

California Community Colleges Student Success Scorecard

Frequently Asked Questions

Scorecard Legislation and Development

What is the [Student Success Scorecard](#)?

The Scorecard is the current version of the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC), the annual report produced by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. This performance measurement system contains a common set of metrics that measures outcomes for the system and its colleges. Click [here](#) for additional information about the Scorecard framework.

What is ARCC/AB 1417?

In 2004, California State [Assembly Bill AB1417](#) (Pacheco) [Chapter 581, Statutes of 2004] established the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) program that required the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to recommend to the Legislature and Governor a workable structure (framework) for annual evaluation of community college performance in meeting statewide educational outcome priorities.

How was the Scorecard developed?

In 2012, the Student Success Task Force (SSTF) recommended the implementation of a new accountability framework, whose purpose was to provide stakeholders with clear and concise information on key student progress and success metrics in order to improve performance. The recommendation specified that a Scorecard be built on the existing reporting system, the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC).

To satisfy the request of the SSTF and subsequent legislation, the ARCC Technical Advisory Workgroup, which guided the development of the initial accountability system in 2005, was reconvened. The workgroup was represented by individuals from various community college organizations and stakeholder groups, as well as researchers with technical expertise in performance measures. This technical workgroup reviewed the existing framework and advised on the design the new Scorecard.

How does the Legislature use the Scorecard?

A college's results might undergo review by the individual legislators whose district contains that college. Over the years, the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst's Office and the Governor's Office have used specific parts of the report for policy discussions. The state oversight bodies interest is also on how each college works with its local board of trustees and its community to demonstrate the efficacy of the principle of local accountability in lieu of centralized action at the state level.

Do the report results affect funding?

Currently, the Scorecard is not tied to any funding.

Scorecard Production and Validation

What is the source of data for the Scorecard report?

The source of data for the report is primarily the Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS), a system that collects student and course level data from each of the colleges and districts at the completion of each term.

What is the general timeline for the Scorecard?

In January each year, the draft report is released giving colleges/districts 30-45 days to review their indicators and resubmit data. Each year on March 30th the final Scorecard is released.

Can the colleges/districts review their data?

The Chancellor's Office asks that each college/district review their college level indicators and the data behind the indicators when a draft report is released in January. The student level datasets for each college/districts are available for this purpose through the [Data on Demand](#) site. Any changes to the data must occur through the standard Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) resubmission process.

How does a college make changes to its data?

Changes to data will only be accepted through the standard COMIS resubmission process. Colleges will generally need to resubmit the entire file if they want to update any part of the file. Changes to course information needs to be done through the [Curriculum Inventory](#).

If we do resubmit, how do we verify the resubmission and changes to the Scorecard?

All submissions and resubmission to COMIS produce a report. Information and Technology (IT) departments at the colleges and districts should be quite familiar with those reports and the overall resubmission process. There will be no additional reports that recalculate the Scorecard indicators after resubmissions other than the final Scorecard report.

Can the colleges/districts replicate the Scorecard metrics?

The Scorecard Data Specifications document gives college/district researchers with the information to replicate the metrics at the local level. The data specification document outlines the methodology, including which variables used to create each of the Scorecard indicators. The college/district researchers will not be able to replicate the metrics exactly because of the inability to determine first-time student status, and transfer across different districts and into different systems. Only the Chancellor's Office has data for all the colleges and can therefore do a systemwide search.

Scorecard Metrics

What data elements are used for each of the indicators?

The [Scorecard Data Specification](#) document provides a detailed description of the college profile and each of the metrics, including the data elements used to create the indicators.

What academic terms constitute an Academic Year?

For purposes of COMIS and the Scorecard, an Academic Year refers to all the terms in one year beginning with the Summer term and ending with the Spring term (Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring).

How did you derive the annual unduplicated headcount?

Annual unduplicated headcount is based on students actively enrolled in Summer, Fall, Winter, and/or Spring terms. This headcount includes both credit and noncredit students. A student enrolled in multiple terms was counted only once for the academic year (i.e., not counted separately for each term).

Is the FTES count based on COMIS data or 320?

The FTES count in the Scorecard is based on the 320 report ([CCFS-320 Report](#)).

Why did the student cohort sizes change from last year's Scorecard?

