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Dana Center Mathematics Pathways Extends Successful Work in Arkansas

New project builds on previous work to expand math pathways across the state's public colleges and universities.

The Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin has expanded its Dana Center Mathematics Pathways (DCMP) work in Arkansas to establish math pathways as “normative practice” in at least 85 percent of the state’s public institutions of higher education.

“The normative practice work in Arkansas will not only deepen and extend the very successful efforts seen in that state so far, but it also serves to create a model of what normative practice looks like and how it can be achieved at scale,” said [Martha Ellis, Ph.D.](#), the Dana Center’s director of higher education strategy, policy and services. “We are very pleased for the opportunity to continue supporting Arkansas colleges and universities in their efforts to deliver the right math at the right time for each student.” DCMP will focus on providing technical assistance through a regional support network and will pilot new tools and resources in Arkansas institutions.

The three-year initiative is supported by a \$1.4 million grant from [Ascendium Education Group](#) and builds upon [prior DCMP efforts](#) in Arkansas, including the three-year [Mathematics Pathways to Completion](#) (MPC) project that helped develop math pathways in six states. MPC efforts resulted in the successful implementation of math pathways in a number of Arkansas institutions, but they did not extend to what is considered “full” implementation in the state.

Mathematics pathways are considered fully implemented when they are part of the normative practice among institutions and systems of higher education. Implementation must be accepted by systems across the state and be enacted as the default—or normative—practice within an institution for the vast majority of students, including low-income students and students of color. While pathways have become a widely accepted approach, few states and institutions have shifted to normative practice at a statewide scale.

Mathematics pathways are a rapidly growing national movement in colleges and universities to align math courses more closely to students’ intended majors and future careers. Mathematics pathways support student success and upward mobility for all students. The DCMP began in 2012 and has conducted extensive work in more than 30 states. Its major goal is to accelerate students’ successful completion of their first college-level math course while maintaining the academic rigor of those curricula, often accomplished through the use of “co-requisite” models of instruction. Earning credit in an entry-level math course is a critical milestone in degree or certificate completion, but national data show that less than 10 percent of students complete a college mathematics course within the first two years of college.

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