

Hiring the right employees for the increasingly sophisticated jobs that are available isn't easy. Every employer in every industry faces this skills mismatch. Companies want to grow their U.S. workforce but to do so they must have employees with the knowledge and skills today's jobs require.

Alone, your business can be a powerful advocate for college and career readiness. But there's strength in numbers. Joining forces with other companies makes your voice a more powerful call for change.



### Why Join Business Associations/Coalitions?

States that have had the most success transforming their education systems all have had something in common. Their businesses joined together — through chambers of commerce, business roundtables, industry associations, business-education coalitions — to speak out about the need to support college and career readiness.

Business groups can collectively do the heavy lifting to ensure changes are made — and implemented — in the education system. They can keep the momentum going as states face competing priorities, limited budgets, and leadership turnover.



### Key Messages

**Business has the opportunity to join and lend its voice to college- and career-ready education reforms today to ensure that America has the skilled workforce it needs tomorrow.**



The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education's (MBAE) Board and Advisory Council represents more than half of the 25 largest employers in the state, providing jobs to over 110,000 people. The three most influential statewide business organizations—Associated Industries of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, and the Massachusetts Taxpayers Association—pursue their education agenda through MBAE rather than tackle issues in isolation. In 2011, MBAE hosted three forums on the Common Core State Standards and common assessments and continues to supply a range of materials in support of college- and career-ready reforms.

## The Right Fit: Finding an Active Business Association

Working through state and local business associations can be a powerful way to promote education reform policy and harness the power of a collective business voice.

Before joining a business group or coalition, consider:

- Do they have a history of advocacy? Have they supported education or similar issues in the past?
- Will you find allies to support your education reform strategy and college- and career-ready standards specifically?
- Does your association have the reach and influence with key stakeholders — policymakers, the media, the education community — to affect change?

Once you determine which association you would like to join, attend a meeting to learn more about what they are doing to support education. Find out how you can support their efforts to be the voice of business throughout the implementation of the college- and career-ready standards and related policies.



The Austin Chamber of Commerce saw a problem in its community. Local residents without a college degree were having a hard time finding jobs. One report showed that 84% of the unemployed people in one Austin county never obtained a college degree. Austin business leaders sprung into action. They spearheaded a suite of education initiatives, from partnering with Austin Community College to advocate for financial aid, to studying why some high school graduates don't go to college. Over 50 companies, non-profits and higher-education institutions have signed on in support of the Chamber's goals.

