ABE-to-College bridge programs
	• Program-focused orientation
	• Multiple measures to indicate overall level of readiness
	• Initial in-class diagnostic assessment
	• Diagnostic tests for modularized placement
	• Required exploratory/meta majors
	• Required program plans based on career exploration/advising
	• Required field-specific success courses
	• Predictive analytics
		• Co-requisite remediation
		• Math pathways
		• Integrated/Backward design
		• Compressed courses
		• Modularized curricula
		• Learning communities
		• Innovative instructional strategies
		  - Contextualization
		  - Productive persistence
		  - Reading apprenticeship
		  - Integrated reading and writing
		  - Competency-based/mastery learning

Progress Monitoring, Feedback, and Support

- Intrusive advising by program embedded advisors
- E-advising
- Early warning systems
- Predictable scheduling
- Incentives for full-time enrollment
- Cohort enrollment

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[1] The illustration of components reflects an updated glossary of interventions that was developed by the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University (2014); see separate attachment for description of interventions

In addition to these field level shifts, several institutions are beginning to link discrete interventions and activities across multiple departments and functions (e.g., instruction, advising, and enrollment management). By linking interventions together across multiple "components", these institutions are building an *integrated experience of developmental education*—an experience that links developmental education interventions with dedicated pathways for student success (e.g., connecting competency-based learning with a defined program of study). In our discussions with the field, the vast majority of the individuals we interviewed confirmed the need for greater integration and alignment of activities across the four components.

It is important to note that the level of alignment around the need for integrated approaches linked to pathways represents a critical inflection point for the field. Moreover, many stakeholders in the field have differing perspectives as to the exact configuration and approach to conceptualizing the link. CCRC has proposed a preliminary framework for linking the elements of integrated developmental education to a holistic process for intake and on-ramp into a program of study (see illustration below; rationale for framework is included as a separate attachment).

Figure 2: Preliminary framework for integrated developmental education aligned with pathways for student success
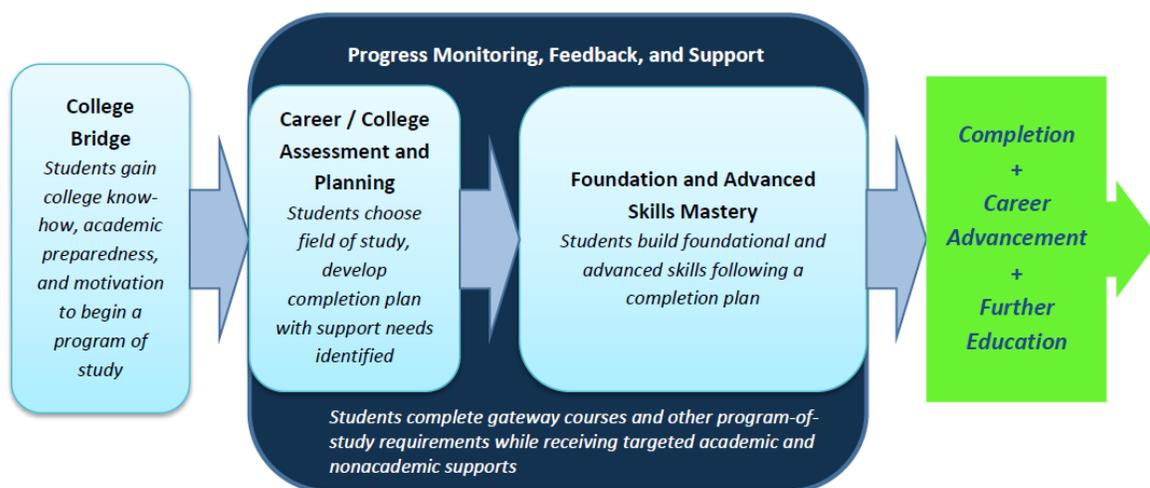
Areas of focus to support greater integration and scaling of effective practices

While there is a shared understanding of the need for more integration, the field is confronting several challenges and barriers that make pursuing that path difficult. Below, we have outlined several themes that emerged from our conversations as key areas on which to focus:

Area of focus	Voices of the field
Building a culture anchored on supporting student success	• *"The real work of developmental education reform is figuring out how to change the culture to support student success. We need to focus on leveraging the implementation of various initiatives to change the overall culture." – National Funder* • *"There is natural division between the academic and student support divisions within institutions. Something needs to bring these two groups together for the common cause of student success." – State System Leader* • *"Having a culture of innovation that is established and maintained by leadership is critical. We can't be afraid to try things and fail as long as we always learn and improve. We have to focus on scaling a culture of student success. Everything else will fall into place after that." – Community College President*