Changes in counts from the previous report for the same cohort years may be caused by resubmission of data from the colleges to COMIS or changes in the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data match. The NCS data match is used to define "first time student" status which is one of the criteria for cohort inclusion. With each annual version of the Scorecard, all the cohorts are reconstituted with new data from COMIS tables and the NSC data match. Additionally, changes in methodology are applied to previous cohorts, which may produce a different sample from the previous cohorts. Reconstituting all the cohorts with new data and revised methodologies allow for longitudinal comparison across cohorts.

Why are we only tracking students with SSNs for most of the indicators?

SSN gives us a unique identifier to track students among colleges, districts and transfer outcomes. A student without an SSN would have to be tracked with only a college or district student id which is a localized identifier. This would not allow the student to be tracked at the statewide level nor would it allow an NCS match. A Missing SSN report is available [here](#).

What is the definition of "attempted" course?

The definition of "attempt" for the Scorecard metrics is that a student must have an:

- enrollment that resulted in attendance in a course as of the first census or later for daily or weekly census, or
- enrollment that resulted in attendance in at least one meeting of a positive attendance class or
- enrollment that resulted in a notation on the student's official record.

There are two data elements in Data On Demand that are not in the Scorecard – "Economically Disadvantaged" and "Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)." How are these data elements defined?

Students are designated as "Economically Disadvantaged" if they meet any of the following criteria:

- A recipient of a Board Of Governors Waiver;
- A recipient of Department of Social Services (present in the DSS match with CCCCCO students);

- A recipient of CalWorks, TANF, or General Assistance (COMIS data element SVO3 = 1,2,3,4);
- A recipient of a Pell grant, or;
- A participant in the Workforce Investment Act (COMIS data element SB26 = “J”).

Students are designated as “DSPS” if they are reported as having one or more disabilities (COMIS data element SCD3 = “Y”).

Why are we using a three-term persistence measure, instead of fall-to-fall persistence?

Three-term persistence was seen as a more comprehensive measure of retention than year-to-year persistence. Retention in the first three terms captures second term persistence as well as first year persistence. The new persistence measure is also constructed as a momentum point (along with 30+ units) on the way to the Completion outcome. The persistence measure is based on the same first-time student cohort as the Completion and 30-unit metrics.

What are the reasons for using 30 units as an intermediate/momentum outcome?

Often cited in student success literature, 30 units is the half-way point to 60 units, a key criterion for successful transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution. Completion of 30 units was also recommended by the Student Success Task Force as a progression metric that could be examined and was a metric carried over from the first ARCC report.

Why are 12-unit certificates now included in the Completion outcome?

As of several years ago, some 12-unit certificates have been included in the Chancellor’s Office approved certificates category. The Completion outcome will only include 12-unit certificates that are Chancellor’s Office approved.

For the CTE indicator, why are we not using a first-time student cohort?

Students may have begun taking courses that were non-CTE initially, then moved on to a CTE pathway. We’ve actually confirmed this with analyzing the pathways of CTE students. Using CTE course behavior as a qualifier for the cohort helps to filter out students who may not be pursuing a CTE outcome.

Why was more than eight units completed in a single vocational discipline chosen as one of the qualifiers for the CTE cohort?

More than eight units completed was seen as a marker of taking more than two CTE courses (for example two four-unit courses). Taking more than two CTE courses in a single vocation discipline was considered a defining behavior of students pursuing a CTE outcome.

What is the difference between the CTE indicator and the Perkins indicator?

The CTE indicator takes a cohort of those who completed a CTE course for the first-time and completed more than 8 units in the subsequent three years in a single discipline (2-digit vocational TOP code where at least one of the courses is occupational SAM A, B or C). The Perkins indicator includes all students who earned 12 or more units in a vocational discipline with a SAM code of A-C within three years.

Why are we using “levels below” (CB 21) for coding on remedial/developmental courses instead of courses coded as ‘basic skills’?

Traditionally, our basic skills indicator only included progress from courses that were coded as basic skills, and progress was tracked at different levels below. The new “levels below” indicator tracks success to “transfer level” coursework from courses that are coded as some number of levels below transfer, which may be coded as basic skills, degree applicable, or even transferable.

The advisory group suggested this change because most math courses that are one level below transfer are not coded as basic skills but degree applicable. Thus, going from degree applicable to degree applicable is not really an outcome. But ultimately this reasoning is no longer valid since one-level below in math is dropped from our levels below indicator (only looking at 2-4 levels below in math).

