

COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

To ensure that all students graduate ready for college and careers, states need a new approach to accountability in high school—one that makes college and career readiness the central driver, provides the right information to the right people at the right time, and includes a continuum of college- and career-ready indicators to monitor students' progress over time. As more states align their standards, graduation requirements and assessments to college- and career-ready expectations, it is increasingly important that states develop a fully operational accountability system that reinforces and prioritizes their college and career readiness goals.

Achieve considers a state to have a comprehensive approach to college- and career-ready accountability if it collects and reports the right data in the right way, sets clear targets for schools to improve, and provides clear incentives and consequences that drive schools to improve performance and meet the targets. Achieve established the following threshold for combining indicators and their uses in state accountability systems:

- **For indicators:** The state includes the college-and career-ready diploma *and* a college- and career-ready assessment *and either* uses earning college credit while in high school *or* college remediation indicators in its reporting and accountability system. Cohort graduation rate and postsecondary enrollment are important denominators to report.
- **For uses:** For each college- and career-ready indicator, the state publicly reports *and* sets a statewide performance goal *and either* provides incentives for improvement *or* factors improvement into its accountability formula.

Accountability Criteria Defined

The Indicators

Cohort Graduation Rate: The percentage of ninth graders who graduate from high school in four years calculated using a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by either the U.S.

Department of Education or the **National Governors Association Compact**.

Minimum criteria:

- **The U.S. Department of Education Rate:** By 2010–11, all states must report on a “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate,” defined as the number of students who graduate in four years or less with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier (adjusting for transfers in and out, émigrés and deceased students).
- **The National Governors Association Rate:** The denominator of the Compact Rate is based on tracking a cohort of students who begin ninth grade in a given school year through their graduation year. The denominator of the Compact Rate is adjusted to account for students who transfer in or out of a given student cohort over the next three years.

College- and Career-Ready Diploma: The percentage of students who graduate having completed the requirements for a college- and career-ready diploma.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has set a college- and career-ready diploma as the mandatory/default option for all students or as an honors diploma (at an equivalent college- and career-ready level) that any student can pursue. For any use of this indicator, the denominator should include all

students in a graduating cohort (using a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by either the **U.S. Department of Education** or the **National Governors Association Compact**).

College- and Career-Ready Assessment: The percentage of students who score at the college- and career-ready level on a high school assessment given to all eligible students.

Minimum criteria:

- The state administers a college- and career-ready test to all *eligible* students, either a state-developed test(s) or a national college admissions test (such as the ACT/SAT). Eligible students include those who are enrolled in Algebra II statewide or all 11th grade students.
- The state has adopted or recognized a minimum performance level (cut score) that indicates college readiness.
- Postsecondary institutions factor at least the minimum college readiness cut score into their admissions or placement decisions.

Career Readiness Indicator: The percentage of high school graduates who complete a CTE pathway, earn an industry-based credential and/or dual enrollment in technical study.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator includes all students in a high school graduation cohort.

Postsecondary Enrollment: The percentage of high school graduates who enroll in a postsecondary institution within a year of graduation.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator is the number of students who graduated from high school during the previous school year.
- The numerator is the number of these students who enrolled in one, two- or four-year postsecondary institution during the subsequent school year.

Postsecondary Remediation: The percentage of high school graduates who, upon entrance to a postsecondary institution, are placed into a remedial course in reading, writing or mathematics (courses that do not count as English or mathematics credit).

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator is the postsecondary enrollment number.
- The numerator includes the number of students enrolled in remedial coursework during their first year of postsecondary education, reported by subject area (e.g., percentage in remedial reading, percentage in mathematics and percentage in writing), or if unavailable, it also would be acceptable to define remedial course-taking as “enrollment in remedial reading, writing and/or mathematics” (e.g., not disaggregated by subject). Achieve does NOT count “any remedial” coursework as an appropriate definition for this indicator.

Earning College Credit while in High School: The percentage of students who earn college credit while still enrolled in high school through AP, IB and/or dual enrollment.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator includes all students in a high school graduation cohort.
- The numerator includes the number of students *earning credit* for their college- and career-ready performance in AP, IB or dual enrollment.

The Uses

Public Reporting: The state publicly reports at the school level the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators at the school level.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator for any indicator is “all eligible students.”
- The data are reported annually and are no more than two years old. (*NOTE: Current data are judged by whether they are reported year to year or by cohort.*)
- The data are reported at the state and school levels.
- K–12 reports its data (e.g., college- and career-ready diploma and testing), and higher education reports its data (e.g., remediation and enrollment rates for high school graduation cohorts) – unless the state uses a joint reporting system/data repository

Goals: The state has publicly set statewide performance goals and defines a date for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has established a numerical goal or goal for percentage improved by a certain date.
- The state has established baseline data for that goal.

Incentives: The state has established incentives to reward schools for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has established a clear definition of what the incentive is, e.g., financial reward, public recognition, specific flexibility from regulation, etc.
- The state has established a clear threshold for earning the incentive, e.g., meeting and/or exceeding specific benchmark(s) on specific indicators.

Accountability Formula: The state factors the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators into its state accountability formula.

Minimum criteria:

- Performance/improvement on these indicators factors into ratings, and lead to any consequences, rewards, interventions or supports — beyond public reporting — for districts and/or schools.