

I. Introduction

The purpose of the College and Career Readiness Project is to improve the college and career readiness rate of high school students and reduce the percent needing postsecondary remediation in reading, writing and mathematics after graduation. This project is fully aligned with the Department of Education's strategic goals promoting highest student achievement, seamless articulation and maximum access, and workforce development. The College and Career Readiness Project encompass a variety of collaborative (K12-Workforce-Community Colleges-State University System) efforts to define college and career readiness and to ensure students earning standard high school diplomas meet that definition. Initiatives include, but are not limited to implementation of select components of recent (2008) education reform legislation (SB 1908) as well as taking action on the related recommendations of the *2007-2008 Go Higher, Florida Task Force*.

College and Career Readiness Project start date: April 2008

II. Scope

The scope of the College and Career Readiness Project includes the following:

- a. Adoption of a definition of college and career readiness by participating in the Achieve "Alignment Institute".
- b. Adoption of a new postsecondary assessment which includes an issuing RFP for a new CPT exam.
- c. Provide college-readiness assessment/evaluation to students in the 11th grade. Develop appropriate remedial instruction in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics to be provided/offered prior to high school graduation.

III. Objective

There are two primary objectives of the College and Career Readiness Project. The first is to define college and career readiness and submit that definition to inform the department's other strategic efforts to align standards, curriculum, materials, and professional development. The second objective is to provide assessment and remediation, as needed, to students while they are still in high school in reading, writing, and mathematics.

THE AMERICAN DIPLOMA PROJECT

CLOSING THE EXPECTATIONS GAP

In nearly every state today, students can meet the requirements for high school graduation and still be unprepared for success in college or the workplace. Simply put, our standards have not kept pace with the world students are entering after high school.

States need to raise standards for all students and tie high school tests and requirements to the expectations of colleges and employers. Colleges and employers must then honor and reward student achievement on state tests through their admissions, placement and hiring policies. This will send a powerful signal to students that it pays to meet higher standards in high school.

The American Diploma Project

The American Diploma Project (ADP) is an Achieve initiative created to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared to face the challenges of work and college. The ADP Network includes 33 states dedicated to the same goal. ADP is designed to ensure that all states:

- Align high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.
- Require all graduates to take rigorous courses – aligned to college- and career-ready standards – that prepare them for life after high school.
- Streamline the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school also can serve as placement tests for college and hiring for the workplace.
- Hold high schools accountable for graduating students who are ready for college or careers and hold postsecondary institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.

Keeping Pace with Rising Knowledge and Skill Demands

In the new, knowledge-based economy, employers and college leaders are placing a higher premium on high-level math and communications skills than ever before. Yet, few states expect students to take high school courses in math through and beyond Algebra II or advanced courses in English and science, despite the research that finds students that complete this coursework are more likely to be successful in work and college. Only eighteen states have high school graduation requirements aligned with college and workplace expectations.

High School Graduates Are Not Prepared To Succeed

Far too many recent high school graduates enter college and the workplace unprepared for the demands of learning and earning. According to a survey commissioned by Achieve, 39 percent of recent graduates enrolled in college and 46 percent in the workforce say there were significant gaps in their preparation. Professors and employers estimate that four out of ten graduates are unprepared for college or employment.

The American Diploma Project Network

Thirty-three states – educating nearly 80 percent of America's high school students – have signed on to the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network. In these states, governors, state education officials, business executives and higher education officials work together to raise high school standards, strengthen assessments and curriculum, and align expectations with the demands of college and careers.

Although all Network states have committed to a common set of key policy priorities, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each state has developed its own action plan for carrying out the agenda. See the state profiles at [Achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org) for more details: <http://www.achieve.org/node/317>



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These gaps come with a steep price. States, postsecondary institutions, employers and young people spend an estimated \$17 billion each year on remedial classes to re-teach material that should have been mastered in high school. This price tag might be acceptable if remediation was a proven fix, but one national study indicates that 76 percent of students who take remedial courses in reading and 63 percent of students who take one or two remedial courses in math fail to earn college degrees.

