



2012 Closing the Expectations Gap


Achieve
 American Diploma Project Network

50-STATE PROGRESS REPORT
 on the Alignment of K–12 Policies and Practice
 with the Demands of College and Careers





ABOUT ACHIEVE

Created in 1996 by the nation's governors and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority. To this day, Achieve remains the only education reform organization led by a Board of Directors comprised of national business executives and prominent governors from each political party. Through its 35-state American Diploma Project Network, Achieve supports governors, state K–12 and postsecondary leaders, and business leaders as they work together to develop policies that

make the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers seamless. Achieve partnered with the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative and was selected by states to manage the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers to create next generation assessments aligned to the CCSS. Achieve is also managing a state-led process to develop the Next Generation Science Standards. For more information, see www.achieve.org.

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At the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, governors from 45 states joined with business leaders and education officials to address a critical problem in American education: Too few students graduate from high school prepared for the demands of college and career in an increasingly competitive global economy. Since then, to monitor and report on state progress in adopting policies that prepare *all* students for their next steps after high school graduation, Achieve has conducted an annual survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia on key college- and career-ready (CCR) policies, including aligning standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and data and accountability systems with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers.

With policy adoption nearly universal in many of these critical areas, for the first time this year's survey and report also address issues regarding the implementation of these policies. This report provides an overview of the progress states are making — as well as draws attention to key issues states should consider as adoption and implementation work continues.

KEY FINDINGS



Standards

All **50 states and the District of Columbia** have adopted English language arts/literacy and mathematics standards that reflect the knowledge and skills colleges and employers demand of high school graduates. Of these, **46 states and the District of Columbia** adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); the remaining **four states** have developed and adopted their own CCR standards. By 2015–16, *all K–12 English language arts and mathematics instruction should reflect CCR expectations.*

Now that CCSS/CCR standards have been adopted, states face the challenge of implementing these standards and ensuring that *all* students have access to the full range of CCSS/CCR standards. To this end, Achieve asked states about their support for the transition to full implementation of CCSS/CCR standards through curricular and instructional materials and how state-provided professional development is changing to ensure that teachers and principals are equipped to transition to the CCSS/CCR standards. Nearly all states are supporting districts and schools by *providing guidance*, such as high-quality processes and exemplars, and *developing curricular and supplemental materials* aligned to the standards for voluntary use. Far fewer states are *approving/certifying lists of approved materials*, and even fewer are *requiring districts and schools to use materials aligned to the standards.*



Graduation Requirements

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have not only adopted CCSS/CCR academic content standards but also established requirements that all high school graduates must complete a CCR curriculum that includes at least mathematics through the content typically taught in an Algebra II course (or its equivalent) and four years of grade-level English to earn a high school diploma. This number includes **three states** that raised requirements in the last year.

The remaining states have adopted CCSS/CCR standards but have not yet raised their graduation requirements to ensure that all students meet the CCR expectations found in their standards.



Assessments

Eighteen states administer assessments to high school students that postsecondary institutions use to make decisions about students' readiness for college, including **four new states** since 2011. Any assessment states administer to measure high school students' mastery of CCR content in English and mathematics must have credibility with postsecondary institutions across the state. **Seven states** with college-ready assessments have developed tests aligned to their state standards, while the remaining **11 states** administer a national college admissions exam.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia are collaborating, either through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, to develop common assessments aligned to the CCSS. **Nearly all states** are planning to administer new assessments in 2014–15 aligned to the CCSS in English language arts/literacy and math or to state-developed CCR standards.



Accountability, Data and Public Reporting Systems

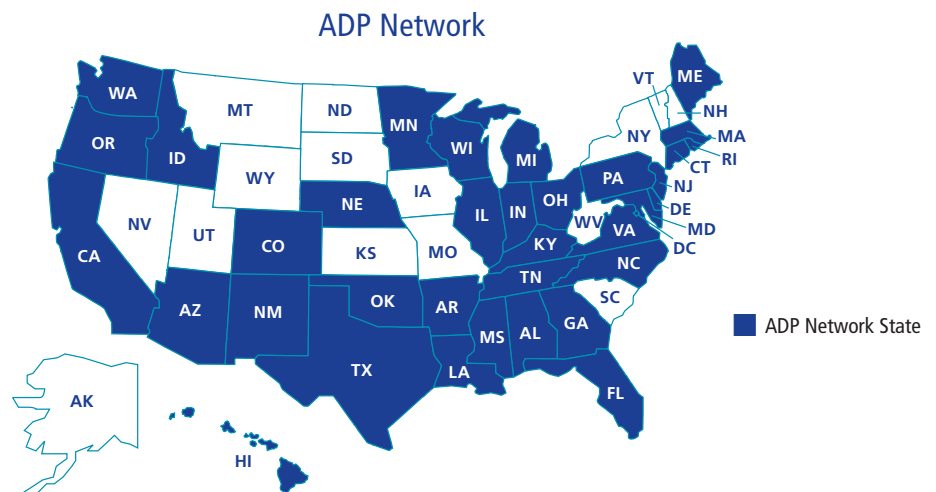
Designing an accountability system focused on preparing all students for success in postsecondary education and careers requires using a rich, comprehensive set of indicators. Achieve's survey asked states about the inclusion of four critical CCR *indicators* in their accountability systems: the percentages of high school graduates who earn a CCR diploma, obtain a readiness score on a high school assessment, earn college credit while in high school and require remediation upon entering college. Achieve also asked states about the ways they use each indicator, including whether they publicly report school-level data, set statewide goals, create incentives and rewards to drive progress, and hold schools and districts accountable for improving student performance.

Consistent with years past, states' accountability systems continue to slowly add CCR indicators and uses. Only **one state** uses all four CCR indicators in multiple ways at this time. For the first time this year, Achieve identified **four states** with accountability systems that include at least two CCR indicators and at least two uses. These states achieved partial credit for having a CCR accountability system. **Thirty-two states** include at least one CCR indicator and use — seven more states than last year.



At the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, governors from 45 states joined with business leaders and education officials to address a critical problem in American education: Too few students were graduating from high school prepared for the demands of college and career in an increasingly competitive global economy. Since then, to monitor and report on state progress in adopting policies that prepare *all* students for their next steps after high school graduation, Achieve has conducted an annual survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia on key college- and career-ready (CCR) policies including aligning standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and data and accountability systems with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers.

These policies, which the 13 original American Diploma Network (ADP) states first agreed to at the 2005 Education Summit, aim to close the expectations gap — the gap between the knowledge and skills of current high school graduates and what graduates really need to know and be able to do to succeed in college, career and life. Each ADP state is approaching the work in its own way, but the real power of the network is derived from the collective commitment to the CCR policies and the opportunity to share ideas and collaborate across state lines. The ADP Network has now grown to 35 states, and all states — whether members or not — have embraced the CCR agenda.



Specifically, the policy agenda calls for states to commit to college and career readiness for *all* students by:

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

These four policies are not discreet but rather are a coherent set of policies that reinforce and support one another. When one policy changes — as has been the case with the universal adoption of standards anchoring all CCR efforts in states — the other policies must be re-examined.



For each policy area of the CCR agenda, the story of state — and national — progress is varied.

Historically, Achieve’s annual 50-state report has focused on the adoption of these policies, but policy adoption is not enough. Now that all states have adopted CCR standards — which in almost all states are the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) — nearly all are working on aligned assessments, and almost half have aligned graduation requirements to CCR standards. For the first time, this year’s survey and report also address issues regarding the complex and challenging work to implement CCR policies. State-level leadership is critically important to sustain the policies even as implementation is under way in districts and schools.

WHAT IS COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS?

Being college and career ready means that a high school graduate has the academic knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics needed to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary coursework or postsecondary job training, regardless of whether that training comes from a community college, university, technical/vocational program, apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training.

English language arts and mathematics are core foundational subjects necessary for the study of all subjects, but they alone are not enough; to be college and career ready, high school graduates must have studied a rigorous and broad curriculum as part of a well-rounded education. Of course, academic preparation alone is also not enough to ensure postsecondary readiness, but it is clearly an essential part of readiness for college, career and life in the 21st century. Preparing all students for college and career is the mission of the K–12 system and also serves as a unifying agenda across the P–20 education pipeline, encompassing, for example, high-quality early education, rigorous career and technical education (CTE) programs, and postsecondary completion goals.

College and career readiness for all high school graduates is now a national priority. For this national priority to take root in districts and schools and be sustained, states must now focus on the complex challenges of implementation and lay the foundation for success. As remarkable as the effort has been to get to this point, the promise of these reforms will be realized only if these policies are fully implemented for the benefit of every student, in every classroom, in every state.

MEETING THE PROMISE

One of the shortcomings of past state standards-based reform efforts was the lack of attention to implementation, including ensuring that curricular and instructional resources and meaningful professional development were available. Implementing standards well in states will require focusing and building the capacity of school systems — from classroom educators and instructional coaches to principals to district central office staff — to support student mastery of these new, more rigorous expectations. States have recognized that implementing these new academic standards will require educators to be provided with better tools and more support to implement the standards with fidelity.

Another shortcoming of past efforts was the lack of a coordinated and coherent policy framework or structure. Successful implementation will be largely driven by changes in practice but will also require changes in policies so that all related policies will be aligned with the new expectations.

When K–12 and postsecondary system policies — including CCR standards, high school graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems — are in alignment, students receive clear signals as to what they should know and be able to do to succeed in postsecondary education, and the field receives clear signals about the shared commitment to higher expectations. Routine collaboration between K–12 and higher education leaders to review, provide input and monitor progress on policy changes reinforces the connections among policies and ensures that the whole CCR agenda is stronger than its individual parts.

Implementation occurs at many different levels. Success will require significant support by governors, state school chiefs, legislators, state board members, state agency staff, higher education leaders, educators and school leaders, business and community leaders, and the broader community. This cross-sector leadership was critical in getting to this juncture; ongoing support is essential to advancing this work now from policy adoption to implementation. On the front lines, local educators (including teachers, curriculum directors and content specialists, principals, superintendents, and central office staff) need to embrace high expectations for all students and understand clearly what the transition will look like and how it will affect their day-to-day work. Parents and students also need to understand what higher expectations will mean for students, the benefits of these expectations and what support they can anticipate to ensure that they will succeed. As reform efforts around standards implementation, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems continue, states must take steps to integrate and coordinate the streams of work within the state so that the efforts support and reinforce one another.

This report provides an overview of the progress states are making in both adopting and implementing policies as well as draws attention to key issues states should consider as implementation work continues.

Academic content standards serve as the foundation for state and district education systems. They communicate to teachers, parents and students the knowledge and skills students are expected to master in each grade and subject. CCR standards for *all* students provide the proper foundation for building policies and practice, including curriculum, instruction and assessments, to ensure student success. Adopting standards alone is not enough. States and districts must now undertake the critical task of implementation. Implementing English language arts and mathematics CCR standards (which in nearly all states means the CCSS) well will require focusing and building the capacity of school systems — from classroom educators and instructional coaches to principals to district central office staff — to support student mastery of these new expectations.

Between the 2004 release of the ADP benchmarks and the 2010 release of the K–12 CCSS, a national consensus formed: Academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics must be aligned to the expectations of college and career and must be internationally benchmarked. States increasingly recognized that to be competitive in the 21st century, American students must have the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and in the knowledge-based economy and must be prepared to compete with students from the highest-performing countries around the world, not just peers from other states. The states that participated in developing the CCSS determined the knowledge and skills that all high school graduates must possess to be successful in first-year, credit-bearing college courses or to qualify for the postsecondary education or training needed for good, entry-level jobs with clear pathways to advancement.¹

As this year’s survey data reflect, all states have embraced the importance of establishing CCR expectations for all students.² **Forty-six states and the District of Columbia**³ have adopted the CCSS; the remaining **four states (Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia)** have developed and adopted their own CCR standards.⁴ By 2015–16 *all* K–12 English language arts and mathematics instruction should reflect CCR expectations. States now face the challenge of implementing the standards using various strategies designed to ensure that *all* students have access to the full range of CCSS/CCR standards.

