

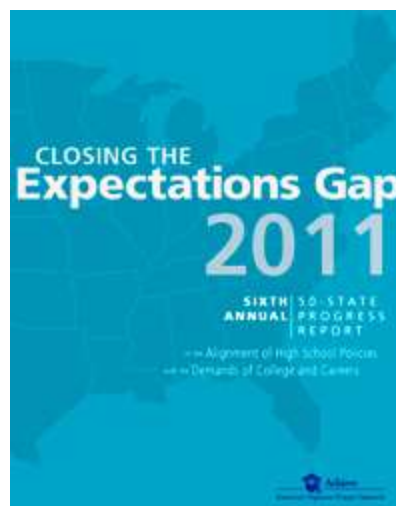
February 2011

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Commentary

The College- and Career-Ready Agenda: Six Years Later

In February 2005, the National Governors Association (NGA) and Achieve co-sponsored the National Education Summit on High Schools. At the end of the Summit, Achieve and 13 states launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network to challenge states to work together to align high school expectations with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers. Over the past six years, the ADP Network has grown to 35 states, and across the country states have made progress adopting college- and career-ready high school standards, graduation requirements, and assessment and accountability systems. For each policy area of the college- and career-ready agenda, however, the story of state — and national — progress is varied.



Since the 2005 Summit, Achieve has conducted an annual survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia on key college- and career-ready policies, including aligning standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and data and accountability systems with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers. This year marks the sixth anniversary of the "[Closing the Expectations Gap](#)" report and based on state survey response, Achieve is able to report the following:

- **Standards:** Today, 47 states and the District of Columbia have developed and adopted high school academic standards in English and mathematics that are aligned with college- and career-ready expectations. Much of the progress in standards in 2010 was the result of widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The three remaining states are contemplating adopting the CCSS or developing their own college- and career-ready standards.
- **Graduation Requirements:** Today, 20 states and the District of Columbia require all students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum to

earn a high school diploma. Two new states, **Florida** and **Utah**, raised their graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level in 2010.

- *Assessments:* Today, 14 states administer high school assessments capable of producing a readiness score that postsecondary institutions use to make placement decisions. Only one new state — **Delaware** — has a new policy to administer a college- and career-ready test to its high school students. In a separate effort, 45 states and DC are engaged in the development of next-generation assessments through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced assessment consortia, which have the potential to dramatically transform the assessment landscape.
- *P-20 Data Systems:* Today, 22 states have operational P-20 longitudinal data systems that link states' student-level K-12 data with similar data from their postsecondary systems and are matching such data annually. The matching of student-level records began for the first time in six states in 2010: **Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, New Mexico, New York** and **Virginia**.
- *Accountability:* Today, only one state meets Achieve's criteria regarding the use of all indicators in its college- and career-ready accountability system. While progress in this area has been slowest, 25 states now incorporate at least one of the four accountability indicators that Achieve has identified as critical to promoting college and career readiness.

The K-12 education landscape has shifted dramatically in 2010. And while states have made important gains on the college- and career-ready agenda since 2005, there is much work to be done to ensure that the higher expectations they have adopted in their standards are fully implemented and reflected in related policies such as graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems that value college and career readiness.

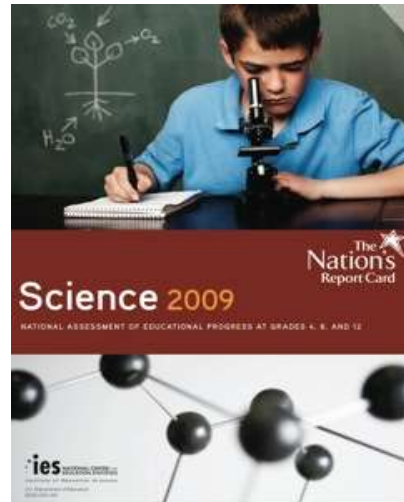
To view a copy of the report and accompanying PowerPoint presentation go to www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2011

New from Achieve

NAEP Science Results Demonstrate Importance of Developing Next Generation Science Standards

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation's Report Card, science scores offer a sobering reminder of how much work there is to be done to improve performance in science. The [2009 NAEP science results](#) are based on a new assessment framework that assesses students' knowledge on physical, life, and earth/space sciences. The results reveal that fewer than half of the students at the 4th, 8th and 12th grade level are proficient in science.

Equally alarming is that very few students – no more than one or two percent – performed at the advanced level. Stephen Pruitt, Vice President for Content, Research and Development, said the results "demonstrate the need for improved science education grounded in next-generation K-12 science standards." [More...](#)



PARCC Appoints Technical Advisory Committee

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) announced the appointment of its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC will advise the state leaders of the PARCC consortium as it develops a next-generation assessment system that is valid, reliable, fair, and moves the twenty-five state consortium towards its shared goal of college and career readiness for all students by the end of high school. Read the [press release](#). For more information on PARCC, including a newly updated PowerPoint presentation about the 25-state Partnership, see www.achieve.org/PARCC.

New Issue Brief on Building Higher Education Support for the Common Core State Standards

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), in partnership with Achieve and with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has released an [issue brief](#) (PDF) describing the Common Core initiative and the major lines of implementation work in which higher education must be engaged.

New York Adopts Common Core State Standards

The **New York** Board of Education finalized the adoption of the CCSS on January 11, along with state-specific K-12 expectations and



prekindergarten standards. Education Commissioner David M. Steiner said, "With the New York Common Core Standards in place we can now begin to build the sequenced, content-rich statewide curriculum and embedded assessments our children rightly deserve." Read the [press release](#). For a map of states that have adopted the CCSS, go [here](#). To help states and others better understand the CCSS, Achieve created a range of materials, available at <http://www.achieve.org/achievingcommoncore>.

