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**New Report Explains How K-12 School and Community College Alignment Helps Student Success**

*AACC, ACCT, and Education Strategy Group offer recommended practices to improve community college, K-12 collaboration for better college and career outcomes.*

Washington DC— The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and Education Strategy Group (ESG) today released a series of recommendations to support community college presidents and trustees as they continue to work to improve graduation and labor market outcomes for students.

In recent years, community colleges have been at the center of many education policy conversations—and with good reason. Two-year institutions play a critical role in our educational ecosystem by providing open-access education to more than 40% of the nation’s undergraduates. Those students represent a substantial majority of the country’s first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented minority undergraduates. Higher education is necessary in today’s global economy and community colleges afford individuals opportunities to learn the skills needed to enter the workforce and earn a family-sustaining wage. Further, educated Americans are more likely to productively engage in their community.

“Community college leaders today are charged with doing more for students with fewer resources,” said ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown. “We know that trustees and presidents are up to the challenge—and we are proud to offer this actionable, practical resource to help our members navigate such complex terrain.”

The need for community colleges and their K-12 peers to collaborate is more critical than ever before. College- and career-focused measures are now included in K-12 system accountability metrics in more than 40 states; ensuring that high schools are measured, in part, based on how well prepared their students are for postsecondary transitions. Perkins V, which was passed into law on July 31, 2018, now requires state career and technical education systems to include a strategy for joint planning and alignment between K-12 and postsecondary. Further, under the umbrella of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, more

states are aligning the work of in-school, out-of-school, and adult training programs through their workforce development boards.

“Today, community colleges are facing increased pressures to improve graduation and labor market outcomes,” said Matt Gandal, president of Education Strategy Group. “Community colleges across the country continue to meet this challenge by locking arms with K-12 school systems to align academic, navigational, and career supports. These collaborations have been game changers, setting students on a path to succeed in higher education and beyond.”

***Aligning for Student Success: How Community Colleges Work with K-12 to Improve College and Career Outcomes***calls on community college presidents and trustees implement strategies to accelerate academic transitions, extend navigational supports, and serve as career bridges from high school to the workforce. The report identifies successful community college practices and offers high-level strategies community college president and trustees can take to partner with K-12 to dramatically improve student outcomes. The report specifically recommends that community colleges focus on three priorities:

1. **Accelerate Academic Transitions**: Community colleges can partner with K-12 school systems to provide opportunities for students to “speed-up” their learning through early postsecondary course-taking opportunities in high school or “catch-up” to a college-ready level through 12th grade transitions courses that bring developmental education down to high school
2. **Extend Navigational Supports**: Community colleges can work with K-12 partners to strengthen academic counseling and provide clear academic and career pathways for students.
3. **Serve as Career Bridges**: Community colleges can and should serve as career bridges that guide students from high school to a credential with currency in the labor market.

The report profiles successful programs at a variety of community colleges that serve as exemplary models, including:

* The City University of New York and State University of New York’s focus on using the 12th-grade year to increase academic readiness
* Miami Dade College’s early advising to support students to and through college
* Maryland’s Montgomery College and Prince George’s Community College’s mapping of transfer and career opportunities to accelerate baccalaureate degree completion through collaboration

“Community colleges have been providing workforce education for decades,” noted Walter G. Bumphus, AACC’s president and CEO. “Now, more than ever, they are working to align educational and training programs for students with the needs of local business and industry. Those efforts are a bridge between students, education, and jobs and are critical to ensuring that Americans are able to meet the needs of the 21st Century global workforce.”

The organizations are encouraging community college leaders to review the report and for college boards and presidents to consider what interventions might work best for their institutions and students. Additional resources and opportunities for collaboration will also be made available to institutions interested in advancing this work.

For more information, download ***Aligning for Student Success: How Community Colleges Work with K-12 to Improve College and Career Outcomes*** at: [http://edstrategy.org/resource/aligning-for-student-success/](http://edstrategy.org/?post_type=resources&p=1192&preview=true)

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**About AACC**

 As the voice of the nation’s community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) delivers on the community college promise to provide educational opportunities for more than 12 million diverse students in search of the American Dream. Uniquely dedicated to access and success for all students, AACC’s member colleges provide an on-ramp to degree attainment, skilled careers, and family-supporting wages. Located in Washington, D.C., AACC advocates for these not-for-profit, public-serving institutions to ensure they have the resources and support they need to deliver on the mission of increasing economic mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for all Americans. [www.aacc.nche.edu.](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001WTJTvmx3lGP-RntCBOc2Al1-iOvJK_L-_kA7TELPRWifVELNADXVD7MMzubd9iSGrDks7R3_yNEvLNS7W7EhArS6HhEvRv3oetjwus_gRxoPGttELLP29oIauQaqnYEraB71JPfMBDFLkQecF0Uau3ONqKPb5a3g&c=bCjMCGGW2MpGU8jaDwT0NJnRKCCwrhoifN-nKPoGjVLzgQe-840QWg==&ch=v9DzdNCFdKFhQIqKHaX6lf1TyrLfJNwiIBI95lI-5a8ztSzeY35Ucg==)

**About ACCT**

Founded in 1972, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is the nonprofit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees of community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond.  ACCT's purpose is to strengthen the capacity of community, technical, and junior colleges and to foster the realization of their missions through effective board leadership at local, state, and national levels.  For more information, visit [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org/). Follow ACCT on Twitter at[www.twitter.com/CCTrustees](https://twitter.com/CCTrustees).

**About Education Strategy Group**

Education Strategy Group (ESG) supports America’s education leaders and employers at the transition points that have the highest stakes for students and the highest impact for states, communities, and economies. We bring deep experience leading policy development, advocacy and implementation work in the K-12, higher education, and workforce sectors. For more information, go to <http://edstrategy.org/>

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