THE QUESTION

In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they have adopted the CCSS or high school academic content standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics aligned to CCR expectations. Achieve also asked states about their support for the transition to full implementation of CCSS/CCR standards through curricular and instructional materials, how state-provided professional development is changing to ensure that teachers and principals are equipped to transition to the CCSS/CCR standards, and the timeline for classroom implementation of/transition to English and mathematics standards aligned to the CCSS/CCR expectations.



THE CRITERIA

Achieve considers state standards to be aligned with CCR expectations if the standards are based on the best available evidence of what is needed for success in postsecondary education and the workplace. In addition, Achieve looks at whether the state's development process was guided by the expectations of the state's postsecondary and business communities, whether those communities verified that the resulting standards articulate the knowledge and skills required for success in college and the workplace, and whether an external organization verified the standards' alignment to CCR expectations. The CCSS are aligned with CCR expectations.

ROLE OF THE STATES

Curricular and Instructional Supports

Beyond developing and adopting standards, states have the ability and authority to affect change in classrooms by ensuring that educators, curriculum directors and principals have the resources and skills they need to succeed. State efforts to affect change can range from directly providing materials to vetting and approving materials to guiding local school leaders through frameworks for decisionmaking around high-quality materials. Having common academic standards across most states provides a unique opportunity to build on and share curricular and instructional materials beyond state borders. (See sidebar on page 10.) While each state's historical state-, regional-, district-, school- and classroom-level processes for adopting and implementing new materials (including varying governance structures and legal authorities) shape the state's role, every state clearly has an important role to play.

Work is under way in states and districts to ensure that the content taught in classrooms is rigorous and engaging for students and aligned to the CCSS/CCR standards. Achieve asked states to provide information on how they are supporting district and school transitions to fully implement their CCSS/CCR standards through curricular and instructional materials. There are many ways states can and have approached this work, and the possible options are not mutually exclusive.

DEVELOPING NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

Through a collaborative, state-led process, new K–12 science standards are being developed that will be rich in content and practice and arranged in a coherent manner across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education. The National Research Council (NRC) began the process by developing the *Framework for K–12 Science Education*, which was published in July 2011. The Framework was a critical first step because it is grounded in the most current research on science and science learning and identifies the science all K–12 students should know.

Now, in a process being managed by Achieve, 26 states are leading the development of

science standards that will be faithful to the NRC Framework. As part of the development process, the standards will undergo multiple reviews from many stakeholders, including two public reviews of drafts — one occurred in spring 2012 and another will happen in fall/winter 2012 — allowing all who have a stake in science education an opportunity to inform the content and organization of the standards. The K–12 Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) will be ready for state adoption in early 2013. (See www.nextgenscience.org.)

The vision represented in the Framework is that students must be engaged at the nexus of three dimensions: (1) science and engineering practice, (2) crosscutting concepts, and (3) disciplinary core ideas. The NGSS will require that students demonstrate a sense of contextual understanding with regard to scientific knowledge, how it is

acquired and applied, and how science is connected through a series of concepts that help further understanding of the natural and designed world. Student performance expectations will include a student's ability to apply a practice to content knowledge, thereby focusing on understanding and application as opposed to memorization of facts devoid of context.



The NGSS Lead States and writers are paying close attention to the

CCSS to ensure effective learning progressions by not requiring knowledge of mathematical or literacy concepts prior to instruction. The NGSS will also show alignment to the CCSS.



Achieve identified several different ways that states are supporting districts, schools and, ultimately, educators with standards implementation, including:

- ▶ Guiding/supporting district and school use by providing high-quality processes, protocols and exemplars, including rubrics or tools that the state provides, which are often used by district leaders, principals and curriculum directors (e.g., alignment tools).
- ▶ Approving/certifying a list of curricular and supplemental materials aligned to the new CCSS/CCR standards.
- ▶ Developing curricular and supplemental materials for voluntary use by districts and schools to align the state's required courses to the CCSS/CCR standards. These materials include those the state provides or makes available for direct use in classrooms, often by teachers (e.g., model units, lessons, curricular maps, graphic organizers).
- ▶ Requiring district and school use of curricular materials aligned to the state's required courses and the CCSS/CCR standards.

Nearly all states reported that they are providing districts and schools high-quality protocols, processes, rubrics or tools to build capacity and understanding of how to evaluate and develop aligned curricular and instructional materials. **More than two-thirds of states** are also developing or making available tools for direct, voluntary use by districts and schools (most often by teachers). Typically these materials are housed on state education agency websites. (See table on page 11.)

Regardless of the role that the state plays, it is important for states to clearly and consistently define and communicate what quality looks like and ensure that schools, districts and regional service providers have a way of accessing high-quality materials and resources — whether use is required or voluntary.

THE POWER OF COMMON: STATE COLLABORATION TO EVALUATE INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR MATERIALS

Many states share a desire to collaborate with other states to develop tools and processes for educators to determine the quality of instructional materials aligned to the CCSS. Equally important, through this work, these states also want to increase the capacity of educators at the classroom, building, district and state levels so that they are equipped to

make determinations regarding quality and alignment of instructional materials to the CCSS on their own.

In January 2012, Achieve convened more than half of the ADP Network states to launch a new ADP Network collaborative — Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQulP). This collaborative will convene throughout 2012 and 2013, providing states an opportunity to come together to learn about measures of quality, evaluate materials and improve on existing materials using the feedback

provided by educators as part of the states' broader effort to support educators in CCSS implementation.

EQulP builds on the rubrics and processes developed by the Tri-State Collaborative (**Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island**) to determine the quality and alignment of instructional lessons and units to the CCSS. These tools and quality review processes are available to all states in support of their CCSS implementation efforts. (See www.achieve.org/EQulP.)

STATE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION

	Providing processes, protocols and exemplars	Approving/certifying list of materials	Developing materials for voluntary use	Requiring use of materials
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	✓		✓	
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	46	16	39	5

Types of efforts listed in this table are not mutually exclusive. A number of states provided examples of efforts to support implementation of aligned curricular and instructional materials outside the scope of the categories identified in the survey.



Professional Development

In addition to high-quality materials and resources, state and district leaders recognize that widespread efforts are needed to provide highly effective and cost-efficient professional development around the CCSS/CCR standards. Transitioning to CCR standards will provide states and districts the opportunity to examine and align professional development in a thoughtful and comprehensive way. (See sidebar below.) States must work to dispel the misguided notion that the CCSS are not demonstrably different from past versions of state standards.

Achieve asked states how state-provided professional development is changing to ensure that teachers and principals are equipped to transition to the CCSS/CCR standards. The categories below are not mutually exclusive.

- ▶ **39 states** have developed a coordinated agencywide plan and calendar for professional development aligned to the CCSS/CCR standards;
- ▶ **20 states** have or will identify high-quality or promising providers for districts/schools to access;
- ▶ **14 states** have or will audit existing professional development offerings for alignment to the CCSS/CCR standards; and
- ▶ **Three states** do not directly deliver professional development to teachers and principals.

Regardless of the role the state plays, it is critical that states make certain that the professional development teachers and building leaders receive is aligned to the CCSS/CCR standards, high quality and capable of affecting changes in instruction.

ALIGNING TEACHER LICENSURE POLICIES WITH CCSS/CCR STANDARDS

Most states have or are in the process of aligning their teacher licensure/relicensure policies with their standards. States recognize the importance of ensuring that teachers have the education, support and skills they need to be successful instructional leaders.

Leading states are actively working to increase the awareness and understanding of the CCSS among higher education arts and sciences and education faculty. A number of state educational agencies have recognized that teachers' deep understanding of the content and instructional shifts within the standards is a key factor in their ability to successfully teach to these higher standards. Given that licensure policies play a leading role in determining the knowledge and skills teachers must demonstrate to receive a teaching license, states are taking steps to re-examine their teacher licensure requirements, including course requirements

and assessments, to better ensure that both preservice and in-service teachers have the requisite knowledge and demonstrate mastery of the standards and aligned instructional shifts.

To date, **21 states** have or are currently in the process of aligning their teacher licensure/relicensure policies with the CCSS/CCR standards, and **15 additional states** are planning to do so in the near future. Given differences across the states regarding capacity and where the authority lies to implement the changes, states are approaching the work in a variety of ways. For example:

- ▶ In **Arkansas**, the state education agency plans to use information from a pilot of its teacher evaluation systems in 2013–14, along with best practices, to determine how to restructure licensure policies and teacher preparation programs to ensure that teachers are equipped to effectively teach the CCSS.

- ▶ In **Kentucky**, state policymakers passed Senate Bill 1 in 2009 mandating that higher education institutions create professional development plans for higher education faculty that focus on integrating the CCSS into teacher preservice as well as developmental courses.
- ▶ In **Tennessee**, the state has launched two projects for teacher and principal training programs: Integrating Common Core into Pre-Service Training and Integrating the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System into Pre-Service Training. These efforts include developing a statewide curriculum for integrating the CCSS into preservice training that will provide a common tool for all programs to use but will allow for enough flexibility so that it can meet the specific needs of individual programs and local education agencies. The Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission are working collaboratively on these projects to ensure alignment.

Neither high-quality standards nor professional development activities alone will increase students' preparedness for college and career if the state does not know what is working — and what is not. Too much teacher and leader time, money, and resources have been invested in professional development that does not serve them well. States should establish quality control and feedback loops to evaluate the impact of professional development activities. To that end, Achieve determined that:

- ▶ **34 states** are employing user satisfaction surveys for teachers and/or school leaders;
- ▶ **20 states** are using self-reports of changed practice by teachers and/or school leaders who participated in aligned professional development (vs. nonparticipants);
- ▶ **13 states** are examining the impact on student outcomes (e.g., through formative or summative assessments); and
- ▶ **11 states** are using observations of changed practice by teacher and/or school leaders who participated in aligned professional development (vs. nonparticipants).

As states across the nation take on the ambitious work of implementing the CCSS, it is critical that they have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of their efforts, including whether all educators are being reached, whether state supports and resources are meeting the needs of the field, and what challenges exist and require the state education agencies' attention. To better understand these issues and know whether implementation is taking place as intended, state education agencies can use quality control and feedback loops. Achieve, the U.S. Education Delivery Institute and Education First Consulting collaborated to develop guidance and a bank of possible survey questions for states to use to develop customized surveys on CCSS implementation efforts. (See www.achieve.org/files/GuidanceforsurveysFINAL6-25-12-TOSHAREv2.pdf.)

Timelines for Implementation of CCSS/CCR Standards

To anchor the transition to new standards, each state has set a timeline for full K–12 implementation. The timeline sends clear signals to educators and the public about the transition to higher expectations. Similarly, it can help drive efforts to provide professional development opportunities for educators and administrators as well as guide decisionmaking in areas such as the procurement or development of curricular and instructional materials.

States are taking varied approaches to phasing in their CCR standards in their classrooms — by grade, content areas, etc. — though most are beginning with the elementary years and building toward high school. It should be noted that in some states, districts and schools intend to move faster than the state plans.



CCSS/CCR STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The following table captures states' timelines for classroom implementation of/and transition to English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics standards aligned to the CCSS/CCR expectations.

