

July 2011

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Math and Civil Rights

Is access to high-level mathematics a civil rights issue?

Numerous studies demonstrate that successful completion of rigorous mathematics, such as Algebra II, in high school is an important gateway to success in college and the work place. Yet [data](#) released by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights in June shows that nearly half a million students—at least—attend public schools that don't even offer Algebra II or equivalent courses.

If a student doesn't take high-level mathematics, it can dramatically limit his or her chance of succeeding in the work place of today—and the future.

In July, [another federal report](#) from the U.S. Department of Commerce demonstrated that over the past ten years, jobs in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics—or STEM—grew at a rate three times faster than non-STEM jobs. That trend is expected to continue over the next 10 years, and likely beyond given the role innovation plays in U.S. economic growth. And STEM jobs are not only growing faster, but they pay better, too. PayScale, a company that tracks compensation data, recently released its [2011-2012 College Salary Report](#), which tracks the college majors that lead to the best salaries. Every degree in the top 10 was in a STEM area from computer science to aerospace engineering.

Simply put, students who do not have access to high-level mathematics are going to be less prepared for STEM work in college and careers, meaning their prospects for a bright financial future are also limited. This makes educational access a major civil rights issue.

The good news is that something is being done about it. Nearly every state has made a [firm commitment to college and career readiness for all students](#).

There are now 46 states that have committed to implementing the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. The standards are aligned to the expectations of higher education and the work place—and that includes advanced mathematics.

Also, nearly every state in the nation is involved in building new assessments

that are aligned to the Common Core and will make sure all students are getting access to the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. (Achieve is the project manager for one of those consortia—the [Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers](#), or PARCC. The other is the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#)).

Momentum continues to build for the college- and career-ready agenda and, as a nation, we are making major strides toward providing all students access to a meaningful education. But as the U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights data make very clear, there is much work left to be done.

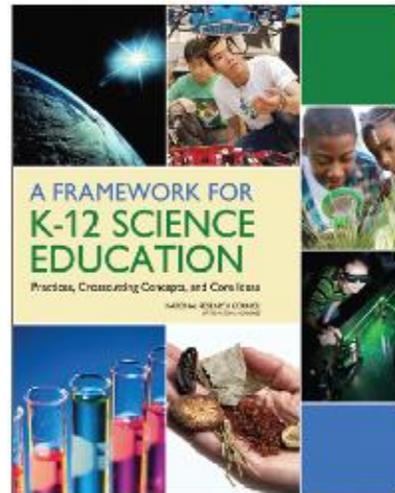
For more, see Achieve's [Math Works](#), a set of materials that make the case that all students need high-level mathematics for success, including success on-the-job in high-growth careers.

New from Achieve

Update on the Next Generation Science Standards

Phase one of the two-phase process to develop Next Generation Science Standards is complete: the National Research Council released the [Framework for K-12 Science Education](#) on July 19. The Framework describes the key ideas and practices in the natural sciences and engineering that all students should be familiar with by the time they graduate from high school. Achieve will coordinate phase two: the state-led development of standards based on the NRC Framework.

Over the next year, content and education experts from across states will work together to create science standards based on the Framework. The process will include the opportunity for input from those in the field, including K-12 educators, the scientific community, higher education, business leaders and the general public. The new standards should be released in late 2012. Information and updates about the standards development process can be found [online](#).



PARCC K-12 Engagement

To support educators in their efforts to provide students with a first class education, PARCC is developing a number of different [tools](#) for educators. Educators are encouraged to provide feedback on these tools as they are developed, so if you are interested in learning more, please complete the K-12 engagement [survey](#). The more feedback we get, the more useful the tools will be.

We would also like to hear experiences with implementing the Common Core State Standards in classrooms. Please send testimonials on how your state, district, or school is implementing CCSS and PARCC via the [contact form](#). Stay tuned to the classroom resources section of the PARCC website for updates at www.parcconline.org/classroom-resources.

On a related note, at the recent PARCC Transition & Implementation Institute, David Coleman, a Common Core State Standards writer, demonstrated two lesson plans—"Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and "Gettysburg Address"—that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Watch the [video](#).

Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards

Developed by Common Core State Standards (CCSS) authors, the Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards are designed to guide publishers and curriculum developers as they work to ensure alignment with the K-12 standards in English language arts (ELA) and literacy for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. By underscoring what matters most in the standards, the criteria illustrate what shifts must take place in the next generation of curricula, including paring away elements that distract or are at odds with the Common Core State Standards. Download the [Grades K-2 criteria](#) and [Grades 3-12 criteria](#).

