

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

The Presidency

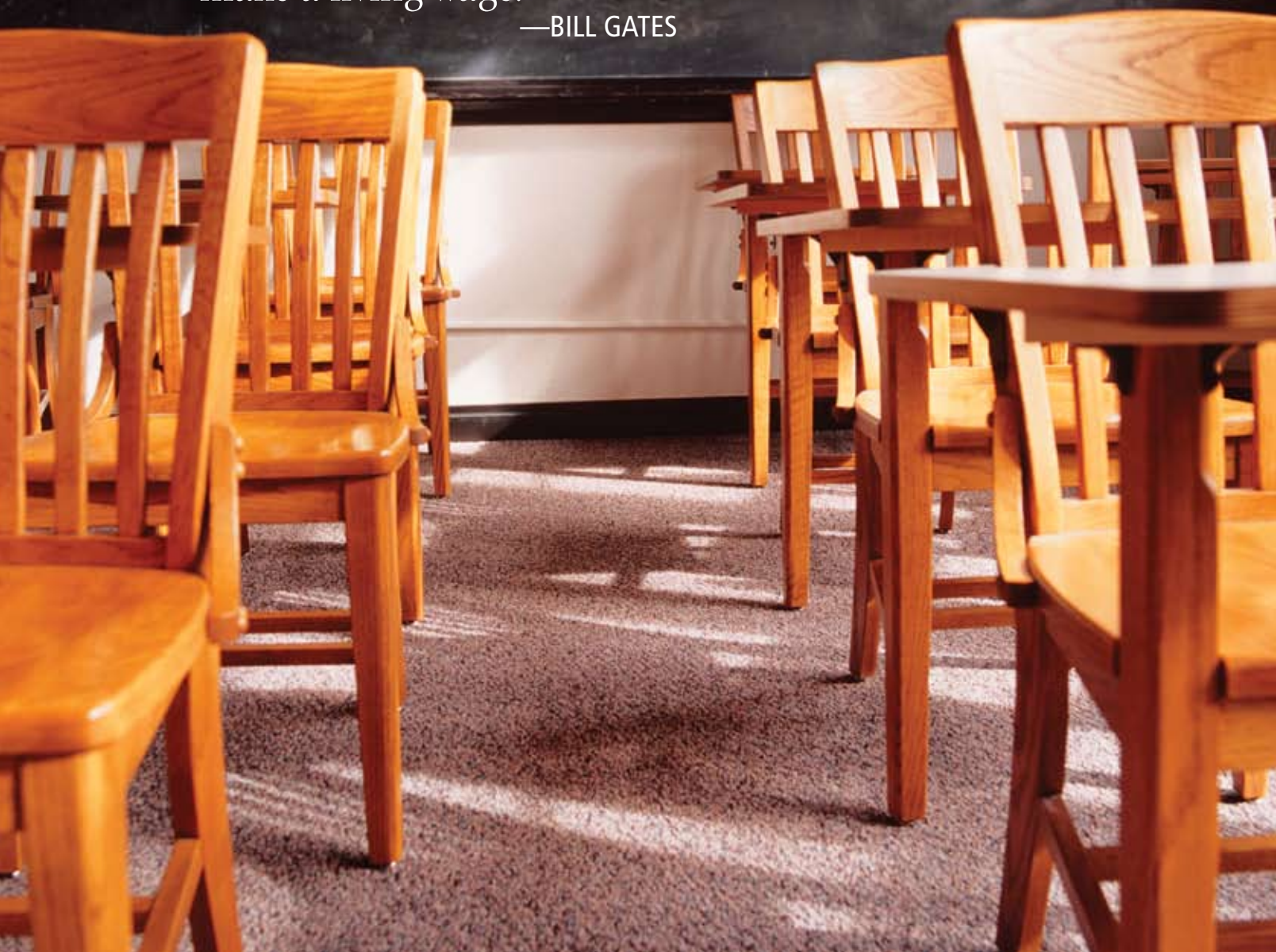
WINTER 2007

THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION'S MAGAZINE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS

ACE[®]

“In district after district, wealthy white kids are taught Algebra II, while low-income minority kids are taught to balance a check book! The first group goes on to college and careers; the second group will struggle to make a living wage.”

—BILL GATES





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Advancing College Readiness Through the American Diploma Project Network

By Michael Cohen and Jacqueline E. King

In most states today, a student can complete all the courses required for high school graduation and college admissions, pass all required high school assessments, be admitted to a college or university—and still require remedial coursework to be ready for first-year college courses. In fact, nearly one-third of first-year college students are placed into remedial courses, a situation that substantially reduces their odds of earning a college degree.

In February 2005, Achieve and the National Governors Association sponsored a National Education Summit on High Schools, at which governors from 45 states, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, corporate leaders, academics, policy experts, and leaders from both secondary and higher education agreed on a common policy goal: making the high school diploma a true indicator of readiness for both college and work. Participants concluded that, in today's economy, the old distinction between academic and career skills is obsolete. Young people need the same fundamental skills whether they pursue college or work immediately after high school, and most will eventually need at least some postsecondary education.

