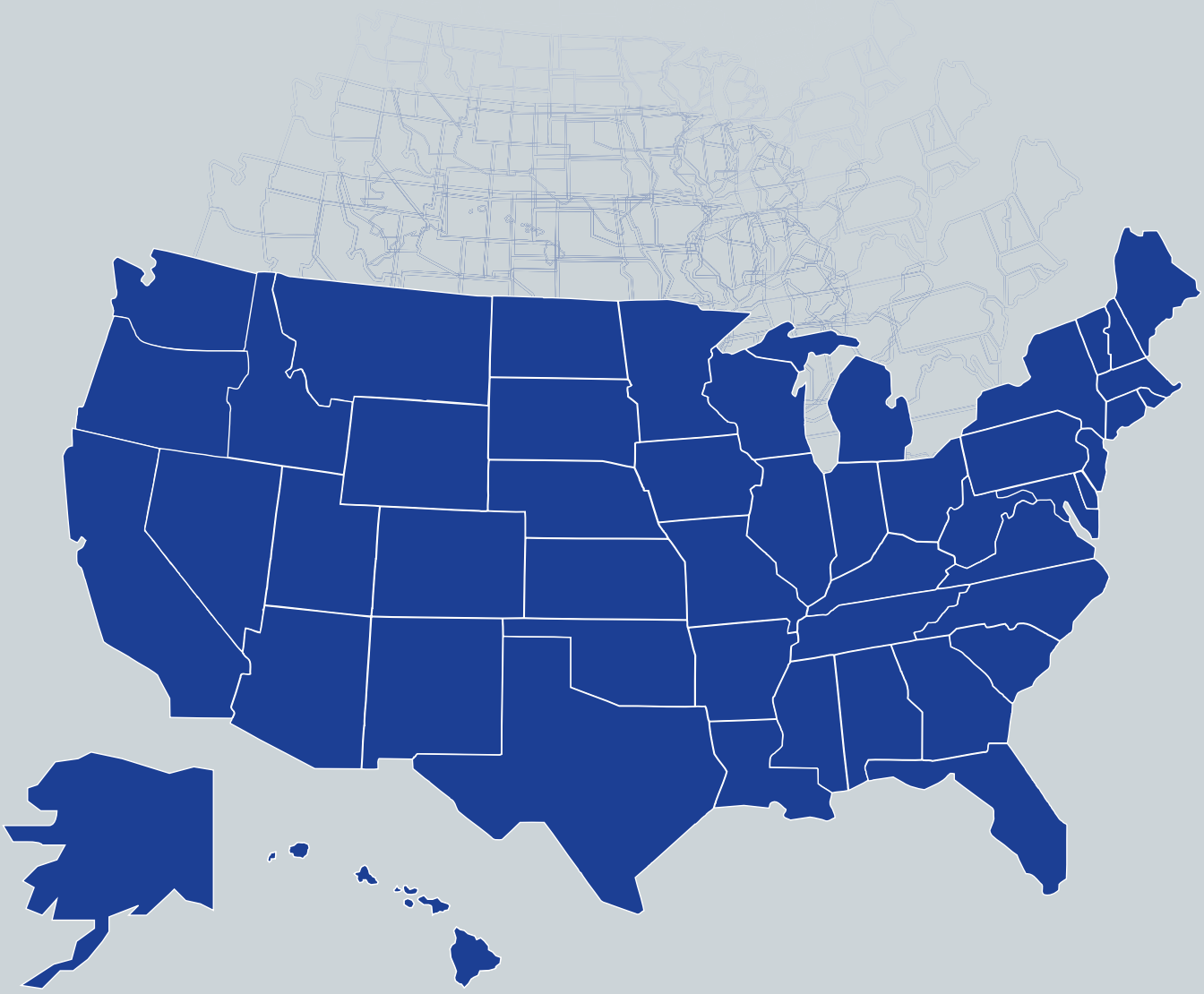
Achieve
American Diploma Project Network



# 2010 Closing the Expectations Gap

## FIFTH ANNUAL 50-STATE PROGRESS REPORT

on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers

## *Closing the Expectations Gap*

*Closing the Expectations Gap* is Achieve's annual report on the progress states are making on aligning high school policies with the demands of college and careers. To download copies of previous years' reports, visit www.achieve.org.


Achieve
American Diploma Project Network

### About Achieve

Created by the nation's governors and business leaders, Achieve is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for college, careers and citizenship. Achieve has helped more than half the states benchmark their academic standards, tests and accountability systems against the best examples in the United States and around the world. Achieve also serves as a significant national voice for quality in standards-based education reform and regularly convenes governors, CEOs and other influential leaders.

In 2005, Achieve co-sponsored the National Education Summit on High Schools. Forty-five governors attended the Summit along with corporate CEOs and K–12 and postsecondary leaders. The Summit made the case that our high schools are not adequately preparing students for college and 21st-century jobs and that aggressive state action would be needed to address the expectations gap.

As a result of the Summit, 13 states formed the American Diploma Project Network — a coalition of states committed to aligning high school standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability systems with the demands of college and the workplace. The coalition has since grown to 35 states that educate more than 85 percent of all public school children in the United States.

For more information, visit Achieve at www.achieve.org.

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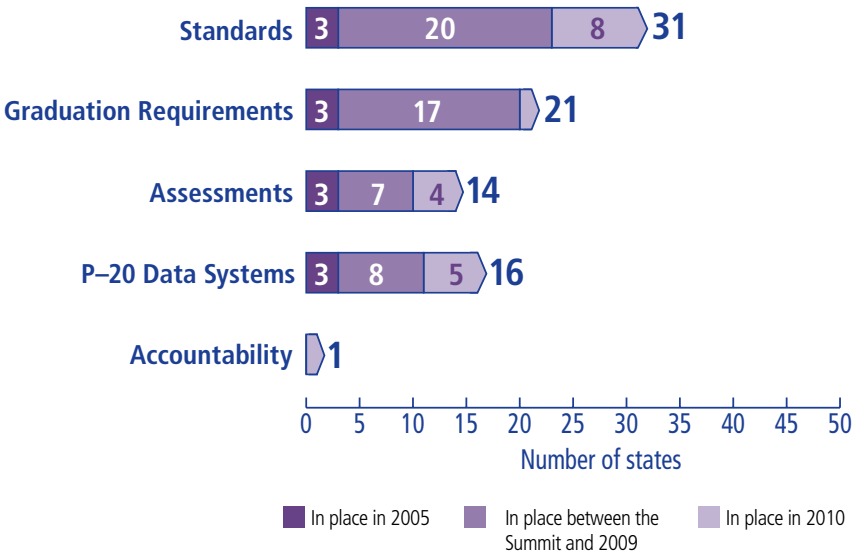
# Executive Summary

Since Achieve launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network at the National Education Summit on High Schools in February 2005, state leaders across the country have been hard at work aligning their standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems with the expectations of colleges and employers. To monitor state progress in adopting the college and career readiness agenda, Achieve conducts an annual survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia on the key college- and career-ready policies that form the basis for the ADP Network. K–12 education chiefs from all 50 states and the District of Columbia responded to this year's survey.

**State Progress on Adopting College- and Career-Ready Policies**

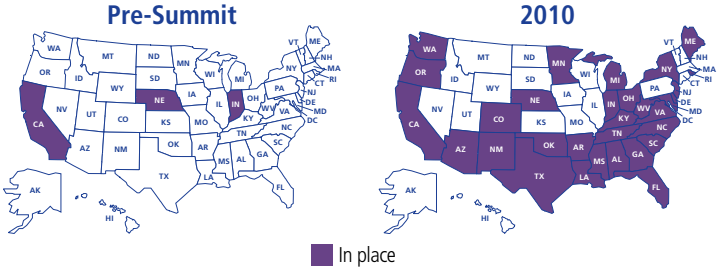



## Key Findings

### Standards

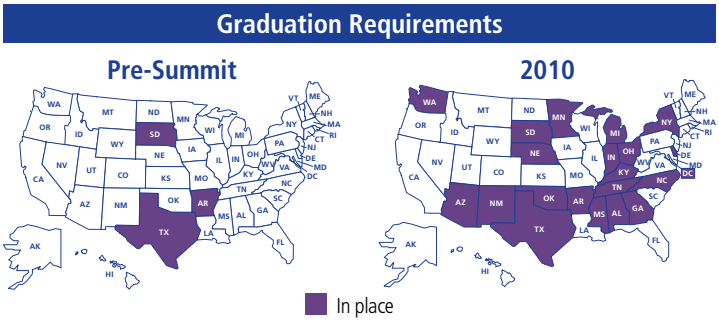
At the time of the National Education Summit on High Schools, **three states** had aligned their high school standards in English and mathematics with postsecondary and workplace expectations. Five years later, **31 states** report that they have college- and career-ready standards, including **eight** that adopted aligned high school standards in the past year. What started off as isolated efforts among individual states just five years ago has become a national movement producing a national consensus: Standards must be aligned to college- and career-ready expectations. Moreover, as states began to focus their end-of-high-school expectations on college and career readiness, those expectations became increasingly consistent across the states. This growing consensus and strong foundation has spurred the state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative through which states have committed to develop not only end-of-high-school but also K–12 content standards in English and mathematics that are rigorous, focused and internationally benchmarked (see www.corestandards.org).

**Standards**



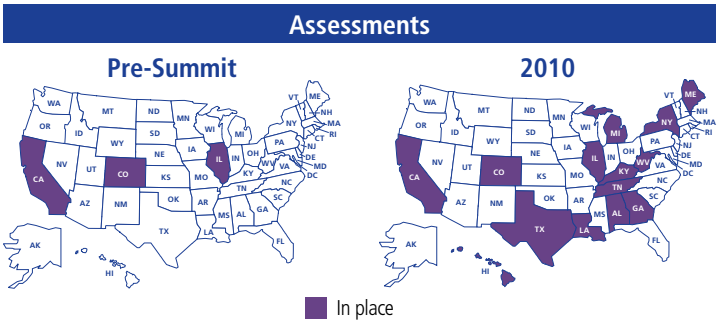
## Graduation Requirements

On the eve of the National Education Summit in 2005, only **three states** had established graduation requirements that require all students to complete a curriculum that will prepare them for college and career, including four years of challenging mathematics — the content of which is at least to the level of what is typically taught in an Algebra II course or its equivalent — and four years of grade-level English. Today, **20 states and the District of Columbia** require all students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum to earn a high school diploma. The **only new state** in 2009 to raise its graduation requirements to this level was *Nebraska*. Raising graduation requirements is an important way to ensure that college- and career-ready standards are implemented in classrooms. It also ensures that all students have access to rigorous courses that in the past have been available only to some students. In addition, raising graduation requirements requires states to have the necessary teacher and student supports in place to ensure students can meet these ambitious goals.