	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
Alabama		Math: K–12	ELA: K–12	
Alaska		ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	ELA: K–2; 9–12 Math: K–2; 9–12	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Arizona	ELA: K Math: K	ELA: K–3; 8–9 Math: K–2	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Arkansas	ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	ELA: K–8 Math: K–8	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
California				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Colorado			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Connecticut			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Delaware		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12		
District of Columbia	ELA: K–12 Math: K–2	Math: K–12		
Florida	ELA: K Math: K	ELA: K–1 Math: K–1	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Georgia		ELA: K–12 Math: K–9	Math: K–10	Math: K–12
Hawaii	ELA: K–2; 11–12 Math: K–2; 11–12		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Idaho			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Illinois			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Indiana	ELA: K Math: K	ELA: K–1 Math: K–1	ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Iowa		ELA: 9–12 Math: 9–12		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Kansas				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Kentucky	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12			
Louisiana		ELA: K–1 Math: K–1	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Maine		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12		
Maryland			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Massachusetts			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Michigan	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12			
Minnesota ⁵	Math: K–12	ELA: K–12		
Mississippi	ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	ELA: K–8 Math: K–8	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Missouri			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Montana			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Nebraska			ELA: K–12	Math: K–12
Nevada	ELA: K–8	ELA: K–12 Math: K–2	Math: K–8	Math: K–12
New Hampshire				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
New Jersey	Math: K–2	ELA: K–12 Math: K–5, 9–12	Math: K–12	
New Mexico		ELA: K–3 Math: K–3	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
New York		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12		
North Carolina		ELA: K–12 Math: K–12		
North Dakota			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Ohio			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Oklahoma			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Oregon			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Pennsylvania			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Rhode Island	ELA: K, 8 Math: K, 8	ELA: K, 1, 8, 9 Math: K, 1, 8, 9	ELA: K–10 Math: K–10	ELA: K–11 Math: K–11
South Carolina			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
South Dakota				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Tennessee	ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	Math: K–8	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Texas ⁶	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12			
Utah	ELA: K–12 Math: 6, 9	Math: K–7, 9–10	Math: K–12	
Vermont			ELA: K–12 Math: K–12	
Virginia	Math: K–12	ELA: K–12		
Washington				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
West Virginia	ELA: K Math: K	ELA: K–1 Math: K–1	ELA: K–2 Math: K–2	ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Wisconsin				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12
Wyoming				ELA: K–12 Math: K–12

KEY QUESTIONS FOR STATES TO CONSIDER

- ▶ How is the state moving from policies on the books to supporting district and classroom practices that can improve student achievement?
- ▶ How is the state going to evaluate the impact of implementing the CCSS on current mathematics, English, history/social studies, science and technical courses?
- ▶ Educators need access to high-quality, aligned classroom materials, such as textbooks and instructional software, formative assessment tasks, lesson plans, scope and sequence maps, open education resources, and the like, to support CCSS-focused instruction. Is the state clearly and consistently defining and communicating what quality looks like and ensuring that schools, districts and regional service providers have a way of accessing high-quality materials and resources — whether these are required to be used or voluntary and whether they are developed by the state, districts or third-party providers?
- ▶ Has the state established feedback loops to monitor the efficacy and effectiveness of its efforts?
- ▶ How will the state measure evidence of effectiveness? Where will the evidence come from?
- ▶ Does the state system have clear strategies to ensure that high-quality instructional materials are aligned to the CCSS?
- ▶ Does the state have a clear definition or criteria for quality and alignment of classroom tools? How is the state ensuring that all teachers have access to high-quality and CCSS-aligned classroom materials across the range of subjects and grades?

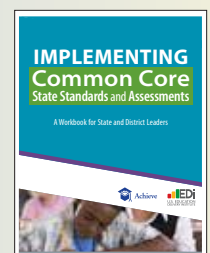
TOOLS TO SUPPORT CCSS IMPLEMENTATION

Ensuring that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and career depends on full implementation of the CCSS in states and districts. To support states, Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute partnered to develop a practical Common Core implementation workbook. *Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments: A Workbook for State and District Leaders* uses a proven performance management methodology known as “delivery” to lay out clear action steps for states and districts. It provides relevant information, case stories of good practice,

key questions and hands-on exercises for leadership teams to complete together.

To further assist states in gauging the strength of their implementation plans and to illustrate how to improve them, Education First Consulting and Achieve developed a complementary resource, the *Common Core State Standards Implementation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool*. This tool sets a high standard for a strong state role, provides concrete details and examples to help state leaders meet that standard, and profiles promising state approaches. Accounting for differences across states, the rubric identifies strategies to ensure accountability for results, high-quality services and products, and alignment of services and products with the

expectations articulated in the CCSS. While the workbook is mainly about the *how* — what it takes to organize and manage the complex implementation plan required for success — the rubric and self-assessment tool focus more directly on the *what*. Both tools were designed to assist states in assessing the effectiveness of their implementation plans and to strengthen their ongoing efforts to implement the CCSS. (See the “Implementation Planning Tools” tab at www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core.)





GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Completing a rigorous course of study in high school aligned to college and career expectations is one of the strongest predictors of whether students ultimately will succeed in postsecondary coursework and reach their goals, including attaining a degree.⁷ Moreover, requiring students to complete such a course of study is one of the most explicit ways to ensure that CCR academic content standards reach all students, in all high schools.

Achieve considers states' mathematics and English language arts high school graduation requirements to be at the CCR level if students are required to complete a curriculum consistent with the entry-level expectations of college faculty and employers. Of course, readiness for college and career depends on more than the mastery of English language arts/literacy and mathematics content and skills, but these two content areas serve as a foundation for the study of other academic disciplines and contextualized learning.

In states that have adopted the CCSS, students must take at least three years of rigorous mathematics through an Algebra II/Integrated Math III course (or an equivalent) to learn what is found in the CCSS. In fact, given the amount of algebra in the CCSS, students will need to take at least two years of algebra (or the equivalent integrated courses) to reach the "college- and career-ready line" identified in the CCSS. In English, where course titles often do not convey meaning, states will need to unpack the English language arts/literacy standards into courses that reflect the full range of the CCSS for high school. This unpacking will, by necessity, extend beyond traditional English courses. It will require states to look at how to integrate the literacy standards across the disciplines and, in doing so, help provide all students a well-rounded education that includes history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

A CCR course of study is more than just the number or names of required courses; more important are the content and rigor of those courses and their alignment to the state's CCR standards. As states align and/or raise course requirements to the CCR level, they will need to identify levers to ensure that courses taught in high schools throughout the state are consistently rigorous and aligned with the state standards. Otherwise, the content or instruction in these courses, particularly in the more advanced ones, may become watered down as more students enroll in them. While some students currently are exposed to content-rich and stimulating classes that build CCR skills in high school, many others have access to courses that are rigorous in name alone.

THE QUESTION

In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they require all students to complete a CCR course of study, as defined by ADP. 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 career, they need to complete a challenging course of study in mathematics that includes the content typically taught through an Algebra II course or its equivalent and four years of grade-level English aligned with CCR standards.⁸



ROLE OF THE STATES

Improving Access and Opportunity with CCR Graduation Requirements

In the past eight years, **twenty-three states and the District of Columbia** have raised their high school graduation requirements to the CCR level. In 2011, **three states — Hawaii, Iowa and Washington** — raised their graduation requirements to the CCR level. **Four additional states — Colorado, Maine, New Jersey and West Virginia** — have proposals or legislation under consideration that, if adopted, would require all students to meet the full set of expectations defined in the CCSS — either through a traditional course-based requirement or through a competency-based approach. (See sidebar on page 20.)

That leaves **23 states** with CCR standards that have not aligned their graduation requirements to ensure that all students meet the expectations found in their standards. Providing all students a chance to succeed after high school means making different choices for and with students while they are in high school. These choices start by committing to graduating all students with the knowledge and skills needed to enter nonremedial courses in postsecondary education or training.

CCSS implementation provides an opportunity for all states, including the **23 states and District of Columbia** that currently have CCR graduation requirements, to examine current policy and practice to improve access and opportunity for all students.

REQUIRING MATHEMATICS THROUGHOUT HIGH SCHOOL

The research is clear that students benefit from being exposed to mathematics during all four years of high school.⁹ Students who engage in mathematics throughout high school tap into and build on their advanced analytic skills and are more likely to be successful in postsecondary coursework, as they have maintained their momentum and continued to practice mathematics throughout their high school experience. Ongoing exposure to mathematics across four years specifically allows students to deepen their conceptual understanding in the content area and maintain their learning gains (and avoid suffering a learning loss, often most acute in mathematics, before entering postsecondary education). It also is associated with higher ACT and SAT scores.

Since many students will complete the CCSS/CCR mathematics standards before high school graduation, states need to ensure that they are offering courses that include rich and meaningful mathematics — whether in traditional mathematics courses, capstone experiences or applied/technical courses with rigorous (and identified) embedded mathematics. **Kentucky**, for example, recognizing that mathematics can be learned and reinforced in a variety of courses, requires three years of mathematics but also requires that students be *engaged* in mathematics every year of high school. Examples of the types of courses that fit these criteria, beyond the more typical Precalculus/Calculus sequence, might include Modeling and Quantitative Reasoning, Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics, Data Analysis, Engineering or Physics, Personal

Finance, Multimedia Information Technology, or Architectural Drafting.

While not every student needs to learn calculus in high school, it is critical that all students continue to engage in mathematics throughout all four years of high school so they build on their knowledge base and have more opportunities to apply mathematics in a variety of ways. Of equal importance is that states, districts and schools offer courses that are aligned with students' interests and post-high school plans, so students can truly see the connection between what they are learning, why they are learning it — and what it will mean for their future. (See www.achieve.org/math-works.)



CCR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ACROSS STATES

States raising their course requirements in English and mathematics to the CCR level have structured the requirements in one of two ways:

1. **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. **Nine states and the District of Columbia** have set mandatory course requirements.
2. **Default:** An alternative approach is to automatically enroll all students in the “default” CCR curriculum but allow students to opt out of the requirements if their parents sign a waiver. States establish a default diploma in one of two main ways:

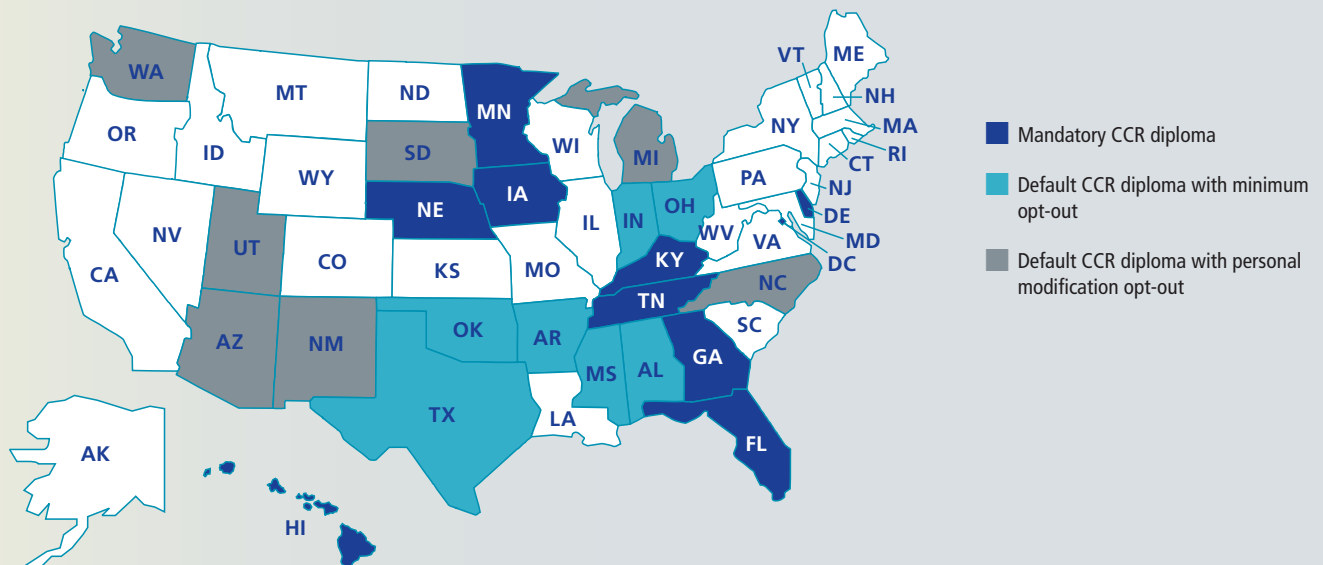
► **Minimum Diploma:** States offer a separate minimum diploma for students who opt out of the default CCR curriculum. It’s important that the **seven states** with a minimum diploma opt-out carefully monitor which students in which schools earn which diploma to ensure that all students have access to 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 CCR graduation requirements. For the **seven 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 — and how students with and without personal modifications are faring after high school (e.g., remediation rates for recent graduates at two- and four-year postsecondary institutions).

