Commentary

Partnering for student success in Michigan

Achieve has long emphasized that the college and career ready agenda is not the agenda of one leader, not the agenda of one agency or organization, and certainly not the agenda of one sector alone; transforming our educational system into one that supports all students toward and beyond readiness for college and career is the work of all. Michigan is one state that is showing how to make college and career readiness for all students the shared agenda it must be.

In August 2013, Michigan held a summit with 45 leaders from K-12 education, postsecondary education, and business to clarify the definition of career and college readiness and strategies to help more students reach the goal. The participants began with a full day conversation about career and college readiness (CCR), facilitated by the Education Delivery Institute, where they refined a proposed definition (see call-out box below). Gregg Dionne, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction at the Michigan Department of Education, attributes the success of the conversation to the fact that it focused on what CCR means for students. "Everyone was there for the same reason - career and college readiness for our students - employers, K-12, and higher education alike," he explains. "For me,

that was the fuse. It was the most important thing that we've done so far."

Defining career and college readiness in Michigan

Career & college-ready students possess the skills necessary to earn a self-sustaining wage and participate in postsecondary opportunities without remediation. This means that they:

- *Use **technology and tools** strategically in learning and communicating*
- *Use **argument and reasoning** to do research, construct arguments, and critique the reasoning of others*
- ***Communicate and collaborate** effectively with a variety of audiences*
- ***Solve problems**, construct explanations and design solutions*

After refining the definition, the participants turned to action - choosing four initiatives they would work on to support the career- and college- ready agenda. Their work will focus on project based/service learning, aligned/standards-based P-20 systems, career path liaisons and a corporate engagement portal, and family and community engagement. These initiatives will ensure that career and college readiness has a broad base of support from stakeholder communities across the state. The group has grant funding from a variety of sources, such as CCSSO, AASCU, and SHEEO, to supplement their own resources (and manpower) to accomplish these initiatives.

In pursuit of these goals, the team has also developed a strategic, informal, partnership across the education continuum - the

Partnership for a Career and College Ready Michigan. Jenny Schnaker, Director of Research and Institutional Practice at the Michigan Community College Association, articulates the purposes of the partnership as "advancing the understanding of career and college readiness and promoting sector alignment between K-12, community colleges, and postsecondary education across the state."

In addition to improved communication and alignment, another important goal for the partnership is to promote innovations such as competency-based pathways (CBP). Michigan is one of 12 states working with Achieve through the [CBP State Partnership](#) to advance policy and implementation efforts to build CBP approaches that support all students reaching or exceeding college- and career-ready expectations.

Finally, the partnership is enhancing coherence across the career and college ready agenda. As Patricia Ferrell-Cole, Director of University Relations and Policy Research at the State Universities of Michigan, emphasizes, "We have all worked on a lot of initiatives in past few years, and putting them all under this umbrella about what it means to be CCR and working towards college completion is important."

These leaders have some important words of guidance for other states working to forge strong connections among K-12, higher education, business and other groups. They encourage states to focus conversations on pathways, transitions, and outcomes for students - while funding and governance issues are essential, students should always be the focus. The benefits are clear: as Jenny Schnaker notes, "The key thing is that now we can speak the same language across different groups."

EQuIP Update

Achieve would like to bring your attention to instructional resources made freely available for classroom teachers through the EQuIP initiative. The EQuIP quality review process identifies exemplary CCSS-aligned instructional materials that can be broadly disseminated and used by educators across the country. There are currently **48 exemplar or exemplar-if-improved lessons** that have been reviewed by the EQuIP Peer Review Panel and are publicly available for download on the EQuIP website, and more will be added in the coming months.

Additionally, Achieve recently posted a newly updated version of the **EQuIP Student Work Protocol**, which is a process for analyzing student responses to tasks for the purpose of evaluating the quality of the task and its alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The protocol focuses on the quality of a single task within a lesson or unit and is a complement to reviews of the full lesson or unit using the EQuIP Quality Review Rubrics. Please visit the EQuIP website and click on the "EQuIP Student Work Protocol" tab to learn more about this resource, or click here to access the updated PDF version of the protocol.

