

Statement from Michael Cohen, President of Achieve

Over the last few months, the Achieve Board of Directors and I have conducted an extensive review of Achieve's impact and accomplishments, our ongoing work, the needs and capacity of the broader college- and career-readiness community, and the political and financial environment.

At the end of that process, we concluded that this is the right time to pass the torch to the next generation of organizations that can help states and other stakeholders ensure that standards-based education reform and college- and career-readiness remain central features of the nation's education improvement strategies, especially in support of efforts to boost equity.

While we have not set a hard date, we anticipate completing this hand-off early this summer. We have already taken a number of steps to begin passing the torch.

- We found a new home for Achieve's work to support the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) at WestEd. We are excited to report that the Achieve staff members who lead this work will found the NextGenScience project at WestEd where they will continue working with educators and partners across the nation to improve the quality of science education. The team will continue to serve as stewards of the NGSS, sharing resources with the field through the nextgenscience.org website, NGSSNow newsletter, and @OfficialNGSS Twitter feed.
- NextGenScience will continue to work alongside state, district, and curriculum leaders to design, implement, and evaluate K-12 science curriculum. Since 2017, Achieve's team has worked with over 140 science curriculum developers to improve the quality of their instructional materials and we look forward to continuing this work at WestEd.
- With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the NextGenScience team will continue to play an essential role in reviewing free and publicly available science instructional materials, including from OpenSciEd, using Achieve's EQuIP Rubric for Science and awarding the NGSS Design Badge to top-quality units.
- We have also helped nearly all of our other talented staff members find positions in other organizations, allowing them to continue to work to improve the readiness of all students. We continue to support others as they explore career opportunities.
- We are finalizing a plan to ensure that all of Achieve's intellectual property, including our free and publicly available our free and publicly available tools for evaluating quality and alignment of instructional materials in math, ELA and science (EQuIP), and for auditing local assessments, as well as our websites (e.g. achieve.org, nextgenscience.org) will remain fully accessible to the field.

The Board and I are extremely proud of all that Achieve has accomplished in its more than 20-year history, especially our pivotal role in making college- and career-readiness a national priority. We have supported states in raising expectations for all students, built cross-sector reform leadership capacity within states, and helped spark the development of an ecosystem of organizations capable of deepening support for states and local districts committed to educating all students to be college- and career-ready.

We are deeply indebted to our partners, colleagues, and funders for their invaluable support and collaboration. And we have been honored and humbled to work with hundreds of state and local education and business leaders, and thousands of educators, whose dedication to preparing all young people to pursue their dreams has been inspiring.

While Achieve will soon close its doors, we know that the greater mission has not yet been accomplished. Fortunately, the field has rapidly grown capacity to address these issues. Organizations such as CenterPoint Education Solutions, the Education Strategy Group and Seek Common Ground—each founded and staffed by Achieve alumni—now play leading roles in advancing core aspects of the agenda they helped create and sustain. Long-standing partners such as the Education Trust, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and Student Achievement Partners, among many others, continue and deepen their outstanding work. Achieve also helped spark the formation of new organizations, such as EdReports and OpenSciEd, devoted to increasing the supply and demand of standards-aligned curriculum in math, science and English Language Arts. As I look to our colleagues, I'm confident that educators and policymakers will continue to receive essential support and leadership they need.

We learned much while doing this work. An inequitable education for some students remains a critical issue for our country. Standards, high quality assessments, curriculum, professional learning, and accountability must remain an important part of the solution for our nation's young people. Over the coming months, I plan to spend time reflecting on what we've accomplished and learned, and what this means for the field going forward. I will capture and share those key lessons with you over the coming months.