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College Spark Washington invests \$12 million to help low-income students develop math skills to succeed in college

SEATTLE – College Spark Washington announced today a \$12 million investment over seven years in a new College-Ready Math Initiative to help low-income students graduate high school with the math skills needed to avoid remediation and succeed in college.

“The majority of high school students are placed in remedial math in college and fewer than half of those students go on to graduate from college,” said Christine McCabe, Executive Director at College Spark Washington. “The College-Ready Math Initiative will give students the support they need to develop math skills in high school and help get them on the pathway to a college degree.”

The College-Ready Math Initiative invests in evidence-based strategies and programs designed to help students improve their score on the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment, which measures a students’ growth on the Common Core State Standards. Education experts have predicted that 70 percent of the students who take the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment in 2015 will score below the college-ready level on the math section of the test.

The College-Ready Math Initiative will invest in the following four evidence-based strategies to help improve students’ score on this assessment:

- **School-Year Academic Youth Development:** Academic Youth Development translates the latest psychological and learning sciences research on student motivation, engagement, and learning into practical strategies and tools for educators and students to use every day, in every classroom. Working within a school’s Advisory system, this program for 8th, 9th, or 10th grade students is designed to strengthen students’ mindsets, attitudes, beliefs about their own abilities, and problem-solving skills to better prepare them for the increased rigor of high school STEM and college preparatory courses.
- **Intensified Algebra I:** This comprehensive, extended-period program is designed to help students who are one to three years behind in mathematics re-engage as motivated learners and succeed in Algebra I within a single academic year. The program is for eligible 8th, 9th, or 10th grade students, and combines an Algebra I course curriculum with growth mindset content.
- **Senior Transition Courses:** These Math and English Language Arts courses are for seniors who score below the college-ready level on the Smarter Balanced Assessment

in 11th grade. Students who pass the course will be considered college-ready by the majority of colleges in Washington and permitted to enroll in non-STEM college-level math and English courses without additional placement testing.

- **Equity in Higher Level Math:** Research shows that students who take rigorous math courses during their senior year do better in college than other students, and that many of the low-income students and students of color who could succeed in such courses are missing from these classes. A variety of strategies will be funded to increase access to and success in higher level math courses including school partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools.

“This year approximately 20,000 Washington high school graduates going directly into public higher education institutions had to enroll in remedial courses, costing students money and time and reducing the chance they will earn a degree” said Bill Moore, Core to College Alignment Director at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. “The College Spark Washington partnership will support transition courses to help high school seniors who need additional support in math and English avoid remediation and greatly increase their likelihood of success in college.”

For more information on the College-Ready Math Initiative please visit www.collegespark.org/page/127/College-Ready+Math+Initiative+

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College Spark Washington funds programs across Washington state that help low-income students become college-ready and earn their degrees. Grantees include community-based organizations, K-12 schools and districts, community and technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, educational nonprofits, and public agencies. College Spark began supporting access to higher education in 1978 and, since 2005, has awarded more than \$38 million to college readiness and degree completion programs throughout the state.