

## Preparing Illinois' Students for College and Career

Achieve/American Diploma Project/Alignment Institute Launch  
November 7, 2008

### This presentation will . . .

Provide an overview of:

- v The American Diploma Project Network
- v Progress States are making on the ADP Policy Agenda
- v The Participation of Illinois in the Alignment Institute
- v Key Illinois Efforts Related to College and Career Readiness

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### About Achieve

- v Achieve was created by the nation's governors and business leaders in 1996 following the first National Education Summit.
- v Achieve is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work, and citizenship.
- v Achieve currently is working with 34 states through the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network to design and implement policies that aim to close the expectations gap.

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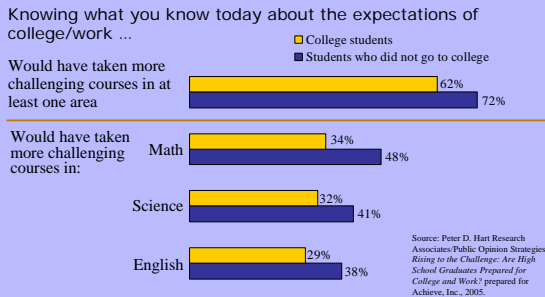
### Too Many Students Graduate from High School Unprepared for College and Work

- v 30% of first year students in postsecondary education are required to take remedial courses
- v 40% - 45% of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills, both in college and the workplace
- v Faculty estimate 42% of first year students in credit-bearing courses are academically unprepared
- v Employers estimate 45% of recent high school graduates lack skills to advance
- v ACT estimates only half of college-bound students are ready for college-level reading

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### Majority of graduates would have taken harder courses

Knowing what you know today about the expectations of college/work ...



Subject	College students	Students who did not go to college
Would have taken more challenging courses in at least one area	62%	72%
Math	34%	48%
Science	32%	41%
English	29%	38%

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Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies. *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* prepared for Achieve, Inc., 2005.

### American Diploma Project

- v The American Diploma Project (ADP) was created to ensure all graduates leave high school ready for college and work.
- v Early research by ADP sought to identify "must-have" knowledge and skills graduates will need to be successful in college and the workplace.
- v Found a convergence between the skills that high school graduates need to be successful in college and those they need to be successful in a job that supports a family and offers career advancement.
- v Developed ADP benchmarks that include the content and skills all students should have when they graduate high school.

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## ADP expectations ensure high school graduates are prepared to succeed

- v In English, the benchmarks cover:
    - λ Language
    - λ Communication
    - λ Writing
    - λ Research
    - λ Logic
    - λ Informational text
    - λ Media
    - λ Literature
  - v In mathematics, the benchmarks cover:
    - λ Number sense and numerical operations
    - λ Algebra
    - λ Geometry
    - λ Data interpretations, statistics and probability
    - λ Math reasoning skills

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## To be college and work ready, students need to complete rigorous courses

To cover the content in the ADP benchmarks, high school graduates need:

- v In mathematics:
    - λ Content equivalent to Algebra I and II, Geometry, Statistics, Probability, and Data Analysis
  - v In English:
    - λ Content equivalent to four years of grade-level English or higher

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## Cross-disciplinary Proficiencies

### Research and Evidence Gathering

- Conduct research and utilize the research process to describe, summarize and synthesize information or to solve problems

### Critical Thinking and Decision Making

- Employ abstract and concrete reasoning to make and assess logical inferences, conclusions and predictions

### Communication and Teamwork

- Articulate and translate ideas and information with precision and coherence
- Understand different perspectives and approaches and work productively in teams

### Media and Technology

- Utilize technology efficiently and effectively
- Assess and employ a variety of media and formats to evaluate, create, and distribute information

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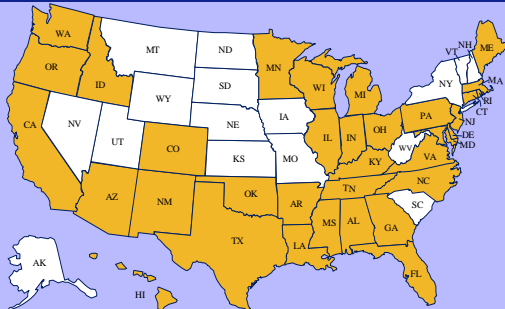
## ADP Research Documents an Expectations Gap

- v Academic standards not aligned
- v Graduation requirements too low
- v Assessments not meaningfully connected with students' college or career aspirations
- v RESULT: In most state, students can earn a high school diploma without the skills necessary for success in college and work.

