



Achieve

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

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News Clips

Common Core State Standards in Louisiana

Paul Pastorek, the former state superintendent in Louisiana, writes in an op-ed in *The Times-Picayune* that, "Under no circumstances would Common Core allow the federal government to dictate education to states and local government. By law the federal government cannot set standards or curricula. Standards are set by the state, and curricula are always locally chosen, not just in Louisiana but everywhere." [More...](#)

Perspective Newsletter April 2014

Commentary

Graduating with a Diploma that Matters

According to newly-released [data](#) high school graduation rates nationwide are on the rise. This is good news but as states, districts and schools make progress on ensuring that all students graduate from high school, it is imperative that the diploma grads receive signifies preparation for the real world of college, careers and citizenship.

College- and career-ready standards are the first step. Then, implementing those standards with fidelity -- which means, in part, ensuring that all high school students take courses where they are exposed to all of the standards. For states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), that means students must take at least three years of rigorous mathematics to learn the content in the CCSS and four years of English aligned with the CCSS. Revising graduation requirements in English and math (and other subjects) to align to state standards for all students is a must do - otherwise graduating college and career ready will remain out of reach for many students.

Obviously, before a state can require that students take courses consistent with their standards to receive a diploma they must actually ensure that such courses are offered to all students. [Data](#) recently released by the Office for Civil Rights shows how much work needs to be done on this front. Students, especially minority students, often do not have access to the courses they need to graduate college and career ready. For example, the study showed only 81% of high schools offer Algebra II. Beyond mathematics, access to science courses, in general, is lacking with 87% of high schools offering biology, but only 75% of high schools offering Chemistry and 63% of high schools offering Physics.

When the Circus Descends

The New York Times Op-Ed columnist David Brooks authored a piece highlighting the ridiculous attacks on the Common Core from its opponents on the right and the left. [More...](#)

Confusing Math Homework? Don't Blame Common Core

Jessica Lahey, a correspondent for *The Atlantic*, writes that, "In order to have an honest and productive debate about the efficacy of the Common Core State Standards, we must separate fact from fiction, and the idea that a particular confusing math curriculum is part and parcel of the Common Core is fiction." [More...](#)

There are several mechanisms that states can put into place to help ensure that all students have access to relevant and rigorous courses that deliver on their standards including monitoring student course-taking patterns and publicly reporting this information. Without access to course taking patterns, states, and the public, do not know which students in which schools are graduating having completed a college- and career-ready course of study. States that track students' course-taking patterns are better positioned to study and understand the relationships among high school course enrollment, grades and assessments of college readiness as well as identify the types and series of courses that best prepare students for college success.

It's important to remember, of course, that course titles alone aren't important, what matters is that students have access and exposure to the state's standards. In addition to increased monitoring and public reporting of course-taking, states should also monitor the rigor and consistency of courses to ensure that courses are covering the expected content. While course titles may vary across the state, the rigor and consistency of course or competency-based requirements should not. If courses do not have appropriate consistency and rigor, then students will not be adequately prepared for college and careers.

While the rise in graduation rates is certainly heartening, true success will come when states' graduation requirements ensure that students have access to and are taking courses aligned to the state's college- and career-ready standards, resulting in graduates who are truly prepared for the demands of college and career.

News

Achieve's State Support Team Grows

Michael Cohen, president of Achieve, announced three new hires to Achieve's team that will increase Achieve's ability to support states in the implementation of major college- and career-ready reforms and help make college and career readiness the expectation for all students. Ted Coe, Ph.D., has joined Achieve as our Director of Mathematics. Sasheen Phillips is Director of Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) and Open Educational Resources (OER). Jacob Mishook, Ph.D., is Associate Director, Assessment and Accountability. [More...](#)

New Resources

A Research Agenda for the Common Core State Standards

As part of a broader project to better connect the research on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to policy and practice, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) met with individuals from organizations representing state and local education policymakers to learn of their memberships' research and data needs around the Common Core. The conversations yielded four areas of policy-related research that will be needed in the coming year: (1) case studies of successful implementation of the CCSS; (2) studies of state and local CCSS outreach strategies; (3) studies of state education agency capacity to lead the CCSS implementation; and (4) analyses of the impact of federal education requirements on CCSS implementation. Read the [report](#).



CTE Dual Enrollment

A report from Education Commission of the States (ECS) illustrates growth in dual-enrollment across the country, including dual enrollment with a CTE focus. According to the report, [CTE Dual Enrollment: A Strategy for College Completion and Workforce Investment](#), the most recent data available from NCEES show that 82 percent of high schools had students enrolling in dual enrollment coursework in 2010-11. Nearly half of the schools had students participating in dual enrollment with a CTE focus. That translates into roughly 601,500 students enrolled in CTE dual enrollment courses that year.



Digital Learning Report Card

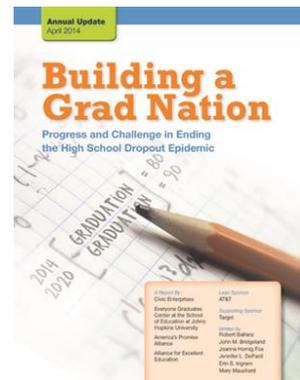
In Digital Learning Now's [annual rating](#) of digital learning quality, states are graded by 10 elements: student eligibility, student access, personalized learning, advancement, quality content, quality instruction, quality choices, assessment and accountability and infrastructure.

The intent is to better understand what states are doing to create a policy ecosystem that embraces new education models, promotes the use of technology to meet the needs of all students, and breaks down the barriers that constrain student-centric innovations.



Building a GradNation

For the first time in U.S. history the nation's high school graduation rate rose above 80 percent, according to the [2014 Building a GradNation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic](#) report released by Civic Enterprises, the Everyone Graduates Center, America's Promise Alliance and the Alliance for Excellent Education. While more than eight in 10 public high school students are graduating on time, *Building a GradNation* shows more good news: the number of students enrolled in dropout factories has dropped 47 percent over the last decade, students of color have led the way in increasing graduation rates and leaving dropout factory high schools and these increases have come as standards to graduate have gotten tougher. The report indicates the national graduation rate has crossed a momentous threshold.



Career Opportunities

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