



Achieve

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

In This Issue

[Commentary](#)
[News](#)
[New Resources](#)
[Connect with Achieve](#)

News Clips

Common Core State Standards in Illinois

NapervilleSun reports that standards for students across the state are changing, and educational leaders hope it will be a game changer when it comes to student achievement.

[More...](#)

School Event Explains Common Core to Parents

The Marietta Daily Journal reports that parents in Smyrna, Georgia headed to the classroom for a lesson in new, statewide education standards. The training focused on ways to boost understanding of the Common Core State Standards.

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Perspective Newsletter Jan. 2013

Commentary

Skills in the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are often described as the academic *knowledge* and *skills* all students need to be college and career ready. While it is relatively straightforward to identify the knowledge in the content, it can be more challenging to isolate the skills embedded within the new standards.

To bring about clarity to this issue, Achieve commissioned research to identify skills in the CCSS, using the Deeper Learning Standards and Career Cluster Essential Skills Statements as benchmarks. Achieve deliberately selected two diverse sets of skills statements so that the analysis focused on both broad, transferable "habits of mind" skills and skills more aligned with workplace and career readiness. The two skills statements selected are by and large representative of the universe of skills most valued by higher education, business and society.

So what did we find? Achieve's new report - [Understanding the Skills in the Common Core State Standards](#) - demonstrates how the CCSS in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy cover many *college-ready*, *career-ready* and *employability/life-ready* skills, demonstrating how the knowledge and skills needed to excel in academics, technical settings and life overlap significantly. The ELA/Literacy CCSS are particularly strong when it comes to providing regular opportunities for students to work collaboratively, present information, communicate in a variety of ways and use research to make informed judgments, while the mathematics standards (and in particular the Standards for Mathematical Practice) provide regular opportunities for students to solve problems and use logic and reasoning.

Part of this "blurring" between academic, technical and employability skills has to do with the fact that workplaces are demanding more knowledge and skills than before, pushing the education system to provide more opportunities for students to integrate academic and technical knowledge and skills, as is done on the job.

Common Core Could Help Underperformers

Orange County Register reports that the streamlined standards that students will soon be expected to master in California could make it easier for schools to level the playing field for everyone.

[More...](#)

Skills Strongly/ Largely Reflected in the CCSS

- ❖ Communications skills
- ❖ Teamwork/ collaboration skills
- ❖ Problem-solving skills
- ❖ Reasoning skills
- ❖ The applications/ extension of core content in various situations
- ❖ Use of data
- ❖ Research skills
- ❖ Time management skills
- ❖ Use of technology (in ELA/literacy)

Skills Requiring an Academic Foundation Articulated by the CCSS with Technical Elements Outside the Scope of the CCSS

- ❖ External and internal work-based communications skills
- ❖ Job-seeking skills
- ❖ The application/ extension of core content in nonroutine ways

Skills that Could be Reflected in CCSS-Aligned Instruction

- ❖ Motivation/ self-discipline skills
- ❖ Study skills
- ❖ Adaptability skills
- ❖ "Enjoyment" of learning
- ❖ Recognizing strengths and weaknesses

Skills Not Covered by the CCSS

- ❖ Conflict resolution skills
- ❖ Technology-based project management skills
- ❖ Mentoring skills
- ❖ Career planning and exploration
- ❖ Ethical reasoning
- ❖ Quality control systems and practices
- ❖ Workplace safety and health
- ❖ Emergency procedures and response techniques

But even more important, the overlap derives from the fact that skills cannot be gained absent content - and content is not very useful without the skills necessary to transfer and use that knowledge. In other words, content knowledge is foundational in the development of skills, and the application of skills provides students the opportunity to extend content knowledge in relevant and meaningful ways.

Of course, the CCSS only identify those skills - it is up to teachers and their use of pedagogy and instruction to help students master the content and skills called for in the CCSS.

Related Resources:

On the report's webpage (www.achieve.org/Skills-CCSS), you can find

- The downloadable report, with illustrative examples, and Appendix B: Commonly Identified (High School-Level) *Common Core State Standards*
- *Appendix C: Full Analysis Tables in ELA/Literacy*
- *Appendix D: Full Analysis Tables in Mathematics*
- Sortable Excel File of Deeper Learning Skills, CCSS, and Ratings
- Sortable Excel File of Career Cluster Essential Knowledge & Skills, CCSS, and Ratings
- *Charting College- and Career-Ready Skills* Venn diagram

News

New Vice Presidents Named At Achieve

Michael Gilligan, formerly the Director of Strategic Initiatives and Resource Development at the Hunt Institute in North Carolina, has joined Achieve as the new Vice President of Strategic Initiatives. In this position, he will focus on building state coalition support for the Common Core State Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the broader college- and career-ready agenda across the American Diploma Project Network states. He will also coordinate Achieve's relationship with partners and allies. In addition, Alissa Peltzman has been promoted to Vice President of State Policy & Implementation Support, where she will be leading Achieve's efforts to support the 35 American Diploma Project Network states on key content and policy issues related to the advancement, implementation, and sustainability of the college- and career-ready agenda. [More...](#)

