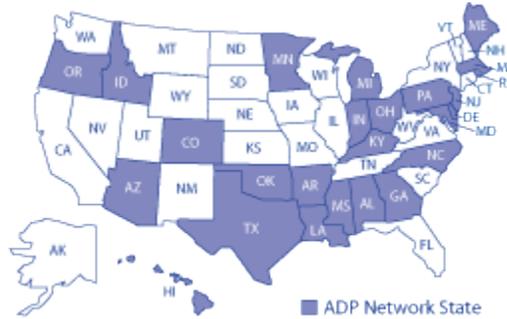


September 2006

New from Achieve

ADP Network expands to 25 states. Since it was launched following the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network has nearly doubled in size, growing from 13 to 25 states, which together educate more than 23 million K-12 students. **Arizona, Hawaii** and **Maine** are the latest to join the Network and commit to bringing together K-12, business and postsecondary education leaders to align expectations and better prepare students for college and work.



Commentary: Using NAEP to Assess College and Work Readiness

When the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) releases results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, people sit up and take notice. It is far rarer for the proceedings of their quarterly meetings to make news. Last month, a special NAGB committee proposed a new direction for 12th grade NAEP that is worth paying attention to because it could have a significant impact on high school testing in this country in the years ahead.

The new direction would change the 12th grade assessment from a test that samples everything students might learn in high school to one that measures the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for college and careers.

This is more than a subtle difference. It

News Clips

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1. **More states raise the bar.** This summer, [Minnesota](#) and [Delaware](#) joined the growing ranks of states that have raised graduation requirements to the college- and work-ready level. In addition, two other states are reviewing similar measures. The [Idaho](#) State Board of Education plans to submit a proposal for more rigorous graduation expectations to the Legislature in January, after a similar proposal stalled last year. In [New Jersey](#), the governor and business leaders have developed a proposal that would require students to complete a more rigorous set of courses to earn a high school diploma.
2. **Efforts pay off in California.** Despite ongoing legal battles centered on whether it is fair to require all [California](#) high school students pass the state exit exam to graduate, almost 90 percent of students in the classes of 2007 and 2008 already have passed the

will involve changing the NAEP frameworks in math and reading and then the questions on the 12th grade test to better measure college- and work-ready skills. NAGB contracted with Achieve last year to review the frameworks in those subjects and advise the board on how NAEP would have to change to become a strong measure of college and workforce preparedness. Achieve recommended revisions to both the reading and math frameworks to better align with the American Diploma Project benchmarks. According to NAGB officials, they have decided to follow Achieve's advice.

The move puts NAEP and a growing number of states on a similar path -- anchoring end-of-high-school standards and tests in the skills young people need to be successful in credit-bearing courses in college and in good jobs that pay enough to support a family. We think this is the right path for NAEP, and we applaud NAGB for moving in this direction.

Having a national assessment that measures college and work readiness will be a huge benefit to our nation. Currently, the only college-ready tests taken nationwide on a large scale are the SAT and ACT, but they are taken by only a self-selected group of students. NAEP provides a representative national sample and thus would be a better measure of how well our schools are preparing students for their next steps. And it would be given in 12th grade, at the end of high school, whereas most other tests come one or two years earlier and measure only what students have learned through two or three years of high school.

Currently, the 12th grade NAEP is given only at the national level; state-by-state results are not available. If Congress gives

math and English portions of the test. And even though an achievement gap continues to separate the performance of African American and Latino students from their white and Asian American peers, the vast majority of [minority parents](#) in the state support the exit exam.

3. **Mixed results on national tests.**

More students than ever are meeting the ACT college readiness benchmarks, but the majority of test takers still lack essential skills they need to succeed in college-level math and science, according to 2006 test results released by [ACT](#). Overall, average ACT scores registered their biggest jump in 20 years, rising from 20.9 in 2005 to 21.1 in 2006. On the [SAT](#), however, the College Board reports that students' results declined slightly, due in part to the fact that fewer students took the test multiple times, which tends to raise scores. See the [ACT](#) and [College Board](#) Web sites for detailed results.

NAGB the ability to build a 12th grade state NAEP, states will have access to comparable data on the college and work readiness of their students as well.

NAGB will face its share of challenges in making this work. Chief among them is student motivation. Unlike state tests, students and schools do not get individual scores back from NAEP, so there is less incentive to take it seriously. This is particularly a problem with 12th graders, who may not be motivated to try hard on a test that has no visible payoff for them. NAGB will need to find a solution to this if a new and improved 12th grade NAEP is to live up to its full potential.

