



THE COLLEGE BOARD **ADVOCACY & POLICY CENTER**

# **AFFINITY NETWORK**

SUPPORTING COLLABORATION  
BETWEEN K–12 AND HIGHER  
EDUCATION

Year One | Interim Report One

## INTRODUCTION

In April 2012, more than 100 educators and administrators from across the nation came together in Reston, Virginia, for a full day of meetings and discussions to launch the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center Affinity Network. The Affinity Network’s mission is to facilitate students’ successful transition from high school to college by:

1. Helping educators across the K–12 and postsecondary sectors understand and agree on common expectations for our nation’s students;
2. Serving as an incubator for ideas and solutions for College Board members and for the education field at the institutional, state, and national levels; and
3. Establishing an ongoing process to encourage creative problem solving and strengthen the links between education sectors.

Each year, one cohort of educators will be selected to work intently on one major issue for 9–12 months; at the end of this period, both a new cohort and a new issue will be selected. The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center is providing technical assistance, information, research, policy expertise, and facilitation, as well as an online forum to assist Affinity Network participants in their work together. This report is the first in a series to document the process, progress, and outcomes of the teams engaged in the first cohort of the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center Affinity Network.

For this inaugural cohort, we have assembled strong teams drawn from 15 institutions (districts, two-year, and four-year colleges) in five states. They are dedicated to addressing the initial charge: how the Common Core State Standards will result in changes in expectations and alignment across the education sectors. This will not be an easy endeavor, but it is an extremely important one if we are going to prepare all students to be college and career ready. The Affinity Network will focus on the following key questions:

- How might the Common Core State Standards result in improvements to the alignment of high school exit expectations with postsecondary entry expectations? What supports need to be in place to successfully accomplish this alignment?
- How might the Common Core State Standards affect the design of remedial education courses on college campuses?

In-state work meetings bringing together each state’s Affinity Network team are under way. At their first meetings, teams agreed upon their approach and activities to tackle the key questions noted above, prepared individual plans and timelines, and determined the information needed to meet their goals. In between these face-to-face meetings, teams are using the Affinity Network’s online community to access content, articles, and expert blogs that help to further their work, and, most important, to share information within and between their state teams.

In a recent speech to the Conference Board on the Mathematical Sciences, University System of Maryland Chancellor William “Brit” Kirwan said:

*“Closing the gap between high school completion requirements and college entrance expectations is arguably the single most important thing to fix, if we are to address our college completion problem ... a lot is at stake for our nation and the well-being of future generations. Much will depend on how we respond to the challenge and this moment of opportunity.”*

To be successful in addressing the most critical issues facing our education system today, we need the full engagement and active participation of K–12 and higher education. Many of these conversations are already happening across sectors in several states; the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center Affinity Network is meant to advance those conversations. In areas where these discussions are just beginning, the Affinity Network will have an active role in supporting this work.

## WHY THE AFFINITY NETWORK?

### THE POLICY IMPERATIVE FOR GREATER K–12 AND POSTSECONDARY COORDINATION

For over two decades, business and political leaders have emphasized the need to raise the education and skill levels of America’s adults and improve student attainment at every point in the U.S. educational system. A primary goal is for every student who successfully completes high school to be fully prepared for study at the postsecondary level, whether it is to obtain a college degree or a certificate in a vocational field. Such preparation, it is argued, is the minimum necessary to compete in the increasingly talent-rich, global economy.

Unfortunately, creating a seamless education pipeline from kindergarten through college — with no gaps in between — has proved elusive. In particular, many high school graduates find their knowledge and skills inadequate for study at the postsecondary level. Studies show that only about one-third of graduating high school students complete the course work and rigor necessary for success at four-year colleges or universities; students entering community colleges are even less prepared.<sup>1</sup>

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***“In our region more than 40 percent of high school graduates do not attend college because the path isn’t clear or seen as worthy of the journey. Our work together will and must increase the rate of higher education participation and completion among those who don’t see it as possible. If we fail at this, we fail them.”***

— Janet Gullickson, District Academic Officer, Community Colleges of Spokane, and overall Lead for the Washington Affinity Network Team

