

SREB



Lost in Transition:

*Building a Better Path from
School to College and Careers*

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2008

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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Introduction:

Too Many Students Are Being Lost in Transition

W weak transitions from school to college and careers threaten the prosperity of our states and our next generation of citizens.

Our nation's workforce is in jeopardy. Too many Americans have a constricted vision of what it means to be successful in school, in careers and in adult life. Educators, policy-makers and the public are too willing to define "success" as a four-year college degree and tend to concentrate most of our economic and social resources on that single goal.

At the same time, many Americans have in their minds a particular kind of learner who fits into a traditional picture of academic education — the student who is able to be successful in a classroom dominated by lecture and text-based study and led by instructors who see their primary role as delivering the content, not reaching the student. One result of this outmoded view of schooling is a tendency to perpetuate the myth that only a minority of students are capable of meeting rigorous academic standards. Out of that myth grows a rationalization for devaluing the bridging and scaffolding that can help many more students adopt challenging career goals and develop sound educational plans to reach those goals.

In many states, a narrow perspective of the purpose of school and a failure to recognize the potential of all students — with the right support — to "do hard things" is already creating a shortage of the kind of knowledgeable and skilled employees that states must have to sustain economic development. Today, states have significant percentages of students not completing high school and on a path to low-wage jobs or unemployment. Too many young people are adrift, unclear about their reasons for sticking with school and bored by the prospect of more seemingly disconnected education.

High schools, community colleges and four-year colleges need to work together to create a set of curricular experiences — including authentic projects, job shadowing and internships — that excite students about learning, introduce them to the skills and knowledge they will need for high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields, and convince them that they will reap the rewards for learning to do hard things.

Lost in transition

The problem begins in high schools, which direct most of their guidance and counseling services toward students pursuing further study in four-year colleges. Often overlooked are students going to community colleges, technical schools, apprenticeship programs or directly to work. These are young people approaching adulthood who need to be prepared to compete for good jobs with family-sustaining wages.

Students in this neglected group who plan to continue to postsecondary education often do not comprehend the level of preparedness and commitment required to be successful in further study. While they may go through a process of pro forma career planning by ninth grade, they are seldom given the continuous counseling and support they need to persist in a course of study that will fully prepare them for the challenges ahead. Furthermore, many colleges neglect to help these students set outcome goals for their higher education experience. Consequently, college completion rates in every state remain well below high school rates, with community and technical college rates lowest of all.

Collaboration is the key to solving this problem. When school districts and community colleges work in partnerships, they can design effective transitions that provide students with greater opportunities to learn about the habits and skills of effective workers and to acquire the skills necessary to compete in a knowledge-based economy.

In 2005 and 2006, the *High Schools That Work* program of the Southern Regional Education Board and the College and Career Transitions Initiative of the League for Innovation in the Community College convened a cross section of state education and policy leaders in 15 state-level forums. Forum participants were asked to identify ways to foster collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education systems and build successful transitions from high school to college and careers.

At nearly all of the state forums, participants were able to pinpoint exemplary programs in which high schools and community colleges work together to help more students transition seamlessly from secondary to postsecondary education. These efforts, however, are episodic and dependent on local personalities rather than on a uniform set of state policies. They often arise from isolated agreements between a few high schools and the nearby community college.

It became abundantly clear, as a result of these discussions among nearly 500 educators and policy-makers, that states need to develop and sustain a statewide, collaborative K–20 system that requires academic and technical studies be taught to college- and career-readiness standards. These comprehensive systems must help students relate academic studies to a career context, connecting high school to their futures. These redesigned systems must also provide new ways of learning through courses that blend academic and technical studies and create opportunities for academic and career/technical teachers to jointly plan integrated learning experiences.

An effective system of student transitions

When states achieve an effective system of student transitions from high school to college and careers, they will enjoy improved high school completion rates; improved college preparedness; higher postsecondary enrollments; reduced college remediation rates; and improved student persistence toward employer certifications, associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees.

States will know they have achieved such a system when:

- College, K–12 and business leaders work together to create theme-based learning pathways in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields that motivate high school students to master knowledge and skills needed to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.
- High school students are enrolled in planned programs of study that include higher-level learning experiences in academic courses coupled with opportunities to apply academic learning in a variety of settings, including career/technical courses, authentic projects and work-site learning.
- High school and community college leaders work together to help all high school seniors become college-ready in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Decisions on state policies and resource allocations recognize that high schools with chronically low achievement and graduation rates need greater assistance to improve school structure, climate and community engagement in ways that produce higher-performing learning communities.

- State resource allocation decisions recognize the additional time, support and differentiated instruction needed to help at-risk students graduate from high school prepared for a career and further study.
- Dual credit courses truly represent college-level work and students enrolled in such courses demonstrate college readiness in reading, writing and mathematics.
- High school and community college leaders work together to provide high school students access to career/technical laboratories in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields on college campuses.
- College, K–12 and business leaders establish readiness standards for college and careers and multiple paths through which students demonstrate they met the standards.
- Over age high school students and young adults who have dropped out of high school are recovered and successfully complete a GED and earn an employer certification.
- Significantly more students graduate from high school prepared for college and a career as shown on readiness assessments that are a part of state high school exams or other national readiness tests.
- High school students who will not immediately pursue college leave high school with a recognized employer certification.
- Many more college students successfully complete the freshman year with a declared career goal and returning for the second year.

This report summarizes the conclusions of the 15 state forums; identifies key barriers and policy issues; and recommends a series of state actions to ensure a new generation of knowledgeable and skilled citizens and workers are ready to pursue high-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers that can help sustain prosperity and economic growth.

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Taking Action to Build Seamless Transitions from High School to College and Careers:

Recommendations from Leaders in 15 States

In 2005 and 2006, the *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* program of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the College and Career Transitions Initiative of the League for Innovation in the Community College (League) facilitated a series of 15 state-level forums aimed at identifying ways to foster collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education systems and build successful transitions from high school to college and careers.

