

SREB State College and Career Readiness Initiative



Results of the SREB National Survey on Teacher Development for College and Career Readiness

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) launched its *Strengthening Statewide College/Career Readiness Initiative (SSCRI)* to provide states with technical assistance to accelerate implementation of college- and career-readiness standards. The release of the national Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English and mathematics and the participation of most states in the CCSS Initiative have triggered activity at state and local levels. States are challenged to understand how the national standards will compare with existing state standards and how new or revised state college-readiness standards will be communicated to teachers through teacher development — both in-service and pre-service.

In fall 2009, SREB staff developed and distributed its National Survey on Teacher Development for College- and Career-Readiness Standards electronically to three education-sector professionals in each of the 50 states. This report documents the development and implementation of the survey and its findings.

The response data reveal some important general information about college readiness and some specific findings related to teacher development associated with college readiness. In addition to the findings on the next page, four key themes emerged from the survey:

- There *is* a need to define *college and career* readiness across the nation.
- Nationwide, too few states have clearly and deliberately defined college-readiness standards.
- Few states have professional development or teacher preparation modules designed specifically to communicate the college-readiness standards.
- Teacher development is a significant component in a state's effort to increase college and career readiness. Teachers should be familiar with and able to teach to college-readiness standards. Yet there is insufficient information available to guide states.

Summary Findings from SREB's National Survey on Teacher Development for College- and Career-Readiness Standards

Among the 36 states that responded:

- About half had a clearly identifiable set of college-readiness standards.
- Approximately two-thirds *did not* have clearly defined *performance levels* for college readiness.
- Three out of four states did not have training modules relating to college readiness to use for teachers' professional development and preparation.
- No state had designed professional development, teacher preparation or teacher licensure requirements specifically focused on independent college-readiness standards. However, a number of states are working toward this goal.
- There was wide-spread interest in guidelines and promising practices related to teacher development activities focused on college readiness.

Further analysis of the results and research on policies in the states revealed that nearly half of the responding states either *did not* have separate college-readiness standards *or* believe state curriculum standards and college-readiness standards should be the same (i.e., all students should strive to perform at a college-ready level). Forty percent of the states were working on implementing some version of college-readiness standards — from adopting the CCSS to using college placement tests as standards. One in 10 states had specifically defined college-readiness standards separate from state curriculum standards.

Survey Purpose and Methodology

Teacher development plays a critical role in advancing progress on readiness standards. To collect information on state-level teacher development activity related to the standards, SREB developed the National Survey on Teacher Development for College- and Career-Readiness Standards, to request information on:

- 1) the status of college- and career-readiness standards in the states;
- 2) the anticipated impact of the national Common Core State Standards on pre-service and in-service teacher education;
- 3) the nature of current and anticipated teacher development activities related to college-readiness standards;
- 4) current state policies concerning teacher development activities related to college-readiness standards; and,
- 5) potential challenges to providing teacher development on college-readiness standards.

SREB, through its *Strengthening State College/Career Readiness Initiative (SSCRI)*, is working with leadership in Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia to accelerate the agenda for college and career readiness of high school graduates. Many states are working with the American Diploma Project, the National Governors Association, the College Board and ACT Inc. in efforts such as the Common Core State Standards to improve college readiness. SREB's Strengthening Statewide College/Career Readiness Initiative focuses on a **model college- and career-readiness agenda** composed of six interrelated and essential components:

- Adoption of statewide college- and career-readiness standards.
- Assessment of state-adopted standards with qualifying scores denoting readiness.
- Modification of public school curriculum to align with college-readiness standards and application of 12th-grade transitional courses for underprepared students.
- Development of statewide teacher development plans to implement standards.
- Accountability of statewide programs to monitor student and school performance.
- Accountability of public postsecondary education for the application of the standards.

The survey supported SREB's *SSCRI* project, which aims to help states accelerate the agenda for college- and career-readiness of high school graduates and provide the six states with technical support to implement a comprehensive college- and career-readiness initiative. The survey allowed SREB to compile a wide range of information on state-level teacher development activity — a vital component of accelerating college and career readiness.