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As a result of the summit, the governors and business and education leaders from 26 states have joined the American Diploma Project Network, a structured national initiative organized by Achieve to help states take concrete steps toward making the high school diploma a true indicator of college and work readiness (see map below). The American Council on Education (ACE), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), and the National Association of System Heads (NASH) are working with Achieve to promote active higher education participation in this network. There is a high degree of consensus about the steps necessary to make this vision a reality. The challenge is that this work requires statewide buy-in and cooperation between secondary and higher education, with colleges and universities playing a major role. Higher education has a lot to gain: reduced remediation, better instruction at the

high school and college levels, improved student performance, and higher college graduation rates, as well as recognition for contributing to a major public policy agenda. What then is required of higher education?

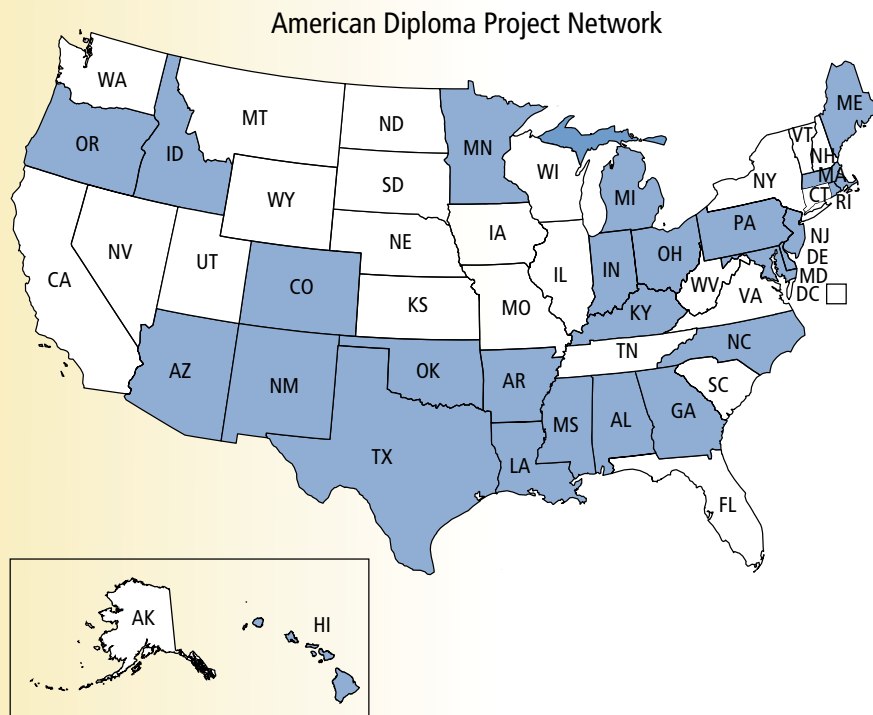
College and secondary education leaders in each state must work together to align high school graduation standards with expectations for success in entry-level college coursework. K–12 leaders in every state have established academic standards that have become the foundation for curriculum, testing, and accountability systems from elementary through high school. Unfortunately, few states carefully aligned those standards with the skills required for success in higher education. That is beginning to change.

With support from Achieve, college and high school faculty in 16 states have begun working together on new academic standards that define the knowledge and skills high school graduates

must have in math, reading, and writing to succeed in college or the workplace, and more work will start this academic year. High school curriculum, course descriptions, and assessments, as well as college placement exams and first-year college course descriptions, can and should be aligned with these “Academic Standards for College and Work.” College faculty may initially resist the notion of a common set of entry-level standards across institutions, but once they begin to compare course syllabi, textbooks, and so forth, they typically find that 90 percent of the material is common to first-year math and English courses at all institutions and that the remaining 10 percent can be reconciled.

States must raise high school graduation requirements so that the courses students take to earn a diploma are consistent with the prerequisite courses needed to attend college. Based on its extensive research on college and work standards, Achieve recommends four years of rigorous English and math through Algebra II to be minimum requirements for a college- and work-ready high school diploma. Only 10 states currently mandate a set of college-preparatory courses for high school graduation, but another 10 states are working toward this goal (see “By the Numbers” on page 12). Public university systems can reinforce state efforts by working with K–12 officials to determine the right set of courses needed to succeed in higher education, and using these courses to establish course requirements for admission.

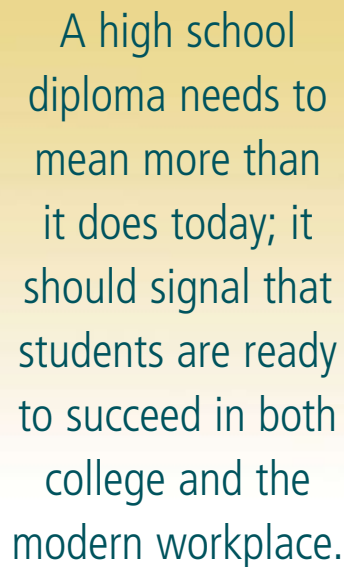
Statewide standards must drive not only coursework, but also assessment. The tests students take in high school must better measure the knowledge



Source: Achieve, Inc.

and skills needed to succeed in college. Proficiency on high school tests should mean that students are prepared for higher education. Leaders in a growing number of states are working to build more ambitious state-wide high school assessments to better signal college readiness. Nine states in the American Diploma Project Network are entering into a compact to develop an Algebra II end-of-course assessment that will indicate readiness for college-level math. The California State University system and the California Department of Education worked together to add questions to the state's 11th-grade English and math assessments so these tests also could be used as college placement exams. In each of these cases, students who don't score well find out early that they aren't ready for college-level work, and have the opportunity to fill in any gaps while still in high school. Higher education leaders have an important role to play in supporting test development efforts and adding credibility to the exams by using them for college placement decisions.