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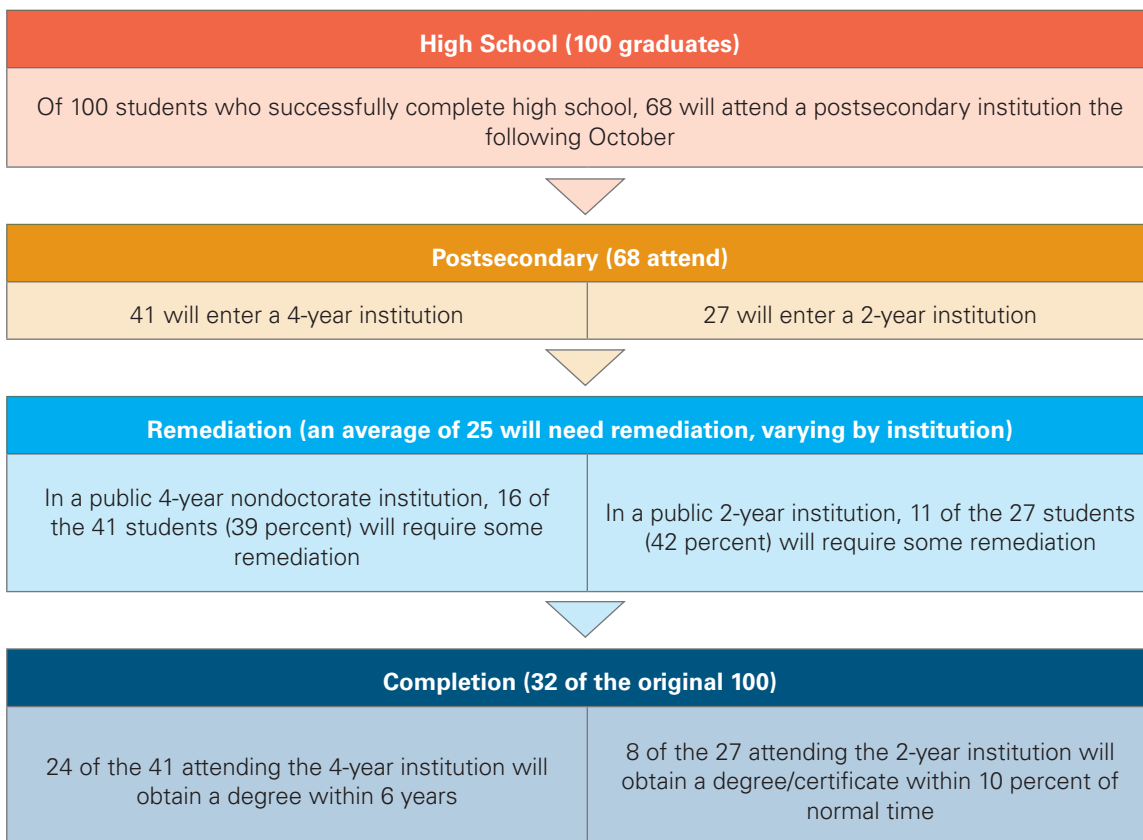
As a result, many college freshmen must first complete remedial classes before enrolling in college-credit course work. In 2007-08, for example, about 36 percent of undergraduate students in their first year reported taking a remedial course (with rates varying by institution type).<sup>2</sup> This adds to the time and expense to complete a degree or certificate. Partly as a consequence, less than half of all students who enter college obtain a degree in six years or a certificate within a reasonable time frame (see chart below).<sup>3</sup>

Many factors contribute to the misalignment between K–12 results and higher education expectations, but the lack of collaboration between the two segments is a key reason. The K–12 and postsecondary systems too often work in isolation, rarely coordinating policies or sharing information and ideas that may improve student success. This isolation is reinforced by the fact that each system has unique governance structures, financing, and their own pressing objectives.

To address this gap in education continuity, states in the 1990s began forming councils and advisory bodies — often termed P–16 or P–20 councils — to review practices and policies that affected the transitions between the educational segments. The goal was to create a more seamless system from preschool through college. By 2008, P–16 or P–20 councils were operating in 40 states.<sup>4</sup>

Although these councils have identified a number of policy changes that can better align the education segments, the discussions generally involve only the appointed representatives to the councils from the K–12 and higher education institutions in the state. Widespread collaboration between the different levels of education on specific reforms is rare. Disparities continue to exist between what K–12 teachers think students need to know to enter college and what professors expect they should know. With a mission to connect more students to college success; a deep commitment to excellence and equity; a membership that spans the education pipeline, from K–12 to higher education; and deep expertise in college readiness and the transition between high school and college, the College Board is well positioned to help address these issues and strengthen connections between education sectors.

## The Path from High School Through College Has Many Hurdles



(Source: Tables A-34-1, A-45-2, and A-45-3 from *The Condition of Education 2012 (NCES 2012-045)*, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC.)

## THE AFFINITY NETWORK

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center established the Affinity Network as an important step toward a seamless education system that will improve students' transitions and outcomes. The Affinity Network will help educators across the K–12 and postsecondary sectors understand and agree on common expectations for our nation's students; serve as an incubator for ideas and solutions for College Board members and for the education field at the institutional, state, and national levels; and establish an ongoing process to encourage creative problem solving and strengthen the links between education sectors.

To achieve these goals, the College Board has designed a unique process and specialized supports. Each year, through consultation with its governing bodies and regional councils, policymakers, and stakeholders, the Center will select teams of K–12 and postsecondary educators and administrators to participate in the Affinity Network. Participants will be drawn from the College Board's institutional membership, which includes more than 6,000 schools and districts, two- and four-year colleges, universities, higher education systems, and other bodies. These teams will work together over a nine- to 12-month time frame to identify workable solutions to a specific issue or challenge, after which new participants and a new focus area will be selected. The topic chosen must require active engagement between the K–12 and higher education systems and address policies and practices that improve college readiness and student success.

The Center is providing high-level technical assistance and expertise that includes research, customized content, facilitators, and an online forum to engage participants and connect them to valuable resources. The Center has enlisted HCM Strategists, a policy and communications firm, to help implement the initiative and provide policy expertise. The Center has also assembled a distinguished advisory committee of education, policy, and Common Core State Standards experts to develop special content pieces and briefs and address questions and issues faced by each team. (See Benefits of Participating below.)