What Is Causing the Expectations Gap?

Only recently have state officials, together with college and business leaders, begun working to define what skills and content signify college and work readiness. This lack of collaboration has bred confusion in the past: parents, teachers, colleges and employers have no agreed-upon benchmark for what readiness entails, so students don't know what courses to take to ensure they are prepared. As a result, the case is not effectively being made that hard work in high school leads to future success in the marketplace, college, and beyond.

Unless these stakeholders come together, high school courses will continue to vary widely in their academic content and rigor. Although some students are exposed to content-rich and stimulating classes that build college- and work-ready skills in high school, many others only have access to courses that offer remedial and non-academic content. These watered-down courses are unlikely to engage students, let alone prepare them for work and college, and can lead to higher drop out rates.

Next Steps for the States

The good news is that progress is being made throughout the states. While only a handful of states have put into place the policies championed by ADP, many others are in the process of implementing them. Over half of the states already have aligned their academic standards and developed comprehensive data systems – or plan to do so in the coming years. There is certainly more work to be done, but the ADP agenda is gaining momentum.

About Achieve

Created by the nation's governors and business leaders, Achieve, Inc. 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. Achieve was founded at the 1996 National Education Summit and has sponsored subsequent Summits in 1999, 2001 and 2005. At the 2005 Summit, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network.

Achieve provides policy and advocacy leadership, technical assistance and other support to the ADP Network states and is leading a number of initiatives aimed at meeting specific challenges states face while implementing the ADP policy agenda, including:

- *Alignment Institutes:* K-12, postsecondary and business leaders from each state come together to define the core English and math knowledge and skills graduates need to be ready for college and work and then revise their high school standards as necessary.
- *Algebra II Consortium:* Fourteen states have partnered to develop a new end-of-course assessment in Algebra II. Achieve is supporting the development of the test, providing an annual report comparing the performance of participating states, and helping the states share and develop tools and strategies for improving teaching and learning in high school math.
- *Research and Data:* Achieve is a resource of information, analysis and advice for state leaders through policy briefs, annual progress reports, public opinion polling, sample communications materials, and best practices.
- *State Outreach and Advocacy:* Achieve convenes states to engage in meaningful and strategic dialogue about policy and political strategies and to provide the opportunity for peer networking.



On **February 22, 2009** high school seniors and families will be offered expert assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at over 30 sites throughout Florida. Coordinated by ENLACE Florida, this one-day event is designed to help prospective college students gain access to federal and state need-based aid available to them. Every year in Florida, millions of federal dollars are left on the table simply because limited-income students fail to successfully complete the FAFSA. College Goal Sunday Florida is working to be part of the solution. With the help of university and community college financial aid office staff, volunteers, community and faith-based organizations, thousands of students will have access to expert help in this important process.

College Goal Sunday Florida is supported by Lumina Foundation for Education and USA Funds; ENLACE Florida serves as the state coordinator and fiscal agent. For more information on College Goal Sunday Florida, please visit: www.collegegoalsundayusa.org

List of 2009 College Goal Sunday Florida sites:

Santa Fe College	Gainesville	University of Central Florida	Orlando
Gainesville High School	Gainesville	Valencia Community College	Orlando
Eastside High School	Gainesville	New Covenant Baptist Church	Orlando
ASPIRA of Florida, Inc	Dade	Jones High School	Orlando
Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc.	Dade	Oak Ridge High School	Orlando
The Resource Room	Dade	Frontline Outreach	Orlando
Educate Tomorrow (Foster Youth)	Dade	TECO	Osceola
Brooks De-Bartolo Collegiate High	Hillsborough	Chisholm Center	Orlando
HOPE Center	Hillsborough	Broward College	Broward
Middleton High School	Hillsborough	Urban League of Palm Beach	West Palm
Pierce Middle School	Hillsborough	ASPIRA of Florida, Inc	West Palm
East Bay High School	Hillsborough	American Intercontinental Univ.	Broward
University of South Florida	Hillsborough	Tallahassee Community College	Tallahassee
Florida Community College	Duval	Washington County School District	Tallahassee
Florida Community College	Nassau	Immokalee High School	Ft. Myers
		Pensacola Junior College	Escambia



