



Achieve

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

Perspective Newsletter

November 2014

## Commentary

In Hall-Dale High School in Farmingdale, Maine, all students complete a capstone project that reflects their interests and aspirations. When they graduate, their diploma reflects that they attained proficiency on the state's academic content standards - including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English language arts/literacy - as well as Maine's Guiding Principles, which require that students be effective communicators, self-directed learners, problem-solvers, responsible and involved citizens, and informed thinkers. Each graduate reaches this outcome through his or her own path. Some go well beyond and graduate with college credits. Others need a bit of extra time to reach the diploma requirements. While the minimum standards and expectations all students must reach are clear, each student at Hall-Dale High has "voice and choice" in his or her path and benefits from an educational experience customized to his or her individual interests and needs.

For more than a century, U.S. public education has struggled with a tension about how much to personalize learning for students. The traditional education system reflects the fact that most of the time the answer has been "not too much".

- Most students advance through their studies in age-based cohorts driven by the calendar, not as they master the

knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for what comes next.

- Most students have little flexibility in how they demonstrate that they have mastered this knowledge and skills - usually, students have to complete the same assignment the same way, and take the same test at the same time.
- Most students have limited opportunities to learn and apply their learning outside the regular school day and outside of school walls.

Today, the widespread implementation of the CCSS across states has opened a window to shift the balance toward greater personalization for students. This may appear contradictory. The CCSS simply articulates the minimum set of knowledge and skills that all students must master to be prepared for entry-level, credit-bearing courses in postsecondary education, including career training. ***The way students learn this set of knowledge and skills, demonstrate and apply their learning, should not be one-size-fits-all.***

## News

### **Prudential Financial's Vice Chairman Mark Grier to Lead Achieve Board**

Achieve named Mark Grier, Vice Chairman of Prudential Financial, Inc. (NYSE:PRU), as the chairman of the education nonprofit's board of directors. Grier has served on the board since 2009, and has been a leading voice for college and career readiness in the business community. He succeeds former Intel Chairman and CEO Craig Barrett, who has led the board since 2008. [More...](#)



### **EQuIP Update**

Achieve and Teaching Channel announced the launch of the next video in the planned series exploring Achieve's Evaluating Quality

Instructional Products (EQuIP) initiative. This video, which is publicly available for viewing on Teaching Channel's website, introduces the Student Work Protocol for strengthening Common Core-aligned lessons. The video outlines the five steps in the Student Work Protocol and shows real teachers engaging in discussion to revise instructional materials collaboratively. [More...](#)

### **Next Generation Science Standards**



Classroom Sample Assessment Tasks for middle and high school were just released. These draft sample tasks, written by secondary teachers of a variety of subjects, provide examples of how

content from science, math and English language arts can be assessed together in classrooms. The [front matter for the tasks](#) also provides valuable information for teachers about the tasks' development process so that they can create their own tasks. [More...](#)

## **News Clips**

### **Business Leaders Support Higher Standards**

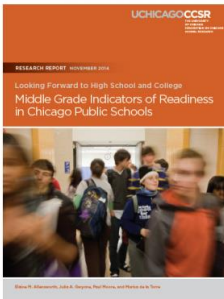
Some of the staunchest supporters of higher standards are found in the business community. Business leaders realize the critical importance of holding students to high academic standards; after all, today's students represent tomorrow's workforce. [More...](#)

## Public Charter Schools Embrace CCSS

While we often hear about the progress that traditional public schools are making with the Common Core State Standards, public charter schools are embracing the CCSS as well. [More...](#)

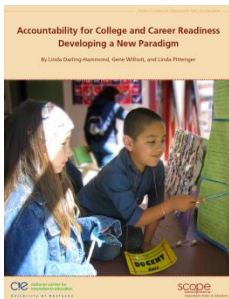
## New Resources

### Looking Forward to High School and College



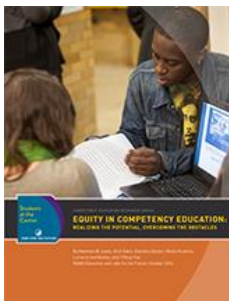
The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) published [\*Looking Forward to High School and College: Middle Grade Indicators of Readiness in Chicago Public Schools\*](#). It follows roughly 20,000 students as they transition from elementary to high school. It is designed to help answer questions about which markers should be used to gauge whether students are ready to succeed in high school and beyond. It also considers the performance levels students need to reach in middle school to have a reasonable chance of succeeding in high school. In light of prior research highlighting the importance of the high school transition, as well as growing national attention focused on middle grades, the report provides insight into where policymakers and practitioners could most effectively intervene and support students.

