College- and Career-Readiness Standards and Assessment Resource List (Summer 2016)

Introduction

The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC), an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (AIR), publishes this biannual update of college- and career-readiness standards and assessment (CCRS-A) resources. This list of resources is designed to assist staff in state education agencies (SEAs) and other educators in their curricula, instruction, and assessment efforts.

Federal legislation from the U.S. Department of Education requires SEAs to take steps to support and guide schools and school districts in preparing students to graduate from high school prepared for success in college and careers. The College & Career Readiness & Success Center at AIR (CCRS Center)—one of seven national content centers—is at the forefront of assisting 15 federal regional comprehensive centers (RCCs) and SEAs nationwide in these efforts. The CCRS Center provides essential tools, resources, and technical assistance (TA) to address CCRS priorities. These include briefs; a resource database of topics such as career pathways, measuring CCR, and data use; an interactive state map that provides summaries of CCR policies; an organizer to assist in strategic planning, decision making, and alignment of initiatives; and implementation guides that provide the latest research and practice to aid states in implementing CCR initiatives. Additional information is available on the center's website and in its blog, which shares lessons from national organizations and state leaders that are collaborating to strengthen CCR.

In addition to federal priorities related to CCR, SEAs are charged with implementing standards and assessments that provide appropriate benchmarks for measuring educator and leader effectiveness, student learning, and school improvement. The national content center—Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI) at WestEd—is a primary source for tools, resources, and TA regarding these efforts. CSAI offers an interactive mapping tool that provides snapshots of each state's standards and assessment implementation efforts; a resource library of guidance documents, policy briefs and research papers; as well as updates on implementation work in the field, news, and events.

This issue of the CCRS-A resource list features a number of resources that may be beneficial to SEA staff, educators, and other stakeholders. The SECC resource team has compiled items from the federal RCCs, national content centers, regional educational laboratories, and other organizations that specialize in education policy, research, and TA. Sources include Achieve, ACT, Data Quality Campaign, Education Commission of the States, and the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, among others. The resource list is organized into five sections (see chart), and for each resource, the section contains the title, a description, and a hyperlink to the web page or item. Subsequent issues of the resource list will include additional resources related to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as they become available.

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For more information or assistance regarding CCRS-A resources, contact SECC Director Beth Howard-Brown or Concepcion Molina, senior technical assistance consultant.

Section 1: General Resources

Achieving Tomorrow
This interactive website from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation provides policymakers and education stakeholders with information about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the foundation's role in supporting CCRS. The website features five sections:

- What to Know—an overview of CCSS and CCRS, including numerous video clips
- Myths Versus Facts—common myths associated with CCSS and facts that refute those myths
- Your State—state standards, assessments, reading and math proficiency, college remediation and completion rates, the post-secondary skills gap, and additional resources
- Blogs—print and video information regarding standards from various organizations and individuals
- Resources—information on state standards, assessments, and small business resources, along with resources of interest to parents, teachers, and military families

http://www.achievingtomorrow.org/your-state/

An Update to the OER Institute State Profiles
This report from Achieve updates the profiles of six of the seven member states involved in its Open Educational Resources (OER) Institute. OER provides schools and districts with openly licensed, high-quality, standards-aligned, online instructional materials. The report highlights progress in the usage of OER and future opportunities for expanded OER usage in California, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. This document, combined with a set of policy recommendations released by Achieve in 2015, is intended to expand the use of OER in state and district efforts to prepare students for college and career opportunities.

http://www.achieve.org/files/StateProfilesUpdateFINAL.pdf

Blueprint for College Readiness Policies
This chart, from the Education Commission of the States, identifies high school and/or postsecondary CCR policies gleaned from a search of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It provides policymakers and state leaders with at-a-glance information about policies and legislation related to CCR in various states, including the title, date, and a brief summary of the policy as well as a link to the identified policy or piece of legislation.

http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/BlueHSSC

CCRS Interactive State Map
This interactive web-based tool profiles CCR initiatives in each state. Housed on the CCRS Center's website, each state's map includes CCR policies, definitions, metrics, programs, and structures. The tool allows policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to access and evaluate policies and practices in a single state or compare multiple states across selected categories. Users can access a compiled list of additional resources on related topics by clicking on the *Hot Topics* link that is available on each state page.

http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/state-profile

Checking-In: Do Classroom Assignments Reflect Today's Higher Standards?