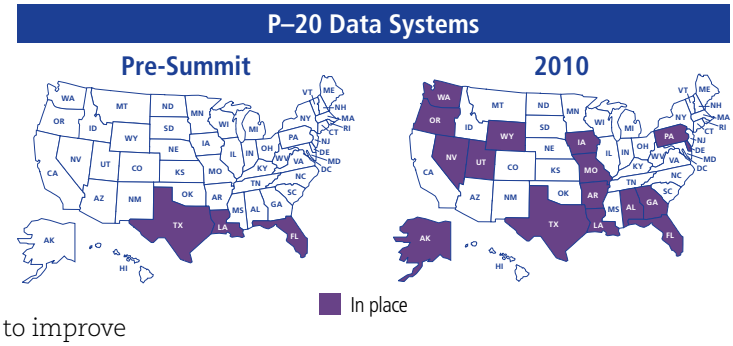

## Assessments

Five years ago, **three states** administered assessments to high school students that postsecondary institutions use to make decisions about their readiness for college. Since the Summit, additional states have begun administering assessments that reflect the expectations of colleges and employers and produce results in reading, writing and mathematics that signal whether a high school graduate is ready to succeed. On the fifth anniversary of the National Education Summit, **14 states** now administer college- and career-ready high school assessments, including **four new states** in the past year.



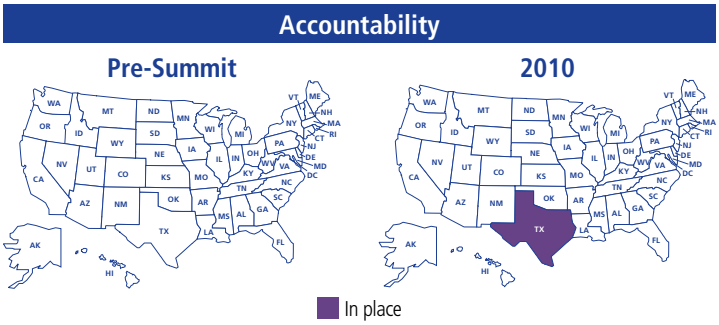

## P–20 Data Systems

Every state in the country is working to develop longitudinal data systems that link student-level data from the state's K–12 system with the data from the state's postsecondary institutions. At the time of the National Education Summit in 2005, only **three states** had operational P–20 longitudinal data systems. Today, **16 states** report that they have begun annually matching K–12 and postsecondary student-level data, including **five new states** in the past year. With all 50 states and the District of Columbia working on such systems, policymakers have begun to focus on how the data can be used to improve student learning and postsecondary success in both college and the workplace.



## Accountability

At the time of the Summit, **no state** had a comprehensive college- and career-ready accountability system, and there has been little progress in this area in the five years since the Summit. Accountability systems ought to reflect the goal of college and career readiness for all students and in doing so measure and incentivize improvement toward that goal. Designing an accountability system focused on preparing all students for success in postsecondary education and training requires comprehensively using a much richer set of indicators.




Achieve asked states about their inclusion of four critical college- and career-ready indicators in their accountability systems: the percentage of high school graduates who earn a college- and career-ready diploma, obtain a readiness score on a college- and career-ready high school assessment, earn college credit while still in high school, and require remediation upon entering college. Achieve also asked states about the ways they use each of the college- and career-ready indicators, including reporting publicly at the school level, setting statewide goals, providing incentives for improvement, and factoring college and career readiness into the state accountability formula. While **22 states** use at least one of these indicators, **only one state,** *Texas*, makes full use of all indicators in its accountability system.

# Overview of Key Survey Results for Each State

Achieve
American Diploma Project Network

| State | ADP Network member | Align high school standards with the expectations of college and careers | Align high school graduation requirements with college- and career-ready expectations | Develop college- and career-ready assessment systems | Develop P–20 longitudinal data systems | Develop accountability and reporting systems that promote college and career readiness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Alaska | | | | | ✓ | |
| Arizona | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Arkansas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| California | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Colorado | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Connecticut | ✓ | | | | | |
| Delaware | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| District of Columbia | | | ✓ | | | |
| Florida | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Georgia | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Hawaii | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Idaho | ✓ | | | | | |
| Illinois | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| Indiana | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Iowa | | | | | ✓ | |
| Kansas | | | | | | |
| Kentucky | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Louisiana | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Maine | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Maryland | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Massachusetts | ✓ | | | | | |
| Michigan | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Minnesota | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Mississippi | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Missouri | | | | | ✓ | |
| Montana | | | | | | |
| Nebraska | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Nevada | | | | | ✓ | |
| New Hampshire | | | | | | |
| New Jersey | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| New Mexico | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| New York | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| North Carolina | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| North Dakota | | | | | | |
| Ohio | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Oklahoma | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Oregon | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Pennsylvania | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| Rhode Island | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| South Carolina | | ✓ | | | | |
| South Dakota | | | ✓ | | | |
| Tennessee | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Texas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Utah | | | | | ✓ | |
| Vermont | | | | | | |
| Virginia | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Washington | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| West Virginia | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| Wisconsin | ✓ | | | | | |
| Wyoming | | | | | ✓ | |
| TOTAL | | 31 | 21 | 14 | 16 | 1 |

# Introduction

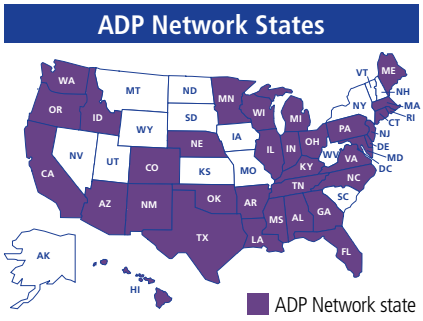
In 2004, states were becoming increasingly aware that their high schools, which had changed little since the mid-20th century, were not producing the 21st-century graduates needed to compete and succeed after high school in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Around the same time, Achieve conducted studies of employers and two- and four-year college faculty that confirmed what states suspected: There was a sizeable gap between what students knew leaving high school and the actual knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and careers. Achieve called this disconnect the "expectations gap" and issued a challenge to national and state leaders to take action to close the gap by adopting and implementing college- and career-ready policies for all high school graduates.[1]

In 2005, Achieve sponsored, in partnership with the National Governors Association, the National Education Summit on High Schools. Forty-five governors attended the Summit, as did corporate CEOs and education leaders from both K–12 and higher education. These leaders confronted alarming statistics about the preparation of high school students for post-secondary success in an increasingly competitive global economy, including low high school graduation rates, high college remediation rates, the increased education and skill requirements of new and growing occupations, and the decrease in well-paying jobs for which a high school education alone is sufficient.

The leaders widely acknowledged that if states did not dramatically raise expectations and achievement in their high schools, America's ability to compete could be at risk. At the end of the Summit, Achieve and 13 states launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network and committed to closing the expectations gap by adopting the following college- and career-ready policies:

- Aligning high school academic content standards in English and mathematics with the demands of college and careers;
- Establishing graduation requirements that require all students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum;
- Developing statewide high school assessment systems anchored to college- and career-ready expectations; and
- Creating comprehensive accountability and reporting systems that promote college and career readiness for all students.

Today, the ADP Network includes 35 states educating 85 percent of the nation's students.




## Progress since the Summit

It has been five years since the Summit, and this is the fifth year that Achieve has reported on the progress states have made on the college- and career-ready policy agenda. Without question, significant progress has been achieved. Still, the more significant change, five years later, is the environment in which states are doing that work. It is hard to conceive of now, but when the small group of state leaders who formed the ADP Network began their work in earnest, the notion that state education systems should be geared toward the end goal of *all* students graduating from high school college and career ready was a radical one. In just five years, it has become the new norm.

This paradigm shift is evident not just in the state policy advances reported here but in the national conversation as well. College and career readiness for all is embraced by the Obama administration, political leaders of all stripes, business and community leaders, and the philanthropic community. The notion that all students can and should graduate ready for college and careers is evident in key policies not just at the state level but at the federal level as well. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Race to the Top grant competition, and discussions about the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act all clearly seek to anchor state education systems in the goal of graduating students ready for college and careers by providing incentives for the right policies and programs.

Much, if not all, of this shift can be attributed to the leadership exhibited by the states. The high school reform movement — and the subsequent college- and career-ready policy agenda — was created by state leaders. The progress made by states on the individual college- and career-ready policies, as well as the shift toward common standards and multistate assessment partnerships, demonstrates that a state-led effort can and is shaping the national education agenda.

For example, as states started to align their standards to college- and career-ready expectations, often with other states and always in conjunction with their own K–12, higher education and employer communities, end-of-high-school expectations in mathematics and English became increasingly consistent across the states, as Achieve first reported in 2008.[2] This growing consensus and the foundation it created have spurred the state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative — through which 48 states and the District of Columbia have signed on to develop consistent, college- and career-ready, internationally benchmarked standards. This effort would not have been possible if not for the precedent of states working together to close the expectations gap and develop and adopt college- and career-ready standards.

Another significant trend that has emerged over the past five years is the increase in multistate collaboration, as states look for economical and practical solutions to common issues and challenges. Nowhere is this trend more evident than in the emergence of assessment coalitions in which groups of states facing significant budget, procurement, legal and policy challenges have come together to create common assessments. The New England Common Assessments Program (NECAP) and the ADP Assessment Consortium have led the way in this area and shown that multistate partnerships are not just possible but also beneficial in advancing states' shared goals. Federal incentives to support multistate consortia, particularly in assessment, are certain to further support and encourage this type of cross-state collaboration. In particular, the U.S. Department of Education has dedicated $350 million to the development of common assessments that reflect common, college- and career-ready state standards and allow for comparisons across states.

