



Achieving
the Dream™

At-a-glance

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count (ATD) is a bold national effort to help more community college students succeed, with a special focus on students of color and low-income students.

Our approach uses ground-level strategies to accomplish big-picture outcomes. *Achieving the Dream* proceeds from the premise that success begets success — and every incremental milestone for every student can be positively affected by community college leaders and educators. We

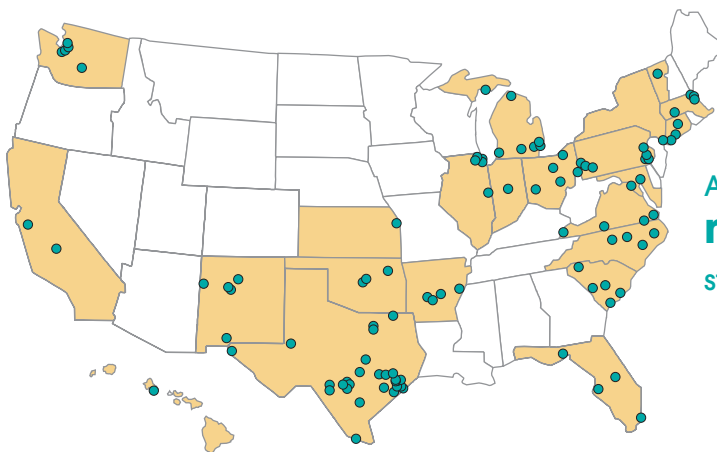
also work with state teams to create a policy environment that promotes innovation and moves more students to degrees and credentials. Community colleges can help deliver on the promise of the American dream — in fact, no educational enterprise is better positioned to do so.

Our Approach

ATD focuses colleges and others on understanding and making better use of student outcome data. We act on many fronts, including:

- **Institutional change:** ATD’s coaches, data facilitators, and supporting organizations work with leadership teams comprised of faculty, administration, staff, and others across the campus and community to build a long-term, institution-wide commitment to student success by creating a culture of evidence, engaging with diverse groups, and implementing systemic reforms.
- **Knowledge:** ATD collects data from participating colleges and states, researches and evaluates change efforts, convenes learning events, and issues publications of findings.
- **Policy:** ATD’s state lead institutions work to create an education policy environment that encourages innovation and rewards institutions for moving greater numbers of students to degrees and credentials. Areas of focus include aligning standards for “college ready” transitions from secondary school to community colleges, careful student assessment and placement policies, identifying innovations that work, and accurate performance measures with incentives.

ATD’s National Network



ATD has established a network of **more than 100** institutions in **22** states serving nearly **1 million** students.

“ATD has been a transformative experience for Phillips Community College. It has changed the way we measure our work from an emphasis on access and enrollment to an emphasis on student success and outcomes.” — Steven Murray, President, Phillips Community College

Why ATD Matters

About 6.7 million students — nearly half of all undergraduates in the U.S. — are being educated at 1,200 community colleges. But too few are reaching their goals. Historically, fewer than half of community college students succeed in earning a degree or transferring to a four-year institution. And more than just their hopes and dreams are at stake: the very foundations of our economy depend on increasing student success.

Today, **42%** of whites ages 25-64 have an associate's degree or higher, compared with **26%** of African-Americans and **18%** of Hispanics.

Fewer than 46% of students who enter community college with the goal of earning a degree or certificate have met their goal six years later.

Percentage of young-adult (ages 25-34) degree attainment:

Canada:	55%
Japan:	54%
Korea:	53%
U.S.:	39%
Poland:	28%
Mexico:	19%

ATD's Goals

Achieving the Dream seeks to help more students earn postsecondary credentials, including occupational certificates and degrees, by working with institutions to improve student progression.

Our objective is to help more students:

- Successfully complete remedial or developmental instruction and advance to credit-bearing courses
- Enroll in and successfully complete the initial college-level or gatekeeper courses in subjects such as math and English
- Complete the courses they take with a grade of C or better
- Persist from one term to the next
- Earn a certificate or associate's degree

Investment in Student Success Yields Economic Growth

Increased employment

60%

Jobs that are held by workers with at least some postsecondary education or training

Increased earnings

20-30%

The difference in earnings of people who hold associate's degrees as compared with those who hold only high school diplomas

Regional economic development

3:1

Every taxpayer dollar invested in community colleges yields \$3 in taxes from economic growth

National competitiveness

5-15%

Economic growth that results from increasing a country's average level of schooling by one year

"Paris Junior College's participation in the Achieving the Dream initiative is changing the culture of the institution. We are seeing systemic change in the use of data for decision making." — Pam Anglin, President, Paris Junior College

For more information, visit
www.achievingthedream.org or
contact atd@mdcinc.org or
(919) 968-4531 x330



Achieving the Dream™



Institutions around the country participating in *Achieving the Dream* have implemented diverse evidence-based programs and interventions resulting in critical student success advancements and important public policy changes.

