


**COLLEGE & CAREER  
READINESS & SUCCESS Center**

at American Institutes for Research ■



● **OVERVIEW:  
STATE DEFINITIONS  
OF COLLEGE AND  
CAREER READINESS**  
SEPTEMBER 2014



**AIR**<sup>®</sup>

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH<sup>®</sup>



## Overview: State Definitions of College and Career Readiness

SEPTEMBER 2014

---

Anne Mishkind



The purpose of this overview is to highlight select common elements of state definitions of “college and career readiness.” Although preparing students for postgraduation opportunities has long been a priority for states, districts, and schools, a burgeoning global economy and ongoing labor market shifts call for renewed attention to the readiness requirements for student success in this changing postsecondary landscape. The current domestic workforce demands employees who can fill middle-and high-skills jobs that require a combination of technical and academic skills (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). However, employers struggle to find such qualified workers (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013). A definition of college and career readiness can help build an understanding of what these skills are, by highlighting the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of learners who are prepared for postsecondary success. In addition, these definitions can guide educators’ efforts to identify which students are on track to succeed in the economy of the 21st century.

Recent widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards or other similar standards in English language arts and mathematics has furthered the conversation about what prepared students look like. The adoption of these standards and the Next Generation Science Standards are designed to set higher expectations for critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills across a range of academic subjects. As these standards create a set of academic expectations for college and career readiness, definitions of college and career readiness can reinforce these goals and set similar expectations in other areas of student performance. In addition, definitions can play an essential role in guiding states’ efforts to achieve their visions for college and career readiness to ensure that students receive the multidimensional preparation necessary for success in the global economy.

## Two Types of Definitions

To date, 36 states and the District of Columbia have definitions of college and career readiness.<sup>1</sup>

The College and Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) Center’s analysis breaks down these 37 definitions to examine the components with potential impact on college and career readiness.

In 33 of the 37 states with definitions, a single definition is used to describe both college readiness and career readiness. Examples from

---

<sup>1</sup> This information was gathered from state documents, state websites, and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility requests. In the text that follows, D.C. will be included in the state definition count, bringing it to 37.

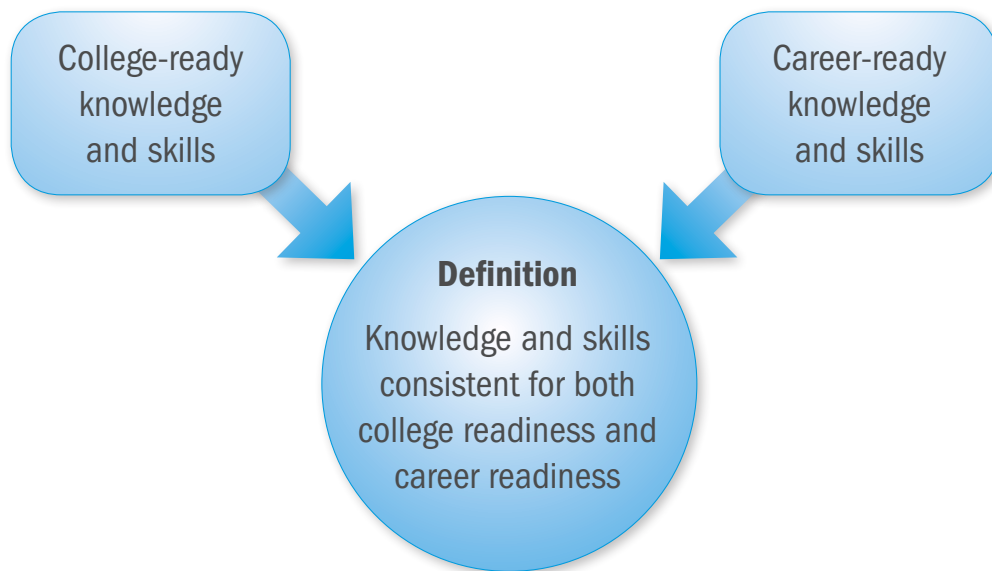
**How can a college and career readiness definition be used? Example from the Oregon Education Investment Board (2014, p. 132):**

**Strategic planning at local, regional, and state levels to address achievement gaps and increase college readiness**

- Communications planning
- Student, family, and community awareness and engagement
- Cross-sector vertical and horizontal educational alignment
- High school reform and 12th-grade redesign
- Grades 11–14 model
- Postsecondary placement and developmental education reform
- Assessment
- Data collection and analysis

two states shed light on states' views on the interconnectedness of readiness to succeed in both college and careers. The Oregon Investment Education Board reports that having one definition for both terms “helps to break down the ‘silos’ in which education and workforce sectors often operate,” adding “significant research has shown that although the knowledge, skills, and applications of learning required for success in particular fields and programs of study vary, *the overarching skills and strategies required for students of all ages entering colleges and careers are consistent*” (Oregon Investment Education Board, 2014).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, states such as New Hampshire have a single, shared definition of college and career readiness that differentiates between college readiness and career readiness, while emphasizing the overlap in knowledge and skills necessary for success in each area. New Hampshire’s ESEA flexibility request (2013a) states, “Evidence and experience indicate that the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and career are greatly similar, and that all graduates will need some form of postsecondary education or training to succeed during their careers.”

