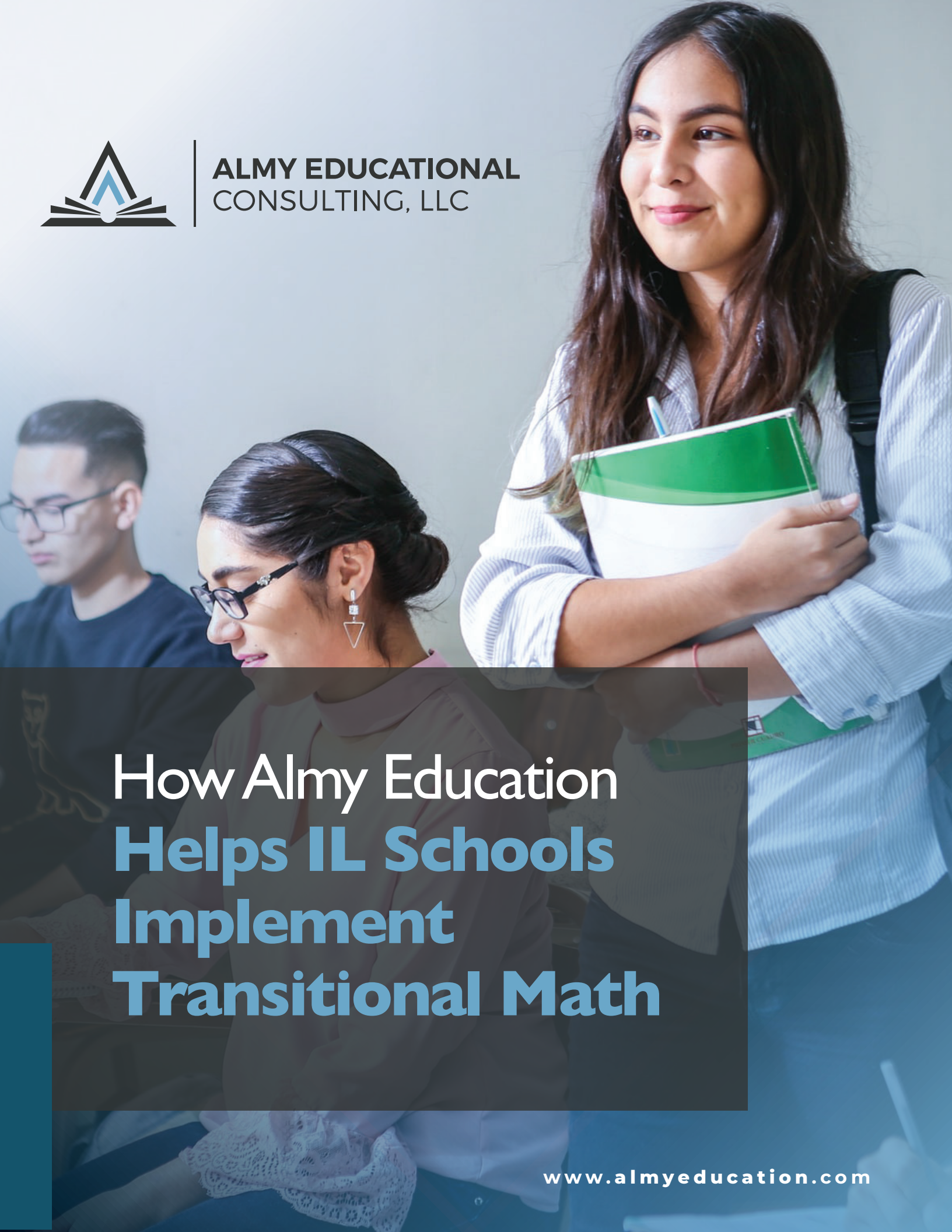

ALMY EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTING, LLC

How Almy Education **Helps IL Schools Implement Transitional Math**

www.almyeducation.com

IMPLEMENTING **TRANSITIONAL MATH**

ALMY EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING, LLC

"During her partnership with the Illinois Community College Board, the amount of work Kathleen was able to get moving and the momentum she produced showed the need for $1 million for transitional math implementation. As a result, ICCB was granted the funds, using Kathleen's work to defend the request."