EQuIP NGSS Rubric

Given increasing demand from states for EQuIP NGSS training, we are preparing new trainers from across the US to facilitate additional trainings. In addition, we will be releasing an updated version of the rubric soon. It is important to note that both the current and new

versions do not have numerical scoring guidelines because we are not yet at the stage where we can identify exemplars, but rather, are keeping the focus of the rubric and conversations surrounding it on the shifts that lessons and units need to make. In the future, we envision including scoring guidelines and establishing a peer review panel.

News Clips

For Alabama students, the sky is no longer the limit: guest opinion

Jessica Hammonds, executive director of Alabama GRIT (Graduate Ready. Impact Tomorrow) writes in *AL.com* that, "because of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards, Alabama students are at a great advantage for future college achievements and careers." More...

Fox Cities schools vary in approach to Common Core

The Post-Crescent in Appleton, Wisconsin reports that a major benefit to come from Common Core State Standards is more collaboration. "Whether they work more closely with teachers in their building or across the district, instructors agree more teamwork has helped them in all aspects." More...

CED Launches New Education Resource App with Business Roundtable
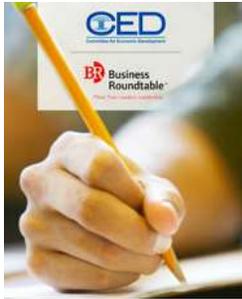
"Business4Readiness" is a resource application presented by the Committee for Economic Development (CED) and Business Roundtable (BRT) specifically for business leaders to educate themselves, policymakers, and the public about the Common Core State Standards initiative, and how it supports student college-and career-readiness as well as economic growth. This free, downloadable mobile App allows its users to:

- Explore the Common Core State Standards, learn why they are important, and understand how they were created;
- Address concerns surrounding the Common Core;
- Watch videos related to the Common Core State Standards;
- Read how states are implementing the standards;
- Support implementation of the initiative by posting updates to social networks, including Facebook and Twitter;
- Review information on State legislators, Governors, and Chief State School Officers from official sites and Wikipedia;
- Scroll through quotes of support from business leaders, educators, state elected officials, and others; and,
- Access resources about the Common Core State Standards.

The goal of the App is to provide relevant information in easily accessible, practical, and digestible bites. The material is designed to be selective but not exhaustive. To download the App, search for

"Business4Readiness" in the Apple or Android stores or enter the corresponding link:

Apple:
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/business-4-readiness/id916466355?ls=1&mt=8

Android:
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ced.app.android.ui

For any questions, please contact CED's Director of Education Programs, Cindy Cisneros, at Ccisneros@ced.org

Connecting with Higher Education

New America Foundation released, *Common Core Goes to College: Building Better Connections Between High School and Higher Education*, a report which discusses the current landscape of higher education policies and practices that prevent clear alignment between colleges and the CCSS. This analysis includes state and institution policies within higher education, such as the admissions process, qualifying for financial aid, retesting and course placement, developmental education, and teacher preparation. Further, the report states that some policies can be barriers to student success at the postsecondary level, such as multiple district assessments, exit exams, college admission exams, and placement exams. It argues that the CCSS should help guide teacher preparation programs to better prepare future K-12 students.

Teachers and Common Core
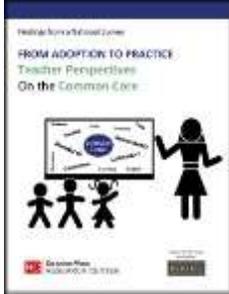
A report from the *Education Week* Research Center takes stock of educators' readiness to teach the CCSS, their access to high-quality curricular materials and training, and their students' readiness to master the demands of the new standards. The report, *From Adoption to Practice: Teacher Perspectives On the Common Core*, draws on a national survey of teachers fielded during the 2013-14 school year, and follows a similar survey conducted a year earlier. Support for these studies was provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which also underwrites coverage of deeper learning in *Education Week*. The report finds that overall awareness of the CCSS has increased over time and a growing share of educators have received training on the new standards. Most teachers also believe that the common standards, in the long term, will benefit their own instruction and their students' learning.

Career Opportunities

Achieve has career opportunities here.

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