



Achieve

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

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News Clips

School Year Starts with New Curriculum

The Baltimore Sun reports that for the first time in a decade, what gets taught in classrooms across Maryland is shifting under a new set of standards for reading and math. Those standards, called the Common Core, mark the first time there's been near-national consensus on what students should learn in math and language arts in kindergarten through 12th grade.

[More...](#)

Getting to the Core

Norwalk Citizen reports that Connecticut schools are preparing for implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted by the state in 2010 and will be implemented by 2014-15. The Norwalk Public School system

Perspective Newsletter August 2012

Commentary

Back to School with the Common Core State Standards

With the new school year just around the corner (or already in session in some states), the majority of educators across the country are hard at work implementing the new K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The new standards have sparked a range of resources and tools to support CCSS-aligned instruction, as well as drawn a lot of media attention, particularly in the last few weeks.

The Common Core State Standards are grade-by-grade, college- and career-ready standards in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy developed for and by states. Since the standards' release in 2010, 46 states and Washington DC have adopted the CCSS and are now in process of implementing them by 2014-15, when 44 of those states and DC will begin administering common assessments aligned to the new standards. As of the 2012-13 school, 25 states have fully implemented the CCSS in at least one grade and content area, although all 46 states have some implementation efforts in place.

While 2014-15 is the end date in mind for full implementation of the Common Core, states' implementation plans vary widely, with states taking on a variety of approaches and timelines. For example, Alabama is implementing the full set of K-12 mathematics standards this year, and ELA will be fully implemented next year. Indiana and West Virginia, on the other hand, implemented the CCSS in Kindergarten in both content areas in 2011-12, added 1st grade in 2012-13; 2nd grade in 2013-14, with full K-12 implementation planned for 2014-15. As of this school year, seven states have fully implemented the CCSS in both content areas (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, New York, and [North Carolina](#)).



"We're going to produce a lot of thinkers, problem solvers, more number sense – less just procedural addition, and more 'how many ways can we find the answer to an addition problem?'" Katie Brown, Academic Coach, Troup County, Georgia

was invited to the GE Foundation Developing Futures™ in Education Conference, which took place in Florida in July. The 12-member team that attended the conference returned with many goals regarding what needs to be done to ease the transition. [More...](#)

Tennessee Roundtable Meets

Times Free Press reports that Gov. Bill Haslam attended a roundtable of legislators and business and higher education leaders in Chattanooga. Executives at the meeting said graduates come to their companies lacking basic knowledge in areas such as math and literacy. But just as importantly, many lack other skills such as critical thinking, being able to make a presentation and teamwork. [More...](#)

Alabama Sets New Math Standards

WRBL reports that across the state teachers are changing how math is taught in the classroom. Starting this year, teachers will take a real-world approach to math lessons under Alabama's College and Career Standards. [More...](#)

Beyond the state-developed implementation timeline, many districts and schools are working ahead of schedule to make sure their teachers and students are prepared for the transition. Over the last few weeks, articles have chronicled the efforts districts, schools, and teachers have been making to prepare for the new college- and career-ready standards, such as in [Knox County, Tennessee](#), [Watauga County, North Carolina](#), [Santa Barbara, California](#), and [Troup County, Georgia](#).

Achieving the Common

Core is Achieve's resource bank for Common Core implementation, with tools and resources developed by Achieve and other organizations targeted for **educators**

(e.g., [quality review](#)

[rubrics](#) for evaluating the quality of instructional resources, [OER Commons CCSS-aligned resources](#), [classroom tasks aligned to the CCSS in math and CTE expectations](#), [Teaching Channel videos](#), the [Illustrative Mathematics Project](#)), for **policymakers** (e.g., [Common Core Implementation Workbook](#), a [Common Core Survey Tool](#) for tracking the quality of implementation efforts, [Common Core State Standards Implementation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool](#) to gauge the strength of state implementation plans and illustrate how to improve them), and for **advocates** (e.g., [relevant survey data](#), [Common Core messaging cards](#), [fact sheets](#), [PTA parent guides](#), [examples from states](#)). These resources and others demonstrate the power of "common" promised by the Common Core State Standards.