Engaging instructional and advising faculty and deepening professional development opportunities	• *"There is NO WAY to do this work of remediation reform without engaging faculty and activating their leadership and creativity"* – Community College President • *"Working with adjunct faculty is a big deal. This has to be addressed to make real progress. Also, there needs to be more of a focus on student advising, since they are often the frontline contact for students."* – Technical Assistance Provider • *"Something like communities of practice for faculty is an absolute necessity and the most important thing we can do. Faculty are starving for PD, but institutions can't afford to provide it."* – Community College Institutional Research Director
Effectively using data to drive decision making and improvements in practice	• *"Our data needs to tell a coherent story. Everyone has loads of data. We have all we need. We just don't have the capacity to make sense of it in a way that informs our decisions."* – Community College President • *"We have a great need to have a college-level faculty, IT, and advisors sit down with external IT experts to figure out how best to handle data."* –State System Leader
Thinking through ways to support the whole student experience along multiple points in their pathway to completion	• *"We have to pay more attention to the full student experience. Just as many students have a rough transition from high school to college, we see the same kind of difficult transition from developmental education courses to college level work."* – Community College President • *"There needs to be more focus on non-cognitive development. Cultural issues, fears, anxiety, and a deep desire to be successful lies beneath the surface of our developmental education students. It's not just about math and English. Mindsets and cultures need to be lifted up in the reform work. They are essential."* – Community College President • *"We have to focus on pathways to success. Begin with the end in mind. The key to retaining students having programs that lead to somewhere students want to go."* – National Researchers
Building external infrastructure to support implementation	• *"The most important focus for scale has to be on infrastructure to support implementation. Individual interventions and technologies will not get us to scale."* – National Researcher • *"It is a significant challenge to find strong intermediaries in the field."* – National Funder • *"Capacity building at the local level is the key for success in our state."* – State System Leader

Preliminary thoughts on required infrastructure supports

Based on the areas of focus outlined above, we have begun to think about a path forward on what it takes to support scaling of integrated developmental education practices across multiple campuses, and test and refine these ideas with many of you.

While there are impressive pockets of innovation throughout the country, we share the belief many of you articulated that there needs to be a robust *ecosystem* of supports at a *national and state/regional level* to enable more institutions to pursue the path of effective integrated reform. Outlined below are our preliminary thoughts on national and state/regional supports that will help enable and accelerate greater scaling of reforms on campuses, and which reflect input from early, one-on-one conversations with you. *[Note: many of the suggested elements already have existing efforts in motion]*

National support and activities
- Alignment among key stakeholders in the field (e.g., researchers, national technical assistance providers, institutions, funders) on shared standards and metrics of success   - A repository of ongoing research on effective interventions and examples of implementation that can easily be accessed by practitioners and technical assistance providers   - Publicly shared benchmarking data on performance of institutions against key metrics (e.g., percentage of developmental education students completing gateway courses within a year)   - Toolkits and guides to support implementation of effective practices

State/regional support and activities
- Dedicated technical assistance to build capacity for reform, e.g.:   - Leadership coaching focused on culture and change management   - Professional development providers focused on faculty engagement and tailoring of interventions   - Support for strategic use of data and formative evaluation   - State/regional "implementation hubs" that organize a state's stakeholders around common actions to accelerate developmental education reform efforts, e.g.:   - Supporting the development of "communities of practice" composed of administrators, instructional, and advising faculty to support shared learning and innovation   - Coordinating funders, policymakers, and system leaders behind a shared agenda

We are in the early stages of developing these ideas and we look forward to deeply engaging with you on this during the convening. These thoughts reflect individual input from many of you – and we greatly anticipate the opportunity to have collective conversations to better define and shape them. In order to have a fruitful discussion about this at the convening, we have put together a set of questions that we would like you to reflect on prior to the convening.

Questions

- What does it take to implement effective integrated developmental education reforms at an institution? (Note: we have taken a first pass on this in the appendix, which is a synthesis based on discussion with and observation of the practices of institutions implementing integrated reforms. Please feel free to refer to it as a starting point as you reflect on this question)
- What are some supports, resources, and/or information that you think are needed to enable and accelerate the statewide/national scaling of integrated approaches to developmental education reform?
  - Which of the supports could be implemented at the national level? (e.g., database of interventions and pathways)
  - Which should be organized at state or regional level? (e.g., technical assistance to support cultural changes on campus, professional development for faculty, effective data usage)
- What are the relationships between the players in the ecosystem that need to be in place for this to be effective? (e.g., relationships across institutions, between states and among TA providers)
- A final, distinct question: what should we call this work? As we think together about what we all may do to support scale – should we consider a name that captures the momentum we aspire to support?