The forums, supported by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education, convened nearly 500 participants — including state education leaders, state board of education members, state education commissioners, school district superintendents, community college presidents, academic deans, college system chancellors, high school principals, teachers, legislators and business leaders — to consider how their states might achieve effective transitions for students, based on the following indicators:

- *Improved* academic and technical achievement at the secondary and postsecondary levels;
- *Increased* enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education;
- *Decreased* need for remediation at the postsecondary level;
- *Increased* attainment of postsecondary degrees, certificates or other recognized credentials; and
- *Increased* entry of students into employment or further education.

States Hosting Forums:

Alabama — August 2006

Georgia — May 2006

Hawaii — August 2006

Kentucky — March 2005

Louisiana — February 2006

Montana — August 2006

Nebraska — August 2005

New Jersey — May 2005

New Mexico — November 2005

North Carolina — June 2005

Oklahoma — February 2006

South Carolina — August 2005

Tennessee — September 2005

Texas — September 2006

West Virginia — July 2005

Each state forum produced a report highlighting the state's progress in building stronger transitions for students, identifying challenges the state faces and recommending actions the state can take to meet those challenges. Each report also includes essential data that state and institutional leaders will need as they design better paths from high school to college and careers.

The suggested actions included in these state reports emerged from forum discussions and from the experiences of SREB and the League in helping states and educational systems improve student outcomes. Electronic copies of the full state reports on *Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers* are available on the SREB Web site (www.sreb.org) and the League's Web site (www.league.org).

This summary report synthesizes the forums' major conclusions about successful transitions and describes courses of action that can help all states meet important economic and workforce goals and secure productive lives and careers for our next generation of adult workers and citizens.

Students Must Have a Vision of the Future

By the time students complete the middle grades they should have a six-year career development plan covering four years of high school and two years beyond. At this early stage, forum participants emphasized that students need to see clear connections between the course content they are being asked to learn in school and the skills and knowledge they will need in their careers.

A career and educational plan can communicate to students, parents and counselors the important courses students will need to complete to achieve their goals. Some states require high school students to prepare four- to six-year plans for a program of study. However, according to forum participants, follow-through on these plans is inconsistent. Large student counseling loads and a predisposition in favor of four-year college-goers means that counselors seldom have time to give the majority of students and their parents the guidance they need to make informed decisions about the future.

Many high schools do not systematically educate all students, parents, teachers and community leaders about high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career fields and the importance of further education to entering these fields. These schools fail in their obligation to emphasize the strong academic skills required for *all* students to advance in college and careers. In short, they do not send the message that continued learning and postsecondary credentials are important for everyone's quality of life and economic security.

How can schools, districts and states better address career and educational planning? One promising practice presented at the forums is the program of study developed by the League's College and Career Transitions Initiative (CCTI).¹ This strategy, modeled around high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career fields, is being implemented at 15 community colleges and their partner high schools in 13 states.

¹ League for Innovation in the Community College. *Pathways to Student Success: Case Studies from the College and Career Transitions Initiative*, 2006. CCTI's career pathway templates and examples are available electronically on the League's Web site, <http://www.league.org/league/projects/ccti/cp/templates.html>.

The CCTI program delivers an articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career courses beginning in the ninth grade and leading to an industry-recognized certificate, an associate's degree and/or a baccalaureate degree. The five programs of study supported in these partnerships — education and training; health science; information technology; law, public safety and security; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics — engage students early in high school in the skills and knowledge needed in these specialized fields. The emphasis is on teaching the embedded academic content in the sequence of career courses and using real-world context to increase students' motivation and learning in academic courses, particularly mathematics and science.

Forum participants shared other examples of local collaborative efforts between high schools and community colleges that start students on the journey to employment in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields:

- Gadsden Independent School District and Doña Ana Branch Community College in New Mexico provide high school seniors with up to 18 hours of college credit toward a manufacturing certificate. Students can continue their postsecondary program at the community college in a one-year program to earn a manufacturing certificate or a two-year program to earn a manufacturing technology associate's degree.²
- Northeast State Technical Community College in Tennessee leads a joint effort with local high schools to enroll students in a combined industry and college electromechanical technology program. Unprepared students receive extra help in reading and mathematics so they can be successful in their college studies and in the aligned work-site learning experiences.³
- Cumberland County Community College in New Jersey works with high school, district and business leaders to motivate ninth-graders to stay in school with the promise of a scholarship to the community college if they maintain good attendance, work hard, produce quality work and earn a high school diploma.⁴
- Nebraska's Tech Prep consortia develop programs of academic and technical studies that encompass grades nine to 14 to help students set education and career goals, earn a high school diploma, get a jump-start on college and earn a workplace credential.⁵

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Develop programs of study that connect high school with postsecondary education and careers —

- Encourage community colleges and high schools, through joint grants, to collaboratively develop programs of career and academic studies in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career fields that bridge secondary and postsecondary studies, link students to an outcome goal, and create new ways of engaging students in learning mathematics, science and technical content and skills.
- Help high schools implement a teacher-adviser system in which each professional educator assists a small group of students and their parents through all four years of high school to set postsecondary and career goals and to pursue a program of study to achieve those goals.

² New Mexico Public Education Department. "Model Apprenticeship Program to Premier in Gadsden Holds Potential for Improving Region's Economy," *Press Release*. May 14, 2004.

³ Shaw, Carole. "Enhancing Workforce Development through Articulation and Dual Enrollment Programs," presented at the SREB/HSTW State Leaders' Forum, Charleston, South Carolina, November 17, 2005.

⁴ Identified during discussion. New Jersey Education Forum, Trenton, New Jersey, May 25, 2005.

⁵ Identified during discussion. Nebraska Next Steps Tech Prep Forum, Grand Island, Nebraska, August 31, 2005.

- Require all students to prepare a six-year plan for a program of study that begins in grade nine and leads to a postsecondary credential — an employer certification, an associate’s degree or a bachelor’s degree.