In the four states that define college readiness and career readiness separately, most have developed a definition for college or career readiness rather than both. For example, Nebraska has adopted a definition of career readiness, though included in it is mention of readiness for a “college career” and “for life.” The definition states, “A career ready person capitalizes on personal strengths, talents, education and experiences to bring value to the workplace and the community through his/her performance, skill, diligence, ethics and responsible behavior... When students are career ready, they are prepared for the next step in their lives—whether that means getting their first job or beginning their college ‘career’ (which eventually leads to the workplace as well)! Being career ready also means being ready for life” (Nebraska Department of Education, 2009).



---

<sup>2</sup> Emphasis added.

## Characteristics of Definitions

In its review of state definitions of college and career readiness, the CCRS Center identified a subset of actionable definitions. These definitions are considered actionable because they are grounded in concrete skills that students must master to be considered college and/or career ready in that state and enable improvement or intervention when outlined expectations are not met. For example, districts can use these definitions as guidance for developing and identifying measures. Once measures are developed, they can then look at patterns when particular student groups do not meet the definition-based benchmarks or outcomes and determine districtwide which educational supports to implement. By providing a source of expectations on which districts and schools can develop measures and interventions, actionable definitions can provide foundational information akin to academic standards.

Twenty-one states' definitions of "college and career readiness" mention concrete knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students must demonstrate mastery of to be prepared for postsecondary success. These skills fit into six categories, and more than half of the 21 states include at least four of the following six actionable categories.

### ► Academic knowledge

Nineteen states require some form of academic content knowledge for students to be considered college and career ready. Nine definitions include specific mention of English, mathematics, or both, and two call for knowledge in "core" subjects. For example, New Jersey's definition states, "College and career readiness refers to the content, knowledge and skills that high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics..." (New Jersey Department of Education, 2012), while in Illinois students should be "prepared to take credit-bearing postsecondary courses in core subject areas" (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

### ► Critical thinking and/or problem solving

Fourteen states' definitions require students to demonstrate critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills to be deemed college and career ready. In Oregon, for example, this means a college and career ready student:

- Reasons, researches, analyzes logically in order to investigate topics, and to evaluate, integrate, and present ideas and information...
- Evaluates and/or applies prior knowledge of content and situations, including cultural understanding, to support comprehension...
- Employs effective speaking and active listening strategies for a range of purposes, audiences, and contexts
- Distinguishes between opinions, interpretations, and facts
- Uses technology to access and evaluate the reliability, credibility, and utility of information and is able to produce and/or present information
- Locates, analyzes, and critiques perceptions, information, ideas, arguments, and/or themes in a variety of text

- Produces clear, effective, and accurate writing grounded in textual evidence for a range of purposes, genres, and audiences
- Constructs clear and precise arguments to support their reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others
- Explains and applies mathematical concepts, carrying out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency in a variety of settings
- Solves a range of complex problems in pure and applied mathematics
- Makes productive use of knowledge and problem solving strategies
- Analyzes complex, real-world scenarios (Oregon Education Investment Board, 2014)

▶ **Social and emotional learning, collaboration, and/or communication**

Fourteen states' definitions require students to demonstrate collaboration, communication, and/or social and emotional learning skills. Twelve of these 14 also require critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills. Delaware's definition states, "Students will graduate with... the behaviors and skills with which to apply their knowledge, and the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively. Each student should be an independent learner, and have respect for a diverse society and a commitment to responsible citizenship" (Center on Education Policy, 2013).

▶ **Grit/resilience/perseverance**

Sometimes called "readiness behaviors," grit, resilience, and/or perseverance are included in eight definitions of college and career readiness.<sup>3</sup> For example, among other knowledge, skills, and behaviors, Ohio's definition emphasizes "the acquisition of readiness behaviors such as goal-setting, persistence, and resourcefulness" (U.S. Department of Education, 2013b).

