Strong Start to Finish – an initiative supported by Education Commission of the States – is an emerging network of committed postsecondary leaders and philanthropists, working together to change institutional practice and policy across the nation and bring equity to education. We aim to significantly increase the number and proportion of low-income students, students of color and returning adults who succeed in college math and English and enter a program of study in their first year of college.

State University of New York
Strong Start to Finish (SUNY-SSTF)

The State University of New York was selected as a recipient of a $2.1 million grant in a competitive process to serve as one of four Strong Start to Finish sites that serve as exemplars for scaling evidence-based practices.

SUNY-SSTF provides system-wide support for campus level reforms to ensure access and equity and help more students of color, low income students and returning adults to succeed and graduate.

Priority Action Areas
SUNY-SSTF is focused on four priority action areas:

- Accelerating and scaling up of Guided Pathways reforms
- Spreading the Carnegie Math Pathways and targeted interventions across the SUNY system
- Expanding co-requisite English Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)
- Increasing access to technical pathways for adult learners

Strategies at Scale
Through the financial support and professional networks of Strong Start to Finish, SUNY-SSTF will bridge the “last mile” by scaling the following reforms:

- Provide sub-grants to thirty colleges, implement a peer mentorship model, and provide ongoing professional development to scale the American Association of Community Colleges Guided Pathways Institute model to serve an additional 98,000 students annually
- Support colleges in scaling Carnegie Math Pathways (Quantway/Statway) through in-depth faculty training to serve an additional 17,500 students by 2021
- Build capacity within institutional research to conduct ongoing research on institutional readiness for developmental education reforms
- Facilitate critical equity conversations via campus-based equity institutes to better meet the needs of diverse learners
- Increase the number of institutions and provide necessary professional development to expand English co-requisite models to serve an additional 15,000 students by 2021
- Deepen college supports to adult learners, including veterans, in high-needs technical programs to serve an additional 6,000 returners by 2021
- Expand P-TECH model to offer an additional 4,600 high school students a free pathway to an associate degree in a high-demand career, through hosting semi-annual convenings for faculty and staff focused on redesigning institutional structures to provide for the academic, career, and advising needs of all learners
Project Leadership and Campus Involvement

Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline, leads the project out of the system office and coordinates with campus presidents, faculty and administrators from the participating institutions.

The State University of New York (SUNY) has 64 colleges making it one of the largest, most comprehensive university systems in the nation with a unique capacity and infrastructure to make a large, scalable impact on student success. Access and completion are priorities for SUNY, which served nearly 1.3 million students last year, including nearly 600,000 in credit bearing courses and programs. SUNY is fundamentally committed to ensuring that every student’s first year will begin with the academic and non-academic support necessary to get them on a path to college and career success. Essential to this effort is the commitment to ensuring that the vast majority of students will go directly into credit-bearing work rather than stand-alone, pre-requisite remedial education. SUNY’s goal is for developmental education to become an “on-ramp” to completion as evidenced by its inclusion into the system’s emerging guided gateways efforts. As colleges become increasingly diverse, the SUNY System is committed to working with faculty and campus leadership to ensure access and equity and help more students of color, low income students and returning adults to succeed and graduate.

All 30 of SUNY’s community colleges and nine of its four-year colleges are participating in SUNY-SSTF. Together, these colleges enroll more than 260,000 students and span the entire state of New York. Among these colleges, approximately 42% are low-income students, 28% are students of color, and 25% are returning adults. In addition, SUNY intends to open professional development opportunities offered through SSTF to non-participating colleges as well, further extending the reach and impact of this system-wide project.

SUNY Adirondack  SUNY Finger Lakes  SUNY Niagara
SUNY Alfred State  SUNY Fashion Institute of Technology  SUNY North Country
SUNY Broome  SUNY Fulton- Montgomery  SUNY Oneonta
SUNY Canton  SUNY Genese  SUNY Onondaga
SUNY Cayuga  SUNY Herkimer  SUNY Orange
SUNY Clinton  SUNY Plattsburgh  SUNY Rockland
SUNY Cobleskill  SUNY Schenectady  SUNY Suffolk
SUNY Columbia-Green  SUNY Hudson Valley  SUNY Sullivan
SUNY Corning  SUNY Jamestown  SUNY Tompkins-Cortland
SUNY Delhi  SUNY Jefferson  SUNY Ulster
SUNY Dutchess  SUNY Mohawk Valley  SUNY Westchester
SUNY Empire State  SUNY Monroe
SUNY Erie  SUNY Morrisville
SUNY Farmingdale  SUNY Nassau

Key Implementation Partnerships

Achieving the Dream
Carnegie Math Pathways/WestEd
Community College Research Center (CCRC)
Jobs for the Future

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