



Achieve

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

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## News Clips

### Students will go farther faster with Common Core

In the *Orlando Sentinel*, Craig R. Barrett and Michael Cohen note, "As the leaders of Achieve, the organization founded by governors and the nation's business leaders to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college, careers and citizenship, it falls to us to address the red herrings and falsehoods made by a small but vocal band of Common Core State Standards critics."

[More...](#)

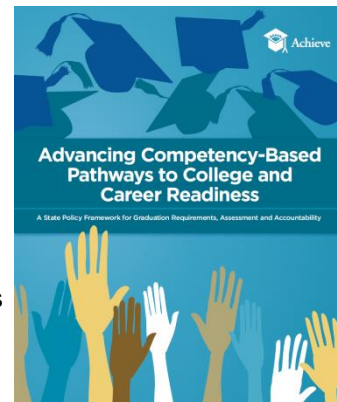
## Perspective Newsletter July 2013

### Commentary

### State Policy Framework Provides Guidance To States On Planning For A Shift To Competency-Based Pathways

Achieve has released a new state policy framework, [Advancing Competency-Based Pathways to College and Career Readiness](#), to guide state education policymakers in envisioning and planning for policies that encourage student-centered approaches designed to help all students learn the full scope of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The framework focuses on helping states reach a definition of competency at a level of rigor that equates with college and career readiness, which requires them to address three major policy areas - graduation requirements, assessment and accountability. Within each of these areas, it clarifies the unique purpose each has in a competency-based learning environment, identifies key policy questions and suggests potential options and policy levers for states. It also lays out several approaches that states can take to envision what competency-based pathways (CBP) will look like within their states and how it will take hold across schools and districts.



The framework suggests several characteristics of CBP that can help all students reach the CCSS:

- Students advance upon demonstrated mastery.
- Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.
- Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
- Students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
- Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include the application and creation of knowledge.

## Tennessee Economy Tied to Common Core

In an op-ed in *The Tennessee Tribune*, Catherine Glover, president of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry, writes, "Common Core is one solid step toward remedying the issues our employers face when it comes to finding a skilled workforce." [More...](#)

## Raise the bar for our schools

"Common Core Standards represent one of the most positive developments in American education," said Chauncey Veatch, former national teacher of the year and a member of *The Desert Sun* editorial board. "They serve to address the unmet family needs of our highly mobile population. In particular, they will serve to assist the school children of our migrant families and of our military personnel." [More...](#)

- The process of reaching learning outcomes encourages students to develop skills and dispositions important for success in college, careers and citizenship.

These characteristics were adapted from a working definition of CBP, developed by Susan Patrick, President and CEO of iNACOL and Chris Sturgis, Founder of MetisNet - both members of Achieve's Competency-Based Pathways Working Group, which provided extraordinary guidance and feedback in the development of the framework.

Launched in August 2012, the Working Group includes a number of states and organizations with strong interest in CBP as a mechanism for helping far more students reach college and career readiness. The states include Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, Washington and Wisconsin. Organizations include Advance Illinois, Alliance for Excellent Education, Business Education Compact, Carpe Diem, CCSSO, Data Quality Campaign, Digital Learning Now, iNACOL, MetisNet, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Nellie Mae Education Foundation and Western Governors University.

The Working Group, in addition to guiding the development of the framework, also deeply contributed to Achieve's understanding of CBP by facilitating site visits in four states. Achieve staff, along with a working group member from each state, visited Danville Independent Schools in Kentucky, Adams County School District 50 in Colorado, Young Women's Leadership Charter School in Chicago, Illinois and four districts in the [Maine Cohort for Customized Learning](#) in Maine.

In a few weeks, Achieve will release more resources on CBP, including a school-level report card and policy brief particularly designed to support state policy that advances CBP with a strong eye toward ensuring equity for all students.

