BOARD OF REGENTS

SUMMARY OF ITEM FOR ACTION,
INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

TOPIC: PARCC: Partnership for Readiness in College and Careers (Common Core State Standards Assessment Consortium)

COMMITTEE: Education Policy

DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING: September 21, 2011

SUMMARY: In June 2010, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released the Common Core State Standards© (CCSS) in English/Language Arts and mathematics. The stated aim of the Common Core State Standards is to define the knowledge and skills students should achieve in order to graduate from high school ready to succeed in entry- level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs—that is, with no need for remediation in college. As of July 2011, 44 states had taken up this invitation and had adopted the standards.

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Education made two awards of approximately $180 million dollars each, to two consortia to develop assessments of the CCSS: PARCC and SMARTER Balance. Each consortium represents approximately 25 states. The Maryland State Board of Education signed up with the PARCC Consortia, led by Achieve, Inc.

The purpose of the PARCC system is to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace. To reach this goal, PARCC is developing a set of formative and summative assessments and instructional interventions designed to provide valid, reliable, and timely data; provide feedback on student performance; help determine whether students are college and career ready or on track; support the needs of educators in the classroom; and provide data for accountability.

At the request of MSDE and MHEC, Maryland's public two-year and four-year institutions were asked to sign letters in support of Maryland's participation in the PARCC consortium, and those letters required a commitment to use the resulting assessments as early indicators of college readiness—students who passed the "tests" would be placed in college credit bearing courses. Chancellor Kirwan signed the letter of support for the USM institutions, with the caveat that only if higher education faculty had a significant role in developing the assessments and readiness criteria, would USM institutions agree to use the resulting scores as indicators of students ability to be successful in the first credit-bearing college mathematics and English courses (i.e. placement in non-remedial courses).

The purpose of the presentation today is to introduce the members of the BOR EPC to the agenda item is to provide initial grounding in both the Common Core State Standards and the important consequences of this national policy initiative for higher education in Maryland.

ALTERNATIVE(S): This item is for information only.

FISCAL IMPACT: This item is for information only.

CHANCELLOR'S RECOMMENDATION: This item is for information only.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Received as information. DATE: September 21, 2011

BOARD ACTION: DATE:

SUBMITTED BY: Irwin L. Goldstein (301) 445-1992 irv@usmd.edu

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

May 27, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

As the Chancellor of the University System of Maryland (USM), I would like to express strong support for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career and pledge to work collaboratively with our K-12 state counterparts and our higher education colleagues across the partnership states to develop high school assessments that can serve as an indicator of readiness for non-remedial, credit-bearing, college-level coursework in mathematics and English. We value the promise of the new Common Core State Standards to improve college readiness rates of direct matriculation high school students and the vision outlined for developing a common college-ready assessment.

We further recognize that the diverse missions of postsecondary systems and institutions in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career will determine the specific ways in which this new assessment will be used by those systems and institutions. Matters of admission and specific course placement are separate issues from the determination of readiness for the threshold level of credit-bearing college work. We are, however, prepared to participate in the design, development, and standard-setting process of the Partnership with the goal of using the new measure(s) as one part of our course placement system once the Partnership has set the college readiness standards for the assessment(s).

USM is committed to working with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career to develop the appropriate assessment(s) and identify performance levels that could be used to help students know in advance of their high school graduation if they are prepared to enter non-remedial college courses in English and mathematics. To do this most effectively and to ensure the broadest acceptance of the alignment, higher education faculty in the disciplines must have primary authority for determining the standards of college-ready performance.

With this understanding in place, USM will work with the Partnership to ensure that students who score college-ready on its end of high school assessments are eligible to enter credit-bearing coursework without remediation at this institution.

