



Achieve

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

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No Delays on Common Core

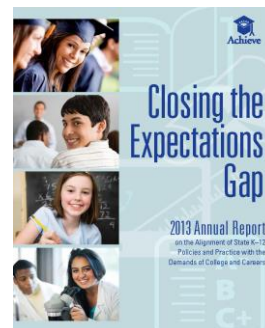
The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* Editorial Board writes that, "the Ohio Senate has to reject House Bill 193, an ill-conceived measure that would delay Common Core testing for a year, likely derailing this promising and long-planned effort to prepare Ohio's students more effectively for jobs and careers." [More...](#)

Perspective Newsletter Jan. 2014

Commentary

In 2013 Achieve advanced the college- and career-ready (CCR) agenda by working with states and partners on the four CCR policy pillars: standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems. While much of our work last year focused on supporting states as they prepared to, and continue to, implement CCR standards, important contributions to the field were made to support states' development, adoption and implementation of graduation requirements that deliver the CCR standards, assessments aligned to CCR standards and data and accountability systems that value and incentivize CCR measures.

Achieve's eighth annual report on college and career readiness, [Closing the Expectations Gap](#), highlights the progress states have made in integrating college- and career-ready policies into their systems. Below is an overview of some of the major work undertaken to advance this college- and career-ready agenda in 2013.



Standards

- The [Toolkit for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the CCSS](#) was designed to support alignment of instructional materials to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Developed for educators, the Toolkit offers a set of interrelated, freely available instruments for evaluating alignment to the CCSS. The Toolkit was developed in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Student Achievement Partners.

Optimism Justified for Common Core

The Jesup (Georgia) *Press-Sentinel* writes that the need for higher standards is well-documented - Achieve Inc., found ...that "current high-school exit expectations fall well short of [employer and college] demands." [More...](#)

Viewpoints: Common Core Education Standards Put Students on the Right Path

Jackie Levy, president of the Sacramento County Board of Education and Greg Geeting, a member of the Sacramento County Board of Education, write in an op-ed in *The Sacramento Bee* that, "Common Core focuses greater attention on career readiness and critical thinking and is consistent across grades." [More...](#)

- Trainings on the EQuIP rubrics and quality review process continued throughout the year and the EQuIP Peer Review Panel was established. This year exemplary materials aligned to the CCSS were identified and publicly posted, and eLearning modules and student work protocols were developed. These resources can be found on the [EQuIP webpage](#).
- A [CCSS Tool for Legislators](#) was designed to help increase understanding of the CCSS and of legislators' roles in supporting the implementation of the CCSS and related policies. The tool was developed in partnership with Education First, the Aspen Institute and the Insight Education Group.
- The [Next Generation Science Standards](#) (NGSS) were released. These K-12 science standards were developed by 26 states in a collaborative process managed by Achieve. They are arranged in a coherent manner across disciplines and are rich in content and practice to help provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education.
- For state education policy leaders, the [NGSS Adoption and Implementation Workbook](#) was released to provide guidance, exercises and templates for state teams to use as they work through the critical steps for adoption and planning for implementation of the NGSS. It also includes a diagnostic tool to help assess readiness to implement each step. The Workbook was developed in partnership with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI).
- [State Support for Open Educational Resources: Key Findings from Achieve's OER Institute](#) details seven states' efforts to advance OER in their respective states: California, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington and Wisconsin.
- To help educators find valuable classroom resources, the OER [Evaluation Tool Handbook](#) was developed to guide users through the process of evaluating the quality of online instructional resources using the Achieve OER rubrics.

- The [Business Center for a College- and Career-Ready America](#) (BCCCRA) was launched to provide a range of practical and customizable tools, key messages, talking points and examples of how current business leaders are supporting standards-based education reform.
- For state-based advocates, Achieve provided communications tools around CCR standards and engaged in direct media and stakeholder communications activities.