The Center plans to disseminate widely the activities, progress, and results of each Affinity Network cohort so that other education leaders, practitioners, and policymakers can take advantage of the lessons learned by the institutional teams. Findings will be disseminated through the Affinity Network website (<http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/affinity-network>), outreach to stakeholders, the College Board membership, and the media; briefings will be conducted by key institutional team members to education policy leaders; and a final report issued each year will chronicle and evaluate the process and outcomes of each year's cohort.

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***“As much as the K–12 and higher education systems depend on each other for educating our students, it is unfortunately very rare that we actually sit down together to share our issues and coordinate programs. A lot can be gained from coming together in this forum.”***

— David Eagle, Coordinating Supervisor, College and Career Ready Office, Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland, and overall Lead for the Maryland Affinity Network Team

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## BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING

Participating in the Affinity Network gives member institutions access to several types of in-depth, customized technical assistance and support, including:

- **Expertise:** The Center has built a cadre of education policy and advocacy experts that will support the Network teams. These experts include College Board staff from the Advocacy & Policy Center, research and analysis, and government relations units; an in-state meeting facilitator; a communications moderator to support the online community; and policy specialists from HCM Strategists, LLC.
- **The most current evidence-based research:** Participants have access to the latest policy developments, data, best practices, and issue-area leadership.
- **An online community:** Participants have access to a special Affinity Network online community to share best practices and lessons learned among all the participating institutions. Through this real-time interaction, the network fosters a better understanding of what works and where barriers exist.
- **Facilitated conversations:** A trained facilitator with expertise and experience in education generally and the Common Core State Standards specifically guides conversations at the local level to help teams communicate, collaborate, and innovate at and between their in-state meetings.
- **Peer-to-peer relationships:** The Center will host two forums each year that bring together all local Network teams to build relationships, share experiences, and foster learning across the Network. The Center will provide travel support for all Network activities for the participating team members.
- **Stipend:** The Center is providing a stipend for each team member.

The Network will help participants strengthen relationships with their peers at local institutions. These relationships will provide a platform for continued collaboration on issues concerning the Common Core State Standards and other policies that improve student preparation for and success in postsecondary education.

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***“[The Network will have] one cohort examining one issue for one year.”***

— Christen Pollock, Vice President, College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, on the principle of the Affinity Network

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## THE FIRST-YEAR FOCUS

The first cohort of the Affinity Network will focus on implementation and alignment of expectations at the institutional level between K–12 and higher education related to the Common Core State Standards. Created through a national coalition of governors and chief state school officers, the Common Core State Standards define the knowledge and skills students must attain to graduate high school ready to succeed in entry-level college courses and in workforce training programs. The new standards — covering English Language Arts and Mathematics — will replace the previous state-by-state standards, which varied greatly in rigor and depth. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards. (Next Generation

Science Standards are being developed by Achieve and state partners for introduction at the end of 2012.)

The Common Core State Standards were chosen as the Network’s initial topic after consultation with the College Board governing bodies and regional councils, policymakers and thought leaders, and collaborating partners. The Center conducted an environmental scan on the critical issues facing the field, determining that achieving the full benefits of the new standards will require the active engagement and full partnership of the K–12 and higher education segments on a number of important topics over the coming years, including setting college readiness conditions, determining high school exit requirements, and identifying changes to remediation.

The Center discussed the Affinity Network purpose and objectives with consortia members of both Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced), and with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the National Governors Association (NGA), Achieve, the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and others in the K–12 and higher education policy areas. There was consensus around a need for facilitating conversations and joint efforts at the institutional level, and that the information gained from the Affinity Network process and outcomes would be of value to stakeholders and leaders of the Common Core State Standards movement.

## WHY THE STANDARDS ARE “GAME CHANGING”

The Common Core State Standards represent a significant milestone in U.S. education reform; for the first time we have substantial agreement about what students should learn in school. The standards eliminate the gap in knowledge and skills between high school and college and bring state standards up to those of countries whose students consistently outperform their U.S. counterparts in international math and science tests.

Developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, nationally recognized experts, and individuals from the higher education sector, the detailed grade-by-grade standards:

- Align with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in the global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.<sup>5</sup>

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***“In Washington State, we have not had standards for grades 11 and 12. This has resulted in a population of graduates who leave our institutions with a varied experience in ELA. With the new standards, the students from our system will be better prepared for higher-level tasks and expectations. As our expectations increase, so will the postsecondary institutions as more students enter college ready to think.”***

— Michelle Lewis, Secondary Schools Program Coordinator, Spokane Public Schools, and ELA Lead for the Washington Affinity Network Team

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The new standards both define what a student should know at particular grade levels and classify the cognitive abilities a student should be able to demonstrate. Students will be asked to learn more difficult material and apply more rigorous analysis than under previous state standards. For example, the new standards will force changes in what many students read and how they decipher content. This is because research conducted in support of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts found that:

*“... while reading demands in college, workforce training programs, and life in general have held steady or increased over the last half century, K–12 texts have actually declined in sophistication, and relatively little attention has been paid to students’ ability to read complex texts independently. These conditions have left a serious gap between many high school seniors’ reading ability and the reading requirements they will face after graduation.”<sup>6</sup>*

The research goes on to state that most high school students do not read enough independently, read too much fiction at the expense of informational or expository text, do not spend enough time analyzing the information that they read, and read text that is not sufficiently challenging.

