



September 2011

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### **Next Generation Science Standards for Today's Students and Tomorrow's Workforce**

Earlier this month, 20 states were selected to lead the effort to improve science education for all students by developing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These states are Arizona, California, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia. Read the full news statement [here](#).



The new K–12 science standards will be rich in both content and practice to provide all students a challenging science education. The new standards will be arranged in a coherent manner across grades so students and educators can see the clear progression of the content, practices, and concepts that cut across the K-12 spectrum.

The NGSS are being developed in a two-step process in partnership with the National Research Council (NRC), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Achieve. The first step was the development of the [Framework for K-12 Science Education](#), led by the NRC, which identified the broad ideas and practices in natural sciences and engineering that all students should be familiar with by the time they graduate from high school.

The second step is drafting standards true to the *Framework*. Working with the lead states, a writing team comprised of science educators and experts from around the country have begun the process of drafting the Next Generation Science Standards. The final standards will be released by the end of 2012, with two public review and feedback periods scheduled for the winter and spring of 2012.

The need for next generation science standards is both real and urgent: Over the past 15 years, students' achievement in science has remained stagnant with no more than 30% of students meeting the proficiency mark on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and about the same percentage of students meeting the "below basic" level. Internationally, between 2000 and 2006, the number of countries scoring higher than the U.S. on the PISA science

assessment rose from 6 to 12. Economically, over the past 10 years, growth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) jobs was [three times greater](#) than that of non-STEM jobs, and STEM jobs are expected to continue to grow at a faster rate than other jobs in the coming decade.

For more information, see [www.nextgenscience.org](http://www.nextgenscience.org).

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## **New from Achieve**

### **American Diploma Project Network Leadership Team Meeting**

Achieve convened state education leaders earlier this month at the 7th annual American Diploma Project (ADP) Network Leadership Team Meeting which took place September 7-8, 2011 in Alexandria, Virginia. The meeting gave states a significant opportunity to address key challenges and opportunities associated with advancing and sustaining the college- and career-ready policy agenda. Approximately 300 leaders from the ADP Network states, including K-12 chief state school officers, governors' senior policy advisors, higher education system and institutional leaders, business leaders, state board of education members, state legislators, and other stakeholders attended. Participants engaged with national experts, learned from colleagues in other states, and met in state teams to plan next steps in ongoing efforts to advance the ADP policy goals. Topics discussed included CCSS implementation, strategies for aligning the college readiness and college completion agendas, STEM education, and ESEA reauthorization. Materials from the meeting are available [here](#).

### **NBC's Education Nation**

Education reform is in the spotlight this week. NBC (and all of its platforms and affiliates) has been broadcasting "Education Nation," a week-long event focusing on the state of U.S. education and ways in which to encourage policy changes and community involvement. The Education Nation website—[www.educationnation.com](http://www.educationnation.com)—includes a scorecard that Achieve worked with GreatSchools and other partners to create. The [Education Nation Scorecard](#) provides families with easily understandable and accessible information about how well their local schools are performing, as well as their districts, states, and the nation as a whole.

### **PARCC Governing Board Meets, Welcomes Two New States**

The Governing Board of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) met on September 22, 2011 to continue the development of the next generation of K-12 assessments. Since its last meeting in June, two additional states have become members of the Governing Board—Mississippi and New Mexico. PARCC now includes 24 states and the District of Columbia, with 17 states serving on the Governing Board. "We are pleased to welcome New Mexico and Mississippi to the PARCC governing board," said Governing Board Chair Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in

Massachusetts. "As members of the Governing Board, they will play a vital role in the development of high-quality assessments that provide meaningful data to teachers and parents about student achievement and readiness for college and careers." Read the full news statement [here](#).

