

Implementing a Summer Bridge Program at Waubonsee Community College

The Situation

Waubonsee Community College needed to make changes to their developmental math program in response to the Developmental Education Reform Act (DERA) passed by Illinois in 2021. However, students were getting stuck in these courses and needed a way to advance out of developmental education. The idea of a summer bridge program was consistently mentioned when polling faculty and administration.

The Process

Concerns about implementing a summer bridge program were alleviated through supportive meetings with faculty and administration. Benefits offered to students of the program included a voucher to return to the college after completion, use of a cohort model to maintain student connections, and providing lots of food to help hungry students better concentrate on the math.

Over 600 students were identified as needing developmental education and ultimately 48 enrolled. The first bridge program lasted nine days with a goal of students placing one-level higher so students could register for the next course in their sequence. If possible, students would place high enough to start in college-level math.

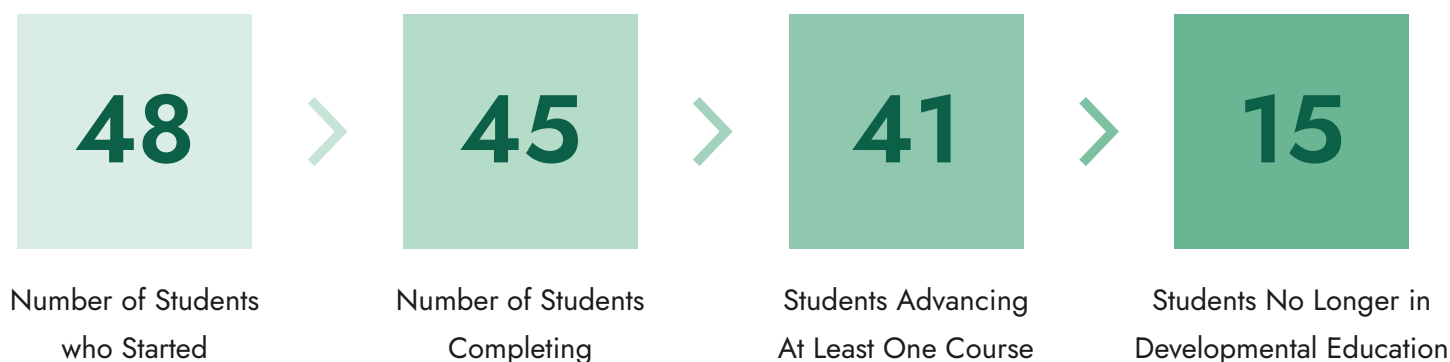


WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Concern	Solution
Faculty managing three different courses in one classroom	Use of ALEKS personalized online program from McGraw Hill
Helping students at different levels and stages	Include tutors in the classroom with faculty
Students not asking for help when needed	"High-touch" faculty and tutors who actively engage and ask students when help is needed
Students not adept with using technology	First day focus and training on how to use technology
Students with math or test anxiety or that have overall concerns about college	Care team including a counselor and academic coach are present to support students

The Pilot Program & Results

Of the 48 students who enrolled in the summer bridge program, 45 completed the program and 91% moved up at least one level from their initial placement. A majority (71%) of students stayed at the college, enrolling in Fall 2023 courses.



From anecdotal and survey data, students reported that they gained confidence with math and technology and were more aware of the college's resources and the support available from the care team. Faculty shared that it was a "great pilot" with "hardworking students."

Getting Started With Your Gateway Redesign

If your institution is exploring how to redesign gateway courses or ready to lead broader transformation, Almy Education is here to help. Our expert-led sessions prioritize faculty engagement and momentum, paving the way for collaborative redesign that drives student completion and institutional success. Whether launching your first initiative or scaling existing reforms, you'll leave with a strategic blueprint for advancing your gateway course redesign and sustaining positive impact even after our engagement ends.

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