Why is one level below in Math considered ‘College Prepared’ Level while one level below in English considered ‘Unprepared for College’?

At many colleges, one level below in Math is a degree applicable course. This was not the case for most English courses one level below.

Will ESL writing, reading be broken out?

ESL writing and reading are combined into a single ESL “levels below” metric.

What is the difference between the remedial metric and the basic skills tracker?

The cohorts might be similar but have different selection criteria. The basic skills tracker is looking for students who attempted a basic skills course at a particular college. The scorecard remedial metrics look systemwide to determine the first attempt of any remedial Math, English or Math course. Similarly with the outcomes, the basic skills tracker only looks within the specified college while the scorecard remedial metrics look systemwide. The scorecard remedial metrics also only look at students with an SSN; the basic skills tracker looks only within a single college population and includes all students.

There is also a caveat with the Scorecard Math metric in that ‘one level below’ transfer is counted as an outcome and would not be included as part of the cohort.

Click [here](#) for further information on the differences between the remedial metric and the basic skills tracker. There is documentation available for the basic skills tracker available [here](#).

How will the Scorecard address Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) Instruction Enhanced Funding, also known as “Enhanced Noncredit”?

Beginning in 2008 the ARCC report has included college level data for CDCP courses that receive enhanced funding, as implemented in 2007 under SB 361 (Scott, Chapter 631, Statutes of 2006).

Enhanced funding is available for noncredit programs that create opportunities for career development and college preparation through career-technical education (short-term vocational), educational development (basic skills, ESL and VESL) and workforce preparation. For

noncredit courses to be eligible for enhanced funding they must be part of a sequence of courses that lead to either a certificate of completion or a certificate of competency with the intended result of improving student progress towards college or a career path. (Title 5, Section 55151).

What was the reason for including a CDCP metric in this report?

Beginning in 2008, the ARCC report included college level data for CDCP courses that receive enhanced funding as implemented in 2007 under SB 361 (Scott, Chapter 631, Statutes of 2006). In response to requirements from oversight agencies (Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst’s Office), we also produced a supplementary system level report to analyze CDCP data in more depth. The CDCP report was discontinued with the last report being published in 2012.

How are Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) awards being captured in COMIS?

CDCP awards have been submitted to COMIS in recent years. Some of our cohorts might not have CDCP awards data because data submission was started in 2010.

Does the CDCP metric include only students with SSN?

No, the CDCP metric includes both students with and without SSNs. This is the one metric where we use students without SSNs.

Data on Demand allows you to download the Scorecard datasets, such as the Completion metric. Can you suggest ways that colleges can analyze data on this measure? Also, can you suggest ways that college can analyze student achievement and/or supplement Scorecard data with analyses of their local MIS data?

The Completion Rate dataset was released to the colleges so that researchers can analyze the various outcomes of the Completion rate. For example, to determine the number or percentage of students receiving a certificate. Students also achieve multiple awards, so there is always an interest in such analyses. A researcher could study the number of students that transferred and were also ‘transfer-prepared,’ or received a certificate.

We also release this dataset because colleges wanted to analyze the Completion rate, and its various component outcomes, by demographic variables (race/ethnicity, gender, age). The unitary data include student identifiers so that colleges can match the Scorecard data with their local MIS data to “drill down” and learn more about the students and courses that led to the Scorecard results (Data On Demand file layouts are available [here](#)). For example, for those students that transferred: What courses did they take and in what sequence? What was their GPA? What support services did they receive at the college? The potential research questions and subsequent studies at the local level can be used to inform and guide program improvements at the college.

At this point, we have not provided the colleges with a framework (or suggestions) on how to use their unitary data. Colleges are unique, with different priorities and needs. In the near future, we would like to get feedback about, and report out, how colleges are using the data to improve student success.

Are the Scorecard metrics available in other formats?

Yes, the Scorecard metrics are also available in the California Community College Chancellor's Office Data Mart (click [here](#)). Scorecard metrics can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, age, economic status, and disability status with the Data Mart.

Responsibilities of Colleges and Districts

What are the responsibilities for colleges and districts?