## Meeting Our Common Goal

There is still much work to be done to ensure that all students have a K–12 education that will enable them to reach their full potential and prepare them for the real world they will enter after high school graduation. Yet we seem, as a nation, to have finally set our sights on a common goal: Provide all students an education that will prepare them for college, career and life and ensure that the quality of a child's education is not determined by the state, city or ZIP code in which he or she lives.

With state and federal policy finally converging around the college- and career-ready agenda, and with growing public and political will to see the agenda through, we stand at a defining moment in education reform. We hope to report in the next five years that implementation of the shared goal of college and career readiness for all is well under way and that we are graduating more students from high school, better prepared than ever before.

# STANDARDS: Align High School Standards with the Expectations of College and Careers

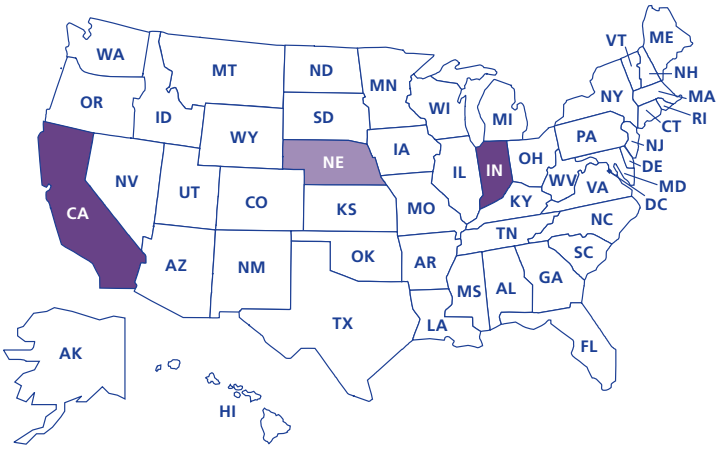
Academic content standards serve as the foundation of state education systems. Standards provide the underpinning for decisions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment, and they communicate core knowledge and skills to teachers, parents and students. For states' high school standards to reflect an understanding of the skills and knowledge students need to be successful when they leave high school, the standards must be anchored to the expectations of the real world.

In 2004, Achieve, The Education Trust, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the National Alliance of Business released the ADP benchmarks in English and mathematics. The benchmarks identify the knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics to be successful in first-year, credit-bearing college courses and/or to qualify for the postsecondary education or training needed for good entry-level jobs with a clear pathway to advancement.[3] The initiative identified a much more rigorous and focused set of expectations in English and mathematics than most states had in place at the time.

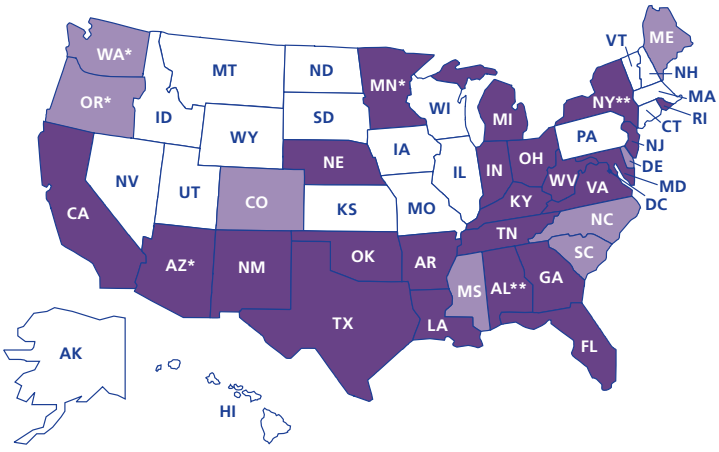
**THE QUESTION:** In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they have developed and adopted high school academic content standards in English and mathematics aligned to college- and career-ready expectations. Achieve also asked states about their process for developing such standards and the additional steps taken to ensure that the resulting standards reflect the real-world expectations that await high school graduates.

**THE CRITERIA:** Achieve considers state standards to be aligned with college- and career-ready expectations if the standards writing process is guided by the expectations of the state's postsecondary and business communities, if those communities verify that the resulting standards articulate the knowledge and skills required for success in college and the workplace, and if an external organization verifies the standards' alignment to college- and career-ready expectations.

**Standards: Pre-Summit**




**Standards: 2010**




Aligned standards formally verified by Achieve

Aligned standards not verified by Achieve

* Only mathematics standards aligned

** Only one content area verified by Achieve: NY (English), AL (Mathematics)

## Progress since the Summit

Only **three states** reported that they had adopted standards aligned to college- and career-ready expectations prior to the Summit in February 2005: *California, Indiana* and *Nebraska*. By February 2009, **23 states** had adopted aligned standards.

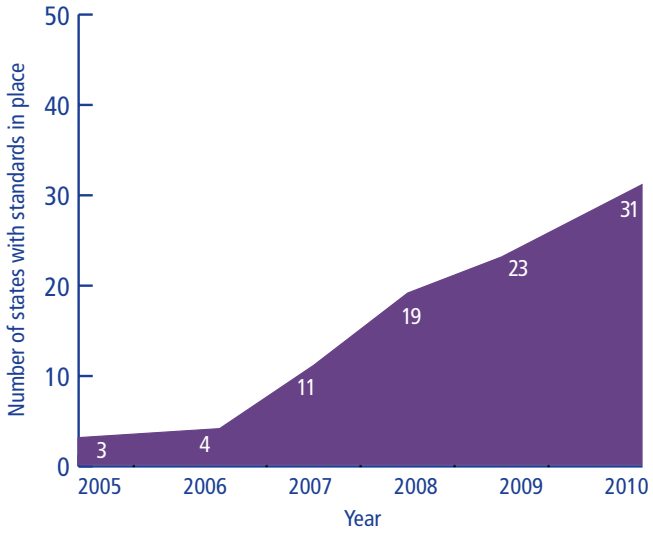
In the past year, **eight additional states** adopted college- and career-ready standards, bringing the total number of states with standards aligned to the demands of the real world to **31** (23 of which have had Achieve verify that alignment). The eight new states added since February 2009 are *Alabama, Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina* and *Virginia*.

Of the remaining states, **11** reported that they are in the process of aligning their standards to college- and career-ready expectations: *Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Utah* and *Wisconsin*.

## The Trend

Overall, the widespread adoption of college- and career-ready state standards reflects a national consensus that high school expectations must be aligned with the expectations students will be required to meet after graduation. The Common Core State Standards Initiative builds on this consensus (see below).

**College- and Career-Ready Standards: Five-Year Progress**




## Common Core State Standards Initiative

The Common Core State Standards Initiative — an effort led by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association in partnership with Achieve — is a state-led effort designed to produce common K–12 standards in English and mathematics that reflect college and career readiness; are internationally benchmarked; are grounded in evidence; and are focused, rigorous and teachable. Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia have committed to developing such standards and will decide in the coming months whether and when to adopt the final Common Core State Standards, which are expected to be released in April 2010.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was built on the strong foundation laid by Achieve's work over the past five years helping states to develop and adopt standards aligned to college- and career-ready expectations. In 2009, the idea of common standards shifted from being a byproduct of state's policy work to a priority in and of itself. States now see common standards as a top priority that can ensure consistency of real-world expectations across local, state and national boundaries and provide a foundation for future collaborative work.

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Align High School Graduation Requirements with College- and Career-Ready Expectations

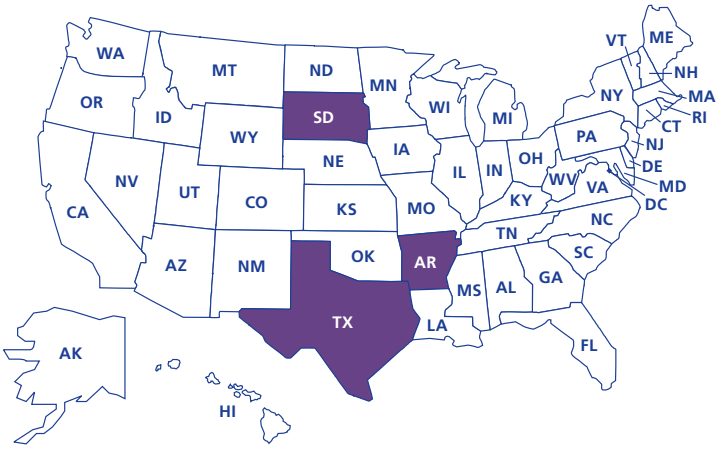
Many of the states that have adopted college- and career-ready content standards also have raised their graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level. Taking a rigorous course of study in high school aligned to college and career expectations is one of the strongest predictors of whether a student ultimately will meet his or her postsecondary goals.

A college- and career-ready curriculum is more than just the number or names of required courses; more important are the content and rigor of those courses. Specifically, Achieve considers the high school graduation requirements to be at the college- and career-ready level if students are required to complete a curriculum consistent with the ADP recommendations. Readiness for college and careers depends on more than the mastery of English and mathematics content, but these two content areas are important foundational subjects for the study of other academic disciplines and contextualized learning.

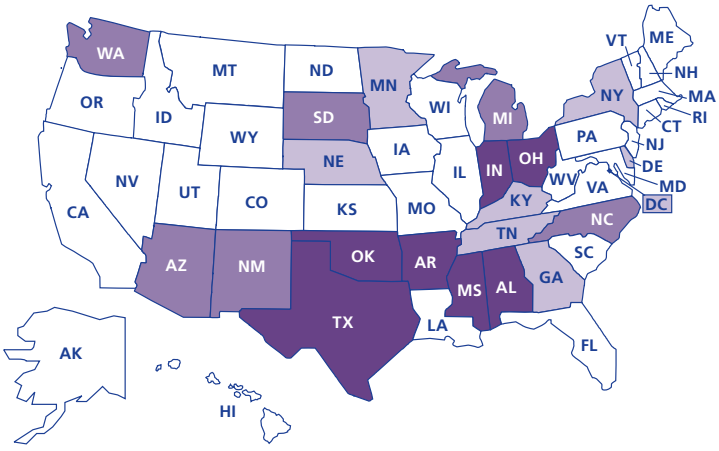
**THE QUESTION:** In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they require all students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum to earn a high school diploma. Achieve also asked states how they ensure that the courses students take are aligned with the state's academic content standards and that the content of courses is consistent and equally rigorous across schools and districts.

