Multiple Measures for Learning Support Placement

Quarterly Meeting of the Tennessee Board of Regents

March 2021
Over the past decade, Tennessee has transformed remediation. Students at Tennessee community colleges can access college-level courses in their first year through three pathways.

**The path to college-level courses**

**Placement Tests**
First-time and dual enrollment students who satisfy minimum cut scores on placement tests (like the ACT, SAT, or Accuplacer) can enroll directly in college-level courses.

**SAILS**
Students who successfully complete SAILS during their senior year of high school can enroll directly in college-level math courses.

**Corequisite Learning Support**
First-time students who do not meet minimum placement scores and do not complete SAILS enroll in corequisite learning support courses alongside their college-level courses. In 2015, TBR became the first system to transform from the prerequisite remediation model into the innovative corequisite model at scale across all community colleges.
More than half of first-time students at Tennessee community colleges require learning support. Corequisite learning support transformed student success.

In fall 2019, before COVID-19...

59% of first-time, full-time students required learning support in at least one subject, and 21% required support in all three subjects.

Learning support is a key part of colleges’ efforts to close equity gaps.

84% of first-time, full-time Black students were placed into learning support in fall 2019, along with 66% of Hispanic students.

The corequisite learning support model transformed success.

57% of corequisite learning support students in 2017 passed college-level math in their first year, compared to only 15% under the prerequisite model in 2013.
In March 2020, TBR approved a pilot effort to add high school GPA as a method for learning support placement.

- COVID-19 posed challenges to students’ access to tests like the ACT and Accuplacer.
- Using high school GPA for placement is a research-based best practice.
- Implementing this reform alongside corequisite learning support continues Tennessee’s tradition of remediation reform and innovation.

Added high school GPA as a method for placement alongside traditional measures.

Students with a high school GPA of 3.6 or higher could bypass corequisite learning support regardless of their test scores.

At three colleges, students could provisionally place out of remediation if their high school GPA was between 2.8 - 3.6.
More than 2,900 first-time freshmen had ACT scores below and high school GPAs above the cut score. These students were able to bypass learning support.

In math alone, 2,200+ students bypassed learning support.

More than 900 students bypassed learning support in multiple subject areas. This translated to 15,000+ semester credit hours that students were able to bypass.

More than 4,100 dual enrolled high school students in fall 2020 were able to take college-level courses based on their high school GPA.

Over 3,000 dual enrollment students with no ACT score were able to take a college-level math, writing, or reading course.
Pilot students succeeded at high rates.

**Success in College-Level Math for First-Time Freshmen in Fall 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Math Below Cut Score</th>
<th>ACT Math Above Cut Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HS GPA Below 3.6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passed college-level math in fall 2020, compared to 38% in fall 2019.</td>
<td>passed college-level math in fall 2020, compared to 54% in fall 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Learning Support</td>
<td>Not In Learning Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HS GPA Above 3.6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passed college-level math in fall 2020, compared to 79% in fall 2019.</td>
<td>passed college-level math in fall 2020, compared to 87% in fall 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Not In Learning Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pass rates reflect the number of students enrolled in a college-level math course who earned a grade of A, B, or C. 288 first-time freshmen had high school GPAs above 3.6 but no ACT score. Of these, 65% passed math.*
For students placed using high school GPA, success rates in writing and reading courses remained high and were comparable to success rates in math.

Students at the three colleges who piloted a high school GPA cut score of 2.8 saw some promising results, but further research is needed on student outcomes.

Success rates for dual enrollment students who were placed into college-level courses using high school GPA remained very high in all subject areas.

Before 2020, very few learning support courses were offered online, so colleges had to quickly develop these courses. Further research is needed on the effectiveness of online learning support courses.
Extension of the pilot through 2021-2022 would allow placement to be determined by high school GPA, alongside traditional test-based measures.

This extension will help place students who lack access to tests or where test scores are delayed due to COVID-19.

This will also allow for further research into outcomes for students whose placement was determined based on their high school GPA.