There must be an information feedback loop between post-secondary education and high schools that drives improvement in both sectors. In order for high schools to improve, they need information from colleges about how well students are performing, particularly in their first-year coursework. Likewise, by sharing their challenges and successes in implementing a college-ready curriculum, secondary educators can help higher education anticipate student needs for remediation, refine first-year courses, and improve teacher preparation and professional development.



A high school diploma needs to mean more than it does today; it should signal that students are ready to succeed in both college and the modern workplace.

Promising Practices

This is a challenging agenda, but some states have already made significant progress and can help others identify and overcome both political and practical issues. This special supplement to ACE's *The Presidency* magazine features articles and resources to help higher education leaders advance this agenda in their states.


One pioneer in the effort to more seamlessly link higher education to elementary/secondary education—former University System of Georgia chancellor Stephen Portch—shares the lessons he has learned about leading a collaborative effort with K–12 (see page 4). Portch is joined by three current higher education leaders who have been in the vanguard of reform—Stan Jones, Charles Reed, and Mark Rosenberg share their insights about both the work that is required and the payoff of this work for higher education (see pages 6, 8, and

10). To help readers gauge progress in their states, “By the Numbers” (see page 12) features data on the status of efforts to implement the American Diploma Project agenda in the 26-state network. Finally, we include a variety of resources for further reflection, discussion, and action, including a wide variety of meetings and publications that ACE, SHEEO, NASH, and Achieve have planned for the next two years to help higher education leaders learn more about this reform agenda and implement needed changes in their states (see the back cover).

A high school diploma needs to mean more than it does today; it should signal that students are ready to succeed in both college and the modern workplace. There is a mandate for change, but states cannot make progress on the agenda we have outlined without the active support of higher education. David Spence, former provost of the California State University system and an architect of reform efforts, sums up the situation best: “I don't think the high schools can go any further without higher education being clear about their college-readiness standards. It's time for higher education to step up to the plate and be absolutely clear what it means, across a whole state, to be college-ready.”¹ ■

Note:

1. Callan, P. M., Finney, J. E., Kirst, M. W., Usdan, M. D., & Venezia, A. (2006). *Claiming common ground: State policy-making for improving college readiness and success*. San Jose, CA: Institute for Educational Leadership, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research.

An abstract painting on the left side of the page. It features a large, stylized figure with a head composed of concentric orange and yellow circles, resembling a sun or a face. The figure's body is composed of various geometric shapes in shades of red, orange, green, and white. The background is a mix of these colors, creating a vibrant, textured effect.

The Leadership Challenges of Working Across the Educational Spectrum

By Stephen R. Portch

Oh, to be a president today. With higher education under the microscope of national commissions and activist boards on the outside, and grumpy faculty and consumer-minded students all making demands from the inside, presidents and chancellors have their hands full. With state budgets declining as a percentage of revenue, federal research dollars flattening as a result of other demands on federal revenue, and capital campaigns increasing into the billions, presidents and chancellors may even be tempted to throw up their hands in despair. On top of all this, higher education policy groups and policy leaders are advocating that academic leaders make the connection between college and high school one of their top priorities. What's a president to do?



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Presidents may be reluctant to add yet another priority to their duties, but there are compelling reasons for them to do so. As report after report has documented, national demographics and international competition are creating significant challenges for the nation and its colleges and universities. The successful participation of high school students in higher education has not shown significant improvement despite numerous “reform” activities in K–12 and targeted initiatives in higher education. Overall retention and graduation rates in higher education have proven stubborn to improvement. Just as resistant to improvement, the achievement gap between rich and poor, majority and minority remains a major concern. Within the half-life of another cohort of students, this concern becomes a crisis because of the demographic shifts resulting in ever-increasing minority populations, especially Hispanics. And while we wrestle with these challenges, nations like China and India and constructs like the European Union are forging ahead to increase the educational attainment of their populations.

The alarm bells have been sounded by political, business, and educational leaders. Foundations such as the new-breed Gates Foundation have poured multimillions of dollars into possible solutions, and higher education organizations like the American Council on Education seek to galvanize higher education leaders to take a more visible role in the full continuum of a student’s education. The reality is most universities cannot realize their ambitions without better-prepared students, and most states cannot strengthen their economies without more educated populaces.

These calls for coordinated efforts are not new. Over a

decade ago, two states (Georgia and Maryland) launched P–16 initiatives aimed at creating shared responsibility for a student’s education, from preschool through college graduation. Various known, in an era before branding and marketing, as P–16 or P–20 or K–16 or K–20, the movement spread in one form or another to most states. P–16 is, as Twain famously said of Wagner’s music, “better than it sounds.” Yet traction remains uneven, with some states experiencing false starts, restarts, or abandonment. Today, there is a new, more focused national

Sustained leadership from presidents and system leaders on this issue could make all the difference.

movement targeting the high school-to-college transition. With support from 45 governors and national leaders like Bill Gates, the drive to transform the high school diploma into a true indicator of readiness for college and the modern workplace has advantages that the more diffuse P–16 movement lacks, including a focused reform agenda (see “Advancing College Readiness Through the American Diploma Project Network” on page 1) and resources to help move that agenda forward. Sustained leadership from presidents and system leaders on this issue could make all the difference, as a number of relatively isolated examples have demonstrated (see “Involving Higher Education in Raising Expectations and

Achievement Levels” and “Early Assessment: An Important Role for the University” on pages 6 and 8, respectively). Boards and state leaders, however, must support such a focus so that presidents can overcome the following impediments.