Additional coverage of the state policy framework:

- [Getting Smart blog post](#), July 21, 2013
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More resources on competency-based pathways:

- [Maine Center for Best Practice](#), including case studies and videos illustrating how proficiency-based learning serves students in Maine
- [Adams County School District 50 Competency-Based System \(CBS\)](#), which includes a number of tools and resources on competency-based learning
- [CompetencyWorks](#), the primary site for up-to-date information, webinars and resources for CBP

## News

### OER Policy Brief

Achieve released the policy brief [State Support for Open Educational Resources: Key Findings from Achieve's OER Institute](#). Since 2012, seven states in Achieve's American Diploma Project (ADP) Network - California, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington and Wisconsin - have agreed to work together in Achieve's Open Educational Resources (OER) Institute. The goal of OER Institute is to bring these states together to discuss issues and policy barriers surrounding using OER in college- and career-ready standards implementation. In addition to describing this initiative and providing appendices that detail each of the seven OER Institute state's efforts, this brief includes three potential areas for cross-state collaboration to support the use of OER:

- Establishing commonalities in defining quality
- Sharing quality, standards-aligned resources
- Sharing metadata about quality resources

The brief also describes four key findings to date from the OER Institute:

- States face a number of common challenges and barriers to implementation, including a lack of knowledge about OER and uncertainty about the quality of resources available online.
- Experts from multiple sectors, including standards, curriculum and technology, must work together to use OER successfully in CCSS implementation.
- States must develop a common understanding of processes for measuring quality and vetting resources.
- States must assess their technology and capacity needs to implement technology-based innovations.

Click [here](#) to access the full report.

Achieve will be continuing this work as states continue to implement plans that support the use of OER in classrooms. This work is made possible by a generous donation from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. To learn more, visit [www.achieve.org/oer-rubrics](http://www.achieve.org/oer-rubrics).

### EQulP e-Learning module

Achieve is pleased to announce the launch of our first EQulP e-Learning module. The purpose of this e-Learning module is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of the EQulP Quality Review Process, which is designed to increase the ability of educators - and



educational leaders - to identify and create quality instructional materials aligned to the CCSS. Learners will explore what effective observations and criterion-based feedback look like and experience the process of reviewing instructional materials using the EQulP quality review criteria, rating scales and rating descriptors. EQulP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) is an initiative of the American Diploma Project Network designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the CCSS. The module is available at [www.achieve.org/EQulP](http://www.achieve.org/EQulP).

## Toolkit for Evaluating the Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the Common Core State Standards

In joint partnership, Achieve, The Council of Chief State School Officers and Student Achievement Partners have developed a [Toolkit for Evaluating the Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the Common Core State Standards](#).

The Toolkit is a set of interrelated, freely available instruments for evaluating alignment to the CCSS; each tool in the Toolkit supports the expectations in the CCSS and derives from the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards. We encourage you to share the Toolkit with your colleagues, state and district administrators, school-based educators and others working to implement the CCSS. [www.achieve.org/toolkit](http://www.achieve.org/toolkit).

### TOOLKIT for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the Common Core State Standards

July 2013

• Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET)	iii-1
• EQulP Quality Review Rubric	iii-21
• Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)	iii-27
• Assessment Passage and Item Quality Criteria Checklist	iii-29
• Additional Resources for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional Materials	iv-1
• Appendix: Publisher's Criteria for the Common Core State Standards	v-1



## New Policy Brief on Academic Indicators of Student Readiness

Achieve published a [guide](#) for state education policy leaders to use 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. Achieve hosted a webinar on this recent brief for state leaders on July 25, 2013. More information on the webinar, including the PPT slides and full brief, are available at [www.achieve.org/adp-meetings-and-webinars](http://www.achieve.org/adp-meetings-and-webinars).

## Education Pioneers

Achieve welcomes an exciting new partnership with [Education Pioneers](#) (EP), a leading national organization working to channel top notch talent into the education leadership sector. Crystal Hill, Amanda Mendoza and Brian Walch joined Achieve in June as our first EP Fellows. As three-month Fellows, Crystal and Amanda are assisting Achieve with human capital initiatives and with PARCC's State Engagement Team, respectively. As a yearlong Fellow, Brian is working on strategic CCSS issues. Crystal has a master's in industrial and labor relations and has

spent over ten years in the field of human resources, partnering with education organizations. A former Senate legislative aide, Amanda holds a B.A. from Stanford University and is a current MBA/MPP student at the University of Maryland. Brian is a former Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State, with an MBA from Thunderbird School of Global Management and a B.A. from Brown University.