Students Must Be Ready for Both College and Careers

The college-preparatory academic core is available for some students, but not for all. Success in completing a rigorous academic core in high school is not only predictive of success in postsecondary studies, but, coupled with high-quality career/technical studies, is essential for success in the workplace. Readiness for many good jobs requires that students have specific technical knowledge and skills along with the ability to apply both academic and technical knowledge in new situations. Most forum participants stressed that high schools and community colleges *must not only do a better job of addressing college readiness, but must also give equal emphasis to strategies that improve workplace readiness.*

Success in the 21st century requires that every student be challenged to complete a rigorous academic core. When students choose a weaker academic track, they are making a choice (often unknowingly) that can have profound negative effects on their future prospects. *Consider these facts:* Students who completed the ACT-recommended academic core⁶ achieved a mean composite score of 22 on the 2006 ACT exam, compared with 19.7 for students who did not complete the core.⁷ Similarly, students who completed 18 or more academic courses achieved a mean composite score of 1066 on the 2006 SAT, compared with 922 for students completing fewer than 18 academic courses.⁸ Students who complete Advanced Placement (AP) courses perform even better. Twenty-four percent of the nation’s 2006 high school graduating class took an AP course in high school, and of these, 61 percent scored 3 or higher on the exam,⁹ making them eligible for college credit at many postsecondary institutions.

Many students will be more motivated to complete a rigorous academic core if they can couple it with apprenticeships and in-depth study in a high-quality career/technical program during high school. Data reported at the forums indicate that some states lack policies to provide all students with opportunities for deeper academic studies through AP participation or through quality career/technical programs. The percentage of students participating in AP courses in the 15 states ranged from only 5 percent to a high of 32 percent.

Many states provide multiple diploma options with a weaker academic core for some students. Routinely enrolling students in low-level courses sends a negative message about the importance of a rigorous high school curriculum to their futures. Variations often occur between the college-preparatory and career/technical diploma paths, particularly in the number of mathematics credits required. Mathematics is a gatekeeper for advancement in further study and careers, and completion of Algebra II is a predictor of college success.¹⁰ Yet mathematics requirements vary widely across these 15 states. Some

⁶ The ACT academic core includes, at a minimum, four years of English, three years of mathematics (Algebra I and higher), three years of science and three years of social studies.

⁷ ACT, Inc. *ACT High School Profile Report: The Graduating Class of 2006: National*. 2006.

⁸ The College Board. *2006 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report*. 2006.

⁹ The College Board. *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation 2007*. 2007.

¹⁰ Adelman, Clifford. *The Toolbox Revisited, Pathways to Degree Completion From High School Through College*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2003.

states require three credits, and others require four. Some states specify which mathematics courses must be taken, others do not. In a few states, local school boards establish graduation requirements, leading to inconsistencies from district to district.

Disparities in achievement among students who do take college-preparatory courses suggest that when such courses are available, they are not always taught to college- and career-readiness standards. This is caused in part by minimum-level graduation exams that confuse teachers about helping students become college- and career-ready. In response to high-stakes state assessments, instruction often focuses on the coverage of materials, while neglecting higher-level learning activities that provide challenging, authentic assignments. Universities and school districts place too little emphasis on training teachers and school leaders to help students meet college- and career-readiness standards.

To get more students from all groups — including economically disadvantaged students, racial/ethnic minorities, recent immigrants and students with disabilities — to meet college- and career-readiness standards, states will need to consider ways to teach a more rigorous academic core to more students. The following examples were identified during the state forums and show promise for providing more students with more challenging high school work:

- Hamilton County School District in Tennessee developed a construction geometry class aligned to state-approved geometry standards and included hands-on activities through which students apply geometry knowledge and skills to real-world tasks.
- New Mexico enacted the Indian Education Act,¹¹ which establishes a formal government-to-government relationship between the state and the 22 tribes in New Mexico to ensure equitable learning opportunities for Native American students from early childhood to graduate school age.
- The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia is seeking to increase enrollments of black males in the state's two- and four-year colleges.¹² As a part of this effort, 12 postsecondary institutions have developed programs with school districts to increase the percentage of black male students completing the college-preparatory high school curriculum.
- Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Nebraska — states with large rural populations — are using distance learning to increase high school students' access to advanced academic and quality career/technical learning opportunities.

ACTIONS STATES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAN TAKE: Help more students complete a college-preparatory academic core taught to college- and career-readiness standards —

- Set the college-preparatory academic core as the graduation requirement for all high school students, or require high schools to progress toward having 85 percent of all students complete the college-preparatory academic core. This core includes:
 - four credits of college-preparatory English with an emphasis on developing reading and writing skills to meet college- and career-readiness standards;

¹¹ New Mexico State Legislature. *Senate Bill 115, 46th Legislature, First Session: Indian Education Act*. 2003.

¹² University System of Georgia. "Board of Regents Adopts 15 Recommendations in Support of USG's African-American Male Initiative," *Press Release*. May 21, 2003.

- four credits of mathematics that include Algebra I and Algebra II, geometry and a fourth higher-level mathematics course or a specially developed mathematics course designed to prepare students for postsecondary study and careers;
- three credits of lab-based sciences; and
- three credits in college-preparatory social studies courses that emphasize reading and writing.
- Require all students to complete additional advanced-level academic courses in mathematics, science, humanities or fine arts, or a sequence of at least four courses in a broad career field leading to an employer certification, an associate’s degree, a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- Provide the extra help and instructional support that some students will need to meet grade-level standards.
- Build the capacity of high school principals and academic and career/technical teachers to align curriculum, classroom assignments and assessments to college- and career-readiness standards and to use authentic, real-world assignments that engage and motivate students to meet academic and technical standards.
- Create opportunities for students to earn academic credit through challenging career/technical courses that have curriculum and instructional materials aligned to college- and career-readiness standards, are taught by well-trained and qualified teachers, and verify mastery of academic content through external assessment.

Every Student Must Have Good Reasons to Finish High School

Raising student achievement was a common concern expressed at the state forums, but the need to raise high school graduation rates received little attention. However, high school graduation rates for these 15 states ranged from a low of 60 percent to a high of 88 percent for 2004–2005,¹³ with wide performance gaps between student groups. Ninth-grade failure (a powerful predictor of dropping out) is high in many of the 15 states. In 2005, the ninth-grade failure rate exceeded 15 percent in 10 of the 15 forum states.