We are prepared to participate with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career to work toward accomplishing the following goals:

- A collaborative and comprehensive effort by K-12 and higher education faculty and leaders across the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career on test design and development.
- A coordinated effort across the consortium to design and participate in validity studies and comparisons with current placement instruments to ensure that the assessments developed are an accurate measure of readiness for entry into the first credit-bearing courses.
- A thorough, research-based process to establish common achievement standards on the new assessments that signal students' preparation for entry-level, credit-bearing coursework.
- Use of the assessment in all partnership states' public postsecondary institutions as an indicator of students' readiness for placement in non-remedial, credit-bearing college-level coursework.

We strongly support further work to establish a better aligned P-20 education system that will help all Maryland's students graduate from high school ready for college and careers, by providing students, their parents, and their teachers with clear and consistent information about what it means and what it takes to be ready for college. We further commit ourselves to work collaboratively with our K-12 counterparts to improve associated student outreach, intervention, and academic preparation programs to ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully transition into our postsecondary institutions.

Thank you for providing the students in our state with the opportunity to benefit from such an important collaboration.

Signature(s) for the State of Maryland:	
Authorized State Signature: 	
Name: James E. Lyons, Sr. Ph.D.	Date: 6/10/2010
Title: Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission	
Authorized State Signature: 	
Name: William E. Kirwan	Date: May 27, 2010
Title: Chancellor, University System of Maryland	

Race to the Top Update:

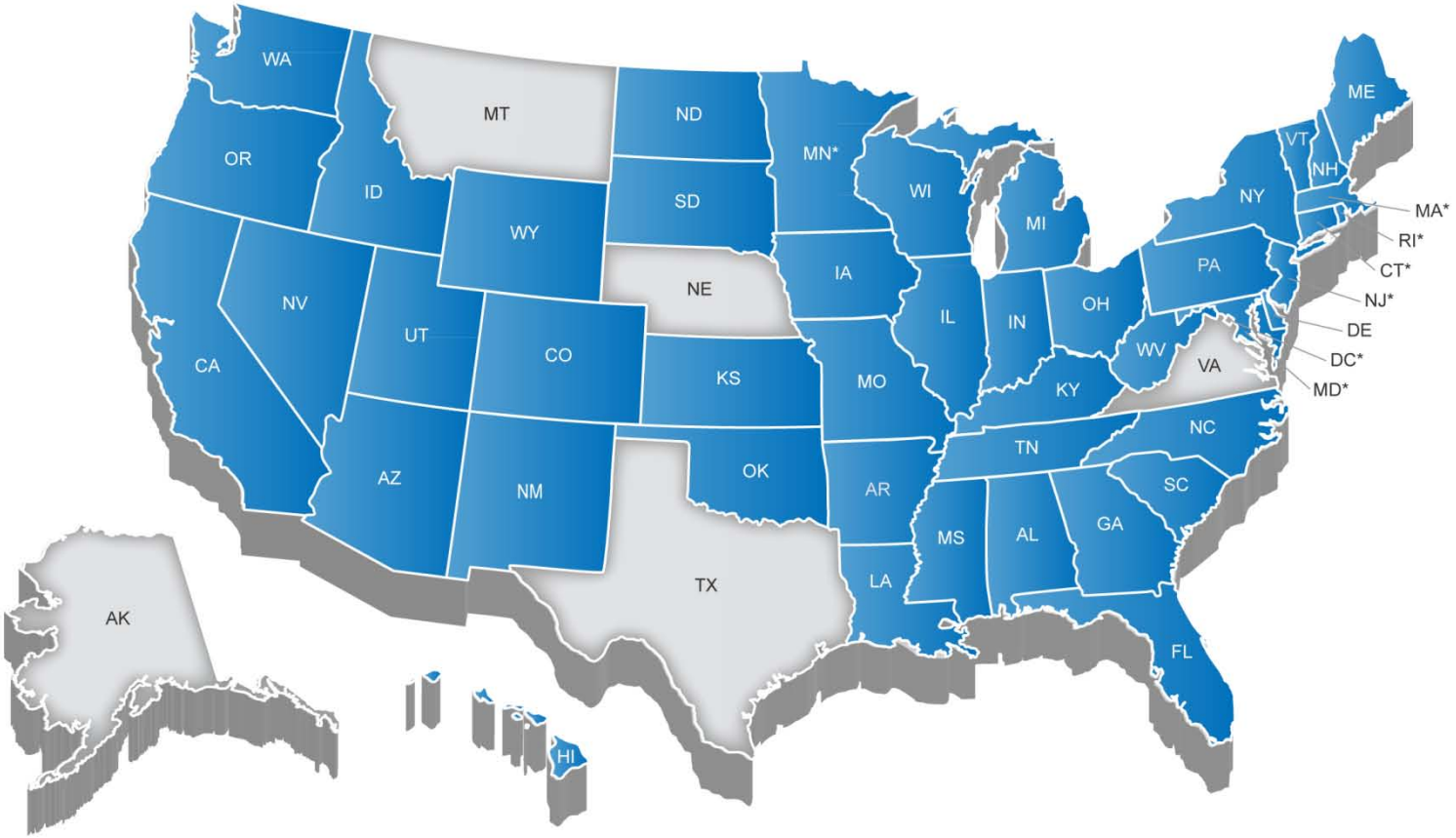
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Presented to University of Maryland Board of Regents Education Policy Committee September 21, 2011

