Achieve Services for Improving Student Success

Over the course of our 20 years of experience raising expectations for all K-12 students in states and districts, the Achieve staff has developed unmatched expertise in helping partners drive student success.
Achieve delivers education expertise to states, districts, educators, and organizations.

✅ Reviewing and Advising on State Standards

Since our founding in 1996, improving the quality and rigor of state standards has been at the core of Achieve’s mission. Achieve has deep subject matter expertise in standards development and a nearly 20-year history in evaluating state mathematics, English language arts (ELA)/literacy, and science standards. We work directly with states and organizations to evaluate proposed and final standards according to Achieve’s established six-point criteria for quality college- and career-ready standards: rigor, focus, coherence, specificity, clarity/accessibility, and measurability.

In addition to reviewing standards for more than half of states at least once in the past 20 years, Achieve has also applied this approach to evaluate and compare standards in 15 countries around the globe. More recently, Achieve’s standards criteria were also used in the creation and review of computer coding standards. Achieve also advises states on creating transparent standards development processes.

✅ Taking a Deeper Dive on K-12 Standards

Using our deep bench of mathematics, ELA/literacy, and science content experts — all of whom have K-12 or higher education classroom teaching experience — Achieve facilitates in-depth trainings for educators, leaders, and advocates on understanding college- and career-ready mathematics, ELA/literacy and science standards. Content-specific trainings help participants gain better insight on the standards, how to implement them, and what to expect from students who master them.

✅ Reviewing State Summative English and Mathematics Assessments

Since 1998, Achieve has reviewed, on behalf of states, ELA/literacy and mathematics assessments to ensure they are of high quality and aligned to state standards. In addition to these content and quality reviews, Achieve also assists states in evaluating the clarity of score reports, rigor of cut scores for performance levels, and accessibility of state tests for all students. Our team of experts works to improve state tests so they measure what matters and provide information useful to teachers, parents, and students in understanding students’ knowledge and skills and progress towards graduating from high school ready to succeed in college and career.

✅ Developing and Selecting Instructional Materials in ELA/literacy, Mathematics and Science

Achieve understands that instructional materials are key to translating rigorous standards into student success and that creating, evaluating, and adopting materials aligned to standards is powerful professional development. We help educators and others in several ways:

- **Existing Materials**: To help educators and leaders select and adapt the best materials that align to their standards, Achieve offers single- and multiple-day trainings and facilitations using our industry-standard EQuIP Rubric and Quality Review Process for units and lessons.

- **New Materials**: We also leverage the EQuIP process to support the creation of new materials that align to rigorous standards.

- **Classroom Applications**: Achieve provides trainings on using its EQuIP Task Rubric and Student Work Analysis tools to help participants evaluate instructional materials at the task level, as well as determine expectations using student work samples.

- **Science Materials**: In science, in addition to EQuIP trainings for units and lessons, Achieve provides trainings on PEEC, a tool that educators, districts, and states can use to determine whether textbooks or yearlong curricula are aligned to rigorous science standards.

- **Science Publisher and Curriculum Developer Training**: Using PEEC and the EQuIP suite of tools, Achieve provides curriculum developers training to ensure that they understand the demands of high-quality science standards.
Eliminating Overtesting and Evaluating Testing Strategies

Achieve has long focused on the need to test students as effectively and efficiently as possible. Federal law requires annual testing of all students in grades 3-8 and once in high school in ELA/literacy and mathematics (as well as grade band testing in science), but many districts often require regular standardized testing far beyond those requirements.

Achieve regularly works with districts and states to conduct audits of their assessments — from a student perspective — to ensure they have a coherent strategy and only administer tests that are useful and of high quality. Achieve has helped numerous states and districts reduce tests and improve their overall quality. We have worked with other partners who share a commitment to smart testing, such as the National School Boards Association, and our evaluation tool has been lauded by the U.S. Department of Education as part of its Testing Action Plan to eliminate overtesting.

Providing Strategic Advice

Achieve has a long history of working with states, districts, organizations and advocates to develop solutions to help our partners take on the toughest challenges in K-12 education. We’ve helped states and districts think through policy issues, such as how to structure a standards writing and review process, creating high school graduation requirements that reflect college- and career-ready expectations, and creating coherent policy and implementation plans for standards implementation. We have also assisted states and districts in thinking through their assessment and accountability systems, including exploring innovative ways to improve student success.

Supporting Communications and Coalition Building

Achieve regularly works with state partners — including coalitions, education reform groups, and business organizations — to support their work to improve college and career readiness. Leaders of state-based efforts turn to Achieve to help them develop strategy, build stakeholder engagement plans and implement those plans. Our team of experts also conducts trainings for policymakers, educators, and advocates to ensure that they are effectively delivering their college- and career-ready messages to stakeholders.

We Stand Ready: Contact Achieve today to learn more about our services and put our expertise to work for you. Email us at services@achieve.org or contact any Achieve staff member (see our roster at achieve.org/staff).

Achieve
www.achieve.org