States that have adopted CCR graduation requirements — but have not made course requirements mandatory — should take steps to build in monitoring of who is opting out of course sequences or modifying their course of study by opting out of specific courses. Unless the number of students opting out of default CCR requirements is monitored and reported, critical course-taking completion data are lost, along with the opportunity to identify course patterns that best prepare students for college success and promising practices. Further, this information can inform decisions about teacher assignment and resource

allocation and identify areas of challenge and intervention for students. States in the process of phasing in new course requirements — or those that already have CCR requirements in place — should work with districts and schools to collect this information. (See table on page 21.) Of the **14 states** with a default CCR diploma with a minimum or personal modification option, **nine** track the percentage of students opting out at the state level. Of these states, **five** report publicly the percentage of students earning each type of diploma at the school level.

States that do not have CCR diploma requirements in place but have adopted the CCSS/CCR standards undoubtedly have gaps between the content and skills articulated in the standards and the courses currently required for a high school diploma. Collecting and reporting individual districts’ high school course requirements — which many times will exceed the course requirements “floor” that the state sets — can serve as a diagnostic assessment of how wide the gap is between the state and district course requirements and the CCSS/CCR standards — as well as the lift required to fully implement the CCSS/CCR standards in all schools and districts.



Addressing the Disconnect between Graduation Requirements and Standards

Most states do not currently require students to take courses aligned to their CCSS/CCR standards. Though all states have adopted the CCSS or CCR standards, the majority are not considering proposals to change their graduation requirements in light of the CCSS/CCR standards. This disconnect is cause for concern.

States' graduation course requirements range in rigor from two units of unspecified math to four units of math that must include a course beyond Algebra II. Nearly all states require four units of English to graduate; however, states' levels of specificity in what those courses are vary widely — from unspecified altogether to four years of grade-level English. For states to realize the full promise of their CCSS/CCR standards, they will have to ensure that all students take courses in English and mathematics that fully cover the standards.

Issues that states will have to consider include:

- ▶ Whether to require traditional courses or take an integrated approach;¹⁰
- ▶ Whether to keep current course requirements for all students or change and/or raise requirements to cover the full range of the CCSS so that all students meet the CCR level;
- ▶ Whether content that has been typically taught in one course needs to be reassigned to another course; and
- ▶ What to do for students who meet the CCR requirements earlier so they stay engaged (particularly in mathematics) through the end of high school and what to do for students who need four years or more to meet the CCR requirements.

One way states can achieve true alignment between their academic standards and their graduation course requirements — which for some states fall under the purview of different governance structures — is to explicitly align their graduation requirements to the new standards.

- ▶ **Kentucky** has linked its academic standards to graduation course requirements in statute, mandating that credits include the “content standards as provided in the Kentucky core academic standards.” Kentucky directly names the standards statute in the graduation requirements statute, solidifying the connection between the two. Rather than just specifying course names, Kentucky emphasizes that courses must include the content contained in the Kentucky core academic standards for that discipline.
- ▶ Likewise, beginning in 2012–13, **New Mexico** plans to re-evaluate high school graduation requirements and course content to ensure that all students are prepared for postsecondary education or careers. The state will partner with institutions of higher education to examine and refine graduation requirements and course specifications to ensure alignment with the CCSS.

Seat Time and Beyond

Nearly every state currently organizes its high school mathematics and English language arts/literacy standards into courses — such as Algebra I and Geometry or English I and II. Increasingly, however, states are embracing competency-based policies. (See sidebar on page 20.) Regardless of its approach to graduation requirements, each state will need to think through how it wants to go about implementing its CCR standards and determine the impact implementation will have on existing high school course requirements.

Depending on their current graduation requirements, some states may need to adjust their existing policies, course structures and pathways to ensure that students have options for how they can reach the CCR level. Even states that have had CCR graduation requirements for all students must revisit the requirements if they adopt new standards. As part of comprehensive implementation of the CCSS/CCR standards, states can take several approaches to provide signals and supports to districts and schools. States can organize the



CCSS/CCR standards into model core courses and pathways or provide sample model core courses and pathways. Alternatively, states can issue guidance, criteria or mechanisms to districts and schools to support and monitor the development and implementation of those courses and pathways.

As states pursue policies and practices to improve high school graduation rates while aligning the high school diploma to CCR expectations, traditional notions of seat time are giving way to competency-based pathways that allow students to advance upon mastery of the standards rather than time spent in the classroom. What matters, of course, is that students have mastered the mathematics and English language arts/literacy they need to be college and career ready; course requirements (and course access) are one major indicator, but mastery can be determined in other ways as well. Leading states are innovating with competency-based pathways such as the following:

- ▶ Students receive credit toward graduation for passing an end-of-course exam, without completing the course;
- ▶ Students progress through a course at their own pace, moving through the content as they master standards grouped into modules, clusters or units — an approach that has long been encouraged but requires new forms of school organization and robust instructional management systems;
- ▶ Students use multiple sources of evidence, including assessments, research projects and presentations, to display mastery of course standards or competencies for credit toward graduation based on state-approved criteria and processes for evaluation that hold all students to a high and equal standard for mastery; and
- ▶ Students who are behind in credits accelerate their progress toward graduation by completing blended online and face-to-face coursework, along with assessments that indicate mastery of the standards.

COMPETENCY-BASED METHODS FOR AWARDED HIGH SCHOOL COURSE CREDIT

Competency-based education describes policies and practices whereby students move on after mastery of content standards rather than after a set number of hours of seat time or Carnegie units. It can be applied to progress within a course, such as moving from one instructional unit to another only after achieving mastery of the content, or to progress through courses and to awarding high school graduation credit to students at the point at which they master course standards rather than at the conclusion of a semester or year.

Approximately **35 states** have policies permitting or encouraging students to attain credit through competency-based pathways rather than seat time, with varying degrees of intensity — from permitting a chief state school officer or state board of education

to issue waivers from seat-time regulations, to providing technical assistance to districts and schools interested in pursuing such approaches, to actually requiring the use of competency-based pathways.

Maine is one of the nation's leaders in advancing competency-based (also known as proficiency-based) learning. In May 2012, the state approved legislation requiring districts to design proficiency-based pathways to high school graduation by 2017. The law requires students to demonstrate proficiency by taking educational experiences in mathematics, English language arts, and science and technology each year of secondary schooling and by meeting state content standards. It also permits students to present multiple forms of evidence of meeting these standards, such as assessments, portfolios and projects. The state also provides technical assistance to innovative districts that are interested in expanding their use of competency-based

learning approaches. (See *Maine's Center for Best Practices*: <http://maine.gov/doe/cbp/index.html>.)

Maine joins with other states — including **Kentucky, New Hampshire, Ohio, West Virginia and Wisconsin** — in working through design and implementation issues in the Council of Chief State School Officers' Innovation Lab Network. **Rhode Island** has several schools that are developing policies and systems that promote proficiency-/competency-based graduation pathways for students. In **Missouri**, students can earn high school credit through mastery of course competencies if school districts notify the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and ensure that the performance level aligns to mastery of the course competencies. In **Florida** and **New York**, students may earn high school credit by earning a certain score on an end-of-course (Florida) or Regents (New York) exam in lieu of completing the full course.

FIRST COHORTS OF STUDENTS TO GRADUATE HAVING MET CCR REQUIREMENTS

The number of students facing CCR graduation requirements continues to slowly grow. For the class of 2012, students in **11 states — Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Utah —** and the **District of Columbia** were defaulted into CCR course requirements in the 9th grade. These 11 states and the District of Columbia educate 25 percent of public high school students in the United States. For the class of 2013, students in **five additional states — Alabama, Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina and Tennessee —** face such requirements, increasing the percentage of high school students with CCR graduation requirements nationally to 35 percent. By 2016, 49 percent of America’s high school students across 23 states and the District of Columbia will be subject to CCR graduation requirements.¹¹

	2010 or before	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Texas ¹²	✓						
Arkansas	✓						
Oklahoma	✓						
South Dakota ¹³	✓			✓			
Delaware		✓					
District of Columbia		✓					
Indiana		✓					
Michigan		✓					
Georgia			✓				
Kentucky			✓				
Mississippi			✓				
Utah			✓				
Alabama				✓			
Arizona				✓			
New Mexico				✓			
North Carolina				✓			
Tennessee				✓			
Ohio					✓		
Iowa ¹⁴						✓	
Minnesota						✓	
Nebraska ¹⁵						✓	
Florida							✓
Hawaii							✓
Washington							✓

Ensuring Consistency of Rigor

As the CCSS/CCR standards are implemented, the next question becomes how states ensure that the new standards are translated into courses and consistently applied across classrooms. When Achieve asked whether states examined or planned to examine current high school courses required for students to graduate to ensure that they align with the new CCSS/CCR standards, the majority of states indicated they would. However, in most states, districts and schools are responsible for revising and aligning coursework to the standards. Some states require districts to assure in writing that this has happened, and some states support districts with their review of courses to ensure alignment to the new standards. In a few states, committees are formed to examine the standards, or state boards must take action to adopt new course descriptions that reflect the new academic standards. Realizing the critical role many districts and schools play in making certain that the new standards are reflected in courses, states must provide sufficient clarity, guidance and review of courses — beyond course titles to actual delivery of the standards — and support district and school transition to the new standards.



States can employ a variety of mechanisms to monitor and ensure the consistency and rigor of the courses students are required to complete:

- ▶ **30 states** require course standards, **27 states** administer standards-aligned end-of-course assessments, **13 states** employ a course approval process and **nine states** conduct sample curriculum audits.
- ▶ A number of states are building on their course approval process to allow locally developed courses to count toward both academic and CTE requirements. Specifically, **33 states** have processes to approve district courses, with embedded CTE expectations, that meet the states' graduation requirements criteria.
 - **California** has enabled the development of high school CTE courses that meet the state's rigorous "a–g" admissions requirements through the University of California Curriculum Integration Institutes (UCCI). As of spring 2012, 32 courses had been developed at the UCCI Institutes, such as Business Algebra and Applied Medical English, 14 of which have been approved by K–12 and higher education and are now being taught in 20 California high schools. More broadly, through the University of California approval process, more than 9,000 courses have been found to meet the "a–g" threshold in one or more content areas.
 - **Wisconsin** will also allow districts to expand the options available to students to meet high school course requirements. Under new legislative statute, the Department of Public Instruction now has the authority to approve equivalency course requests from local school boards, resulting in the option for students to meet the state's graduation requirements through approved CTE courses, such as Business Communication and Veterinary Science.

State higher education system(s) should collaborate with K–12 leaders to clearly communicate the course-based requirements for admission into public institutions and how they relate to the state's high school graduation course requirements — particularly when the state offers more than one type of diploma for students. Some states have chosen to fully align their exit and minimum entrance requirements at a CCR level. At a minimum, students should know what courses they need to take to be eligible for entry into college, as well as for state scholarships. Advancing this work will require postsecondary systems and institutions to be more clear and transparent about what it means to be college ready so that key stakeholders — such as high school educators, administrators, guidance counselors, parents and students — receive concrete and consistent signals about readiness.