A recent study found that “dropping out of high school is not a sudden act, but a gradual process of disengagement,”¹⁴ and a major reason for this disengagement is a lack of clear connections between high school work and personal goals. As occupation-specific programs have dwindled in high schools, graduation rates have subsequently declined. The national high school graduation rate declined from 75 percent in 1982 to 68 percent in 2002.¹⁵ When students have the option to enroll in career/technical programs, more of them stay in school, according to a 2003 National Assessment of Vocational

¹³ Sable, Jennifer, and A. Garofano. *Public Elementary and Secondary School Student Enrollment, High School Completions, and Staff from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005–06 (NCES 2007–352)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved July 11, 2007 — <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007352>.

¹⁴ Bridgeland, John M., J. Dilulio Jr. and K. Morison. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. Washington, D.C.: Civic Enterprises, 2006.

¹⁵ SREB. *Getting Serious About High School Graduation, A Challenge to Lead Series*. Atlanta, Ga.: Southern Regional Education Board, 2005.

Education report.¹⁶ *Education Week's Diplomas Count* report also indicates that high school career/technical programs “can reduce high school dropout rates and increase short- and medium-term earnings for students.”¹⁷

School is about preparing students for success in life, but too few options exist for meeting the needs of all groups of students. Students' learning styles vary, and career/technical education (CTE) is a useful strategy to meet diverse modes of learning. Some students have difficulty grasping mathematics concepts and do not see the need for courses such as chemistry or physics. These students need access to career/technical (CT) programs that provide challenging, real-world projects in which students can apply higher-level mathematics and science knowledge and skills. They need hands-on projects to connect their studies to the workplace. Contextual learning and integrated academics in technical courses are powerful tools for engaging students in high school studies.

The traditional career/technical program does not enroll students in specialized technical courses until the 11th or 12th grade at the earliest. In many programs, students can only take introductory career courses at the end of high school and must take specialized courses at the postsecondary level. This model may be valuable for students who are searching for a niche or are more focused on academic studies, but it does not address the needs of that large group of students who seek to enter a career immediately after high school. The needs of students who do not plan to pursue further study are lost in the rhetoric of “four-year college for all.”

The data on dropouts make it clear that introductory-level career courses during the junior and senior years of high school are not sufficiently compelling for students who do not plan to pursue further education. These students want a certification that will help them secure a good job. Students who want work-specific skills, such as those required for auto mechanics or refrigeration technicians, will not remain in school until they are 19 or 20 years old to begin studies in their occupation of choice. They need engaging technical training in high school and courses in which they can apply academic content to authentic projects related to their career fields.

Shortages of qualified workers are jeopardizing economic growth in virtually all of the 15 states, and workforce shortages will persist until many more students see relevancy in their education. Unfortunately, few state policies and initiatives address high school completion and its impact on workforce development. If states expect more students to finish high school prepared for advancement in college and the workplace, they will need a portfolio of strategies that encourage students to complete a rigorous academic core and finish high school; pique students' interest in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations; and offer programs of study important to the local and state labor needs that are linked to postsecondary education.

Several states have targeted workforce development in specific industries tied to economic growth. For example, Texas¹⁸ is focused on developing six technology-based industry clusters — advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense, biotechnology and life sciences, information and computer technology, petroleum refining and chemical products, and energy. Hawaii plans to invest

¹⁶ Advisory Committee for the National Assessment of Vocational Education. *Report of the Advisory Committee for the National Assessment of Vocational Education*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education Office of the Under Secretary, 2003.

¹⁷ “Diplomas Count: Ready for What? Preparing Students for College, Careers, and Life After High School,” *Education Week*, 26. June 12, 2007.

¹⁸ Texas Office of the Governor. “Industry Cluster Initiative FAQ” — http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/press/initiatives/Industry_Cluster/Industry_Cluster_FAQ.

more in education for workforce development, emphasizing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to be more competitive in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁹ The following states and districts also are developing academic and career programs of study to produce a steady stream of professional, technical and skilled workers in high-growth fields:

- South Carolina and Texas each have more than 130 high schools offering a project-based, engineering curriculum from Project Lead The Way®. This program requires students to complete four years of mathematics and science and introduces them to applications of these subjects in real-world engineering problems.²⁰
- Addressing local regional economic needs, Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology and Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina have developed a career pathway in information technology. This pathway integrates rigorous academic and technical learning in an engaging manner, and more students are continuing into postsecondary studies in the field.²¹
- Oklahoma provides a pathway to an associate's or applied science two-year degree through alliances between technology centers and colleges. The goal of these alliances is to increase the number of high school career/technical students earning a college degree.²²
- Kentucky has developed state exams in 19 occupational areas, based on employers' descriptions of what students should know and be able to do to qualify for entry-level jobs.²³ Kentucky also has a goal to link every associate's degree to a recognized industry credential.
- Oklahoma, South Carolina and five other states implemented a new biomedical science curriculum in 42 high schools in fall 2007, aimed at introducing students to this broad career field and preparing them for further study.

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Prepare more students for successful high school graduation and postsecondary learning through a portfolio of strategies —

- Focus district and school leaders' attention on reducing the failure rate in grade nine. Provide an accelerated curriculum and expanded school day to help more students meet grade-level standards and commit to post-high school and career goals through a planned program of study.
- Design ninth-grade career-exploratory classes that combine career-based, authentic projects with challenging and rich academic content to help students master grade-level mathematics, science and literacy standards. Incorporate opportunities to interact with members of the local business and postsecondary education communities and to learn essential study and time management skills.

¹⁹ Governor Linda Lingle. "State of the State Address 2007" —

http://www.hawaii.gov/gov/leg/2007-session/STATE_OF_THE_STATE_ADDRESS_2007.pdf.

²⁰ Project Lead The Way® "Pathway to Engineering" — <http://www.pltw.org/curriculum/hs-engineering.html>.

²¹ League for Innovation in the Community College, College and Career Transitions Initiative. "Central Piedmont Community College: Information Technology: Project Summary" — <http://www.league.org/league/projects/ccti/projects/summary.cfm?key=cpcc>.

²² Berkenbile, Phil. "Cooperative Alliance between Career/Technical and Higher Education for Dual Credit," presented at the SREB/HSTW State Leaders' Forum, Charleston, South Carolina, November 17, 2005.

²³ Kentucky Department of Education. *2005 NGA National Education Summit on High Schools Cross-Reference — NGA Agenda to Kentucky Activities*. Version 5: March 14, 2005.