A Strong Foundation: The Common Core State Standards

- Nearly every state in the nation is working individually and collectively to improve its academic standards and assessments to ensure students graduate with the knowledge and skills most demanded by college and careers
- The Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics were created by educators around the nation

45 States + DC Have Adopted the Common Core State Standards



***Minnesota adopted the CCSS in ELA/literacy only**

Key Advances of the Common Core

MATHEMATICS
Focus, coherence and clarity: emphasis on key topics at each grade level and coherent progression across grades
Procedural fluency and understanding of concepts and skills
Promote rigor through mathematical proficiencies that foster reasoning and understanding across discipline
High school standards organized by conceptual categories

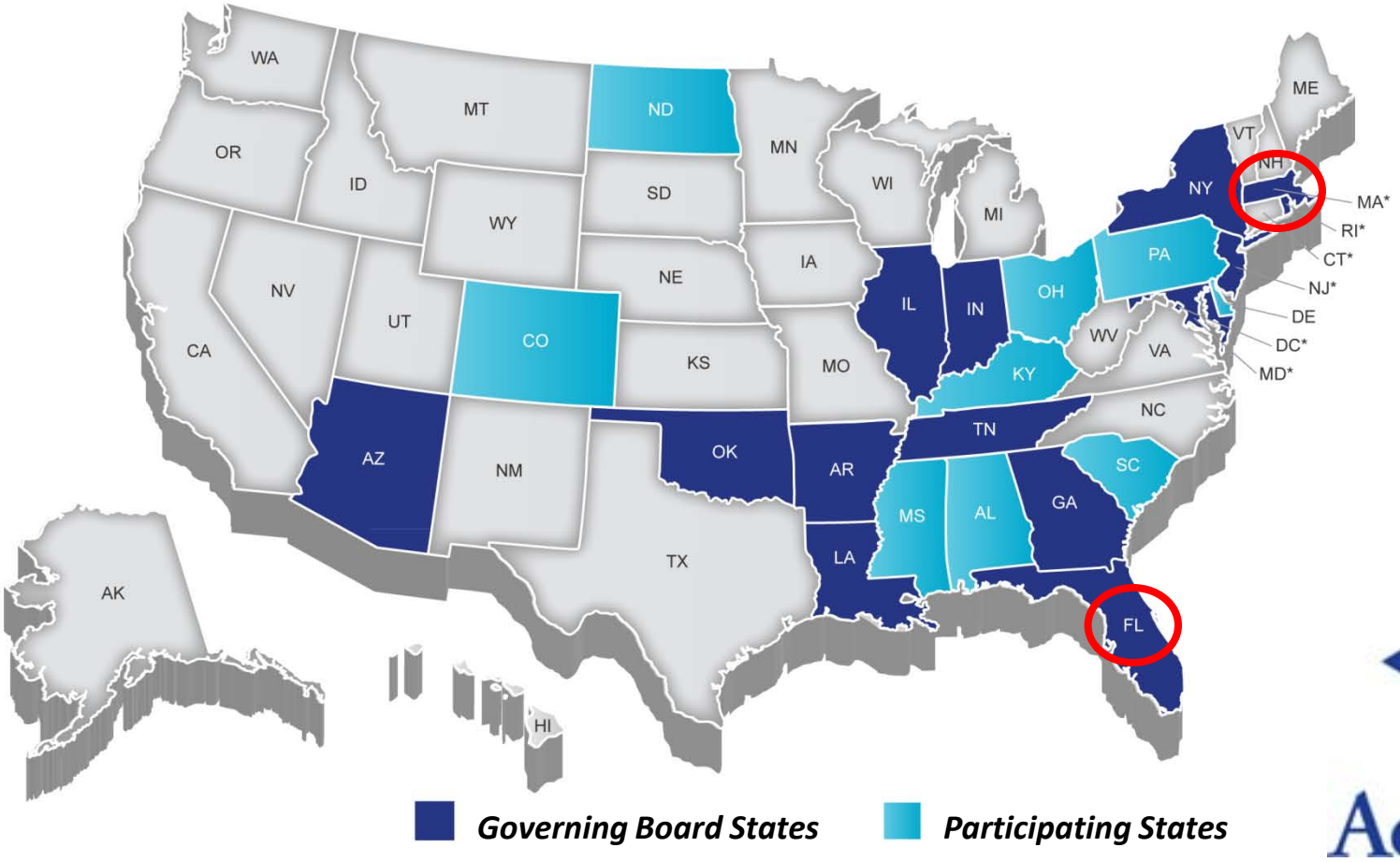
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY
Balance of literature and informational texts; focus on text complexity
Emphasis on argument, informative/ explanatory writing, and research
Speaking and listening skills
Literacy standards for history, science and technical subjects

