



Sample Issues and Questions for Analysis of State Readiness Efforts

Presence of State-Level, Statewide Commitment

1. Does the state have a comprehensive and specific action plan or agenda for implementing a college- and career-readiness initiative? How was the plan developed? Who was involved? What is the schedule?
2. Which statewide governmental entity directs the agenda and its implementation? Are all of the needed officials and interests involved?
3. Do state leaders and educators understand the initiative to be statewide, involving all public high schools and all public postsecondary institutions?
4. Is the agenda formalized and supported by state-level policy in the form of legislation, legislative oversight, governor's direction, State Board of Education (K-12), state education agency, or statewide higher education policy?
5. What is understood to be the size and nature of the readiness problem statewide? How has the size or magnitude of students' lack of readiness been determined? Do statewide academic standards and measurement process establish and address students' readiness performance levels expected by the state?

Scope of the Postsecondary Readiness Initiative

1. Is it envisioned that the same kind and level of readiness standards will be applied to all forms of postsecondary education? These forms include:
 - Baccalaureate degree study
 - Associate's degree Study (transfer and career-related)
 - Career certificate programs
 - Diploma career programs
 - On-the-job training
 - Military training
2. Or, will different kinds or levels of readiness be applied depending on the form of postsecondary education?
3. What is the empirical basis for these decisions about readiness for different forms of postsecondary education? How has performance on the readiness standards been related to the skills and knowledge needed to begin a specific kind of study after high school?

Readiness Standards

1. On which areas of skill or knowledge will the readiness standards be based?

- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Others

2. Have such statewide readiness standards been developed or identified? If so, where can they be found and do they meet the following characteristics of effective readiness standards?

- Are they learning-skill based and focused (reading, writing and math)?
- Are they specific components of the state's formally-adopted public school academic content standards that all teachers are expected to emphasize?
- How were or are the readiness standards made full and identifiable parts of the statewide public school standards?
 - By using the existing state school standards as a base and identifying those that indicate readiness?
 - By a combination of identification of existing standards and the incorporation of additional readiness standards into the official statewide school standards?
 - By identifying the readiness standards independently from the existing school standards and formally incorporating them into the school standards?

3. How have the identified standards been described both in terms of content and performance to enable all teachers to understand the specific nature and performance expectations of the readiness standards? How have the general content descriptions of the standards been further specified in performance expectations?

How will the state ensure that those involved in classroom teaching, school assessments, professional development, curriculum development, new teacher preparation, postsecondary readiness testing, and school accountability apply the same standards?

4. How will the state ensure that the readiness standards meet appropriate levels of rigor and effectiveness?

- Through direct validation of the readiness standards' effect on postsecondary success?
- Through benchmarking of the standards through national comparisons?

5. Given the current gap between the threshold performance now required for high school graduation and an appropriately effective expectation for postsecondary readiness, how will the state address the public's perception of the readiness challenge?

Will the state be able to establish an appropriately high (and needed) readiness standard when the gap between high school graduation and postsecondary readiness may increase in the short-term?

6. Has public postsecondary education statewide endorsed the readiness standards? If so, how?

- How was postsecondary education involved in identifying the readiness standards?

- If not universally involved, which segments and institutions were active?

Readiness Assessment in High School and College

1. How will all students be assessed on the specific statewide readiness standards while in high school?
2. How can these assessments be timed so that students have taken enough of the courses relevant to the specific readiness standards to have an opportunity to do well, but still have enough time remaining in high school for schools to address any shortcomings that students may have in meeting the standards?
3. Which kinds of high school tests will be used?
 - Comprehensive tests
 - End-of-course tests
 - National tests
4. How can existing statewide school tests be revised to measure the readiness standards and expectations?
5. How will the school assessments address the readiness standards associated with English III and Algebra II?
6. Can comprehensive high-stakes graduation tests also be used to measure postsecondary readiness?
7. How can the state ensure that the readiness tests specifically address the state readiness standards and expectations?
 - Additions to existing comprehensive or end-of-course tests?
 - Identification of subsets of standards and items on current tests?
 - Conversion of national tests to reflect the state readiness standards specifically?
8. How does postsecondary education currently assess the readiness of entering students? Do all institutions use one set of readiness standards and related assessments?
9. How will postsecondary education conform its placement/readiness standards and assessments to the new statewide readiness standards and school-based assessments?

State High School Accountability System

1. How can the college-readiness standards be given proper focus and priority by all high schools, teachers and students?
2. How can states encourage high schools to prepare increasingly higher percentages of students for postsecondary education, and then recognize schools that meet their goals?

3. How can the high school accountability system make college readiness a priority?

4. Will there be incentives attached to the college- and career-ready tests for students? How can the state make the test “count” in some way for students to ensure they take the test seriously?

5. Which stakes or consequences should be applied to schools that meet their college-readiness goals or improve their rates of students showing readiness for college study?

Strengthening College and Career Readiness by Adjusting Curriculum and Instruction

1. How will the college-readiness standards be infused with appropriate performance expectations at each grade in key areas of study?

2. How can all teachers in the state develop a shared sense of performance expectations in each content area? What kinds of statewide professional development programs will build this consensus on the needed levels of student performance in each academic content area?

3. How will teacher preparation programs be adjusted to ensure that all new teachers know the statewide readiness standards and how to use them in teaching?

4. How will the senior-year curriculum and instruction be revised to help students previously assessed as unready for college in reading, writing or math develop the skills they need to meet the college-readiness standards?