In response, the Common Core State Standards will require students to read a significantly higher proportion of informational and expository text both inside and outside the classroom. They also will require students to demonstrate that they can interpret words and phrases as they are used in the text, cite evidence from information presented in text, evaluate arguments, judge the validity of the reasoning and supporting information, and compare how different texts address the same topics.

Similar changes will take place in the way math is taught. Students now will need to demonstrate that they can use math to reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments,

## The PARCC and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia

Two consortia of states were awarded federal grants of approximately \$175 million in September 2010 to develop comprehensive assessment systems for the Common Core State Standards: the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced). Each system will measure student attainment of the Common Core State Standards and provide other information, such as:

- The extent to which each student is on track, at each grade level tested, toward college or career readiness;
- Individual student college and career readiness, which can be used to inform high school exit decisions, college course placement in credit-bearing classes, and college entrance;
- School effectiveness; and
- Principal and teacher effectiveness for use in evaluations and identifying supports for teachers and principals.

Each system will include several types of interim tests throughout the school year to measure student progress and determine whether instruction changes or interventions are needed.



critique the reasoning of others, and model real-life situations using mathematics. This is in addition to understanding math's basic tools and concepts.

The transition to the new standards is moving quickly. A number of states began implementation in the 2011-12 school year, and the new assessments — designed to measure student achievement of the standards — are to be ready for classroom use in 2014-15. Two multistate consortia were awarded grants to develop new assessment systems to measure student achievement for grades 3 through 8 and high school; 44 states and the District of Columbia are participating in at least one consortium (see sidebar).<sup>7</sup>

## THE FIRST-YEAR COHORT: INSTITUTIONAL TEAMS

Teams from Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Washington were chosen to participate in the first year of the Affinity Network. Each team in the first cohort includes a school district, a two-year institution, and a four-year institution. The 100-plus Affinity Network members include faculty and administrators from local K–12 and postsecondary institutions and governing bodies. The institutions in each state have existing relationships and are committed to working together, and many have direct feeder patterns, with a large number of students matriculating from the high school to the two-year and four-year institutions, and from the two-year institution to the four-year institution.

In selecting partnerships for the first cohort, the following criteria were considered:

- Whether states signed on to adopt the Common Core State Standards;
- If states were participating in at least one of the assessment consortia — PARCC or Smarter Balanced;
- Geographic representation cutting across regions;
- Federal “Race to the Top” grant receipt or non-receipt;
- Mix of urban-, suburban-, and rural-based institutions;
- Range of approaches and stages in tackling the issues related to Common Core State Standards; and
- Existence of dynamic and committed leadership within the district, community college, and four-year college or university.

To ensure leadership commitment to the Affinity Network effort, initial invitations to join the Network were extended to the district superintendents, university chancellors, and college and university presidents, who agreed to the participation of their institution in the Network and assigned leads from their faculty or staff. The lead(s) then worked across the institution to choose faculty and administrators best positioned to participate in the Network, and coordinated with their colleagues at the other institutions engaged in this effort.

Team members include faculty experts and leadership representing the individual fields of English Language Arts and Math, directors of curriculum and instruction, teachers, counselors, vice provosts, academic deans and department directors, professors, vice presidents of enrollment, and vice presidents of academic affairs. A full roster of team members may be found on the Affinity Network website (<http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/affinity-network>).

## THE CHARGE TO THE FIRST-YEAR COHORT

Although there was higher education involvement in the creation of the Common Core State Standards, responsibility for implementing the standards, as expected, falls chiefly to the K–12 community. The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center believes that for the standards to succeed, however, the higher education segment must participate in a number of key policy decisions. As Jacqueline King of the American Council on Education points out:<sup>8</sup>

*“... states need a careful and thoughtful plan for implementing the Common Core State Standards, including the development of integrated and aligned K–12 and postsecondary policies and practices. As a result, the higher education community must not only be informed about the Common Core State Standards but also be engaged as a full partner in their implementation.”*

As the Common Core State Standards and new assessments are implemented in the next several years, high-level K–12 and higher education collaboration will be needed in a number of key areas, including:

- Aligning assessments to high school exit and college entrance requirements;
- Developing new approaches to developmental education and remediation;
- Improving teacher preparation and training;
- Revamping curricula and classroom materials; and
- Integrating data to create a robust P–16 system.

These topics were considered by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center to be addressed in Affinity Network cohort one, and are more fully discussed in Appendix B. To help the teams narrow their focus to the timeliest and most relevant areas, the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center has asked them to concentrate on the following questions and issues:

- How might the Common Core State Standards result in improvements to the alignment of high school exit expectations with postsecondary entry expectations? What supports need to be in place to successfully accomplish this alignment?
- How might the Common Core State Standards affect the design of remedial education courses on college campuses?

## THE AFFINITY NETWORK KICK-OFF MEETING

The Affinity Network inaugural meeting on April 15–16 brought together team leads and the members of the first cohort to build rapport within and across teams, review the Affinity Network action plan and approach, prepare for the in-state face-to-face meetings, and provide training for the online community.