▶ **Citizenship and/or community involvement**

Citizenship is included in readiness definitions in eight states. To highlight its importance, Oklahoma has renamed its definition "College, Career, and Citizen Ready" (C3 for short) and states "citizen ready [students] will know something about our government and the history of our nation" (State of Oklahoma, 2012). The other seven states include citizenship within the context of what it means to be prepared for postsecondary education and workforce training. For example, Delaware's definition says, "Each student should be an independent learner, and have respect for a diverse society and a commitment to responsible citizenship"(Center on Education Policy, 2013). Maine's definition states, "The goal for learners is to graduate from high school ready to enter into post-secondary level coursework (without remediation) or begin a career track in their chosen field, and to enter into civic life" (Maine Department of Education, 2013).

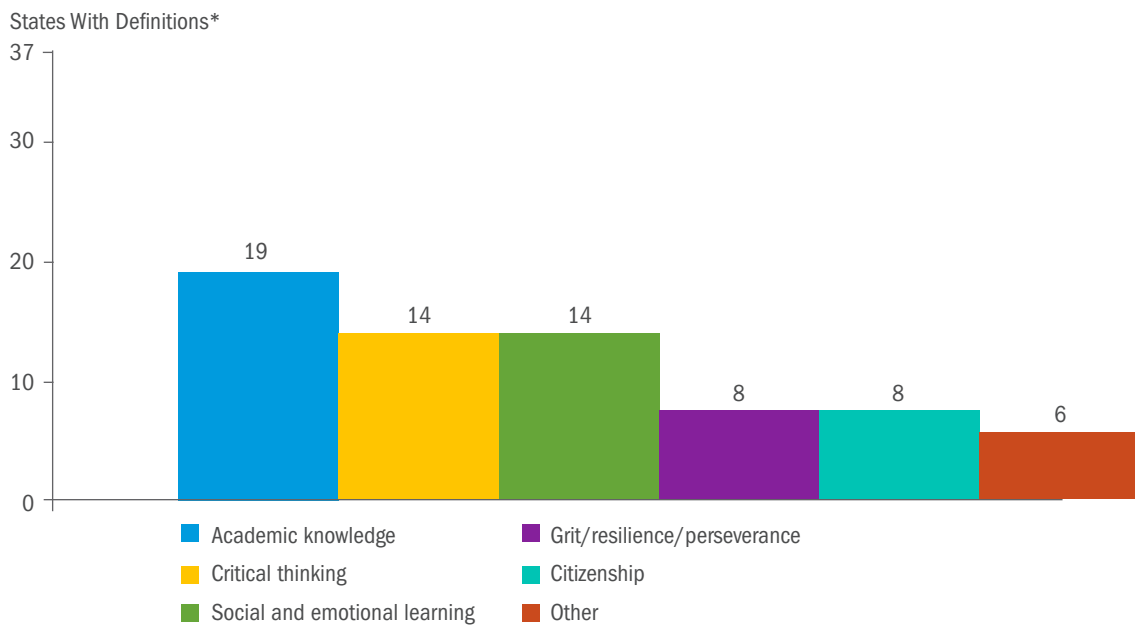
---

<sup>3</sup> The term "grit" was first used in an educational context by Angela Duckworth and colleagues (2007). The concept of resilience or perseverance has long sparked debate about the teachability of this important trait.



► **Other additional activities**

Only six of 37 states mention an actionable item outside of the five categories above. Of these six states, two include knowledge of technology, three include lifelong learning, and one (Hawaii) highlights responsibility to environment and family—past, present, and future generations. To be considered college and career ready in Hawaii, among other articulated knowledge, skills, and dispositions, students also must have “[b]uilt a strong foundation of identity through an ongoing process of wayfinding to engage in local, national, and global contexts.” Wayfinding in this context means that “students are able to identify their *kuleana*<sup>4</sup> and work hard to fulfill these responsibilities to their families, *‘āina*,<sup>5</sup> community, and future and past generations. Students know what makes their communities unique and become more involved through opportunities such as volunteer service, ecological stewardship, and civic engagement. Students understand and can comfortably interface with diverse perspectives, cultures, and worldviews to flourish in and sustain local and global communities” (Hawaii P–20 Partnerships for Education, 2013).



\*Includes D.C.

<sup>4</sup> Kuleana” is the value of responsibility. It drives self-motivation and self-reliance, for the desire to act comes from accepting our responsibility with deliberance and with diligence. Responsibility seeks opportunity.

<sup>5</sup> “Aina” means earth or land.

## Conclusion

A review of state college and career readiness definitions yields insight into state priorities and nationwide trends. State definitions included in this review reflect the recognition that readiness for college and careers is multifaceted, encompassing academic readiness, as well as knowledge, abilities, and dispositions that impact academic achievement. Research on this latter group is still emerging and, in some instances, is controversial as we have yet to conclusively determine the impact that instruction and educational supports can have on the development of these lifelong learning skills. What is clear is that the world economy has changed and educational shifts are necessary if the nation's students are to be competitive in this new environment. States are taking on this challenge by exploring more broadly what it means to be ready for college and careers.