Student Success Progress

- **Valencia Community College** drastically narrowed the achievement gap between African-American and Caucasian students from 13 percent to 5 percent and eliminated the gap between Hispanic and Caucasian students.
- **Danville Community College** dramatically increased the percentage of students of color (by 22 percent) and low-income students (20 percent) that advanced from developmental to college-level math.
- **Patrick Henry Community College** reduced its attrition rate from 26 percent to just 5 percent for students in classes with Active Cooperative Learning.
- **Jefferson Community College** increased retention of new full-time students by 8 percent.
- **El Paso Community College** significantly decreased the number of students requiring developmental education, including a 24 percent decrease in developmental reading and a 37 percent decrease in developmental writing coupled with a 15 percent increase in students entering college-ready English. Also, EPCC increased by nearly 70 percent the number of degrees and certificates awarded.
- **Guilford Technical Community College** virtually eliminated its 11 percent persistence gap between African-American and Caucasian males in developmental education.
- **Coastal Bend College** increased its intermediate algebra completion rate by 28 percent between 2001 and 2008.

Public Policy Impact

- Six states (CT, FL, NC, OH, TX, VA) have developed a cross-state set of measures for tracking student success progress and are in varying stages of aligning performance systems with these indicators. Six additional states (AR, MA, NM, OK, SC, WA) have joined this effort and are working to utilize these student success measures.
- Several ATD states have embedded the student success philosophy and agenda into their strategic plans.
- U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) introduced The Building Student Success Act based on ATD principles.
- ATD goals have been endorsed by the Connecticut Council of Presidents and embedded in its system-wide strategic plan.
- The strategic plan for the North Carolina system specifically cites ATD goals, leveraging the initiative's success approach across all 58 colleges.
- Washington State secured \$4 million in legislative funding for its Student Achievement Initiative.
- In Virginia, ATD was framed as a lever to help the system reach the state's Dateline 2009 strategic plan goals.
- Oklahoma is revising its state-level strategic plan performance fund indicators to reflect ATD goals.
- The Ohio legislature approved a performance funding system for public universities and colleges that rewards institutions for improving student success. This new system, shaped in part by ATD, has increased the focus on improving and using data to help drive decisions and obtain better results.

“Thanks to Achieving the Dream, for many college students the tunnel is getting shorter and the graduation light brighter.” — John Brockman, President Emeritus, Coastal Bend College



“Thanks to ATD, we have set off on a decade-long effort to increase by 20 points the percentage of students who successfully complete their developmental course requirements and to increase the overall retention rate of our students.”

— Robert Templin, President, Northern Virginia Community College

“An investment in ATD assures your ability to demonstrate impact through its rigorous use of data and assessment.”

— Wynn Rosser, Executive Director, Greater Texas Foundation

What's Next

ATD is scaling up nationally for maximum impact:

■ **Adding 20 new colleges a year through 2013:**

ATD started in 2004 with 27 colleges in five states. By 2008 it had grown to 83 colleges in 15 states. In 2009 it grew to more than 100 institutions in 22 states, serving nearly 1 million students. By 2012–2013, the goal is to reach at least 160 schools.

■ **Focusing efforts on key states:** By focusing resources on key states, ATD will be able to reach a critical mass that allows state policy changes and institutional improvements to reinforce each other, creating results that encourage other states to improve.

■ **Influencing national policy:** The National Commission on Community Colleges recommended in 2008 that Congress include an appropriation sufficient to bring ATD to scale nationwide. In 2009, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown introduced The Building Student Success Act, based on the ATD model.

National Organizations

Part of what makes ATD unique is that Lumina Foundation for Education identified and brought together over 20 funders and seven of the most qualified expert organizations in their fields to create a comprehensive approach to student success. This partnership includes:

- American Association of Community Colleges
- Jobs for the Future
- Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University
- Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin
- MDC
- MDRC
- Public Agenda

“A key benefit is that our institution is aligned in using its resources at the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness.” — Mary Spangler, President, Houston Community College