PARCC Releases Draft Accommodations Policies for Public Comment

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) released two draft accommodations policies for public comment, the reading access accommodation and the calculator use accommodation. In addition to allowing a full array of testing accommodations on summative tests, PARCC is proposing two

accommodations that will expand access to its tests to an even wider range of students with disabilities. The draft accommodations policies are posted on the PARCC website until February 4. Interested parties can provide feedback through a [survey posted on the PARCC website](#), answering questions specific to each policy. Once feedback is provided on these policies, they will be included in a larger policy that details all accommodations provided to students with disabilities and English language learners. [More...](#)

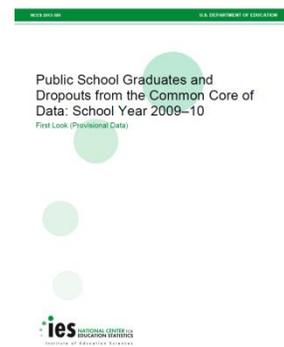
PARCC Governing Board Approves Math Assessments for College and Career Readiness, Retest Policy and Tech Specs

The PARCC Governing Board held a meeting on December 13, 2012, which included a joint session with the PARCC Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR). The board meets quarterly to make major policy and operational decisions on behalf of the PARCC consortium related to the overall design of the assessment system, PARCC's procurement strategy, and other significant issues. In the joint session, the Governing Board and ACCR agreed on a policy that establishes which PARCC high school mathematics assessments should be used to make college- and career-ready determinations (CCRD) for students, indicating the extent to which they are ready to enter directly into a credit bearing college math course such as College Algebra or Statistics. [More...](#)

New Resources

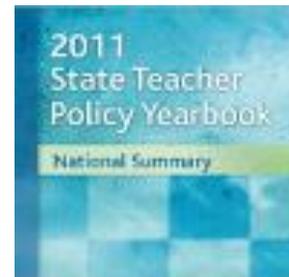
NCES: High School Graduation Rate at Highest Level in Three Decades

A new report from the Department of Education shows that across the United States, a total of 3,128,022 public school students received a high school diploma in 2009-10, resulting in a calculated Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) of 78.2 percent. This rate ranged from 57.8 percent in Nevada and 59.9 percent in the District of Columbia to 91.1 in Wisconsin and 91.4 percent in Vermont. The report, from ED's National Center for Education Statistics, also provides state-by-state data on high school dropouts. Secretary Arne Duncan [noted](#) that the dropout rate is "unsustainably high for a knowledge-based economy and still unacceptably high in our African-American, Latino, and Native-American communities." [Click here](#) to read the entire report, including data per state, race/ethnicity and gender.



State of Teacher Policy Yearbook

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its annual report, "[2012 State Teacher Policy Yearbook](#)." Among other state-specific research, the report focused on preparing teachers for the instructional shifts which will be necessary for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) currently being implemented in 45 states and the District of Columbia. The report argues that states need to be aligning teacher preparation for elementary school teachers with the CCSS by ensuring that coursework and subject-matter testing are well aligned to the standards, preparation programs prepare candidates in and require a rigorous assessment of the science of reading instruction, and preparation programs provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers. They find that only one state, Massachusetts, meets their criteria for these policies being on track, and just six more - Alabama, California, Connecticut, Indiana, Minnesota, and New Hampshire - with these policies evident but in need of improvement. This leaves 44 states far off the mark when it comes to fostering teacher preparedness for the CCSS. For more information, visit the [NCTQ website](#).



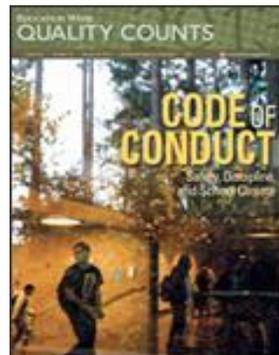
DQC's State-by-State Analysis of High School Feedback Reports

Data Quality Campaign (DQC) has produced a [state-by-state analysis](#) of states' efforts to provide high school feedback. DQC offers a [factsheet](#) about states' data capacity related to high school feedback reports. Every state committed to providing this information in exchange for the 2009 federal stimulus funding, and every state that received an ESEA waiver committed to do so annually moving forward. States have made significant progress producing high school feedback reports. Nearly every high-priority item in national, federal, state and local discussions about education-and policy proposals across the political spectrum requires high-quality longitudinal data to inform its design, implementation and evaluation. The best information to help stakeholders evaluate and strengthen their efforts to improve students' college and career readiness is actual information about students' success beyond high school, such as enrollment, remediation, degree and certification completion and employment outcomes.



Education Week's Quality Counts Report

The 17th 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. Each year, *Quality Counts* provides new results for a portion of the policy-and-performance categories that form the framework for the report's State-of-the-States analysis. The annual [Quality Counts report card](#) chronicles the challenges the nation and many states continue to face in delivering high-quality education to all students. This year's report updates progress in the area of transitions and alignment, which tracks state-policy efforts to better coordinate the connections between K-12 schooling and early-childhood education, postsecondary schooling, and the workforce. According to *Education Week*, eight states earn grades of A for transitions and alignment. Overall, 25 states have improved their grades since 2011, with significant policymaking activity seen across all three domains tracked in this section-early childhood, college readiness, and economy and workforce.



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