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## ADP Network today: 34 states now committed to improving student preparation



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## Each ADP Network State is Unique

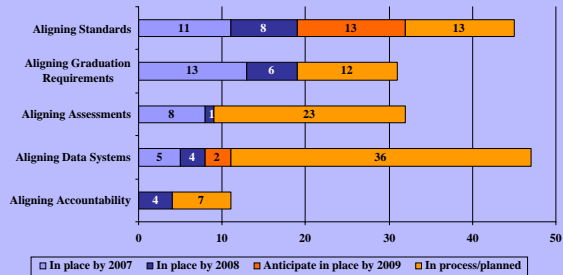
State Leaders share a common commitment but use different approaches to close the expectations gap

- Align high school standards and assessments with knowledge and skills required for success in college and career.
- Require all graduates to take rigorous courses – aligned to college and career ready standards – that prepare students for their next steps after high school.
- Streamline the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school can also be part of the placement process into entry-level college coursework.
- Hold high schools accountable for graduating students who are ready for college or careers and hold postsecondary institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.

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## A Growing Number of States have Policies That help Prepare HS Graduates for College and Careers



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## Align high school standards with the demands of college and the workplace

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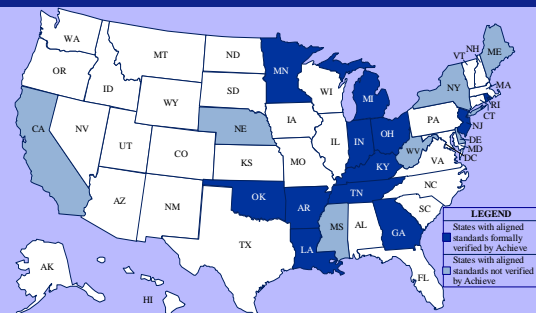
## Aligning Standards

- v **The goal** for states is to align their high school standards with the demands of college and careers so that students can:
  - λ Enter into credit-bearing course work in two- or four-year colleges, without the need for remediation and with a strong chance for earning credit toward their program or degree; and
  - λ Gain entry-level positions in quality job and career pathways, which often require further education and training.

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## Twenty States Have Aligned High School Standards



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## Graduation Requirements

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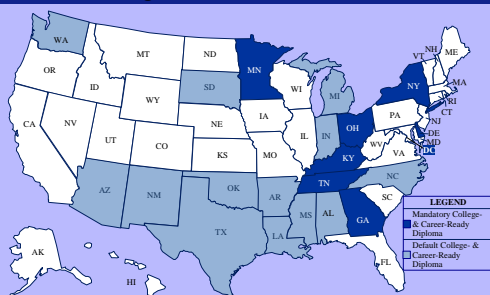
## The ADP recommended college- & career-ready curriculum

- v Achieve's research suggests that for high school graduates to be prepared for success in postsecondary settings, they need to take
  - λ Four years of challenging mathematics—at least through Algebra II or its equivalent, and
  - λ Four years of rigorous English aligned with college and career ready standards.
- v In 2005, only 2 states had graduation requirements at this level

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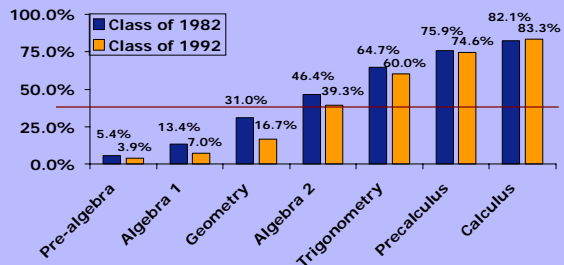
## Twenty states and DC require all students to complete a college- and career-ready curriculum



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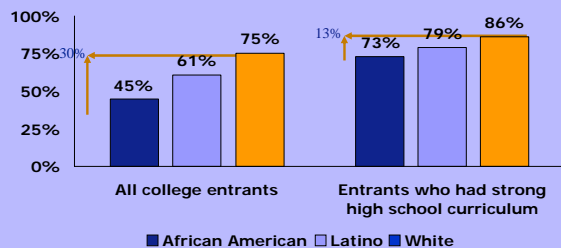
## Bachelor's degree attainment by highest level of math reached: High school class of 1982 & 1992



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## A strong high school curriculum\* improves college completion & narrows gaps



\*Completing at least Algebra II plus other courses.  
 Source: Adapted from Adelman, Clifford, U.S. Department of Education, *Answers in the Toolbox*, 1999.