ANCHORED IN COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

What's Next?
Common Assessments

- **Common Core State Standards** are critical, but they are just the first step
- **Common assessments** aligned to the Common Core will help ensure the new standards truly reach every classroom

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)



Achieve

K-12 and Postsecondary Roles in PARCC

K-12 Educators & Education Leaders

- Educators will be involved throughout the development of the PARCC assessments and related instructional and reporting tools to help ensure the system provides the information and resources educators most need

Postsecondary Faculty & Leaders

- More than 200 institutions and systems covering hundreds of campuses across PARCC states have committed to help develop the high school assessments and set the college-ready cut score that will be used to place incoming freshmen

The PARCC Goals

1. Create high-quality assessments
2. Build a pathway to college and career readiness for ***all*** students
3. Support educators in the classroom
4. Develop 21st century, technology-based assessments
5. Advance accountability at all levels

Goal #1: Create High Quality Assessments

Priority Purposes of PARCC Assessments:

1. Determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track
2. Assess the full range of the Common Core Standards, including standards that are difficult to measure
3. Measure the full range of student performance, including the performance of high and low performing students
4. Provide data *during* the academic year to inform instruction, interventions and professional development
5. Provide data for accountability, including measures of growth
6. Incorporate innovative approaches throughout the system

Goal #1: Create High Quality Assessments

- To address these priority purposes, PARCC will develop an assessment system comprised of **four components**. Each component will be computer-delivered and will leverage technology to incorporate innovations.
  - Two ***summative assessment components*** designed to
    - Make "college- and career-readiness" and "on-track" determinations
    - Measure the full range of standards and full performance continuum
    - Provide data for accountability uses, including measures of growth
  - Two ***formative assessment components*** designed to
    - Generate *timely* information for informing instruction, interventions, and professional development during the school year
    - In ELA/literacy, a *third* formative component will assess students' speaking and listening skills

