



Achieve

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

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Conservatives Support Common Core

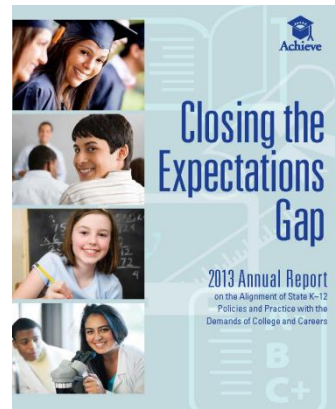
In an op-ed for *The Indianapolis Star*, Chad Colby, Achieve's Communications Director, writes that the Common Core State Standards were developed by conservative governors and voluntarily adopted by 45 states, all of which can add standards to fit local needs as they see fit. [More...](#)

Perspective Newsletter Nov. 2013

Commentary

New Annual Report From Achieve Details States' Commitment to College and Career Readiness

With all 50 states having adopted college- and career-ready standards (CCR) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, Achieve's eighth annual "[Closing the Expectations Gap](#)" report shows how all states are aligning those standards with policies to send clear signals to students about what it means to be academically prepared for life after high school.



Achieve conducts an annual policy survey that asks all 50 states and the District of Columbia whether they have adopted standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems aligned to the expectations of two- and four-year colleges and employers. The national survey of state education leaders has measured the same areas of reform each year since the National Governors Association and Achieve co-sponsored the National Education Summit in 2005.

All states now have college- and career-ready (CCR) standards and most states are on track to have high-quality assessments that will drive instruction of the standards at the level of rigor students need for readiness. However, fewer than half of the states will require all students to learn those standards by high

Common Core State Standards in Florida

Samantha Tankersley, a graduate from the UCF College of Education and Human Performance and a certified teacher, writes, "Our move to higher standards will ultimately increase Florida student performance and lead to improved college and career readiness, which is badly needed for students in our changing global economy." [More...](#)

New Education Standards Create Problem Solvers

In a guest column for *The Plain Dealer* Char Shryock, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Bay Village City Schools and a member of the Ohio Education Leadership Cadre, writes in favor of Common Core. [More...](#)

school graduation because they do not require students to take courses that deliver those standards. Progress on building comprehensive college- and career-ready accountability systems has nearly stalled. The major findings of the survey include:

- **Standards:** All 50 states and the District of Columbia have adopted standards aligned to the expectations of college and careers. Forty-six states and DC have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), while four have state-developed CCR standards on their own. For these standards to be realized in classrooms, they must be implemented with fidelity. Ensuring access to high-quality aligned instructional materials and supporting training and professional learning opportunities for teachers and principals is critical - as is deploying strong performance metrics to monitor implementation progress.
- **Graduation Requirements:** Today, 19 states and the District of Columbia have adopted college and career-ready graduation requirements. However, more than half the states in the country that have adopted CCSS/CCR standards have not raised their graduation requirements to match those standards. This misalignment means that students may graduate unprepared for college and careers since they will not have taken courses that deliver the CCSS/CCR standards or demonstrated their mastery of the CCSS/CCR standards through competency-based methods.
- **Assessments:** Today, 19 states have or will administer college- and career-ready high school assessments capable of producing a readiness score that postsecondary institutions use to make placement decisions. The 42 states and District of Columbia participating in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium working to develop CCR assessments will face many key decisions in the months and years ahead, including how these next generation assessments can support aligned and rigorous instruction, how to ensure postsecondary use of the results, and how and whether to factor the results of new assessments into high-stakes graduation decisions for students.

- **Accountability:** A majority of states, 35, have now incorporated at least one of four accountability indicators that Achieve has identified as critical to promoting college and career readiness. No state meets Achieve's criteria regarding the use of all indicators in its college- and career-ready accountability system, and overall state progress in creating accountability systems anchored in CCR has been slow - and often stalled - even with the adoption of new accountability systems under ESEA flexibility waivers.

Even as states continue to make gains on the college- and career-ready agenda, states have further to go to ensure successful implementation of standards and related policies. States cannot make the transformation from systems that require minimal performance to systems that propel all students to college and career readiness without significant changes to policy and practice in all four areas of standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability. Progress in a few areas provides a foundation for change, but only when attention is paid to all four policy areas will states have exercised the policy levers that can influence student outcomes. Their sum is far greater than their parts, and they work best when they are aligned and reinforce one another. To see a full copy of the report, go to www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2013.