### **Postsecondary Engagement**

Achieve's Postsecondary Engagement team has been on the road, making visits to many states in the PARCC consortium, for the purposes of ensuring that higher education leaders at the state level are prepared for the implementation of the CCSS and are aligning their policy agendas with their counterparts in the K-12 community. Achieve will visit more states to host meetings with members of the Higher Education Leadership Team and engage faculty, senior level administrators, two- and four-year college and university presidents, state executive officers of higher education, chief state school officers and other stakeholders in discussions of the impact of the CCSS on first-year courses, the importance of involvement of higher education content experts in the assessment design and development process, proposed interventions to ensure students that are not college-ready are provided supports to reach their goals by graduation, and other matters to be addressed to continue the successful forward movement of the PARCC initiative.

On September 26, PARCC held its Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR) launch meeting in Washington, DC, bringing together more than 25 state and national higher education leaders. The ACCR, a high-level committee that will ensure that higher education has a voice in issues that affect the postsecondary education community during the assessment design, development, and implementation, is co-chaired by Dr. Richard M. Freeland, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, and Dr. Joseph Savoie, President, University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Read more about the co-chairs [here](#).

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### **Unbridled Learning: College/Career Readiness for All**

Across the country, the college- and career-ready agenda is taking hold and improving education for all students. Kentucky continues to show a way forward on this ambitious agenda through its "[Unbridled Learning: College/Career Readiness for All](#)" initiative, a comprehensive school reform effort that includes higher standards, new assessments and an improved accountability model. Kentucky was an early adopter of the Common Core State Standards and the

#### **News Clips**

- 1. Brought To You by the Letters S, T, E & M**

*USA TODAY* reports that the producers of Sesame Street want to help the very young think like scientists. It's a response to international rankings that show U.S. students slipping when it comes to basic math and science

new standards are now a central element of the state's college- and career-ready reforms.

Terry Holiday, Commissioner of Education for Kentucky, was quoted in the *Herald-Dispatch* as saying: "This is the next generation of teaching, learning and leading for Kentucky schools. Our focus has moved from a focus on minimum proficiency to a focus on ensuring all Kentucky graduates are prepared for college and career."

Equally important to the commitment of Kentucky's leaders to the agenda is the commitment of a broad set of stakeholders who are embracing and helping to advance college and career readiness as the statewide goal. The *Herald-Dispatch* reported that Mindy Thompson, a PTA vice president in Jefferson County, Kentucky's largest district, and a coalition of like-minded parents, are committed to an ambitious plan aimed at educating communities about these changes. Read [more](#).

knowledge. [More...](#)

## 2. **A College Degree Is Crucial**

Oklahoma Secretary of Education Phyllis Hudecki and Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce Dave Lopez write in an op-ed that having more college graduates attracts and retains businesses that offer high-paying jobs and encourage other investments to improve quality of life. [More...](#)

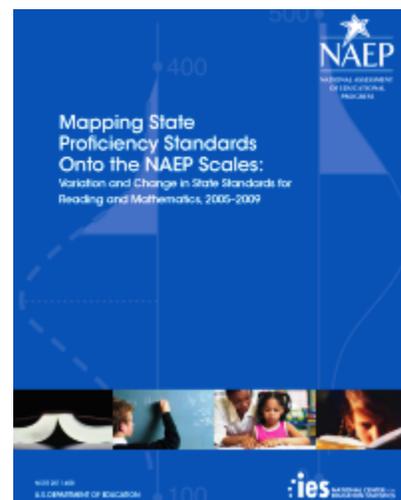
## 3. **Stay in School**

Anthony P. Carnevale writes in an op-ed that skipping college and settling for a lower-paying career simply is not a smart trade-off. [More...](#)

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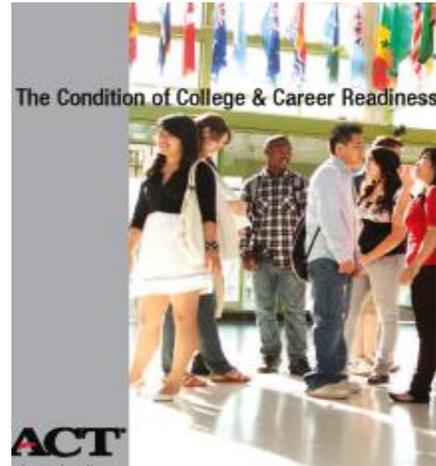
## New Resources