Graduation Requirements

- A brief, [Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities: Ensuring Meaningful Diplomas for All Students](#), was released to provide guidance to support the goal of ensuring that students with disabilities leave school with meaningful diplomas. The brief was developed in partnership with the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota.
- [Advancing Competency-Based Pathways to College and Career Readiness](#) provided a state policy framework for graduation requirements, assessment and accountability to assist states in building a policy structure that contributes to statewide adoption and implementation of competency-based pathways that support all students in reaching college and career readiness. The framework was developed through the Competency-Based Pathways Working Group, comprised of leaders from 11 states (Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, Washington and Wisconsin) and 12 national and state organizations interested in advancing competency-based pathways.
- Completed the first phase of Competency-Based Pathways Work Group and launched state partnerships with Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Assessments

- Started the year managing the PARCC consortium work for the states and assisted the consortium in establishing themselves as a nonprofit, spinning off of Achieve by the end of the year.
- [State Transition to High-Quality, College/Career-Ready Assessments: A Workbook for State Action on Key Policy, Legal, and Technical Issues](#) was designed to assist states in planning for transitions to next-generation assessments aligned to CCR standards. It was developed in partnership with CCSSO and EducationCounsel, with guidance from a task force of state leaders. It focuses on several key issues, including school and district accountability, teacher and leader evaluation and student accountability, and includes a needs assessment for states to gauge their priority areas to address for the transition.

Accountability

- The policy brief [Transforming Public Reporting to Ensure College and Career Readiness for ALL](#) was developed as states adopt and implement bold education reforms intended to dramatically increase a student's likelihood of graduating from high school college- and career-ready. There is a strong sense among many states that reporting the right data to the right people at the right time, and reporting it well, is an essential path toward ensuring the readiness of all students for college and career.
- [Creating a P-20 Continuum of Actionable Academic Indicators of Student Readiness](#) was released to serve as a guide in selecting and prioritizing academic performance indicators that illuminate student readiness for college and career across the P-20 spectrum. These indicators can be built into the state's accountability system through public reporting, statewide performance goals, school-level incentives and accountability formulas used to differentiate and classify schools and districts. A [webinar](#) highlighted the key takeaways from the brief and states' actions to lift academic achievement, educational attainment and career success through innovative public reporting.

As the work of CCR standards implementation continues and states prepare to administer CCR-aligned assessments, our work will continue to evolve as we support states in their continued implementation efforts and as they begin to develop and implement assessment transition plans and policies. Achieve remains committed to the four policy pillars of the college- and career-ready agenda and advancing work in these areas in 2014. A few things to look for in the coming year:

Standards

- Continued posting of emerging exemplars from the EQuIP collaborative and the addition of student work samples. The EQuIP Peer Review Panel will continue to review instructional materials and exemplary materials will be posted to the EQuIP webpage. To submit ELA/literacy or mathematics lessons and units for the EQuIP Peer Review Panel to review, visit the [EQuIP webpage](#) and look under the "EQuIP Peer Review Panel" tab.
- Continued support for states as they prepare to adopt and implement the NGSS, including the development of accelerated course models for high school, evidence statements for each NGSS performance expectation, model content frameworks, publisher's criteria and classroom sample assessment tasks that integrate math and science. Additionally, the NGSS Network will officially launch in early 2014.
- Continued work with the states we are supporting through the OER Institute through cross-state convenings and targeted, state-specific assistance as they continue to support the use of OER in classrooms.
- Continued support for state-based advocates for CCR standards through the development and sharing of communications tools and resources, as well as direct engagement with stakeholder groups.
- Continued support for the business community by tracking 2014 [Business in the News](#) - both within and across states.

Graduation Requirements

- Continued support to states as they work to align their graduation requirements with the rigor and expectations of CCR standards.

Assessments

- Increased assistance and guidance to states as they prepare to transition to new assessments aligned to the CCR standards, especially the consortia-developed tests.

Accountability

- Continued support and guidance to states to increase the presence of and use of college- and career-ready indicators in their accountability and public reporting systems.

News

Achieve's Annual Meeting

Achieve hosted the 9th Annual Meeting for State Leadership Teams and National Partners on December 12-13, 2013 in Arlington, Virginia. With over 300 leaders from 34 states in attendance, including K-12 chief state school officers, governor's education policy advisors, postsecondary leaders, state board members, state legislators and representatives from third-party organizations and national education organizations, the meeting focused on what's working and what's on the horizon to further implementation of the college- and career-ready policy agenda in states.

This year's meeting featured a keynote with the author and investigative journalist Amanda Ripley, who discussed her new book, "The Smartest Kids in the World," and remarked on American students' experiences in the classrooms of high-performing nations to reveal insights on advancing a college- and career-ready nation. The meeting also included compelling conversations on implementing and sustaining the agenda with emphasis on college- and career-ready standards and

assessments, integrating STEM into the college- and career-ready agenda and transforming teacher preparation to meet the expectations for a college- and career-ready nation.

