

March 2005

## New from Achieve

- **State performance profiles.** How well is your state preparing students for college and work? Achieve's new [national and state performance profiles](#) provide data that show how the nation as a whole and individual states are doing on moving students through the education pipeline from middle school through college graduation.
- **Action agenda for improving America's high schools.** At the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, governors, business leaders and education officials agreed to an [action agenda](#) to ensure that *all* high schools facilitate *all* students' successful transition to postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Updated Web site.** Visit our [updated Web site](#) for more information about the [economic imperative](#) for improving high schools and to view the state performance profiles, the Summit action agenda and more.



## Commentary: Summit Sparks Action

Last week at the National Education Summit on High Schools, the nation's governors and business and education leaders met to discuss strategies for improving America's high schools. Governors from nearly every state were there, as were CEOs from some of the nation's largest companies. Bill Gates served as keynote speaker, kicking off the event with an urgent call to fundamentally redesign high school. The Summit received significant media coverage, helping to focus national attention on the need to better prepare high school students for a smooth transition to college or work.

But the real mark of the Summit's success will be the actions state leaders take when they go home. A pioneering group of governors committed to an action agenda even before they left the Summit.

Thirteen states, which together educate more than one-third of the nation's students, have joined with Achieve to form the American Diploma Project Network. The

## News Clips

Click on the links below to view articles of interest from the past month. Some publications require free registration to read articles.

1. **Education summit.** Following are selected news stories about the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, which was co-sponsored by Achieve and the National Governors Association.
  - Achieve Plan Aims To Raise Standards in High Schools, [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#)
  - Microsoft's Gates Urges Governors To Restructure U.S. High Schools, [Washington Post](#)
  - Granholm Promises To Reform Education, [Detroit Free Press](#)
  - PA, NJ To Toughen Graduation Rules,

states -- Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Texas -- have agreed to take a bold set of steps to make the high school diploma synonymous with college or work readiness. These steps include:

- Raising high school standards to the level of what is actually required to succeed in college or in the workforce.
- Requiring all students to take rigorous college- and work-ready curriculum.
- Developing tests of college and work readiness that all students will take in high school.
- Holding high schools accountable for graduating all students ready for college and work and holding colleges accountable for the success of the students they admit.

Each state will develop an action plan with specific milestones for addressing these four priorities, which are part of a more [comprehensive set of strategies](#) discussed at the Summit. Achieve will produce an annual report on their progress.

This work will not be easy. Nor will it be popular with everyone. It will require fundamental changes in the mission and design of high schools. Higher education will have to get off the sidelines and become more of a partner in developing solutions. And governors and business leaders will need to explain more clearly than ever what's at stake to build the necessary political will.

But if they are successful, these states have the potential to transform their high schools and dramatically improve the quality of education their students receive. The impact also will likely extend well beyond their borders. We expect that other states will be watching and taking careful notes.

#### [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

- Groups Call for Comprehensive Reform for U.S. High Schools, [USA Today](#)
- Governors of 13 States Plan To Raise Standards in High Schools, [New York Times](#)
- 13 States Call for Raising Standards in High Schools, [Los Angeles Times](#)
- Gobs Pledge Ambitious High School Reforms, [Stateline.org](#)
- State Leaders Pledge To Reform Nation's High Schools, [Education Week](#)

Following are selected op-eds and editorials about the Summit.

- Two Messages on Education, Editorial, [Washington Post](#)
- Mr. Gates Goes to Washington, Editorial, [New York Times](#)
- What's Wrong with American High Schools, Bill Gates, [Los Angeles Times](#)
- Educational Complacency Will Make U.S. Feel the Pain, Craig Barrett, [USA Today](#)

2. **Staying the course.** Advocates of an [Arizona](#) bill that would repeal the state's high school graduation exam requirement say that making passage of the test mandatory would deny thousands a diploma. Several years ago, critics of the [Massachusetts](#) exit exam made a similar argument, but the state held the line. It has paid off -- 95 percent of the Massachusetts class of 2003 has passed the 10th grade

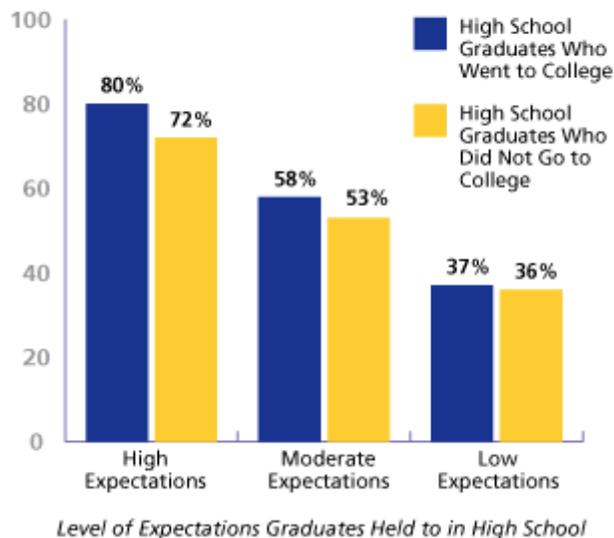
## New Resources

- According to a new report from Jay Greene and Marcus Winters of the Manhattan Institute, **Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002**, almost three in 10 students fail to graduate high school. Of those who do graduate, only one-third are college-ready. Download the full report, including state-by-state results and achievement gap data, from the [Manhattan Institute](#) Web site.
- High schools that provide all students with high-level courses, qualified teachers, flexible teaching styles and extra tutorial support are more successful in preparing students for college, according to a new study by ACT and The Education Trust. The report includes model course syllabi and descriptions of key courses in English, mathematics and science that can be used to re-evaluate high school curriculum. Download the report, **On Course for Success: A Close Look at Selected Courses That Prepare All Students for College**, from the [ACT](#) or [Ed Trust](#) Web sites.
- A new report from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), **One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities**, reinforces the urgent need for high school reform. The report shows that dropout rates are rising, earnings for dropouts in the job market are declining and public investments in effective second-chance efforts are falling. Download the report from the [ETS](#) Web site.

## Did You Know?

### Graduates Who Faced High Expectations in High School Were Twice as Likely To Feel Prepared for College/Future Job

Percentage saying they were extremely/very well prepared



Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies, *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work? A Study of Recent High School Graduates, College Instructors, and Employers*, prepared for Achieve, Inc., 2005.

According to a recent Achieve poll, high school graduates who believed their high school expected more of them were more likely to feel extremely well prepared for their futures.

This is true of both those who went on to college and those who did not. Eighty percent of college students who experienced high expectations in high school said they felt well prepared for the next step -- as did 72 percent of high school graduates who were not in college. Those who reported being held to low expectations in high school were less likely to feel prepared for college or the workplace. For more results from Achieve's poll of recent high school graduates, college instructors and employers, download a PDF of the [summary](#).

*Perspective* is sent to you monthly 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 this e-newsletter to your colleagues.

If you received this e-mail from a friend and would like to subscribe, [click here](#).

If you would like to unsubscribe, [click here](#).

If you would like to comment, [click here](#).

Copyright © 2005 Achieve, Inc.

Achieve, Inc. \* 1775 Eye Street, NW \* Suite 410 \* Washington, DC 20006 \* [www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)