The two days included a planning meeting of the team leads, expert panel discussions, and breakout and workgroup sessions, as well as time to socialize.

The first panel addressed the promise and vision for the Common Core State Standards. The panelists were leaders in the Common Core State Standards’ conception, development, and promotion, including **Roy Romer**, senior advisor to the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

and former governor of Colorado and superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District; **Jacqueline King**, director of higher education collaboration, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium; **Paul Lingenfelter**, president, State Higher Education Executive Officers; and **Gene Wilhoit**, executive director, Council of Chief State School Officers. The panel was moderated by **Dane Linn**, executive director for state policy strategy at the College Board, who guided a discussion of the policy background and goals of the Common Core State Standards, and of a vision for success in 2014-15.

The second panel focused on the importance of full engagement between the K–12 and higher education community to ensure successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The panel was composed of **Brit Kirwan**, chancellor, University System of Maryland; **Stu Harvey**, executive director of planning and research, Oklahoma City Community College; **Calvin Watts**, associate superintendent, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia; and **Sue Cain**, coordinator of college readiness, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. The panel was moderated by **Nancy Shapiro**, associate vice chancellor of academic affairs, University System of Maryland. The key message of the panel was that the Common Core State Standards presents a unique and urgent opportunity for higher education — through collaboration with the K–12 system — to improve student success in entering and completing college.

The breakout sessions gave an opportunity for Network participants to share ideas and begin to consider how the K–12 and higher education systems can (and must) work together to ensure successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The following key issues identified by the teams typify those facing other K–12 and higher education institutions around the country:

- A great deal of uncertainty exists at the institutional level about how the Common Core State Standards will affect the educational system.
- Many higher education faculty and administrators would like and need more information about Common Core State Standards and are not sure what role, if any, they should play.
- Many educators believe that the Common Core State Standards likely will bring about major changes to developmental education and remediation, alignment of test expectations with high school exit requirements and college readiness definitions, and teacher preparation and development. However, much uncertainty exists regarding how to tackle those changes.

At breakout sessions, the team leads from each state discussed their objectives and ideas of what would constitute success for their institutions. The College Board reviewed the objectives and the supports provided to each team by the Network. The College Board also reviewed communications, roles, and responsibilities, and introduced the online community.

Finally, the Affinity Network teams began to lay the groundwork for their in-state meetings. They started the process of assessing where they were in terms of addressing the potential implications and implementation of Common Core State Standards within their district or institution and in coordination with other institutions and efforts under way in their state.

## THE AFFINITY NETWORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The distinguished experts of the Affinity Network Advisory Committee provide customized content for the participating state teams on topics related to K–12 and higher education alignment and Common Core State Standards. The committee members respond to queries posted from the Affinity Network participants, review content, prepare special briefs and summary pieces based on Affinity Network teams’ needs, and contribute to the blog section of our online community. Please see Appendix A for a full list and biographies of Advisory Committee members.

## TEAM MEETINGS, OBJECTIVES, AND ENGAGEMENT

In-state meetings for each team are under way. Each team is determining what its approach will be to address the alignment of expectations and what set of tasks it plans to undertake to meet its local needs in a meaningful way. Each team is at a different place and has a slightly different focus as it relates to aligning expectations for the Common Core State Standards. Some teams may begin to review the alignment of current programs with the Common Core State Standards. Others may conduct strategic planning to identify collaborative efforts that should take place in the future.

The next interim report will outline the goals and approaches for each team and provide details on the status of each team’s work.

## EXPECTED PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES

The Affinity Network will generate:

- Monthly reports of team progress, shared within and between teams and with external stakeholders;
- Case studies of new K–12/higher education partnerships and innovative approaches to such collaboration;
- Final project report(s), including lessons learned, implications, and recommendations;
- Identification of implications for state and institutional policies; and
- Knowledge for the education field as a whole and for those particularly involved with the Common Core State Standards and assessment consortia.

At a spring 2013 meeting, each of the teams will make a final presentation describing its process, outcomes, lessons learned, and future challenges. These will be synthesized into a culminating Cohort I report. This report will be widely disseminated, as detailed in the next section.

Of course, an important outcome is that the team members participating in the first Affinity Network cohort will continue to collaborate on this work after their term concludes, and their accomplishments will spur others in their institutions and states to participate. The College Board will work in partnership with the teams to determine the assistance necessary to continue.

## DISSEMINATION AND POSTING OF INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTS

The reports, as well as the background papers and research and other materials produced by Affinity Network advisory committee members, the subject-matter experts, and participants, will be distributed broadly to the education community. Although portions of the teams' work will be unique to their own contexts, both the process and lessons learned will be valuable for educators across the country as they implement the Common Core State Standards. The Affinity Network reports, therefore, will be disseminated widely, to an audience that includes:

- Policymakers, including state governors, legislators, and leaders of state K–12 and higher education departments;
- Education organizations, including NGA, NCSL, SHEEO, Smarter Balanced, Achieve, Jobs for the Future, Achieving the Dream, American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Association of American Colleges and Universities, and others;
- Local institutions and education leaders in the participating teams' states and regions;
- The College Board membership as well as attendees at College Board professional development workshops and other conferences and events; and
- Other groups, including teachers, principals, and college faculty.

