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New from Achieve

Rhode Island Gov. Carcieri Joins Achieve Board

Achieve welcomes Rhode Island Governor Donald L. Carcieri to its Board of Directors. Rhode Island has been a member of the American Diploma Project since 2005 and is a member of the nine state consortium launching a common end-of-course Algebra II exam. Under Governor Carcieri's leadership, Rhode Island has become a national leader in efforts to improve high schools and to ensure that more students graduate ready for college and work. New performance-based graduation requirements are in effect beginning with the class of 2008. Governor Carcieri has led efforts to instill greater accountability, higher standards and math and science education improvements.

The Achieve Board is comprised of six Governors and six CEO's. Other governors serving on the Board include North Carolina Governor Mike Easley (co-chair), Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell (vice co-chair), Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm, and Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty. [Read the release](#).

ADP Network Leadership Team Meeting Materials Available

The agenda and PowerPoint presentations from June's American Diploma Project (ADP) Network 2007 Leadership Team Meeting are now available [here](#). You can also watch a [video clip](#) of highlights from former Colorado Gov. Roy Romer's remarks about the importance of making education a priority in the 2008 presidential campaign. Romer chairs the ["ED in '08" campaign](#).

Achieve, NGA, CCSSO Announce Partnership on International Academic Backmapping

The National Governors Association in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers and Achieve, Inc. will convene a group of national and international experts to help states determine how each state can benchmark its education system against best practices globally. The strong desire of governors and education leaders to ensure that students are well-prepared for high-wage, high-skills jobs in a global, knowledge-based economy is driving the work of the advisory group. [Read the PDF](#).

New Online Toolkit Helps Business Get Involved in Education Reform

Achieve launched the “Business Tools for Better Schools” Toolkit to mobilize businesses to play a greater role in education reform and to ensure that their current and future investments of time and resources have the biggest impact possible on public schools and student readiness. The toolkit was developed in consultation with companies, states and business organizations and focuses on three areas critical to business: all graduates college and work ready; more STEM workers and data-driven decision making. The Toolkit provides the facts, data and specific tools needed to spur business involvement at the state and local levels. If you're interested in a demonstration of the online toolkit or if you want to learn more about how to use it, please contact Sandy Boyd at sboyd@achieve.org. Go to www.biztools4schools.org

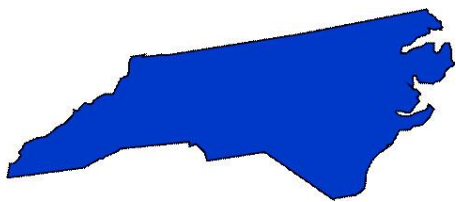
Moving Forward in Massachusetts

High Standards and High Graduation Rates: Moving Forward on a Dual Agenda in Massachusetts recommends ways for Massachusetts to leverage current efforts to support a dual agenda of high standards and high graduation rates. The recommendations include increasing the number of students who earn the college and career ready diploma and certificate of occupational proficiency, using early warning indicators to identify students at risk of not graduating as well as using an expanded set of indicators to promote high school graduation and college-readiness rates, placing a priority on and dedicating resources to state intervention in low-performing schools, and opening new schools designed to improve college-ready graduation rates for low-income, minority, and struggling students. Each recommendation is accompanied by specific action steps. Implementing these recommendations will require the support and direct involvement of a broad group of stakeholders across the state. This report was part of *Moving Forward: High Standards and High Graduation Rates*, a joint project of Achieve, Inc., and Jobs for the Future and funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York. [More...](#)



Common Algebra II Test Update

The end-of-course Algebra II test is the largest effort a group of states has ever undertaken to develop a common assessment based on common standards. The consortium of states includes Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island – all of which are ADP Network states. Field testing of the end-of-course exam in Algebra II will take place in October 2007, and the test will be operational in spring 2008. A fact sheet that answers frequently asked questions is now available, including more information on the core test content and how states can join the consortium. [More...](#)



North Carolina Raises Graduation

News Clips

Click on the links below to view recent articles. Some publications require free registration.

