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Achieve

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

Perspective Newsletter

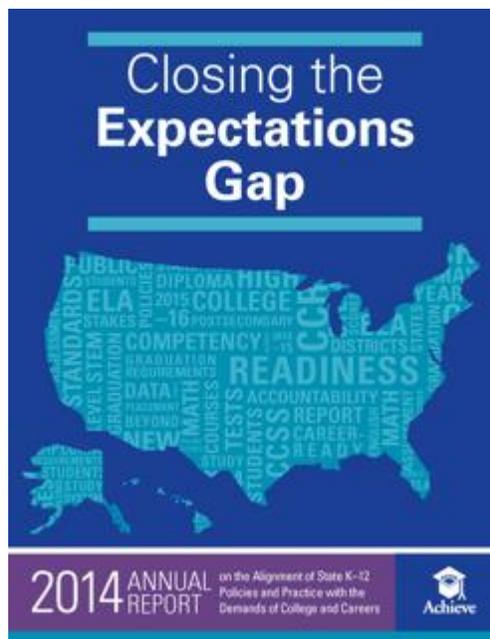
Commentary

Take a Closer Look: State-by-State Assessment and Graduation Requirements Data

Coinciding with this year's release of Achieve's annual "[Closing the Expectations Gap](#)" report, Achieve has released state-specific **assessment and graduation course requirements data for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.**

Nearly all states are transitioning their English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy and math K-12 assessment systems, and a large majority of these states are in the midst of transitioning to college- and career-ready assessments. States'

assessment transitions, however, are fraught with challenging questions and critical decisions, from standard setting to the use of assessments for high stakes decisions about students, teachers, and schools, to the participation of higher education systems and institutions using the assessments for placement decisions into non-remedial courses, to how



assessment results will be publicly reported.

Many states are making a thoughtful transition by phasing in assessments, but it creates a varied landscape and the need for very clear communication and transparent public reporting about the assessments. For example, as legacy assessments are phased out and new assessments phased in, and particularly for states with student stakes tied to assessments, students may be selecting from a menu of assessment options to meet the state's requirements. Different cohorts of students are facing different assessments in many states - particularly those with high stakes assessments for students.

Acknowledging that states' assessments are very much in flux, Achieve asked states what ELA/literacy, math, and science assessments they will administer to students in 2014-15. Four state assessment tables are currently available:

- ELA/literacy and math assessments in grades 3-8;
- ELA/literacy and math assessments in high school;
- Science assessments in grades 3-8; and
- Science assessments in high school.

The ELA/literacy and math assessment tables report for each state whether the assessments administered will be used to evaluate schools and districts, whether the assessment results will be included in teacher evaluation, and whether/how student stakes are attached to the high school assessments. Finally, we also included information for *which* students will take the assessments. In states that administer comprehensive exams, all students in a cohort typically take the exam together. In states the administer end-of-course (EOC) assessments, the expectation is that a student will take the EOC assessment when the student completes the course. However, states' assessment and course

requirements vary and there is often not consistency from state to state regarding which students take which assessments.

While assessment offerings are being discussed and analyzed in many states, an important component of fulfilling the college- and career-ready agenda remains ensuring that students are graduating having completed a college- and career-ready course of study. To support this goal and provide a snapshot of the national landscape, Achieve is also releasing **states' graduation requirements for ELA, math and science by diploma offering**. To date, 23 states and the District of Columbia have raised graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level.

To view these new resources, please visit

<http://www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2014>.

News

Competency-Based Pathways Communications Toolkit

As a growing number of states pursue competency-based pathways (CBP), the need to engage state, district, and community-level stakeholders is vital. As with any significant education reform, a shift to a competency-based approach will not succeed without strong understanding and will at all levels. Recognizing this need, Achieve has developed a suite of resources to help states communicate the value and need for competency-based pathways. This "[Competency-Based Pathways Communications Toolkit](#)" was specifically designed for the needs of states, but can be adapted for use by districts, advocates, and others involved in similar discussions. The tools include resources on

how to message competency-based pathways, exemplars of powerful messages and stories, frequently asked questions, and detailed how-to-guides on getting the message right.

Next Generation Science Standards



NGSS Evidence Statements for High School are now available (evidence statements for elementary and middle school are under development). These statements were developed by educators and scientists, including many members of the NGSS writing team. The evidence statements are intended to identify clear, measurable components that, if met, fully satisfy each performance expectation (PE) described within the NGSS.

Given that each PE is three-dimensional, the statements describe how students can use the practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas together to demonstrate proficiency on the PEs by the end of instruction. They are not meant to limit or dictate instruction and were written to allow for multiple methods and contexts of assessment, including assessing multiple related PEs together at the same time. [More...](#)

News Clips

Parents In Support of Higher Standards

Parents can be among the most powerful advocates for high academic standards for their children. Every parent wants his or her child to succeed both in school and in life, and these parent voices recognize the

critical importance of higher standards in achieving that success. [More...](#)

Common Core in New York

Read stories which highlight good work and success on Common Core in New York State. [More...](#)

New Resources

The Carnegie Unit: A Century-Old Standard in a Changing Education Landscape



The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching released the findings of its comprehensive examination of the Carnegie Unit, the time-based standard of student progress that originated with the Foundation in the early 20th century. The [report](#) describes the Carnegie Foundation's research on whether the Carnegie Unit - a central organizing feature of the American education enterprise - impedes the progress of today's education reforms. Exploring the origins of the Carnegie Unit and its pervasive influence in education today, the report examines how the Carnegie Unit promotes or hinders the efficiency, equity, and efficacy of education and identifies specific ways in which it intersects with efforts to bring greater flexibility and transparency to the American educational system.

KnowledgeWorks Foundation, District Conditions for Scale: A Practical Guide to Scaling Personalized Learning



The KnowledgeWorks Foundation recently released a [brief](#) focused on the necessary conditions for districts to scale personalized learning efforts. They recognize that there are a wide range of personalized learning programs across the country and these programs have garnered a significant national attention. However, despite this attention, personalized learning has been stuck in the school pilot phase. This brief draws attention to the conditions for scaling across a district. After gathering lessons learned from national partners, interviewing almost 30 district leaders across the country, and collecting best practices, they identify ten core areas that are most critical to personalized learning. The conditions range from curriculum and assessment to technology and data systems. Within each condition, the brief describes its value, strategies for addressing it, and specific district examples.

Open Education Resources in K-12 Education



CCSSO released the results of a survey of states regarding OER initiatives titled, "[State of the States: Open Education Resources in K-12 Education](#)." The report discusses the number of respondent states that are pursuing OER initiatives, and in what ways. It also provides brief snapshots of OER initiatives in states. The report lists some common goals across states related to OER, including: Creation of consistent and supportive policy for states and districts looking to curate OER; vetting of high-quality materials against quality and academic standards; curation of easy-to-use OER for

districts and teachers; support for collaboration; and dedication of funding to OER projects.

Career Opportunities

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