KEY QUESTIONS FOR STATES TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Does the state have statewide minimum high school graduation requirements that expect *all* students to take English and mathematics courses that cover the full range of its CCR standards, and/or does the state have proficiency-based requirements aligned to its full set of CCSS/CCR standards?
- ▶ Has the state made the connection — in policy and practice — between standards and graduation requirements? Has the state examined whether the high school courses that students are required to complete to graduate are aligned with its standards?
- ▶ Does the state report the number and percentage of students opting out of a required CCR course of study — whether they opt into a minimum diploma or personally modify individual course requirements?
- ▶ Does the state have a plan in place to review *courses* to make sure they are covering the state's standards in a progression that ensures college and career readiness for all? Is the state clear about how it ensures the consistency/rigor of courses? Does it give districts or schools guidance?
- ▶ Is the state reviewing its current mathematics requirements, including but not limited to requiring mathematics throughout high school, to ensure that students graduate ready for postsecondary education and training without the need for remediation?
- ▶ Has the state developed processes, protocols, guidance and/or exemplars showing strong alignment among the CCSS and CTE expectations and pathways?



ASSESSMENTS

Today's high school students take a wide variety of assessments for different purposes. Students take state-required high school tests for school accountability and/or graduation and national assessments such as the ACT and SAT for college admissions. Many of the students who attend postsecondary institutions must also take placement tests to see, in part, if they are ready for credit-bearing work in English and mathematics or whether they must take remedial classes first. Such a system is not only inefficient and costly but also sends mixed messages to students about what is important; the system is sorely in need of reform.

States need comprehensive and coherent K–12 assessment systems that value and provide signals of college and career readiness and reflect the following four core principles:

- ▶ Testing should support and reflect good teaching and become a tool for instructional improvement, including ensuring that students get the support they need on a timely basis.
- ▶ Tests should assess the full range of CCR standards, such as the CCSS or other state-developed standards that prepare students for postsecondary success. Some of the knowledge and skills that college faculty and employers value most in high school graduates are difficult to measure via multiple-choice items, requiring the addition of performance assessments or items in state assessment systems.
- ▶ High school test results should open doors to higher education and good jobs for students. States should administer assessments in high school that are used by postsecondary institutions to place freshmen directly into first-year, credit-bearing courses without need for remediation — and by high schools to identify students in need of additional support and instruction if they are not ready for credit-bearing, college-level coursework.
- ▶ Reaching a certain score on the state assessment should mean that a student is on track to be or is academically prepared by the end of high school for success in college and career.

Well-developed CCR tests create a bridge between two otherwise disconnected systems, send a message of aligned expectations and open doors for students. **Eighteen states** currently administer to all students tests capable of measuring students' college and career readiness. Of these, **seven states** are using state-developed assessments, and **11 states** are using a national college admissions exam. Among these 18 states, **four new states (Florida, North Carolina, Oregon and Wyoming)** require all students to take an assessment that has a score that signals college readiness and will be used by the state's public postsecondary system for placement into entry-level, credit-bearing courses.

Any state that is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is considered to be in the planning stages of developing a CCR assessment. Through these two consortia, a total of **44 states and the District of Columbia** are collaborating to develop common assessments aligned to the CCSS; the assessments will be designed to provide an honest picture of how well students, schools and the education system are achieving on the most critical knowledge and skills in mathematics and English and to support needed instructional changes.

THE QUESTION

In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they administer to all students an assessment of CCR 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.¹⁶

THE CRITERIA

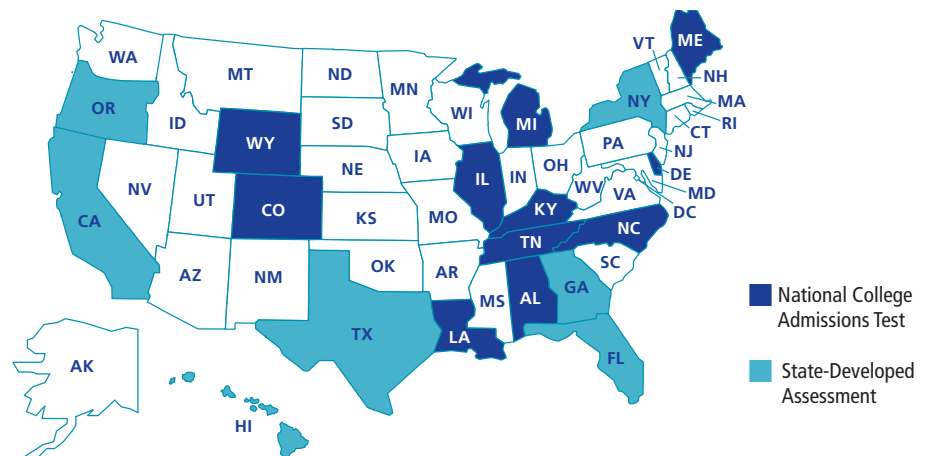
Achieve considers a state to have a CCR assessment if a component of its high school assessment system measures students on CCR literacy and mathematics knowledge and skills. The assessments must have credibility and utility with postsecondary institutions and/or employers so that achieving a certain score signals being truly prepared for success after high school.

ROLE OF THE STATES

Planning Transition and Implementation

To date, **18 states** have adopted policies to administer a CCR assessment to all high school students — either an assessment developed in state or a national college admissions exam.

States that administer a CCR assessment to all students



Most states are participating in PARCC or SBAC. By 2014–15, most states will therefore be in a position to administer new, next generation assessment systems that will provide policymakers, educators, parents and students with information that is essential to improving students' readiness for college and career. States will need to establish an implementation plan for administering the new assessments once they are operational, including paying specific attention to whether or not the high school assessments will be administered to all students.

The assessments themselves will be crucial tools for educators as they translate the CCSS or other CCR academic standards into classroom practice, focusing instruction on the most critical standards and reinforcing the shifts needed to raise performance for individual students across the states. The results will also change the trajectory of student learning across states by focusing the system on improving student performance according to clear CCR expectations. As they help educators transition to these new assessments, states are taking several opportunities to focus on college and career readiness by:

- ▶ Setting new standards for proficiency on current state assessments to direct instruction for more students at higher levels of mastery on current state standards.



- ▶ Augmenting current state assessments with new items to focus instruction on the CCSS and signal the depth of understanding, skill and application that students will be asked to demonstrate on the new assessment systems.
- ▶ Building new “bridge” assessments that make more significant leaps toward the next generation assessment systems.
- ▶ Using stakeholder engagement and communications strategies to show how the new assessments will reset expectations for student performance around CCR expectations.

POSTSECONDARY USE OF CCR ASSESSMENTS

	Assessment	Administered	Postsecondary policy
Alabama	ACT (2014)/WorkKeys (2015)	2014 ¹⁷	Institutional
California	California Standards Test (CST)/Early Assessment Program (EAP)	In Use	Statewide
Colorado	ACT	In Use	Institutional
Delaware	SAT	In Use	Institutional
Florida	FCAT 2.0 Reading	In Use	Statewide (2012)
Georgia	Georgia High School Graduation Test (ELA)	In Use	Statewide
Hawaii	ADP Common Algebra II End-of-Course Exam	In Use	Statewide
Illinois	ACT/WorkKeys	In Use	Institutional
Kentucky	ACT	In Use	Statewide
Louisiana	ACT	2013 ¹⁸	Statewide
Maine	SAT	In Use	Institutional
Michigan	ACT/WorkKeys	In Use	Institutional
New York	Regents End-of-Course Exams	In Use	Statewide
North Carolina	ACT	In Use	Institutional
Oregon ¹⁹	Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS)	In Use	Statewide (2012)
Tennessee	ACT	In Use	Institutional
Texas	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)	In Use ²⁰	Statewide
Texas	End-of-Course Exams (Algebra II, English III)	In Use	Statewide (2015)
Wyoming	ACT	In Use	Institutional

A number of states — including **Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma** and **Tennessee** — that have been reported in the past as being in the process of working with postsecondary institutions to develop placement policies based on individual state-developed state tests administered to all students will begin making placement decisions with the implementation of PARCC assessments. **Mississippi** has a district-level pilot under way to administer the ACT to all students.

For several years, many states have been taking preliminary steps to move their assessment systems toward CCR expectations. This past year, for example, **Michigan** signaled its commitment to this transition by lifting the cut score for proficiency on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the high school Michigan Merit Exam (MME), in effect lowering the rates of students scoring proficient on the assessments. To put the new rates of student proficiency in context, the state recalculated the previous four years of student performance data and shared this information with the public. Moving forward, Michigan will remove test items that are not aligned with the CCSS and add items in field test slots that cover content in the CCSS.

Other states have raised both academic content standards and performance levels. After **Tennessee** implemented new standards and performance expectations, the state saw proficiency on 8th grade mathematics change from 90 percent in 2008–09 to 29 percent in 2009–10. An intense campaign prepared the state for the change in standards and expectations, and in the following years, educators, parents and leaders celebrated Tennessee 8th graders’ improvement from 29 percent to 35 percent proficient in 2010–11 and 43 percent proficient in 2011–12. The state also has set new annual measureable objectives (AMOs) for local education agencies and schools based on these new standards and expectations as part of its approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request.



Nearly all states are planning to administer new assessments in 2014–15 aligned to the CCSS in English language arts/literacy and mathematics or to state-developed CCR standards. In the interim, some states are taking steps to transition their currently operational assessments. Given the different stakes attached to state-developed summative assessments (e.g., student promotion and graduation, teacher effectiveness, and school accountability determinations), one single transition path to new assessments able to measure students' readiness for college and career is not appropriate for all states. Achieve asked states to provide details on how they were transitioning their state assessment systems between now and 2014–15 in light of their newly adopted standards. Most often states are removing items from their state assessments that were aligned to previous state standards but are not found in the CCSS/CCR standards and are adding new items that align to the CCSS/CCR standards. A number of states *not* making direct changes to their assessments *are* identifying CCSS-aligned items and will produce specific reports on how students are doing on CCSS-aligned items.

- ▶ Several states are taking multiple steps to strengthen the alignment between their state assessments and the CCSS/CCR standards. **Connecticut, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico** and **Washington** are removing items that are not aligned to their state standards, adding new items that are aligned, and expanding or creating new constructed-response or performance-based assessments.
- ▶ **Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Virginia** and the **District of Columbia** are going one step further in demonstrating their commitment to preparing educators and students for the transition to higher expectations. In addition to taking the series of comprehensive actions described above, they are raising the standard for proficiency on their respective state assessments.

States and districts must ensure that they have assessment systems — diagnostic and summative — that are aligned to standards and that give teachers and students the information they need. Summative assessments alone will not be sufficient to support students and educators in meeting new standards. For instance, diagnostic assessments — those administered by the teacher in the classroom for the explicit purpose of understanding where students are in their learning, where gaps in knowledge and understanding exist, and how to help improve student learning — can help classroom educators align their daily instruction with CCR standards. Transition planning is critical for the diagnostic assessments typically determined at the local level. These district-, school- and classroom-level tools may be used to improve instructional practice, increase student achievement and improve the coherence of the assessment system.

As states work through PARCC and SBAC to build common assessment systems that are anchored in college and career readiness and assess the CCSS, meeting standards in one state will mean the same thing as in the others for the first time. Because the assessments will be developed by states in partnership with one another, they will provide a common metric for measuring the performance of students. The assessment system will be aligned all the way up and down the line from grade 3 through high school and therefore will be able to provide early signals of readiness to students, parents and educators. The high school assessments in mathematics and English language arts/literacy will be able to signal whether students have acquired the prerequisite academic knowledge and skills for entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary courses, allowing educators to adjust instructional practices or give extra support to students who need it. Assessing students against a standard that has been benchmarked against readiness by high school graduation gives parents a clear signal of whether their children are prepared for their next steps, and it gives schools a chance to close any gaps in students' academic skills before they graduate.