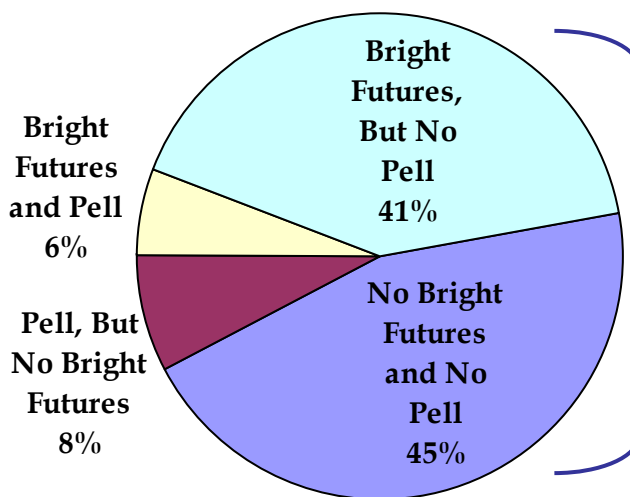


WHO DOES NOT BENEFIT FROM FEDERAL AND STATE FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS?

Many students from middle-income and lower-income Florida families do not qualify for federal or state grants and scholarships.

- An estimated 37,000 State University System undergraduates with family incomes between \$40,000 and \$80,000 did not receive federal Pell grants, other federal need-based programs, or Florida's need-based or merit-based financial aid programs.
- This income group can be particularly sensitive to tuition increases.
- Need-based financial aid programs should recognize the need of many of these middle-income and lower-income Florida families.

Nearly Half of State University System Middle- and Lower-Income Families Do Not Receive Benefits From Federal or State Financial Aid Programs



Most State University System students from families earning between \$40,000 and \$80,000 do not qualify for Pell grants or for the various other state and federal need-based grants.