Survey questions were reviewed and field-tested for content and format by internal and external stakeholders. The survey was revised and piloted with a small group of state representatives similar to the target survey group. SREB staff collected input and finalized the online survey for distribution. Surveys were sent electronically to three individuals in each state: a senior person for curriculum and development in the state department of education, the executive director of the professional standards board (if available), and a dean of a college of education.

The response rate was 47 percent, with usable responses totaling 39 percent of the 150 surveys distributed. A total of 58 useable surveys from 36 states were received, representing all 16 states in the SREB region, seven states in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) region, 10 in the Midwest Higher Education Compact (MHEC) region, four in the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) region, and three states with no regional affiliation. The most respondents were from state Professional Standards Boards (23), followed by state Departments of Education (20) and deans of colleges of education (15). Basic descriptive statistics were calculated.



Results and Discussion

Results from the data are summarized and key points are discussed in the section below. The Appendix explains the methodology and provides more detail, with specific data on numbers and percentages of selected responses for each survey item, as well as more information on cross-tabulated results.

College- and Career-Readiness Standards

About half of the respondents believe that their states have a clearly identifiable set of college- readiness standards; however, these standards are not always clearly differentiated from existing state core curriculum standards. In a few instances, respondents within a state had conflicting answers, indicating that there is some confusion among education professionals on the presence of these standards in the state. There was more agreement on the existence of clearly defined performance levels for college readiness — about two out of three respondents said their states do not have such performance levels. The vast majority of states do not have fully developed modules that define college-readiness standards and that can be used with in-service and pre-service teacher training. A few states noted that modules currently were under development.

States face major challenges in providing teacher development on college-readiness standards. The most prominent challenge was *lack of funding*, as well as *time for teacher development activities*. Eighty-nine percent of the responders indicated that a set of guidelines with promising practices for teacher development related specifically to college-readiness standards for pre- and in-service teachers would be helpful to states.

Professional Development

About one-third of the responders from 34 states indicated having clearly identifiable college-readiness standards and teacher professional development for these standards. But a higher proportion of responders (43 percent) indicated having no readiness-focused professional development in their state. Some responders who indicated having no specific professional development for college readiness were from states with readiness standards but more were from states without them. The survey also requested information on professional development efforts the state may be planning to provide related to college-readiness standards. Thirty-six percent of the responders indicated the state had no planned professional development that was separate for college-readiness standards.

Forty-five-percent of respondents indicated the state is working on professional development for curriculum and/or college-readiness standards. Responsibility for the delivery of professional development related to college-readiness standards falls primarily to state department of education staff, followed closely by school districts, colleges and universities, professional organizations and state higher education agencies.

Of the small number of states that provide professional development, responders say that training should target all K-12 teachers and ensure that teachers are familiar with college-readiness standards, understand the level of performance expected, and know how to teach their students to attain expected college-readiness levels. About half of the all responders provided input on how to assess the effectiveness of professional development related

to college-readiness standards, citing student achievement as a factor in assessment, instructional practices, or a combination of assessment tools and instructional practices. Seventy-one percent of the responders indicated that their states do not have a policy on professional development for college-readiness standards. Only five responders indicated that their states have such a policy, but none was able to provide the documentation.

Teacher Preparation

The majority of responders (from 32 states) indicated that college-readiness standards are not required to be taught in the teacher preparation curriculum; only 15 percent said that they are required. All responders who said that college-readiness standards are part of the teacher preparation curriculum also indicated that their states do have clearly identifiable college-readiness standards.

When asked — “What are your state’s expectations for pre-service teachers relative to college-readiness standards?” — most responders indicated that this was not a priority. Of the remaining responses, the most frequent response selection was: *pre-service teachers know how to instruct students to attain college-readiness standards*. Two-thirds of the responders also indicated that there is no reference in their state’s licensure and certification requirements to college-readiness standards.

When asked which teacher education students are expected to be knowledgeable on college- and career-readiness standards, over half of the responders indicated that this is not expected. One-third indicated this is expected of all or some teacher education students. Slight more than one-third of the responders said that they anticipated changes in how college-readiness standards are covered in teacher preparation programs. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents believe their state has no policy on teacher preparation for college-readiness standards.

