



ALMY EDUCATION
Solving your math problems®

Waubonsee Community College

Case Study

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. Like many other colleges in the Accelerating Student Progress and Increasing Racial Equity (ASPIRE) program sponsored by Women Employed, Waubonsee had a series of developmental math classes designed to teach students the math content and skills needed to engage with college-level math courses.

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. Under the guidance and technical assistance of Almy Education, plus the connections and funding provided by the ASPIRE program, Waubonsee was able to design and implement a summer bridge program that worked for their unique student population.



Chassie Sherretz, Academic Support Manager at Waubonsee Community College, met and talked with Kathleen Almy at an ASPIRE conference by Women Employed. To begin the process, Kathleen shared articles and connected Waubonsee with other colleges who had previously implemented a summer bridge program. Concerns about implementing a summer bridge program raised by faculty and administration were alleviated through supportive meetings with Kathleen Almy.



“You want somebody who understands and who truly talks to administrators, like me, and to faculty...Kathleen is able to connect with everybody.”

Jessica Moreno, Dean for Academic Support



During the course of these meetings, Kathleen was able to address both faculty and administrative concerns with a variety of effective solutions.

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

Other benefits offered to students of the summer bridge 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! Students were able to better concentrate on the math because their hunger was met with snacks for the classroom and to take home.

In the spring of 2023, over 600 students were identified as needing developmental education, being placed into one of three classes. The college reached out to these students about the summer bridge program and ultimately had 48 enroll.

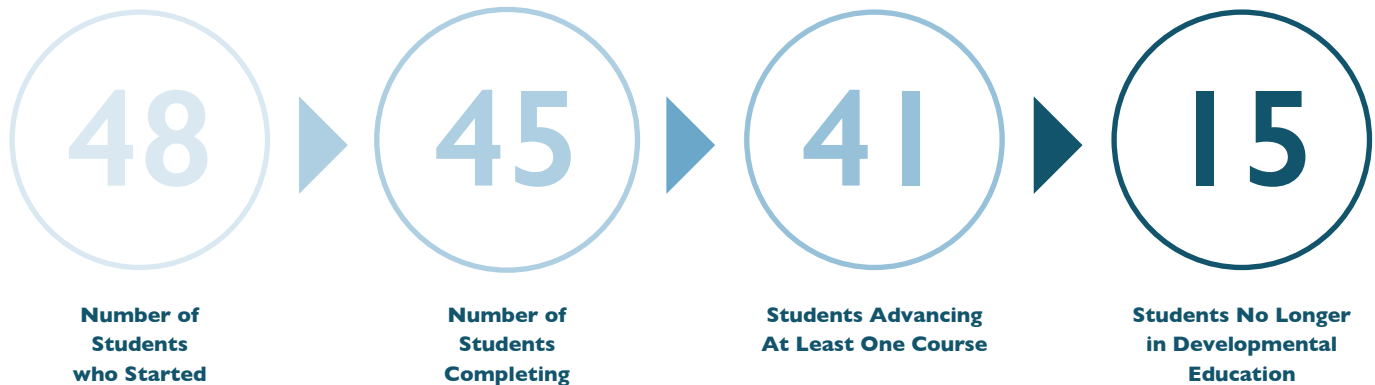
The first bridge program took place in late summer and lasted for nine days. Despite having a set amount of time, the goal of the program was to have students place one-level higher so students could register for the next course in their sequence.

“We're trying to focus on having these students move up a level...it's an overall collaborative college process that we have to go through.”

Chassie Sherretz, Academic Support Manager



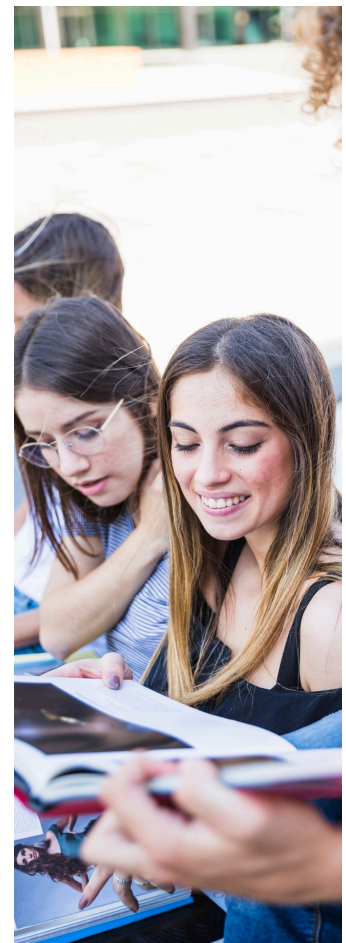
Of the 48 students who enrolled in the summer bridge program, 45 completed the program and 91% moved up at least one level from their initial placement. A majority (71%) of students stayed at the college, enrolling in Fall 2023 courses.



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." They also were grateful for having tutors in the classroom.

"It was a win because students were refreshed in math, they got free food, and they got to make friends."

Jessica Moreno, Dean for Academic Support



A second bridge program was implemented in January 2024 with a few improvements:

- Limit to students who need to move on to College Algebra
- Reduce time from 9 to 7 days, focusing on goal of moving up one level
- Minimum number of assignments required to move up a level
- Create multiple assessments to aid in monitoring progress
- Set roles and responsibilities for faculty, tutor, and care team members
- Focus on math skills AND soft skills like collaboration and problem solving





The success of Waubensee Community College's bridge program would not have happened without Kathleen Almy and Almy Education. From the initial conversation, Kathleen was able to provide resources and put Waubensee in touch with other colleges who had gone through a similar process.

The regular ASPIRE meetings helped colleges to learn from one another. If one college was stuck, it was an issue to be shared with the entire group. Even in the absence of this support, Kathleen's experience working with various institutions and her deep knowledge of the research puts her into a position to help schools of all types.

“Kathleen knows what to say and when to say it. She knows when to be a cheerleader, and she knows when to do a reality check. That is who you want in your corner.”

Jessica Moreno, Dean for Academic Support