## Accountability for College and Career Readiness



The Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and the Center for Innovation in Education at the University of Kentucky released [Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm](#). In this report the authors portray an imagined "51st state" and recommend that the following elements be put in place: sophisticated curriculum and assessments, adequate and equitably distributed resources, capacity-building for educators and schools and evaluation and improvement models that foster collaborative changes needed to transform schools for the future.

## Equity in Competency Education

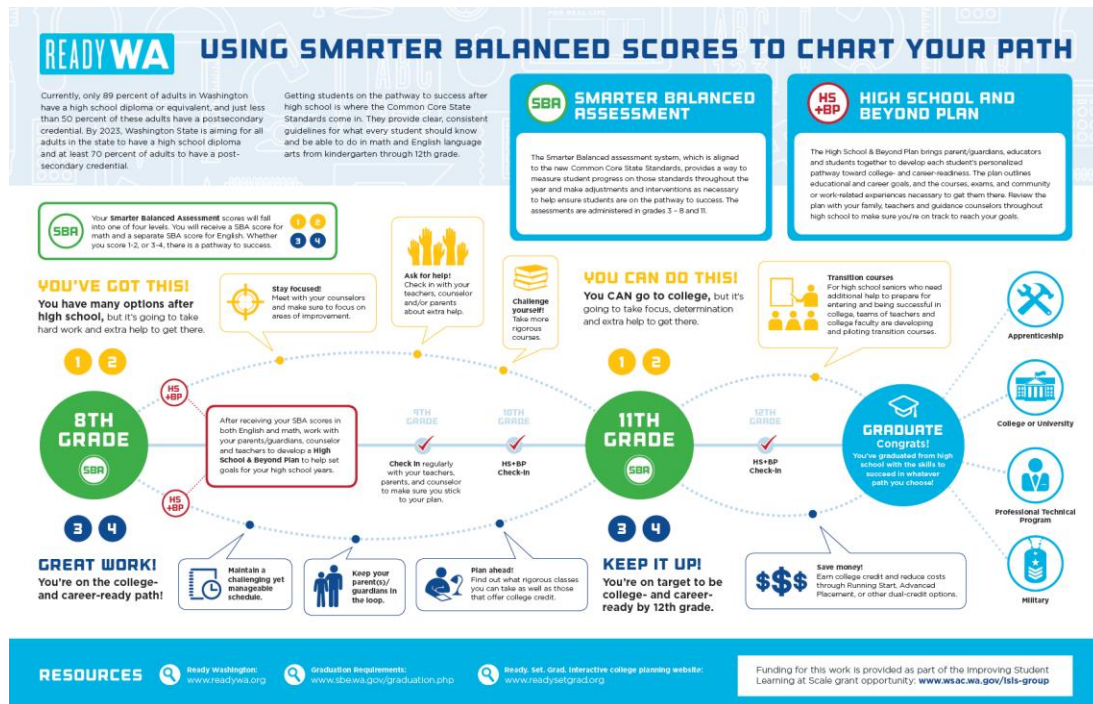


While a central goal of competency education is a more equitable system in which all students can master the knowledge and skills needed to succeed, low income students still face barriers to success. Jobs for the Future recently studied those equity challenges in their [second paper](#) of Students at the Center's Competency Education Research Series. It addresses potential areas of inequity in competency-based programs by highlighting disparities across income levels in three areas: student skills, attitudes, and behaviors; access to technology; and access to learning experiences beyond the classroom. Drawing from a broad research-base, it finds that students from low-income backgrounds often have less access to technology and learning resources beyond the school day. Research has also found that low income students often lack specific learning strategies and behaviors that are necessary to succeed in a competency-based system. The

brief discusses the implications of those disparities and proposes strategies for mitigating their effects.

## Washington State's Infographic for Parents and Students

Recently, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and The Council of Presidents Representing Washington's Public Baccalaureate Institutions agreed to the use of Smarter Balanced 11th grade college- and career-ready assessments in English language arts and mathematics for placement in Washington higher education institutions. These agreements will help students move into non-remedial, credit-bearing coursework in higher education institutions across the state. The state developed an [infographic](#) for parents and students to understand how Smarter Balanced scores move students along the path to college- and career-readiness.



## Career Opportunities

Achieve has career opportunities [here](#).

## Social Media

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