Conclusion

A major purpose of SREB’s national survey was to determine the existence of college- and career-readiness standards in the states. Some state responders perceive college- and career-readiness standards as no different from other core curriculum standards. Many indicated having no separate college- and career-readiness standards in their state. Some responders identified assessments as the state’s only indicator of college readiness. A few responders within the same state gave conflicting answers as to whether readiness standards exist. While great differentiation occurred, **most states have no separate, specific college- and career-readiness standards for K-12 education.** Most states also do not have clearly defined performance levels for their standards.

There are differences across states — and, possibly, within some states — as to what exactly college readiness means. **The responses across states reveal the overwhelming need to have a clear understanding nationally of what college and career readiness means.** Each state will need to identify the set of standards that it will use to indicate and measure college and career readiness, as well as the level of performance on measures or assessments of these standards. Until these are specified, teacher development for college and career readiness will not have the clarity needed to truly assist educators.



Very little activity has occurred within the states regarding teacher development on college- and career-readiness standards. Only a handful of states were offering teacher development, preparation activities or modules for clearly defined college-readiness standards.

Potential challenges to providing teacher development on college- and career-readiness standards are typical — namely, lack of funding and finding time for teacher development. However, survey results indicate that states first need to have clearly identified college- and career-readiness standards and performance levels in place for teacher development to be designed and implemented in a meaningful way.

State policies are needed to address teacher development and preparation focused on college and career readiness. Formalized policies through statute or rule will help ensure that teacher development is implemented and supported with adequate resources to be effective. It is important that teacher preparation programs include instruction on the state college- and career-readiness standards in order for future teachers to have the skills necessary to teach students to college- and career-ready levels.

The online survey helped SREB staff prepare a set of guidelines with promising practices for states on incorporating college- and career-readiness standards into teacher development programs and activities:



Teacher Development to Increase College and Career Readiness — Guidelines and Promising Practices for States.

Appendix

Detailed Summary of Survey Question Responses

General Questions

Does your state have a clearly identifiable set of college-readiness standards?

- 49 useable responses (representing 36 states)
- Yes: 53% of responses
- No: 41% of responses
- Don't know: 6% of responses
- In five states with multiple responders, one responder answered "yes" and one answered "no"
- The majority of SREB states indicated having college-readiness standards, while MHEC and NEBHE responses were evenly divided, and WICHE states predominately indicated not having these standards

Does your state have clearly defined performance levels for college readiness?

- 47 useable responses (representing 36 states)
- Yes: 29% of responses
- No: 60% of responses
- Don't know: 11% of responses
- Four states had conflicting responses (i.e., one responder said "yes" and one said "no").

How are the performance expectations specified differently for college-readiness standards than for state curriculum standards?

- This question allowed for open-ended answers, which were grouped into six different categorical responses.
- 33 useable responses from 27 states
- Eight states indicated that the state curriculum is ideologically the same as college-readiness standards.
- Seven states do not have college-readiness standards that are separate from state curriculum standards.
- Six states use a postsecondary placement/entrance test as a measure of college readiness.
- Four states are working on college-readiness standards.
- Four states specifically define college-readiness standards separate from state curriculum standards.
- One state is planning to adopt the CCSS as the college-readiness measure.
- In three states, multiple responders provided different answers, possibly indicating inconsistencies in understanding either what performance expectations are or how they are specified.

Does your state offer a fully developed module that clearly defines college-readiness standards for teachers for use during professional development and teacher preparation?

- 45 useable responses (from 36 states)
- Yes: 9% of responses



- No: 71% of responses
- Don't know: 20% of responses

What are the major challenges in your state to providing teacher development on college-readiness standards?

- Responders could select multiple responses from six alternative responses.
- 41 useable responses from 31 states
- Lack of funding was selected most frequently: 31 times
- Finding time for teachers to participate in teacher development activities for college readiness: 25 times
- Lack of clearly identifiable performance levels: 23 times
- Lack of clearly defined readiness standards: 18 times
- Lack of expertise of professional development providers: 2 times
- 14 responders provided other explanations instead of (or in addition to) choices given, and these included “don't know” to “lack of training materials” to “such training included in other training modules.”