Appendix: Initial thinking on what it takes to implement integrated developmental education reform at an institution

Based on our conversations with you, we have outlined a set of factors that appear instrumental in achieving a successful integrated developmental education approach on campuses. We hope that this draft can serve as a resource as you think about what it takes to achieve integrated developmental education reform at an institution.

1. **Students, faculty, and leadership share a vision of student success and a commitment to improved learning across the institution**

Among the many institutions we visited, there was a pervasive sense that those institutions who were pushing the furthest on developing integrated reforms spoke a similar language that was anchored in how to support students to be successful not only in developmental education courses but also throughout their career at the institution. In one focus group of faculty and students discussing the I-BEST program, the students were quick to note that while they felt deeply that faculty members believed in their potential, it was also important for the students to share that belief for them to be successful.

2. **Senior leadership provides opportunities and resources for instructional and advising faculty to bring the vision to life by:**
   - **Engendering a cohesive culture of trust and respect for faculty and staff to drive change, and**
   - **Supporting faculty and staff to explore innovative ideas through professional development, iterative experimentation and learning, and transparent allocation of resources to support initiatives**

While the institutions that we observed were taking differing approaches to scaling integrated developmental education interventions, they all had similar "genesis" points. These institutions tended to begin with the senior leadership providing resources and support for experimentation—either in the form of small "high impact grants" or open RFP grant processes—that served as catalysts for faculty to identify and design practices that fit their institution. In the cases where deep curricular redesign was pursued, faculty whose ideas were selected were given release time to focus on developing the curriculum and working with the appropriate departments to ensure that policies would be supportive of the shift.

Although not all programs funded through these grants were expected to move beyond the experimentation phase, many administrators used the process as a way to provide an on-ramp to larger funding. For example, anticipating a shift in student success funding, one institution used the earlier experimentation funding as a way to pilot activities and prepare a stronger application for public funding. By creating learning communities for faculty to share best practices, attend professional development training, and apply for release time to focus on curriculum development, they were well positioned to take advantage of public funding flows to support expansion of the program.

In addition to anticipating potential funding opportunities, senior administrators also noted the need to be cognizant of a pathway for scaling pilots. Key factors that were noted in these conversations were paying attention to the overall costs of supporting interventions, the complexity of the approach (e.g., requirements for learning communities vs. integrated courses), and the financial impact of these shifts on enrollment and persistence.

3. **Faculty motivated to adopt and adapt best in-class interventions while honoring the core institutional context and culture**

Many faculty members highlighted the critical role of professional development opportunities in leading them to identify effective interventions. In particular, faculty cited the role of professional development funding to attend conferences in their field as a critical enabler of their ability to learn about and share best practices with other institutions.

In addition to learning about effective practices, faculty members stressed the need to adapt those practices to the unique institutional context of their campus to ensure that those practices would extend beyond their own classrooms. By thinking through how their students would perceive the interventions and engaging other faculty members in the process of tailoring the interventions, these faculty members were able to develop initiatives that could be easily embedded within their existing campus policies and practices.

Once new programs and approaches are in place, we have seen institutions provide supports to encourage a broader set of faculty to begin to adopt them effectively, for example, with online training modules or learning groups.

4. **Cultivation of a culture that supports learning through experimentation, collaboration, project-piloting and creative recovery from setbacks, with:**
    - **Capacity to set effective evaluation metrics aligned to student success**
    - **Courageous use of data to support both formative and summative evaluation measures**
    - **Commitment to see through the evolving success of particular interventions and to persist in building scale (e.g., time to adoption among faculty)**

Members of institutions that are engaged in continuous improvement processes emphasized the importance of using data to inform what is working well and what changes need to be made to improve student outcomes. Some spoke about the value of aligning with a "data coach" that helped them analyze student performance data and identify changes that need to be made to improve student achievement outcomes. These settings—which were organized around using data for formative assessment rather than evaluation—provided opportunities for using data to encourage and deepen effective practice and learning rather than to penalize behaviors

In addition to factors outlined above, interviews surfaced the importance of additional surrounding local supports (e.g., funders, business leaders) as well as the state policy context as enabling factors that supported developmental education reform efforts