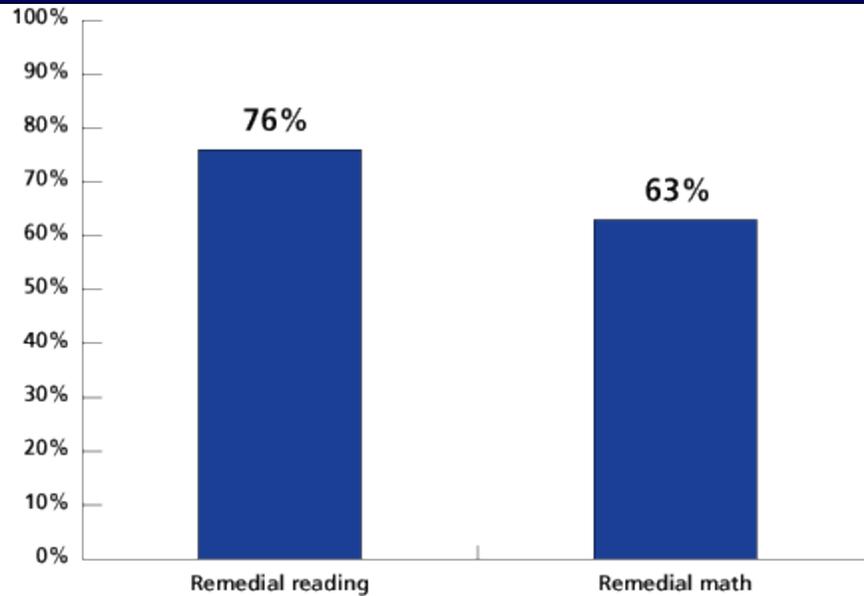
Find Out More

- Download PDF files of Achieve's recommendations to NAGB for [reading](#) and [math](#).
- Download a PDF file of NAGB's committee report, [*The Future of 12th Grade NAEP: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Planning for NAEP 12th Grade Assessments in 2009.*](#)
- Read an article from [*Education Week.*](#)

Did You Know?

Most U.S. College Students Who Take Remedial Courses Fail To Earn Degrees

Percentage of college students not earning degree by type of remedial coursework



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education*, 2004.

Many college students who were not adequately prepared in high school and need remediation, especially in reading and math, fail to earn an associate or a bachelor's degree. For more on the costs of poor high school preparation, see the Alliance for Excellent Education brief in "New Resources," below.

New Resources

- Even as more jobs require at least some form of postsecondary education, more students than ever are failing to complete college, according to a new report by the **National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education**. [Measuring Up 2006](#), the center's biennial report card on postsecondary education, provides data on the nation as a whole and on each state in a variety of performance categories, including international comparisons and the extent to which colleges and universities prepare students to contribute to the workforce. In addition, users can compare any state with the best-performing states in each category.
- As states focus on creating longitudinal data systems that follow individual students' progress from K-12 into postsecondary education and the workforce, many are wrestling with how to protect student privacy. In a new brief, the [Data Quality Campaign](#) provides a guide for how states can pursue a P-16 longitudinal data system while adhering to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which imposes limits on the disclosure of student records by educational agencies and institutions that receive funds from the U.S. Department of Education.
- In 2005, governors from all 50 states signed a compact to make graduation rates more valid, reliable and consistent. Just one year later, 13 states will report their graduation rate data according to the formula outlined in the compact, and by 2010, 39 states will do so, according to a progress report by the [National Governors Association](#).

- Two new briefs by the **Alliance for Excellent Education** look at the cost of inadequate education for high school students. In [Paying Double](#), the Alliance calculates that the poor preparation students receive in high school is costing the nation more than \$3.7 billion a year. This figure includes the \$1.4 billion needed to provide remedial education to recent high school graduates and the almost \$2.3 billion that the economy loses when remedial reading students reduce their earning potential by dropping out of college without a degree. In [Saving Futures, Saving Dollars](#), the Alliance projects that increasing the high school graduation and college enrollment rates of male students by only 5 percent could lead to reduced crime rates and combined savings and revenue of almost \$8 billion each year.
- Concerned about weak and inconsistent standards in many states, the **Thomas B. Fordham Foundation** is leading a renewed call for national standards and tests. In [To Dream the Impossible Dream](#), the foundation proposes four approaches to this issue, ranging from a system in which the federal government takes the lead in establishing and enforcing national standards and tests to one in which states voluntarily join together to develop common standards and tests or test items. The report also looks at how likely it is that each approach will result in rigorous standards and be politically feasible.
- Early college high school programs, which enable students to attain their high school diploma and associate degree by the time they graduate high school, provide benefits for students, families and states, according to a new [study](#) by **Jobs for the Future (JFF)**. The study looks at the return on investment for early college high schools nationally and in two states. In addition, JFF has launched a new newsletter, [BreakThroughs](#), which examines ways to create more effective pathways for low-skilled adults to earn degrees from community colleges.

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.

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Achieve, Inc. * 1775 Eye Street, NW * Suite 410 * Washington, DC 20006 *

www.achieve.org