



Achieve

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

In This Issue

[Commentary](#)
[News](#)
[New Resources](#)
[Career Opportunities](#)
[Connect with Achieve](#)

News Clips

On Setting Goals for Students

Arizona Ready Education Council Chairman Craig R. Barrett, who also is also Chair of Achieve's Board of Directors and former CEO and Chairman of the Board of Intel, writes in a guest opinion in the *Arizona Capitol Times* that "English and math standards are about setting goals for our kids to learn to read, write, and calculate at a competitive level with high-performing states and countries." [More...](#)

Why I Support the Common Core Reading Standards

English Professor Karen Swallow Prior writes in *The Atlantic* that the Common Core State Standards in reading "empower students to read, and to read well, the very foundation of success

Perspective Newsletter

April 2013

Commentary

State-created Standards for Science Education Prepare Students for Success

The final release of the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) this month is a huge step in the advancement of science education in the United States. The NGSS will better prepare our students for careers in STEM and science-related fields and in developing informed citizens for a world fueled by innovations in science and technology. As states begin the process of adoption and implementation of the NGSS, an important step is to solidify a definition of college and career readiness in science so students will know what is expected of them to be successful in the rapidly growing and changing field of science.

The role of science in college and careers is changing dramatically. If the United States is to retain its place in the global economy, the pipeline preparing more scientifically literate students is critical. An estimated 70 percent of STEM jobs will require a bachelor's degree or more by 2018, with an estimated 90 percent requiring some kind of postsecondary degree. The pipeline can best be filled by preparing all students and allowing each student the opportunity to pursue science or STEM as a career.

While a clear definition of college and career readiness has been established through the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA), establishing a commensurate college- and career-ready definition for science poses a different set of challenges. Unlike mathematics and ELA, there are very few remedial science courses offered in universities, technical schools or programs in science. Further, there are rarely placement tests to determine students' readiness for appropriate levels of science coursework. Placement is often determined by either interest in science or mathematics levels. Additionally, unlike mathematics and ELA, there are not agreed-upon entry-level postsecondary courses in science.

Despite these challenges, work is already underway to establish a college- and career-ready definition in science. Through a series of College and Career Readiness Institutes in June and November 2012, Achieve convened a group of experts, including faculty who teach

for college, career, and life."

[More...](#)

More on the Common Core State Standards

Columnist Beth Kassab writes in the *Orlando Sentinel* that the Common Core State Standards "...promote analytical thinking. They promote real understanding rather than memorization. And that's the kind of education I want for my own kids."

[More...](#)

introductory science courses from 2- and 4-year colleges, universities and technical colleges from across the country, to review the content of the NGSS to determine the appropriate level for students to be successful in introductory level science courses and help define college- and career-readiness in science; the definition should be finalized within the coming months.

The NGSS will help students acquire disciplinary core ideas, as well as the skills to apply them in real world settings. A college and career readiness definition in science will make clear to all students and teachers the expectations they must meet in order to be prepared to pursue postsecondary training and careers in the sciences.

News

PARCC Releases Draft Accommodations Manual for Public Comment

On April 18 the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) released for public comment a draft of the full accommodations manual for the assessments currently being developed by the 22-state consortium. The draft PARCC Accommodations Manual is a comprehensive policy document that will support local educators in the selection, administration and evaluation of accommodations for the assessment of students with disabilities and English learners on the PARCC End-of-Year, Performance-Based and optional Mid-Year assessment components. The release of the manual is an important step in meeting PARCC's commitment to accessibility for all students, especially students with disabilities (SWD) and English learners (EL). The public review period allows for feedback from a wide group of stakeholders, including K-12 educators, parents, curriculum and assessment experts and interest groups. A feedback survey is posted on the PARCC website through May 13 [here](#).

PARCC Releases Draft Grade- and Subject-Specific PLDs for Public Comment

On April 10 PARCC released the draft grade- and subject-specific performance level descriptors (PLDs) in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics for public comment. Performance levels, sometimes referred to as "achievement levels," are the broad, categorical levels used to report student performance on an assessment, and the PLDs further describe what that performance means. These articulate the knowledge, skills, and practices that students performing at a given level should be able to demonstrate in each content area at each grade level and to be on-track for college and career readiness. Provide feedback through surveys posted on the PARCC website through May 8 [here](#).

PARCC Releases Assessment Blueprints and Test Specifications Documents

Today PARCC released [assessment blueprints and test specifications](#) for both the English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments set to debut in 2014-15. These blueprints and test specifications will help educators better prepare students for the new online assessments that are aligned to the more rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and designed to measure college and career readiness. [More...](#)

New Resources

The Shifting Education Landscape

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) released [The Shifting Education Landscape: Advocating for Student Success](#), a white paper which examines the changing role of educational leaders in preparing students for higher education and career development. It focuses on the opportunities posed by the CCSS, improving teacher and principal evaluations, and engaging the community to serve as academic advocates. It includes insights from superintendents about the impact of consistent academic standards; the importance of effective educator evaluations and increased accountability for student learning; and the need to engage parents, guardians and community members - all with the goal of ensuring a quality education for every student. It identifies the critical communicator role that K-12 superintendents play to promote improvements to academic programming, increase student achievement and stimulate robust support for public education throughout communities.

New Digital Learning Report

The [2012 Digital Learning Report Card](#) measures each state against the [10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning](#). It helps gauge how innovation-friendly state policies are in terms of student eligibility, funding flexibility and creating a strong policy environment for education innovators. Last year more than 700 bills involving digital learning were considered and more than 152 were signed into law. The report highlights states that are making strides in offering high-quality digital learning options and identifies opportunities for reform.

Feedback from Educators for Continuous Improvement

Aspen Institute's [Evaluating Evaluations: Using Teacher Surveys to Strengthen Implementation](#) provides practical advice for system leaders who want to use teacher evaluation systems to improve instruction, elevate the teaching profession and create a culture of continuous improvement. The report uses case studies from school systems, as well as private-sector companies, to make the case for teacher surveys and to establish guidelines for using surveys to improve results. In a relatively quick and cost-efficient way, surveys can build employee engagement, provide actionable data on implementation and support reciprocal accountability.

STEM Careers

The [2012-2013 PayScale College Salary Report](#) shows that careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) offer some of the best opportunities and most rewarding salaries for students seeking well-paying careers. STEM careers dominated PayScale's list of 130 top-tier salaries for entry-level through mid-career professionals. Starting annual salaries ranged from \$50,000 to \$100,000, with mid-career STEM profession salaries ranging from \$100,000 to over \$160,000 per year.

Career Opportunities

Achieve has career opportunities available, including Director, State Policy and Implementation Support; Program Associate, PARCC Assessment Technology; and Senior Advisor, PARCC Assessment Technology. Go to www.achieve.org/careers.

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