

SOMEWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES...

A recent high school graduate excitedly starts her first semester in college. While she passed advanced mathematics courses in her senior year of high school, her university informs her she is not “college ready” in mathematics.

A high school student decides not to take any mathematics courses beyond those required for graduation because nothing in his experience has helped him see how math is relevant to his future.

Another student is steered away from advanced mathematics courses by her counselor based on that counselor’s perceptions about her race or family background.

Still another student wants to take additional mathematics courses but cannot—because his school does not offer them.

And somewhere, a recent university graduate, having successfully navigated the transition into and through college mathematics, finds that what he learned in his math courses did not prepare him with the quantitative skills he needs for his future.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE THESE STORIES...

For millions of students, the way we teach mathematics stands as a barrier to postsecondary and career success. Too often, misaligned and outdated mathematics requirements and policies unfairly block students from realizing their dreams. Now is the time to dismantle those systemic barriers and build mathematics pathways that will increase student success and lead to equitable outcomes.

BARRIERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

In the report *Launch Years: A New Vision for the Transition from High School to Postsecondary Mathematics*, the Launch Years initiative establishes a case for change by identifying these common barriers facing today’s students:

Barrier #1: Students experience inequitable opportunities to learn.

Barrier #2: Mathematics is misused in college admissions criteria.

Barrier #3: Postsecondary readiness policies are inconsistent and misaligned.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

While substantial barriers exist, so do opportunities to leverage change:

Opportunity #1: Advanced quantitative literacy skills are increasingly in demand.

Opportunity #2: Mathematics leaders are calling for modernizing mathematics pathways.

Opportunity #3: Higher education innovations are increasing options, equity, and success.

Opportunity #4: Innovations in K–12 systems are showing promise.

**DOWNLOAD LAUNCH YEARS: A NEW VISION
FOR THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL
TO POSTSECONDARY MATHEMATICS**

..... **LAUNCHYEARSREPORT.ORG/VISION**

Launch Years initiative

Now is the time to reimagine mathematics and update mathematics policies and practices so students can make a seamless transition in their “launch years”—from grade 11 through the first year of postsecondary education.

We are at a unique moment in time: a changing economy and evolving technology have created new jobs that require math skills. There is an economic imperative to ensure that our country has a diverse workforce equipped with the specific math skills that the 21st-century economy demands.

Launch Years brings together leaders, experts, and advocates from K–12, higher education, and business and industry to codify and support the scaling of efforts to build mathematics pathways from high school through higher education and into the workplace.

Three states—Georgia, Texas, and Washington—are actively engaged in the Launch Years initiative based on their previous experience and success in mathematics pathways work. They have committed to creating clear, relevant pathways from K–12 to postsecondary mathematics and sharing their key learnings with states and districts around the country.

Launch Years is an initiative led by the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, in collaboration with Education Strategy Group, Achieve, Community College Research Center, and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.



LAUNCH YEARS — CREATING MORE EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR EACH STUDENT

A college degree, postsecondary certificate of value, and educational opportunities in the military are keys that can provide opportunities for all students—particularly those who have not traditionally been well served by education systems.

Yet the current reality is that far too many of these students face systemic barriers on their paths to success.

There is a moral imperative to ensure that all students, regardless of their circumstances, background, or zip code, have access to the high-quality, relevant mathematics education they need for any future they choose to pursue—whether it's a STEM or non-STEM career.

HOW TO MODERNIZE HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS

In *Launch Years: A New Vision for the Transition from High School to Postsecondary Mathematics*, seven recommendations offer concrete strategies to establish policies, practices, and structures that enable students to transition seamlessly from high school to postsecondary and toward fulfilling careers and active participation in our data-driven society. The report also explains the ways in which these recommendations will lead to more equitable outcomes.

What do we need to change?

Secondary and postsecondary institutions offer aligned mathematics pathways that:

- Offer rigorous content that prepares students for future educational and job opportunities and for participation in a data-driven society.
- Provide high-quality instruction from highly trained teachers who are well prepared to meet the needs of a diverse student population.
- Are paired with student supports that empower students and families to make informed decisions and support student success.
- Use data and evaluation to guard against tracking and other practices that lead to inequitable outcomes.

How do we bring change to scale?

State agencies and education systems, institutions, and schools create the conditions that promote and support change through:

- State and institutional policies on alignment, postsecondary readiness, and postsecondary admission that enable smooth student transitions from high school to postsecondary mathematics.
- Mobilizing and including a wide array of stakeholders through strategic and equitable communications and engagement strategies.

How will we measure impact and improve?

State agencies, systems, and institutions use data and research to measure impact and to inform continuous improvement of mathematics pathways with particular attention to:

- Examining overall student success and identifying disparities across subpopulations and targeting actions to achieve more equitable outcomes.
- Respecting the student experience.
- Creating transparency around data and how it is used in decision-making.

Achieving these structural changes will take a lot of work. Learn more about the collaborations, experience-based expertise, and strategies the Launch Years initiative brings to bear on the challenges facing today's students: www.utdanacenter.org/launchyears

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