**THE CRITERIA:** Achieve's ADP research shows that for high school graduates to be prepared for success in college and careers, they need to take four years of challenging mathematics — including the content typically taught in an Algebra II course or its equivalent — and four years of grade-level English aligned with college- and career-ready standards.

**Graduation Requirements: Pre-Summit**




**Graduation Requirements: 2010**




Default college- and career-ready diploma with minimum opt-out

Default college- and career-ready diploma with personal modification opt-out

Mandatory college- and career-ready diploma

## Progress since the Summit

In early 2005, only **three states** had graduation requirements at the level necessary to prepare all students for success in college and the workplace. Five years later, **20 states and the District of Columbia** have adopted college- and career-ready graduation requirements — *Nebraska* was the only state in 2009 to raise its graduation requirements to this level.

Beyond the states that have already adopted a college- and career-ready curriculum for all students, **three additional states** have proposals under consideration that, if adopted, would establish new rigorous high school requirements at the ADP-recommended level: *Florida, Hawaii* and *Maryland*.

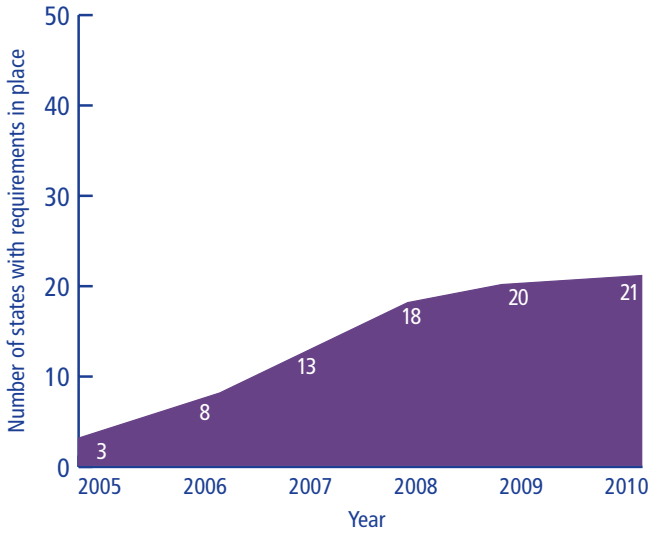
## The Trend

The initial surge in the number of states requiring students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum has slowed in recent years, but the number of students facing college- and career-ready graduation requirements in these states continues to grow. By fall 2010, the first cohort of students in all but two of these states will have entered high school and be required to meet college- and career-ready expectations to graduate.

As an increasing number of students face more rigorous requirements, states must confront the capacity challenges associated with offering more courses of greater rigor to more students. Students who arrive at high school unprepared also need additional supports and transition programs designed to help them catch up and complete a college- and career-ready course of study by the end of the 12th grade.

In addition, states have begun implementing strategies to ensure that students are in fact taking courses that cover the college- and career-ready content they need. End-of-course testing and curriculum audits are two important and increasingly common approaches to addressing the issue of consistency and rigor.

**College- and Career-Ready Graduation Requirements: Five-Year Progress**

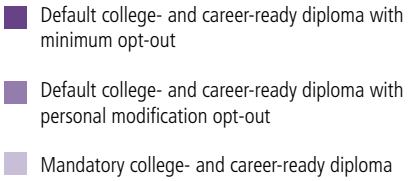



Finally, the political challenges states face in their attempts to raise graduation requirements do not end when the governor signs the new requirements into law or the state board adopts them. Without a well-developed, comprehensive implementation plan that includes student and teacher supports and a communications and outreach strategy to students, parents and other stakeholders, states are likely to be caught in a continuous struggle to protect their new requirements from attempts to backslide and return to the previous status quo.

## First Cohort of Students To Graduate under the New Requirements

| State | First cohort |
|---|---|
| Texas | 2008/2011[4] |
| Arkansas | 2010 |
| New York | 2010 |
| Oklahoma | 2010 |
| South Dakota | 2010/2013[5] |
| Delaware | 2011 |
| District of Columbia | 2011 |
| Indiana | 2011 |
| Michigan | 2011 |
| Georgia | 2012 |
| Kentucky | 2012 |

| State | First cohort |
|---|---|
| Mississippi | 2012 |
| Alabama | 2013 |
| Arizona | 2013 |
| New Mexico | 2013 |
| North Carolina | 2013 |
| Tennessee | 2013 |
| Washington | 2013 |
| Ohio | 2014 |
| Minnesota | 2015 |
| Nebraska | 2015 |




## Raising Course Requirements

States raising their course requirements to the level recommended by ADP have structured the requirements in one of two ways:

**Mandatory**
The most direct approach is to establish **mandatory** requirements that result in students earning a high school diploma only if they complete the required courses (or in the case of New York, pass the required end-of-course assessments). **Seven states and the District of Columbia** have set mandatory course requirements, including *Nebraska*, which now requires districts to establish college- and career-ready graduation requirements for all students starting with the graduating class of 2015.[6]

**Default**
An alternative approach to raising graduation requirements is to automatically enroll all students in the **"default"** college- and career-ready curriculum but allow students to opt out of the requirements if their parents sign a waiver. There are two main ways states establish a default diploma: either with a "minimum diploma" opt-out or a "personal modification" opt-out.

*Minimum Diploma:* States offer a separate minimum diploma for students who opt out of the "default" college- and career-ready curriculum. It's important that the **seven states** with a minimum diploma opt-out carefully monitor which students in which schools earn which diploma to ensure that all students have access to a rigorous curriculum.

*Personal Modification:* States allow students to opt out of individual courses — typically advanced-level mathematics or science courses — but award students the same diploma as those who complete the full set of college- and career-ready graduation requirements. For the **six states** with a personal modification opt-out, it is critical that they track student-level course-taking data so they know which students in which schools are completing the courses that prepare them for success in college and the workplace.

# ASSESSMENTS: Develop College- and Career-Ready Assessment Systems

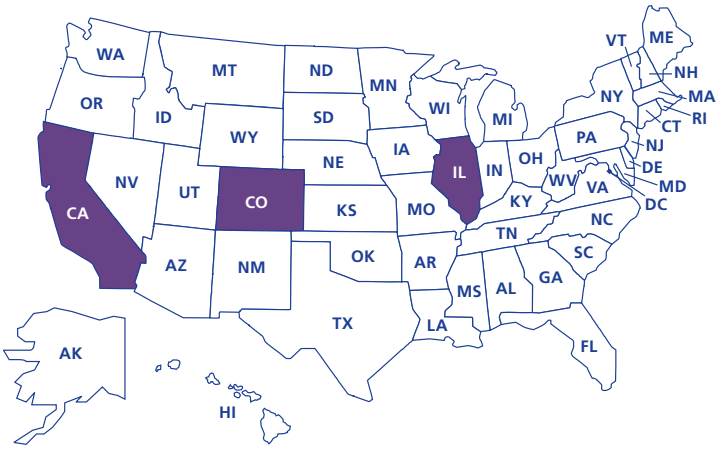
Most high school assessments required for *all* students — particularly those "high-stakes" tests required for graduation — measure the knowledge and skills students learn early in high school or even in middle school. These tests fail to assess the advanced high school content students need to be successful in college and other postsecondary education and training opportunities. As such, they have limited capacity to signal whether a student will leave high school ready to succeed.

State assessments at the high school level must do a better job of measuring the real-world knowledge and skills that students need to be successful after high school. Achieve recommends that every state build "anchor assessments," capable of measuring college and career readiness, into their high school assessment systems. Achieve also recommends that states align the rest of the K–12 assessment system with the anchor assessments so that "proficient" means prepared all the way through the grades. The goal is to signal, at each stage of schooling, whether students are on a path to college and career readiness.

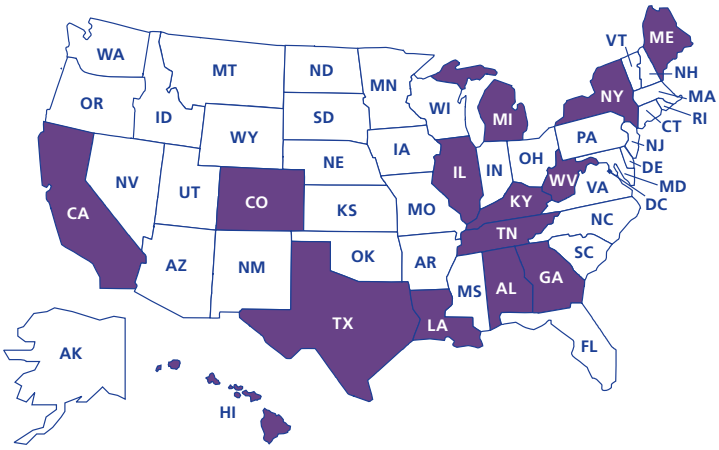
**THE QUESTION:** In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they administer to all students an assessment of college- and career-ready knowledge and skills capable of producing a readiness score that postsecondary institutions use to make placement decisions or that the state's business community uses for hiring or placement decisions.[7]

**THE CRITERIA:** To meet Achieve's criteria for having a college- and career-ready assessment, states must have a component of their high school assessment system that measures all students on college- and career-ready content in English and mathematics. The assessment must have credibility with postsecondary institutions and employers, so that achieving a certain score signals being truly prepared for success after high school.

**Assessments: Pre-Summit**




**Assessments: 2010**




In place

## Progress since the Summit

Prior to the 2005 Summit, **three states** administered a test capable of measuring college and career readiness with an established cut score used by postsecondary institutions to place students into first-year credit-bearing mathematics and English courses: *California, Colorado* and *Illinois*.

In 2010, **14 states** will administer college- and career-ready assessments, including **four new states** in 2009: *Alabama, Hawaii, Louisiana* and *West Virginia*.

