



THE NEBRASKA MATH READINESS PROJECT

PERSISTENCE, RETENTION, COMPLETION, SUCCESS



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Introduction

Students entering post-secondary education are required to possess a minimum standard of knowledge. College-ready students have a base of knowledge that supports their educational success as they take college-level courses in their primary program of study. Unfortunately, many students are entering post-secondary education without being college-ready and are required to take developmental coursework upon entry to a post-secondary institution.

- Less than one-third of Nebraska high school juniors met benchmarks according to the 2016 Nebraska ACT scores.
- Of Nebraska high school graduates entering a community college, 25% required a developmental math course before meeting the requirements to enter a college-level math course for their program of study (NCCA Study, Fall 2016).
- Nationally, the number of high school graduates who are failing to meet college-level benchmarks has increased by 8% over the last four years.
- This results in over two-thirds of community college students who are required to take developmental coursework. Only 20% who begin with developmental courses successfully finish a college-level math course (Rutschow, Diamond, & Serna-Wallender, 2017).



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To increase the number of students who are college-ready upon high school graduation, three of Nebraska's community colleges (Central Community College, Northeast Community College, and Western Nebraska Community College) are working together to provide a clear path to post-secondary educational attainment. The Nebraska Math Readiness Project (NMRP) establishes a collaboration among the community colleges and 30 identified high school partners to assist students in achieving their academic goals. The community colleges will work with identified high school partners to communicate expectations of college-readiness, provide a consistent assessment level of what it means to be college-ready, and assist with program implementation.

Data will be obtained to provide evidence-based information showcasing the impact and benefits of the project on students across the state from small, medium, and large high schools as they enter and complete post-secondary education.



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Project Intent

The purpose of the NMRP is to provide a bridge to success for high school seniors who need to improve their math skills before entering and completing a college-level math course. The project will be lead by a high school math teacher in a blended classroom environment to improve understanding and reinforce learning. Students will work in a Pearson MyLab Math course that will provide personalized tools to learn new math skills and build upon existing knowledge. Upon successful completion of the course, students will not require foundations-level math classes in college. Instead they will be able to directly enter college-level math classes upon acceptance into a partnering community college. This allows students to pay less tuition, immediately start taking classes that count towards their degree, better qualify for financial aid, and have the ability to finish their degree on time.

Population

Through community college and high school partnerships, a math readiness course will be offered to high school juniors and seniors who do not show college-readiness and have declared intentions to pursue post-secondary education. Potential students need to meet any of the following qualifiers.

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Population

- Scored between 13-18/19 on the ACT Math exam or Pre-ACT Math exam
- Scored between 225-239/242 on district MAP (NWEA) math
- Math placement scores that would place students into foundations level math courses at a community college
- Appropriate scores on other district assessments
- Overall high school GPA of 3.0 or lower
- Overall high school math GPA between 2.0 and 3.25
- Teacher recommendation

Students in the NMRP are to aim for success and be motivated. This is one more opportunity in a student's high school career to improve their math abilities and knowledge. The course has been developed in a way that it can find a student's strengths and weaknesses and build on that foundation. This particular population was chosen as early intervention can greatly impact a student's success.

During the initial four years, the NMRP has provided service to over 900 students across the state.



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Pearson MyLab Math

The coursework, with the assistance of Pearson software called MyLab Math, will provide a customized and adaptive learning experience for students to increase preparation for college-level math coursework prior to entering in post-secondary education. This intervention is driven by technology and allows a student to learn through personalized pretests, homework, quizzes, and tests. Students can access the MyLab Math virtual platform two ways: 1) during the required, in-class course where an instructor is present to assist with in-depth questions and instruction, and, 2) outside the traditional classroom with internet and computer accessibility to continue advancing their skills at an individualized pace.

Teachers

The role of the math teacher within the NMRP is to facilitate the learning process for each student. While much of the curriculum will be online through MyLab Math, a math teacher is vital to the success of the project. Students will need daily assistance, monitoring, and counseling throughout the course. Having a teacher that is familiar to the student and knowledgeable on the content will be a great advantage to students and further promote their future success in the NMRP and in their post-secondary education.

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Curriculum

Throughout the progression of one year, students will be expected to successfully complete two levels within the course. Level I is Arithmetic, where students will focus on obtaining a sound understanding of arithmetic skills and number sense. Level II is Algebra, where students will use their Level I skills to communicate algebraic concepts and solve problems. A detailed timeline will be given to each partner high school to help keep students on track. The teacher may need to jump-start students' motivation for learning if they should fall behind on the timeline. A remediation plan may need to be developed to get students back on track.

For grading and credit allocation of the high school course, the NMRP grants each partner school district the autonomy to create their own system.

Regional Coordinators

The role of the regional coordinators within the NMRP is to ensure that the project is being implemented and offered to students consistently in current partner high schools. Coordinators will also work with potential partner high schools to implement the project for the future.

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Regional Coordinators

Throughout the academic year, the coordinators will provide teachers and students support in the application of the course. Correspondence through phone, email, and formal visits between teachers, coordinators, and the project director will aid in communication. The coordinator will answer questions as they arise, aid in grade book updates, watch out for potential problems, and send deadline reminders for high school teachers, administrators, and students. Coordinators, along with the project director, teachers, and students, are the visible presence of the project and the community colleges throughout the year.

Coordinators will also take an active role in helping community college admission counselors in their effort to correctly place incoming students into math courses during registration. The coordinators have access to all completers in the statewide project.

The NMRP has the goal to be the statewide, systematic approach that addresses the low percentage of Nebraska high school students who are college-ready in math upon high school graduation. We are proud of our first four years in this project and look forward to its future with implementation at more schools and helping more students attain their academic dreams.

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