



Achieve

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

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News Clips

New Standards Will Help Students

Montclair Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Penny MacCormack said the Common Core State Standards could help usher new energy into classrooms that will better prepare students for college, and she urged students, teachers and parents to look at the imminent change as an opportunity. [More...](#)

Urban Legends About Common Core

In ASCD's *Educational Leadership*, a noted literacy expert dismantles five myths about the new standards and shows what the standards entail. [More...](#)

## Perspective Newsletter Dec. 2012

### Commentary

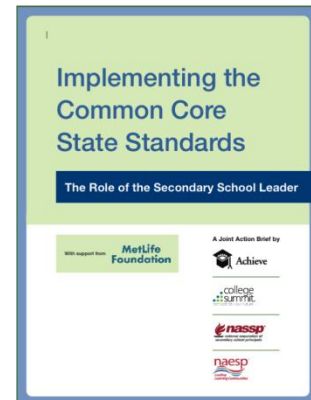
#### 2012: Achieve's Year in Review

2012 was, in many ways, the "Year of College and Career Ready Agenda." Much like the 46 states (and the thousands of districts and schools) working to implement the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy and other critical college- and career-ready (CCR) reforms, Achieve dedicated much of our energy to digging deeply into the new standards, building and testing tools to support the implementation of CCR reforms from both the policy and instructional perspectives, and conducting research to reinforce the importance of all students graduating ready for college and careers.

Below is an overview of some of Achieve's most important publications and resources from 2012.

Our resources that support the implementation of the **Common Core State Standards** include tools for state leaders as they develop and evaluate their implementation strategies - such as [Common Core State Standards Implementation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool](#) with Education First Consulting and the updated [Implementing the Common Core State Standards: A Workbook for State and Local Leaders](#) with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute - as well as tools for local educators and curriculum leaders responsible for ground-level implementation of the new standards - like the [EQulP quality review rubrics](#), instructional tasks aligned to the [CCSS and career and technical education \(CTE\)](#) expectations, rubrics for evaluating the quality and alignment of [Open Educational Resources \(OERs\)](#), and action briefs on the role of the [school counselors](#), [elementary school leaders](#), and [secondary school leaders](#) in the implementation of the standards.

In addition to the CCSS-focused tools, Achieve also undertook a number of research projects to explore [public awareness of and support for](#) the standards, opportunities for [bridging the "college" and "career" ready](#)



## Remedial Classes in Florida

The Florida Center for Investigative Reporting and *StateImpact Florida* explore the growing need for remedial education among Florida's high school graduates and older students. They try to figure out what the state can do to improve public education and provide students with the skills and tools they need to succeed in college and in the workforce. [More...](#)

## Common Core in Oklahoma

*Tulsa World* reports that the Common Core State Standards initiative is a state-led effort to provide curriculum standards that are consistent throughout the country. [More...](#)

## Common Core Sets Bar for Achievement

Laura Moore, director of innovation at the State Collaboration on Reforming Education (SCORE), a nonprofit organization that supports Tennessee's work to prepare students for college and the workforce, writes in *The Commercial Appeal*

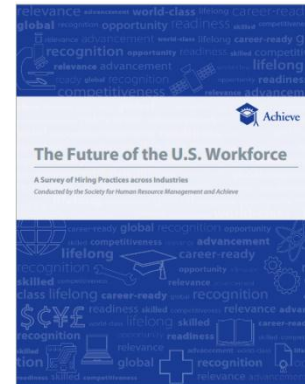
[divide](#) through CCSS implementation, and the range of academic, technical, and employability/life [skills](#) reflected in the CCSS. These resources and others are available on Achieve's regularly updated [Achieving the Common Core webpage](#).

Another major focus of 2012 was the ***Future of the U.S. Workforce***. With the U.S. still climbing out of its recession and many policymakers and business leaders looking to our education system to help reaffirm our global and personal competitiveness, the time was right to release three reports exploring the intersection of opportunity and education. [These reports](#) include a survey of over 4,700 human resources managers in partnership with the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), a literature review on middle skills jobs, and an analysis of the (limited) opportunities within low skills jobs.

Given the growing importance of strong *data and reporting* to inform teachers, students, parents, and other critical stakeholders, this fall, Achieve released a [policy brief](#) that explores how reporting can help drive college and career readiness at all levels. Achieve also developed model report cards to demonstrate how powerful well-organized data can be.

And lastly, it wouldn't be a Year in Review without Achieve's seventh annual report on states' progress in the areas of college- and career-ready standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability - [Closing the Expectations Gap 2012](#). For the first time, the report details not only states' policy progress on *adopting* the college- and career-ready agenda but also their efforts to *implement* those policies since only faithful implementation will improve student achievement.

**Looking ahead**, Achieve sees great things coming in 2013: The release of the [Next Generation Science Standards](#), a new set of resources and tools to help business leaders support college- and career-ready reform in their states and communities, and an in-depth look into competency-based education and the college- and career-ready level, to name just a few. Continue to follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and through our [Perspective](#) Newsletter to stay up to date with Achieve in the new year. Happy Holidays from the Achieve team!



