



Achieve

Insights

September 2017

Achieve Insights is a monthly briefing of newsworthy items from across states related to ensuring that all students graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and life.

Reaching Higher New Hampshire releases interactive web documentary

Education advocacy coalition Reaching Higher New Hampshire (RHNH) has launched a new, [interactive web documentary](#) showcasing senior projects at Souhegan High School in Amherst, New Hampshire. Each year, Souhegan students engage in a deep exploration of themselves and their chosen subject through a yearlong, personalized, experiential learning opportunity called Senior Project. RHNH worked with a Boston-area filmmaker and Souhegan High School film students and staff to document the journey of three Souhegan seniors as they complete their Senior Projects over the course of ten months. This project encapsulates New Hampshire's vision for how public education—one that is student centered, equitable, and inclusive—can help better prepare students for life after high school in college or careers.

Recent national polls show support for high standards and assessments to measure student performance

Recent national poll data released by [Education Next](#) and [PDK](#) both show that our nation supports high academic standards and annual testing. 61 percent of those surveyed in the Education Next poll said that they support the use of standards for reading and mathematics in their state that are the same across states. 63 percent of respondents to the same poll said they support current requirements for annual assessments in mathematics and reading.

Moreover, in the PDK poll, 77 percent of parents said that they are confident or very confident that standardized tests do a good job of measuring how well their child is learning. These important aspects of the college- and career-ready agenda—high standards and quality assessments—maintain broad support across demographic groups in our country.

Georgia districts take stock of local assessments and reduce the number of assessments administered

In coordination with the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE) and the Georgia Department of Education, five school districts engaged in a pilot program to help determine which tests are most helpful to measure and improve student achievement. GPEE shared [the results of this pilot](#), which included eliminating some unnecessary or redundant assessments. The use of assessments to measure student progress is important; however, districts across the country have found that some assessments are unaligned to state academic standards or do not provide the kind of information needed to support students.

Achieve has similarly made available [tools for districts and schools](#) to take inventory of the assessments they administer to students to help ensure that all assessments administered are necessary and of high quality.

Five State and National Updates

- Of the 17 state ESSA plans that were submitted in the first round this spring, 15 have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Michigan and Colorado have been granted additional time to revise their plans.
- 32 additional states have submitted their ESSA plans for review by USED. The remaining states (South Carolina and Alabama) have been granted additional time to submit their plans.
- New York's Board of Regents [adopts](#) Next Generation Learning Standards in mathematics and English language arts and literacy.

- Nebraska's State Board of Education approves College and Career Ready Standards for Science.
- Mississippi's State Board of Education approves new diploma options for all students, including different diploma endorsements that students can earn in addition to a standard high school diploma, such as a Career and Technical Education endorsement.

All students should graduate from high school ready for college, careers, and citizenship.