Requirements

The State Board of Education recently adopted the new "Future-Ready Core Course of Study." Beginning with entering 9th graders in 2009-2010, students will be placed in the Future-Ready Core as a default option. The new graduation requirements include an increase in the level of math proficiency required as well as a one-unit increase in the total number of units required. At the request of a parent and with counseling provided by the school, a student will be able to opt-out of the third and fourth course in the math sequence that includes Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II or Integrated Math I, II and III and a fourth-year course aligned to post-high school plans. Even with the opt out, students will be required to take four years of math.

In addition to increased math requirements, the new graduation requirements include four English units, three social studies units, three science units, one health and PE unit, six elective units and four "unit concentration" based on student interest and post-secondary goals.

Support for change on the State Board of Education was strong; board members unanimously approved the new high school graduation requirements. "The Future-Ready Core will help ensure that students graduate with the academic foundation they need for success in the global economy," State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee said. "The Core gives students the ability to tailor course concentrations to fit their interests and goals – including opportunities for college-level work – while building a strong academic foundation."

North Carolina is now the 14th state in the U.S. that requires high school students to complete a college- and work-ready curriculum -- which includes challenging mathematics at least through Algebra II and four years of rigorous English -- to earn a diploma. The other states are

1. A National Test We Don't Need.

In a *Washington Post* [op ed](#) in June, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings argues against implementing national standards dictated by the federal government, noting, for example, that states are already working to raise standards and pointed to the multi-state [Algebra II exam](#) as a "race to the top." With states working to raise graduation requirements and to decrease drop out rates, the Secretary believes that the proper role of the federal government should be collecting and providing accurate data to drive good decision making.

2. No. 1 Issue: Unprepared Grads.

Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen is focusing attention on raising academic standards. "We need to get serious about this standards issue," Bredesen said. "If the state school system sets high academic expectations, students will respond accordingly." The education reform measures in the Governor's Basic Education Plan 2.0 are the largest education investment in the state's history. Tennessee joined the ADP Network in January. [More...](#)

3. School-Business Partnerships Target STEM Subjects.

An [article](#) in *Education Week* highlights partnerships centered on STEM disciplines—science, technology, engineering, and

Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas.

Read the [press release...](#)

Here's a [news story complete with video...](#)

mathematics. Achieve's ["Business Tools for Better Schools" online toolkit](#) is featured as a resource to mobilize the business community and to support their efforts to ensure that graduates are college- and work-ready.

4. NGA Awards \$500,000 Grants to Six States to Improve STEM Education.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices awarded Colorado, Hawaii, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia \$500,000 grants to establish STEM education centers. The centers will serve as the foundation for an improved workforce by aligning K-12 STEM education requirements with postsecondary and workplace expectations. [More](#)

Commentary: From Why to How

Achieve hosted its annual ADP Network Leadership Team Meeting at the beginning of June. Twenty-eight ADP states sent teams including 63 K-12 leaders, 29 postsecondary leaders, 16 members of the business community, 18 governors' advisors, and nine members of state boards of education. The goal of the meeting was to give states a significant opportunity to learn from each other and continue to advance the college and career readiness policy agenda.

Since we began hosting the leadership team meeting in the spring of 2005, we have been impressed by the high degree of energy and enthusiasm around a very ambitious policy agenda. Raising standards is hardly an easy lift for states, particularly when students and schools are having a hard time reaching the current targets.

We saw the same degree of commitment at this year's meeting, and from a larger number of states as the ADP Network grew from 22 to 29 states. This year, however, there was a noticeable shift in the conversation. Whereas in the past we spent a considerable amount of time focused on the "why" of the policy

agenda, this year much more time on the “how.” Moreover, we saw more states tackling all of the policy pillars of the ADP agenda—standards, raising graduation requirements, assessment and accountability—simultaneously. The urgency to make policy changes and improve student performance was palpable.