Colleges and districts are responsible for providing the Chancellor's Office with accurate and complete data in a timely manner. This essentially encompasses the current submission of data to the MIS unit in the Chancellor's Office. Colleges and districts will also need to help by learning about the performance framework, reviewing the data and metrics, and responding to the data and peer grouping analysis for the report. If necessary, colleges and districts may resubmit their data. Finally, colleges and districts must present the Scorecard to their local Board of Trustees for their review.

What happens if a college/district fails to provide needed data?

By adhering to the normal data submission timelines for COMIS data used for allocations, districts and colleges will be in compliance with the data submission requirements for AB1417.

Education Code Section 84754.5(b) directs the Chancellor to withhold, delay, or reduce the funds specified in the annual Budget Act (2006-07 Budget Bill, AB 1800, page 449, item 6870-101-0001, provision 4) if a district fails to provide needed data by specified deadlines; these funds are a part of each district's yearly ongoing apportionment base which is part of the annual apportionment.

What are the responsibilities of the Scorecard contacts for the January draft?

In January each year, the draft report is released giving colleges/districts 30-45 days to review their indicators and resubmit data. Each year on March 30th the final Scorecard is released.

The Scorecard contacts need to review their institution's data in the January draft report for completeness and accuracy. We can only accept data changes through resubmission of the COMIS data.

What are the responsibilities of the colleges and districts in terms of displaying the Scorecard results on their websites?

The [Student Success Task Force](#) recommends that each college publicly post their Scorecard results on websites and physical locations:

“Amend Title 5 to require local boards to discuss the scorecard at a public hearing and certify its content. Colleges would then publicly post their scorecard on websites and at physical locations and the Chancellor's Office would make results for all colleges readily available for public view (Advancing Student Success in the California Community Colleges: Recommendations of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012, Recommendation 7.3, pg 51).

Assistance with logos and website button placement is available [here](#).

What role does the local Board of Trustees have related to the report?

The local Board of Trustees will review and interact with the report for each of the colleges under its jurisdiction. (More information is available [here](#).) Each college will need to submit a copy of the board’s minutes to the Chancellor’s Office showing the board’s annual interaction with the report, including review and interaction with the report at a public meeting, with public comment allowed (required by Education Code, Section 84754.5(d)). It is also acceptable for a district representative to present to a board the explicit Scorecard data for each of a district’s colleges. But the minutes for the public meeting where this presentation occurs must specify the colleges that are covered by that presentation and indicate that college-specific results were given. In this case, a district may submit the documentation to us and relieve the separate colleges within that district from submitting separate items of documentation to the Chancellor’s Office. Send an e-mail with your board’s minutes to scorecard@cccco.edu.

When is the Board of Trustees interaction due for the Scorecard?

The Board of Trustees interaction with the Scorecard must be completed, and its minutes submitted to the Chancellor’s Office, by March (in the year following release of the report). The specific date in March will be announced each year. We encourage all colleges and districts to begin this process early.

Why is there a year given for Board of Trustee interaction to the final report? Won’t this delay mean that the Board interactions will not affect the budget decisions of the Legislature/Governor’s Office?

During the planning phase of the Scorecard, our advisory members expressed concern about sufficient time for trustee boards to receive, consider, and discuss (the “interaction” component) the Scorecard results. A short timeframe would disadvantage those districts that historically hold less frequent board meetings. In an effort to be fair to all districts, we adopted the one-year window for board interaction.

Because the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst’s Office, and the Governor’s Office will use the results in the final report (March) for its budget/policy decisions, the one-year window for board interaction will not affect those decisions.

What information should my Board of Trustee minutes reflect?

- Reference to the Scorecard report and the specific report’s year (e.g., the 2013 Scorecard).
- Reference to the areas discussed in the Scorecard (e.g., Systemwide section, college performance in a specific area, etc.)
- Reaction of board of trustee members.

What does “interaction” with the report mean? What does “adopt” the report really mean?

Local college administrators are expected to discuss the final Scorecard with their respective trustee boards in public forums to inform trustees as well as their communities about local

college performance. Ideally, local college administrators will present Scorecard results to their trustees and discuss how they will maintain successful performances or improve upon less successful ones. Minutes of the meetings before local trustees need to reflect such discussions in order to demonstrate the concept of local accountability that underlies the Scorecard. “Adopt” is not really the best term for the expected board interaction. Some form of recognition or acknowledgement by the trustees that they have received and considered the Scorecard results is the desired type of response.

