



Achieve

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

## Perspective Newsletter

### Commentary

The U.S. workforce has undergone significant changes in the past few decades. The development of new, innovative technologies, the shift to a knowledge-based economy, and the growth of the global marketplace mean employers across all industries are putting a higher premium on skilled and educated workers than ever before.

Business leaders understand the importance of qualified talent. According to the 2013 Business Roundtable (BRT) report [\*Taking Action on Education and Workforce Preparedness\*](#), "a nation's capacity to develop a skilled, prepared workforce is inextricably linked to the quality of its education system." The report suggests that such a workforce is the cornerstone of economic competitiveness.

Yet, during a related survey of BRT members, more than 95 percent of CEOs indicated that their companies have suffered from a lack of qualified talent. The report went on to reveal that "the long-term negative impacts of this 'skills gap' on workers, families, businesses, governments and the economy are potentially profound and far reaching."

Additionally, the 2014 Corporate Learning Factbook published by Bersin and Deloitte reports that U.S. spending on corporate training

surpassed \$70 billion last year. More than 70 percent of the companies surveyed cite a "capabilities gap" as the reason for spending on training, and many of the respondents report that a new hire still needs three to five years of experience before becoming a fully productive member of the company.

To help business leaders think more strategically about their support for college and career readiness, Achieve has collaborated with the GE Foundation and AT&T, along with Chevron, the Prudential and Travelers Foundations, and Alcoa to create the Business Center for a College and Career Ready America. Through the Business Center's suite of featured tools and resources, the site explores college and career readiness in economic terms and examines issues of competitiveness, the skills gap, STEM training, and more through the lens of America's education-to-workforce pipeline. The Business Center advocates college and career readiness for *all* students.

Learn more about the Business Center at [www.businessandeducation.org](http://www.businessandeducation.org). Download the #BizEdu mobile app via Google Play or Apple Store. Follow the Business Center @Biz4Edu on Twitter.

## News

### Update from EQUIP

There are now 38 lessons or units posted on the EQUIP website and available for download that have been identified as *Exemplar* or *Exemplar if Improved* by members of the EQUIP Peer Review Panel. If you are interested in having a lessons or units reviewed by the EQUIP Peer

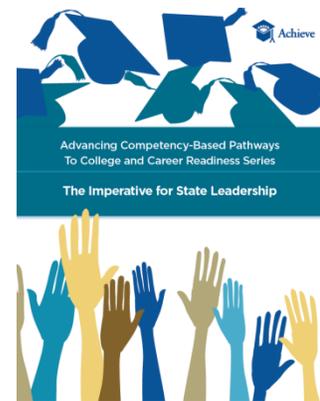


Review Panel, please visit <http://lessons.achieve.org> to register and submit materials aligned to the CCSS.

Additionally, Achieve will again be accepting applications for educators to join the EQUiP Peer Review Panel within the next month. For more information on EQUiP and the Peer Review Panel, visit <http://www.achieve.org/equip>.

## New Policy Brief

Achieve has released a new policy brief, [\*The Imperative for State Leadership\*](#), to provide guidance on critical areas for states to exercise strong leadership as they advance competency-based pathways to college and career readiness for all students. It highlights the importance of states providing leadership on communications and engagement to pave the way forward for districts and schools; ensuring that graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability systems work together to promote determinations of competency that equate to college and career readiness; and addressing risks to equity to make certain that a shift to competency-based pathways promotes greater opportunity and outcomes for students of color, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. This policy brief accompanies Achieve's state policy framework, [\*Advancing Competency-Based Pathways to College and Career Readiness\*](#), which illuminates key decisions for states in the areas of graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability. It has been informed by Achieve's ongoing work with states through the CBP State Partnership and a working group of



state leaders and experts.