This report is part of the *Equity in Motion* series by The Education Trust. To determine the degree to which classroom assignments are aligned with CCSS, researchers conducted an assignment analysis on 1,591 class assignments in English language arts (ELA), humanities, science, and social studies from six large, urban middle schools in two states. The assignments were given over a consecutive two-week period in 2015. Key findings from the analysis indicate

- Five percent of assignments met six or more indicators of the assignment analysis framework.
- Thirty-eight percent of assignments were aligned with grade-level standards.
- Although 55% of assignments required the use of text, only 16% of assignments required students to cite textual information to support their inferences, positions, or critiques.
- Four percent of assignments required students to engage in higher-level thinking.
- Two percent of assignments motivated and engaged students and provided students with the opportunity to engage in relevant academic conversation.

The authors conclude by offering recommendations for next steps and encouraging educational leaders to closely examine student assignments across grade levels and content areas to better support standards-aligned teaching and learning.

http://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CheckingIn_TheEducationTrust_Sept2015.pdf

College and Career Readiness and Success Organizer

This interactive graphic organizer from the CCRS Center is designed to facilitate discussion and support strategic planning across stakeholder groups as they address student needs for college and career readiness. The tool provides an overview of the elements that influence a student's ability to succeed in college and careers. The elements are organized into three tiers. The central tier consists of four *strands*, each driven by a guiding question. The second tier contains *threads* that represent specific aspects of each strand. Each thread includes a bulleted list of *components*, which comprises the third tier. These components are specific items that education policy makers can use to impact college and career readiness. Additional information for each tier can be accessed using the point-and-click interactive feature. Users also can download a PDF version of the organizer that includes additional information, resources, and references.

http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/ccrs-organizer

Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

This report, the most recent in a series of annual publications from ACT, examines high school graduates' readiness for college and careers and informs the school community (e.g., education policymakers, practitioners, researchers, parents, community agencies) about the effectiveness and impact of current policies and practices on high school graduates' college and career readiness. Using 2015 ACT data, the authors looked at how course-taking patterns, early participation in rigorous curricula, student-reported planned majors, and other factors (e.g., cross-cutting capabilities, behavioral skills, and the ability to navigate education and career paths) impact readiness. Data indicated that enrolling more students in a college preparatory curriculum, increasing the number of students who take the recommended core curriculum, and encouraging early participation in more rigorous coursework will have a positive impact on college and career readiness. Recommendations from the authors include safeguarding and using data appropriately, focusing on system alignment (standards curricula, assessment, and instruction), and providing more teacher support and development.

http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr15/pdf/CCCR15-NationalReadinessRpt.pdf

Equal Opportunity for Deeper Learning

This white paper, produced by Jobs for the Future as part of the Deeper Learning Research Series, addresses the issue of inequity in teaching and learning. The authors focus on the inequities that exist in providing all students with the deeper learning they need for college and career success and the education practices and policies that impact this issue. The paper provides an overview of current research about deeper learning and child development and examines practices in a number of schools committed to equity and deeper learning. Based on that information, the authors propose a policy agenda for funding, human capital, instruction, and assessment to achieve equitable access to deeper learning for all students.
http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Equal-Opportunity-for-Deeper-Learning-100115a.pdf