Team members, advisory committee members, and College Board Advocacy & Policy Center staff will present their findings at national, regional, and state-level conferences. All reports will be made available on the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center website, and will be announced through targeted email campaigns. The Center will reach out to the education press to highlight the important work of the Affinity Network.

# APPENDIX A

## THE AFFINITY NETWORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Elisabeth Hensley**, K–12 Specialist and Project Manager, MPR Associates, Inc.

Elisabeth Hensley works primarily in the area of K–12 school improvement. Currently, she manages MPR’s work on both The Broad Prize for Urban Education and The Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools for the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation. The Broad Prize analyses are conducted using both federal and state data sets in order to identify urban school districts and charter management organizations that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement, reducing achievement gaps, and improving the college readiness of graduates. Hensley’s work with The Broad Prizes has given her thorough knowledge of state standards, assessments, and alignment issues. She also served as the state coordinator for Florida during the National Student Clearinghouse Three-State Pilot, which links secondary and postsecondary data in three states to develop data reports and Web tools in order to improve the college readiness and success of high school students nationwide.

**Laura Horn**, Higher Education Senior Advisor, MPR Associates, Inc.

Laura Horn directs the Postsecondary Education and Transition to College program at MPR Associates. In her 20-year tenure at MPR, Horn has earned wide recognition in the field of higher education research, especially for her studies conducted for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education. She has authored more than 25 published reports, many of which focus on the experiences of students historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. For the past five years, Horn has built a research agenda at MPR focusing on community college student success at both the national and state level. She directs MPR’s work on The Completion Arch, a large project funded by and in partnership with the College Board designed to track community college student progress and success. The Completion Arch organizes a common set of outcome metrics into a unique framework and presents them at the national and state level in a website and print report.

**Michal Kurlaender**, Associate Professor of Education Policy, School of Education, University of California, Davis

Michal Kurlaender’s research focuses on education policy and evaluation, in particular the sources and impacts of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequality at various stages of the educational attainment process. She is currently investigating policies and practices aimed at improving college access, persistence, and degree completion at nonselective public four-year universities and at community colleges. A recent project — Ready or Not? California’s Early Assessment Program and the Transition to College — evaluates how informing students of their need for remediation while in high school impacts students’ senior year course-taking patterns, transition to college, and need for remediation upon college entry. Kurlaender has been on the faculty at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) since 2005. She also serves as the UC Davis site director for the UC Educational Evaluation Center. She received her doctoral degree from Harvard University in 2005.

**Zakiya Lee**, P–20 Project Manager, University System of Maryland (USM)

Zakiya S. Lee helps coordinate multiple partnerships within higher education institutions and between K–12 schools and colleges and universities. These efforts include work with teacher

preparation with Education Deans, the Governor’s P–20 Leadership Council, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, and the Associate of Arts in Teaching two-year/four-year collaboration. Prior to joining USM, Lee taught sixth-grade language arts in the Anne Arundel County (Md.) Public Schools and worked in Student Activities and Greek Life at The Ohio State University. She earned her Ph.D. in college student personnel administration from the University of Maryland, College Park, where her research focused on the postsecondary decision-making processes of black males. Lee also has a M.A. in higher education and student affairs from The Ohio State University and a B.A. in psychology and B.S. in elementary education from the University of Maryland, College Park.

**William McCallum**, Professor of Mathematics, Head of the Department of Mathematics, The University of Arizona

William G. McCallum is a University Distinguished Professor of Mathematics and head of the Department of Mathematics at The University of Arizona. Born in Sydney, Australia, in 1956, he received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard University in 1984, under the supervision of Barry Mazur. After spending two years at the University of California, Berkeley, and one at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley, he joined the faculty at The University of Arizona in 1987. In 1989, he joined the Harvard calculus consortium, and is the lead author of the consortium’s multivariable calculus and college algebra texts. In 1993–94, he spent a year at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, and in 1995–96 he spent a year at the Institute for Advanced Study on a Centennial Fellowship from the American Mathematical Society. In 2005, he received the Director’s Award for Distinguished Teaching Scholars from the National Science Foundation. In 2006, he founded the Institute for Mathematics and Education at The University of Arizona. He was director of the Institute until 2009 and now chairs its advisory board. In 2009–2010, he was one of the lead writers for the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. His professional interests include arithmetical algebraic geometry and mathematics education. He has received grants and written articles, essays, and books in both areas.

