

# The Florida College System – Transparency, Accountability, Progress, and Performance

## HOW DO FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM FIRST-TIME IN COLLEGE DEGREE SEEKING STUDENTS PERFORM IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION?

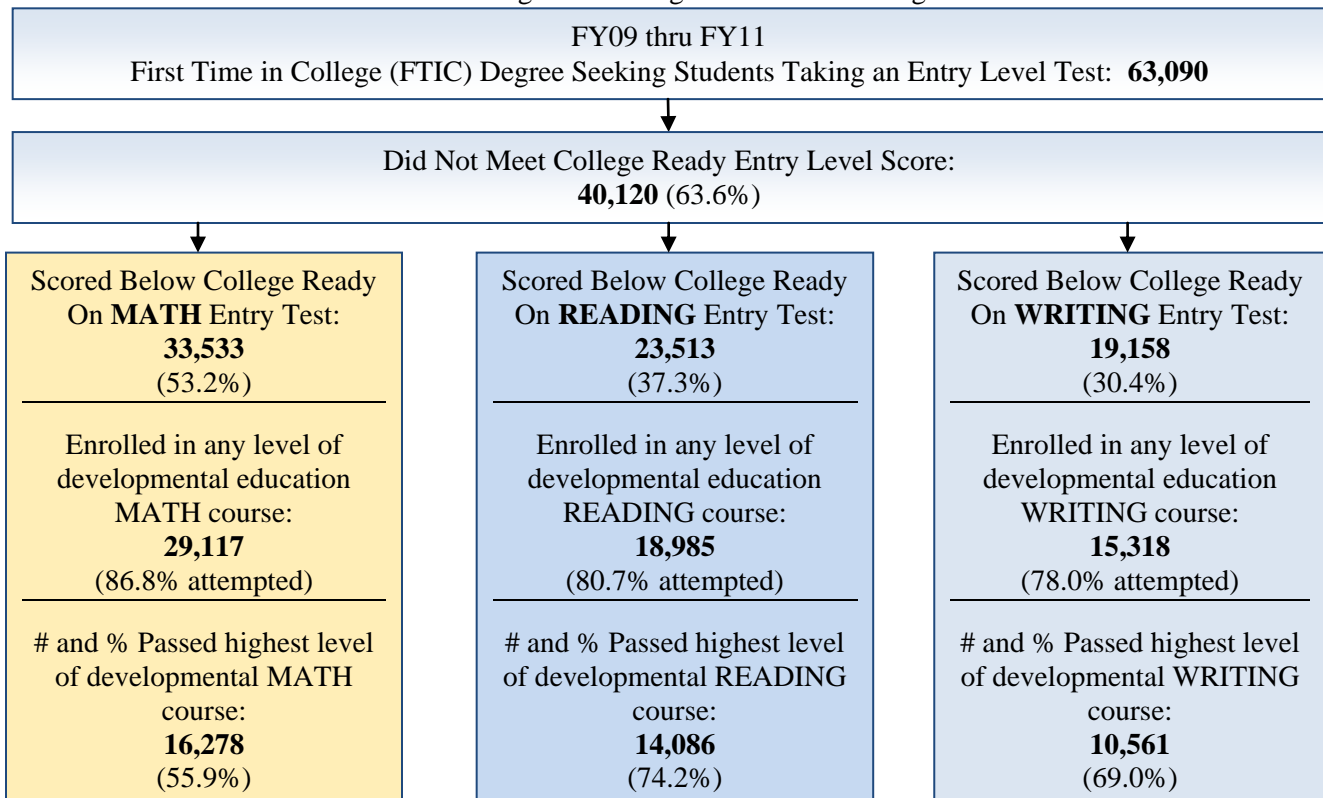
The Florida College System welcomes individuals with an ability to benefit from postsecondary education and embraces its mission to serve people who are fully prepared for college as well as students whose foundational academic skills need strengthening to succeed in college level classes. Florida College System leaders are actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with education and community partners to reduce the number of students needing developmental education and the amount/depth of remediation each student must complete to be successful in college level work. The colleges help individuals advance from where they are to where they want to be. First choices and second chances are provided.

To begin answering this question for The Florida College System, groups of fall, first-time-in-college (FTIC) degree seeking student cohorts who took an entry level test (SAT, ACT, or an approved placement test administered locally) were identified. Across all five entering cohorts tracked in this analysis, students were **most ready in Writing, next most prepared in Reading, and least prepared in Math**. Underdeveloped Math skills are responsible for the largest number of 1st time degree seeking students needing to take developmental courses. The attached tables contain additional details.

The latest statewide results for The Florida College System show that for the fall 2008-2009 FTIC cohort, **63.6 percent or 40,120 did not meet or exceed college ready scores on the entry level test**. The statewide need for remediation, while still elevated, **improved 3.3 percent from five years ago at the same time the number of students tested increased**. **Proportionately fewer recent Florida public high school graduates** who immediately transition into a Florida College System institution needed remediation (53.8 percent for the fall 2008-2009 cohort). According to the [Community College Research Center](#) (CCRC) at Columbia University’s Teacher’s College, nationwide approximately 60 percent of students entering community colleges are referred to at least one developmental education course.

In Florida, the progress of entering FTIC student cohorts was tracked for three years. Students attempting developmental courses in Math, Reading, and Writing and subsequently emerging from developmental coursework within three years are identified by subject. Results for the latest cohort appear in Figure 1 below. “By subject matter” counts are duplicated because some students are required to take developmental coursework in multiple subjects.