Proficient Means Prepared Toolkit

This toolkit from the Higher Ed for Higher Standards coalition outlines strategies the higher education community can employ to effectively manage communication in support of states' CCRS and assessments and to describe their role in working with K–12 schools to ensure postsecondary student success. The toolkit includes suggested communication activities with timelines for implementation, background information on several CCR assessments, key messages for higher education leaders with customizable templates for communicating those messages, a discussion about what higher education leaders can do to promote effective P–20 alignment, and additional data resources and communications resources from national organizations.
http://higheredforhigherstandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ProficentMeansPrepared-Toolkit.pdf

State of the States

Located on the CSAI website, this interactive web-based state map provides policymakers with a snapshot of state standards and assessment implementation efforts in the areas of ELA, mathematics, and science as well as information about preK and kindergarten assessments. The website also provides the adoption status of each state's CCR standards (CCSS Full, CCSS Partial, or State ELA/Math Standards).
http://www.csai-online.org/sos

Section 2: Career and Technical Education Resources

College and Career Readiness of U.S. High School Graduates
This report from Achieve examines student performance on a number of CCR measures across states and the District of Columbia to determine the extent to which students are graduating college- and career-ready. The report examines specific indicators including performance on CCR assessments, completion of a rigorous CCR course of study, and earning college credits for courses taken while students are still in high school. It also contains a link to additional information regarding CCR indicators for individual states and a video explaining how to read the state profiles.
http://www.achieve.org/files/CCRHSGrads-March2016.pdf

Employability Skills Framework
The Employability Skills Framework website, from the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network and the U.S. Department of Education (Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education), provides education stakeholders with resources for the instruction and assessment of employability skills for labor market success. The framework is composed of nine key employable skills organized into three categories: (a) applied knowledge, (b) effective relationships, and (c) workplace skills. The skills within these three categories are applicable to all workplace environments.

The website features five sections:
- About the Framework—how the framework was developed, an interactive framework, and a crosswalk with academic and technical careers
- Explore the Framework—definitions of employability skills and how they are applied to the workplace
- Choosing an Assessment—issues related to selecting an employability skills assessment
- Developing Skills—strategies for teaching employability skills
- Resources—information on national and state employability skill standards and assessments, important assessment considerations, and the federal role in supporting employability skills

The website also provides tips and related resources for educators, employers, and policymakers.
http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/

States Look to Career and Technical Education to Boost College Readiness
This article, from the Council of State Governments Knowledge Center, reports on the efforts of several states to increase funding to allow more students access to CCR strategies such as dual-enrollment courses, Advanced Placement classes, and career academies. The article highlights the impact that Kansas' Career and Technical Education Act is having on increasing the number of college credits earned and on increasing the number of students participating in college-level technical education courses and earning industry-recognized credentials. In addition, the article describes proposed legislation in Nebraska and Minnesota to increase funding for similar CCR opportunities.
http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/states-look-career-and-technical-education-boost-college-readiness

Section 3: Assessment Resources

Assessment Design Toolkit

This CSAI webpage houses a compilation of resources from the Reform Support Network that are designed to help teachers and principals create and select high-quality assessments. The resources include 13 modules grouped into four categories: (a) Key Concepts, (b) Five Elements of Assessment Design, (c) Writing & Selecting Assessments, and (d) Reflecting on Assessment Design. The website also provides information on how to use and repurpose the toolkit to meet professional development (PD) needs. Users can download supplemental materials for each module including presenter scripts, PowerPoint slides, and handouts.
http://www.csai-online.org/spotlight/assessment-design-toolkit

Assessment Literacy

This CSAI web page houses a compilation of Assessment Literacy resources designed to help educators understand the goal/purpose of assessments, interpret assessment data, and use assessment data in the instructional process. The site provides educators with a link to resources in three different categories: (a) Understanding Assessments, (b) Interpreting Data, and (c) Using the Results. Each category allows users to access various resources including webinars, guidance documents, and training modules.
http://www.csai-online.org/collection/2199

Assessment Literacy Project

This website, hosted by the Assessment Literacy Project at the Kansas State Department of Education, contains resources to help school administrators and teachers understand the components of their state's educational assessment system and use this knowledge to improve instruction. Although assessment systems vary from state to state, all state educational assessment systems include components that address these five questions:

- What is assessed?
- How is it assessed?
- How should students prepare for and take the assessments?
- How are special-needs students provided appropriate access to the assessments?
- How are the results reported and interpreted?

