PRECOLLEGE MILESTONES

COMPLETION OF DEVELOPMENTAL READING SEQUENCE: VIRGINIA

Among first-time Virginia Community College students enrolled in transfer programs in fall 2004 and referred to developmental reading, percentage who completed the developmental reading sequence:

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students who completed a developmental reading sequence within four years

Who Is Counted?
First-time students enrolled in transfer programs in the summer or fall 2004 terms who were referred to a developmental reading course

What It Tells Us
About two-fifths (41 percent) of incoming Virginia Community College System (VCCS) students who were referred to a developmental reading course one level below the college level completed the developmental reading sequence, while 20 percent of those referred to a course two levels below the college level completed the sequence.

Why It’s Important
Most beginning community college students must complete at least one developmental education course in mathematics or English (reading, writing, or both), and many must complete multiple courses in one or more subjects (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Completing the highest-level developmental course in a subject is the final precollege milestone and is often required to transfer to a four-year institution or to earn a certificate or associate degree.

ABOUT THE DATA
Developmental reading courses include reading courses one level below the college level (ENG05) and two levels below the college level (ENG04). First-time college students enrolled in VCCS in the summer or fall 2004 terms had no prior college credits other than those earned through high school dual-enrollment programs. The 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. The need for developmental education was determined using three different indicators: students’ placement test scores, course placement recommendations, and whether or not students took developmental courses in reading, writing, or math. Analyses by placement are carried out on a smaller sample because only about two-thirds of first-time students had placement test scores for at least one subject (reading, writing, or math).

DATA SOURCE