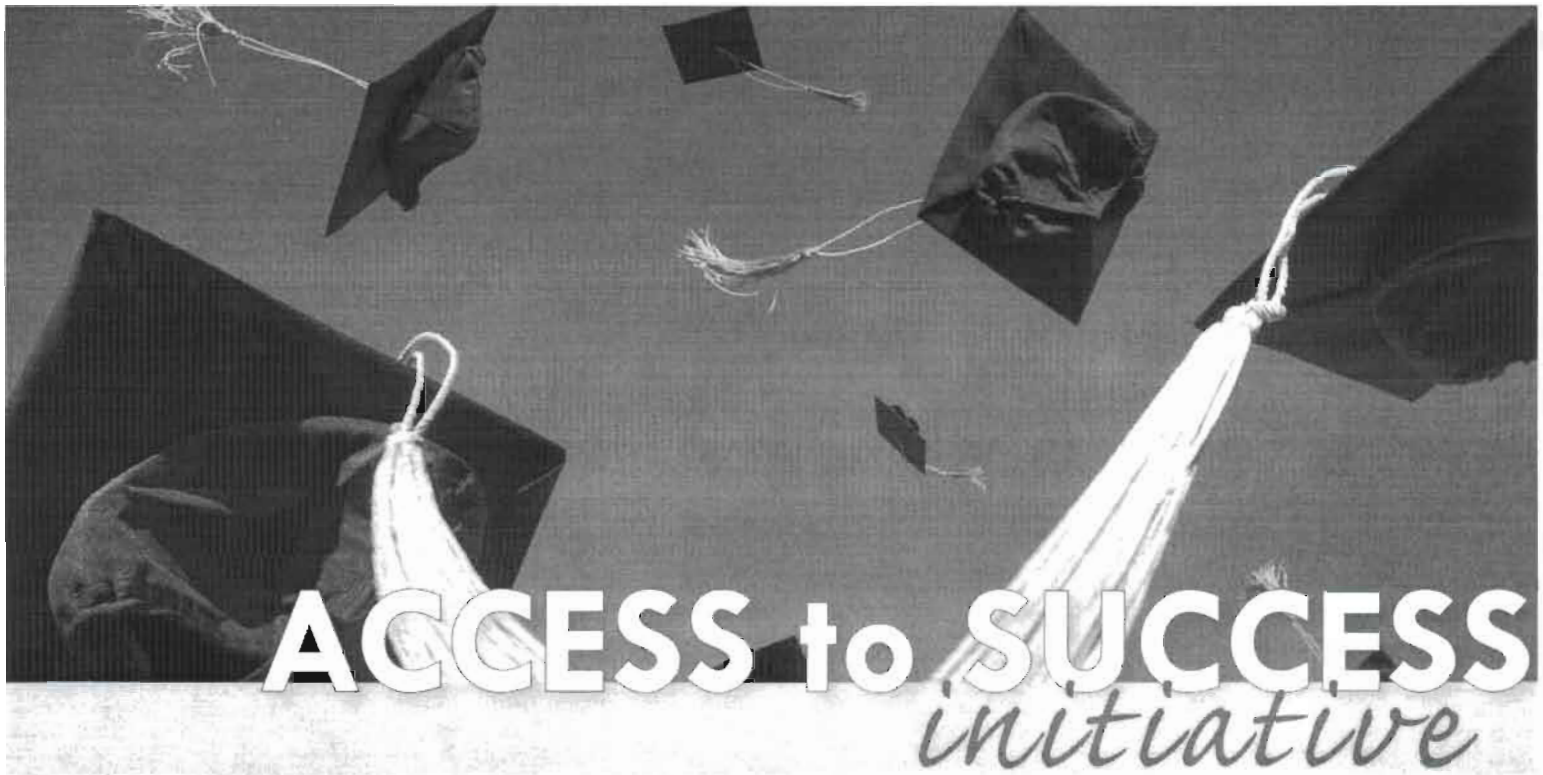
And more than half of these middle- and lower-income students also do not receive Bright Futures scholarships.

Note: These percentages are of SUS resident, undergraduates with 2005 family adjusted gross incomes between \$40,000 and \$80,000.

Technical notes:

The income data used in this study are the result of a match between the academic records of Florida students and data from the federal income tax return. The IRS authorized and facilitated the project, and, following federal rules, the Florida Department of Revenue aggregated the data in such a way as to provide no identifiable information from individual taxpayer or student records, only on groups of students. This study uses a cohort of 2005-06 academic year Florida resident undergraduates. The tax data come from 2005 federal income tax returns. The student records were compared first with dependents on tax returns of Florida residents. If the student did not match a dependent on a primary filer's tax return, the student record was then compared with independent filers (primary and secondary tax filers). Overall, 90% of the student records matched to a federal tax return. Of those that matched, 60% of the students were dependents on another's tax return, and 40% were independent filers.

For more information, email chancellor@flbog.edu or call 850-245-0466.



Rising to the Challenge

America faces two serious challenges to its long-time dominance in higher education:

- Fierce and well-financed international competition from countries determined that they – not the United States – will have the best educated workforce in the world; and
- A wide chasm within our own country in the rates at which different groups of young Americans earn college degrees.

Meeting these challenges is essential to the health of our democracy, the strength of our economy, and our nation's leadership in the world. And the two are inextricably linked: our country cannot meet the competition without dramatically expanding the college access and increasing the success of low-income and minority students.

Together, leaders of public college and university systems throughout the U.S. – collectively educating more than two million undergraduates – are stepping forward to take on these challenges.

What Will We Do?

