



January 2017

## Twenty Years of Raising Expectations

In December, Achieve celebrated its 20th anniversary by bringing together partners and practitioners from across the nation. The discussion about the current state and future of college and career readiness in the U.S. also included a look at how far the work has come since Achieve's founding in 1996. [This video](#) gives an overview of the major milestones in the effort to increase college and career readiness for all students.



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## *"Lessons on Common Core: Critical Books Offer More Folly than Wisdom"*

A [recent piece](#) in *Education Next* from Robert Pondiscio, senior fellow and vice president for external affairs at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, examined six books that are critical of the Common Core. Through his analysis, Pondiscio concludes that the books "barely take up the content of the standards at all. Instead, they mainly traffic in fear mongering and paranoid conspiracy theories about corporate greed."



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## *From Education Week: "Teachers Say They Know More About the Common Core, but Challenges Linger"*

The Education Week Research Center recently conducted a survey asking teachers about their experiences with professional development, materials, and other aspects of implementing the Common Core State Standards. Survey results reinforced the importance of ensuring that teachers have access to instructional materials that are of high quality and aligned to the standards. Many teachers still face challenges in finding materials that suit their needs.



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## *ICYMI: Diplomas that Matter: Ensuring Equity of Opportunity for Students with Disabilities*

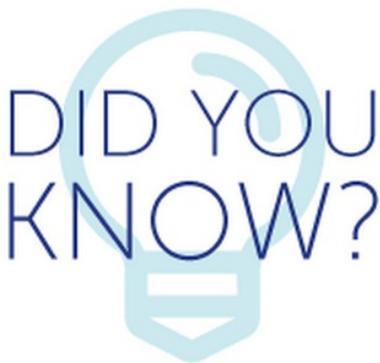
A [recent report](#) from Achieve and the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) report analyzes the diplomas available to students with disabilities in each state for the graduating class of 2015. Although an estimated 85 to 90 percent of students with disabilities can, with the proper instruction, supports, and accommodations, meet the same graduation standards as all other students, the national graduation rate for students with disabilities has risen from 56.9 percent in 2006 only to 66.3 percent in 2014. In addition to these low graduation rates, questions persist as to whether students with disabilities are being given access to a rigorous course of study that will prepare them for college and career. States do a disservice to students with disabilities when they are not given the opportunity to earn a regular diploma with adequate supports or when they are held to lower expectations.



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KNOW?



Finding high-quality, aligned Common Core instructional materials remains a challenge for teachers. Achieve's [EQulP initiative](#) currently offers

165

lessons and units that have been rated as Exemplars by a panel of expert educators and are freely available for download and use.

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

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