Competing Priorities. Modern-day presidents need to raise money. Not only do they have to raise private money, but many also have to persuade state legislators to ignore structural deficits in the state budget in order to spend more on higher education. Furthermore, they have to convince students, their parents, legislators, governing boards, and critics in Congress that tuition increases are justifiable, that costs are under control, and that the return on investment is worthwhile.

Modern-day presidents also need to compete in the arms race for their institutions. The battlefields range from research labs to climbing walls, as we live in an age of rampant educational consumerism. The middle and upper economic classes determine the rules of engagement, and *U.S. News & World Report* declares the victors. From winning sports teams to stealing star faculty, colleges and universities seek attention, branding, and marketing with all the fervor and sophistication of a soft drink giant. While the public policy talk is of collaboration, we measure *competitiveness*.

So it is little wonder that presidents are reluctant to invest much time in working on a state-wide project to advance college readiness.

High Risk, Low Short-Term Returns. With political landmines just one Ward Churchill away, the modern-day president has to judge risks and returns more frequently and precisely. Collaboration with K–12 is risky business and getting caught in some cross-fire is almost inevitable as politics

will almost certainly intrude. Take Georgia in 2001, for example, when a well-established P-16 initiative was tested, as one of the key statutory figures in the effort (the elected Republican state superintendent of schools) declared she intended to run against another key statutory P-16 leader (the incumbent Democratic governor) on a platform of fighting his education reform efforts (including P-16). It is tough to get traction in that sort of mud. Politics can be even muddier when issues of local control get raised in the context of a statewide, systemic initiative.

With legislative term limits and increasingly fractious gubernatorial races, there's increased political pressure for initiatives that will have rapid returns. High school reform is a long-term project with results rarely realized within one governor's term in office.

Finally, modern-day presidents may be daunted by their lack of K-12 experience. Indeed, for many presidents, their only K-12 experience was their own education in a different era. At one time, the road to a presidency more often included a K-12 experience. For the majority of

presidents who have spent their whole careers in higher education, the K-12 environment can seem foreign and foreboding.

Yet even with competing priorities, some risks, and delayed results, presidents can leave a true legacy by focusing on improving student achievement though intellectual continuity. This is especially true if they pay attention first to the successes and failures of those who have entered these waters earlier. Seven simple suggestions may be of help as presidents embark on efforts to strengthen the linkage between high school and college.

Involving Higher Education in Raising Expectations

By Stanley G. Jones



Access and opportunity have always been the hallmarks of higher education. Today, more students are enrolling in collegiate programs than ever before. Unfortunately, only 55 percent of full-time students seeking a bachelor's degree complete that degree within six years.¹ The

reality is that many students may leave college before earning an educational credential.

Research reveals that a rigorous academic curriculum is the single most important factor in determining a student's success in college. Unfortunately, only a handful of states require high school students to pursue advanced courses in core academic subjects in order to graduate. In nearly every state, students may earn a high school diploma and be unprepared for success in college.

Success will be realized only if the state's entire education system is geared to prepare and enable all students to achieve at high levels. I would like to offer the following recommendations on how the higher education sector can help raise expectations and achievement levels:

Be active in efforts to align high school requirements with college expectations. A decade ago, Indiana K-12, higher education, and business leaders recognized that the state would face severe economic hardship unless more young people were

ready for college and the demands of the global workplace. Low-skilled, high-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector were becoming extinct. The "new economy" jobs we wanted to bring to Indiana demanded a workforce with greater skills and knowledge. In response, Indiana began its Core 40 college-preparatory curriculum. Although the curriculum was voluntary, the percentage of Indiana students graduating from high school with the Core 40 diploma skyrocketed from 13 percent to 65 percent in 10 years. Over that same period, the state moved from 34th to 10th in the nation in the percentage of high school seniors going directly to college.

Advocate for the college-prep curriculum to be the default curriculum for all high school students.

All students should be enrolled automatically into a challenging college-prep curriculum. This approach communicates a clear expectation for what courses students should take to be prepared for college. After 12 years of Core 40 as a voluntary curriculum, Indiana has legislated Core 40 to be the default curriculum. Rather than having students opt in to Core 40, they now will be assumed in and have to opt out.

Align college entrance standards with high school exit standards. College faculty members regularly complain about the lack of student preparation, but their institutions continue to accept unprepared students and enroll them in remedial courses. Core 40 as a minimum college admission standard first happened voluntarily and then by law for all of Indiana's public four-year colleges. Although the higher education community enthusiastically supported Core 40 as the high

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1. Demonstrate enough—but not too much—leadership. Collaboration succeeds best when all partners perceive that they are equally valued. With the possible exception of a governor or corporate leader, the president brings more prestige, “power,” and resources to the table than anyone from K–12. When a president in one state tried to dictate the agenda of a P–16 effort, control even the minutia, and claim all the credit for the initiative, only he was surprised when the effort floundered until his departure. This is not to say

that a president should not commit more than the other partners; the president should, however, be particularly attuned to symbols and sensitivities, and should understand that the high school reform agenda requires much more of secondary education and its leadership than of any other players.