Data Quality Campaign Webinar

On February 16, the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), of which Achieve is a managing partner, will host a live webcast from Noon - 1:30 p.m. ET to release and discuss the results of DQC's sixth annual state analysis, *Data for Action 2010*, a powerful policymaking tool to drive education leaders to use data in decision making.

Initial findings suggest rapid gains in several states, while others have flatlined despite growing momentum to empower individuals to use data to support student success. Key opportunities for states to improve how data are collected, shared and used to inform critical policy discussions like teacher effectiveness and college and career readiness will also be explored.

Panelists include:

- Aimee Guidera, Data Quality Campaign
- Julie Bell, National Conference of State Legislatures
- Paul Lingenfelter, State Higher Education Executive Officers
- Dane Linn, National Governors Association
- Brenda Welburn, National Association of State Boards of Education
- Gene Wilhoit, The Council of Chief State School Officers

News Clips

1. **Common Core Standards Will Improve Teaching and Learning**

Joe Robertson of *The Kansas City Star* reports that while getting states to agree on the details of the common standards will be challenging, the end result will be enticing. "Teachers across state lines will relish being able to teach to deeper levels, following the trend of many competing nations that effectively spend more time on fewer learning targets. Students will be more engaged with more time — and rich technology — to burrow into lessons that thrill them." [More...](#)

2. **Bipartisan Support of ESEA Reauthorization**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan writes in an [op-ed](#) in *The Washington Post* that ESEA reauthorization is a chance for bipartisan governing. On a similar note, Bill Frist, Chairman of Tennessee

Following a brief presentation of the state analysis results by DQC's Executive Director, panelists will engage in an interactive conversation to discuss the findings and their implications for education policy, using questions submitted by participants from the around the country.

Data for Action is a series of analyses on states' ability to collect and use data to improve student success. It provides transparency about state progress and priority actions they need to take to collect and use longitudinal data to improve student success.

To register go [here](#).

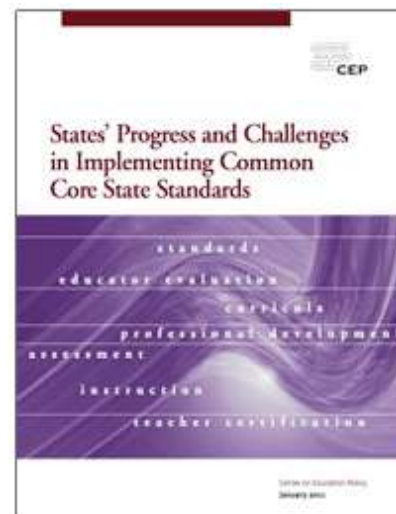
State Collaborative on Reforming Education and former U.S. Senator, and John Podesta, President and CEO of the Center for American Progress and former chief of staff to President Clinton, write in *Politico* that reauthorization will "go a long way toward making sure our children — especially children living in poverty — receive the comprehensive, globally competitive education they deserve." [More...](#)

3. **A Time for Serious and Strategic Thinking**

Thomas L. Friedman writes in *The New York Times* that the U.S. "will have to both cut and invest — really intelligently and at a large scale" to reach the compelling vision the President outlined in the State of the Union. [More...](#)

New Resources

- The Center on Education Policy issued a new report, "[States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing Common Core State Standards](#)," which found that the majority of states intended to hold firm in their decision to adopt the CCSS; almost all respondents cited the rigor of the standards as a very important or important factor in their determination to adopt the CCSS. Nearly a third of respondents planned to add state-determined content to the CCSS, a third of states did not



intend on supplementing the CCSS, and a third of states were still undecided. Most states indicated their timelines for implementing K-12 policies in support of the CCSS would fully implement these changes in 2013 or later; one notable exception was in the area of changing professional development programs, which most states indicated would happen in 2012 or earlier.

Most state education departments lacked firm plans to align and coordinate higher education policies with the CCSS. Just eight states responded that undergraduate admissions requirements would be aligned and seven states responded that there were plans to align the first-year college core curriculum with the CCSS. States were more certain about upcoming changes to coordinate teacher preparation programs and the pedagogical content of these programs.

- The National Governors Association (NGA) has released "[Common College Completion Metrics](#)" as part of its "Complete to Compete" initiative. The metrics were designed to help states improve both the quality and the efficiency of postsecondary education and monitor system performance to inform future policy decisions. Outcome metrics include graduation rates, the number of degrees awarded, transfer rates, and the average length of time and credits to degree completion. Progress metrics include the number of freshman who need remediation, retention rates, success in first-year courses, and course completion rates. The report also offers recommendations for implementation of the metrics, including establishing clear definitions for the completion goals, collecting comprehensive completion data, and reporting on the outcome and progress metrics on an annual basis. A [technical guide](#) and [briefing papers](#) provide additional information.

- "[Return on Educational Investment: A District-by-District Evaluation of U.S. Educational Productivity](#)," a new report from the Center for American Progress, includes the first-ever attempt to evaluate the productivity of almost every major school district in the country. The report measures the academic achievement a school district produces relative to its educational spending, while controlling for factors outside a district's control, such as cost of living and students in poverty. The development of academic standards has important implications for advocates of educational productivity. Standards make it far easier to evaluate productivity because it allows all school systems within a state to work toward a common educational goal. Accompanying this report is an interactive website that



allows anyone to compare the relative productivity of thousands of school districts and find out more about their spending and achievement.

Achieve Job Opportunity

Achieve has numerous career opportunities available. Go to www.achieve.org/careers.

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