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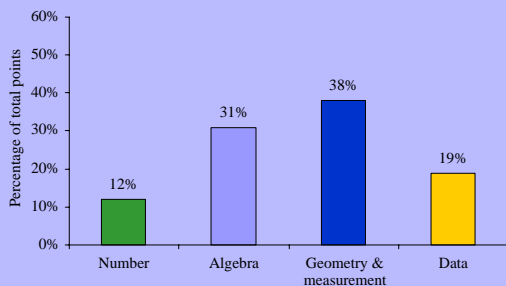
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## High School Testing Systems

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## Good news: States are measuring algebra, geometry, data analysis

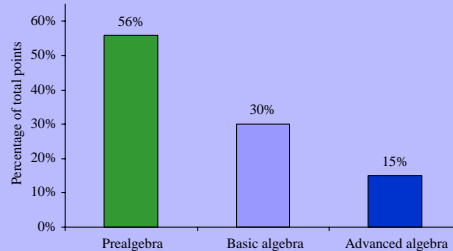


Source: Achieve, Inc., *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams*, 2004.

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## Bad news: States tend to measure lower-level content

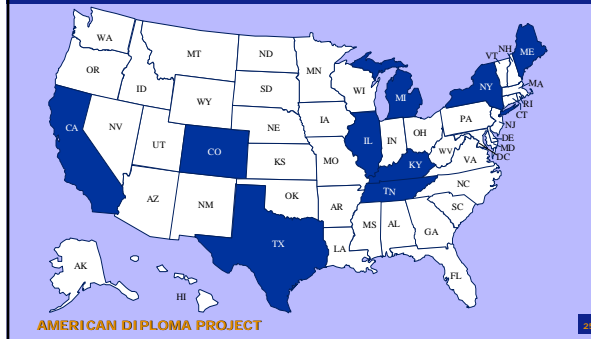


Source: Achieve, Inc., *Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams*, 2004.

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**Nine states have as part of high school tests - assessments that are also used for college placement**



**Different Approaches States are Taking to College/Career-Ready Assessments**

- v California’s Early Assessment Program—students scoring “college ready” on 11<sup>th</sup> grade test guaranteed placement in credit bearing courses at CSU
- v City University of New York and State University of New York use higher-than-passing cut scores on selected end-of-course State Regents Exams
- v Some states, including Illinois, use ACT or SAT as part of the high school assessment system
- v 14 states are preparing to use a common end-of-course exam in Algebra II that will have “college ready” score

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**ADP Algebra II End-of-Course Exam**

- v Fourteen states have developed a common Algebra II exam aligned with ADP math benchmarks
  - λ AR, AZ, HI, IN, KY, MA, MD, MN, NC, NJ, OH, PA, RI & WA
- v Purposes of the test:
  - λ To improve Algebra II curriculum and instruction in high schools;
  - λ To serve as an indicator of readiness for first-year college credit-bearing courses;
  - λ To provide a common and consistent measure of student performance across states over time.
- v Additional states will be able to use this exam & the Consortium will consider additional exams.

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**Accountability Systems**

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**What do current high school accountability systems value?**

- v “Proficiency” on tests measuring knowledge & skills students should learn by early in high school
- v Graduation rates
- v Other measures, such as attendance...
- v **But college & career readiness rarely measured & valued**

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**Few states hold high schools accountable for college- & career-readiness of their students**

- v An accountability system that measures college- & career-readiness should take into account key indicators including
  - λ an accurate graduation rate; **10**
  - λ whether students have completed a college- & career-ready curriculum; **7**
  - λ whether students have reached a statewide college- & career-ready cut score on a high school assessment; **0**
  - λ whether students have been placed into credit-bearing, non-remedial courses in reading, writing and mathematics. **2**

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## Achieve Support to States

- v Research and Development
- v Technical Assistance and Networking
- v Advocacy

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## Examples of Research & Development Support to States

- v To help states improve K-12 standards:
  - λ ADP benchmarks in ELA & mathematics
  - λ Backmapped ADP benchmarks in ELA & mathematics
  - λ Science benchmarks
  - λ Mathematics at Work series
- v To help states improve high school assessments:
  - λ Exit exam study
  - λ Study of college admissions and placement tests
  - λ Upcoming report on strategies for improving HS assessments
- v To help states raise graduation standards & graduation rates:
  - λ Policy brief on raising graduation requirements
  - λ White paper on building an early warning data system to identify potential dropouts
- v Annual 50 state policy survey