- A [report](#) released by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) authored by experts with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) finds that there is a wide variation among the proficiency standards that states use on their assessments. AIR researchers used a methodology that makes it possible for each state to compare the rigor of its proficiency standards with other states. By mapping states' standards onto the NAEP scale, they compared the various proficiency standards used by states with the common metric of NAEP, using 2005, 2007 and

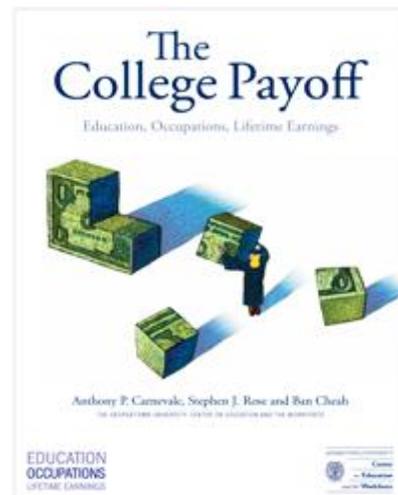


2009 math and reading assessments for grades 4 and 8. The authors noted that "the range of state standards continues to be wide: 60 to 71 NAEP points, depending on grade and subject. With such a wide range, a student considered proficient in one state may not be considered proficient in another."

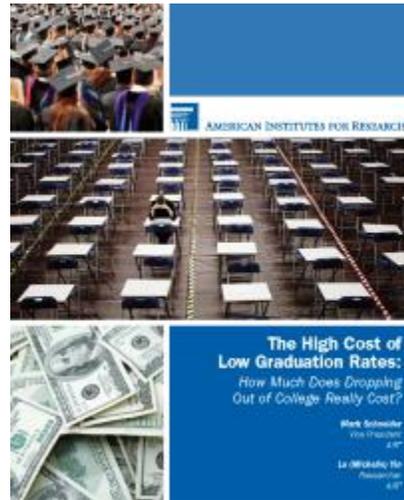
- ACT's [\*The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2011\*](#) provides a college and career readiness snapshot of the ACT-tested high school class of 2011. Early data suggests that while about 89% of all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates aspired to attain at least a 2-year postsecondary degree, regardless of race/ethnicity, only 25% of graduates who took the exam are prepared for success in the first year of college. Overall, the national average composite score across content areas for 2011 was 21.1 out of a possible 36. The score reflects a marginal increase in the achievement gap between top-scoring and the lowest scoring students between 2007 and 2011. Readiness benchmarks by state are available in the report.



- As millions of students return to college this fall, a [\*study\*](#) by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce confirms that the value of college degrees is increasing. According to the study, individuals with a bachelor's degree now make 84% more over a lifetime than those with only a high school diploma, up from 75% in 1999. Today, bachelor's degree-holders can expect median lifetime earnings approaching \$2.3 million. Workers with just a high school diploma average roughly \$1.3 million, which translates into a little more than \$15 per hour.



- Looking at this economic impact of higher education another way, AIR published [\*The High Cost of Low Graduation Rates: How Much Does Dropping Out of College Really Cost?\*](#) It found that as students across the country prepare to start their freshman year of college, more than 40 percent of them will not graduate within six years. Of the more than 1.1 million full-time students who entered college in 2002 seeking bachelor degrees, almost 500,000 did not graduate within six years—costing a combined \$4.5 billion in lost income and lost federal and state income taxes.



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### **Achieve Job Opportunity**

Achieve has several career opportunities available. Go to [www.achieve.org/careers](http://www.achieve.org/careers).

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