News

Business Center for a College- and Career-Ready America

Achieve launched the Business Center for a College- and Career-Ready America and its website, www.BusinessandEducation.org. The GE Foundation and AT&T, along with Chevron and the Prudential and Travelers foundations, collaborated with Achieve to create the Business Center for a College- and Career-Ready America to help businesses think more strategically about how best to support college and career readiness for all students. The Business Center's unique value for business leaders is rooted in Achieve's

deep understanding of implementation of college- and career-ready standards and what will help states ensure success going forward. To strengthen the bridge between awareness and engagement, the Business Center provides a range of practical and customizable tools and examples of how business leaders can and do support standards-based education reform within and across states. [More...](#)

Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

Achieve, in partnership with the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO), released a [policy brief](#) to guide state policies with the goal of ensuring all students have access to a diploma that means that they are truly academically prepared. Currently, policies vary greatly across the country. Some states hold all students to the same standards to graduate but allow students to demonstrate their mastery of standards in different ways. Some states, despite having the potential for most students with disabilities to achieve, lower the standards or lessen the coursework, offering a diploma that does not signify that students are ready for life after high school. Still other states award all students the same diploma, but there are multiple pathways leading to this diploma that may vary greatly in rigor.

While acknowledging that the students with disabilities population is diverse, the report indicated that 85 to 90 percent of this group can meet the graduation standards targeted for all students with appropriate supports and accommodations. That is, only 10 to 15 percent of students with disabilities have disabilities that require that they meet different achievement standards. The report also indicates that there exists an inverse relationship between the number of diplomas a state offers and the rate of students with disabilities earning a standard diploma, consequently limiting many students' ability to pursue educational and employment opportunities.



To make sure students with disabilities and their families can make informed decisions about their futures, the report includes recommendations for states. [More...](#)

EQuIP NGSS Rubric in Development

In October 2013, Achieve convened educators, administrators and science education experts from six states to help continue the development of the EQuIP Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Rubric.

This initiative expands the work of EQuIP for Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The EQuIP NGSS Rubric is a tool for educators and education leaders to use in identifying high quality, NGSS-aligned instructional materials through a criterion-based, peer-review process. Specifically the Rubric will allow users to evaluate materials based on their alignment to the dimensions of the NGSS, the strength of instructional supports and the use of regular assessments of both teaching and learning.

"The blending of practice, content and crosscutting concepts in NGSS performance expectations needs to be reflected in instruction," said Dr. Jim Short, Director of the Gottesman Center for Science Teaching and Learning at the American Museum of Natural History, who is assisting in the development of the EQuIP NGSS Rubric. "Not only should these three dimensions be explicitly addressed in teaching materials, but instructional supports and assessments should also make clear to both teachers and students how interweaving the three dimensions contributes to student learning."

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) has led efforts to recruit and train educators to be peer reviewers using the EQuIP NGSS Rubric as part of the organization's process to identify high quality materials.

"Learning how to apply this tool is a great opportunity for teachers to immerse themselves in the NGSS," said Emily Miller, an ESL and bilingual resource teacher in Wisconsin who serves on her district's science leadership team and recently helped lead an NSTA meeting that introduced the EQuIP NGSS Rubric to teachers.

"Educators will build their capacity to understand the standards, what it means for instruction to truly align to them, and they can share this information with lesson and unit developers."

This feedback is critical to creating high quality instructional materials, according to Dr. Kaye Forgione, who worked on the development of the EQUiP CCSS Rubric for mathematics and is providing guidance on the EQUiP NGSS Rubric.

"Perhaps the most powerful use of the criteria in the mathematics rubric has been the guidance curriculum specialists, including teachers, provide to reviewers in crafting constructive, evidence-based feedback," said Forgione. "This feedback will lead to the development of exemplary lessons and units that will support teaching and learning."

The EQUiP NGSS Rubric is one of several projects that Achieve is facilitating to support states in their implementation of the NGSS. Teams of math, engineering and science teachers are continuing to develop K-12 model student assessment tasks that integrate the NGSS and CCSS.

After receiving feedback from districts, states and third party organizations, the task writers are now revising these models, which will be released online in January 2014.