## Appendix. College and Career Readiness: Actionable State Definitions

State	Definition
Alabama	<p>The Alabama Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request.</p> <p>“Being college and career ready means that a high school graduate has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to either (1) qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses without the need for remedial coursework, or (2) qualify for and succeed in the postsecondary job training and/or education necessary for their chosen career (i.e., technical/vocational program, community college, apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training)” (Bice, Parris, Maddox, Hannah, &amp; Thacker, 2012).</p>
Arizona	<p>Arizona has adopted a definition of college and career readiness as follows:</p> <p><b>“College ready: Graduating student</b> Is prepared for any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to a postsecondary credential (i.e., a certificate, license, associate or bachelor’s degree); has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework.</p> <p><b>Career ready: Job candidate</b> Qualifies for a job that provides a family-sustaining wage and pathways to advancement and requires postsecondary training or education; is a high school graduate and has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills needed to qualify for and succeed in the postsecondary job training and/or education necessary for their chosen career (i.e., technical/vocational program, community college, apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training)” (Arizona Business &amp; Education Coalition, n.d.).</p>
Colorado	<p>The Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education have adopted a definition of college and career readiness and made it available through publication to the general public.</p> <p>“Postsecondary and workforce readiness’ describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy.</p> <p>To be designated as postsecondary and workforce ready, secondary students shall demonstrate that the following content knowledge and learning and behavior skills have been achieved without the need for remedial instruction or training. This demonstration includes the completion of increasingly challenging, engaging, and coherent academic work and experiences, and the achievement of proficiency shown by a body of evidence including postsecondary and workforce readiness assessments and other relevant materials that document a student’s postsecondary and workforce readiness” (Colorado State Board of Education &amp; Colorado Commission on Higher Education, 2009).</p>

State	Definition
<b>Connecticut</b>	<p>Connecticut has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in the state's ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>The state has endorsed the Association for Career and Technical Education and National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium definition of college and career readiness, which states that readiness “involves three major skill areas: core academic skills and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; employability skills (such as critical thinking and responsibility) that are essential in any career area; and technical, job-specific skills related to a specific career pathway. These skills have been emphasized across numerous pieces of research and allow students to enter true career pathways that offer family-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012a).</p>
<b>Delaware</b>	<p>The Delaware Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness as follows:</p> <p>“Each Delaware student will graduate college- and career-ready. Students will be prepared to successfully plan and pursue an education and career path aligned to their personal goals, with the ability to adapt to innovate as job demands change. Students will graduate with strong academic knowledge, the behaviors and skills with which to apply their knowledge, and the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively. Each student should be an independent learner, and have respect for a diverse society and a commitment to responsible citizenship” (Center on Education Policy, 2013).</p>
<b>Georgia</b>	<p>The Georgia Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and made it available through publication to the general public.</p> <p>College and career readiness is “the level of achievement required in order for a student to enroll in two- or four-year colleges and universities and technical colleges without remediation, fully prepared for college-level work and careers. This means that all students graduate from high school with both rigorous content knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge” (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).</p>

State	Definition
Hawaii	<p>Hawaii has adopted a definition of “college, career and community readiness,” developed by the Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education.</p> <p>“Students, who are prepared for meaningful engagement in college, career, and community, have successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Achieved proficiency in essential content knowledge;</li> <li>■ Mastered key learning skills and cognitive strategies;</li> <li>■ Acquired practical knowledge, enabling successful transitions from high school to college and career; and</li> <li>■ Built a strong foundation of identity through an ongoing process of wayfinding to engage in local, national, and global contexts.</li> </ul> <p>By ‘students,’ we mean youth enrolled in Hawai‘i’s public education system recognizing that college, career and community readiness is a lifelong process that begins with early childhood learning.</p> <p>By ‘college,’ we mean two- and four-year post-secondary institutions, trade schools, and technical schools.</p> <p>By ‘career,’ we mean a pathway of employment that provides a family-sustaining wage.</p> <p>By ‘community,’ we mean the set of interdependent relationships among physical, social and/or cultural groups linked by a shared responsibility for one another, the natural world, and local and global well-being.</p> <p>Students have the content knowledge and skills to be eligible to enroll in credit-bearing, postsecondary courses, workforce training, and/or apprenticeship programs without the need for remediation, and complete them successfully.</p> <p>Students are able to navigate through postsecondary program selection and admissions, possess the knowledge and skills to enter into and thrive in a family-sustaining career pathway, and utilize strategies to resolve problems and improve academic performance.</p> <p>Wayfinding: Students are able to identify their kuleana and work hard to fulfill these responsibilities to their families, ‘āina, community, and future and past generations.</p> <p>Students know what makes their communities unique and become more involved through opportunities such as volunteer service, ecological stewardship, and civic engagement.</p> <p>Students understand and can comfortably interface with diverse perspectives, cultures, and worldviews to flourish in and sustain local and global communities” (Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education, 2013).</p>