Common challenges emerged at the meeting: How can states responsibly raise graduation standards while ensuring that schools and students have the supports they need to succeed? What should states do with their fourth year of math requirements? How can states encourage multiple curriculum pathways while maintaining a common standard of rigor? What’s the appropriate role for career and technical education in an academically rigorous high school curriculum and what can states do to foster it? What are innovative approaches to college and career ready assessments and how can states balance reliance on summative, performance based and formative assessments?

For nearly every question raised there was at least one state, usually more, offering answers based on their own experiences. While states have their own unique challenges, there is much they can learn from each other about solving tough challenges without reinventing the wheel. In some key areas, states are even formally joining forces and working together on solutions. Most notable is the development of a common Algebra II test by nine states. Most agree that this joint venture has tremendous potential and may serve as a model for additional cross-state efforts.

States are all feeling the same pressure: to produce better prepared graduates capable of succeeding in an increasingly sophisticated, interconnected world. Rather than turning inward, states are turning to each other for answers. That is gratifying. Getting all graduates college and work ready is hard work, but no state is alone in its efforts.

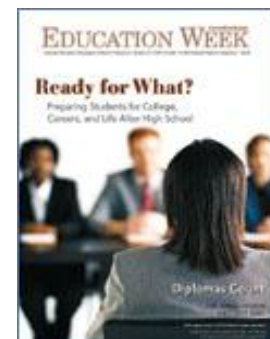
New Resources

- The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation issued a core curriculum volume entitled, [“Beyond the Basics: Achieving a Liberal Education for All Children.”](#) Edited, and with an introduction and conclusion, by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Diane Ravitch, it argues that America's true competitive long-term edge is its creativity, imagination, and inventiveness. Study of liberal arts and sciences, liberally defined, rather than just skill drill, is a key to success. This work emerges from a Fordham-sponsored conference in December 2006. It develops the rationale for liberal education in the primary and secondary grades, explores what policymakers and educators at all levels can do to sustain liberal learning, and reignites a passion for liberal learning in K-12 education.

A section of this report was written by Achieve's Matthew Gandal, Michael

Cohen, and John Kraman. They note that the research shows that the general trend is that states are not reducing course requirements in the humanities at the high school level as they increase them in math and science. In order to benchmark humanities expectations in an ADP-like way, there needs to be a consensus around what students should learn and how to measure whether students have learned it. [Download the PDF.](#)

- Nine out of 10 middle school students (92%) say that it's likely that they'll attend college, but nearly 7 of 10 (68%) indicate that they've little or no information about how to choose high school classes that will prepare them for college, according to a survey of middle level students released by NASSP and Phi Delta Kappa International. Conducted by Harris Interactive, the "A Voice from the Middle" survey of 1,814 students in grades seven and eight reveals several stark contrasts between students' educational goals and their beliefs about how they'll achieve them. The poll, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education as part of its KnowHow2GO campaign, may be the very first national snapshot of the aspirations and school experiences of middle level students. The report, executive summary, and a podcast on the poll results are available [here](#).
- A report from ACT titled "[Rigor at Risk](#)" concludes that U.S. high school core courses too often lack the rigor needed to prepare students for college-level work. Although more students are taking the "core curriculum" recommended by ACT, there hasn't been a subsequent increase in the students who meet college ready benchmarks. The ACT core consists of three years of math -- including Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II -- and at least three years of science -- including biology, chemistry, and physics. The report suggests that even students who take the recommended college preparatory curriculum in high school are often ill-prepared to handle college material. ACT recommends that the content of core courses be aligned to state standards to ensure consistency and rigor, that teachers receive the training and support they need to teach rigorous core courses, and that student progress through the core curriculum be more closely monitored and assessed.
- In June *Education Week* released its annual "[Diplomas Count 2007](#)" report with the news that more than 1.2 million students will not graduate this year. This year's report focuses on "career readiness," which *Ed Week* defines as an umbrella that encompasses both "college readiness" and "work readiness for good jobs." The findings underscore that to earn a decent wage in the United States, young people need to anticipate completing at least some college.



Perspective is sent to you by Achieve, a bipartisan, non-profit organization founded by the nation's governors and CEOs to help states raise standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship. Please feel free to circulate

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