To help educators build assessment literacy about their assessment system components, the website provides 21 online PD modules, grouped into four categories: (a) What is a good assessment?, (b) What do tests measure?, (c) How do tests measure learning?, and (d) How do teachers and students prepare for and take tests? Each module contains explanatory videos, activities, handouts, a PowerPoint slide presentation with speaker notes, and other resources such as a glossary and a bibliography.
http://www.k-state.edu/ksde/alp/

Comprehensive Standards-Based Assessment Framework

Colorado's comprehensive standards-based assessment framework is a coherent system of formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments that support student learning and mastery of state standards. The framework provides state and district leaders, teachers, policymakers and parents with information about each of seven different types of assessments:

- Classroom Formative: Embedded
- Classroom Formative: Formal
- Classroom Summative
- Interim Summative
- Summative (district, school, state)

- Diagnostic and Screening
- National and International

http://www.csai-online.org/sites/default/files/COFramework_9.25.15.pdf

Different Assessments, Different Results: A Cautionary Note When Interpreting State Test Results

This issue brief from ACT provides explanations for discrepancies between (a) the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state test scores and (b) NAEP and ACT scores. The authors contend that differences between NAEP and state assessments scores may be attributed to different content and/or cut scores. They argue that NAEP and ACT score discrepancies are most likely due to differences between the students who take the tests. According to the authors, students taking the ACT are often self-selected based on college aspirations, while NAEP test takers are representative of the state's overall student population. The authors end their brief with a call for new proficiency standards aligned to essential postsecondary outcomes along with a reminder that proficiency rates will likely drop during the transition period.

https://forms.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/2015-Issue-Brief-Different-Results.pdf

Guide to Evaluating Assessments Using the CCSSO Criteria for High-Quality Assessments: Focus on Test Content

This document from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment describes a methodology for evaluating the quality of assessments of CCR standards. Using the Council of Chief States School Officers' *Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments,* this methodology focuses on evaluating test content, which includes alignment of test content to CCRS, accessibility for all students, and transparency of test design and expectations. This document provides an overview of the evaluation process, including explanations of the steps involved in the methodology and examples of the tools (e.g., rubrics, coding forms, and scoring summaries) that were developed for conducting the evaluation study. A set of appendices contains additional guidance and information as well as copies of the forms and tools developed for the evaluation process.

http://www.nciea.org/publication_PDFs/Guide%20to%20Evaluating%20CCSSO%20Criteria%20Test%20Content%20020316.pdf

Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act: Toward a Coherent, Aligned Assessment System

This report from the Center for American Progress (CAP) provides a possible roadmap for federal, state, and local leaders to follow for creating more effective assessment systems using the new provisions in ESSA. Using parent and teacher focus group data, parent survey results, and interviews with assessment experts, policymakers, district assessment coordinators, and other state and local leaders, CAP identifies salient state and district testing issues. The report also provides examples of how states, districts, and organizations have addressed these issues. Based on their findings, the authors offer recommendations at the federal, state, district, and school levels for developing coherent, aligned assessment systems that support teaching and learning.

https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/28135807/MendIt-ESSA-report.pdf

National Benchmarks for State Achievement Standards

This report from AIR compares state achievement standards to NAEP achievement levels. The report compares how the achievement standards for Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced), the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), and ACT Aspire align with NAEP benchmarks and how these tests compare with each other. Findings include

- Level 3 Smarter Balanced college-readiness standards are comparable in difficulty to NAEP's Basic level.
- Level 4 PARCC college-readiness standards are comparable to NAEP's Proficient level for mathematics and NAEP's Basic level for ELA.
- Level 3 Smarter Balanced achievement standards are significantly lower than Level 4 PARCC performance standards.