Participating systems are aiming to improve overall student success, and to close by at least half the gaps in both college-going and college completion that separate low-income and minority students from others. Each system will choose how best to meet the goals of the initiative by 2015. But all of us will:

- Analyze our data more carefully to identify and eliminate roadblocks that slow student momentum;
- Improve student success in our developmental and introductory courses;
- Re-examine how we use financial aid and other resources, focusing on enhancing success, especially among low-income and minority students; and
- Work more closely with our K-12 counterparts to improve preparation for college.

To meet our goals, we'll need the creative energies of our faculties, the insights of our students, and strong leadership from our campus presidents.

That's what this initiative is all about—organizing our systems of higher education differently to promote student success.

What's Different About This Initiative?

We have clear and public goals for both college entry and college completion.

We are not only committed to increasing the number of students entering college, but also the number that successfully get through with a degree. This initiative is not about lowering standards, but about enabling more students to meet them.

We will report annually to the public on our progress.

Each system will collect and report data on annual progress toward initiative goals. The metrics will measure progress in at least two ways that improve on traditional measures. First, they take account of all students served, not just traditional, full-time students. Second, the metrics define a system's success not in abstract terms but in the real context of the economic and racial/ethnic diversity of its state's citizens.

Our commitment to equity—to fairer opportunities for the full range of our states' young people—is at the heart of this initiative.

“Diversity,” in other words, isn't a side goal or an afterthought. We will remain squarely focused on better serving the full citizenry of our states.



We have organized to learn from each other about what works and what doesn't.

None of the participating systems has any need to reinvent the wheel. So, we'll carefully mine our data to identify campuses or other academic units that are unusually effective in achieving support on access or success, study their accomplishments, and share best practices widely across our systems.

This is not about more programs. It's about changing the way our systems do business.

Over time, we've had lots of experience with small programs that have positive but limited impact on our students. This effort is not just about more programs. Rather, we're trying to reorganize how we do our basic work of teaching and advising students with a clearer focus on student success. We want to show that greater student success is achievable, and that it is achievable at scale.

While we'd welcome government support, we're not waiting for it.

We have no doubt that, over time, we'll need more public support if we are to meet the full needs of our states and our country. But we're not waiting, because we know that we can and must redeploy some of our own resources in ways that will increase student success.

Finally, to help us reach our goals, we've chosen a partner—The Education Trust—known for its independence, its honest reporting of data, and its willingness to speak truth to power.

Analysis, Action and Accountability

This initiative is an aggressive, highly-focused effort to increase the number of college-educated Americans overall, while closing gaps for underrepresented students. As leaders of the participating university systems, we are acutely aware that this is what America needs from higher education.

Meeting these twin goals is important to the future competitiveness and economic security of our country. But it's also terribly important to the many young people who are working hard and following all the rules, yet finding themselves unable to get a college education. Unaddressed, this will continue to have a chilling effect on the hopes and dreams of too many of our nation's children and will erode the fundamental principles of opportunity on which our nation was founded.

This initiative can help renew the promise of opportunity in America and help give all students the confidence that hard work pays off.

National Partner Organizations



The National Association of System Heads (NASH) is the association of the chief executives of the 52 college and university systems of public higher education in the United States.



The Education Trust was created to promote high-academic achievement for all students, at all levels—pre-kindergarten through college. While we know that all schools and colleges could better serve their students, our work focuses on the schools and colleges most often left behind in plans to improve education: those serving African-American, Latino, Native American and low-income students.

Foundation Support



Lumina Foundation for Education is an Indianapolis-based, private foundation dedicated to expanding access and success in education beyond high school.



Guided by the belief that every life has equal value the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to reduce inequities and improve lives around the world.



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Access to Success Initiative Focuses on Gaps

Cohort	URM grad rate	URM gap (White - URM)	Pell grad rate	Pell gap (Non-Pell - Pell)
FTIC	54%	10 points	57%	6 points
AA Transfers	75%	3 points	77%	No gap

Notes:

- These are 6-year rates for 2001 full-time FTICs and 4-year rates for 2003 full-time AA transfers.
- URM (“underrepresented minorities”) = Black, Hispanic, and Native American.