Goal #1: Create High Quality Assessments

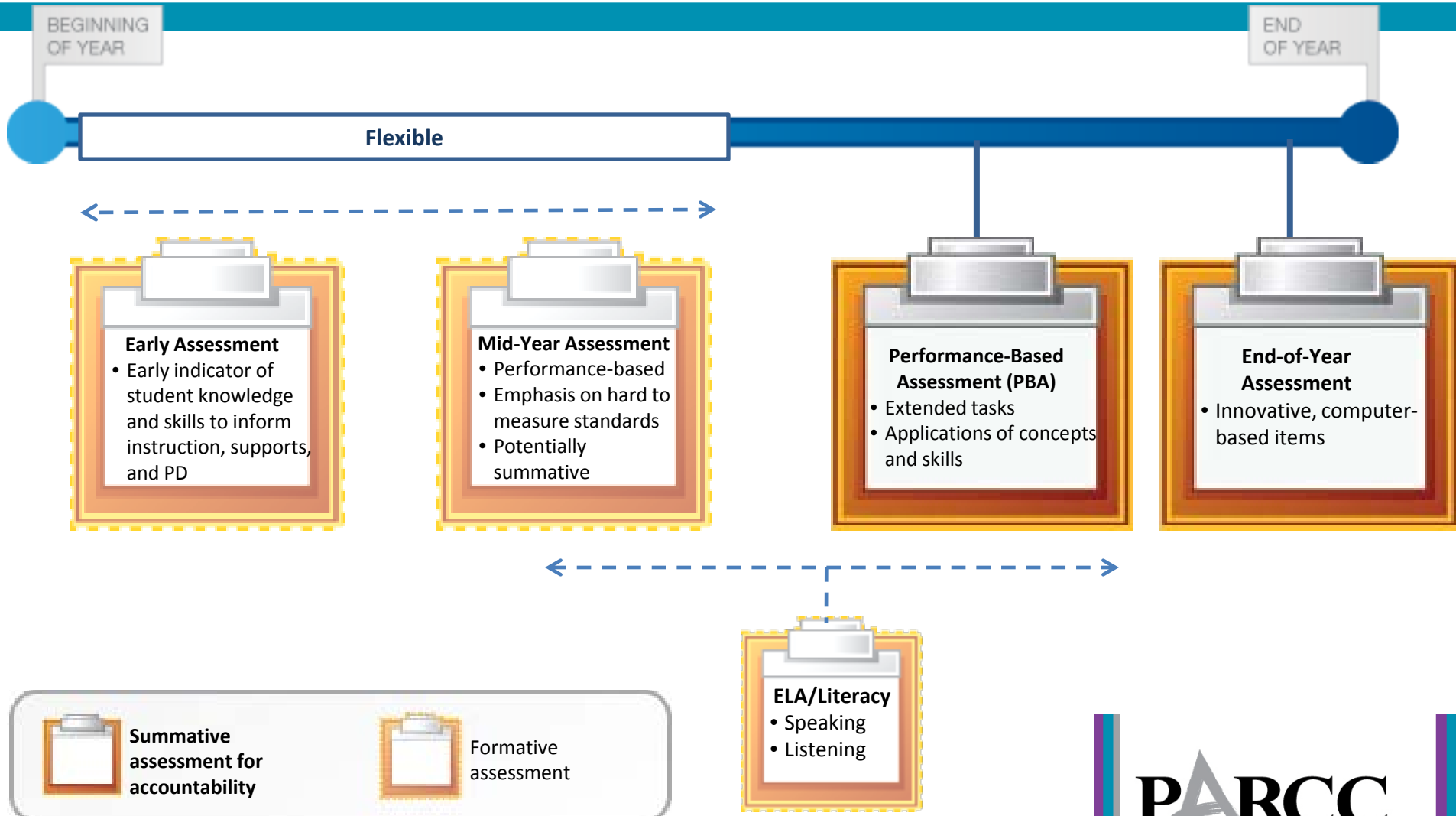
- Summative Assessment Components:
  - **Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)** administered as close to the end of the school year as possible. The ELA/literacy PBA will focus on writing effectively when analyzing text. The mathematics PBA will focus on applying skills, concepts, and understandings to solve multi-step problems requiring abstract reasoning, precision, perseverance, and strategic use of tools
  - **End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)** administered after approx. 90% of the school year. The ELA/literacy EOY will focus on reading comprehension. The math EOY will be comprised of innovative, machine-scorable items
- Formative Assessment Components:
  - **Early Assessment** designed to be an indicator of student knowledge and skills so that instruction, supports and professional development can be tailored to meet student needs
  - **Mid-Year Assessment** comprised of performance-based items and tasks, with an emphasis on hard-to-measure standards. After study, individual states may consider including as a summative component