STATE ASSESSMENT TRANSITION ACTIONS

	Removing items	Adding new items	Expanding or creating constructed-response or performance-based assessments	Raising standard for proficiency	No changes planned
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	✓			✓	
Mississippi					✓
Missouri	✓	✓	✓		
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	✓		✓		
Utah	✓	✓			
Vermont	✓				
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Washington	✓	✓	✓		
West Virginia					✓
Wisconsin				✓	
Wyoming	✓	✓			
TOTAL	28	25	15	12	10

These actions are not mutually exclusive, with the exception of “No changes planned to state assessments at this time.” For most states, the transition actions apply to both English language arts and mathematics for grades 3–8 and high school. However, in a few cases, states made changes to one subject or grade band. Minnesota and Texas have developed/are developing new state-specific CCR assessments; the assessment transition actions included in the table are not relevant.

Assessments for All Students

States in both the PARCC and SBAC consortia share a commitment to developing an assessment system aligned to the CCSS that is anchored in college and career readiness; provides comparability across states; and provides truly useful information for educators, parents and students alike. The vision of comparability of student readiness was a motivating factor in joining the consortia for many state leaders. The ability to make valid comparisons could be challenged if all of the assessments are not administered to *all* high school students. To be clear, the assessments need not have accountability stakes for students attached to them. One of the concerns is that if the assessments are administered only to a subset of students, such as those who enroll in advanced courses, then the denominators will not be comparable across states. Denominators that include only a select group of students can send an inaccurate picture of performance in a school, district or state.

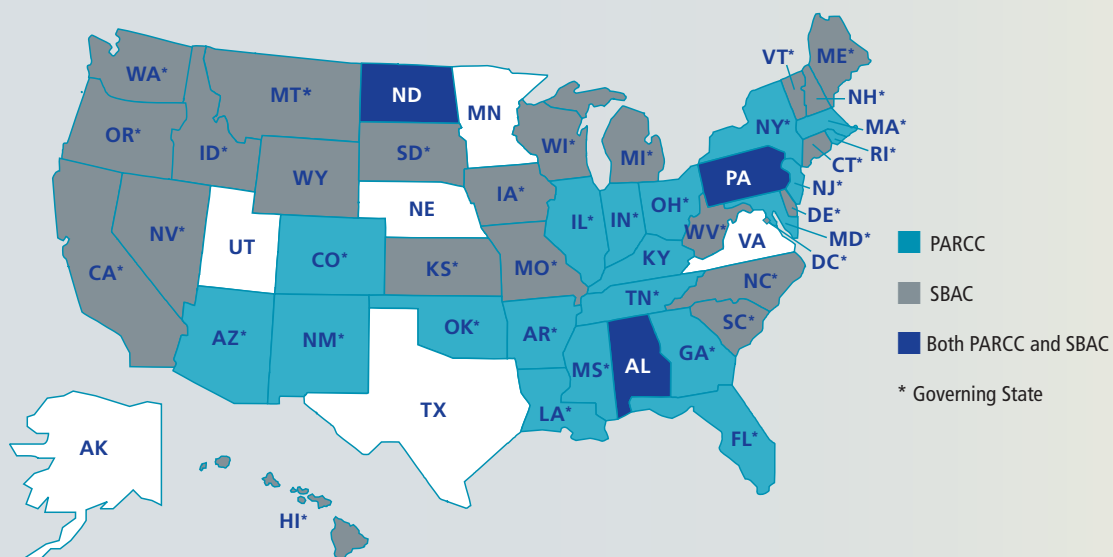
Higher education faculty will play a critical role in defining what it means to be ready for entry-level courses and in ensuring that the scores are widely accepted and valued. **More than two-thirds of states** do not have a commonly agreed-upon score on a placement test for entry-level, credit-bearing mathematics and literacy courses (e.g., ACT, SAT, COMPASS, Accuplacer, state-developed assessments) in their public two- and four-year colleges and universities. The work under way by the PARCC and SBAC consortia may help signal a common understanding of placement criteria.

PARCC AND SBAC MEMBERSHIP

PARCC and SBAC are two multistate consortia working to develop next generation assessment systems that will measure the full range of the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts/literacy and the full range of student performances. These technology-based K–12

assessments will build a pathway to college and career readiness by the end of high school, mark students' progress toward this goal beginning in 3rd grade, and provide teachers with timely information to inform instruction and provide student support. The two consortia both received Race to the Top funding to support the design and

development of the assessment systems. Now in year two of the grant, the consortia are in the midst of the development phase and are committed to have the new assessments fully operational by the 2014–15 school year. (For more information on the consortia, see www.parcconline.org and www.smarterbalanced.org.)





KEY QUESTIONS FOR STATES TO CONSIDER

- ▶ *Are the assessments well aligned to the CCSS/CCR standards, and do they signal the major instructional shifts called for in the standards?* The CCSS carefully incorporate the skills necessary for postsecondary success, such as the ability to read and draw evidence from complex texts and construct logical arguments based on the evidence. In mathematics, they place great emphasis on problem solving and modeling. States should be sure that the assessments they use, whether consortia, state or vendor developed, measure these skills and promote the instructional practices that will help develop them.
- ▶ *Are all students in the state required to take the assessments?* Unless all students take assessments that measure performance on CCR standards, *some* students and their families will be denied valuable information, and educators, policymakers and the public will lack the information necessary to judge the performance and progress of the education system. For example, states that rely on end-of-course assessments in mathematics but do not require *all* students to take the requisite three-course sequence aligned with the standards will face particular challenges. They will either fail to test all students, or they will require students to take assessments without having received the appropriate instruction. Achieve strongly recommends that states in this position resolve this dilemma by aligning their high school graduation requirements and assessments with the CCR standards.
- ▶ *Are the assessment performance standards evidence based, and do they provide honest and accurate feedback on how well students are prepared for college and career?* Performance standards for college and career readiness must be informed by evidence. This evidence must include predictive validity studies that validate that students who meet the performance standard have a high likelihood of succeeding in first-year, credit-bearing courses. This type of evidence (along with other evidence) is necessary for postsecondary institutions to use the assessment results for placement purposes. It is also necessary to ensure that the standards are set at an honest and appropriately rigorous level.
- ▶ *How is the postsecondary community in the state involved in the development of CCR assessments?* For the higher education community to use state high school assessments as indicators of readiness to enter into credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation, key aspects of the assessments — the academic standards they prioritize, the performance standards that define college readiness and the evidence used to set the cut scores — must be determined jointly by the postsecondary and K–12 systems. The assessment consortia provide a forum for this joint work, which requires a new partnership and unprecedented collaboration between the two systems, starting with leadership from both the chief state school officer and higher education leaders in each state.
- ▶ *What is the plan to communicate with students, parents, districts, schools, educators and leaders regarding the revisions to the high school assessments?* Compared with current high school assessments, CCR assessments will measure different knowledge and skills, be more rigorous, serve different purposes, and have different consequences. How will the state help the range of important stakeholders understand and prepare for these changes?



TYING STAKES AND INCENTIVES TO CCR ASSESSMENTS

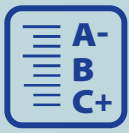
Currently, **more than half of the states** administer high-stakes exit exams to students by tying passage of minimum standards tests to high school graduation. The implementation of CCSS/CCR standards and aligned assessments provides an opening for states to raise the question about whether they plan to continue implementing policies that tie results of high school assessments to high school graduation determinations. ***Given the current state of student readiness and school capacity, virtually no state is in a position to insist in the next year or even in the next few years that all students hit the CCR level of performance on these tests to earn a high school diploma.*** For these new

assessments to have credibility, especially in the postsecondary community, the test content and the performance standards have to be firmly anchored in what it takes to be successful in college and career.

New assessments present an opportunity for states to consider new ways to make high school testing meaningful for students, without either sacrificing the goal of getting all graduates ready for their next steps or subjecting the new assessments to the same downward pressure traditionally seen with high-stakes graduation exams. Students will be better off with high school tests that measure the skills they need to succeed after high school so they can know whether they are on track. These new tests will send a powerful message if assessment results clearly signal to students that they are ready for placement into entry-level, credit-bearing

postsecondary courses and training or that there is additional work needed to close preparation gaps.

States should consider a range of stakes and incentives for student performance on the new CCR anchor assessment. This range could include counting test performance for a portion of the course grade (an option that is exponentially easier with end-of-course exams than other types of assessments), providing bonuses in state financial aid programs for students who perform well on the assessment and ensuring that students who score at the college-ready level on the assessment can be guaranteed enrollment in credit-bearing (nonremedial) courses in college. States could also consider requiring students to perform at a lower, but still meaningful, level on the assessment to graduate.



ACCOUNTABILITY, DATA AND PUBLIC REPORTING SYSTEMS

The fundamental design imperative for accountability systems is to include the incentives and data that students, educators and schools need to improve teaching, learning, and preparation toward college and career readiness. The result should be a system in which everyone is working toward clear, shared goals; their performance is measured against those goals; all are provided incentives to meet the goals; and deliberate and fair actions are taken to support and encourage better performance.

The foundation for a CCR accountability system is a robust P–20 longitudinal data system. States have made significant progress in building P–20 longitudinal data systems to track meaningful indicators of college and career readiness for individual students, but few states have used these indicators to focus their accountability systems on improving college and career readiness. The accountability formulas that are used to differentiate and classify school and district performance and that school leaders and educators use to target their work have not included indicators of students' college and career readiness. Instead, the formulas focus on achieving minimum proficiency levels on standardized assessments. Equally troubling, accountability goals are perceived as something to meet to avoid state interference rather than meaningful goals to work toward.

In the past year, in both the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility program and changes to state law, a small number of states have moved to new accountability systems that include multiple CCR indicators of student performance, such as student enrollment and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and exams, participation in dual enrollment courses, and attainment of industry certifications.

To incentivize and support continuous improvement, states should design the indicators in a manner that reflects a continuum of whether students are progressing toward, achieving or exceeding college and career readiness. This continuum of indicators will allow states to accomplish the dual goals of ensuring that students identified as off track receive the supports they need to get back on track while simultaneously avoiding a situation in which the floor becomes the ceiling for students who meet the CCR requirements earlier in high school.

Making these data available at the school and district levels, establishing statewide student performance goals aligned to college and career readiness, creating incentives and rewards to drive progress on CCR goals, and holding schools and districts accountable for improving student performance are essential strategies for states to meet their CCR goals.

DEVELOPING ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS ANCHORED IN THE CCSS

It is worth noting that implementation of the CCSS and the assessments being created by both PARCC and SBAC will require states to advance toward an accountability approach that truly focuses on college and career readiness for all students. Three major changes should result from the implementation:

- ▶ A change in accountability systems from those that focus on improving rates of minimal proficiency toward those that are geared toward improvement in college and career readiness;
- ▶ A change in accountability measures — including new measures that harness longitudinal P–20 data as well as status and growth measures from new CCSS-aligned assessments; and
- ▶ A change in actual outcomes for students resulting from heightened instructional capacity brought about through effective professional learning, instructional tools, data systems and other implementation efforts. The anticipated improvement in student outcomes should be a driving force behind states' work to set performance goals and benchmarks within accountability systems based on CCR measures.