OER Rubrics

Many state education agencies now have offices devoted to identifying and using Open Educational Resources (OERs) and other digital resources in their states. To help states, districts, teachers, and other users determine the degree of alignment of OERs to the Common Core State Standards, and to determine aspects of quality of OERs, Achieve has developed eight rubrics in collaboration with leaders from the OER community that evaluate the degree of alignment to standards, the quality of explanation of content, the utility of materials as tools to teach others, the quality of assessment, the degree of interactivity, quality of practice exercises, opportunities for deeper learning, and assurance of accessibility. Achieve is working with OER Commons and other OER repositories to incorporate these rubrics into online rating tools. This work is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. [More...](#)

Achieve Staff Changes

On July 1 Achieve president Michael Cohen announced staff changes that position the organization for success as it continues its efforts to make college and career readiness a national priority. Sandra Boyd has been promoted to Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives. She will be responsible for positioning Achieve's initiatives and major programs for success, directly managing Achieve's strategic alliances and partnerships, and overseeing external affairs and communications efforts. Margaret Horn has been promoted to Vice President, State Leadership and Policy Development. She will oversee its state leadership team work including the 35-state [American Diploma Project Network](#). Alissa Peltzman has been promoted to Director of State Leadership and Policy Development. She will work with states to adopt, implement and sustain college- and career-ready policies and will lead the planning and execution for the transition to next-

generation assessments being developed by [PARCC](#). Dana Tofig has joined Achieve as the Director of Strategic Communications and Outreach. He will work with states and districts to communicate Achieve initiatives, programs and projects and will work with local and national media to advocate Achieve's college- and career-ready agenda. Read the [news statement](#).

NCES Releases Updates to State Education Reforms Website

New state-level data on statewide student data systems, college and career readiness, charter schools, and kindergarten requirements are now available on the State Education Reforms [website](#) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. The website, which draws primarily on data collected by organizations other than the National Center for Education Statistics, compiles and disseminates data on state-level education reform efforts, including accountability, assessment and standards, and student readiness and progress through school.

Data from Achieve's recent [Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: Sixth Annual 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers](#) was used to update [Table 1.8](#) in the Accountability Section, [2.8](#) in the Assessments and Standards Section, and [5.9](#) in the Student Readiness and Progress Through School Section.

News Clips

1. **A New Frontier: Education**

Jamie Merisotis, CEO and president of the Lumina Foundation, writes in the *Indianapolis Star* that, "Today, we must establish a new frontier that focuses on building a knowledge-based economy and graduating more Americans from college." [More...](#)

2. **The Cost Of Dropping Out**

NPR covers the dropout crisis through the stories of five people who discuss why they left school, the forces in their lives that contributed to that decision and its impact in the years since. [More...](#)

3. **Tennessee Students Make Progress**

Tennessee Commissioner of Education Kevin S. Huffman notes that Tennessee's Comprehensive Assessment Program pays off with higher scores over the previous year, particularly

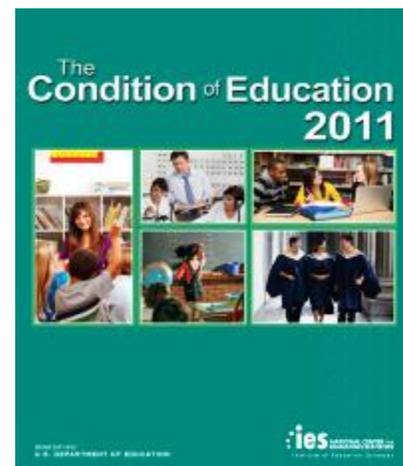
in math, in grades 3-8.
[More...](#)

New Resources

- In [An Economy That Works: Job Creation and America's Future](#), the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) found that for the United States to return to full employment—finding work for the currently unemployed and accommodating new entrants into the labor force this decade—the U.S. economy will need to create 21 million jobs by 2020. To understand how this might happen, MGI launched a research project that combines extensive sector analysis, interviews with human resource executives and a survey of 2,000 business leaders. MGI's central finding is that a return to full employment will occur in only the most optimistic job growth scenario. This will require not only a robust economic recovery, but also a concerted effort to address other factors that impede employment, including growing gaps in skill and education.

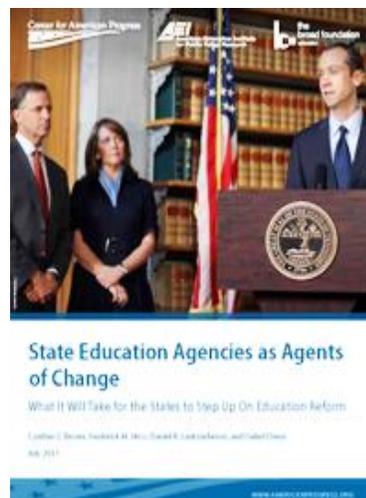


- Enrollment in U.S. schools is expected to grow through the decade, as the U.S. population increases and participation rises. Postsecondary institutions are experiencing an exponential enrollment change, with numbers quadrupling in the last decade at private for-profit postsecondary institutions, according to [The Condition of Education 2011](#) report released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This congressionally mandated report provides an annual portrait of education in the U.S. There are 50 indicators in this year's report covering all aspects of education, including



early childhood through postsecondary education, student achievement and outcomes, and school environments.

- The Center for American Progress and Frederick M. Hess and Daniel Lautzenheiser of the American Enterprise Institute released a joint report titled [*State Education Agencies as Agents of Change*](#), which found that despite being responsible for administering state and federal aid and charged with driving state level reforms, state education agencies (SEAs) have traditionally been under the radar. SEA chiefs now find themselves in the limelight due to reforms of the past decade and heightened attention to reform issues such as turning around low-performing schools, fixing state data systems, and improving teacher evaluation. The report recommends granting SEAs more flexibility and the authority to take over the lowest-performing schools.



Achieve Job Opportunity

Achieve has two career opportunities available. Go to www.achieve.org/careers.

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Perspective readers are invited to 'Like' Achieve's [Facebook page](#). This page includes the latest Achieve blog updates on the Wall as well as photos from events.

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