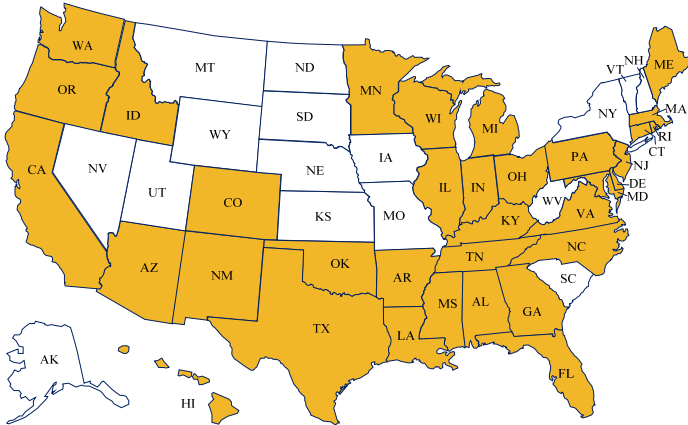


# About Achieve

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 34 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, assessments, graduation requirements 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. More than 19 states have used these benchmarks to adopt college- and career-ready standards.

Achieve has spearheaded a 14-state partnership 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. A rigorous Algebra I exam is also under development. This is one of the first, and the largest, efforts of states to collaborate on the development of common exams. Currently, Achieve is undertaking a major analysis of mathematics, science and literacy standards of high performing countries around the world and intends to develop science benchmarks.

### Technical Assistance to States

Achieve provides technical assistance to states on their standards, assessments, curriculum and accountability. Achieve's *Alignment Institutes* have assisted 19 states, with three more starting in late 2008, in creating college- and career-ready end of high school standards in collaboration with their K-12, postsecondary and business communities. The recently launched *College & Career-Ready Policy Institute* will assist 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 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.

### Recent Accomplishments

- With Achieve's guidance, 16 states in mathematics and 12 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 for graduation has grown from two in 2005, to 20 today.
- The largest- ever multistate exam—the ADP Algebra II end-of course exam-- was administered in the spring of 2008 to nearly 90,000 students.

### 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:* With the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Achieve has launched a sweeping international benchmarking initiative to ensure that state policies are competitive with the highest performing countries. Governor Janet Napolitano, Governor Sonny Perdue and Intel Chairman Craig Barrett chair this effort.

*Leading the Common State Standards Initiative:* As a result of their work with Achieve, 16 states have adopted math and English standards that share a common core of college- and career-ready expectations – a marked departure from the situation over the past 20 years in which state standards were “all over the map.” Building on this foundation and based on the ADP benchmarks, Achieve has joined with NGA and CCSSO to spearhead a state-led effort to encourage all states to adopt a common set of internationally benchmarked, college- and career-ready mathematics and English standards.

*State Progress on the College- and Career- Ready Agenda*

