



Achieve

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

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News Clips

Common Core in Delaware

Delaware schools are implementing the CCSS. Most state education leaders are supporters of the standards, arguing they'll set higher expectations for students and bridge gaps between schools. [More...](#)

Poll: Majority of Teachers Support Common Core

Although more than three-quarters of teachers support adopting the CCSS for English and math, many in high-poverty schools doubt that their districts are prepared to implement the standards, according to a new poll from the National Education Association. [More...](#)

Perspective Newsletter Sept. 2013

Commentary

NGSS Lead States Move Forward with Adoption

After months of public outreach, on Sept. 19 Delaware became the seventh state to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with a unanimous vote from the State Board of Education. The NGSS were developed by Delaware working side-by-side with 25 other lead state partners in a process managed by Achieve.

A [press release](#) quoted State Board of Education President Teri Quinn Grey: "The Next Generation Science Standards provide clear and consistent, researched-based standards that engage students in science instruction that will prepare them to utilize critical thinking and creative problem-solving necessary to excel in the global society."



Secretary of Education Mark Murphy highlighted the need for the NGSS based on a new understanding of how students learn.

"Our current standards do not emphasize science and engineering practices and don't promote the type of deeper critical thinking skills students need to be successful after graduation," said Murphy. "These new performance expectations will increase opportunities for all students."

Throughout August, the Delaware Department of Education hosted a series of community events across the state to introduce the NGSS to parents, students and other community members. The Department of Education also collected public commentary

Common Core Goals Focus on Skills

Amy Utter Spies, a fourth grade teacher at Cypress Creek Elementary in Port Orange, Florida, writes about the CCSS in an op-ed in *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*. She notes, "While the transition will be challenging, never before have Florida standards attempted such rigor and depth of understanding. Our students and future work force will be much stronger." [More...](#)

through September 5.

Recently state leadership has expressed the need to improve STEM education. In July, Governor Markell tasked the DE STEM Council, a group of education and business leaders, with boosting the number of students getting training for technical jobs in STEM fields.

As a lead state partner, Delaware committed to giving serious consideration to adopting the standards, provided direction to the NGSS writing team, participated in reviews of the standards and formed a broad-based committee to consider issues regarding adoption and implementation.

Delaware joins six other lead states, California, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Rhode Island and Vermont, in formally approving the NGSS. Each is working with educators to develop a multi-year implementation strategy to provide teachers with the training and resources needed to successfully introduce the standards in classrooms.

Slow and Steady Implementation

Education officials in the adopting states are advocating moving slowly to implement the NGSS. A number of state officials were interviewed by [Education Week](#) earlier this year.

"I don't think of a light switch," said Peter McLaren, a science and technology specialist at the Rhode Island education department. "I think of a dimmer. The lights will come up slowly, become brighter and brighter."

"I've cautioned, this is an opportunity to think carefully about your system of science education in your district and what needs to be revised, a three- to four-year implementation plan to do this slowly and carefully." said Matt Krehbiel, a science education consultant for Kansas.

- **California** [initially plans](#) to implement during the 2014-2015 school year at the earliest.
- **Kansas** is also on a gradual [four-year path](#) toward implementation.
- **Kentucky** intends to begin K-12 implementation in 2014-2015.

- **Maryland's** [preliminary plans](#) for implementation do not fully introduce the standards until 2017-2018.
- **Rhode Island's** initial four-year implementation plans move from awareness and understanding, to curriculum shifts, to instructional shifts, to assessment systems.
- **Vermont** is in the process of establishing an advisory team to liaise with the state's implementation team and communicate about the NGSS to stakeholders. Regional training meetings will continue through 2014.

States should "have the courage to be patient," Achieve senior vice president Stephen Pruitt told *Education Week*. "They shouldn't be rushing to implement the standards. They should do it in their time, and when they're ready."

What is crucial, said Pruitt, is for states and districts to "have this opportunity to build some capacity and build the right infrastructure for success."

Visit the Next Generation Science Standards [website](#).

News

PARCC Governing Board Meets, Appoints PARCC Chief Executive Officer

During its quarterly meeting yesterday, the Governing Board of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) made several key decisions to support the long-term sustainability and success of the consortium.

In a unanimous vote, the Governing Board appointed Laura McGiffert Slover as the Chief Executive Officer of the PARCC nonprofit, which the member states of PARCC formed to carry on the work of the consortium in developing next-generation Math and English Language Arts/Literacy tests.

As CEO of the PARCC nonprofit, Slover will work with educators and policymakers from each of PARCC's states to continue the work that is already well under way toward bringing the new computer-based tests, which will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), to schools for field testing this spring and operational use in the next school year.

Slover previously served as senior vice president at Achieve, which is serving as the project manager for PARCC. Setting up the new PARCC nonprofit - led by a CEO and staff, and with strong engagement of PARCC states - is an important step in creating long-term sustainability for PARCC and its effort to deliver the kind of tests students need to be successful in the 21st century.

"I am pleased to continue working with states in our combined effort to help ensure that all students graduate high school prepared for college, careers and citizenship," Slover said. "As a former teacher, I know educators want an assessment system that provides the kind of meaningful and timely information they can use to support their students in reaching a higher bar. As a parent, these are the kinds of engaging and meaningful assessments I want for my child."

"PARCC's gain is Achieve's loss," said Mike Cohen, President of Achieve. "Laura has been a key member of the Achieve team for the last 15 years, leading Achieve's participation in the development of the Common Core State Standards. She also led the development of the American Diploma Project's Algebra I and II exams, the first multi-state initiative to develop a standards-based exam that can serve as an indicator of college readiness."