State	Definition
<p><b>Idaho</b></p>	<p>Idaho Professional-Technical Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and made it available through publication to the general public.</p> <p>“Content standards that define what students are expected to know and be able to do to enter and advance in college and/or their careers comprise the foundation of a program of study. Rigorous college and career readiness standards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be developed and continually validated in collaboration with secondary, postsecondary, and industry partners.</li> <li>■ Incorporate essential knowledge and skills (i.e., academic skills, communication, and problem-solving), which students must master regardless of their chosen career area or program of study.</li> <li>■ Provide the same rigorous knowledge and skills in English and mathematics that employers and colleges expect of high school graduates.</li> <li>■ Incorporate industry-recognized technical standards that are valued in the workplace.</li> <li>■ To the extent practicable, be internationally benchmarked so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy” (Idaho Professional-Technical Education, n.d.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Illinois</b></p>	<p>The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in its ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>“Although readiness includes being prepared to take credit-bearing postsecondary courses in core subject areas, Illinois’ college- and career-readiness objectives also extend to developing employability skills and opportunities for students to pursue a personalized education plan based on their academic and career interests” (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).</p>
<p><b>Maryland</b></p>	<p>Maryland has included a definition of college and career readiness in its ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>“College- and career-readiness includes mastery of rigorous content knowledge and the abilities to apply that knowledge through higher-order skills to demonstrate success in college and careers. This includes the ability to think critically and solve problems, communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and be self-directed in the learning process. More specifically, a student who is college- and career-ready should: be prepared to succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary introductory general education courses or in industry certification programs without needing remediation; be competent in the Skills for Success (SFS) (includes learning, thinking, communication, technology, and interpersonal skills.); have identified potential career goal(s) and understand the steps to achieve them; and be skilled enough in communication to seek assistance as needed, including student financial assistance” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b).</p>

State	Definition
<p><b>Massachusetts</b></p>	<p>The Massachusetts Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.</p> <p>“Massachusetts students who are college and career ready will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary to successfully complete entry-level, credit-bearing college courses, participate in certificate or workplace training programs, and enter economically viable career pathways. In order to meet this goal, the Commonwealth has defined a set of learning competencies, intellectual capacities, and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners; positive contributors to their families, workplaces, and communities; and successfully engaged citizens of a global 21st century. Beyond achieving college and career ready levels of competence in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics, all high school students should develop a foundation in the academic disciplines identified in the MassCore course of study: (1) build competencies for workplace readiness as articulated in the <i>Integrating College and Career</i> Task Force Report, and (2) focus on applying academic strategies to problem solving in diverse professional and life contexts, appropriate to individual student goals. Massachusetts will use its 2011 curriculum frameworks, which include the Common Core State Standards, as the basis for an educational program that provides students with the academic knowledge, skills and experience.</p> <p><b>Learning Competencies:</b></p> <p>College and career ready students in English Language Arts/Literacy will be academically prepared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Read and comprehend a range of sufficiently complex texts independently</li> <li>■ Write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources</li> <li>■ Build and present knowledge through research and the integration, comparison, and synthesis of ideas</li> <li>■ Use context to determine the meaning of words and phrases</li> </ul>

State	Definition
<p><b>Massachusetts</b> (continued)</p>	<p>College and career ready students in Mathematics will be academically prepared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Solve problems involving the major content with connections to the mathematical practices</li> <li>■ Solve problems involving the additional and supporting content with connections to the mathematical practices</li> <li>■ Express mathematical reasoning by constructing mathematical arguments and critiques</li> <li>■ Solve real world problems, engaging particularly in the modeling practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Work Ethic and Professionalism:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attendance and punctuality expected by the workplace</li> <li>■ Workplace appearance appropriate for position and duties</li> <li>■ Accepting direction and constructive criticism with a positive attitude and response</li> <li>■ Motivation and taking initiative, taking projects from initiation to completion</li> <li>■ Understanding workplace culture, policy, and safety, including respecting confidentiality and workplace ethics</li> <li>■ Effective communication and interpersonal skills</li> <li>■ Oral and written communication appropriate to the workplace</li> <li>■ Listening attentively and confirming understanding</li> <li>■ Interacting with co-workers, individually and in teams</li> </ul> <p>In high school, students should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation</li> <li>■ The ability to think critically, coherently, and creatively</li> <li>■ The ability to direct and evaluate their own learning, be aware of resources available to support their learning, and have the confidence to access these resources when needed</li> <li>■ Motivation, intellectual curiosity, flexibility, discipline, self-advocacy, responsibility, and reasoned beliefs” (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2013).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Michigan</b></p>	<p>The Michigan Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in its ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>“We define [college and career readiness] as student preparation that is adequate to allow a student to pass first-year technical training and first-year college courses in core areas without remediation. Our state is preparing students not just for the opportunities we know about today, but also for the economic and intellectual challenges of the future” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012c).</p>