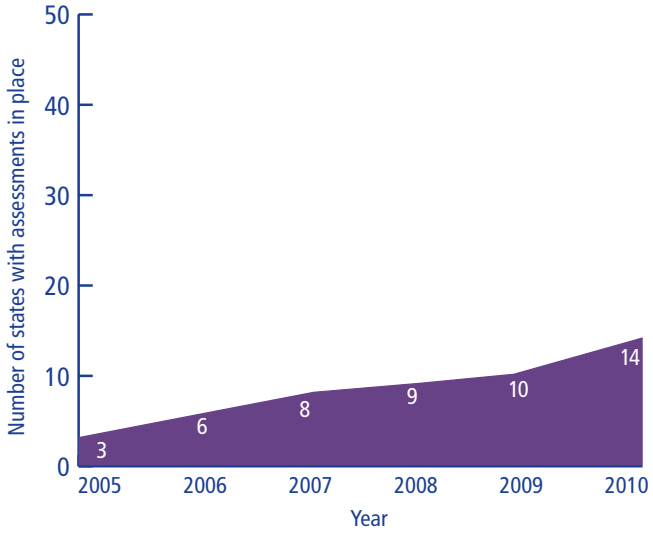
- **Six** of the **14 states** measure the college and career readiness of students using a high school assessment developed in state or by the ADP Assessment Consortium: *California, Georgia, Hawaii, New York, Texas* and *West Virginia*.
- **Eight states** require all students to take a national college admissions exam: *Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan* and *Tennessee*.

**Nine additional states** have committed to administering college- and career-ready assessments in the coming years. See the table on page 16 for details about the assessment policies being developed in these states.[8] Only the three states in the ADP Assessment Consortium that are administering the end-of-course exam statewide are included in this table; for information on all 15 states in the consortium, see Appendix B.

## The Trend

Increasingly, states are developing multiple college- and career-ready measures within their assessment systems. State systems are beginning to include both national college admissions tests and advanced level end-of-course exams. For some states, the ACT or SAT serves as only one assessment within a larger high school assessment system — along with other assessments, such as WorkKeys and state-developed tests designed to more fully assess state standards.

**College- and Career-Ready Assessments: Five-Year Progress**




Among the states making changes to their assessment systems, the most common approach is the development of new end-of-course assessments. End-of-course assessments can help ensure consistency of rigor between and within schools, as well as throughout a state, and can more accurately measure students' mastery of specific content than large-scale, comprehensive assessments, which typically measure broader — and often lower-level — content.

If tests adequately measure students' mastery of the states' college- and career-ready standards, postsecondary institutions will be able to use test results to make placement determinations. Strong alignment between high school assessments and postsecondary and employer expectations clearly communicates expectations and creates incentives for students, schools and districts. Assessment systems anchored in college- and career-ready expectations can assess whether or not students in the lower grades are on track and progressing toward college and career readiness by the end of high school.

## College- and Career-Ready Assessments

| Status | State | Assessment | Administered | Postsecondary use |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ASSESSMENTS IN USE | Alabama | ACT | 2014 | In Use |
| | California | California Standards Test (CST)/Early Assessment Program (EAP) | In Use | In Use |
| | Colorado | ACT | In Use | In Use |
| | Georgia | Georgia High School Graduation Test (ELA) | In Use | In Use |
| | | Georgia High School Graduation Test (Mathematics) | 2011 | 2012 |
| | Hawaii | ADP Common Algebra II End-of-Course Exam | In Use | In Use |
| | Illinois | ACT/WorkKeys | In Use | In Use |
| | Kentucky | ACT | In Use | In Use |
| | Louisiana | ACT/WorkKeys | 2012 | In Use |
| | | End-of-Course Exam English III | 2012 | TBD |
| | Maine | SAT | In Use | In Use |
| | Michigan | ACT/WorkKeys | In Use | In Use |
| | New York | Regents End-of-Course Exams | In Use | In Use |
| | Tennessee | ACT | In Use | In Use |
| | | End-of-Course Exams (Algebra II, English III) | 2013 | 2013 |
| | Texas* | Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) | In Use | In Use |
| | | End-of-Course Exams (Algebra II, English III) | Algebra II: 2011<br>English III:2012 | 2015 |
| | West Virginia | WESTEST | In Use | 2011 |
| ASSESSMENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT[9] | Arkansas | ADP Common Algebra II End-of-Course Exam | In Use | TBD |
| | Indiana | ADP Common Algebra II End-of-Course Exam | In Use | TBD |
| | Minnesota | TBD: ADP Algebra II End-of-Course Exam &<br>Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) | TBD | TBD |
| | Mississippi | ACT (Pilot)[10] | TBD | TBD |
| | North Carolina | State Algebra II End-of-Course Exam | In Use | TBD |
| | Ohio | Nationally standardized college admissions exam | TBD | TBD |
| | Oklahoma | End-of-Instruction Exams (Algebra II, English III) | In Use | TBD |
| | Oregon | Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS)[11] | In Use | 2012 |
| | Utah | ACT | TBD | In Use |

*Texas is developing state end-of-course assessments that will replace the TAKS.

# P–20 DATA SYSTEMS: Develop P–20 Longitudinal Data Systems

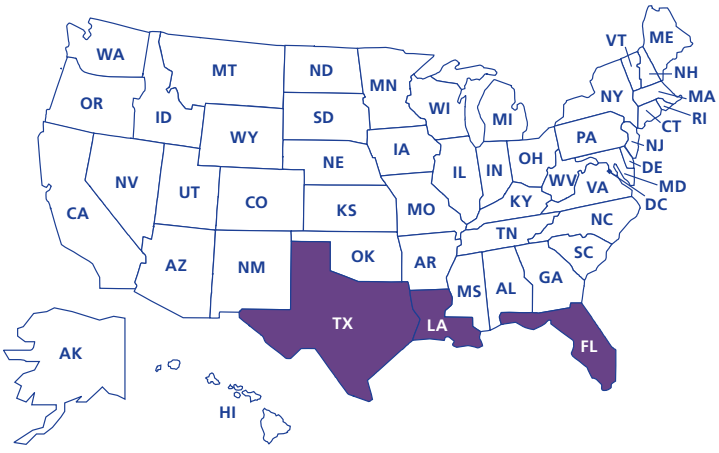
Critical to the success of the college- and career-ready agenda is the ability of states to collect, coordinate and use secondary and postsecondary data to improve the readiness of graduates to succeed in college and the workplace. At the National Education Summit in 2005, state leaders were urged to develop P–20 longitudinal data systems that track meaningful indicators of college and career readiness for individual students.

Collecting data is no longer the only critical focus of state P–20 longitudinal data systems; states also must use the data effectively. The work of the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) — of which Achieve is a Managing Partner — has expanded beyond helping states implement the 10 Essential Elements of a comprehensive longitudinal data system. The DQC now also has identified 10 State Actions necessary to ensure key stakeholders — including state policymakers and classroom teachers — use the data effectively.[12]

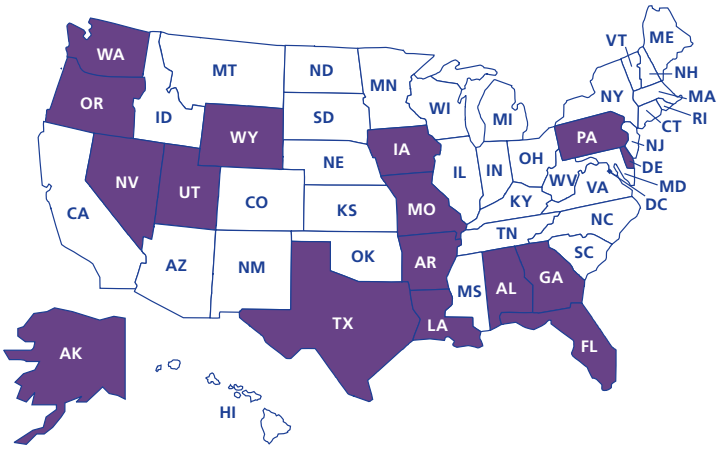
**THE QUESTION:** In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they annually match student-level records from K–12 with similar data from their postsecondary system(s). Given that P–20 longitudinal data systems require a long-term, sustainable investment from states, Achieve also asked states about their timeline for developing such a data system and reviewed state responses to the DQC survey about the technical, policy and legal barriers that they must overcome to begin linking their data systems.

**THE CRITERIA:** Achieve considers a state to have an operational P–20 longitudinal data system when it has unique student identifiers to track each student through and beyond the K–12 system, has overcome all barriers to matching, has the capacity to match the records between K–12 and postsecondary, and has begun to match records at least annually.

**P–20 Data Systems: Pre-Summit**




**P–20 Data Systems: 2010**




In place

## Progress since the Summit

At the time of the Summit in February 2005, only **three states** had operational P–20 longitudinal data systems: *Florida, Louisiana* and *Texas*. By February 2009, **11 states** reported having a longitudinal data system in place.

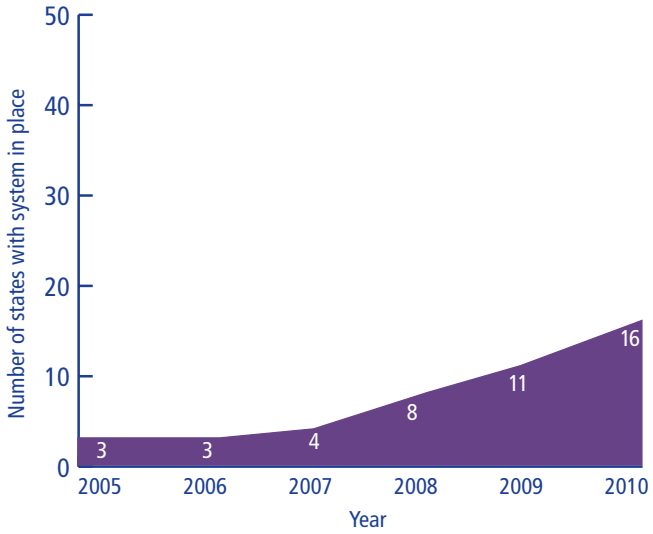
In the past year, **five additional states** — *Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Nevada* and *Pennsylvania* — began matching student-level records through a P–20 longitudinal data system, bringing the total number of matching states to **16.**

All other states and the District of Columbia are now working to develop their P–20 longitudinal data systems. Federal grants to states and support from other sectors have enabled states to make a sustained effort to build the technical capacity while the DQC and others have been working with states to overcome other barriers to the matching of student-level data.