Goal #1: Create High Quality Assessments

The PARCC assessments will allow us to make important claims about students' knowledge and skills.

- In English Language Arts/Literacy, whether students:
  - Can Read and Comprehend Complex Literary and Informational Text
  - Can Write Effectively When Analyzing Text
  - Have attained overall proficiency in ELA/literacy
- In Mathematics, whether students:
  - Have mastered knowledge and skills in highlighted domains (e.g. domain of highest importance for a particular grade level – number/ fractions in grade 4; proportional reasoning and ratios in grade 6)
  - Have attained overall proficiency in mathematics

Goal #1: Create High-Quality Assessments



PARCC
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Goal #2: Build a Pathway to College and Career Readiness for All Students

K-2 formative assessment being developed, aligned to the PARCC system

Timely student achievement data showing students, parents and educators whether ALL students are on-track to college and career readiness

College readiness score to identify who is ready for college-level coursework

Targeted interventions & supports:
- 12th-grade bridge courses
- PD for educators

K-2 → 3-8 → High School → SUCCESS IN FIRST-YEAR, CREDIT-BEARING, POSTSECONDARY COURSEWORK

ONGOING STUDENT SUPPORTS/INTERVENTIONS

Goal #3: Support Educators in the Classroom

INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES

K-12 Educator

TIMELY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

EDUCATOR-LED TRAINING TO SUPPORT "PEER-TO-PEER" TRAINING

Goal #4: Develop 21st Century, Technology-Based Assessments

PARCC's assessment will be computer-based and leverage technology in a range of ways:

- Item Development
  - Develop innovative tasks that engage students in the assessment process
- Administration
  - Reduce paperwork, increase security, reduce shipping/receiving & storage
  - Increase access to and provision of accommodations for SWDs and ELLs
- Scoring
  - Make scoring more efficient by combining human and automated approaches
- Reporting
  - Produce *timely* reports of students performance throughout the year to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development

Goal #5: Advance Accountability at All Levels

- PARCC assessments will be purposefully designed to generate valid, reliable and timely data, including measures of *growth,* for various accountability uses including:
  - School and district effectiveness
  - Educator effectiveness
  - Student placement into college, credit-bearing courses
  - Comparisons with other state and international benchmarks
- PARCC assessments will be designed for other accountability uses as states deem appropriate