**David Radwin**, Senior Research Associate, MPR Associates, Inc.

David Radwin, senior research associate at MPR Associates, works primarily on research involving postsecondary education and quantitative methods. Radwin is the lead analyst for The Completion Arch, a project in partnership with and supported by the College Board, which presents over 600 indicators of community college student progress and success in an interactive website and report. He is also involved in an evaluation of a multistate program for underprepared community college students, and from 2009 through 2011, he served as a state coordinator for The National Student Clearinghouse Three State Pilot Project, Tracking Postsecondary Outcomes for High Schools, collecting, validating, and analyzing data from over 20 state and local educational agencies. His analysis of time to completion for associate degrees was recently published by the National Center for Education Statistics and will be followed by an analysis of completion times for postsecondary certificates. Prior to starting at MPR in 2009, he was a principal analyst at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Nancy Shapiro**, Associate Vice Chancellor, University System of Maryland

Nancy S. Shapiro, associate vice chancellor for the University System of Maryland, has a distinguished record of over 25 years of professional accomplishment in the education sector. She has established groundbreaking P–16 partnerships and fostered multi-segmental P–20 collaborations among two- and four-year, public and private higher education sectors, K–12 schools and the private business sector. As one of the first university system P–16 directors in the



nation, she expanded the fledgling University System of Maryland K–16 project into a statewide platform for education reform. Shapiro’s priorities emphasize the goals of increasing access to college for underrepresented populations, aligning K–12 and higher education standards, closing the achievement gap in college, reforming teacher preparation, improving STEM education, and focusing on increasing college attainment in Maryland to 55 percent by 2020.

**Martha Snyder**, Senior Associate, HCM Strategists, LLC

Martha Snyder is an education policy specialist with high-level experience supporting federal and state policy leaders. At HCM, she provides clients with expertise and strategic counsel on a broad range of education policy issues, including performance funding, K–16 alignment and higher education productivity. Snyder recently completed an analysis of performance funding for the Indiana Higher Education Commission, and continues to engage with the Commission on ways to strengthen it by financing incentives for college completion. She previously worked as a senior policy advisor at the U.S. Department of Education, focusing on K–12 accountability, high school reform, and special education. She also served as an associate director for the White House Domestic Policy Council, providing analysis and counsel on all federal education issues. Snyder also oversaw presidential initiatives and the development of budget priorities. She served as a legislative assistant to Congressman Jim Gerlach of Pennsylvania.

**Bruce Vandal**, Vice President, Complete College America

Bruce Vandal was appointed Vice President at Complete College America in October 2012. He previously coordinated research and policy work as director of the Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute at Education Commission of the States (ECS). He was also the director of Getting Past Go, a three-year Lumina Foundation for Education project to more effectively leverage investments in remedial and developmental education to increase college attainment. He is the co-director of the Tennessee Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative, which is a partnership with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to reform developmental education courses at TBR institutions funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Vandal has directed projects on aligning education and workforce development policy, teacher preparation, and college access. He earned his Ph.D. in education policy and administration from the University of Minnesota.

**Natasha Vasavada**, Executive Director, Standards Research and Development, The College Board

Natasha Vasavada leads the College Board’s standards and curriculum alignment initiatives to link College Board assessments and curricula to state, national, and international standards, including the Common Core State Standards. In this capacity, she has authored studies examining the relationship between the Common Core State Standards and the Advanced Placement®, SAT®, and PSAT/NMSQT® programs. Vasavada also oversees the development and implementation of the College Board Standards for College Success™, including their use as the foundation for College Board curriculum and assessment programs.





# APPENDIX B

## CROSS-SEGMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

State implementation of the Common Core State Standards will take several years and involve numerous “moving parts.” The chances for a successful and efficient transition to the Common Core State Standards are significantly raised through active collaboration of the K–12 and higher education systems in a number of key policy areas. Some critical topics ripe for collaboration are described below.

### ALIGNING ASSESSMENTS TO HIGH SCHOOL EXIT AND COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The assessments being developed for the Common Core State Standards are designed to provide a wide range of information on student performance throughout grades K–12, and to chart progress in attaining the standards before graduation. Determining how to use the new assessments for making critical decisions on issues such as grade and course completion, high school graduation, remediation, and college placement requires input from the higher education segment. Key issues include:

- **Determining “cut points” for high school graduation and college readiness.** The new assessments will provide substantial information on student proficiency in achieving the Common Core State Standards. The higher education system must be at the table to agree on the “cut-point” scores that truly indicate “college ready” — a level of performance that allows students to start college-level courses without remediation. Equally important — because not all students will attain the Common Core State Standards at least for the foreseeable future — minimum scores that permit high school graduation also must be established. Higher education institutions will need to decide how to interpret these lower scores in terms of placement and remediation while preserving a credible college-ready cut score. State higher education institutions also should identify other competencies not addressed by the assessments that colleges use to determine acceptance. These other competencies will need to be built in to the curricula and experience of all high school students to help them become college ready.
- **Determining placement in postsecondary courses.** The new assessments should help determine placement in college-level, credit-bearing courses. For students who exceed certain cut scores, the assessments should help determine placement in post-introductory courses. For students who show early attainment of the standards before their senior year, the assessments should be useful for placement in dual enrollment programs. Higher education institutions will need to be part of these decisions to ensure efficient student transitions to postsecondary study.
- **Determining potential remediation needs.** The assessments also should help identify remediation needs both in high school and after graduation for those students pursuing postsecondary study. The higher education system must be involved in determining how the assessments will be used to diagnose remediation needs during both high school and when entering college.

## DEVELOPING NEW APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AND REMEDIATION

Implementation of the new standards and assessments will change the nature of remediation at the K–12 level (i.e., developmental education) and college. During high school, the new assessments will provide multiple data points on student performance prior to the senior year. For those students not on track to be college ready, new types of “catch-up” courses will be needed. Higher education can play a valuable role helping design courses that raise the performance of students who have fallen behind before they graduate from high school.

