



Achieve

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

In This Issue

- [Commentary](#)
- [News](#)
- [New Resources](#)
- [Connect with Achieve](#)
- [Career Opportunities](#)

News Clips

The Department of Defense Schools Adopt the Common Standards

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) released memorandum for DoDEA [educators](#) and [parents](#) announcing the adoption of the Common Core State Standards to help them "embark on bold pathways that will position our students for success." [More...](#)

Common Standards In the Classroom

Sue Curtis, a second-grade teacher at Math and Science Leadership Academy in Denver, said the Common State Core Standards are asking students to use more critical thinking skills and communication skills. "It just brings

Perspective Newsletter

May 2012

Commentary

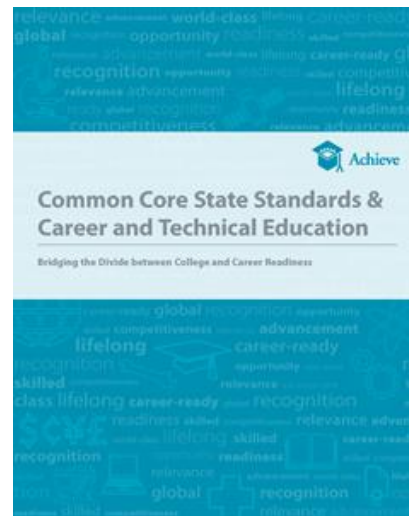
Achieving the Common Core

With forty-six states and the District of Columbia implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) a bevy of new research and resources around the CCSS has been released in the last month - with more to come.

Earlier this month Dr. William Schmidt released key conclusions from his research analyzing how the Common Core State Standards for mathematics have the potential to improve the performance of U.S. students, if implemented appropriately. In an event co-sponsored by Achieve, Chiefs for Change and the Foundation for Excellence in Education, Dr. Schmidt presented a briefing on his work: *Common Core State Standards Math: The Relationship Between High Standards, Systemic Implementation and Student Achievement*. Schmidt explained during the event that the CCSS for mathematics strongly resemble the standards of the highest-achieving nations, and that they have more focus, coherence and rigor than most of the state standards they replaced. He also found states with standards most like the CCSS for mathematics have higher scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), demonstrating that standards - and implementing them well - matter.

"What is clear in the research is that the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics are an important improvement over the state standards that they replaced and that to see their full potential realized, they must be implemented well," said Schmidt. "Their consistency with the international benchmark set by top-achieving countries shows that the CCSS are coherent, focused and rigorous, key attributes of math standards from countries that outperform the U.S. on international assessments." [Read the news statement and watch the video...](#)

Another important issue in CCSS implementation is the role of career and technical education (CTE) teachers and leaders. To explore the



common language to what is expected of children." She said working collaboratively is a big focus as well.

[More...](#)

### Tennessee Easing Into New 'Common Core' Curriculum

State officials are beginning to phase in changes to Tennessee's public education curriculum to include more analytical thinking and, officials hope, less teaching to the test. [More...](#)

### Michigan Graduation Rates Dip Only Slightly

"Michigan has been able to raise expectations of rigor in high school without resulting in the increase in dropouts predicted by the skeptics," said Jan Ellis, spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Education. [More...](#)

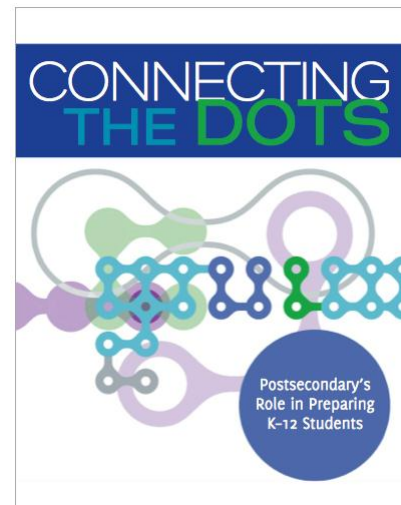
relationship between the CCSS and CTE, Achieve released a report laying out a blueprint for increased engagement between state education leaders and the career and technical education (CTE) community. The report, [Common Core State Standards & Career and Technical Education: Bridging the Divide between College and Career Readiness](#), was developed in partnership with the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc). The paper outlines a set of strategies state and district leaders can leverage to ensure the implementation of CCSS engages, informs, and benefits from the career and technical education community as a partner in the broader college- and career-ready agenda. Strategies highlighted include examples of practices currently employed in states across the nation, such as forming cross-disciplinary teams for planning and implementing the CCSS, enhancing literacy and math strategies within CTE instruction, and fostering CTE and academic teacher collaboration.