New this year were Ed Talks, in which issue-area experts gave defining 15-minute talks highlighting bright spots and advancements in the field. Topics included open educational resources (OER), career and technical education, competency-based pathways, making the most of good data, high-quality instructional materials and advocating for the agenda. The meeting also provided an opportunity for peer networking to share ideas around the next frontier of the college- and career-ready agenda and make connections across state leaders' work. For more information on implementing and sustaining the agenda please visit www.achieve.org/college-and-career-ready-agenda.

PISA Results

In December the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) issued Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey results. Achieve President Michael Cohen noted that, "Unfortunately, the PISA results for 2012 still show that the United States is among the middle of the pack of developed nations. These results mirror the recently released results of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which show that the literacy and problem solving skills of young adults in our international peers are outpacing those of young adults here in the U.S. Considered together, these results are a powerful reminder that we must do more to challenge and prepare our students in order to remain globally competitive." [More...](#)

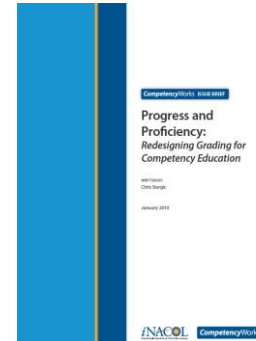
Upcoming NGSS Resources

A number of resources are being developed to support the Next Generation Science Standards, including evidence statements, model content frameworks, classroom assessment tasks, accelerated pathways, an EQUiP NGSS Rubric, a science standards comparison toolkit and a data portal. For more information, visit the [NGSS website](#). To be notified when NGSS resources become available, [sign up for the NGSS newsletter](#).

New Resources

Progress and Proficiency

iNACOL and CompetencyWorks released a new report that explores how districts and schools can approach redesigning their grading systems to reinforce learning based on mastery or proficiency. [Progress and Proficiency: Redesigning Grading for Competency Education](#) unpacks the potential weakness of a traditional A-F grading system and proposes a set of criteria to use in redesigning a system to support the principles of learning passed on outputs, rather than inputs. The paper also explores six elements most, if not all, competency-based schools are following as they redesign their grading policies, including embracing explicit learning progression or standards so that everyone will have a shared vision of what students should learn; developing a clear understanding of levels of knowledge so that students and teachers share an understanding of what proficiency means; ensuring transparency so that educators, students and parents all understand where students are on their learning progression; creating a school-wide or district-wide standards-based grading policy; offering timely feedback and meaningful reassessments so that students can continue to progress and stay on track; and providing adequate information infrastructure to support students, teachers and school-wide continuous improvement. The full report and an executive summary can be accessed at www.CompetencyWorks.Org.



Supporting Early Warning Systems

Data Quality Campaign (DQC) published a [factsheet](#) on early warning systems. Early warning systems combine multiple data points, translate them into predictive indicators based on research and proactively communicate them to



stakeholders so they can examine which students are or are not on track for postsecondary success and intervene accordingly. Thirty-one states produce early warning reports, up from 18 states in 2011. States use early warning data to work toward broader policy goals, such as school improvement efforts and increased graduation rates.

Arizona Aims Higher

Expect More Arizona and the Arizona Public Engagement Task Force partnered together to launch the Arizona Aims Higher campaign, which is focused on educating parents, businesses and community leaders about Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards and an aligned assessment. The campaign includes the ArizonaAimsHigher.org site, resources and materials, multi-media advertising and grassroots outreach efforts. Website visitors can learn more about the standards and new assessment, get resources and tools, and sign up to show their support.



Education Week's Quality Counts Report

The 18th edition of *Education Week's Quality Counts* continues the report's tradition of tracking key education indicators and grading the states on their policy efforts and outcomes. This report delves into the forces that are reshaping the traditional school district. The research center's K-12 Achievement Index assesses the performance of a state's public schools against a broad set of 18 indicators capturing current achievement levels, improvements over time and poverty-based disparities or gaps. According to *Education Week*, Massachusetts again emerges as the top-achieving state, a position it has held since the index was first introduced in 2008.



Career Opportunities

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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.

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