At the college level, the Common Core State Standards will provide data that should allow more targeted remediation. Even if some students graduate high school without achieving full college readiness, the Common Core State Standards should reduce the current levels and breadth of remediation often necessary at postsecondary institutions. Future remediation may need to place greater emphasis on developing certain skills, such as critical thinking and analysis. For these reasons, it will be important to monitor the skill deficits of students who graduate under the Common Core State Standards at each performance level and to identify appropriate interventions to raise proficiency.

Changes to both adult education programs hosted at postsecondary institutions and first-year college courses may be required in order to meet the Common Core State Standards. Adult education courses will need to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards; first-year courses that act as bridges between K–12 and college majors may need to be revised if the Common Core State Standards eventually produce better-prepared college freshmen as expected.

## IMPROVING TEACHER PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Much — or even most — traditional classroom instruction will need to change in order to meet the demands of teaching the Common Core State Standards. The new standards place a heavy emphasis on analysis, problem solving, and critical thinking. Students will be asked to read much more nonfiction, interpret and critique what they read, use math to solve real-world problems, and develop independent study habits outside the classroom. As a recent report from the Education Trust states, the new standards will “... actually require students to do things that most teachers don’t even do, at least not regularly.”<sup>9</sup> Numerous changes will likely be necessary, such as:

- Teacher preparation programs and professional development courses must be redesigned and upgraded.
- Higher education should work with K–12 institutions to identify effective teaching methods and to design preparation and professional development curricula that train teachers in the new methods.
- Field experience programs will need to be expanded and emphasized.
- Teachers will need to be given opportunities to learn alongside master teachers and witness high-quality classroom instruction that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards.
- New classroom techniques must be explored and evaluated.
- Schools of teacher education will need to form partnerships with K–12 institutions to identify, develop, and impart high-quality instruction to prospective teachers.

In addition, the skills and knowledge requirements of teachers will change, requiring colleges of education to raise the standards of the teachers who graduate.<sup>10</sup> This will be a particular challenge for math programs, since the supply of newly qualified math teachers already is insufficient to

keep up with demand.

## REVAMPING CURRICULA AND CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The higher education sector can play a critical role in helping identify curricula and instructional materials that reflect the new standards and prepare students for college. As the Common Core State Standards explain:<sup>11</sup>

*“While the Standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers.”*

Developing the necessary resources — such as syllabi, model lessons, units, and assignments — to support the new standards will be a daunting task for most K–12 education departments. Higher education faculty members are in a strong position to help identify the essential materials they feel students should master before entering college. They can work with their K–12 counterparts to design courses that incorporate these materials and help students practice other skills needed to succeed in college.

One such skill involves the development of study behaviors needed for college. The Common Core State Standards will demand higher-level independent study, but the standards do not detail such competencies or describe how to teach them. The higher education sector can help identify the type of study habits missing in many entering freshmen, and work with K–12 faculty to identify classroom assignments and homework that raise these competencies before students leave high school.

## INTEGRATING DATA TO CREATE A ROBUST P–16 SYSTEM

The Common Core State Standards offer the opportunity to create a more robust and standardized P–16 data system than exists today, but realizing the full benefits of such a system requires the participation of higher education. Many states are already in the midst of creating new data systems, and the information provided through the Common Core State Standards assessments must be integrated with these efforts. At the K–12 level, the Common Core State Standards assessments will be useful for providing feedback on effective teaching methods, diagnosing critical points in student achievement of standards, and developing accountability systems for teachers and schools.

A great deal can be learned about the success of the new standards in improving student performance in postsecondary education by integrating the Common Core State Standards and higher education data. Creating an integrated P–16 data system that incorporates the new Common Core State Standards data can help the state determine:

- the success of the standards in improving college readiness and completion;
- the ability of the standards to reduce remediation;
- performance measures that allow appropriate placement; and
- gaps in specific knowledge affecting postsecondary success based on Common Core State Standards performance level.

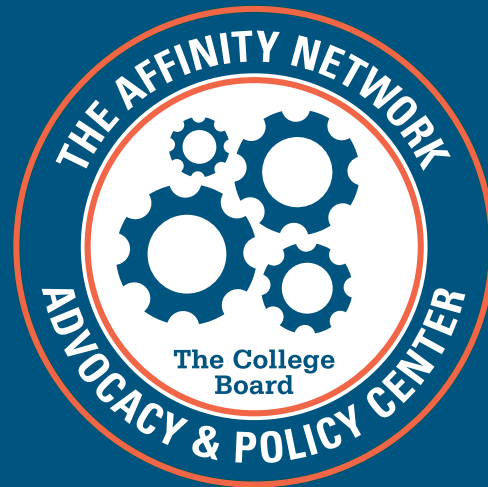
The higher education community has an obligation to learn about the Common Core State Standards, determine how to assist in their execution, and discover how to take advantage of the information the standards will provide. Successful implementation of Common Core State Standards will improve student performance in college; allow for more efficient decisions on college readiness, placement, and remediation; and raise graduation rates.

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## About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT<sup>®</sup> and the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup>. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools. For further information, visit [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

**The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center** was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

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