

HIGHER ED

for HIGHER STANDARDS

UPDATE



January 2015

COALITION UPDATE

19 Major Groups Endorse Higher Standards

In December, the **American Council on Education** wrote a letter to Higher Ed for Higher Standards on behalf of a group of higher ed organizations signaling strong support for the efforts to raise K-12 standards:

"The undersigned organizations strongly support the collaborative and effective implementation of rigorous K-12 state academic standards, including but not limited to the Common Core State Standards, which are designed to ensure that students graduate high school with the reading and mathematics skills and critical thinking ability needed to competently perform college-level work or succeed in their chosen career... there is no question that raising academic standards before students matriculate and begin college work should be a top priority."

The letter was sent on behalf of the following organizations:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
APPA, Leadership in Educational Facilities
Association of American Colleges & Universities
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
EDUCAUSE
NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

**National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
ACT, Inc.**

We thank them for their support and are excited to work together to increase higher education's role in shaping stronger K-12 standards. Read the full letter [here](#).

AASCU: Standards a Top 10 Issue

The **American Association of State Colleges and Universities** has compiled the top 10 higher education state policy issues for 2015. Aligning K-12 standards with postsecondary expectations is on the list and AASCU recognizes the important role higher ed will need to play as the standards and new assessments get implemented this year. "Much of this energy will be channeled through the recently established Higher Ed for Higher Standards, a coalition of leaders advocating for strong college- and career-ready standards, including, but not limited to, the Common Core." See the full list of issues [here](#).

SPOTLIGHT ON TENNESSEE AND NEW JERSEY

John G. Morgan, chancellor of the **Tennessee Board of Regents**, urged lawmakers and the public to support Tennessee's higher standards because students are entering college unprepared. "The problem is our expectations have been too low," he wrote. "Setting a higher bar for children in elementary and secondary school will ultimately result in better prepared high school graduates." Read the full op-ed [here](#).



Warren Nichols, vice chancellor for community colleges at the Tennessee Board of Regents, wrote an op-ed on college readiness and stressed the importance of higher standards to ensure students are ready to succeed in higher education. This is particularly important to the growing number of students who will attend community colleges as the state works to increase access to higher education through the Tennessee Promise program. Read the full op-ed [here](#).



Community college presidents Dr. Raymond Yannuzzi (Camden County College) and Dr. Thomas Isekenegebe (Cumberland County College) wrote to the South Jersey Times to [reaffirm](#) the importance of the Common Core State Standards in **New Jersey** and the positive impact they will have on incoming college students. Their column came weeks after a letter by the New Jersey Presidents' Council pledging its support and commitment to the Common Core.

MAKING THE CASE

High School Grads: We Weren't Prepared

A November 2014 survey of 1,347 recent public high school graduates by the nonprofit Achieve found that 47% of college students and 49% of non-students found that high school prepared them only "somewhat well" or "not well" for college/career. Among students who felt that they were less prepared for college, 52% found it harder than expected. That number was only 26% for students who felt that they were well prepared for college. Read the full findings [here](#).

CCSS Aren't So Easy to Replace

"Last month, former Florida governor Jeb Bush suggested to hundreds of lawmakers and education reformers gathered for his foundation's annual summit that 'the rigor of the Common Core State Standards must be the new minimum.' Furthermore, he said, to 'those states choosing a path other than Common Core, I say this: That's fine. Except you should be aiming even higher and be bolder and raise standards and ask more of our students and the system.' ... The basic problem is that it's impossible to draft standards that prepare students for college and career readiness and that look nothing like Common Core. That's because Common Core, though not perfect, represents a good-faith effort to incorporate the current evidence of what students need to know and do to succeed in credit-bearing courses in college or to land a good-paying job—and the milestones younger students need to pass to reach those goals." Read the full Washington Post op-ed by Michael Petrilli and Michael Brickman [here](#).

Fast Kentucky College Readiness Gains

The percentage of Kentucky high school graduates who met college readiness standards nearly doubled in the past five years and has climbed from 31.8 percent to 62.3 percent. A rapid educational improvement is on display in Kentucky as educators continue to implement the state's Common Core State Standards. Robert King, President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, considers the commonwealth's success to be "a testament to the hard work of teachers in the classroom, partnerships with higher education, inspired leadership in the Kentucky Department of Education, and the vision of lawmakers who sought rigorous academic expectations for every student in the Commonwealth and had the fortitude to stick with it." Read the full Huffington Post article [here](#).

About Higher Ed for Higher Standards

Higher Ed for Higher Standards is a coalition of [higher education leaders](#) that strives to ensure that Americans realize the importance of higher K-12 standards for higher education and student success after high school. [Join us!](#)

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