



Achieve

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

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News Clips

Tennessee Students Continue To Improve

The Chattanooga reports that Governor Bill Haslam and State Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman on Tuesday announced that statewide student performance on the 2012 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) improved for the second year in a row, as the state continues to push toward academic achievement through its First to the Top education reforms. TCAP Achievement tests and End-of-Course exams became aligned with more strategic and rigorous standards in 2009, a result of the Tennessee Diploma Project.

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Perspective Newsletter June 2012

Commentary

National Survey Shows Strong Support For Common Core State Standards

Significant increases in teacher awareness and support; voter support is steady but awareness lags

A new national [poll](#) released by Achieve - *Growing Awareness, Growing Support: Teacher and Voter Understanding of the Common Core State Standards & Assessments* - shows teachers are increasingly knowledgeable about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) - and that they like what they see.

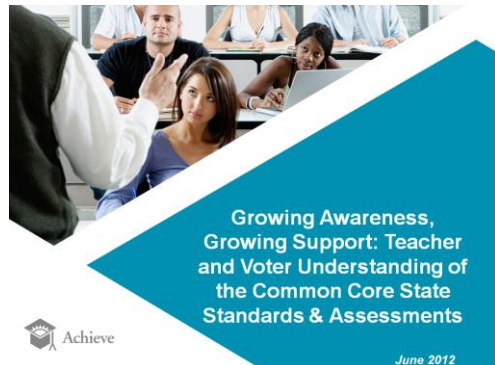
"The more teachers know about the Common Core State Standards, the more supportive they are of implementing the standards, including new assessments," said Sandy Boyd, Achieve's Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives. "These findings demonstrate the importance of communicating with educators, especially as the task at hand moves from

broad awareness of the standards to the deep understanding necessary for the CCSS to be taught in every classroom. Ongoing professional learning opportunities and support will be key."

At the same time, voter awareness of the standards remains flat with less than a quarter of voters knowing some or a lot about the standards. Just a brief description of the CCSS produces broad and deep support for the standards with 77% favoring implementation. "Voters support the implementation of the CCSS but they too will need more information about the CCSS and what it means as the standards move from being an idea to a reality in schools," said Boyd.

Major findings from the nation-wide survey include:

- There has been a significant increase in awareness of the Common Core State Standards among teachers from 68% in August 2011 to 87%, while awareness of the CCSS continues to be very low among the voting public with 79% having heard not much or nothing at all about them.



On Common Core...

"Common Core strikes me as, at long last, the re-emergence of common sense in our classrooms," notes Robert Pondiscio, vice-president of the Core Knowledge Foundation and a former fifth-grade teacher, in the Fordham Institute's "Common Core Watch" blog. "We're no longer ignoring what we know about reading comprehension and language development. And we're making elementary school teachers the most important people in America... the big ideas enshrined within CCSS were long overdue to be restored, renewed, or otherwise placed at the heart of ELA instruction from the first days of class in every American school."

[More...](#)

North Carolina Teachers Prepare for Common Core

North Carolina is implementing the Common Core State Standards beginning in the fall and teachers are preparing for the changes. Cortney Frasier, art teacher at Lake Norman Elementary School, said classes would shift next year with the

- Of teachers who have seen, read or heard about the CCSS, 68% have a favorable impression of the standards, which is up from 59% in August 2011.
- A majority of voters (77%) and teachers (72%) support implementing the CCSS with 45% of voters and 33% of teachers strongly supporting implementation.
- Voter support of CCSS remains strong regardless of age, education level, race, ethnicity, or party affiliation with every subgroup registering a 70% or better favorability rating.
- A majority of voters (74%) and teachers (64%) support CCSS assessments with 40% of voters and 25% of teachers strongly supporting them.
- Support holds when more information on the assessments and their components is provided. Components tested were those being contemplated by the PARCC assessment consortium (www.parcconline.org).
- There are mixed reactions to some specific components of the new assessments, however, voters and teachers are fairly consistent in their views on the highest and lowest rated assessment components. The highest rated assessment components were that test results are available within 1-2 weeks, the first optional test will be diagnostic, and tests would be the same across states. The lowest rated assessment components were that required tests will be for accountability purposes, tests will be given throughout the year, and students will take all tests on the computer. Voters' and teachers' ratings of components are at times inconsistent, such as giving high marks to test results being returned quickly, but ranking the necessary computer administration to get the quick turnaround in the bottom three.

Growing Awareness, Growing Support: Teacher and Voter Understanding of the Common Core State Standards & Assessments shows that there is broad teacher and voter support for implementation of the CCSS, including common assessments. The results also signal the importance of robust communications efforts to build and maintain lasting support. On behalf of Achieve, Public Opinion Strategies and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research completed a national survey of 1000 registered voters and 500 K-12 teachers May 6-10, 2012. The poll has a margin of error of +3.1% among voters and +4.4% among teachers.