[More...](#)

Achieve is focused on supporting states as they transition to the CCSS and has created and amassed a range of communications, implementation, and other tools, all found at [Achieving the Common Core](#).

## Connecting the Dots between K-12 and Higher Ed

The development of the Common Core State Standards and common assessments provides an unprecedented opportunity to connect the dots between K-12 expectations and first-year college courses. The PARCC Higher Education Leadership Team (HELT) issued a monograph which provides an overview of postsecondary's role in preparing K-12 students. Download it [here](#).



## Guidance for New Instructional Technology Purchases

In April, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) issued guidance designed to inform schools and districts as they make annual instructional technology purchases. The guidelines include hardware and operating system specifications covering the vast majority of commercially available computers and tablets. [Read more...](#)

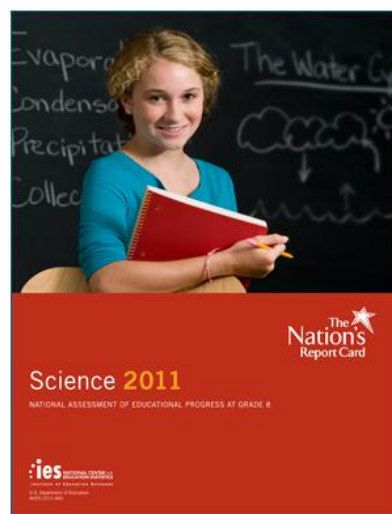
## EQuIP COLLABORATIVE

Educators from 20 states met recently in Washington, DC to participate in Achieve's Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) collaborative. This collaborative formed at the request of educational leaders across Achieve's [ADP Network](#) states. Specifically, states have a great sense of urgency to determine the quality of existing instructional materials as well as those being developed for the immediate use of teachers in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Equally important, states have the need to build the capacity of educators at the classroom, building, district, and state levels so that they are equipped to make determinations of quality and alignment on their own. EQuIP builds on the efforts of the Tri-State Collaborative and the rubrics (in [mathematics](#) and [ELA/Literacy](#)) and processes that have been developed by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island to determine the quality and alignment of instructional lessons and units to the CCSS. EQuIP also builds on criteria for quality such as the [OER Rubrics](#) for evaluating open educational resources.

## New Resources

### NAEP Science 2011

The nation's eighth-graders have modestly improved their performance in science and narrowed some racial/ethnic achievement gaps since 2009, according to the latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card. Scores reported in *NAEP Science 2011* were higher than in 2009 for students across reported percentiles except those at the 90th percentile, which showed no significant change. The average eighth-grade score increased two points, from 150 in 2009 to 152 in 2011. Scores also rose among public school students in 16 of 47 states that participated in both 2009 and 2011, and no state showed a decline in science scores from 2009 to 2011. A five-point gain from 2009 to 2011 by Hispanic students was larger than the one-point gain for White students, an improvement that narrowed the score gap between those two groups. Black students scored three points higher in 2011 than in 2009, narrowing the achievement gap with White students. By contrast, the gender gap reflected in the 2009 science assessment remained essentially unchanged. Average scores for both girls and boys were higher in 2011 than in 2009; male students scored five points higher on average than female students in 2011. David P. Driscoll, chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for NAEP, said "In order to compete in globally competitive and expanding fields like technology and medicine we must make sure we give our students the

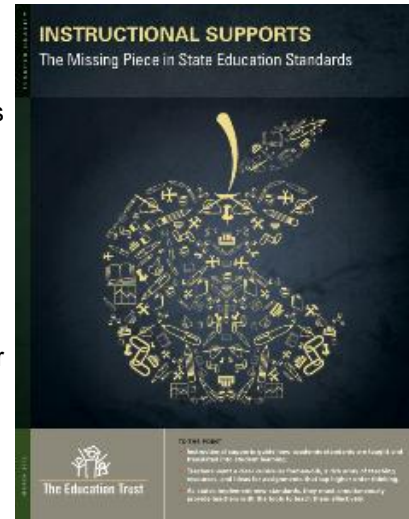


tools necessary to excel in an important subject area." [Read the report...](#)