- Urge high schools and community colleges to develop partnerships for using career/technical education to enhance academic achievement, provide students with more challenging work and improve high school graduation rates. Establish the mindset in school districts, postsecondary institutions, individual schools and the business community that they all have a role in curbing the dropout problem and in improving high school completion rates. Actions may include:
 - creating a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and an employer certification option for overage ninth-graders and students who have already left school.
 - having students at risk of not completing high school take at least two high-quality career/technical courses in a high-demand, high-skill, high-wage field each year.
 - giving work-bound high school students early access to occupational-specific programs at career/technical centers and community colleges, coupled with strong academics that keep open the option for further study.
 - creating charter career/technical high schools on postsecondary campuses with laboratories and classrooms reserved during a portion of the day for high school students to pursue academic and technical studies.
- Use federal career and technical education funding²⁴ to develop seamless career-focused programs of study that connect high school and postsecondary education and contribute to local and state economic development.
- Have state education and workforce agencies establish panels to develop a curriculum framework for a series of high school courses in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career fields. Involve two- and four-year college faculty, high school teachers, school and district leaders, and employers.
- Support community and technical colleges and school districts to embed literacy, mathematics and science standards in existing career/technical courses using authentic, real-world projects.
- Create career/technical programs of study in high schools and community colleges that:
 - teach embedded academic content aligned to workplace standards.
 - provide a coherent sequence of courses in each career field.
 - include options for earning career/technical college credit while in high school.
 - link explicitly to postsecondary education and/or an industry credential.
 - include career-exploratory classes in grades nine and 10 with embedded grade-level academic content.
 - provide opportunities for students to participate in job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships.
- Support high schools in adopting proven programs of study such as the Project Lead The Way® engineering and biomedical science programs and the National Academy Foundation information technology curriculum.

²⁴ U.S. 109th Congress. *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006* (Public Law 109-270), signed into law by the President, August 12, 2006.

- Support school districts in creating technical high schools of choice that teach a college-preparatory academic core coupled with high-quality career/technical studies that prepare students for both work and further study.
- Assist low-performing high schools in adopting a comprehensive school reform model that focuses on:
 - setting high expectations for all students.
 - developing small learning communities or career academies with a rigorous academic foundation and an emphasis on broad career fields of study.
 - using project-based instruction embedded with strong academics to improve relevancy in learning.
 - fostering collaboration among academic and career/technical teachers.
 - implementing nontraditional scheduling to support extra help in grade nine for students achieving below grade level.
 - promoting parent and guardian involvement.
 - training teachers to work with struggling students and their parents and guardians.
 - assigning each student to an adviser to assist the student and the student's parents or guardians in setting goals and designing an individual graduation plan to achieve such goals.

Students Must Not Waste Time in Weak Dual Enrollment Courses

Dual enrollment holds great promise, but states lack policy for realizing its potential. In every state forum, participants touted the benefits of dual enrollment programs. They give students a jump-start on postsecondary studies and provide economic benefits to students and their families. In many states, high school students can enroll in dual credit courses at no cost or a reduced cost, and this tuition savings makes college more accessible to all groups of students.

SREB and the League learned from the forums that, while many states provide dual enrollment opportunities, most lack a statewide policy that establishes student eligibility requirements for dual credit courses and ensures that courses represent college-level work. Some states have yet to identify the readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics that students need to meet to enroll in dual credit courses. *In most states, high school students enrolling in dual credit do not have to take placement tests to demonstrate college readiness.* Unfortunately, when they enroll later as college freshmen, many still must take remedial courses in reading, writing and/or mathematics. Too often, the emphasis on dual enrollment is weighted toward credits, rather than teaching high school students to true college-level standards.

School data and comments from the state forums reveal that dual credit course models are weak when compared with the Advanced Placement model of using a common curriculum framework, assessments and extensive teacher training. *HSTW* Assessments in 2004 and 2006²⁵ revealed that students who reported earning dual credit had average mathematics and reading scores on a NAEP-aligned exam that were below the level necessary for meeting college- and career-readiness standards as defined by *HSTW*. However, students enrolled in Advanced Placement classes had average scores on the *HSTW* Assessments above the threshold level for college readiness. Forum participants had difficulty making the case that most dual credit courses were as challenging as rigorous high school college-preparatory courses.

Through the forums, SREB and the League did not find in any state a comprehensive set of policies to ensure the quality necessary for effectively preparing more students for postsecondary learning. However, the forums did reveal the following elements of effective policies and practices for dual credit courses:

- Texas requires school districts to provide students opportunities to earn the equivalent of 12 hours of college credit through dual credit and concurrent enrollment courses as well as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses.²⁶
- South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 requires the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education to address articulation agreements between school districts and public institutions of higher education. Agreement must provide seamless pathways for adequately prepared high school students to continue into postsecondary learning.²⁷ The ACT also calls for an advisory group to recommend postsecondary courses to be accepted statewide for dual credit courses in high school.
- The Louisiana Board of Regents launched a pilot three-level dual enrollment program.²⁸ The "Advanced" level targets students who meet requirements for Louisiana's four-year institutions. The "Enrichment" level focuses on students who fail to meet college-readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics, enrolling them in courses designed to help them prepare for college. The "Work Skills" level targets students for dual credit in career/technical classes that provide technical training leading to industry-recognized certification in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields.
- Hawaii's Running Start program is a partnership between the Hawaii Department of Education and the University of Hawaii that enables high school juniors and seniors who are academically qualified, as measured by placement exams, to earn six college credits per semester through the University of Hawaii system.²⁹

²⁵ SREB. 2004 *High Schools That Work* Assessment; 2006 *High Schools That Work* Assessment.

²⁶ Texas Education Agency. "Briefing Book on House Bill 1 79th Texas Legislature" — <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/comm/briefingbookspecial.pdf>.

²⁷ South Carolina General Assembly 116th Session, 2005–2006. *H3155: South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act*. Passed by the General Assembly on May 19, 2005; Signed by the Governor on May 27, 2005.

²⁸ Louisiana Board of Regents. *Louisiana Dual Enrollment Pilot Program*. E-mail document from Heather Devall, March 21, 2006.

²⁹ University of Hawaii. Running Start — <http://www.hawaii.edu/runningstart/>.