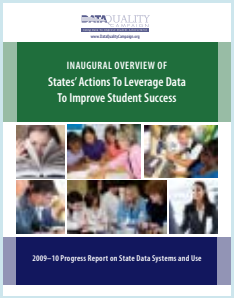
## The Trend

Five years after the 2005 Summit, every state in the nation and the District of Columbia has developed or is developing a P–20 longitudinal data system. States are now shifting their attention from building the infrastructure needed to collect data to adopting policies and practices to use the data at the district and school levels. As the technical barriers to matching are overcome, states must focus on the policy challenges related to the dissemination of data to key stakeholders and the professional development necessary to maximize data use to improve instruction and strengthen the preparation of students for success after high school.

**P–20 Longitudinal Data Systems: Five-Year Progress**




## Data Quality Campaign




In January 2010, the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) released the *Inaugural Overview of States' Actions To Leverage Data To Improve Student Success.* Every state has made a commitment to build a longitudinal data system that includes the DQC's 10 Essential Elements by 2011 — including a unique statewide student identifier, student-level course-taking information, college readiness test scores, high school graduation data, and matching data between K–12 and postsecondary systems — and the most recent DQC data suggest that states are on track to meet this goal.

Because many states have in place the Essential Elements critical to building a robust data system, the DQC also recommends 10 Actions states must take to change how data are used to inform decisions and policies to continuously improve student performance. States must leverage these Actions to expand access, understanding and use of state longitudinal data by policymakers, education administrators, teachers, parents, students and researchers. These 10 Actions include annually matching data across systems, establishing accessible state data repositories and communicating the availability of longitudinal data for continuous improvement.

For individual state progress on implementing the 10 Essential Elements and Actions, visit www.DataQualityCampaign.org.

# ACCOUNTABILITY: Develop Accountability and Reporting Systems That Promote College and Career Readiness

Accountability systems focus the efforts of teachers, students, parents, administrators and policymakers to ensure that students and schools meet established goals. The goals for state high school accountability systems in place today are largely based on student achievement results from standardized tests that typically measure 8th and 9th grade content and do not fully reflect the demands of college and careers. Such systems send the wrong messages and set low expectations for our high schools and the students they serve.

It is important for states to rethink their K–12 accountability systems and anchor them in the goal of graduating all students on time, ready to succeed in college and careers.[13]

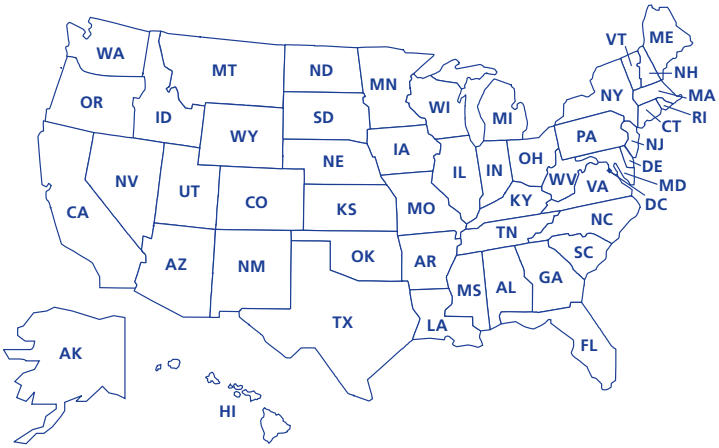
Policymakers must fundamentally reformulate the indicators they use to measure progress and the incentives they provide schools to improve. Without a coordinated framework that sets the right expectations and sends the right signals, educators and school systems will not aim high enough for their students, and many will continue to leave our schools unprepared for their next steps.

**THE QUESTION:** In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they collect school-by-school data on a fundamental set of college- and career-ready indicators and, more important, whether those indicators are used to drive improvement in schools and school systems.

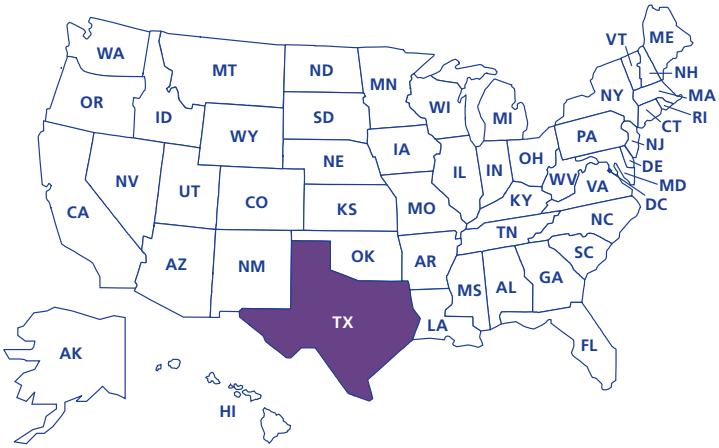
**KEY COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY INDICATORS:** An effective accountability system uses a coherent, purposeful progression of college- and career-ready indicators to focus resources and drive improvement. To better understand the extent to which states are making college and career readiness a priority for their students and schools, Achieve asked states whether they have incorporated a select set of college- and career-ready indicators into their data, reporting and accountability systems:

- **Earning a college- and career-ready diploma:** The percentage of students who graduate from high school with a college- and career-ready diploma, as defined by ADP. States need to know which students — and which groups of students — are leaving high school with this valuable credential and which are not.
- **Scoring college-ready on a high school assessment:** The percentage of students who score at the college-ready level on high school assessments anchored to college- and career-ready standards. Such assessments will signal which students are prepared for postsecondary success and which will require additional support before leaving high school.

**Accountability: Pre-Summit**




**Accountability: 2010**




In place

- **Earning college credit while in high school:** The percentage of high school students earning college credit through Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and/or dual enrollment. Just as states must know whether students are progressing toward and reaching certain benchmarks of college and career readiness, they also need to know whether high school students are exceeding those goals by taking the advanced courses that further solidify their transition to college and put them a step ahead once they arrive.
- **Requiring remedial courses in college:** The percentage of high school graduates who — upon entrance to a postsecondary institution — are placed into a remedial course in reading, writing or mathematics. With the vast majority of high school students intending to pursue a college degree and with so many of those students entering college unprepared for college-level work, states must know whether high schools are preparing students to achieve their goals.

**Tracking of College- and Career-Ready Indicators**

| Indicators: The percentage of high school students … | Number of states that include indicators in their data system |
|---|---|
| Earning a college- and career-ready diploma | 15 |
| Scoring college ready on a high school assessment | 20 |
| Earning college credit while in high school | 19 |
| Requiring remedial courses in college | 22 |

**USE OF INDICATORS:** Including college- and career-ready indicators in the state's longitudinal data system is only the first step. For the indicators to be meaningful and drive improvement in the system, they must be put to good use. To that end, Achieve asked policymakers whether they currently use — or intend to use — a select set of college- and career-ready indicators to raise public awareness and drive school improvement:

- **Publicly report:** The state publicly reports at the school level (e.g., in a school-by-school report card) the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of each indicator. Accountability begins with publicly reporting critical information about school performance, allowing parents, students, community leaders and the public to know whether high schools are preparing students for success in college and careers.
- **Set performance goals:** The state has publicly set statewide performance goals for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of each indicator — and has defined a date for achieving those goals. Accountability systems must set high expectations for performance to motivate schools to improve.
- **Provide incentives to improve:** The state has established incentives to reward schools and districts for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of each indicator. Accountability systems should not only lead to sanctions and punitive actions but also include recognition and other positive incentives to drive improvement.
- **Factor into accountability formula:** The state factors the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of each indicator into its high school accountability formula. Accountability systems ought to include a range of indicators and employ metrics that are weighted most heavily toward the indicators of meeting college and career readiness.

**THE CRITERIA:** Achieve considers a state to have a comprehensive approach to college- and career-ready accountability if it collects and reports the right data in the right way, sets clear targets for schools to improve, and provides clear incentives and consequences that drive schools to improve performance and meet the targets. For this year's report, Achieve established the following threshold for combining indicators and their uses in state accountability systems:

- **For uses:** For each college- and career-ready indicator, the state publicly reports *and* sets a statewide performance goal *and either* provides incentives for improvement *or* factors improvement into its accountability formula.
- **For indicators:** The state includes the college-and career-ready diploma *and* a college- and career-ready assessment *and either* uses earning college credit while in high school *or* college remediation indicators in its reporting and accountability system.

For additional information on accountability criteria, see Appendix C.

## Progress since the Summit

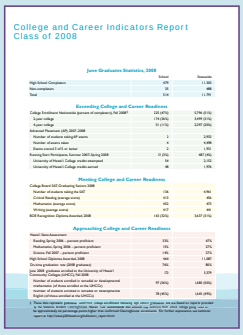
Five years ago, **no state** had a comprehensive approach to college- and career-ready accountability. With the passage of HB 3 in June 2009, *Texas* became the **only state** that meets the minimum criteria Achieve believes necessary to measure and provide incentives for college and career readiness. Making wide use of the four critical indicators Achieve asked about in its survey, Texas has strengthened its accountability system, and its plans moving forward will further deepen the state's commitment to college and career readiness.

## The Trend

Progress on accountability has been slow in the states. Although many states have moved aggressively to raise standards, few have incorporated those standards into their high school accountability systems. While Texas has the most comprehensive approach to college- and career-ready accountability, a growing number of states are beginning to use multiple indicators in multiple ways. (For details, see Accountability Overview on page 22.) Achieve hopes to see further progress in the year ahead.

## Emerging Best Practices in Accountability

**Public Reporting: Hawaii's College and Career Readiness Indicators Report** — For every high school in the state, Hawaii reports the number of high school graduates and details the percentage of students earning the ADP-level Board of Education Recognition (Step-Up) Diploma, the percentages of students enrolling in two- and four-year colleges, and the percentages of last year's graduates enrolled in remedial courses at the state's two-year community colleges. These two-page reports include additional indicators around exceeding, meeting and approaching college and career readiness. To view examples of these reports, visit www.p20hawaii.org/indicators_report.html.