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, signed in 2016, utilizes a student-centered and competency-based approach to support Illinois students in preparing for postsecondary education and careers. Made up of four strategies, one, in particular, requires the development, implementation, and support of transitional math courses. With the law intended to smooth the transition from high school to college (one college reported going from 50% of incoming high school students needing developmental ed to only 13%), partnerships between school districts, community colleges, and universities are vital. The problem is building and sustaining productive partnerships while dealing with the numerous other initiatives and issues schools and colleges are facing. With the requirement that transitional courses are to be implemented by the 2021-2022 school year, time is running out.

"...offering a feasible solution in implementing transitional math before the upcoming deadline"

Kathleen Almy, CEO and founder of Almy Education, is no stranger to college prep initiatives. While in the role of Illinois Director of Transitional Math, she orchestrated methods for these partnerships to flourish, such as half-day summits, communication plans, monthly webinars, and access to professional development resources. **Kathleen brings her extensive expertise as a former high school and college educator and as an administrator to reduce barriers, offering a feasible solution in implementing transitional math before the upcoming deadline.**

Kathleen Almy
CEO

20+ years of experience

"Our goal is to get things done right. Not just done, but at a high-quality level that works."

Introduction

Kathleen Almy is the CEO and founder of Almy Education.

With over 20 years of experience as a high school and college math educator, Kathleen knows a thing or two about education reform at scale. As Illinois Director of Transitional Math, Kathleen led local, state, and national initiatives for over a decade before starting her own consulting group.

Her experience with transitional math, developmental math redesign, and developmental math pathways make Kathleen uniquely qualified to help schools launch successful transitional math programs, from planning to implementation.

The Challenge

Signed into law in 2016, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (PWR) takes a student-based and competency-based approach to helping students achieve college and career readiness. While the PWR Act is composed of four strategies, this case study focuses solely on the requirement that over 700 public Illinois high schools implement transitional math courses by the 2021-2022 school year.

Transitional courses give high school seniors a chance to build any needed college readiness to succeed in math. Instead of using a college's traditional developmental math courses, true transitional math courses employ new content and curricular approaches, such as contextualized curriculum. The result is students who not only have a better understanding of the material but who are engaged as well. A good experience in an effective high school course isn't enough. **The final key feature of transitional math courses is the guaranteed placement a student receives upon successful completion at all Illinois community colleges and accepting Illinois universities.** This placement is not based on a placement test or any high stakes testing. Instead, it is based solely on a grade of C or better in a course with content and grading jointly agreed upon by high schools and colleges.

Community colleges and high schools partner to create courses that incorporate the required competencies and policies while emphasizing authentic learning experiences. Successful students are ready to be contributing members of their communities, fully prepared for college, and equipped with the traits employers seek. The benefits are significant. *For example, if a student starts in a college-level math class, he's much more likely to finish college. However, the flip side has similarly significant outcomes. If he starts in a developmental math class, his chances of graduating diminishes. This not only impacts his earning potential but his whole life.*

So, what could be the problem?

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of transitional math courses requires a K-12 to higher education partnership. This partnership includes the participation of multiple administrators, faculty, and student support professionals effectively communicating with one another. It not only demands a lot of trust and cooperation on both sides, but it requires a lot of intricate work, time, communication, and commitment. At a time when educators are already being stretched too thin, implementation of such courses by the 2021-2022 school year feels even more unattainable.

Solution

When the law passed, Kathleen noticed that it tied into other college prep initiatives that she had been working on, including developmental math pathways. Knowing that the law had tremendous potential, Kathleen realized that there was no way it would come to fruition on its own as envisioned. With such high-stakes at risk, Kathleen approached the Illinois Community College Board, and the position of Illinois Director of Transitional Math was created.

