COLLEGE MILESTONES
ENROLLMENT IN GATEKEEPER COURSES: VIRGINIA

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who enrolled in gatekeeper English and math courses within four years

Who Is Counted?
First-time students enrolled in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) in the summer or fall 2004 terms

What It Tells Us
About three-fifths (62 percent) of first-time VCCS students enrolled in gatekeeper English courses, and 36 percent enrolled in gatekeeper math courses within four years of starting college.

Why It’s Important
A gatekeeper course is the first or lowest-level college-level course students take in a subject such as mathematics, reading, or writing, often following completion of one or more developmental courses in that subject. Most certificate, degree, and transfer programs require students to pass gatekeeper courses in one or more subjects. Yet the largest obstacle to passing gatekeeper courses seems to be that students do not enroll in them. One study found that only 63 percent of those who finished developmental mathematics and 72 percent who finished developmental reading enrolled in gatekeeper courses for those subjects within three years of starting college. However, of those who did enroll, 79 percent passed gatekeeper mathematics and 75 percent passed gatekeeper reading (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

ABOUT THE DATA
Gatekeeper courses: College-level English or math courses. For English, ENG111 was a gatekeeper course. For math, MTH105, MTH120, MTH121, MTH126, MTH141, MTH151, MTH158, MTH163, MTH166, MTH173, and MTH271 were gatekeeper courses.

First-time college students enrolled in a VCCS college in the summer or fall 2004 terms had no prior college credits other than those earned through high school dual enrollment programs. Sample includes students in transfer and career tech programs as well as those concurrently enrolled in high school. These students were followed for four years, through the 2008 summer term.

DATA SOURCE