2. Dedicate senior leadership. P–16 pioneer programs in Maryland and Georgia were established because both had a senior person in their university system charged with the day-to-day effort (the “two Jans,”

Somerville and Kettlewell). Too many presidents take on K–12 collaborations and then add the assignment to, for example, an associate provost (who is already responsible for too much) or, worse yet, to the education dean. Nothing against education deans, but that’s like declaring writing is the sole responsibility of the English department. You need someone who lives and breathes this work and who clearly has the president’s ear. The initial investment pays off if the dedicated person also knows how to get external

and Achievement Levels

school exit requirement, it took time and persuasion for them to see the wisdom of adopting Core 40 as a minimum college entrance standard.

Assist in aligning high school standards to courses and assessing student performance. Alignment provides consistency, high quality, and rigor to the high school courses. Independent third-party organizations (Education Trust, Fordham Foundation, Achieve, ACT, and the College Board) and Indiana’s college faculty have provided critical assistance to the alignment process. Their involvement has brought credibility to the dialogue.

Colleges also can assist in developing end-of-course assessments. Indiana’s end-of-course tests in Algebra II and 11th-grade English have shown widely uneven proficiency levels throughout the state, as well as unacceptably poor performance. These early indicators for schools help identify and assist students who aren’t yet ready for college.

Align financial aid with rigorous course taking. Indiana enhanced its need-based financial aid policy by awarding low-income students with additional financial aid if they graduated with Core 40. Not only are Core 40 students enrolling and succeeding in college at higher rates, but also the combination of financial aid incentives and the required enrollment in Core 40 has allowed us to reach more and more first-generation students.

Create a deliberate and ongoing communications effort. Colleges must be clear and consistent about what it takes to succeed in higher education and communicate that message widely. Many

educators and parents believed that some students did not have the skills to succeed in Core 40. We argued that students who were not part of this curriculum were inevitably on track to low-paying and dead-end jobs. We explained that young people would be more engaged in school and motivated to learn if high schools wiped out low-level courses that reinforced low expectations and contributed to behavioral problems. This effort has helped families better understand what is required for success and has empowered them to raise expectations for their children.

Publicly report progress and take greater responsibility for the performance of students.

Higher education should report to high schools on how their graduates perform so the high schools can use that information to strengthen the academic experience of the next class of students. New efforts, such as Indiana’s electronic high school transcript initiative, hold great promise in making cross-sector reporting possible.

Drastic changes must be made if the next generation of students is to be successful. Not surprisingly, the states moving the furthest and the fastest to close the expectations gap are those that have effectively overcome the traditional barriers between the K–12 and postsecondary worlds. ■

Note:

1. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). NCES, IPEDS Graduate Survey, 2005.

Early Assessment: An Important Role for the University

By Charles B. Reed



Many college-bound students face two major hurdles—and most only know about one of them.

The first is the better-known hurdle of access, or getting in to college; the second is the issue of college readiness, or getting ready for college.

With the exception of a few highly selective institutions, most colleges and universities around the country face the challenge of students' skills not being up to par with what is expected of them at the university level. When students arrive without being able to do the work, they have to take some form of developmental or remedial education, which is costly for both the university and the students.

Yet surprisingly, higher education has been under-involved in working with K–12 schools to align standards and expectations. In fact, when the National Governors Association and Achieve invited college presidents and presidential associations to the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools, the most common response they heard was: "What do high schools have to do with me?"

At the California State University (CSU), which is the largest university system in the country with more than 400,000 students, we have faced a major challenge with the large number of students who meet all of the CSU system qualifications but need remedial education when they arrive on our doorstep. Our board of trustees set a goal almost 10 years ago to reduce the need for remediation in English and math to 10 percent of incoming students by 2007. When I came to California shortly afterwards, I pledged that the California State University would do everything it could to smooth the pathway from California's K–12 schools to higher education.

We have launched a series of efforts to reach out to the K–12 schools and work more closely on integrating our standards and making our expectations clear. One of our most important efforts involves a collaborative effort with the CSU, the California State Board of Education, and the California Department of Education: the Early Assessment Program (EAP), an 11th-grade test that incorporates the CSU's placement standards into the California Standards Test.

The EAP is kind of like an early warning system. It lets students—and their parents and teachers—know in the 11th grade if they need to do additional work in their senior year to get up to speed on English and math. By keeping everyone informed, it helps us align college readiness expectations with K–12 standards and assessments, and it helps all of us provide a more cost-effective path to college by reducing students' need for remediation and improving the path to the baccalaureate degree. We offer many supplemental materials to reinforce the EAP, including online support for students and professional development to help teachers understand the expectations of college-level English and math.

Although the test is voluntary, last year about 120,000 students took the math test and about 186,000 took the English test. But we still need to do more to exercise the EAP's full potential. One key piece that we are still developing is informing our parents and communities about the EAP and about their students' performance. This year, a priority of our EAP work is to help districts ensure that parents receive EAP results.

We also are working to increase parent and community awareness by working directly with California communities. We have held college awareness events across the state; two recent "Super Sunday" events at African-American churches reached more than 30,000 people. Additionally, this fall we are distributing more than half a million "How to Get to College" posters to California's middle and high school students. The poster—offered in five languages—gives a grade-by-grade checklist for students to prepare for college.

What's in it for the university? For starters, there is clearly a benefit in the reduced need for remediation. Additionally, the partnerships created can lead to improved curriculum and instruction at both the K–12 and college levels. Universities also will realize a secondary benefit of improvements in teacher preparation that come from working closely with public school partners. And most universities that lead or participate in these kinds of partnerships reap the public benefits of recognition from state and local governments.