How can trustees use this report to evaluate the performance of their colleges?

Trustees should consider the year-to-year performance on each performance indicator in conjunction with the profile of student enrollment, and the peer group comparison for the Completion rate. However, we don’t recommend that trustees place all their attention upon only one of these pieces of information. The uniqueness of each college will often necessitate additional analysis by the local institutional researcher to understand why a college has a given success level on a performance indicator. The Scorecard is a general diagnostic tool for boards and communities. Local analysts will need to assume the task of identifying specific causes of problems/successes and appropriate plans of action. Where possible, the Chancellor’s Office will, on request, conduct ancillary analyses to help analysts/researchers in these local efforts.

Responsibilities of the Chancellor’s Office

What are the responsibilities of the Chancellor’s Office?

The Chancellor’s Office’s Research, Analysis, and Accountability Unit has primary responsibility for calculating and reporting these performance indicators, and using data and feedback provided by the colleges. The unit will continue to refine the evaluation approach, obtain and analyze performance data, and report and interpret results with assistance from a technical advisory group that includes institutional researchers from the community colleges, as well as representatives from the CEOs, CIOs, Academic Senate, California Department of Finance (DOF) and the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO).

How is the Chancellor’s Office helping local researchers “drill down” in the Scorecard data to perform more insightful research and analysis?

To help colleges perform more insightful local research and analysis, the Chancellor’s Office created the Data on Demand site, which provides a breakdown of Scorecard outcomes in addition to other MIS data. For example, the Completion data are broken down by each of the outcomes, as well as demographic variables.

The Scorecard data files available from Data on Demand are:

- Completion Rate/ Persistence Rate;
- 30-Units Rate;
- Career Technical Education Rate;
- Career Development and College Preparation Rate; and
- Remedial Progress Rates for English, Math and ESL.

Because the Scorecard is a public document, we needed to make this level of data available to researchers through a password-protected separate source (i.e., the Data on Demand website) to maintain the confidentiality of student data. The tight work schedule for the development of the Scorecard necessitates that these breakdowns and relevant updates occur after the Chancellor's Office completes the legislatively mandated components of the report.

Will the Chancellor's Office be addressing needed improvements by the colleges/districts?

While the Scorecard is designed to assist colleges and districts in making improvements, it is up to the colleges, districts and local Board of Trustees to address improvements.

How is the Chancellor's Office communicating with the field?

The Chancellor's Office uses the arcc-list listserv (see below) to send periodic updates to the Scorecard contacts appointed by each college's and district's CEO.

Contact Information

How do I stay informed about the Scorecard?

If you are the person responsible for the Scorecard at your college/district you should make sure you are on the standard distribution list called arcc-all (ARCC-ALL@CCCCO.EDU). This is an alias list maintained by the Chancellor's Office. Mail recipients for arcc-all are determined by each individual college and district. Please direct the request to be included to the arcc-all list to your college or district e-mail administrator.

The e-mail administrator creates the district and college entries (arcc##0@domain.edu for the district office, and arcc###@domain.edu for the colleges) on their email server and points this email account to the appropriate staff.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Scott Gallawa, sgallawa@cccco.edu.

The arcc-all list would have real (mailbox) e-mail accounts at the district/college. See the example below.

District Example: arcc110@butte.edu

College Example: arcc111@butte.edu

Will the colleges and districts be able to provide comments and feedback?

Scorecard staff will continue to accept comments and feedback from the colleges/districts. Interested parties can contact us by e-mail (scorecard@cccco.edu).

Who are the contacts at the colleges and districts?

We send notices about the Scorecard to a mailing list controlled by the MIS at the CCCCCO and the IT office at each college or district. The IT office at each college/district now has the responsibility for directing its respective Scorecard contacts (mostly researchers) to the ARCC" mailbox" at the college.

How can I get updates about this project?

We will post updates to this website as they become available. Check the Updates section of the website for more information. If you would like to be on the Scorecard e-mail distribution list, please contact your college/district IT office so that it can point the ARCC-ALL@cccco.edu of your college/district to your email inbox.

Whom do I contact for more information?

For any information regarding this project, please contact the Chancellor's Office by e-mail at scorecard@cccco.edu