The poll report and PowerPoint are at www.achieve.org/GrowingAwarenessCCSS

Public Comment Sought on Model Content Frameworks for Mathematics

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is seeking a second round of public comment on the

Common Core to spending more time on the cultural impact and meaning of pieces of art rather than focusing on the piece of art itself. "I think [Common Core] is enriching the understanding of the art they see and the art they make," said Frasier. "It gives them a global or cultural perspective." [More...](#)

STEM Education Is Key

John Engler, president of Business Roundtable and a former governor of Michigan, notes in *U.S. News & World Report* that according to a recently released study from [Change the Equation](#), an organization that supports STEM education, there are 3.6 unemployed workers for every job in the United States. That compares with only one unemployed STEM worker for two unfilled STEM jobs throughout the country. Many jobs are going unfilled simply for lack of people with the right skill sets. [More...](#)

Careers of the Future

The June issue of *Pittsburgh Magazine* offers a special "Careers of the Future" section designed to capture the imagination of parents and students by introducing them to

November 2011 draft of the 3-8 Model Content Frameworks as part of an ongoing development process to ensure the frameworks meet the needs of educators, curriculum directors, and school leaders. PARCC is also seeking comments on newly created material for high school mathematics. Based on feedback gathered over the 2011-12 academic year, PARCC states have created materials that provide additional specificity around six high school courses. The newly revised high school Model Content Frameworks detail the standards, or parts of standards that make up the two course sequences and would be assessed in each course by the PARCC assessments. The public comment survey for mathematics will be open until Wednesday, July 11. PARCC will revise the frameworks during the month of July with the goal of releasing final versions later this summer. Access the comment survey at www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks.

PARCC Governing Board Meets in June, Advances College Readiness Decisions

The PARCC Governing Board met on June 20. For the first time, chief state school officers and members of the Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR) from PARCC Governing States met for a joint session to discuss proposed policies on achievement levels and on determining college readiness in mathematics and English language arts/literacy on the PARCC high school assessments. "States in the PARCC consortium are fully committed to developing an assessment that gives students, parents, and the education community information they need about achieving college readiness," said Governing Board Chair Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. [More...](#)

New Resources

Left Out. Forgotten? Recent High School Graduates and the Great Recession

A national survey from the Heldrich Center at Rutgers of recent high school graduates from 2006 to 2011 who are not enrolled in college full time reveal the difficulty this group has with finding work that pays a living wage and offers financial security. Only 27% have full-time jobs. Nearly one in three are unemployed and another 15% are employed part time but looking for full-time jobs. The annual earnings of those working full time are barely sufficient to keep them out of poverty. Ninety percent are paid hourly; the current median wage for those employed full time is only \$9.25 - just \$2.00 above the federal minimum wage. Fewer than 1 in 10 say that their high school education prepared them "extremely well" to get their first job or to be successful at it. Seven in ten believe they will

cool young people working in interesting, rewarding jobs that they may never have heard of. [More...](#) (On a related note, Achieve offers a number of resources at www.achieve.org/math-works for policymakers, advocates, educators, parents, and students alike that highlight the connection between higher-level mathematics course-taking and college access and success, workplace and career readiness, and personal and U.S. competitiveness.)

need more education in order to have a successful career, but recent high school graduates are finding it difficult to achieve their goals. [More...](#)

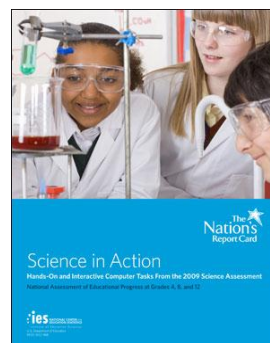
Diplomas Count 2012-Trailing Behind, Moving Forward: Latino Students in U.S. Schools

A new national [report](#) from *Education Week* and the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center finds that the nation's graduation rate has posted a solid gain for the second straight year, following a period of declines and stagnation. Amid this continuing turnaround, the nation's graduation rate has risen to 73%, the highest level of high school completion since the late 1970s. The report shows that the nation's public schools will generate about 90,000 fewer dropouts than the previous year. Nationwide improvements were driven, in large part, by impressive gains among Latino students. The report - part of an ongoing project conducted by EPE - also tracks graduation policies for all 50 states and the District of Columbia and presents an updated analysis of graduation patterns for the nation, states, and the country's 50 largest school systems. The new analysis focuses on the class of 2009, the most recent year for which data are available.



Science in Action

As a part of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress in science for 4th, 8th, and 12th graders, a new generation of hands-on tasks was administered during which students worked with lab materials and other equipment to perform experiments. While hands-on tasks have been used in NAEP since the 1990s, these new tasks present students with more open-ended scenarios that require a deeper level of planning, analysis, and synthesis. For the first time, the NAEP science assessment also included interactive computer tasks in science. While performing the interactive computer and hands-on tasks, students manipulate objects and perform actual experiments, offering richer data on how students respond to scientific challenges. A new NAEP [report](#) shows students were successful on parts of investigations that involved limited sets of data and making straightforward observations of those data, but were challenged by parts of investigations that contained more variables to manipulate or involved strategic decision making to collect appropriate data.



Upcoming Webinar: Promising Practices in Building Educator Capacity to Use Data

Data Quality Campaign (DQC), of which Achieve is a partner, has been hosting a three-part webinar series for state policymakers and practitioners about the value of investing in and building educator capacity to use data. "What Is Data Literacy and How Do We Achieve It?" is the next DQC webinar on July 17, 2-3 p.m. EDT. Participants will learn about a national effort underway to define data literacy and develop best practices for incorporating data training into educator preparation. Register [here](#). The two previous webinar recordings are [here](#). DQC's [State Action 9](#) highlights steps that states should take to create and ensure data literacy and use. States must implement policies and promote practices - including professional development and credentialing policies - to ensure that educators know how to access, analyze, and use data effectively. Building capacity, however, goes beyond providing professional development. States can best focus on building capacity to use data by creating a culture of data use to inform continuous improvement at every level, from informing the practices of teacher preparation programs to providing data-driven decision-making training to teachers at the district level.

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Career Opportunities

Achieve has several career opportunities available. For more, go to www.achieve.org/careers.

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