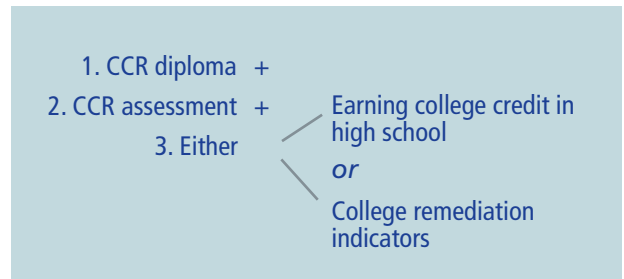
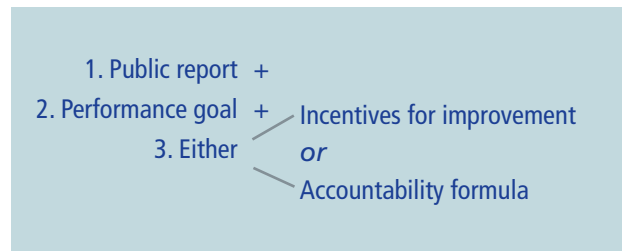
THE QUESTION

In the survey, Achieve asked states whether they incorporate CCR indicators into the state accountability system and whether they use the indicators in multiple ways, including public reporting, setting clear targets for schools to improve through state performance goals, and providing clear incentives and consequences that drive schools to improve performance and meet their targets. (Additional information about these indicators and uses is available in Appendix B.)

THE CRITERIA

Achieve looked across these indicators and their uses to determine whether any states have a comprehensive approach to CCR accountability. Following the approach presented in our 2011 report, Achieve established the following threshold for combining indicators and their uses in state accountability systems:

- ▶ **For uses:** For each CCR indicator, the state publicly reports *and* sets a statewide performance goal *and* either provides positive incentives for improvement (such as recognition, monetary rewards, or flexibility from policy or regulation) *or* factors performance on the indicator into its accountability formula.
- ▶ **For indicators:** The state includes the CCR diploma *and* a CCR assessment *and* either uses earning college credit while in high school *or* uses college remediation indicators in its reporting and accountability system.²¹



Consistent with years past, states' accountability systems continue to slowly add CCR indicators and uses. **Texas** remains the only state that meets the above threshold for the combination of indicators and uses at this time. For the first time this year, Achieve identified states with accountability systems that include at least two CCR indicators and two uses. These states achieved partial credit for having a CCR accountability system. The designation recognizes these states' progress in developing a robust accountability system and the state leaders who are committed to reorienting their accountability systems toward college and career readiness. These states include **Florida, Georgia, Indiana** and **Kentucky**. **Thirty-two states** include at least one CCR indicator and use — seven more than last year. **Fifteen states** have at least two uses for one CCR indicator — up from 10 last year.

Worth noting are the ways three states have expanded their use of CCR indicators in their accountability formulas:

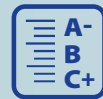
- ▶ **Indiana** will incorporate the percentage of graduates who earn a passing score on an AP or IB exam, earn three college credits in an approved course, or receive an industry certification. This indicator will count as 10 percent of a high school’s grade in the state’s A–F grading system. Schools will get full credit if 25 percent or more of students fall into one of these categories.
- ▶ **New Mexico** will include the percentage of participating students who score at a CCR benchmark (including college entrance exams, AP, dual credit and vocational certification coursework) as 10 percent of the total score for high schools (participation of the graduation cohort is another 5 percent) in the state’s A–F accountability system.
- ▶ **New York** will raise the definition of proficiency for its high school Regents Exams to the CCR level and give greatest weight in its accountability formula Performance Index to students who meet or exceed this threshold.

KEY CCR INDICATORS AND USES

Earning a CCR diploma: The percentage of students who graduate from high school with a CCR diploma. States need to know which students — and which groups of students — are leaving high school with this valuable credential.

	Annual school-level public reporting	Statewide performance goals	School-level incentives	Accountability formula ²²
Alabama	✓			
California	✓			
Delaware	✓			✓
District of Columbia	✓	✓		✓
Florida	✓			
Georgia	✓			✓
Hawaii	✓	✓		
Indiana	✓	✓	✓	
Kentucky	✓	✓		✓
Louisiana	✓	✓	✓	✓
Massachusetts	✓	✓		
New York	✓			
Ohio	✓			
Oklahoma	✓			
Tennessee		✓		
Texas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	
TOTAL	16	9	4	6

States listed include those that offer — but do not require that all students complete — a CCR diploma/curriculum. For example, Virginia reports the number of students voluntarily completing the Advanced Studies Diploma.



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 CCR standards. Such assessments will signal which students are prepared for postsecondary success and which will require additional support before leaving high school.

	Annual school-level public reporting	Statewide performance goals	School-level incentives	Accountability formula
Alabama		✓		
California	✓			
Florida	✓	✓	✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓		
Illinois	✓			
Kentucky	✓			✓
Louisiana		✓		
Maine	✓			
Michigan	✓			
Minnesota		✓		
New York	✓	✓		✓
Texas	✓	✓	✓	
Wisconsin	✓			
TOTAL	10	7	2	3

States listed include those that offer a CCR assessment that may not be required of all students but can produce a readiness score recognized by postsecondary institutions. For example, Florida publicly reports the percentage of graduating students scoring at or above the college-level cut score on the SAT/ACT/Florida College Placement Test — but these tests are not requirements for all students.

Earning college credit while in high school: The percentage of high school students earning college credit through AP, 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.

	Annual school-level public reporting	Statewide performance goals	School-level incentives	Accountability formula
Colorado	✓			
Florida	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indiana	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kentucky		✓		
Louisiana		✓		
Minnesota		✓		
New Mexico				✓
Ohio	✓			
Oklahoma				✓
Texas	✓	✓	✓	
Utah	✓			
TOTAL	6	6	3	4

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 and/or mathematics. With the vast majority of high school students intending to pursue postsecondary education and/or training, too many of these same students enter two- and four-year colleges unprepared for college-level work. Students who must take remedial classes are less likely to achieve their goals, including earning a degree.

	Annual school-level public reporting	Statewide performance goals	School-level incentives	Accountability formula
Alabama	✓	✓		
Colorado	✓			
Florida	✓	✓		
Georgia	✓	✓		✓
Hawaii	✓			
Indiana	✓	✓		
Kentucky	✓	✓		
Louisiana	✓			
Maryland		✓		
Missouri	✓	✓		
Montana	✓			
Nevada	✓			
New Mexico	✓			
North Carolina		✓		
Ohio	✓			
Oklahoma	✓			✓
Texas	✓	✓	✓	
West Virginia	✓			
Wyoming	✓			
TOTAL	17	9	1	2

KEY QUESTIONS FOR STATES TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Does the state have a P–20 longitudinal data system in place that will let parents, teachers, schools, districts and the state know whether students are on track? How are data being used and disseminated now?
- ▶ Does the accountability system reward schools for increasing the percentage of students earning a CCR diploma, scoring ready on a CCR assessment, reducing postsecondary remediation needs and/or earning college credit while in high school?
- ▶ Has the state established realistic but ambitious goals, baseline data and a trajectory for meeting these goals across a number of years?
- ▶ Do the state’s indicators reflect a continuum of readiness that incentivizes schools and districts to move students toward and beyond college and career readiness? Such indicators will begin in elementary school and reflect student progress, and through high school the indicators will be able to present a clear picture of how well students are meeting and exceeding readiness as measured through courses, attainment and achievement.
- ▶ What statutory or regulatory changes need to be considered or made in light of the transitioning assessment and accountability policies?



CREATING QUALITY, ROBUST FEEDBACK REPORTS

Public reporting can and should serve a critical function in shining the spotlight on school performance, including areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed. Reporting clear, actionable data to parents and the public is one of the most powerful strategies in a state’s toolbox for driving progress toward state CCR student performance goals. A state’s report card on districts and schools, in particular, has the visibility and accessibility to reach many people with interest in and influence over student outcomes. Given the high value that students, parents and the public place on readiness and success in postsecondary education and careers, states should strongly consider incorporating CCR indicators into their district and school report cards. The following attributes of strong data reporting can be a starting point for designing a high-impact report card with CCR indicators.

► A range of CCR indicators:

Effective data reporting draws on several CCR indicators across a continuum from progressing toward, achieving or exceeding college and career readiness and highlights areas of achievement, course completion and success, and attainment. For examples of indicators, see *Measures that Matter: Making College and Career Readiness the Mission for High Schools* from Achieve and The Education Trust (www.achievethe.org/making-college-and-career-readiness-mission-high-school-guide-state-policy-makers). For a strong state example, see the **Hawaii** College and Career Readiness Indicators Reports (www.p20hawaii.org/indicators_report.html).



- **Indicators reflecting student performance according to CCR benchmarks:** Selected indicators should show how students are performing against a specific benchmark tied to readiness. Numerators should be criterion-referenced where possible (e.g., “percentage of students meeting a subject-specific CCR benchmark” rather than “average score across subject areas”) to better capture changes in readiness. Denominators should include all students — preferably all students in a graduating cohort to improve the stability of the indicator and its ability to portray the full picture of readiness for students in the school.
- **Reporting techniques:** States can build understanding of student performance patterns and trends in several ways:
 - **Texas** reports the number as well as percentages of students, making the data more real and increasing the sense of urgency. (See the *Texas Campus Graduation Summary* at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/completion/script/2011/campus.html>.)
 - **Indiana** uses “vertical” comparisons between different levels in the education system, such as comparing a school’s performance to the average performance of its school district and state. Indiana also highlights performance disparities among student groups by diploma type. This information is critical for parents and the public. (See the *Indiana Compass Reports* at <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/collegereadiness.aspx?type=state>.)
 - **Illinois** uses “horizontal” comparisons between the same level in the education system, such as comparing a school’s performance to other schools through school rankings or showing where the school’s performance lies along a spectrum of school performance. (See the *Illinois Interactive Report Card* at <http://iirc.niu.edu>.)
- **Use of “judgments” on priority indicators:** Traffic-lighting (color-coding in categories such as red, yellow, green) can be a good strategy to show the importance of critical indicators. Presenting performance data against goals and benchmarks can show where performance has been, where it is expected to go, and whether the school or district is on track to reach the goal. Ratings or classifications such as those used in the state accountability system, or other measures used only in the report card, can also help parents and the public better understand what performance means. Achieve’s Sample CCR Indicators for a School Report Card builds in several different judgment techniques (www.achievethe.org/public-reporting).
- **Stakeholder engagement:** States can build and continuously improve reporting through purposeful engagement of parents and the public through focus groups and surveys, getting feedback on the following:
 - Priority questions about student performance outcomes in schools and districts;
 - The most critical CCR indicators on which to focus more in-depth techniques to build understanding;
 - Data display techniques that resonate with parents and the public and most clearly communicate the “story” of the indicator; and
 - Narratives that explain performance and why an indicator is important. (For a strong state example, see **Michigan** school data at www.mischooldata.org/CareerAndCollegeReadiness/ACTCollegeReadiness/Trend.aspx.)



The foundation for college and career readiness has been laid in every state: All states have adopted academic standards in English language arts and mathematics that are aligned with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers. But for these standards to be realized in classrooms, they must be implemented with fidelity. Ensuring access to high-quality aligned curricular and instructional materials and to highly effective professional development that builds capacity and understanding of the standards — regardless of the role the state plays — are two critical ways states can — and are — supporting districts, schools and, ultimately, educators.

Another key way to ensure that standards are implemented with fidelity is to have course or graduation requirements that require all students to be taught the full range of the state's CCSS/CCR standards. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have established CCR graduation requirements that are aligned to the CCSS/CCR standards for current or future high school graduation classes. However, more than half the states in the country that have adopted these standards have not taken the steps to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn the standards by raising their graduation requirements. States send mixed signals about their commitment to college and career readiness when the courses — or competency-based demonstrations — required for students to earn a diploma in the state encompass only a subset of the academic knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics needed to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary coursework and/or job training. Regardless of whether a state has CCR graduation requirements or not, CCSS/CCR standards implementation provides an opportunity for all states to examine their courses — both in policy and in practice — to make certain that the standards are translated into required courses, consistently rigorous across classrooms and engaging for students.