State	Definition
<b>Missouri</b>	<p>Missouri has adopted a definition of college and career readiness as follows:</p> <p>“College and career readiness means that a high school graduate has the necessary English and mathematics knowledge and skills—including, but not limited to, reading, writing, communications, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving—either to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing two- or four- year college courses without the need for remedial coursework, or in workforce training programs for his/her chosen career that offer competitive, livable salaries above the poverty line, offer opportunities for career advancement, and are in a growing or sustainable industry” (Center on Education Policy, 2013).</p>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<p>The Nebraska Department of Education has adopted a definition of career readiness as follows:</p> <p>“A career ready person capitalizes on personal strengths, talents, education and experiences to bring value to the workplace and the community through his/her performance, skill, diligence, ethics and responsible behavior... When students are career ready, they are prepared for the next step in their lives—whether that means getting their first job or beginning their college ‘career’ (which eventually leads to the workplace as well)! Being career ready also means being ready for life” (Nebraska Department of Education, 2009).</p>

State	Definition
<p><b>New Hampshire</b></p>	<p>The New Hampshire Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in its ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>“College and career ready means that students graduate from high school prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary opportunities—whether college or career—without need for remediation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Students should graduate fully prepared to pursue the college and career options of their choice.</li> <li>■ College ready refers to the full range of programs leading to valuable, recognized degrees, including community colleges and four-year colleges.</li> <li>■ Career ready refers to employment opportunities with meaningful opportunities for advancement as well as career training programs that offer technical certification or other marketable skills.</li> <li>■ Evidence and experience indicate that the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and career are greatly similar, and that all graduates will need some form of postsecondary education or training to succeed during their careers.</li> </ul> <p>To be college and career ready, students must graduate with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to succeed. These are the kinds of deeper learning outcomes that are at the heart of being college and career ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge, skills and dispositions are mutually reinforcing, and not contradictory. That is, evidence and experience confirm that education that advances application of knowledge through skills is more likely to result in student competency of the underlying, rigorous content knowledge.</li> <li>■ The knowledge, skills and dispositions have concrete meaning and can be expressly taught, learned and measured. This will require multiple, robust measures or evaluation and assessment.</li> <li>■ This same set of knowledge, skills and dispositions is also vital for student success in terms of citizenship, in addition to college and career readiness, including the ability to contribute and succeed in our increasingly diverse, democratic, global society” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013a).</li> </ul>

State	Definition
<b>New Jersey</b>	<p>The New Jersey Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness as follows:</p> <p><i>“College and career readiness refers to the content, knowledge, and skills that high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics—including, but not limited to, reading, writing, communications, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving—to be successful in any and all future endeavors. More specifically, to be college ready “means being prepared to enter and succeed in any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to a postsecondary credential (i.e., a certificate, license, associate’s or bachelor’s degree) without the need for remedial coursework,” and being career ready means that a high school graduate possesses not only the academic skills that employees need to be successful, but also both the technical skills, i.e., those that are necessary for a specific job function, and 21st Century employability skills, i.e., interpersonal skills, creativity and innovation, work ethics and personal responsibility, global and social awareness, etc., that are necessary for a successful career”</i> (New Jersey Department of Education, 2012).</p>
<b>Ohio</b>	<p>The Ohio Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in the state’s ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p><i>“Ohio’s college- and career-ready definition is to ensure all students ‘Start Ready and Graduate Ready’ from their PreK–12 learning environment, qualified for success in a degree or credential-granting postsecondary education program, without remediation, and advanced training for a career of choice. Student readiness for college and careers includes: Content Knowledge: A deep core-content knowledge in academic and applicable technical content; 21st Century Skills: The effective use of academic and technical skills (e.g., research, problem-solving, systems thinking); Readiness Behaviors: The acquisition of readiness behaviors such as goal-setting, persistence, and resourcefulness; [and] College and Career Survival Skills: The acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to navigate successfully within the world of higher education and world of work”</i> (U.S. Department of Education, 2013b).</p>
<b>Oklahoma</b>	<p>The Oklahoma State Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and included it in its ESEA flexibility request.</p> <p>Oklahoma is implementing the College, Career and Citizen Ready (C<sup>3</sup>) plan, “which will ensure each student graduating with a diploma from an Oklahoma public school will be ready for college or career without the need for remediation and will be citizen ready, meaning they will know something about our government and the history of our nation” (State of Oklahoma, 2012).</p>

