Improved College Placement and Preparation Lead to Greater Student Achievement

Studies have revealed that standardized placement tests may not accurately place incoming college students, underestimating their ability to succeed in college-level courses and assigning them into unnecessary remedial classes. In the past, only 1 in 4 community college students in Hawai‘i who enrolled in remedial courses passed a college-level math course within 2 years, causing a significant roadblock on their path to earn a degree.

Working with its K12 and postsecondary partners, Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education (Hawai‘i P-20) explored new methods for placing college students in courses based on their high school academic performance. The state’s analyses also have led high schools to alter their curricula and instruction to better prepare students for college-level work.

More incoming students are passing college-level math courses when placed with high school achievement data rather than a traditional placement test.

Learn more

SLDS partners expand programs to prepare students for college

Hawai‘i P-20 continues to encourage uses of data that go beyond compliance reporting in order to spark new inquiries that promote student success. Informed by the analyses on the relationship between high school math and college readiness, UH and HIDOE have begun to focus on creating a middle-to-high school math transition course to support students even earlier in the education pipeline. UH and HIDOE math faculty recognize that strong alignment of curriculum, student support, and interventions are key to increasing student performance in math.

Hawai‘i P-20 and its partners have implemented additional projects to improve student outcomes. Findings are shared with stakeholders through user-friendly briefs, engaging stories from educators and school leaders, and outreach to news media.
Hawai‘i’s K12 educators know how to intervene to support students struggling to meet high school graduation requirements—once they know who those students are.

The Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) uses its longitudinal data system to create the On Track Dashboard, which highlights the factors most strongly correlated with on-time high school graduation. Educators can see at a glance which students are or are not on track to graduate based on their attendance and grades in core academic courses.

**On Track Dashboards focus on critical information for on-time graduation**

Building on a University of Chicago study of long-term outcomes for Chicago ninth-graders, HIDOE and the University of Hawai‘i analyzed ninth-grade cohort data from six Hawai‘i high schools to identify the factors most closely associated with on-time graduation. Similar to Chicago, HIDOE’s study showed that Hawai‘i students who earned one-quarter of credits required for graduation and who did not fail a core course during their first year of high school were significantly more likely to graduate on time than students who did not. Moreover, students’ attendance in ninth grade was closely correlated with whether they earned one-quarter of their high school credits.

HIDOE worked with a team of local instructional leaders and data management staff to design and pilot test interactive tables and charts to help educators identify at-risk students based on these critical data. The resulting On Track Dashboard was released statewide in April 2018.

**Educators save time identifying students and can focus on supporting them**

With the On Track Dashboard, educators spend less time compiling data to identify struggling students and more time providing those students support. The dashboard shows educators at a glance which students are “on track” or “off track” based on their current grades and attendance. Educators also can generate lists of students earning a specific letter grade in a course. With this information, classroom teachers and instructional teams can plan intervention strategies for individual students to help more students graduate on time.

Additionally, the On Track Dashboard is designed to help school leaders to compare student performance across core subjects. In the past, similar data revealed classroom-level differences in grading that prompted administrators to look more closely at instructional factors such as the impact of substitute teachers or grading policy differences between teachers. The new dashboard presents these data in an easier to use format.

After its launch, the On Track Dashboard quickly became one of the most-used data tools in HIDOE’s SLDS. The dashboard is now available to educators at all grade levels at which student attendance and grades are recorded. Preliminary feedback has been positive, with several users saying the tool is “exactly what we need.”