

Participation in Kentucky's college preparatory transition courses: An update



About This Study

This Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia study, conducted in partnership with the Kentucky College and Career Readiness Alliance under the 2012–2017 REL contract, updates a [previous REL Appalachia report](#) on participation in college preparatory transition courses in Kentucky. Transition course changes since the original study of 2011/2012 data include:

- In addition to math and reading, courses are now offered for English.
- Transition courses are now a recommended option for all grade 12 students who did not meet college readiness benchmarks—not just those approaching benchmarks.

Unlike the original study, the new study provides results by schools' Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) designation (priority school, focus school, or reward school).



Nuts and Bolts

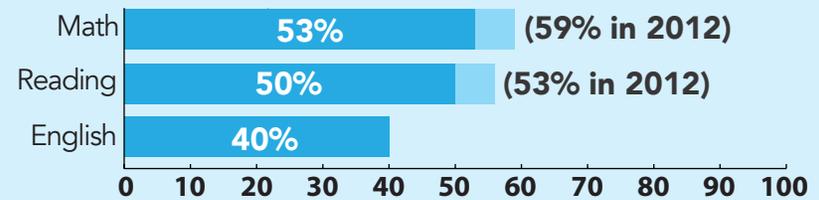
This descriptive study examined:

- Percentage of students who were not college ready.
- Percentage and characteristics of high schools that offered transition courses.
- Percentage and characteristics of students who participated in transition courses.

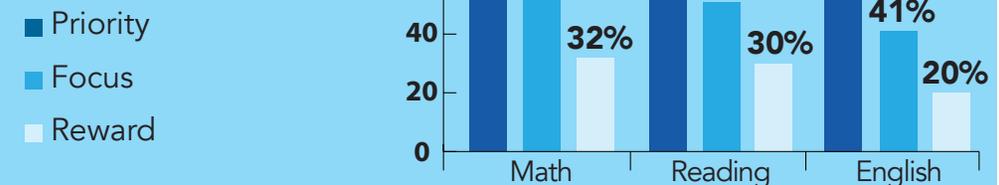
The study uses Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) grade 12 student-level data for the 2014/15 school year, including school enrollment, demographics, course records, ACT records through the end of grade 11 as the measure of college readiness, and a list of schools by ESEA designation, all provided by KDE. School locale and enrollment size data were downloaded from the 2013/14 Common Core of Data. The student population consisted of all 40,722 Kentucky public high school students who were in grade 12 for the first time in Kentucky's 284 public high schools.

Key Findings

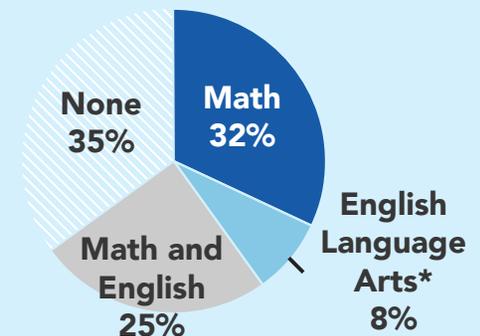
In each subject, about half of students did not meet college readiness benchmarks entering grade 12 and needed college readiness intervention.



Priority schools had the highest percentage of students performing below benchmarks.



Nearly two-thirds of Kentucky high schools—mostly small, rural, and low-performing schools—offered transition courses.



* English language arts combines English courses and reading courses due to data limitations.

Key Findings Cont.

Key Findings

Approximately 40 percent of students who were not college-ready in math and 20 percent who were not college-ready in reading or English participated in a transition course in those subjects.

40% in math 

20% in reading or English 

+ **-** Participation in math transition courses increased 3 percentage points from 2011/12 to 2014/15, including 9 percentage points among students who were within 3 points of meeting college readiness benchmarks.

× **÷**

Participation rates were higher among Black students, students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, and students in Individualized Education Programs.

Participation rates in math were lower among students in urban schools than among students in suburban, town, and rural schools.



What Now?

Implications

The majority of schools offered transition courses in 2014/15. However, fewer than 40 percent of students who needed college readiness intervention participated. Therefore, KDE may wish to explore:

- The relationship between whether a school offers a transition course and the number of students in the school who need intervention in that subject. Schools may need a minimum threshold of students to offer a course.
- Additional interventions schools are offering and which interventions students are choosing.

Areas for Future Research

Future studies may examine:

- The effectiveness of transition courses as a college readiness intervention.
- Why participation rates are lower for students in urban areas than for students in suburban, town, and rural areas.

Flory, M., & Cramer, E. (2017). *Participation in Kentucky's college preparatory transition courses: An update* (REL 2017–211). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Any opinions, suggestions, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this product are a result of this collaborative effort and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Institute of Education Sciences or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.