How might your state's work with the CCSS impact teacher development?

- Responders could select multiple answers from six alternative responses.
- 43 useable responses from 34 states
- Provide teacher development activities on alignment of Common Core Standards to state curriculum standards: 30 times
- Provide teacher development activities on state adoption of CCSS: 26 times
- Provide DOE website regarding how CCSS will be used with state curriculum standards and assessments: 26 times
- Provide guidelines to teachers on how the CCSS relate to the state's college-readiness standards: 20 times
- Provide sample lesson units for engaging students in learning experiences and mastering the CCSS: 20 times
- 14 responders wrote in “Other” selections; e.g., “have not signed on to CCSS,” “don't know” and “replace existing standards with CCSS.”

Would a set of guidelines with promising practices for teacher development related specifically to college-readiness standards for pre- and in-service teachers be helpful in your state?

- 47 useable responses (from 35 states)
- Yes: 89% of responses
- No: 0
- Don't know: 11% of responses

Professional Development Questions

Has your state had professional development activities for teachers that specifically focus on college readiness?

- 42 useable responses (from 34 states)
- Yes: 31% of responses

- No: 43% of responses
- Don't know: 26% of responses
- All 13 responders who answered yes also indicated that the state has clearly identifiable college-readiness standards. Most who answered no indicated that the state does not have college-readiness standards.
- Of the 13 responders who answered yes, the majority indicated that their state has clearly defined performance levels for college-readiness standards. Of the responders who answered no, the majority indicated that the state does not have such performance levels.
- Of the 13 responders who answered yes, four indicated their states offer a fully developed module that clearly defines college-readiness standards for teachers for use during professional development or teacher preparation
- Those who responded yes list both funding and time as the major challenges for professional development.

Describe the professional development efforts your state is providing (or plans to provide soon) related to college-readiness standards

- This question allowed for open-ended answers, which were grouped into four categorical responses.
- 22 useable responses from 20 states
- Eight states have no planned professional development for college-readiness standards.
- Six states are working on professional development for curriculum standards considered the same as college-readiness standards (CRS).
- Four states have some type of professional development for CRS.
- Four states currently are developing some form of professional development for CRS.
- In two states, multiple responders provided different answers.

Who currently delivers professional development related to college-readiness standards in your state?

- 23 useable responses from 21 states (some responders selected multiple answers)
- Of the alternatives provided, state department of education staff was selected 17 times
- School districts: 15 times
- Colleges and universities: 14 times
- Professional organizations: 12 times
- State higher education agencies: 11 times.

What are your state's expectations for in-service teachers relative to college-readiness standards?

- 26 useable responses from 24 states
- Of the alternatives provided, the three most frequently selected responses were teachers are familiar with college-readiness standards, teachers understand the level of performance expected by college-readiness standards, and teachers know how to teach their students to attain expected college-readiness levels.
- An expectation selected less frequently was teachers understand the difference between college-readiness standards and other curriculum standards.



Which teachers should be targeted?

- 38 useable responses from 31 states
- The most frequently selected response was all K-12 teachers: 26 times
- All 9-12 teachers: 4 times
- Middle school teachers: 2 times
- Core content teachers of mathematics and English language arts in grades 9-1: 1 time.
- Five wrote in different answers.

If your state has college-readiness standards, or will have them soon, how will you assess effectiveness of the professional development training related to college-readiness standards?

- This question allowed for open-ended answers, which were grouped into seven categorical responses.
- 17 useable responses from 16 states
- Student achievement as the basis for assessment: 6 times
- Based on student achievement and changes in instructional practice: 3 times
- A combination of assessment tools: 3 times
- Increased graduation rates/college attendance: 2 times
- Changes in instructional practice: 1 time
- Following up with teacher post PD: 1 time
- One indicated that no assessment was planned.

Does your state have a policy on professional development for college-readiness standards?