As educators, both universities and K–12 schools share a common goal in producing educated and well-rounded citizens for the future. With more of these partnerships in place, we can move closer to the ideal of ensuring that all students have access to information about college, are prepared to get there, and are prepared to succeed once they enroll. ■

CHARLES B. REED is chancellor of the California State University.

dollars (The University System of Georgia's P-16 budget is now over \$15 million, much of it from external funding).

3. Move quickly from talk to action.

Collaboration with K-12 requires a lot of talking in the early stages. It is not uncommon for the effort to begin with a summit, continue with conferences (often with outside expertise), and then go through a state political process or, sometimes even more complexly, through a shared governance process on campus. All this takes time. In the case of one southwestern state's P-16 efforts, talk was not cheap, but it was perennial, and interest began to wane until a meaningful project was finally launched. Some of the best projects have been around aligning curriculum and standards, often with the help of national initiatives like the America Diploma Project. It's important to take advantage of the structure that such national initiatives provide to both define the agenda and drive it forward.

4. Involve faculty early. Efforts like the American Diploma Project can too often be seen as the toys of the top, when in fact the real success comes from collaborative efforts of faculty across sectors. In addition to understanding curriculum and standards outside their own worlds, faculty engage in marvelous conversations and collaborations outside the formal task (for example, the sharing of pedagogy, technology, and research knowledge and resources). These byproducts can prove to be enduring and have positive, unintended consequences, such as improvements to teacher preparation programs or more imaginative curricula in introductory courses.

5. Engage the media. Efforts like the American Diploma Project can bemuse the public; they often seem like an abstract concept at best and an alien one at worst. If the press focuses on its political basis, with the intrigue or controversy that usually follows, the game is lost. If the press can see the impact on individual students or on faculty working together as respected and respectful colleagues across sectors, then the public can be positively engaged. This needs to be an intentional strategy from the outset.

At the end of the day, the president's personal commitment, passion, and vision will count the most.

6. Build in sustainability. Collaborative efforts with K-12 can only be successful for the long term if they outlast both the personalities and structures that created them. P-16 initiatives survive through force of philosophy, outcomes, and habits. Governors and legislators come and go. Presidents, chancellors, and superintendents come and go. If an initiative is built on the "great leader" approach, it cannot be sustained because one or more of these "great leaders" will likely be moving on almost every year. Similarly, if the initiative is built

on an overly rigid structure, it cannot be sustained because the structure cannot be easily altered to adapt to changing conditions, like a new governor. Presidents can help new governors reshape K-12 collaborations to fit mutual goals and to sustain the philosophy while morphing the structure.

7. Use data. Sound decision making and long-term credibility depend on using sound data (see "What Universities Can Learn from State Data Systems" on page 10). If a state unit data system is indeed available, it will prove useful to track progress. Even if such a system does not exist, a number of states have demonstrated that data warehouses or data-sharing agreements can be of significant value. These data need to be used for baseline purposes and legitimate research projects. Indeed, colleges of education and other departments should be challenged to use the P-16 activities as a particularly fertile research field.

These seven suggestions can provide guidance for a president. However, at the end of the day, the president's personal commitment, passion, and vision will count the most. If the provost shares those values, then the team will be unstoppable. Leadership matters and improved student achievement is of such importance to our nation and to equity of opportunity that it cannot be left to individual "reforms" in different sectors of education or to random acts of leadership. It has to be a genuine and sustained effort across sectors, so that students come before systems, and presidents have a unique platform from which to lead such an effort. ■

What Universities Can Learn from State Data Systems

By Mark B. Rosenberg



Florida's education data systems—older, broader, and deeper than almost any other state's—are the policy wonk's Disney World. I recently found

out, for example, that 61 percent of the state's younger (under age 28) public school teachers had enrolled at some point in the

State University System, even though only 30 percent of them had earned an education degree with us. Without the ability to match records across sectors, the latter number—which understates the impact of the system on our public schools—is all some states might have.

One of the most important uses of the state's data system is for the annual high school feedback report produced by the Department of Education's Office of Articulation. This report allows high school principals—and university system chancellors—to analyze the pipeline of students moving through our K–12 system and into our postsecondary institutions.

The picture that emerges is one of secondary haves and have-nots—but with some gray area between them. Lawton Chiles High School, a new high school in an affluent part of Tallahassee, home to both Florida State and Florida A&M, is clearly one of the haves. More than 60 percent of its graduates qualify for one of the state's merit scholarships and 38 percent of graduates continue to public university immediately after graduation. Contrast that with Miami-Edison High School, in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood, where only 8 percent of graduates went on to university and just 2 percent qualified for a Bright Futures scholarship. (The difference is even starker given the already-shrunken pool of graduates at Miami-Edison, which has fewer than half the number of Chiles' graduates, despite having 64 percent of Chiles' enrollment.)

Much of the difference can be attributed to preparation. Only 6 percent of Miami-Edison's graduates had performed at level 3 or better on the state's 10th-grade reading and math tests, compared with 59 percent of Chiles' graduates. A college-prep curriculum clearly helps—69 percent of Chiles' graduates had one, compared with 45 percent of Miami-Edison's graduates—but that gap isn't as great as one might expect if "college prep" really meant the same thing

at the two schools. The differences in math course-taking are more striking, as we would expect, based on what research says about the importance of math to postsecondary success.