- The West Virginia Community and Technical College System, in collaboration with the West Virginia Department of Education, created EDGE (Earn a Degree — Graduate Early). EDGE focuses on career/technical programs and courses. High school and postsecondary teachers have worked together to develop common competency-based course syllabi and common end-of-course technical knowledge and skills exams for EDGE-approved courses. Students who complete an EDGE course and pass the end-of-course exam earn credit toward an associate's degree.³⁰

If dual enrollment is to become more than a driving force for postsecondary enrollment revenue, states need to establish comprehensive policies that ensure students in these courses receive college-level instruction and complete college-level work.

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Realize the potential of dual enrollment —

- Establish college-readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics that students must meet to enroll in dual credit courses.
- Set minimum eligibility requirements for earning college credit while in high school and have all state postsecondary institutions apply them to both academic and career/technical dual credit courses.
- Establish the same content standards, requirements for faculty, course syllabi and end-of-course exams for dual credit academic and career/technical courses, whether taught to high school or college students.
- Develop a statewide system for the transfer of college credits earned through dual credit courses.
- Decide how funding for dual credit courses will be provided.
- Determine how dual enrollment will be monitored to ensure programs meet state standards for college-level work.

Students Must Be Held to Common College-Readiness Standards

A plethora of standards exists, but no common set prevails. Evidence from the state forums indicates that academic standards for community colleges are inconsistent from institution to institution and even from program to program. Some systems have failed to establish common standards for reading, writing and mathematics, leaving faculty members to set their own standards for entry-level college courses.

Secondary and postsecondary education systems develop standards independently of each other, leading to gaps between high school graduation requirements and college-readiness standards. Some states require high school students to pass graduation exit exams *and* end-of-course exams. In some states, students must take one or both of the college-readiness exams — the SAT and ACT — and many

³⁰ Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. *The West Virginia EDGE Initiative, Administrative Guidelines* — <http://www.wvtechprep.wvnet.edu/downloads/PDF/The%20West%20Virginia%20EDGE%20Initiative%20Guidelines%20-%20Revised.pdf>, Updated September 5, 2007. Retrieved November 1, 2007.

take placement exams — COMPASS, ASSET or ACCUPLACER — to enter a postsecondary institution. Forum participants frequently referenced cases of students performing well on the SAT or ACT, but failing to meet standards on placement exams because of misaligned curricula and assessments. They also reported a wide variation in placement scores from program to program and institution to institution. Is it any wonder that students, parents and high school faculty have difficulty defining true college readiness?

Public postsecondary systems in most states lack a common set of readiness standards for reading, writing and mathematics for high school graduates. State K–12 content standards may be adequate preparation for postsecondary studies, but this cannot be determined until two- and four-year postsecondary institutions agree on essential college-readiness knowledge and skills, nor can it be communicated to students, parents, counselors and teachers.

Eleven of the 15 states hosting forums are members of the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network to align high school graduation requirements to college-readiness standards. Their progress ranges from beginning stages to fully adopted, agreed-upon standards in reading, writing and mathematics. **In most states, four-year college and university systems are leading this process, while community colleges and career/technical education leaders are absent from the dialogue about college and career readiness.** As a consequence, readiness for college and careers is narrowly defined, using customary assessments (like ACT and SAT) and traditional academic courses, with little attention given to the relationship between college readiness and student engagement in the kind of authentic, career-connected learning experiences that lead to greater effort and persistence.

It appears that some community college leaders have little interest in the alignment process because their institutions prefer to set their own readiness standards. Yet the high remediation rates at community colleges suggest that these independently defined standards are not being adequately communicated to high schools. Community colleges and career/technical education leaders need to take an active role in setting statewide college- and career-readiness standards to ensure they are appropriate for two-year colleges and employment — and are understood by high school faculty and students.

Some states have initiated efforts to align postsecondary readiness and secondary academic standards, but the process requires substantial collaboration between higher education, state education agencies, school district leaders and the business community. Kentucky has completed the alignment process. The state identified the knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that all high school students need to succeed in further studies and careers. In 2004, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education adopted a statewide public postsecondary placement policy³¹ based on college- and career-readiness standards for reading, writing and mathematics. All public higher education institutions, including the community colleges, are required to guarantee placement in credit-bearing courses to any incoming student who is able to demonstrate specific levels on the English and mathematics portions of the ACT exam.

³¹ Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. *Statewide Public Secondary Placement Policy*. November 8, 2004.

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Adopt a single set of college- and career-readiness standards for reading, writing and mathematics —

- Charge, through legislation or executive order, a commission or existing boards or agencies to develop a set of essential standards that represent reading, writing and mathematics readiness for college and careers. The process should involve political leaders, higher education and public school leaders, career/technical educators, college professors, high school teachers, and business leaders.
- Agree on common assessments of students' readiness for college and careers using both traditional academic and employer-developed certification exams.
- Develop readiness guides for reading, writing and mathematics that:
 - describe the breadth and depth of content knowledge and skills students are expected to master for each standard.
 - provide exemplary samples of teacher assignments and classroom assessments at the level students are expected to meet.
 - include training materials to help teachers align assignments, student work and classroom assessments to college-readiness standards.
- Hold postsecondary institutions accountable for preparing middle grades and high school teachers who can incorporate readiness standards into classroom teaching and leaders who can support teachers helping students meet college- and career-readiness standards using instructional strategies that engage them in challenging and authentic assignments.
- Hold state education agencies accountable for developing the capacity of district staff, high school principals, and academic and career/technical teachers to align curricula to college- and career-readiness standards and to use authentic, real-world assignments that engage and motivate students to master standards in a variety of settings.

Students Must Not Be Deceived by the “Open Admissions” Message

The community college message is about access, not preparedness. Community and technical colleges play a valuable role as second-chance, open-admission institutions. However, open admission does not always mean admission to credit-bearing courses leading to a degree. For many students, it means taking remedial or developmental courses to become college-ready and acquire skills that should have been developed in high school. The open-admission message also needs to be clear about what students must know and be able to do to enroll in credit-bearing courses rather than remedial courses.