College and Career Indicators Report
Class of 2008

**Statewide Goals: Louisiana** — In January 2010, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted a set of revised and refined goals designed to measure and provided incentives for college and career readiness. Louisiana has published baseline data and identified numeric improvement targets for each goal. For example, Louisiana has set a goal to increase the percentage of high school graduates completing the college- and career-ready course of study (LA-Core 4) from 58.5 percent in 2006 to 72.5 percent in 2014. The state is working to identify actionable strategies anchored in these goals to catalyze and monitor improvement.

**Incentives: Arkansas Smart Core Incentive Program** — In April 2009, Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe signed into law Act 1481, creating the Arkansas Smart Core Incentive Funding Program. This program will provide financial rewards to schools in which 90 percent of the students have completed the ADP-level Smart Core curriculum. Schools also must have maintained an overall graduation rate above the state average for the previous three years. Monetary incentives range between $50 and $125 per Smart Core graduate, depending on the percentage of graduating students who complete the Smart Core curriculum and earn the Smart Core diploma in the preceding year. The program is in effect through 2020.

**Accountability Formula: Florida** — The Florida Board of Education approved changes to the state's high school accountability system in September 2009. These changes move the state's accountability formula from one based purely on Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) assessment results to one that incorporates the high school cohort graduation rate, advanced high school course-taking and success, and performance on measures of college readiness. For the measures of college readiness, schools will earn weighted credits for the number of students scoring "ready" on the SAT, ACT and/or the state's College Entry-Level Placement Test (CPT). For the measures on accelerated courses, schools will earn weighted credits for the number of exams students take and the number of successful student outcomes (e.g., earning college credit, passing industry certification). The Florida Department of Education produced a presentation outlining its new accountability system: www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2009_09_15/109981presentation.pdf.

## Accountability Overview

The tables below are organized by college- and career-ready indicators. Each table lists the states that use the featured indicator and the ways in which that indicator is used.

### BY INDICATORS: THE PERCENTAGE OF …

#### … High School Graduates Who Earn a College- and Career-Ready Diploma

| State | Annual school-level public reporting | Statewide performance goals | School-level incentives | Accountability formula |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | ✓ | | | |
| Arkansas | | | ✓ | |
| Hawaii | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Indiana | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Louisiana | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Mississippi | | | | ✓ |
| New York | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Ohio | ✓ | | | |
| Texas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Virginia | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| TOTAL | 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

#### … High School Graduates Who Obtain a Readiness Score on a College- and Career-Ready High School Assessment

| State | Annual school-level public reporting | Statewide performance goals | School-level incentives | Accountability formula |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| California | ✓ | | | |
| Florida | | | | ✓ |
| Georgia | | ✓ | | |
| Louisiana | | ✓ | | |
| Michigan | ✓ | | | |
| Minnesota | | ✓ | | |
| New York | ✓ | | | |
| Oklahoma | | | | ✓ |
| Texas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| TOTAL | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

#### … High School Graduates Who Earn College Credit while Still in High School

| State | Annual school-level public reporting | Statewide performance goals | School-level incentives | Accountability formula |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Connecticut | | ✓ | | |
| Florida | | | | ✓ |
| Hawaii | | ✓ | | |
| Indiana | | ✓ | | |
| Kentucky | | ✓ | | |
| Minnesota | | ✓ | | |
| Ohio | ✓ | | | |
| Oklahoma | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Texas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Utah | ✓ | | | |
| TOTAL | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 |

#### … Incoming First-Year College Students Who Require Remediation

| State | Annual school-level public reporting | Statewide performance goals | School-level incentives | Accountability formula |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Georgia | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Hawaii | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Indiana | | ✓ | | |
| Kentucky | | ✓ | | |
| Louisiana | ✓ | | | |
| Missouri | ✓ | | | |
| New Mexico | ✓ | | | |
| Oklahoma | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Texas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Wyoming | ✓ | | | |
| TOTAL | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

# Conclusion

Since the formation of the ADP Network at the 2005 National Education Summit, states have made significant progress on the college- and career-ready agenda. In 2005, only a few states had begun to work on standards, graduation requirements, assessments and data systems aligned to college and career readiness, and no state had made it the focus of its accountability system.

Today, nearly every state has made progress on the agenda. Thirty-one states have adopted college- and career-ready high school standards. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have established college- and career-ready graduation requirements that are in effect for current or future high school graduation classes. By the end of 2009, 14 states had incorporated college- and career-ready assessments into their assessment systems. Moreover, 16 states now annually match student-level data from K–12 and postsecondary education systems, and every other state is developing this capacity. While progress on creating accountability systems anchored in college and career readiness has been slowest — with only one state meeting Achieve's minimum criteria — many more states have added college- and career-ready indicators into their accountability systems.

The goal of college and career readiness for all high school graduates is no longer a radical reform idea promulgated by a handful of states: It has emerged as the new norm throughout the nation.

Without question, state leadership, both individually and collectively, has enabled the progress to date. Looking ahead, the state-led Common Core State Standards Initiative and the multiple assessment consortia formed by states have the potential to propel the college- and career-ready agenda farther and faster still. And states know that getting these policies right is just a first — albeit critical — step. Properly implementing, communicating and sustaining current and future policy gains is key if states are to translate college- and career-ready policies into reality in every classroom, for the benefit of every student.

## Endnotes

1 *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, www.achieve.org/ReadyorNot; *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams*, www.achieve.org/MeasureUp; and *The Expectations Gap: A 50-State Review of High School Graduation Requirements*, www.achieve.org/ExpectationsGap2004.

2 *Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards From the Ground Up*, www.achieve.org/CommonCore.

3 A good job pays a family-sustaining wage, provides benefits and offers opportunities for advancement. See *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, www.achieve.org/ReadyorNot.

4 The Texas Recommended High School Program (RHSP) was established as the requirement for all students (as the default diploma option) in 2003 — first affecting the class of 2008 — and included three mathematics credits through Algebra II. In 2006, Texas added a fourth year of mathematics to the RHSP that will first affect the class of 2011.

5 South Dakota recently revised its graduation requirements. The requirements adopted in 2005 (taking effect in 2010) created two pathways — the default college- and career-ready curriculum with a minimum opt-out to a standard curriculum. The new requirements (taking effect in 2013) create a single pathway with a personal modification in which students can opt out of specific mathematics and science courses. South Dakota is developing the capacity to follow a student's curricular pathway via the state's longitudinal data system and a new statewide common course numbering system beginning in 2010.

6 In 2009, Nebraska mandated that all high schools in the state raise their graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level. Starting with the class of 2015, the local requirements must ensure that to earn a diploma, students meet Nebraska's new college- and career-ready standards — standards that Achieve has verified reflect college- and career-ready expectations. Through the annual reviews of district assurance statements and periodic on-site reviews, the state Department of Education will confirm that the local graduation requirements are truly aligned to the states' rigorous standards.

7 For Achieve, "all students" means all students eligible to take an assessment — e.g., all 11th graders taking 11th grade assessments or all students taking an Algebra II course taking an Algebra II end-of-course exam.

8 Four additional states — New Hampshire, New Mexico, Wisconsin and Wyoming — reported plans to administer college- and career-ready assessments, although their plans are not yet developed enough to include in the table on page 16.

9 Ibid.

10 Mississippi has a district-level pilot program under way to administer ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) and the ACT college admissions tests to all students. Mississippi already has strong ACT participation: More than 90 percent of the 2009 graduating class took the ACT.

11 The Oregon University System (OUS) Board will first establish the OAKS cut scores for the OUS Automatic Admission policy at its February 2011 meeting. Effective for the class applying for admission to the OUS in fall 2012, students who reach the OUS cut scores on all three of the OAKS exams (reading, writing and mathematics) and meet a minimum high school GPA will be granted automatic admission; students scoring below the cut scores may be eligible for standard admission.

12 Achieve coordinated its annual survey with the DQC and in part relies on information about state data systems collected by the DQC, www.DataQualityCampaign.org.

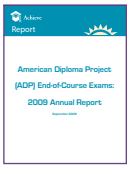
13 Through the *Measures that Matter* initiative, Achieve and The Education Trust collaborated to address accountability challenges and provide strategic and technical guidance to help states create a coherent set of policies designed to graduate all students college and career ready. Informed by a distinguished advisory group of state and national experts representing diverse perspectives, the two organizations developed a set of recommendations designed to provide states with the best possible advice for advancing their reform efforts.

# APPENDIX A: Achieve Resources

In the past five years, Achieve has released a number of hallmark reports on the state of the nation's standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems, as well as many materials that serve to inform and assist stakeholders as they work to improve America's high schools. The following are available at **www.achieve.org**.

**Race to the Top: Accelerating College and Career Readiness** provides state leaders a look at Race to the Top (RTTT) through a college- and career-ready lens, offering specific advice and promising practices to help ADP Network leaders build on the work they have already begun and maximize the new opportunities presented through RTTT. Achieve has developed four guides and shares recommendations for meeting the RTTT challenge and pushing above and beyond the minimum criteria in each of the four core reform areas, including standards and assessments, P–20 longitudinal data systems, teacher effectiveness, and low-performing schools. Two additional briefs are focused on building support and engagement from key stakeholders for states' RTTT plans and planning for success and sustainability. [2009]

**Taking Root: Strategies for Sustaining the College- and Career-Ready Agenda** aims to help state leaders identify and build strategies for sustaining their education agendas over the long run. The project includes four case studies that examine both the governmental and nongovernmental strategies that were effective in making reform last in Indiana, Massachusetts, South Carolina and Texas; a lessons learned paper that draws on and synthesizes the case studies' 10 overarching lessons and strategies for sustainability; and an audit tool that states can use in their own planning. [2009]



**American Diploma Project End-of-Course Exams: 2009 Annual Report** provides an overview of the exams as well as the results from each of the participating states from the spring 2009 administration of the Algebra I and Algebra II exams. [2009]

**Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education** provides states with a roadmap for benchmarking their K–12 education systems against those of top-performing nations. The report, released by Achieve, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, explains the urgent need for action and outlines what states and the federal government must do to ensure U.S. students receive a world-class education. [2008]

