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Achieve Insights is a monthly briefing of newsworthy items from across states related to ensuring that all students graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and life.

New Achieve report explores how states are including science in their ESSA plans

Achieve recently released [a new brief](#) examining ways in which the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) supports science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Achieve's analysis of submitted state ESSA plans reveals a number of different ways states have proposed incorporating STEM initiatives moving forward. In addition to proposing STEM-related programming and professional development uses for federal funding, many states are now planning to include science in their redesigned accountability systems. The brief also presents ways in which states currently include science in their statewide assessment systems and graduation requirements.

Achieve releases new report on the high demand for technology skills in Massachusetts

Achieve also [recently released a report](#) with Burning Glass Technologies that analyzes the demand for technology jobs in Massachusetts, showing that nearly one in four jobs (23 percent) in Massachusetts involve computer science skills – significantly higher than the national average of less than 18 percent. The trends illustrated in the report show the importance of increasing the supply of people with computer science knowledge and skills in Massachusetts, particularly in the Boston area. Among these jobs, Massachusetts employers are having a hard time finding qualified candidates; nine of the top 10 technology occupations

identified in the report take longer than average to fill in the Commonwealth. Both in Massachusetts and in states across the country, students need to graduate from high school prepared for the jobs that await them in their states. Courses that appropriately prepare students in mathematics, ELA/literacy, and science are needed so that states can address these gaps in workforce skills.

Alabama State Board of Education votes to end contract with ACT Aspire; schools will use Scantron for their statewide assessment

The state board of education in Alabama voted unanimously against renewing the ACT Aspire assessment contract effective in the 2017-18 school year. State Superintendent Michael Sentance has said that while the state works on a long-term solution, students will take Scantron assessments already in place in about 65 percent of schools. As the state considers its long term solution, central to that discussion should be any assessment system's alignment to Alabama's college- and career-ready standards in mathematics and English/language arts.

Five State and National Updates

- The Mississippi State Board of Education proposed new graduation requirements that change the current graduation requirements and introduce academic and career technical education endorsements.
- Ohio Department of Education expands the number of industry-recognized credentials available to students to better prepare students for in-demand jobs.
- The Virginia State Board of Education approved a draft proposal for revising the standards of accreditation, which includes reducing the number of verified credits students need student to graduate with both a standard and advanced diploma.
- The U.S. Department of Education provided

feedback to Massachusetts on its submitted ESSA plan, asking the state for additional detail about how it will measure student achievement.

- The U.S. Department of Education answered a set of frequently asked questions for states as it relates to ESSA plan submission and review.

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