"Working with Common Core brings our kids to the literacy and to the ability to be prepared to go out into the real world when they're a high school graduate...It's an overwhelming amount of information, but it is the move that we need to make our kids successful as they become adults in our world," Kim Egan, an 8th grade math teacher, Knox County, Tennessee

Know of good (and free) resources to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards? Effective advocacy or communications resources related to the Common Core? [Let us know about them!](#)

News

Common Core-Career Technical Education Tasks and Workshop Planning Tools

To help educators and education leaders address the challenge of finding ways to ensure the Common Core State Standards are both rigorous and engaging for students, Achieve and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education (NASDCTEc) jointly piloted a process where educators evaluated, modified, and/or developed instructional tasks aligned to the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and relevant CTE standards. Math and CTE educators from Illinois, Nebraska, and New Jersey helped develop [20 fully aligned and integrated tasks](#) in the technical areas of architecture, agriculture, and health sciences, all of which are available online.

Preparing Students for the Future

Richmond Times-Dispatch reports that employers want workers with an increasingly high level of skills, and schools will need to adopt new approaches to prepare students for that, according to several speakers at the Governor's K-12 Education Reform Summit. [More...](#)

Standards Raise the Bar

WFSU reports that Florida and other states have adopted uniform education standards called the Common Core. Said Miami-Dade Superintendent Alberto Carvahlo at a recent event, "The Common Core essentially levels out the playing field across the country. It's a voluntary program where states embrace a new set of standards. So it's an idea whose time has come." [More...](#)

All Kids Need a Great Education

A national audience of business and education leaders recently came together to better understand the implications of all states adopting a common core set of standards to measure educational performance in K-12

In addition, to provide state, district, and school leaders with the opportunity to leverage the tools, processes, and lessons learned from the three pilot CCSS-CTE Task Alignment Workshops, Achieve has developed a set of resources leaders can use to plan and execute their own alignment activity. These free, off-the-shelf resources can be found [here](#).

Achieve Launches New Competency-Based Pathways Working Group

Achieve launched a new Competency-Based Pathways (CBP) Working Group comprised of 10 ADP Network states (Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin) and 10 leading experts committed to advancing state assessment and accountability policies to support competency-based pathways for students. As traditional notions of seat time give way to competency-based pathways that allow students to progress upon mastery of standards rather than time spent in a classroom, it is critical that state assessment and accountability policies adapt in ways that support state goals for college and career readiness and the equity aims of standards-based education reform.

The working group will focus on clarifying both immediate and longer-term issues regarding competency-based pathways, proposing options for addressing them, and advancing implementation strategies. Group members will also engage in problem-solving on emerging assessment and accountability issues, learn from others' successes and mid-course adjustments, and collaborate to design cutting-edge approaches to assessing students and monitoring progress in a competency-based environment. Achieve will also leverage these conversations to develop a policy framework, to be shared with the full ADP Network, for assessment and accountability considerations for competency-based pathways and will ultimately provide more intense support to a small number of states interested in adopting this policy framework.

Initial Set of PARCC Test Items and Task Prototypes Released

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) released its first set of item and task prototypes for both English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics. The prototypes are illustrative of how the critical content and skills found in the CCSS may be measured by the PARCC assessments set to be administered for the first time in 2014-2015. The prototype items are early samples or models that may be helpful in building the actual assessment items. They also give educators and the public an early look at what next generation assessment items may look like. [Read the press release...](#)

Bill Berezowitz, vice president at GE Healthcare, and Tim Sheehy, president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, provide recommendations in the *Journal Sentinel* to help move forward. [More...](#)