**Figure 1:** Statewide Florida College System (FCS) College Preparatory Success Rate for First-time in College (FTIC) Degree Seeking Students Who Took an Entry Level Test Fall 2008-2009 Entering Cohort Progress Tracked Through 2010-2011

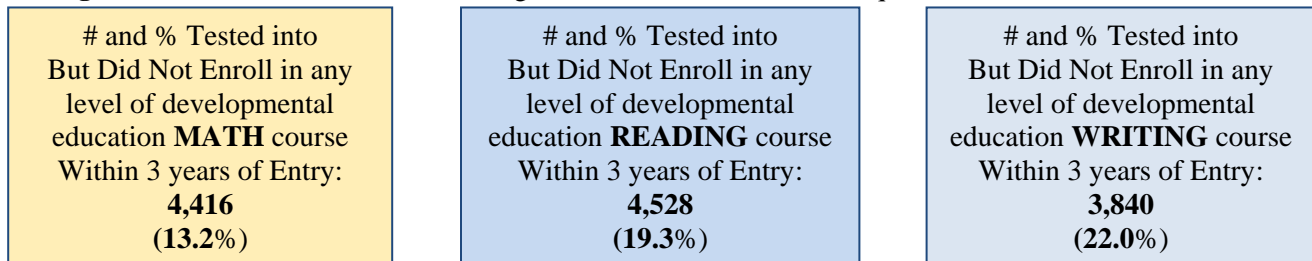


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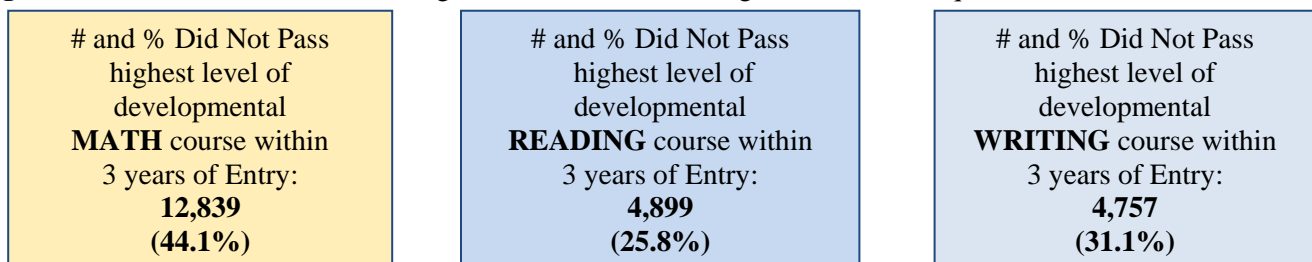
One challenge is to engage more students in required developmental education on a timely basis. Enrolling in needed remediation immediately after testing would benefit students by strengthening their foundational academic skills as early as possible after enrolling at the college. **“Failure to launch”** into remediation within 3 years of college entry was a problem across academic areas. For both **Reading and Writing about 1 in 5** students did not enter required remediation within 3 years. **Math was slightly better with 1 in 8** students not pursuing remediation within 3 years. Thousands of students are impacted. **To promote success, students should promptly pursue required developmental courses.**

**Figure 2:** FCS Fall 2008-2009 Entering Cohort Did Not Enroll in Required Remediation Thru 2010-2011



A second challenge is to help students complete the entire required developmental education sequence and transition exclusively into college level coursework on a timely basis.

**Figure 3:** FCS Fall 2008-2009 Entering Cohort Did Not Pass Highest Level of Required Remediation Thru 2010-2011



Within three years of college entry, students were **most successful in passing the highest level of developmental Reading (3 out of 4), next most successful in developmental Writing (2 out of 3), and least successful in completing the highest level of developmental Math (1 in 2).**

The depth of student Math deficiencies contributes to the challenge of completing the highest level of developmental Math within 3 years. Additional analysis separates FCS students in developmental Math into Lower Level – further away from being college ready and Upper Level developmental Math – closer to being college level. Results of the fall 2008-2009 FTIC cohort shows that the largest group testing into developmental Math – **approximately 1 in 3 students – tested into lower level developmental Math.** A smaller group – just over 1 in 5 tested into higher level developmental Math.

As noted in the CCRC [research brief](#) referenced on the previous page, there are a wide range of underlying reasons why students need to enroll in developmental education courses: difficulty learning the subject; may not have taken either enough or sufficiently challenging courses in high school (e.g., Math); the time lapse from the last time a course was taken in a subject area (i.e., older students); language issues; difficulty taking a test on the computer; or not readily understanding the placement tests. **The array of causes encourages a series of targeted interventions rather than a “one size fits all” approach to preparing students for college-level work.** Over the last year, The Florida College System has been using the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test ([PERT](#)), a customized computer-adaptive common placement test, in an effort to provide more accurate course placements and streamline the remediation process.

The Florida College System [Research & Analytics](#) and [Finance & Information Systems](#) offices produce a variety of reports and analysis including the [FCS Fact Book](#). Educational opportunities are available very close to home. To locate the nearest College and enroll, please visit the [Florida College Directory](#).

For assistance, contact Florida College System Research & Analytics  
Scott J. Parke, Ph.D. or Kathyrine L. Scheuch, Ed.D. at 850-245-0407