Having the data doesn't by itself solve problems, but it does make them harder to ignore. Miami-Edison confronts the same challenges as many urban schools in America—poverty, teacher recruitment, language barriers—and there is no magic formula that will turn it into another Lawton Chiles. Universities should be reaching out to schools like Miami-Edison, helping create a culture of high expectation and high performance, but there are limits to what can be done without addressing fundamental social and educational issues in the larger world. The value of the data system in these cases is in showing the scope of the problem and in being able to measure incremental progress.

The gray area between the extremes may be where the high school feedback data are most valuable to colleges. Port St. Lucie High School, in a mid-sized county 90 minutes from the nearest public university, is close to the state averages on most of the measures related to preparation for college: performance on the 10th-grade test, math and science course-taking patterns, and eligibility for Bright Futures scholarships, for example. But only 12 percent of Port St. Lucie graduates continued to the university system, compared with 22 percent statewide. Such schools present recruitment opportunities for public and private universities. They also may point out policy challenges for state leaders, if more resources are needed to bring students to campus or to move educational opportunities closer to the students.

Having worked in Florida education for more than two decades, including a stint on the state's Articulation Coordinating Committee, I have learned both the uses and the limitations of comprehensive state data systems. We have to remember that data do not make policy—policy makers do. If we think having more data will remove the politics from important decisions, or from the allocation of resources, we are certain to be disappointed. Still, with enough investment not only in collecting but also in analyzing and using the data, such systems can be powerful tools to inform the educational choices of stakeholders at all levels—whether you're a university president, a legislator, a teacher, a parent, or a student. ■

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FOR ADDITIONAL READING

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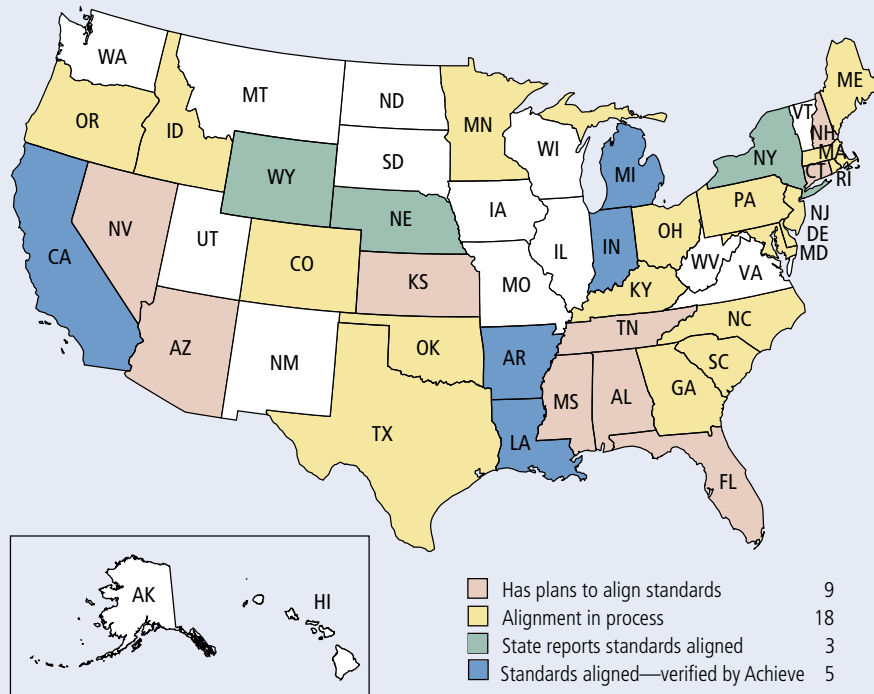
By the Numbers: Status of State Efforts to Advance College Readiness

Academic Standards

- To date, only five states (Arkansas, California, Indiana, Louisiana, and Michigan) have developed standards that are aligned with college and employer expectations, as verified by Achieve.
- Twenty-seven additional states are taking action to align standards, and 13 of these states have participated in an Achieve Alignment Institute. This event

brings together high school educators with college faculty and employer representatives to develop state academic standards for high school English and math, using national benchmarks as a guide. These standards can drive course content, graduation requirements, high school assessments, and college placement.

States Aligning Standards with Postsecondary and Workplace Expectations



Source: Achieve, Inc., November 2006.

Graduation Requirements

- Eleven states have enacted college and work-ready graduation requirements for all students, up from only two states at the beginning of 2005. Achieve considers four years of rigorous English and mathematics content through at least Algebra II as the minimum standard for college readiness.

- Ten states have raised their high school graduation requirements, but not to the level that Achieve considers college-ready.
- To ensure that the courses required for graduation have adequate rigor, 36 states have put in place course-based standards and/or model curricula. In addition, 15 states have developed end-of-course tests for core subjects.