The author concludes with several caveats to help readers understand the information provided in the study.

http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/National-Benchmarks-State-Achievement-Standards-February-2016_rev.pdf

State Summative Assessments: 2015–2016 School Year

This document from the Education Commission of the States provides a comparison of the efforts of all 50 states and the District of Columbia to meet federal assessment requirements. A table provides state policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders with specific information from each state. This information includes assessment consortia participation status, summative assessments administered in mathematics and ELA in Grades 3–8 and 9–11, assessments given in science and social studies including grade levels tested, and any additional state-mandated CCR exams.

http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/21/41/12141.pdf

Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts

This inventory by Achieve is a tool for helping district leaders evaluate their current assessment system and streamline and/or strengthen their assessment program based on that analysis. In addition to the *Student Assessment Inventory* tool, this web page includes other resources to guide districts through a process to ensure that all testing is purposeful and of high quality. These additional resources include

- Training materials (including scripted PowerPoint slides) for teaching others how to use the tool effectively
- A guidance document to lead educators through the inventory process
- Sample focus group and survey materials for engaging with teachers, parents, and students
- Considerations for assessing English language learners and special education assessment systems

Although this resource is directed toward a local education agency (LEA) audience, the tool enables SEAs to assist districts in evaluating and improving their assessment systems.
http://www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory

Student Data Privacy Legislation: What Happened in 2015, and What Is Next?

This document, produced by the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), summarizes the student data privacy legislation landscape in 2015. Federal, state, and local education policymakers view safeguarding student data as a priority while also recognizing the important role data sharing plays in supporting improved student achievement. The document provides an overview of the evolving data privacy conversations taking place at the state and national levels, including topics such as legislating how online service providers use student data. According to the authors, 182 bills addressing student data privacy issues were introduced in 46 states in 2015. A color-coded map identifies states that passed new student data privacy legislation in 2015. As states continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of student data privacy legislation, DQC recommends that states provide transparency about data collection and data use, communicate the value of data as a tool for supporting student achievement, and support boards and districts in their responsibilities for data management and use. The authors also identify strategies states are likely to pursue in 2016.
http://dataqualitycampaign.org/resource/student-data-privacy-legislation-happened-2015-next/

Student Testing in America's Great City Schools: An Inventory and Preliminary Analysis

This report from the Council of the Great City Schools describes assessment practices based on 2014 survey results gathered from the organization's member districts. This report sought to discover what assessments were being used, who mandated them, what was learned from their administration, and why educators were using them. The report includes a three-page bulleted list of findings, a discussion of seven broad conclusions drawn from the study, recommended preliminary next steps for federal and state policymakers and district leaders based on the analysis, and conclusions about the shared responsibility for problems with the current system of assessments.
http://cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Testing%20Report.pdf

Testing Trends: Considerations for Choosing and Using Assessments

This report from the Education Commission of the States provides state and local policymakers with an overview of current trends impacting the selection and use of assessments aligned to states' new higher standards. The authors discuss and provide examples of three trends in how states are choosing their assessments: (a) making a change in consortia membership, (b) blending consortia and state assessment items to create a unique state test, and (c) using college entrance exams to meet high school federal testing requirements. The second half of the report discusses these emerging assessment issues and provides examples of how various states are addressing them, including (a) transitions to the new assessment and the impact that anticipated lower scores may have on accountability decisions, (b) concerns about over-testing, (c) opting out, and (d) comparability of test results.

http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Testing-Trends-final.pdf

Section 4: English/Language Arts Resources

2015–16 State Summative High School English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments

This table from Achieve provides a brief summary of the high school ELA/literacy assessments administered in each state and the District of Columbia in 2015–16. Information about these assessments is organized into the following categories: (a) 2015–16 high school ELA assessments, (b) grade taken, (c) which students take the assessment, (d) student stakes, (e) change from 2014–15 to 2015–16, and (f) additional notes (e.g., descriptions of the student stakes and anticipated changes for future years).
http://www.achieve.org/files/HS_ELA_Assessments_Table_2015-16-7.pdf