Cohen said, "Achieve is committed to PARCC's success, and I look forward to working closely with Laura as she takes on this exciting new role." [Read the news statement.](#)

PARCC Technology Bundle RFP

On September 10, PARCC released a request for proposal (RFP) for assessment technology components including a computer-based test delivery platform, an assessment item repository, a data warehouse, score reporting tools and a score reports design study. The RFP can be found [here](#).

Achieve Congratulates Education Pioneers for Ten Years of Education Leadership

Achieve congratulates Education Pioneers (EP), an organization working to infuse new talent and leadership into the education sector, on its tenth anniversary. Achieve recently began a partnership with EP, and two EP Fellows spent tens weeks with Achieve over the summer. An EP Yearlong Fellow continues to assist our Strategic Initiatives team in driving support for the College and Career Ready agenda. [More...](#)

Back-to-School Search Begins for America's Top Youth Volunteers

Achieve is helping to spread the word that the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, the nation's largest youth volunteer awards program, has kicked off its 2013-14 program. These awards, sponsored by Prudential Financial, Inc. in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), honor outstanding community service by young people in grades 5 through 12 at the local, state and national level. The deadline to submit entries for the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is **November 5th**.

Young volunteers can apply online at <http://spirit.prudential.com> or at www.nassp.org/spirit. Applications must be completed by November 5, 2013, and then submitted to a middle or high school principal, Girl Scout council, county 4-H agent, American Red Cross chapter, YMCA or affiliate of the HandsOn Network. Those without Internet access can get a paper version of the application form by calling 877-525-8491 toll-free.

State Honorees will receive \$1,000 awards, engraved silver medallions, and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with a parent for four days of recognition events in early May, 2014. Ten National Honorees will be named America's Top Youth Volunteers of the year and will receive additional awards of \$5,000, gold medallions, crystal trophies for their nominating schools or organizations, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit, charitable organizations of their choice. For more information about the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, visit www.spirit.prudential.com.

New Resources

How Student-Performance Assessments Can Support Teacher Learning

A Center for American Progress [report](#) describes how teacher learning through involvement with student-performance assessments has been accomplished in the U.S. and around the world, particularly in countries that have been recognized for their high-performing educational systems. It discusses how teachers' engagement with performance assessments influences their understanding of the standards and their students' abilities. This discussion includes comments from teachers about their experiences with performance assessments as provided through interviews conducted for this report as well as in previously published research. Teacher involvement in the design, use and scoring of performance assessments has the potential to powerfully link instruction, assessment, student learning and teacher professional development.



Michigan Statewide Survey Shows Strong, Bipartisan Support for Higher Academic Standards

In September, Education Trust-Midwest and the Michigan Coalition for High Student Standards released results of a [public opinion poll](#) that showed broad, bipartisan support in Michigan for the CCSS. Education Trust-Midwest and the Michigan Coalition for High Student Standards noted: "While most Michigan voters know little about the CCSS being debated in

Lansing, once they are given a basic description of the standards 71 percent say they support Common Core, with only 18 percent opposing the standards. By more than a 2-to-1 margin, voters across Michigan say state funding for Common Core should be restored. Majority support for Common Core cuts across

political parties, geographic region, parental status, gender, age, race, union status and education level." [Michigan adopted the Common Core in 2010.]

What It Takes to Complete High School: The Shifting Terrain of Course and Diploma Requirements

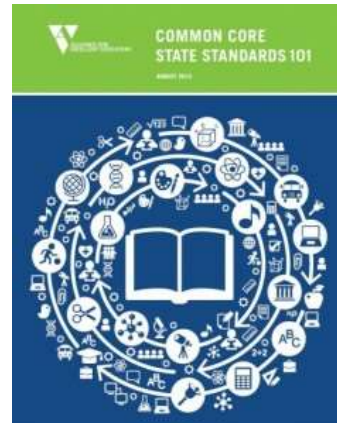
Jobs for the Future published [*What It Takes to Complete High School*](#), which focuses on one category of graduation requirement: courses required by states for students to attain a high school diploma. In recent months, several states have altered their high school course requirements in various ways, from creating endorsements within a single diploma to creating new diplomas. These states appear to be making changes for a variety of reasons: to elevate career and technical education; to emphasize STEM fields; to improve the alignment with non-remedial college entrance requirements; to provide options for students who are not heading to college right after high school.



Whatever the reasons, the new legislation and accompanying rules and regulations require scrutiny and a careful consideration of implications, both for themselves and for their relation to other categories of graduation requirements such as test scores, Carnegie Units and new interest in competency- or proficiency-based assessments. Of particular interest is whether changes augment or undercut the ongoing effort to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready to succeed in postsecondary education- whether headed toward a certificate, an Associate's degree, or a four-year degree. Right now, with systems in flux across the nation, it is critical to track and pay attention to the trends.

Common Core State Standards 101

The CCSS represent the first time that nearly every state has set common expectations for what students should know and be able to do. In the past, each state set its own standards, and the results varied widely. While states collectively developed these common standards, decisions about the curriculum and teaching practices for reaching them are made locally. An unprecedented level of activity is now under way to implement the standards. This activity is uneven, and some states are far ahead of others in their efforts. This Alliance for Excellent Education [fact sheet](#) describes the CCSS initiative came about, briefly describes the changes in instruction, and discusses the keys to ensuring that the standards deliver on their promise.



Career Opportunities

Achieve has career opportunities available including Director, State Policy and Implementation Support, Program Associate, PARCC Item Development, Program Associate, PARCC, Senior Advisor, Mathematics (PARCC), and Senior Associate for Communications. Go to www.achieve.org/careers.

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Perspective is sent to you by Achieve, an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments and strengthen accountability. Please feel free to circulate this e-newsletter to your colleagues.

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