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## Research and Development: Ongoing Work

- v Leading International Benchmarking efforts and the analysis of mathematics, literacy and science standards in high performing countries:
  - λ Joined by National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
  - λ Chaired by Governor Janet Napolitano, Governor Sonny Perdue and Intel Chairman Craig Barrett
- v Next Generation Assessment and Accountability Systems:
  - λ Created national advisory group with Education Trust
  - λ Report & white papers to be released by end of year

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## Technical Assistance and Networking

- v Institutes for Standards Alignment in 22 states
- v Institute for Advancing ADP Policy Agenda in 8 states
- v Policy audits at request of states
- v Reviews of standards and assessments at request of states
- v Annual conference of leadership from the ADP Network States
- v Monthly issue-focused conference calls for ADP Network States

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## Making the Case for Reform: New Advocacy Tools and Web Site



- v The Achieve website is a one-stop resource for tools, survey data, examples and other advocacy materials.

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## Need for Alignment: College Entry-level Expectations are a Mystery

*“Most college-bound students face two major hurdles – and most of them only know about one of them.”*

*The first is the better-known hurdle of access or getting into college. The second – (largely unknown) – is the issue of college readiness, or **preparing for college.**”*

*– Charles B. Reed, Chancellor of the California State University*

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## Next Stage in the Evolution of Illinois Standards Alignment Institute with California and Florida

Designed to help Illinois identify College and Career Ready expectations that are co-owned and mutually endorsed by K-12, postsecondary, and business and are most critical for high school graduates to:

- Enter into credit-bearing coursework in two- or four-year colleges, without the need for remediation and with a strong chance for earning credit toward their program or degree; and
- Gain entry-level positions in quality job and career pathways, which often require further education and training.

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## Achieve Reviewed English, Mathematics, and Science Standards for Illinois in Spring 2008 - Findings

1. Illinois descriptors have strengths, but Achieve also found significant gaps in the expectations when compared to exemplar standards, especially in English and science.
2. Illinois English, mathematics, and science descriptors lack the clarity and specificity necessary to convey the level of performance expected of students.
3. The progression of expectations from Stage I (Early High School) to Stage J (Late High School) in English, mathematics, and science is not clearly developed.

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## Achieve Review of Illinois' English, Mathematics, and Science Standards Recommendations

1. Rework the Illinois standards in English, science and mathematics so they fully embody 21st century knowledge and skills and more closely align with the expectations for success in college and career. (logic, informational text, and media)
2. Emphasize critical Cross-disciplinary Proficiencies:
  - v Research and Evidence Gathering
  - v Critical Thinking and Decision Making
  - v Communication and Teamwork
  - v Media and Technology
3. Revise the Illinois descriptors in English, science and mathematics to achieve greater precision in coverage, clarity, and progression between grade spans.

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## The Alignment Process

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities that K-12, postsecondary, and business play in making expectations clear for students
2. Identify connections and gaps between high school requirements and the demands of college and career
3. Conduct postsecondary and business outreach
4. Submit standards to Achieve for review
5. Seek adoption and endorsement from K-12, postsecondary and business and connect high school requirements to students' next steps into postsecondary and work

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## Common Goals for California, Florida and Illinois

- v Postsecondary and Business Engagement
  - λ States will ensure that the standards produced reflect the demands of postsecondary institutions and employers, and promote real buy-in from those communities.
- v Vertical Alignment
  - λ States will back-map their standards from the end of high school all the way down through the lower grades to ensure that their K-12 standards are vertically aligned.
- v Fully Implement Standards
  - λ States will ensure that their standards provide a foundation for decisions on curriculum, instruction and assessment.

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The screenshot shows the 'POSTSECONDARY CONNECTION' website. At the top, there's a search bar and a navigation menu. The main content area has a banner image of three students. Below the banner, there are three columns of text: 'Our Goal', 'Case Studies & Testimonials', and 'State Data Fact Sheets'. The 'State Data Fact Sheets' section includes a map of the United States and a link to view state fact sheets in PDF format. The footer includes 'Sponsors' and the 'Achieve.org' logo.

**Alignment builds upon . . .**

Key Efforts in Illinois to prepare students  
for college and career

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