State	Definition
Oregon	<p>The Oregon Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness as follows:</p> <p>“College-and-Career-Ready Oregonians have acquired knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors that provide a starting point to enter and succeed in workplace, career training, or college courses leading to certificates or degrees.</p> <p><b>A College and Career Ready Oregonian...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reasons, researches, [and] analyzes logically in order to investigate topics, and to evaluate, integrate, and present ideas and information</li> <li>■ Exhibits the following attributes: reflection, curiosity, openness, internal motivation, persistence, resilience, and flexibility</li> <li>■ Evaluates and/or applies prior knowledge of content and situations, including cultural understanding, to support comprehension</li> <li>■ Tracks and reflects on progress toward educational and vocational goals</li> <li>■ Employs effective speaking and active listening strategies for a range of purposes, audiences, and contexts</li> <li>■ Distinguishes between opinions, interpretations, and facts</li> <li>■ Uses technology to access and evaluate the reliability, credibility, and utility of information and is able to produce and/or present information</li> <li>■ Locates, analyzes, and critiques perceptions, information, ideas, arguments, and/or themes in a variety of text</li> <li>■ Produces clear, effective, and accurate writing grounded in textual evidence for a range of purposes, genres, and audiences</li> <li>■ Constructs clear and precise arguments to support their reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others</li> <li>■ Explains and applies mathematical concepts, carrying out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency in a variety of settings</li> <li>■ Solves a range of complex problems in pure and applied mathematics</li> <li>■ Makes productive use of knowledge and problem solving strategies</li> <li>■ Analyzes complex, real-world scenarios</li> </ul>

State	Definition
<p><b>Oregon</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>A College and Career Ready Oregonian...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has positive values such as: caring, equity, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint</li> <li>■ Practices personal, time, and budget management through planning and decision-making</li> <li>■ Has a sense of support and empowerment</li> <li>■ Is able to self-advocate</li> <li>■ Engages in civic and community activities</li> <li>■ Works productively in new cultural settings</li> <li>■ Relates and responds to individuals from various cultures</li> <li>■ Works productively in teams</li> <li>■ Understands postsecondary education options, expectations, costs, and processes</li> <li>■ Understands and evaluates career options and pathways</li> <li>■ Understands workplace requirements and business cultures</li> <li>■ Has appropriate interviewing skills</li> <li>■ Is timely and reliable</li> <li>■ Has appropriate workplace behaviors and occupation-specific skills</li> <li>■ Is able to accept and use feedback</li> <li>■ Has both personal and academic integrity and is an ethical decision maker” (Oregon Education Investment Board, 2014).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Texas</b></p>	<p>The Texas Education Agency has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and made it available through publication to the general public.</p> <p>“College readiness is the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program. It should be noted, however, that the measurement of college readiness through the Algebra II and English III assessments will be only one piece of information that students, parents, and schools will have in making readiness determinations. Algebra II and English III are courses students typically take in grade 11; after students have taken these assessments and potentially met the college-readiness performance standards, they will continue to take higher-level courses (i.e., calculus and English IV) in grade 12. Students will need to continue to acquire content knowledge and perform at a high level in these courses to fully prepare for postsecondary activities” (Texas Education Agency, 2010).</p>

State	Definition
<b>West Virginia</b>	<p>The West Virginia Department of Education has adopted a definition of college and career readiness and made it available through publication to the general public.</p> <p>“College and Career Readiness means that students exit high school prepared for success in a wide range of high-quality post-secondary opportunities. Specifically, college and career readiness refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in postsecondary education and/or training that lead to gainful employment. Today’s workplace requires that all workers be lifelong learners in order to advance in their careers. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a common set of knowledge and skills that all individuals acquire to successfully transition into postsecondary education or the workplace. As individuals select specific career paths, they will then have to focus on the amount and type of additional knowledge and skills they should acquire to be successful in their chosen field. A student’s goals, desires, and interests influence the precise knowledge and skill profile necessary to be ready for success in their chosen postsecondary endeavors and the level of postsecondary education needed to accomplish a student’s individual career aspirations. All students should exit high school with a full understanding of the career opportunities available to them, the education necessary to be successful in their chosen pathway, and a plan to attain their goals” (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.).</p>