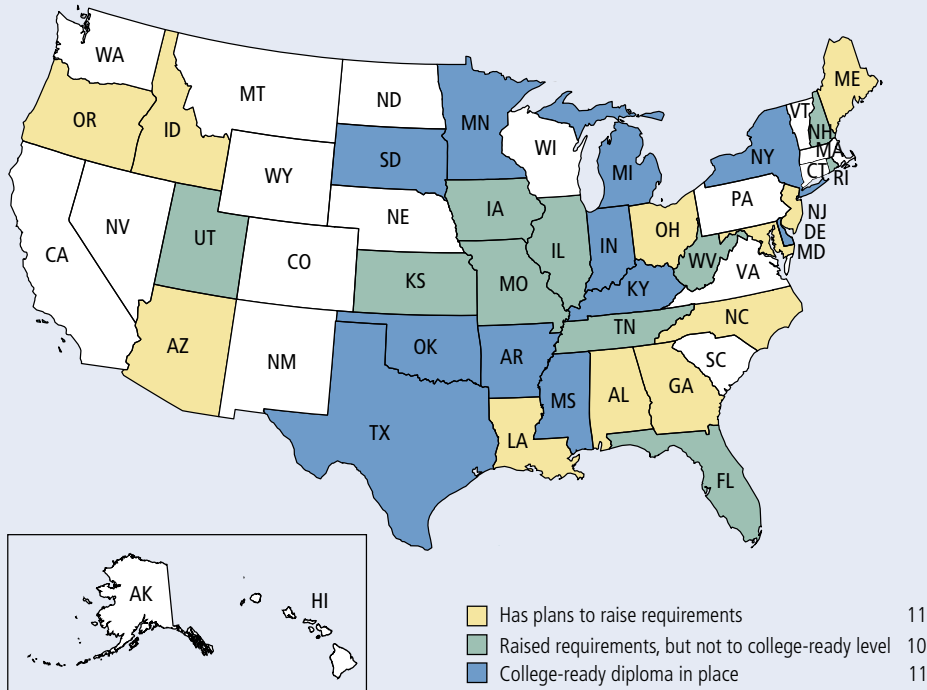
Aligning Assessments

- In seven states, statewide high school assessments are used for placement and/or admissions decisions in some or all public colleges and universities.
- Six states will administer the ACT or SAT to all high school students to measure college readiness.
- Nine states are entering into a compact to develop an Algebra II end-of-course assessment that will indicate students' readiness for college-level math.

Information Feedback

- Three states (Florida, Louisiana, and Texas) have P–16 longitudinal data systems. Thirty-one other states have plans to develop such systems.
- All 50 states signed a National Governors Association compact to report high school graduation rates using a common formula.
- Only one state (Georgia) tracks, by high school, the percentage of students who graduate with a college- or work-ready diploma, attend college, and need remediation. Four states collect at least some of this information, and nine additional states have plans to collect these data.

States Requiring a College-Ready Diploma



Source: Achieve, Inc., November 2006.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Achieve, ACE, NASH, and SHEEO have the following events and publications planned to assist higher education leaders in implementing the American Diploma Project (ADP) agenda in their states.

ACE ACTIVITIES

- **Presidential Roundtables**
June 2007, Washington, DC
ACE will convene roundtables on college readiness that will target 10 to 20 presidents and provosts from ADP Network states. Through these in-depth discussions, participants will identify impediments to improved alignment and strategies for success. If you are interested in attending one of these meetings, please contact ACE's Center for Policy Analysis at (202) 939-9551 or policy@ace.nche.edu.
 - **Expanded Leadership Team Meetings in Select ADP Network States**
Summer 2007–Spring 2008, locations to be determined
These meetings will engage college presidents in four to six ADP Network states in which their involvement is especially crucial because of the governance structure or political circumstances.
 - **Case Studies (Summer 2007–Spring 2008)**
These "Leadership Perspectives on Alignment" will highlight the benefits that institutions can realize as well as the challenges they should address as they collaborate with K–12 to link high school expectations with successful entry into credit-bearing college coursework. Specific campus policies, documents, or practices that enhance high school–postsecondary alignment will be highlighted.
- For more information, visit www.acenet.edu/programs/advancing.

NASH ACTIVITIES

- **Two Annual State K–16 Institutes: A State Education CEO K–16 Spring Meeting and a State Academic Leaders K–16 Summer Institute.** At these meetings, teams of government and education leaders from K–12 and postsecondary education work together on strategies to leverage improvement in student achievement.
 - **Scans of Current State Practices and Issue Briefs.** NASH will prepare reports on enhancing educator quality, accelerating student success, and using K–16 data to galvanize action.
- For more information, visit www.nashonline.org.

SHEEO ACTIVITIES

- **An update of the 2003 volume *Student Success: Statewide P–16 Systems*.** *Student Success* focuses on five key elements of state systems: early outreach programs, curriculum and assessment, quality teaching, student assistance, and data and accountability systems.
 - **Two to four working meetings** with broad participation across the K–20 continuum, including involvement by state teams. These meetings, organized in collaboration with NASH and Achieve, will facilitate intrastate dialogue, team building, and the application of concepts to specific state contexts.
- For more information, visit www.sheeo.org.

ACHIEVE ACTIVITIES

- **Aligning High School Standards with the Demands of Postsecondary Education and Work.** Currently, 13 of the 26 ADP Network states are participating in a 10- to 15-month process, during which they attend three Alignment Institutes designed to develop:
 1. State academic standards in math and English for entry and success in credit-bearing courses and high-skills, high-growth jobs.
 2. Practical options for high school assessments aligned with these academic standards for use in postsecondary placement decisions.
 3. Commitment from postsecondary institutions and faculty to use the academic standards and assessments in admissions and placement decisions.
 4. Validation and support for the academic standards and aligned assessments from the business community.
 - **Backmapping ADP Mathematics and English Standards.** Achieve is "backmapping" its end-of-high-school math and English expectations to provide a framework for K–12 content expectations that will prepare students for credit-bearing college coursework.
 - **Developing an Algebra II End-of-Course Assessment.** Nine states are entering into a compact with Achieve to develop a common Algebra II end-of-source assessment that will indicate students' readiness for college-level math.
- For more information, visit www.achieve.org.