

GEORGIA'S COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY COMMITMENT

Why Is Georgia's Commitment To College and Career Readiness So Critical?

A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR SUCCESS

Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training – such as an associate's or bachelor's degree, certificate, license, or completion of an apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training.

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.ⁱ

One result: The demand for middle- and high-skilled workers is outpacing the state's supply of workers educated and experienced at that level.

- 81% of Georgia's jobs are middle- or high-skill (jobs that require some postsecondary education or training).
- Yet only 36% of Georgia's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).ⁱⁱ

TOO MANY STUDENTS GRADUATE UNPREPARED FOR REAL WORLD CHALLENGES

Currently, far too many students drop out or graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills required for success, closing doors and limiting their post-high school options.

Georgia's graduation rate – both the state-reported and the independently-reported – demonstrates how the education system is not working for all students.

Graduation Rate (class of 2008)	State Reported ⁱⁱⁱ	Independently Reported ^{iv}
	75%	59%

As of 2009, Georgia had 130 “dropout factories” or high schools that graduate 60 percent or less of their students.^v

Far too many students enter two- and four-year postsecondary institutions unprepared for college-level coursework.

Georgia's Remediation Data

24% of Georgia's 2008 high school graduates who enrolled in the state's public colleges (including research, state colleges, universities and eight, two-year colleges) required remediation/ learning support.^{vi}

Employers of graduates entering into the workforce directly after high school note gaps in their knowledge and skills:

- 41% of employers are dissatisfied with graduates' abilities.
- Only 18% believe that new graduates, with no further education beyond high school, have the skills necessary for advancement.^{vii}

THE COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY AGENDA

The best way to prepare students for life after high school is to ensure they graduate with a strong foundation in the core academic areas that will leave all doors open in the future.

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

The momentum created by the states has been bolstered by the federal government's Race to the Top competition, which has further incentivized the adoption of common, college- and career-ready standards and assessments.

Support is very strong among voters for college- and career-ready policies, across demographic and party lines:

- 89% of voters agree that “to really get ahead in life a person needs at least some education beyond high school, whether that means university, community college, technical or vocational school.”
- 83% of voters believe all students should “be pushed to take rigorous and broad academic requirements in high school to make sure they have as many options as possible upon graduation.”^{viii}

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What Georgia Has Accomplished To Date^{ix}

- In 2007 Georgia adopted PK-12 academic standards aligned with college- and career-ready expectations. In July 2010, Georgia adopted the Common Core State Standards.
- In 2007 Georgia passed the Graduation Rule, raising the state's high school graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level.
- The University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia revised their admission requirements to align with the new Graduation Rule to ensure a seamless transition into higher education.

Georgia is one of only 21 states (including DC) with requirements at this level

- In 2009, Georgia first administered the revised Georgia High School Graduation Test in English Language Arts with a college-ready cut score used to place students in first-year, credit-bearing college courses. The state will begin administering the new math test in 2011.

Georgia is one of only 14 states with high school tests used by higher education for admissions/ placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school and giving them time to address any readiness gaps

- Georgia was a Round 2 winner of the Race to the Top state competition

Georgia is one of only 12 states (including DC) to win the Race to the Top state competition

- Georgia is a Governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of states working to develop a common assessment system using Race to the Top Common Assessment funds.
- Georgia's longitudinal data system satisfies all ten essential Data Quality Campaign elements, providing a foundation for strong and sound student-level data collection.

Georgia is one of 22 states with a P-20 longitudinal data system that regularly matches student-level K-12 and postsecondary data

- Georgia collects and uses a range of indicators in a variety of ways to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma	YES			
CCR Testing	YES	YES		
Postsecondary Remediation	YES	YES		
Exceeding CCR				

How Georgia Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Leverage Race to the Top funds to advance the state's college- and career-ready agenda, and build support structures for students to ensure they are fully prepared to meet the raised expectations.
- ✓ ...Realize the promise of the Common Core State Standards by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into consideration the related curricular and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Sustain funding for professional development and instructional resources to support teachers and classroom learning throughout and beyond the transition to the new standards and assessments.
- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly around making student data available to relevant stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and counselors.
- ✓ ...Re-examine the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can further reward measures of college and career readiness, in alignment with the state's standards, course requirements and assessments.

ⁱ Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services.

<http://www.learn2earn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Skills to Compete <http://www.skills2compete.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ 2009-10 State of Georgia Report Card, Governor's Office of Student Achievement, <http://gaosa.org/Index.aspx>

^{iv} Education Week Diplomas Count 2011, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/06/09/index.html>

^v America's Promise Alliance (2011). Building a Grad Nation: March 2011 Update. www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation/Building-a-Grad-Nation.aspx

^{vi} 2008-09 State of Georgia Report Card, Governor's Office of Student Achievement, <http://gaosa.org/Index.aspx>

^{vii} Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies, *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* prepared for Achieve, Inc., 2005.

^{viii} Achieve (2010). *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda*. www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible

^{ix} Achieve (2011). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*. www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2011