## **State Transitions to College- and Career-Ready Assessments**

[State Transitions to College- and Career-Ready Assessments: A Policymaker's Guide to Decisions Regarding High-Stakes Student Assessments](#) has been developed as part of ongoing work by EducationCounsel in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Achieve to support state efforts to develop educationally and legally sound policies associated with the phase-in of new, high-quality CCR assessments. The purpose of this guide is to provide policymakers with a practical resource that can inform their state's particular trajectory in the transition to CCR assessments with a focus on the key questions associated with tests used for high-stakes student purposes. While the guidance is available to all states, it is particularly relevant for those states with current or pending laws that require state assessments to be used for "high-stakes" graduation or grade promotion. EducationCounsel will offer light-touch, confidential, state-specific, "pre-peer review"-follow-up to provide direct guidance and feedback on state-specific plans with regard to use of assessments for high-stakes purposes. If you are interested in this support, or want to learn more, please contact [kedda.williams@educationcounsel.com](mailto:kedda.williams@educationcounsel.com). To download the guidance, please click [here](#).

## **State Science Education Standards Comparison Tool**

The State Science Education Standards Comparison Tool was released on July 1st. This tool can assist states and districts that are considering revision or adoption of science standards by guiding them through a series of questions comparing two sets of standards.

Because new science standards documents, including the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), differ greatly in structure and intent from other existing sets of standards, a traditional standards "crosswalk" document (which focuses on a one-to-one comparison of content standards) may not fully capture the extent of the differences between standards. Thus, the purpose of the comparison tool is to accompany a standards crosswalk document to help users gain a more thorough understanding of how two sets of standards compare on various aspects of knowledge development.

The tool will be beneficial to individuals and teams with some familiarity with both sets of standards being compared. Primary participants in the comparison process are likely to include staff members of a state education agency, but the tool might also be useful to district administrators, teachers, and developers of instructional materials or assessments. Other stakeholders in standards adoption processes, including representatives from the higher education and business communities, along with members of the public, might also be involved in a district or state's use of the tool. At the end of this process, users should have a clear understanding of how each set of standards was developed and how they each address important aspects of science education. The tool is available for download in both PDF and Word at <http://www.nextgenscience.org/resources>.

## News Clips

### **Common Core came from the states**

Achieve President Michael Cohen writes in *The Columbus*

*Dispatch* that, "the Common Core is the natural outgrowth of state leadership and, in the great American tradition, states serving as the laboratories of American democracy." [Read the full commentary.](#)

### **New Jersey Adopts Science Standards**

On July 9, the New Jersey education department announced that the state board had adopted the Next Generation Science Standards, becoming the 12th state to do so. (The District of Columbia has also adopted the standards.) More in [Education Week's blog](#) ...

### **It's tough to find STEM workers**

Even with three flagship universities - UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University and Duke University - North Carolina's Research Triangle still has trouble filling STEM jobs. A new Brookings Institute report looks at the time it takes to fill open science, technology, engineering, and math positions. [More in Triangle Business Journal...](#)



The [OECD Measuring Innovation in Education](#) report offers new perspectives to address this need for measurement through a comparison of innovation in education to innovation in other sectors, identification of specific innovations across educational systems, and construction of metrics to examine the relationship between educational innovation and changes in educational outcomes. This country brief provides a short overview of the key findings of the report, as well as the top five US pedagogic and organizational innovations identified in this report. The United States' top organizational innovation was the use of student assessments for monitoring progress over time. Download the summary PDF [here](#).

## **2014 KIDS COUNT Data Book**

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* is an annual publication that assesses child well-being nationally and across the 50 states, as well as in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Using an index of 16 indicators, the 2014 report ranks states on overall child well-being and in four domains: 1) economic well-being, 2) education, 3) health, and 4) family and community.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, for 2014, the three highest-ranked states for child well-being were Massachusetts, Vermont, and Iowa; the three lowest-ranked were Nevada, New Mexico, and Mississippi. The report also provides national trends, comparing the latest data with mid-decade statistics and can be viewed [here](#).



## Career Opportunities

Achieve has career opportunities [here](#).

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