Many high school students, teachers, counselors and principals do not invest enough in student preparation for community college because the common perception is that anyone can enroll in community college. Community colleges do not clearly communicate to high schools what students must know and be able to do to be college-ready and eligible for credit-bearing courses. Community colleges have high remediation rates, in part, because high school faculty, students and parents are responding to an access message rather than a readiness message. At the same time, community college systems appear to have little interest in developing readiness standards.

Participants in the state forums reported that remediation rates for two-year institutions often are above 50 percent — with some as high as 80 percent — and are highest in mathematics. In many states, two-year institutions are the primary provider of remedial courses, which further contributes to their high remediation rates. While remedial education generates revenue for two-year institutions, it costs the nation \$3.7 billion a year when the expense of providing the courses and the personal income lost by students are figured into the calculation.³² Furthermore, students who take remedial courses are more likely to drop out of college before completing their degree or certificate program.

Potential loss of tuition revenue and a lack of accountability have discouraged community colleges from working with high schools to cut remediation rates. As one community college leader noted at a state forum, community colleges are entrepreneurial in spirit and respond to market needs. **Reducing the remediation rate is not a performance factor in most state accountability systems for either high schools or two-year colleges, thus it is often not a priority for either.**

Forum discussions produced examples of some best practices for reducing remediation rates and improving the effectiveness of remedial education. Still, little evidence exists across the 15 states that remedial courses improve student outcomes or that remedial courses in different institutions address the same standards. Most states lack a comprehensive state policy that fosters partnerships between community colleges, state departments of education and local school districts to implement a systematic approach to reduce remediation among recent high school graduates.

Some state postsecondary systems and institutions are taking steps to communicate both access and preparedness:

- The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System are working together to assess college readiness in the 10th grade. The goal of this assessment is to identify academically at-risk students earlier so they can use the junior and senior years to become college- and career-ready.³³
- The North Carolina Early Mathematics Placement Testing program gives high school students an early indication of their level of mathematical skills.³⁴ The state has developed a 12th-grade mathematics course to help unprepared students become ready for college mathematics³⁵ and reduce the percentage of entering college freshmen requiring remedial mathematics courses.

³² Alliance for Excellent Education. “Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation,” *Issue Brief*. August 2006.

³³ Kentucky Department of Education. *Kentucky P-16 Collaboration: A Review After Five Years*. November 2004.

³⁴ University of North Carolina System. *North Carolina Early Mathematics Placement Testing, A Guide for Parents and Guardians 2005–2006* — www.ncemtp.org/forms/pgbrochure.pdf.

³⁵ Royster, David. “North Carolina’s Approach to Using the Senior Year to Prepare Unprepared Students Mathematically for College.” Presented at the SREB/HSTW State Leaders’ Forum, Charleston, South Carolina, November 17, 2005.

- The Montana University System encourages high school juniors to take the Writing Assessment³⁶ to identify students who are unprepared for a college freshman composition course. Schools encourage teachers who have students needing more intensive instruction to take the online course, *Strategies for Improving High School Writing*.
- Southeastern Louisiana University's (SLU) effort to reduce remediation rates includes partnerships with area high schools to provide opportunities for seniors to complete developmental course work in English and mathematics while in high school. SLU's best developmental faculty train high school English and mathematics teachers on successful strategies for teaching students who do not show college readiness. The outcomes have been positive: Students' ACT scores increased an average of three points.³⁷
- SREB, through *HSTW*, joined with a set of high schools and community and technical colleges in two states — Georgia and South Carolina — to design a senior year English/reading course and a mathematics course for students failing to demonstrate college readiness at the end of grade 11. The pilot effort provided evidence that such transitional English/reading and mathematics courses — aligned to postsecondary-readiness standards and taught using research-based instructional methods through planned standards-based units of instruction — could reduce significantly the number of students having to take remedial courses.³⁸

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Clarify college preparedness and access —

- Ask community and technical colleges to assign itinerant advisers to high school campuses to explain to students and teachers the readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics and the requirements to gain immediate access to credit-bearing courses.
- Create recruiting literature that distinguishes *readiness* from *access*.
- Ask community college leaders to work with high schools to determine students' level of college readiness prior to their senior year.
- Ask state departments of education and leaders of the K–12, community college and higher education systems to collaboratively develop transitional courses in English and mathematics — with common standards, syllabi and instructional materials — for students who do not meet readiness standards. Train teachers to teach the transitional courses and require unprepared students who plan to pursue postsecondary studies to take them during the senior year.

³⁶ Montana University System. "Writing Proficiency in the Montana University System: Admissions Standards" — <http://mus.montana.edu/writingproficiency/index.htm>.

³⁷ An approach described at the Louisiana Education Forum, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February 13, 2006.

³⁸ SREB. *Consortium for Secondary School Comprehensive Reform Final Report: Key Aspects of Secondary School Reform Transitions, Curriculum Alignment*. Submitted by *High Schools That Work*, September 2007. Subaward No. 8402–53677.

Students Must Have More Support to Complete Community College

Community colleges get high marks for enrollment, but low marks for completion. In fall 2005, two-year public colleges accounted for 48 percent of total higher education enrollment in the United States.³⁹ However, only 53 percent of first-time freshmen attending two-year colleges in 2005 returned for their sophomore year,⁴⁰ compared with 76 percent at four-year institutions.⁴¹ As low as high school graduation rates are in many states, community college rates are much lower. Only 29 percent of the 2002 freshman class at two-year institutions graduated within three years,⁴² while 56 percent of the 1999 freshman class of four-year institutions graduated within six years.⁴³

Several factors affect retention and completion rates at the two-year colleges, according to state forum participants. Too many community college students have no goal for their studies. The majority of students attend school part time⁴⁴ and many work full time to support families and pay for college. Extreme effort is necessary to balance work and study.

While forum participants acknowledged the low graduation and retention rates, they often pointed out that current procedures for counting associate's degree and certificate program completion fail to give adequate credit to community colleges' accomplishments. Current procedures do not account for students who stay in school just long enough to pass an employer exam or sharpen their work skills, nor for students who complete general education requirements and transfer to a four-year college or university without applying for the associate's degree, even though they meet the requirements.

