



January 2019

## From College-Ready Students to Student-Ready Colleges, New Math Initiative Seeks Change

Achieve is thrilled to partner with [The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, Education Strategy Group, and Community College Research Center \(CCRC\)](#) in an initiative called [Launch Years](#).

The new initiative specifically looks to address barriers that keep many students - especially first-generation college students and those from low-income families - from progressing in their math courses between their junior year of high school and their junior year of college. [Launch Years](#) rethinks current structures, policies and practices that shape the mathematics experiences students have in those years because they tend to be critical in preparing students for entry into college and guiding them through higher education pathways to degree attainment. Successfully progressing from high school through college math coursework is an obstacle for too many students.



"The reforms of mathematics pathways underway in higher education reflect the growing importance of mathematics, including quantitative reasoning and statistics, in the workplace," said Mike Cohen, President of Achieve. "To ensure that students graduate from high school ready for meaningful postsecondary and workforce opportunities, K-12, higher education, and employers in every state must collaborate to define rigorous math pathways through high school."

This multiyear strategy includes work in several states, to be announced in early 2019, to begin enacting new approaches to high school mathematics pathways. This includes bringing together K-12 school districts with regional higher education institutions to identify the needs of today's students and create clear paths for their success.

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## *Time to Act: Using Data to Meet ESSA Goals*

With the passage of the federal education law--the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)--in 2015, control of education shifted back to states, requiring them to provide better data to parents and the public about how the state,

schools, and their students are performing academically. Access to and effective use of data is front and center in the ESSA plans of each state--and it is now up to states to move beyond compliance as they implement these plans and share the data they have promised with stakeholders in their communities.



A new report *Time to Act: Using Data to Meet ESSA Goals* by [Data Quality Campaign \(DQC\)](#) explores how states are making progress toward the goal of sharing better information. The report examines best practices and barriers to success and identifies areas stakeholders should keep watching to ensure that states are using data to support student achievement. The [report](#) provides an important framework to organize action that supports student achievement. [Explore the report now.](#)

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## *Can Undocumented Students Access Free College Programs?*

It is estimated that undocumented students make up 1.5 percent of all children enrolled in pre-kindergarten to fifth grade and 2.8 percent of students in grades six to 12.

Approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school every year. And while this is significant, another estimated 11,000 to 13,000 undocumented students drop out of high school and never make it to graduation. Providing

these students with a pathway to postsecondary education may not only increase access to college, but may in turn increase high school graduation rates.



In [Can Undocumented Students Access Free College Programs](#) by [The Education Trust](#), the authors investigate the 15 active or authorized statewide free college programs in providing access to undocumented students. The research on undocumented students provides evidence that state policies can serve as an important signaling function on the value of obtaining a postsecondary education. Unfortunately, as undocumented students begin the transition to adulthood, they realize the costs and requirements to continue their education beyond high school. As such, they tend to view their status and postsecondary education as an uncertain and a distant reality and as something reserved for those with documented status, privilege, and wealth.

In-State Resident Tuition (ISRT) policies have been shown to have a positive effect on postsecondary access for undocumented students. Undocumented students residing in states with ISRT policies were more likely to enroll in college compared to undocumented students who live in states without ISRT.

[Explore the findings about how accessible the 15 active or authorized statewide free college programs are to undocumented students.](#)

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## *Parents 2018: Going Beyond Good Grades*

Nearly 9 in 10 parents, regardless of race, income, geography, and education levels believe that their child is achieving at or above grade level. In a new



# Parents 2018: Going Beyond Good Grades

report, *Parents 2018: Going Beyond Good Grades* by Learning Heroes, the research team dove deeply into "the disconnect" - parents' widespread belief that their children perform at or above grade level versus national data suggesting only about one-third of students actually do so. Through in-depth, national research, they wanted to shed light on the underlying reasons for this disconnect and what could be done to ensure parents have access to more accurate, understandable, and actionable information so they can better help their children succeed now and in the future.

The research includes: national surveys of both parents and teachers of public school students in grades 3-8, focus groups with parents of children in grades 3-8 in six states, and individual interviews with parents, their children, teachers, principals, and guidance counselors. The research about "the disconnect" uncovered three key insights:

- 1. Parenting Styles Drive How Parents Engage in Their Child's Education:** Most parents believe they are involved in their child's education as much as they should be, yet depending upon their parenting style, they have different thresholds for involvement, leaving teachers to navigate a range of approaches from parents.
- 2. Report Cards Sit at the Center of the Disconnect:** Parents rely heavily on report card grades as their primary source of information and assume good grades mean their child is performing at grade level. Yet two-thirds of teachers say report cards also reflect effort, progress, and participation in class, not just mastery of grade-level content. Teachers have many more data points about student performance than parents do.
- 3. The Disconnect Is Solvable:** Providing parents with a few already

available pieces of information in one place in a clear, decipherable format leads many parents to reconsider their views about their child's performance.

Explore the findings in [Parents 2018: Going Beyond Grades](#).

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## *January Reading List*

- From Education Week: [Top Education Stories of 2018](#)
- From The Fordham Institute: [Fordham's most-read articles of 2018](#)
- From the New York Times: [Our 2nd Annual Connections Contest: Link Something You're Studying in School With the World Today](#)
- From Student Achievement Partners: [Top 25 Blog Posts of 2018](#)
- From TNTP: [TNTP's Favorite Thinkers 2018: Resolutions for Improving Student Experiences](#)
- From UnboundEd: [The Bias Toolkit Explained](#)
- From the 74: [How School Policy Changed in 2018](#)

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*All students should graduate from high school ready for college, careers, and citizenship.*

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