Implementation, Instructional Support & Next Steps

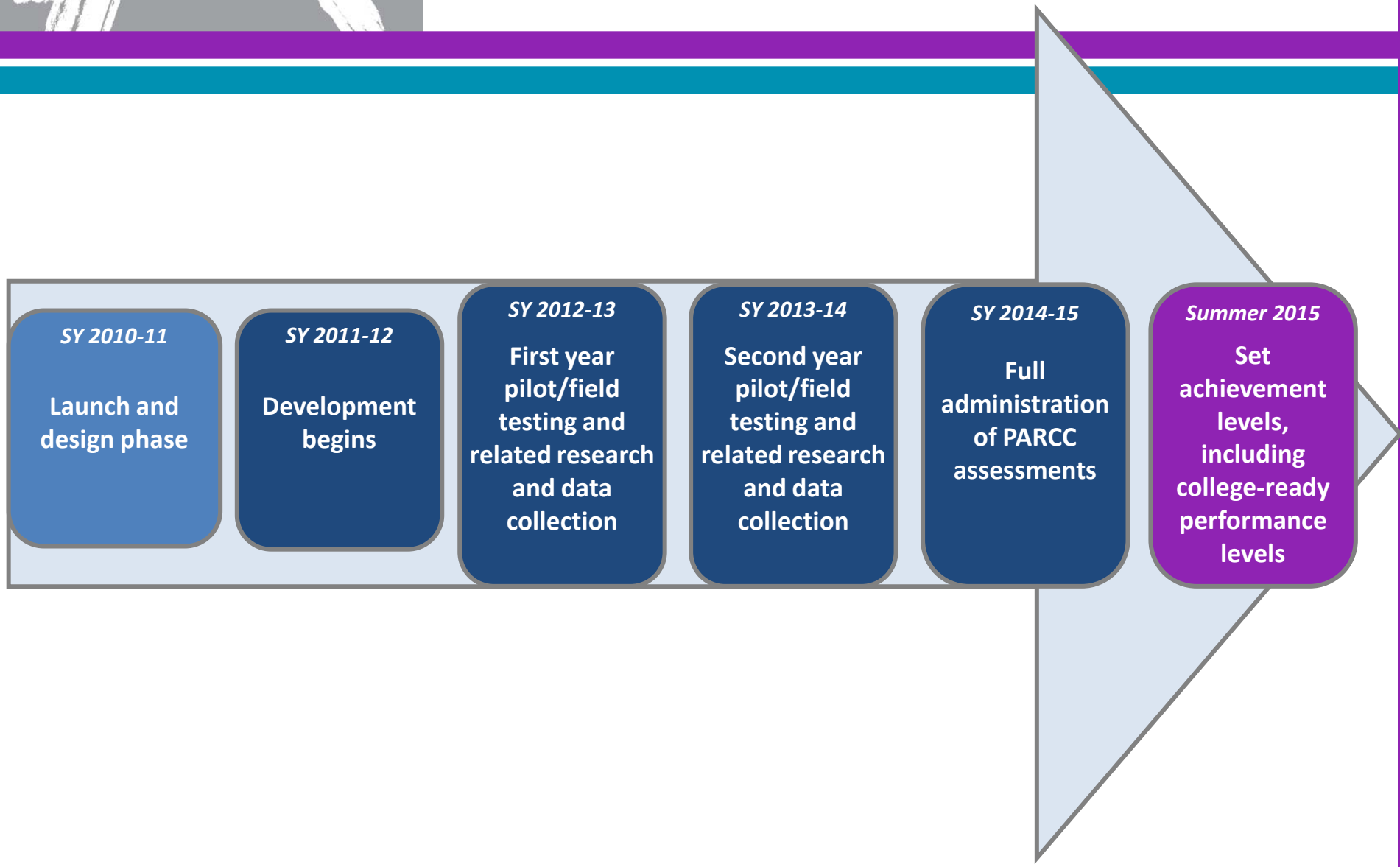
PARCC
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

PARCC's Implementation Support & Stakeholder Engagement

To support state efforts to **implement and transition** to the Common Core and next generation assessments, PARCC will facilitate:

- ***Strategic planning and collective problem solving*** for the implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments
- Collaborative efforts to develop the highest priority ***instructional and support tools***
- Multi-state support to build ***leadership cadres of educators***
- Multi-state support to engage the ***postsecondary community*** around the design and use of the assessments

PARCC Timeline



Key Challenges for PARCC

Technical Challenges

- Developing an interoperable technology platform
- Transitioning to a computer-based assessment system
- Developing and implementing automated scoring systems and processes
- Identifying effective, innovative item types

Implementation Challenges

- Estimating costs over time, including long-term budgetary planning
- Transitioning to the new assessments at the classroom level
- Ensuring long-term sustainability

Policy Challenges

- Student supports and interventions
- Accountability
- High school course requirements
- College admissions/ placement
- Perceptions about what these assessments can do