Eighteen states administer a CCR assessment capable of generating a score used for placement into postsecondary first-year, credit-bearing courses, and nearly all states are collaborating to develop common assessments aligned to the CCSS through PARCC and SBAC. CCR assessments must:

- ▶ Be well aligned to the standards that students are taught and that drive teachers' instruction;
- ▶ Provide information to all students about whether they are on track to be or are academically prepared by the end of high school for success in college and career;
- ▶ Reflect good teaching and become a tool for instructional improvement;
- ▶ Be valued by states' accountability systems; and
- ▶ Be recognized by the postsecondary community as a signal of students' readiness to enter into credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation.

Only one state meets all of Achieve's minimum criteria for creating an accountability system anchored in college and career readiness. However, a number of states have added CCR indicators into their accountability systems, and more states are using the indicators in ways that reinforce one another — and that also send a strong signal to school leaders and educators that the state values students' college and career readiness and that these are meaningful goals to work toward and be held accountable for meeting.

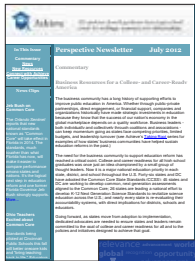
College and career readiness for all high school graduates is the new norm in the United States. This is an important change that reflects the rising expectations of what it takes to be successful in college, career and life. Fully realized, college and career readiness will better prepare individuals, communities, states and our country to compete and succeed. The goal is right — the challenge now facing states, districts and schools is making good on the promise.



- 1 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*. Available at www.achieve.org/ReadyorNot.
- 2 Montana was the only state that chose not to participate in Achieve's survey this year. We have included data points for Montana that have been verified in past years.
- 3 Achieve counts Minnesota among the 46 CCSS adopters; the state has adopted the CCSS in English language arts/literacy but maintains its own verified CCR standards in mathematics.
- 4 Throughout, this report refers to CCSS/CCR standards, which include both the CCSS and state-developed CCR standards.
- 5 Minnesota's CCR math standards were implemented in 2010–11.
- 6 Texas' College and Career Readiness Standards were incorporated into the English Language Arts and Math TEKS for implementation in 2009. The Math TEKS were recently revised and will be implemented in 2013–14 for K–8 and 2014–15 for high school.
- 7 Horn, L., and Nuñez, A.M. (2000). *Mapping the Road to College: First-Generation Students' Math Track, Planning Strategies, and Context of Support*. U.S. Department of Education; Adelman, C. (2006). *The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School through College*. U.S. Department of Education.
- 8 The research of the ADP provided the foundation for *Ready or Not* and the ADP CCR benchmarks (www.achieve.org/ReadyorNot) and was later updated — including with the results of international benchmarking studies — to support the creation of the CCSS (www.corestandards.org).
- 9 Achieve. (2008). *Math Works: The Value of the Fourth Year of Mathematics*. Available at www.futurereadyproject.org/sites/frp/files/Achieve-MathWorks-FactSheet-FourthYear.pdf.
- 10 The Model Course Pathways in Mathematics are published as Appendix A of the CCSS for mathematics (www.achieve.org/mathpathways). Four model course pathways are included: an approach typically seen in the United States that consists of two algebra courses and a geometry course, with some data, probability and statistics included in each course; an integrated approach typically seen internationally that consists of a sequence of three courses, each of which includes number, algebra, geometry, probability and statistics; and a “compacted” version of each pathway that will enable students to reach calculus or other college-level courses by their senior year.
- 11 Data based on the most recent public high school enrollment figures available in the *Digest of Education Statistics* (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_035.asp).
- 12 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 requirements that first affected the class of 2011.
- 13 South Dakota adopted CCR graduation requirements in 2005 (that took effect in 2010), creating two pathways — the default CCR curriculum with a minimum opt-out to a standard curriculum. South Dakota revised its requirements in 2009 (taking effect in 2013), creating a single pathway with a personal modification in which students can opt out of specific mathematics and science courses. The state 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.
- 14 Districts in Iowa must set graduation requirements that include at least four years of English language arts and three years of mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2015, the expectation in Iowa will be that the courses that districts require for graduation will be aligned with the CCSS and that all students will be expected to meet the full set of content and performance expectations defined through the CCSS. No minimum diploma course requirements that do not include the CCSS will be permitted. The state department of education will confirm that the local requirements are truly aligned to the Iowa Core (which includes the CCSS) through comprehensive site visits for accreditation and through the state's data warehouse, which includes districts' offerings on an “as needed” basis.
- 15 In 2009, Nebraska mandated that all high schools in the state raise their graduation requirements to the CCR level. Starting with the class of 2015, the local requirements must ensure that to earn a diploma, students have to meet Nebraska's new CCR standards — standards that Achieve has verified as CCR 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 state's rigorous standards.
- 16 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.
- 17 Alabama has adopted a policy to administer the ACT to all 11th graders beginning in 2014. The ACT is already recognized by postsecondary institutions in this state.
- 18 Louisiana has adopted a policy to administer the ACT to all 11th graders beginning in 2013. The ACT is already recognized by postsecondary institutions in this state.
- 19 The Oregon University System (OUS) established cut scores on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) for the OUS Automatic Admission policy in February 2011. Effective for the class applying for admission to the OUS in fall 2012, students who reach the cut scores on all three of the OAKS exams (reading, writing and mathematics) and meet a minimum high school grade point average will be granted automatic admission to an OUS university; students scoring below the cut scores may be eligible for standard admission.
- 20 Students in the graduating class of 2011 (through the class of 2014) are required to take the TAKS in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to graduate. Beginning in 2011–12, Texas began replacing TAKS with the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) for incoming freshmen.
- 21 Achieve recognizes and supports states' efforts to include other meaningful indicators of postsecondary success in their state data systems, high school feedback reports and accountability systems — such as second-year persistence, rate of credit accumulation and ultimate degree attainment. Given this report's focus on high school accountability systems, Achieve decided not to include these postsecondary indicators in the survey.
- 22 States that have adopted mandatory CCR course requirements for all students will by default be factoring a CCR diploma graduation rate into their school accountability formulas once the requirements take effect. These states include Delaware (2011), District of Columbia (2011), Georgia (2012), Kentucky (2012), Tennessee (2013), Iowa (2015), Minnesota (2015), Nebraska (2015), Florida (2016) and Hawaii (2016).

APPENDIX A: ACHIEVE RESOURCES

In the past eight 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.



Perspective is Achieve's e-newsletter that provides news and links to timely reports. It is e-mailed to anyone interested in helping to prepare students for success. Stay informed and receive the next issue by signing up on our website. [ongoing] www.achieve.org/Perspective

The Future of the U.S. Workforce: The Limited Career Prospects for High School Graduates without Additional Education and Training offers an analysis of the wage and advancement opportunities for individuals employed in low skills jobs — and the skills required to advance out of them. [2012] www.achieve.org/LimitedCareerProspects

The Future of the U.S. Workforce: Middle Skills Jobs and the Growing Importance of Postsecondary Education provides an analysis of current research and efforts to support middle skills careers across the United States. [2012] www.achieve.org/MiddleSkills

The Future of the U.S. Workforce: A Survey of Hiring Practices across Nine Industries is a national survey conducted jointly by Achieve and the Society for Human Resource Management on the changing education and skills requirements for new hires. [2012] www.achieve.org/Achieve-SHRM-Survey

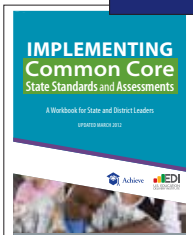
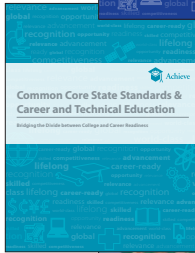
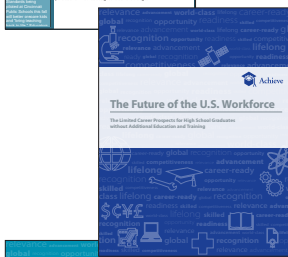
Business Resources for a College- and Career-Ready America, developed by Achieve and the GE Foundation, is aimed at informing and rallying more advocates within the business community. [2012] www.achieve.org/business-resources-college-and-career-ready-america

Common Core State Standards & Career and Technical Education: Bridging the Divide between College and Career Readiness outlines a set of strategies state and district leaders can leverage to ensure that the implementation of the CCSS engages, informs and benefits from the CTE community, a partner in the broader CCR agenda. [2012] www.achieve.org/CCSS-CTE-BridgingtheDivide

Growing Awareness, Growing Support Poll is Achieve's latest national survey on voter and parent awareness and understanding of the CCSS and related tests. [2012] www.achieve.org/growingawarenessCCSS

Common Core State Standards Implementation Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool, developed by Achieve and Education First Consulting, assists states in gauging the strength of their implementation plans and illustrates how to improve them. This tool sets a high-quality standard for a strong state role, provides concrete details and examples to help state leaders get there, and profiles promising state approaches. [2012] www.achieve.org/common-core-state-standards-implementation-rubric-and-self-assessment-tool

Common Core Implementation Workbook, developed by Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, uses a proven performance management methodology known as “delivery” to lay out clear action steps for states and districts. The workbook provides relevant information, case stories of good practice, key questions and hands-on exercises for leadership teams. [2012] www.achieve.org/ImplementingCommonCore





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] www.achieve.org/sustainability

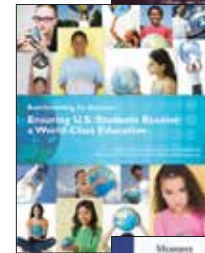
Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education provides states with a roadmap for benchmarking their K–12 education systems against those of top-performing nations. The report, released by Achieve, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School 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] www.achieve.org/BenchmarkingforSuccess

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] www.achieve.org/BuildingBlocksofSuccess

Measures that Matter is a joint effort by Achieve and The Education Trust to provide strategic and technical assistance to states in creating CCR assessment and accountability systems. www.achieve.org/MeasuresthatMatter [2008]

Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards from the Ground Up presents an analysis of the CCR standards for English in 12 states and mathematics in 16 states. Achieve found that a critical mass of states has arrived at a common core of standards in English and mathematics. [2008] www.achieve.org/outofmanyone

Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts 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] www.achieve.org/ReadyorNot



Achieve also has developed Web-based resources to provide information and tools needed to ensure our schools prepare students for college and career:

Achieving the Common Core: www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core

The Future Ready Project: www.futurereadyproject.org

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers: www.parcconline.org

Next Generation Science Standards: www.nextgenscience.org

Math Works Advocacy Kit: www.achieve.org/math-works



APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

ACHIEVE'S SEVENTH ANNUAL SURVEY OF POLICIES

As in past years, Achieve's 2012 50-state survey of high school policies focused on aligned standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability and data systems. This process included a survey states completed this summer. **Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia** participated in this year's survey. Throughout the summer, 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 each state indicating how its information would appear in this report.

Beyond evaluating every policy states reported as already in place or recently adopted, Achieve asked states about their implementation of adopted policies. 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; only verified indicators that met the criteria were included in this report.

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

CCR Diploma: The percentage of students who graduate having completed the requirements for a CCR diploma.

Minimum criteria:

- ▶ The state has set a CCR diploma as the mandatory/default option for all students or as an honors diploma (at an equivalent CCR level) that any student can pursue. For any use of this indicator, the denominator should include all students in a graduating cohort (using a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined by either the U.S. Department of Education or the National Governors Association Compact).

CCR Assessment: The percentage of students who score at the CCR level on a high school assessment given to all eligible students.

Minimum criteria:

- ▶ The state administers a CCR 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 CCR 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 at the school level the percentage of students who satisfy the requirements of the indicators.

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., CCR diploma and testing), and higher education reports its data (e.g., remediation and enrollment rates for high school graduation cohorts) — unless the state uses a joint reporting system/data repository.

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 by a certain date.
- ▶ The state has established baseline data for that goal.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

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 the incentive, 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 a 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 factors into ratings, leading to any consequences, rewards, interventions or supports — beyond public reporting — for districts and/or schools.

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