**The Building Blocks of Success: Higher Level Math for All Students** explores the intellectual and practical benefits to all students of taking higher-level mathematics courses in high school, focusing on college access and success, workplace and career readiness, and personal and U.S. competitiveness. [2008]

**The Perkins Act of 2006: Connecting Career and Technical Education with the College and Career Readiness Agenda** addresses the components of the Perkins Act, discusses career and technical education more broadly in the context of the ADP agenda, and offers a number of strategies state ADP leadership teams could employ to align and coordinate the implementation of the ADP agenda and the Perkins Act. [2008]

**Measures that Matter** is a joint effort by Achieve and The Education Trust to provide strategic and technical assistance to states in creating college- and career-ready assessment and accountability systems. Resources include policy guides and briefs. [2008]

**Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards From the Ground Up** presents an analysis of the college- and career-ready standards for English in 12 states and mathematics in 16 states. Achieve found that a critical mass of states had arrived at a common core of standards in English and mathematics. [2008]

**Raising Graduation Rates in an Era of High Standards** identifies five key outcomes state leaders need to focus on to close the graduation and achievement gaps and suggests strategies policymakers can take to focus their high school reform efforts on ensuring that these commitments are met. [2008]

**Aligned Expectations? A Closer Look at College Admissions and Placement Tests** examines what admissions and placement tests intend to and actually do measure, with recommendations for K–12 and higher education policymakers. [2007]

**Aligning High School Graduation Requirements with the Real World: A Road Map for States** addresses the most frequently cited challenges of policy design, as well as strategies for implementation, communication and coalition building, drawing heavily on the experience of early adopter states. [2007]

**Identifying Potential Dropouts: Key Lessons for Building an Early Warning Data System** provides policymakers an overview of research about the dropout problem and the best strategies for building an early warning data system that can signal which students and schools are most in need of interventions. [2006]

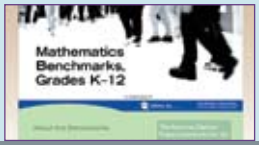
**Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams** analyzes graduation tests from six states to determine what the tests actually measure and finds that the exams need to be strengthened to better measure the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful after graduation. [2005]

**Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?** is a survey of recent high school graduates, employers and college faculty on how well they believe high schools are preparing students. All of these stakeholders noted significant gaps in the overall skills, abilities and work habits that are necessary for success after high school. [2005]

**Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts**, developed with The Education Trust, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the National Alliance of Business, is the result of a multi-year project to identify the knowledge and skills all students need to be successful in college and careers. The report found a convergence in the expectations of business and postsecondary leaders; established the ADP benchmarks; and laid out a rigorous policy agenda, which has since become the agenda of the ADP Network. [2004]

In addition to the reports listed above, Achieve also has developed a number of Web-based resources to provide specific stakeholders with the information and tools they need to ensure our schools prepare students for college and careers:

- Postsecondary Connection: www.postsecconnect.org
- Business Tools for Better Schools: www.biztools4schools.org
- Math Works Advocacy Kit: www.achieve.org/MathWorks
- Joint Achieve-Dana Center "Mathematics Benchmarks, Grades K–12" Web site: www.utdanacenter.org/k12mathbenchmarks
- Achieve Communications Resources: www.achieve.org/CommunicationsResources




# APPENDIX B: Overview of the ADP Assessment Consortium and Use of ADP Algebra II Exam

Achieve surveyed each state in the ADP Assessment Consortium about its spring 2009 administration and postsecondary policy plans for the ADP Algebra II End-of-Course Exam.

| State | State policy for test administration in 2008–09* | Percentage of students enrolled in Algebra II who took the ADP exam (spring 2009)** | | State plans for postsecondary policy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number of exam takers | Number of course takers | |
| Arizona | District option | N/A | | TBD |
| | | 2,982 | No state data | |
| Arkansas*** | Required for all Algebra II students | 81% | | TBD |
| | | 23,608 | 29,119 | |
| Florida | Exam not administered | Exam not administered | | N/A |
| Hawaii*** | Required for all Algebra II students | 87% | | K–12 and postsecondary institutions are working on using the Algebra II exam scores as part of a placement strategy. |
| | | 6,291 | 7,266 | |
| Indiana*** | Required for all Algebra II students | 76% | | TBD |
| | | 45,443 | 60,078 | |
| Kentucky | District pilot | 3% | | K–12 and postsecondary institutions are currently in discussion of how to use end-of-course results. |
| | | 1,384 | 45,359 | |
| Maryland | District option | N/A | | K–12 and postsecondary institutions are currently in discussion of how to use end-of-course results. |
| | | 1,295 | No state data | |
| Massachusetts | District option | 1% | | TBD |
| | | 584 | 46,400 | |
| Minnesota | District option | N/A | | TBD |
| | | 1,164 | No state data | |
| New Jersey | District option | 12% | | TBD |
| | | 8,063 | 70,000 | |
| North Carolina | District pilot | 3% | | TBD |
| | | 2,551 | 76,079 | |
| Ohio | District pilot | 2% | | TBD |
| | | 2,416 | 138,239 | |
| Pennsylvania | School pilot | 5% | | TBD |
| | | 6,786 | 135,307 | |
| Rhode Island | District pilot | N/A | | TBD |
| | | 369 | No state data | |
| Washington | Exam not administered | Exam not administered | | N/A |

*State policies are defined as:
- District option: The state offered all districts the opportunity to administer the exam voluntarily.
- District pilot: The state selected districts to pilot the exam.
- School pilot: The state selected schools to pilot the exam.

**The data include the numbers of students enrolled in Algebra II or its equivalent. The data are state-reported information and may be approximations. Although Arkansas, Hawaii and Indiana required all students taking the Algebra II course to take the spring 2009 exam, discrepancies in numbers reported (course takers versus exam takers) are due to a variety of factors, including students who completed their Algebra II course in a fall or winter semester or trimester, students who were absent during the testing window, students who enrolled in the class but did not complete it, and students who repeated the course and were not retested. For more information, see www.achieve.org/2009ADPAnnualReport.

***Included among the states with college- and career-ready assessments in place or in development (see page 16).

# APPENDIX C: Methodology

## Achieve's Fifth Annual Survey of Policies

As in past years, Achieve's 2009–10 50-state survey of high school policies focused on aligned standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and data and accountability systems. The process included an online survey states completed last fall. All 50 states and the District of Columbia participated in this year's survey. Throughout the winter, Achieve staff followed up with states by phone or e-mail to discuss their responses — either to clarify an answer or to address state questions. Finally, Achieve sent an individual confirmation form to all states indicating how they would appear in this report.

Beyond evaluating every policy states reported as already in place or recently adopted, Achieve also evaluated reported plans, asking questions about where states are in the planning or development process and when they anticipate reaching final adoption. The only plans counted in the report are those that could be verified, i.e., those that are documented and consistent with the minimum criteria for the particular policy area. Achieve applied this approach to all reported accountability indicators and their uses for the first time this year; only verified indicators that met the criteria were included in this report (see Accountability Criteria below).

Beyond accountability, it is worth noting that a small number of state responses reported this year differ from those in last year's report, resulting from further refinements to Achieve's criteria for analysis, states' new interpretations of the questions and/or changes to states' policy plans. In nearly all cases, however, the differences from last year to this year reflect recent developments in the states.

## Accountability Criteria

### The Indicators

**College- and Career-Ready Diploma:** The percentage of students who graduate having completed the requirements for a college- and career-ready diploma.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has set a college- and career-ready diploma as the mandatory/default option for all students or as an honors diploma (at an equivalent college- and career-ready level) that any student can pursue. For any use of this indicator, the denominator should include all students in a graduating cohort.

**College- and Career-Ready Testing:** The percentage of students who score at the college- and career-ready level on a high school assessment given to all eligible students.

Minimum criteria:

- The state administers a college- and career-ready test to all *eligible* students, either a state-developed test(s) or a national college admissions test (such as the ACT/SAT). Eligible students include those who are enrolled in Algebra II statewide or all 11th grade students.
- The state has adopted or recognized a minimum performance level (cut score) that indicates college readiness.
- Postsecondary institutions factor at least the minimum college readiness cut score into their admissions or placement decisions.

**Earning College Credit while in High School:** The percentage of students who earn college credit while still enrolled in high school through AP, IB and/or dual enrollment.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator includes all students in a high school graduation cohort.
- The numerator includes the number of students *earning credit* for their college- and career-ready performance in AP, IB or dual enrollment.

**Postsecondary Remediation:** The percentage of high school graduates who, upon entrance to a postsecondary institution, are placed into a remedial course in reading, writing or mathematics (courses that do not count as English or mathematics credit).

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator is the postsecondary enrollment number.
- The numerator includes the number of students enrolled in remedial coursework during their first year of postsecondary education, reported by subject area (e.g., percentage in remedial reading, percentage in mathematics and percentage in writing), or if unavailable, it also would be acceptable to define remedial course-taking as "enrollment in remedial reading, writing and/or mathematics" (e.g., not disaggregated by subject). Achieve does NOT count "any remedial" coursework as an appropriate definition for this indicator.

## The Uses

**Public Reporting:** The state publicly reports the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators at the school level.

Minimum criteria:

- The denominator for any indicator is "all eligible students."
- The data are reported annually and are no more than two years old. *(NOTE: Current data are judged by whether they are reported year to year or by cohort.)*
- The data are reported at the state and school levels.
- K–12 reports its data (e.g., college- and career-ready diploma and testing), and higher education reports its data (e.g., remediation and enrollment rates for high school graduation cohorts).

**Goals:** The state has publicly set statewide performance goals and defines a date for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has established a numerical goal or goal for percentage improved.
- The state has established baseline data for that goal.

**Incentives:** The state has established incentives to reward schools and districts for increasing the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators.

Minimum criteria:

- The state has established a clear definition of what the incentive is, e.g., financial reward, public recognition, specific flexibility from regulation, etc.
- The state has established a clear threshold for earning the incentive, e.g., meeting and/or exceeding specific benchmark(s) on specific indicators.

**Accountability Formula:** The state factors the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators into its state accountability formula.

Minimum criteria:

- Performance/improvement on these indicators lead to any consequences, rewards, interventions or supports — beyond public reporting.

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**Michael Cohen**
*President*
Achieve

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