

**College Readiness Expectations in English and Mathematics
Placement Summit
Ohio Board of Regents
March 2, 2007**

Background and Overview

Ohio higher education has been concerned about the successful transition of students from high school to college courses, particularly in mathematics and English, for nearly three decades. On several occasions the secondary and higher education communities have joined together to address issues of the academic preparation of recent high school graduates, and since 1978, the Ohio Board of Regents has studied remediation levels at state assisted colleges and universities on an annual basis.

More recently, the Ohio Board of Regents has specifically focused on the transition to college in a statewide performance report, *Making the Transition from High School to College* (<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/index.html>). The Transition Report, produced annually, provides a statewide profile of recent high school graduates and their academic experiences (course taking patterns, ACT, first year college experiences, etc.) prior to making the transition to college.

The Transition Report addresses a key question related to Ohio's high school to college transition: are Ohio's recent high school graduates ready for college and do they succeed? Here are some of the primary observations of the report¹.

- Many college freshmen in Ohio have not taken high school courses that prepare them for college. Seventy percent of first-time freshman in Ohio in fall 2003 had completed at least a minimum college-preparatory curriculum in high school (4 English courses, 3 courses each of math, science, and social studies). Only 24% took a more rigorous curriculum (the complete college preparatory core) consisting of four courses in English, math, and social studies, and three courses in science that include biology, chemistry, and physics. *Many students don't take the full array of courses that are important for success in college.*
- Forty-one percent of Ohio's recent high school graduates enrolling at Ohio public colleges or universities in fall 2003 took at least one remedial course in English or math during their first year of college. Remedial course enrollment rates are directly related to the rigor of high school courses taken. In 2003, the remedial course enrollment rate for students taking a complete college-preparatory core was 15%. 35% for students taking the minimum core and 53% for students taking less than a college preparatory curriculum. *Even students taking the minimum college preparatory curriculum are not necessarily prepared to be successful in college – and most recent high school graduates (70%) only take the minimum core.*

¹Making the Transition from High School College in Ohio 2005: A Statewide Perspective, Draft Report Release dates TBA, November 2005

- Students attending Ohio colleges who have taken the complete college preparatory core have average ACT scores of 24, first-term GPAs of 3.0, first-to-second year retention rates of 91% and remediation rates of 15%. *Every outcome measure is better for students who take the more rigorous courses in high school.*

Student success in college is directly linked to the high school experience. In order to address issues of academic preparation, Ohio has taken several steps to ensure that students, parents and teachers know and understand the expectations for a successful transition to college and the workforce – including the development of *College Readiness Expectations in Mathematics and English*.

College Readiness Expectations in Mathematics and English

The *College Readiness Expectations in Mathematics and English* provide a clear statement of the essential knowledge and skills that students must have for success in making the transition directly into the first college credit courses in these disciplines. Developed by teams of higher education and K-12 faculty, the College Readiness Expectations have been reviewed and endorsed by college and university campuses. The Ohio Board of Regents began the development of the College Readiness Expectations as an extension of its articulation and transfer initiative. Common learning outcomes for many college courses have been developed by faculty as a way of guaranteeing the transfer of credit among all public colleges and universities. The College Readiness Expectations provide a very important bridge from high school into many of these courses such as Algebra, College Calculus and English Composition.

There is a great deal of interest in the expectations. Ohio was one of the early partners in a 29 state coalition formed to improve high schools as part of the American Diploma Project (<http://www.achieve.org>, for more information). The coalition states are developing specific plans and timetables to significantly raise the rigor of high school standards, assessments. And curricula to better align them with the demands of postsecondary education and work. Ohio's Academic Content standards (K – 12) and the College Readiness Expectations in English and Mathematics as well as the requirements for students, schools and colleges mandated through S.B. 311 (the Ohio Core legislation) are important aspects of helping students be successful in college and the workplace.