



February 2016

## Dear Reader,

Last May, when Achieve released its first edition of the Proficient vs. Prepared report, many were dismayed to see that over half of states had discrepancies of more than 30 percentage points between their state-reported proficiency levels and NAEP. The new version of this report—based on 2015 state test and NAEP data and released in late January—shows that many states proactively closed this gap—and they did so implementing higher standards and often new assessments. Now, only five states have a gap of more than 30 percentage points in either 4th grade reading or 8th grade math. [Research](#) from Education Next confirms that more states than ever before have rigorous standards in place AND are communicating more transparently to parents and educators about how students are actually doing. Having high expectations and being transparent is always the right-if difficult-choice. Kudos to the vast majority of states who are now doing the right thing.

Sandy Boyd, COO, Achieve

## States making progress in closing "Honesty Gaps"

In 2015, Achieve first released the [Proficient vs. Prepared report](#), which showed large disparities between most state test results and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). With states taking action to transition to new, more rigorous tests over the past few years and also setting new levels of proficiency or cut scores, states deserve a lot of credit for reducing or even eliminating the "honesty gap" that existed. With standards and tests that gauge whether students are able to show they can do grade-

level work, parents are provided better information so they can partner with educators to impact student achievement. The [2016 edition of the Proficient vs. Prepared report](#) demonstrates that most states acknowledged and corrected their reporting of student proficiency.

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## *More states than ever before have rigorous proficiency standards in place*

New analysis from Education Next, which grades states based upon the rigor of their state proficiency standards, found that more states than ever have high academic standards in place. Overall, 36 states have strengthened their standards since 2013, while just 5 have loosened them, and 7 have left their standards essentially unchanged. Roughly half of all states received an "A" grade from Education Next for their standards in 2015.



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## *Updated CCR school report cards*

Achieve recently updated a set of materials to support states in improving their reporting at all levels, including revised sample school report cards for high school, middle school, and elementary school. Check out the report cards and guidance for incorporating college- and career-ready indicators into report cards [here](#).

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## *Assessment inventory tool can help states reduce testing*

[Recent guidance](#) from the U.S. Department of Education further supports the

trend states have begun of working to reduce the testing burden on students. Our [Student Assessment Inventory Tool for School Districts](#) enables districts to take stock of all assessments they administer in order to eliminate redundant or unnecessary tests.

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## *Updated Assessment Resources*

Achieve has released updated resources on which English language arts/literacy, math, and science assessments states are administering to elementary, middle, and high school students in 2015-16; which students are required to take the assessment; what, if any, student stakes are tied to the assessments; and whether there have been changes to the assessments in states since 2014-15.

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## *AYPF webinar: "Career Pathways: From Ideas to Action, Tools for States"*

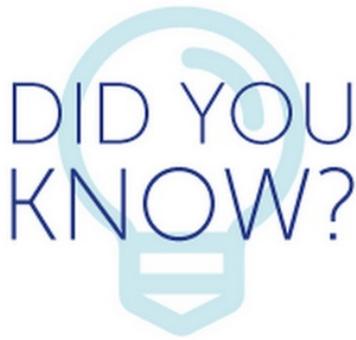
In order to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for success in college and careers, states and districts across the country are working to provide multiple educational pathways to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the economy. In recent years, states and district have been working to build career pathways to provide students with education and workforce preparation opportunities linked to additional training and jobs.



This webinar, which will be held on February 10 at 2 pm ET, will describe the value of career pathway systems, showcase leading state and district examples, and introduce the College and Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) Center's new Career Pathways Modules, which provides tools and resources for the development and implementation of a career pathways system. [Register here.](#)

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The [2016 edition](#) of Achieve's "Proficient vs. Prepared" report found that

# 16 states

have eliminated or narrowed their "Honesty Gap" to within five percentage points of NAEP scores since the 2015 edition of the report.

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

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