

Introduction

Aligning Expectations

Dear Colleagues:

As we begin the new year, higher education leaders need to remain vigilant in our support of higher standards. Important gains that have been made in efforts to align K–12 standards and tests with college-ready expectations could be at risk as a growing number of states launch reviews and consider making changes to the standards and tests.

It is essential that higher education be at the table when these critical discussions are occurring, when recommendations are being weighed, and when decisions are being made.

The recent effort to raise academic expectations is the most promising reform in the K–12 sector in decades. If they are implemented wisely, these standards and their accompanying assessments can help ensure that more students arrive on our campuses prepared for college-level work and are on track from day one to earn a degree or certificate.

Higher education has played a significant role in shaping the high school assessments in many states, with the goal of building a college readiness measure we could use to improve the transition of students from high school to our campuses without the need for remediation. We also played an important role in shaping public perceptions of the new aligned tests when the initial scores were released this past summer and fall. Through our [Proficient Means Prepared campaign](#), higher education voices made a difference in 2015.

As states consider changes to their K–12 standards and assessments, our goal is to ensure that college readiness is a key criterion and that higher education leaders are part of the process. We encourage you to get involved.

Higher Ed for Higher Standards has developed a set of tools to support your work. One set of resources is focused on the standards, the other on the assessments — each with a series of possible scenarios and actions that higher education leaders can take in response.

Higher education leaders in a number of states already are participating. Thank you in advance for joining them. This is an important milestone in our collective efforts to help prepare more students for college, for careers, and for life.

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