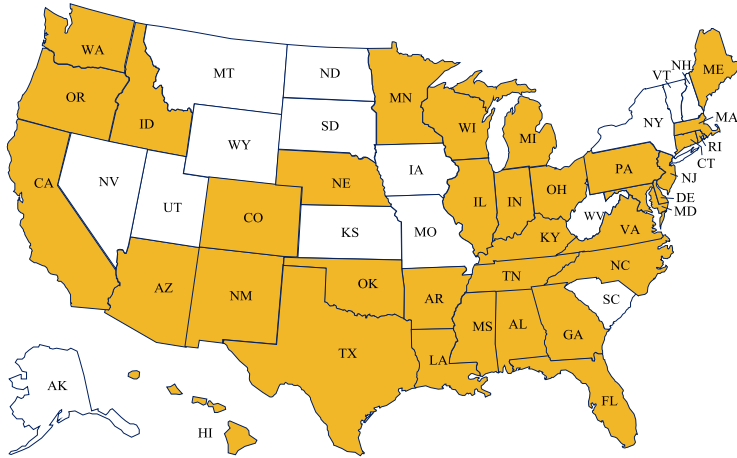


About Achieve

Created in 1996 by the nation's governors and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments and strengthen accountability. In 2006, Achieve was named by *Education Week* as one of the most influential education groups in the nation. Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless.

The American Diploma Project Network

To make college and career readiness a priority in the states, in 2005, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network. Starting with only a handful of states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, graduation requirements and assessment and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers. Achieve tracks states' progress in its annual report, *Closing the Expectations Gap*. Achieve also supports ADP network states through:



Research and Development

Achieve regularly conducts R&D to help advance the work of the ADP Network states as well as the education reform community at large. Achieve's recent research includes studies of high school graduation requirements, state strategies for improving high school graduation rates, and evaluations of what high school exit exams and widely used college admissions and placement exams actually measure.

Our work doesn't stop with the publication of reports; we have developed tools that help states change policies and practices. Chief among these are benchmark expectations – model K-12 academic standards – in mathematics and English that reflect the knowledge and skills graduates need to succeed after high school. Achieve also created *Measures that Matter*, with the Education Trust, to provide states with guidance on advancing their efforts in developing and adopting next-generation, college- and career-ready assessment and accountability systems.

Achieve has spearheaded a 15-state partnership, the ADP Assessment Consortium, to develop the ADP Algebra II end-of-course exam, a rigorous test that measures whether high school students are ready for college-level mathematics, as well as an aligned Algebra I exam. This is one of the first, and the largest, efforts of states to collaborate on the development of common exams.

Technical Assistance to States

Achieve provides technical assistance to states on their standards, assessments, curriculum and accountability. Achieve's *Alignment Institutes* have assisted 22 states in creating college- and career-ready end-of-high school standards in collaboration with their K-12, postsecondary and business communities. The *College & Career-Ready Policy Institute* is assisting eight leading states in ensuring that they have statewide assessment and accountability policies that support their college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.

Advocacy Tools

In an effort to ensure that states have the tools they need to succeed, Achieve has created fact sheets, papers, power point presentations and other advocacy and communications tools to assist states in making the case for reform. Most recently, Achieve launched *Math Works*, a set of advocacy tools that explain why all students need higher-level mathematics to succeed.

Partnerships

Partnerships are key to advancing Achieve's work nationally and in the states. Achieve works closely with organizations representing state policymakers, higher education leaders, business leaders and community-based organizations. Similar local partnerships are developed in ADP Network states.

On the Horizon

As the world becomes increasingly connected and global competition fiercer, questions about education policy have evolved from domestic evaluations to international comparisons. To that end, Achieve will be focused on:

Leading International Benchmarking Efforts: Achieve is in the process of reviewing the expectations for high school graduates from a number of competing and high-performing countries to better understand the structure, organization and rigor of international expectations in mathematics, literacy and science, as well as the countries' education systems as a whole.

Common State Standards: Achieve is working with the National Governors Association (NGA), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), College Board and ACT to draft end-of-high school standards in English and math that are internationally benchmarked, grounded in research and evidence, and aligned with postsecondary and employer expectations, to be completed by summer 2009. Through the end of 2009, Achieve will continue to work with these groups to draft K-12 grade-by-grade standards (or in high school, by course) that are rigorous, clear and focused.

Recent Accomplishments

With Achieve's guidance, 22 states in mathematics and 18 in English have arrived at a rigorous common core of college- and career-ready standards.

The number of states that require students to take Algebra II or its equivalent for graduation has grown from two in 2005 to 19 states and the District of Columbia today.

Through the ADP Assessment Consortium – the largest multistate assessment partnership to date – 130,000 students participated in the spring 2009 administration of the ADP Algebra II end-of-course exam. The ADP Algebra I exam was given for the first time in spring 2009 to approximately 40,000 students.

State Progress on the College- and Career- Ready Agenda