PARCC

PARCC announced that Maryland has committed to taking on the role of the assessment group's fiscal agent, in which the state will lead management of the finances for the state-led consortium starting on January 1, 2014. [More...](#)

Meanwhile, 14 PARCC states, plus the District of Columbia, are preparing to conduct field tests of the PARCC assessments, beginning in March 2014, to ensure the tests are of the highest quality and can be administered smoothly when rolled out statewide in the 2014-15 school year. [More...](#)

Earlier this month PARCC released new sample test items designed to help teachers, students and parents get a better sense of how PARCC will measure student learning in mathematics and ELA/literacy. [More...](#)

PARCC also announced the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for the PARCC Operational Assessments. The release of this RFP is an important milestone in the work of the PARCC consortium, as the services acquired through the RFP will support PARCC states through the first operational year of PARCC assessments in school year 2014-2015, and for several years beyond. [More...](#)

PARCC is hiring for Contracts Program Associates, an Associate Director for Assessment Development, a Communications Director, and Program Associates. Visit www.parcconline.org/careers.

New Resources

NAEP Results

The latest [Nation's Report Card, 2013 Mathematics and Reading](#), shows some improvement nationally from the last assessment in 2011 among fourth- and eighth-grade students in mathematics, and among eighth-grade students in reading. Overall, there have been gains in both subjects since the assessments in the early 1990s. Results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show growth in the proportion of students scoring Proficient and Advanced in both subjects at both grades. For the first time, the report findings are available in a new online format that makes it possible to find and sort the data more easily than the previous, paper version. The interactive [website](#) also allows visitors to explore presentations of mathematics and reading achievement data and includes videos that guide visitors on how to easily explore the results.

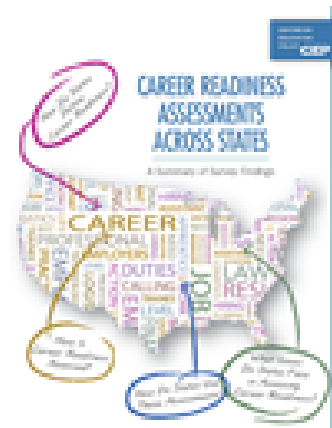


On November 7, Achieve President Michael Cohen issued a [statement](#): "The results of the NAEP show that while scores

are up slightly overall, we should look at what's happening in states where gains are the greatest. Tennessee and the District of Columbia deserve a lot of praise for leading the nation in growth with significant gains in both reading and math."

Career Readiness Assessments Across States

A Center on Education Policy (CEP) report, [*Career Readiness Assessments Across the States: A Summary of Survey Findings*](#), offers a broad overview of state policies for defining career readiness and assessing career and technical skills since the 2010 adoption of the Common Core. The data come from a survey conducted in the summer of 2013 of state directors of career and technical education in 46 states, including the District of Columbia. While most states give one or more assessments of career readiness, technical or employability skills to high school students, the types of tests used vary considerably across states and are sometimes decided at the school district level. These career and technical assessments are distinct from the academic tests that states currently administer to all students in English language arts, math and other subjects and from the new tests being developed by two state consortia to measure students' mastery of the Common Core State Standards.



DQC's Data for Action

The Data Quality Campaign released its seventh annual [*Data for Action*](#) report, monitoring states' progress on developing rich data systems to empower better decision making to ensure that students that



graduate from high school are prepared for success in college and the workplace. This year, Arkansas and Delaware met the bar to have all 10 State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use in place. There has been an overall increase in the average number of Actions achieved by states from 4.7 in 2011 to 6.6 in 2013. Fifteen states have eight or nine Actions in place. However, most states still cannot determine if their K-12 students have been adequately prepared for the workforce because only 19 states have securely linked K-12 and workforce data.

Reshaping the College Transition

The Community College Research Center is out with a new report, [*Reshaping the College Transition: Early College Readiness Assessments and Transition Curricula in Four States*](#), on how states can better prepare students for college. It describes and compares four state initiatives - in California, New York, Tennessee, and West Virginia - which address the problem of college under-preparedness among 12th grade students. In all four initiatives, assessments are administered to 11th grade students and those deemed "not college ready" are enrolled in 12th grade "transition courses," the aim of which is to reduce the likelihood that participating students will be placed in remedial classes upon entry to college. The report reviews questions that must be addressed when designing transition curricula, and makes recommendations about policies that support and promote early assessment and transition courses.

Reshaping the College Transition

Early College Readiness Assessments and Transition Curricula in Four States

A State Policy Report
November 2013

CCRC



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