Evidence from the forums suggests that community colleges, as a group, have not made a concerted effort to improve completion rates. Still, participants identified several exemplary efforts to improve retention and increase completion rates:

- College mathematics instructors at Northeast Community College in Nebraska work with the drafting faculty to identify mathematical skills relevant to construction trades and blend these skills into mathematics and drafting courses.
- Central Community College in Nebraska reduced failure rates in freshman mathematics by integrating career-related projects into a mathematics lab.
- Six community colleges in New Mexico are aligning high school curricula with college-placement standards to help more students earn degrees or certificates.⁴⁵ This effort focuses on student groups that traditionally face significant barriers to college success.
- Fairmount State Community and Technical College in West Virginia has developed a freshman seminar to provide intensive advisement to help students to choose a major.

³⁹ U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES). *Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2005: Graduation Rates, 1999 and 2002 Cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2005: First Look*. April 2007.

⁴⁰ NCHEMS Information Center for State Higher Education Policy Making and Analysis. "Retention Rates — Full-time College Freshmen Returning Their Second Year (NCES, IPEDS) Two-year Total: 2005" — <http://www.higheredinfo.org>.

⁴¹ NCHEMS. "Retention Rates — Full-time College Freshmen Returning Their Second Year (NCES, IPEDS) Four-year Total: 2005" — <http://www.higheredinfo.org>.

⁴² NCHEMS. "Graduation Rates — Three-year Graduation Rate for Associate Students: 2005" — <http://www.higheredinfo.org>.

⁴³ NCHEMS. "Graduation Rates — Six-year Graduation Rate for Bachelor's Students: 2005" — <http://www.higheredinfo.org>.

⁴⁴ IES. *Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2005: Graduation Rates*, op. cit.

⁴⁵ New Mexico Higher Education Department. "Updates from the Secretary of Higher Education," December 11, 2006.

- The University of Alabama, in partnership with the National Center for Academic Transformation, has implemented MyMathLab, a Web-based, student-centered learning approach for pre-calculus courses. The mathematics success rates have improved from the 45- to 50-percent range to the 70- to 75-percent range.⁴⁶
- The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission discovered that 70 percent of students who fail high-attrition courses eventually withdraw from college. The commission is working with faculty to redesign these courses with more effective instructional practices and tutoring.
- Winthrop University in South Carolina sponsors a summer boot camp for incoming at-risk college freshmen. Students attend a mandatory study hall during the freshman year and meet frequently with advisers who monitor their progress. During the past five years of this effort, retention and graduation rates of participating students have been higher than the corresponding rates for other Winthrop students.

ACTIONS STATES CAN TAKE: Improve community and technical college retention and completion rates —

- Strengthen community colleges' capacity to assist academically at-risk students to acquire and apply the study skills they need to succeed. Train faculty to frequently monitor students' attendance and grades and follow up immediately with disengaged and struggling students. Expect colleges to provide the extra support students need to succeed.
- Require students to declare a major and plan a program of study during their first semester and to complete a statement of intent to transfer or obtain a career certificate, an associate's degree or another credential.
- Urge community colleges to enroll students immediately into courses that represent their chosen career field while completing remedial studies and general education requirements.
- Help community colleges develop courses that blend reading, writing and mathematics remedial studies with occupational studies to provide students both technical training and college-level academic content skills.
- Train career/technical faculty to teach the mathematics and literacy skills embedded in their curricula.
- Expand high-quality work-study programs that combine learning and training in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields.
- Broaden the definition of completion to include students who pass approved employer certification exams.

⁴⁶ Speckler, Michelle D. *Making the Grade, a Report on the Success of MyMathLab in Higher Education Math Instruction*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2005.

- Study the effectiveness of remedial or developmental courses in preparing students for success in college courses. Develop policies to bring statewide uniformity and quality to remedial and developmental studies.
- Hold community colleges accountable for increasing the percentages of students who earn an associate's degree or certificate, pass an employer-improved exam, and/or successfully transfer to a four-year college or university.

A Final Thought: Leaders Must Do Hard Things

Far too many young people today enter high school at risk of becoming “lost in transition” because our K–20 educational system has failed in its duty to build clear pathways to academic and career success. This tragic waste of human resources will not only condemn millions of adults in the next generation to unfulfilling lives marked by low-wage jobs and unrealized potential, it will threaten the economic security and social stability of our states and nation.

If this blunt statement seems overly dramatic, consider that **at least one-fourth** of the students in our public schools never finish high school, and of those who do, **nearly two-thirds** do not earn a postsecondary degree, certificate or other credential that indicates they have acquired the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the 21st-century global economy.⁴⁷

This report clearly delineates the actions necessary to avoid this bleak future. The shared responsibility for taking these actions rests on the shoulders of educators, business and political leaders, and citizens who are committed to sustaining America's 200-year history of opportunity, innovation and prosperity.

Like our students, we must learn to do hard things. We *must* break down the traditional barriers that hinder full collaboration among our educational institutions, employers and decision-makers at every level. We must build the supports and transitions students need to find their way to satisfying lives and careers. If we fail to do so, our states and our nation, like so many of our students today, will be a grave risk of being unprepared to compete and succeed in a demanding new world.

⁴⁷ *Achieve Data Profile: United States*. Washington, D.C.: Achieve, Inc., May 2007.

College and Careers Transitions Publications

These reports are based on a series of state education forums held in 2005 and 2006. Sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College and the Southern Regional Education Board with support from the U.S. Department of Education, these forums focused on the goals of the College and Career Transitions Initiative. The reports detail the outcome of the forums and suggest actions each state can take to improve students' transitions from high school to postsecondary studies and careers.

- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Alabama's Youth (07V16)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Georgia's Youth (07V14)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Hawaii's Youth (07V13)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Kentucky's Youth (05V24)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Louisiana's Youth (06V13)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Montana's Youth (07V18)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Nebraska's Youth (07V06)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For New Jersey's Youth (06V06)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For New Mexico's Youth (07V17)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For North Carolina's Youth (06V22)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Oklahoma's Youth (06V51)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For South Carolina's Youth (05V78)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Tennessee's Youth (06V07)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For Texas' Youth (07V12)
- Building Transitions from High School to College and Careers For West Virginia's Youth (05V77)

This publication is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, the League for Innovation in the Community College's College and Career Transitions Initiative (CCTI) and SREB's *High Schools That Work* (HSTW) initiative. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of any of the funding entities, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