## References

- Arizona Business & Education Coalition. (n.d.). *Advancing toward college and career readiness*. Phoenix, AZ: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.azbec.org/pages/CollegeCareerReadiness1/>
- Bice, T. R., Parris, S. W., Maddox, M., Hannah, J., & Thacker, T. (2012). *College and career readiness delivery plan: A component of Plan 2020: Strategies for learners*. Montgomery, AL: Alabama Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/908/Attachment%2012%20College%20and%20Career%20Ready%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf>
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2010). *Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Retrieved from <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>
- Center on Education Policy. (2013). *How do states define career readiness?* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent\\_file.cfm?Attachment=CareerReadiness\\_RelatedReport1-HowDoStatesDefineCareerReadiness\\_10.30.13.pdf](http://www.cep-dc.org/cfcontent_file.cfm?Attachment=CareerReadiness_RelatedReport1-HowDoStatesDefineCareerReadiness_10.30.13.pdf)
- Colorado State Board of Education & Colorado Commission on Higher Education. (2009). *Postsecondary and workforce readiness description*. Denver, CO: Authors. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdedepcom/download/pdf/pwrdescription.pdf>
- Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(6), 1087.
- Georgia Department of Education. (n.d.). *Georgia's College and Career Readiness Performance Index released*. Atlanta, GA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/PressReleaseDetails.aspx?PressView=default&pid=114>
- Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education. (2013, September). *College, career and community readiness definition*. Honolulu, HI: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.p20hawaii.org/programs/college-and-career-readiness/cccr-definition/>
- Idaho Professional-Technical Education. (n.d.). *College and career readiness standards*. Boise, ID: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.pte.idaho.gov/Career\\_Guidance/Program\\_of\\_Study\\_curriculum/Framework\\_Definitions/College\\_Career\\_Ready\\_Standards.html](http://www.pte.idaho.gov/Career_Guidance/Program_of_Study_curriculum/Framework_Definitions/College_Career_Ready_Standards.html)
- Maine Department of Education. (2013). *Glossary of terms related to proficiency-based learning*. Augusta, ME: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.maine.gov/doe/cbp/glossary.html>
- Massachusetts Department of Education. (2013). *Massachusetts definition of college and career readiness*. Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education & Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Boston, MA: Authors. Retrieved from <http://www.mass.edu/library/documents/2013college&careerreadinessdefinition.pdf>

- Nebraska Department of Education. (2009). *Nebraska standards for career ready practice*. Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness. Lincoln, NE: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.education.ne.gov/NCE/documents/2012CareerReadinessBookletWEB.pdf>
- New Jersey Department of Education. (2012, April). *Final report of the New Jersey Department of Education College and Career Readiness Task Force*. Trenton, NJ: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/readiness.pdf>
- Oregon Education Investment Board. (2014). *Joint meeting with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission*. Retrieved from [http://education.oregon.gov/Documents/archive/UpdatedOEIB3\\_11\\_14.pdf](http://education.oregon.gov/Documents/archive/UpdatedOEIB3_11_14.pdf)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013). *Survey of Adult Skills*. Retrieved from [www.oecd.org/site/piaac/surveyofadultskills.htm](http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/surveyofadultskills.htm)
- State of Oklahoma. (2012, January 12). Resolutions [Web blog post]. Retrieved from <http://ok.gov/sde/newsblog/2011-12-30/resolutions>
- Texas Education Agency. (2010). *House Bill 3 transition plan: Chapter 3: The college- and career-readiness component of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End-of-Course (EOC) program*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/hb3plan/>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012a). *ESEA flexibility request: Connecticut*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ct.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012b). *ESEA flexibility request: Maryland*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/md.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012c). *ESEA flexibility request: Michigan*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/mi.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2013a). *ESEA flexibility request: New Hampshire*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/nh.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2013b). *Ohio ESEA flexibility request*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/ohamendrequest071113.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *ESEA flexibility: Illinois request resubmission, January 2014*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/secretary-letters/ilrequest42014.doc>
- West Virginia Department of Education. (n.d.). *College and career readiness*. Retrieved from <https://wvde.state.wv.us/counselors/documents/CollegeandCareerReadiness3-12-14GeneralSession.pdf>





## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS & SUCCESS Center

at American Institutes for Research ■

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007-3835  
800.634.0503

[www.ccrscenter.org](http://www.ccrscenter.org)



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

This resource is offered by the College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center), a central source of information and expertise on postsecondary success issues that does not endorse any interventions or conduct field studies. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the CCRS Center serves regional comprehensive centers in their work to build the capacity of states across the nation to effectively implement the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act related to college and career readiness. The CCRS Center is housed at American Institutes for Research (AIR) and partners with other leading education organizations such as the American Youth Policy Forum and Quill Research Associates, LLC.

*The contents of this resource were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.*

PR/Award #S283B120034

Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Education

1836b\_09/14