Public Review of Draft PARCC Policy and Descriptors

PARCC is seeking feedback on two draft policies related to its next generation assessment system: 1. The PARCC policy for making College-Ready Determinations (CRDs) in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics, and 2. Draft policy-level Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) and general content-level PLDs for the PARCC assessments. The feedback deadline is September 21, 2012. [More...](#)

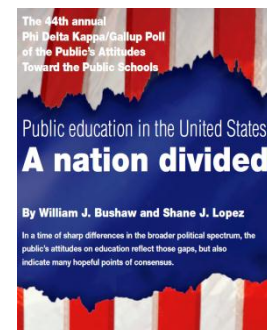
Achieve Receives New Grant from GE Foundation to Strengthen Focus on Common Core Implementation Effort

Achieve has received a three year, \$7 million grant from the [GE Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of General Electric, that will greatly assist in implementation of CCSS. Teachers in almost all states have begun or are beginning to teach to these college- and career-ready standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics. The GE Foundation has a long and rich history of investing in communities through its Developing Futures™ in Education program and other philanthropic objectives with the goals of improving student achievement, particularly in mathematics and science; increasing college-going rates; and, now, ensuring the successful implementation of CCSS, objectives that are entirely aligned with Achieve's mission. The grant will help Achieve provide states with the support necessary to ensure all students graduate from high school - and graduate ready for college, careers, and life. [Read the full press release...](#)

New Resources

New Poll Results Reveal Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

According to the annual Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK)/Gallup [Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools](#), though Americans clearly have opposing stances on many education issues, 75 percent believe common core state standards would provide more consistency in the quality of education between school districts and states. In fact, more than half of Americans (53 percent) believe common core standards would make U.S. education more competitive globally.



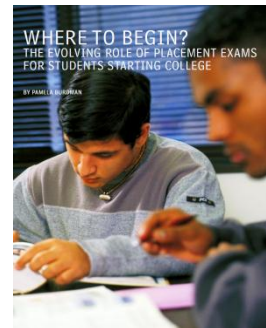
The College Advantage

A new [report](#) by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce finds that almost half of the jobs lost in the recession that began in December 2007 have been recovered and virtually all of those jobs required some form of postsecondary education. Experts say this data demonstrates the ongoing importance of education beyond high school for individual workers and our national economy. The wage premium for bachelor's degrees or better relative to high school degrees skyrocketed from 44 percent in 1981 to 100 percent in 2005 and has only fallen to 97 percent since the beginning of the recession. Jobs that require bachelor's degrees have been the big winner, increasing by 2.2 million jobs since the recession began. At the same time, 5.8 million jobs for those with a high school diploma or less have been lost since the recession began.



Where to Begin? The Evolving Role of Placement Exams for Students Starting College

For years, colleges have used placement exams to determine whether to deem incoming students "college ready" or assign them to developmental education. But emerging research has cast doubt on the practice, sparking national debates over whether the tests are fair and if their traditional use constitutes a barrier to college completion. Jobs for the Future brings clarity to the discussion. [Where to Begin?](#) helps state and college leaders understand the latest research, make sense of the contentious debate issues, and most importantly, evaluate their own options for moving forward.



2012 Condition of College and Career Readiness Success

Success in college and career is at risk for at least 60 percent of likely college-bound 2012 U.S. high school graduates, according to ACT's newly released report, [The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2012](#). The report focuses on the scores earned by graduating seniors who took the ACT exams - this year 52 percent of the U.S. graduating class. More than a fourth (28 percent) of ACT - tested 2012 graduates did not meet any of the four ACT College Readiness



Benchmarks in English, mathematics, reading and science, suggesting they are likely to struggle in first-year college courses in all four of those subject areas. Another 15 percent met only one of the benchmarks, while 17 percent met just two. In short, a total of 60 percent of test takers met no more than two of the four benchmarks. In comparison, only 25 percent of tested 2012 grads met all four ACT benchmarks, unchanged from last year.

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Career Opportunities

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