Common Core State Standards Video Series for English Language Arts

These Common Core videos for ELA are intended to support states, schools, and teachers in the implementation of the Common Core Standards. The videos were created in collaboration with states in SECC's region based on their need for PD support in the implementation of the standards. Each video focuses on one or more specific standard and includes examples to enhance understanding. http://secc.sedl.org/common_core_videos/index_ela.php

ELA/Literacy Instructional Practice Guide: Coaching Tool

Developed by Student Achievement Partners, this online PD tool for teachers and coaches provides opportunities for participants to gain better understanding of and experience with CCSS-aligned instruction. The module is based on the Instructional Practice Guide Coaching Tool and includes

- A user's guide
- A PowerPoint presentation with facilitator notes and videos
- Copies of observational tools for evaluating Grade K–2 and 3–12 lessons
- Activities designed to help participants address the three key instructional shifts in the CCSS for ELA and literacy:
  - Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
  - Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from literary and informational text
  - Building knowledge through reading and understanding content-rich nonfiction

Participants are encouraged to customize the module to meet their needs. Additional resources (e.g., a lesson planning tool and related videos) are available for users who sign up for or are already registered with Teaching the Core.
http://achievethecore.org/page/1082/ela-literacy-instructional-practice-guide-coaching-tool

PARCC Released Items for English Language Arts

This PARCC web page provides released ELA assessment items and other resources to improve classroom instruction and student learning. In addition to scoring rubrics and guides, the website provides released item sets, answer keys, annotated student responses, and standard alignments. Teachers may search the resource database by resource name, subject, grade level, and release year.
https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items?title=&field_subject_tid=&field_grade_level_unlimited_tid=All&page=1

Section 5: Mathematics Resources

2015–16 State Summative High School Math Assessments
This table from Achieve provides a brief summary of the high school math assessments administered in each state and the District of Columbia in 2015–16. Information about these assessments is organized into the following key categories: (a) high school math assessments, (b) grade taken, (c) which students take the assessment, (d) student stakes, (e) change from 2014–15 to 2015–16, and (f) additional notes (e.g., descriptions of the student stakes and anticipated changes for future years).
http://achieve.org/files/HS_Math_Assessments_Table_2015-16-7.pdf

Common Core State Standards Video Series for Mathematics
These Common Core videos for Mathematics are designed to support states, schools, and teachers in the implementation of the Common Core Standards. The videos were created in collaboration with states in SECC's region based on their need for PD support in the implementation of the Common Core. Each video focuses on one or more specific standards and includes examples to enhance understanding. Additional videos are added to the website periodically and include connections to other related standards and applications to the Standards of Mathematical Practice.
http://secc.sedl.org/common_core_videos/

Math in Common: Many Pathways to Student Success in Mathematics—Middle and High School Course Sequences and Placement Decisions in the Math in Common Districts
This document is one in a series of reports by WestEd examining the efforts of Math In Common® (MiC) school districts in California as they implement the CCSS in mathematics (CCSS-Mathematics). This report describes the many interdependent decisions different member districts made about pathways that would lead all students to meet the CCSS-Mathematics. In addition to providing insight into how district leaders made their decisions, the document includes implementation examples and variations within and among districts, a case study of a district implementing an integrated pathway, and a case study of a district that selected the traditional pathway.
https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1453257122resourcemanypathwaystostudentsuccessinmathematics.pdf

PARCC Released Items for Mathematics

This PARCC web page provides released mathematics assessment items and other resources to support teachers in providing effective classroom instruction to improve student learning. Along with scoring rubrics and guides, the website provides released item sets, answer keys, annotated student responses, and standard alignments. The website allows teachers to search for resources by subject, grade level, and release year.

https://prc.parcconline.org/assessments/parcc-released-items?title=&field_subject_tid=&field_grade_level_unlimited_tid=All&page=1