- 42 useable responses (from 27 states)
- Yes: 12% of responses
- No: 71% of responses
- Don't know: 17% of responses
- All five who answered yes also indicated their states have a clearly identifiable set of college-readiness standards. Of the 30 who answered no, 15 indicated that the state does have a set of CRS, and 15 indicated the state did not.
- Of the five who answered yes to this question, four indicated that the state had clearly defined performance levels for CRS and one indicated that the state did not have such performance levels. The majority of those who answered no to this question indicated the state does not have clearly defined performance levels for CRS.

Teacher Preparation Questions*Does your state require that college-readiness standards be taught in the teacher preparation curriculum?*

- 42 useable responses (from 32 states)
- Yes: 15% of responses
- No: 61% of responses

- Don't know: 15% of responses
- NA: 10% of responses
- All six responders who answered yes also indicated that their state has clearly identifiable college-readiness standards. Of those who answered no, the majority indicated that the state does not have college-readiness standards.
- Of the six responders who answered yes, half indicated the state has clearly defined performance levels for college-readiness standards, and half indicated that the state did not. Of those who answered no, the majority indicated that the state does not have clearly defined performance levels for college-readiness standards.
- Of the six responders who answered yes, half indicated their state offers a fully developed module that clearly defines college-readiness standards for teachers for use during professional development. Of the responders who answered no, most indicated the state does not have a CRS module.
- Those who responded yes listed as the major challenges to professional development lack of funding and finding time for teachers to participate in professional development. Those who answered no most frequently listed the major challenges as lack of funding and lack of clearly identifiable performance levels. Less frequently mentioned as challenges were finding time and lack of clearly defined college-readiness standards.

What are your state's expectations for pre-service teachers relative to college-readiness standards?

- 41 useable responses from 32 states (Responders could select multiple answers or "all that apply.")
- NA: 20 times
- Pre-service teachers know how to instruct students to attain college-readiness standards: 18 times
- Pre-service teachers are familiar with college-readiness standards: 13 times
- Pre-service teachers understand the level of performance expected by college-readiness standards: 11 times
- Pre-service teachers understand the difference between college-readiness standards and other curriculum standards: 7 times

Is there any reference in your state's licensure or certification requirements to college-readiness standards?

- 41 useable responses (from 32 states)
- Yes: 10% of responses
- No: 66% of responses
- Don't know: 12% of responses
- N/A: 12% of responses
- All who answered yes to this question also indicated the state had a set of clearly identifiable college-readiness standards. Of those who answered no, 15 indicated that the state had CRS and 12 indicated that the state did not.
- Of those who answered yes to this question, three indicated that the state has clearly defined performance levels, and one indicated that the state did not have these. Of those who answered no to this question, the vast majority indicated the state does not have clearly defined performance levels.



Which teacher education students are expected to be knowledgeable on college- and career-readiness standards?

- 39 useable responses from 32 states
- N/A: 21 times
- All K-12 pre-service teachers: 12 times
- All 9-12 pre-service teachers: 3 times
- All pre-service teachers in secondary core content areas for mathematics and English language art: 3 times
- Six responders wrote in answers
- Half of the respondents did not identify which students in teacher education programs should be knowledgeable of readiness standards.

Does the state anticipate changes in how college-readiness standards are covered in teacher preparation programs?

- 44 useable responses (from 33 states)
- Yes: 39% of responses
- No: 10% of responses
- Don't know: 32% of responses
- N/A: 19% of responses
- Nearly one-third of the responders did not know if the state expected changes in how college-readiness standards were covered in teacher preparation programs.

Does your state have a policy on teacher preparation for college-readiness standards?

- 40 useable responses (from 32 states)
- Yes: 8% of responses
- No: 77% of responses
- Don't know: 15% of responses
- More than 90% of respondents indicated that their states do not have (or they do not know if their states have) a policy on teacher preparation for college-readiness standards.

This draft report was written by Sue Street, consultant, and Megan Root, policy associate, SREB; edited by Cheryl Blanco, vice president, Special Projects, and Alan Richard, director, Communications, SREB; designed by Lety Jones, senior designer, SREB.

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