## Instructional Supports

For years, our nation's public schools have struggled to bridge the gap between what high schools require and the skills and knowledge students need to be successful after graduation day. To close that gap, 46 states and three territories are adopting a common set of college- and career-ready standards. But those higher standards represent a massive expectations shift, one that must be coupled with rich supports for teachers if the new standards are to be more than an empty promise of higher achievement for our nation's students. In "*Instructional Supports: The Missing Piece in State Education Standards*," The Education Trust

outlines the hard work that must be done to equip educators with the comprehensive set of tools and resources they'll need to ensure that all of their students reach these new, higher expectations. [Read the report...](#)



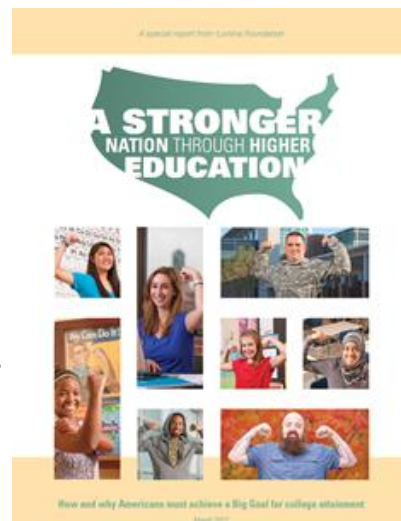
## Principals Matter

A report from the American Institutes for Research reminds us how much principals matter. As districts around the country seek to boost student achievement by supporting and strengthening their teachers, they must not overlook the powerful impact principals have on student achievement. AIR's [The Ripple Effect](#) finds that, as instructional leaders and human capital managers, principals can make or break high student achievement at their schools. One way principals can have a positive effect, the report notes, is by ensuring that students who are farthest behind get assigned the teachers best able to help them catch up. Principals who assert their role in this way can boost their schools' overall achievement. The AIR report concludes that meaningful principal evaluation systems are essential to helping states and districts develop and retain high-quality school leaders. The institute invites researchers and policymakers to use its research-based framework to design better evaluations and professional supports for school principals. Meanwhile, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality released a ["practical guide"](#) last month that builds on the AIR research. It offers specific guidance to states and districts that are developing systems to better evaluate principal quality.

## America's College Attainment Rates

According to a Lumina Foundation report, [A Stronger Nation through Higher Education](#), 38.3 percent of working-age Americans (ages 25-64) held a two- or four-year college degree in 2010. That rate is up modestly from the 38.1 percent in 2009, and 2008, when the rate was 37.9 percent in 2008. The report measures progress toward Goal 2025, a national movement to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. The *Stronger Nation* report shows that if we continue on our current rate of production, only 79.8 million working-age Americans

(46.5% of those aged 25-64) will hold degrees by 2025. Since this will leave us more than 23 million degrees short of the national 60 percent goal, the need to rapidly accelerate degree attainment levels is clear. "More people are graduating from college, but the current pace is not sufficient," said Jamie P. Merisotis, president and chief executive officer of Lumina. "America is grappling with how to grow jobs, skills and opportunity, and this report highlights the economic imperative of getting a postsecondary degree. This issue can't be wished away by fanciful talk about higher education 'bubbles' and whether college is worth it. Education is the only route to economic prosperity for both individuals and the nation. That should matter to policymakers. It should matter to business leaders. And it certainly should matter to our education leaders."



## Automated Student Assessment Prize

Sponsored by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Automated Student Assessment Prize (ASAP) evaluated the ability of technology to assist in grading essays included in standardized tests. The second phase of the competition awarded \$100,000 to three winning teams that developed software that came closest to replicating the scores of essays graded by trained educators. The competition showed promising advances in automated scoring. [More...](#)


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## Career Opportunities

Achieve has several career opportunities available. For more information, go to [www.achieve.org/careers](http://www.achieve.org/careers).



*Perspective* is sent to you by Achieve, an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments and strengthen accountability. Please feel free to circulate this e-newsletter to your colleagues.

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