In her new role for the state, Kathleen had zero budget and zero staff. Instead, she used her experience working with faculty and administrators and went to work. Noticing the considerable disconnect between K-12 and higher education, Kathleen instituted half-day summits that not only brought both groups in the partnerships up to speed on transitional math but also got them in the same room.

In addition to the more than 30 summits she held in 18 months, Kathleen created communication plans, monthly webinars, and professional development resources, such as open educational resources, templates, documents, and plans to reduce barriers and to make transitional math implementation easier. She regularly spoke at events throughout the state to those affected by transitional math, gaining their perspectives and addressing their concerns. This included secondary and postsecondary levels as well as workforce development groups and policy groups.

In August 2019, Kathleen left her director position, going full-time with her consulting group. Due to her experience of working proficiently across all levels and her ability to get things done, Kathleen was hired by multiple Illinois colleges and high schools to help them implement transitional math at their campuses. Those experiences led her to create additional tools for high schools and colleges. **She contracted other Illinois educators who were successful in each aspect of transitional math implementation, including compliance, instruction, and curriculum, to build out proven supports and education. They include teacher workgroups, curriculum, professional development for teachers, counselors, administrators, on-demand resources, custom consulting solutions, and tools to meet compliance requirements.** In one instance, after learning that teachers needed more support to implement the state's free materials, Kathleen found teachers who had created original additions to the resources made for the QL/Stats pathway. She licensed the original content and contracted the teachers to manage a yearlong teachers' workgroup and provide intensive professional development. **Now teachers have a very affordable way to implement the materials with the support they need.**

When schools and colleges struggle with the issues that accompany this level of scale and partnership, Almy Education tackles those issues head-on. That means finding a variety of solutions, big and small, to meet the needs of high schools and colleges. Because of that, Kathleen and Almy Education's current approach to implementation has been extremely successful.

Demonstrated Results

"Kathy demonstrated the impact that committed leadership can have on big bureaucracies. She took on Goliath and prevailed. She has strong levels of optimism, command of the subject, and conviction."

Dr. Linda T. Chapman, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Lewis and Clark Community College

"Kathy Almy is a great partner! The developmental mathematics redesign we recently implemented was based on her quantitative pathways work. She provided the technical assistance needed to complete the curriculum changes. When working with Kathy on the STEM transitional mathematics state workgroup, I found her an excellent facilitator, which allowed the group to accomplish many tasks at each meeting. Locally, Kishwaukee College was able to strengthen our partnerships with local high schools through the transitional math summit she conducted on our campus for college and high school mathematics faculty. The working relationship we established with our high school partners at the summit was the catalyst we needed to begin our local work of creating transitional mathematics courses in our high schools."

M. Joanne Kantner, Ed.D,
Vice President of Instruction
Kishwaukee College

"Students tell me that for the first time in their lives, they actually feel like they understand the math they are learning."

Donna Carlson
Professor of Mathematics, College of Lake County Transitional Mathematics Liaison, Lake County High Schools

*"**ALMY Educational Consulting** was extremely helpful to us. In fall 2020, we called on Kathy Almy for her consultation and expertise. She provided exceptional professional development and support for implementing and fine-tuning our procedures for transitional math under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act's Requirement.*

On several occasions, Kathy met with our systems personnel and staff to address our current processes and program for student intake of placement, transcription information, and portability code processes and implementation. We feel confident and assured moving forward with our district's implementation of transitional math."

Ric Segovia, Associate Dean of College Readiness
Triton College

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Need Help With Your School's Transitional Math Implementation?

Almy Education prides itself on helping not only educators and administrators but students. With colleges reporting numbers, such as a 37% percent decrease of students needing developmental education upon entering college, you can see the positive effects transitional math courses have on schools and their students.

Right now, Kathleen and her Illinois team are helping institutions implement transitional math by the 2021-2022 deadline. If you need help with implementation at any level, contact Kathleen at **kalmy@almyeducation.com** or call **815-222-0326**.

Check out Almy Education's transitional math tools and training at www.almyeducation.com/transitionalmath.