## News

### Implementing the Common Core State Standards Action Briefs

Achieve, in partnership with College Summit, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Association of

that "Common Core represents an opportunity for our state to do what's right for our students."

[More...](#)

### Common Core Could Improve Quality of High School Assessments

*U.S. News & World Report* reports that the movement to common assessment gives states an opportunity to build this support by creating innovative exams that truly measure student achievement. [More...](#)

Elementary School Principals, with support from MetLife Foundation, has released a series of *Implementing the Common Core State Standards Action Briefs* for [school counselors](#), [elementary school leaders](#), and [secondary school leaders](#). The Common Core State Standards provide an opportunity to realize systemic change and ensure that American students are held to the same high expectations in mathematics and literacy as their global peers - regardless of state or zip code. These Action Briefs provide a **starting point**, designed to increase awareness of the standards, create a sense of urgency around their implementation, and provide these stakeholders - who are faced with increased expectations in the context of fewer resources - with a deeper understanding of the standards and their role in implementation.

### Achieve OER Institute Meeting

On November 15 and 16 in Chicago, Illinois, Achieve convened teams from seven states participating in the Achieve OER Institute. Open Education Resources (OERs) are free, online resources for teaching and learning that contain an open license, meaning they can be reused and remixed to fit the needs of a particular student or classroom. The Achieve OER Institute is a year-long effort to help these seven states discuss and strategize about policy and implementation issues related to using OERs as related to their ongoing efforts to implement college- and career-ready standards. This builds on Achieve's previous work to create a series of rubrics to evaluate the quality of OERs and develop and online evaluation tool to display and pool evaluation data. Learn more about this effort [here](#).

The state teams for the Achieve OER Institute are California, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. Prior to the meeting in Chicago, the teams participated in virtual convenings focused on sharing current state developments in OER use, learning about different methods of measuring quality, coordinating curriculum and technology initiatives, and discussing issues related to open licensing. The meeting in Chicago served as a cornerstone to this effort where state partners gathered to create a shared vision for OER implementation, create specific action plans to realize their vision, and discuss these plans across states and with experts from the field. Over the next four months, Achieve will continue to provide support to states as they begin work on their action plans, and will facilitate opportunities for states to share resources and information regarding the use of high-quality, standards-aligned OERs. This OER Institute was made possible by generous funding and support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

## New Resources

### Data for Action 2012

Data Quality Campaign's (DQC) eighth annual state analysis, [Data for Action 2012](#), shows that although states are making progress in supporting effective data use, the hardest work remains. While many states are collecting quality data and have enacted critical policy changes, they still need to focus on helping parents, teachers and students effectively use data. Aimee Rogstad Guidera, executive director of the Data Quality Campaign, said, "State policymakers must actively support a culture in which all education stakeholders are actually using and learning from this crucial information to improve student achievement."

### High Standards Help Struggling Students

In a new Education Sector [analysis](#), researchers demonstrate that higher standards not only do not hurt struggling students, but actually help them achieve at higher levels. Using state-by-state NAEP data to examine the effect of high standards on student achievement, they find there is no evidence that high standards have hurt low-achieving students. In fact, they found that higher standards have probably helped. The researchers compared struggling students - those who score at "below basic" levels on the NAEP in reading and math - across states with low and high standards in 2003 and 2011. Equally significant, the analysis challenges the notion that a state's economic health contributes to the achievement gap. Controlling for these economic conditions, researchers found no evidence that below basic students do better in rich states than in poor states, regardless of standards. In other words, all students benefit from the implementation of higher academic standards. The researchers argue, "There is no reason for states to dilute the strength of the standards with lower expectations of performance."

### Strength in Numbers: State Spending on K-12 Assessment Systems

A [new report](#) by the Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings provides current, comprehensive evidence on state-level costs of assessment systems, based on data from state contracts with testing vendors assembled by the Brown Center. These data cover a combined \$669 million in annual spending on assessments in 45 states. The report identifies state collaboration on assessments as a clear strategy for achieving cost savings without compromising test quality. For example, a state with 100,000 students that joins a consortium of states containing one million students is predicted to save 37 percent, or \$1.4 million per year; a state of 500,000 students saves an estimated 25 percent, or \$3.9 million, by joining the same consortium. This report has clear value to the 45 states that have joined consortia to develop common assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

## Results on International Studies

The National Center for Education Statistics released [results](#) on the performance of U.S. students on two international studies: the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The results show improvement at grade 4 in reading since 2006, when PIRLS was last administered, and in mathematics since 2007, when TIMSS was last administered. Eighth-graders' average scores held steady in both mathematics and science since the last TIMSS administration in 2007, as did fourth-graders' average scores in science. Nine states participated in TIMSS or both TIMSS and PIRLS in 2011 as separate state samples, as well as part of the national sample, and some of the states had among the top average scores in both studies. Both of these cross-national comparative studies are coordinated by the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College, under the auspices of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

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## Career Opportunities

Achieve has several career opportunities available. For more, go to [www.achieve.org/careers](http://www.achieve.org/careers).

*Perspective* is sent to you by Achieve, an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments and strengthen accountability. Please feel free to circulate this e-newsletter to your colleagues.