EP partners with more than 180 leading education organizations in 16 cities to ensure that they have the right people with the right skill sets to advance and scale their most promising results and initiatives. EP works specifically with partners that run systems of schools serving large numbers of students, including school districts and charter school management organizations. On July 24, EP released its first report, [\*The Invisible Lever: A Profile of Leadership and Management Talent in Education\*](#). It highlights:

- There is a major deficit of experienced and talented managers and leaders in public education.
- Leading school systems and education organizations offer exciting professional challenges and opportunities, and the sector is in particular need of leaders of color.
- Education leadership and reform require individuals with strong analytical skills sets, and in the education sector there is a growing need for professionals with proven abilities in data analysis, operations management, and strategic planning.

## PARCC

Fourteen states and the District of Columbia announced Monday they are committed to field testing the next-generation PARCC assessments in the upcoming 2013-14 school year, a key step in building a high-quality assessment system that will be rolled out broadly in schools during the following academic year. The states participating in the field tests are Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island and Tennessee. PARCC has formally amended its grant for Race to the Top funding to fully operate as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with its own funding, board of directors, staff and programs. [More...](#)

## New Resources

### Learning Time in America

States and school districts around the country are making significant headway in their efforts to develop and implement innovative and cost-effective ways to improve schools through more and better learning time, according to a report released by NCTL and the Education Commission of the States. The report provides an overview of policy developments at the federal, state and district levels to enable and fund innovative school models with expanded time to close achievement and opportunity gaps. These policies are benefiting students and providing teachers with time to collaborate and prepare for reforms, including Common Core implementation. The report provides recommendations for policymakers. Read the report [here](#).



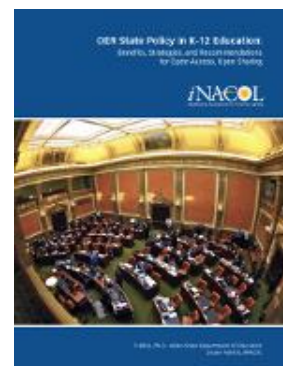
### Change Agents

New Leaders' new policy paper, [Change Agents: How States Can Develop Effective Leaders](#), underscores that now is the time for states to take action to improve the preparation and licensure of principals. Principals are change agents. Strong school leaders have a powerful multiplier effect and are critical for student academic success. Yet, many principals entering the profession are not equipped with the skills they need to succeed. Many state licensure systems are not measuring the competencies principals should demonstrate to receive an initial license or renew that license. *Change Agents* describes policy recommendations for states to move forward. The companion guide provides a framework for state policymakers to explore fundamental questions of purpose and design based on a new vision for leadership. The concept paper, companion guide and executive summary are available on their [website](#).



### iNACOL Report on OER

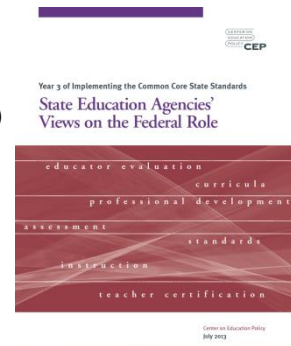
iNACOL released [Open Educational Resources and Collaborative Content Development: A Practical Guide for State and School Leaders](#), which provides guidance to state and district educators regarding the benefits of OER and methods for sharing and collaboration. OER are any educational resource that contains an open license that allows educators to freely share, reuse and modify the resource. This report provides a



series of steps for starting a successful collaboration, including performing a readiness assessment, finding potential partners, creating a shared vision and values, setting expectations and creating rules for engagement.

### **Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on the Federal Role**

Center on Education Policy (CEP) issued a [report](#), based on a winter/spring 2013 survey of 40 Common Core State Standards-adopting states, examining state education agency (SEA) officials' views on the federal role in implementing the standards. The report finds that, although a direct federal role in implementing the Common Core State Standards has been controversial, a majority of states in the survey support legislative and/or regulatory changes to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act to help them with their implementation efforts. It also addresses the issue of within-state opposition to standards and finds that the vast majority of survey states do not anticipate their state's decision to adopt the standards will be reversed, limited or changed in 2013-14.



### **Career Opportunities**

Achieve has career opportunities available including an Intern, State Policy and Implementation Support; Director, State Policy and Implementation Support; Program Associate, PARCC; Senior Advisor, PARCC Assessment Technology; Senior Advisor, ELA/Literacy (PARCC) and Senior Program Associate, English Language Arts/Literacy. Go to [www.achieve.org/careers](http://www.achieve.org/careers).

### **Connect with Achieve**

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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.