PARCC Highlights:
The Work is Underway

- Governing Board meetings where major decisions have been made around assessment design, procurement schedule, committee structure and by-laws
- Consortium-wide and in-state meetings, including first Transition & Implementation Institute, attended by 200 state and district leaders from 22 states
- Release of final by-laws, draft content frameworks and launch of PARCC website (www.parcconline.org)
- Direct engagement with over 1,000 educators, K-12 and postsecondary leaders and state and local officials

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

July 2011

www.PARCConline.org

PARCC
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

The Education Trust

OPPORTUNITIES (AND PERILS) FOR SYSTEMS MOVING TOWARD COMMON CORE STANDARDS

A White Paper Commissioned for the
National Association of System Heads

March 2011

Foreword to the NASH Annual Meeting

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are the first ever US national effort to set learning expectations for K-12 to ensure that all students who graduate from high school do so ready for either work or for credit-bearing work in college. Completed in 2010 after many years of work by a number of state-based national organizations, the new standards are initially confined to expectations in math and English/language arts. Standards have now been adopted in almost all states, and the implementation process is now beginning, with the first assessments scheduled to be in place by 2014.

Representatives from higher education have already been deeply involved in the development of the standards. But much of this has been from faculty or others recruited for their individual expertise. This good work does not automatically translate into institutional representation or needed buy-in to move from development to decision to implementation. As the standards are implemented, the higher education involvement must be more systemic and institutionalized. Without that, there is a good chance that this ambitious effort to address academic under-achievement will falter.

It will be particularly important for postsecondary system leaders to think about how to organize their involvement in this work, to distinguish between discussion and decision, and what can be accomplished at a national, statewide or institutional/system level. System leaders who are also SHEEOS may wear two hats on this topic, from their state policy as well as institutional governing roles. In many states, only system governing boards (including a delegated role for faculty) have the authority to make many of the decisions that need to be made.

Issues for NASH members to consider include:

1) What national CCSS activities is your state already involved in? Will these be adequate to represent system interests in the development of the assessments?
2) Where does authority reside in the state for different decisions areas (for instance, K-12 standards, adoption of assessments, use of assessments to determine readiness for credit-bearing work, alignment of standards with admissions requirements, revision of curriculum in K-12, revision of teacher education)?
3) Is the P-20 structure or network in your state appropriately organized to play a lead role in coordinating state-level decisions about implementation of the standards?
4) Should system leaders wait until the assessments are developed to begin second-level work to implement them, or should those discussions begin now? (Examples of 'second-level' work include: whether to have common cross-sector cut scores for determining eligibility for credit-bearing work; using assessments for placement; using assessments for early identification and developmental education; redesigning teacher education for initial licensure; reworking in-service education.)

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In March of 2010, after many years of work, the nation's governors and chief state-school officers announced an agreement on a new set of Common Core Standards to replace the patchwork of state standards that had anchored American schools for the previous decade. Unlike the earlier standards, these would be pegged to a much higher goal: college and career readiness by the end of high school.

In the months that followed, state after state "adopted" these standards. By late 2010, over 40 states had signed on. Most also signed on to one of two consortia that were tasked with building a set of common assessments that would track progress to these standards from the early elementary grades onward.

Many in higher education don't know whether to be thrilled or terrified.

On its face, of course, the movement seems positive: After all, public schools have for years resisted the idea that their goal is to prepare all students for college, arguing that if colleges and universities didn't like the skill levels among entering students, they shouldn't admit them. If public schools have really turned around on this issue, then there are exciting possibilities ahead. With that said, many folks in higher education were enthusiastic participants in developing the last set of academic standards for their respective states. But their hopes were dashed when they saw the assessments, most of which were extremely basic. And goodness knows, we have yet to see the new common core assessments.

In this brief paper, we seek to do two things:

- First, given considerable confusion about just how much higher education participation there has been in the process, we're providing a summary of that involvement and what is intended in the coming months. (Those who are already immersed in the process are free to skip this section and move directly to page 8.)

- Second, we lay out a brief framework that we hope will help system leaders think about and act on some of the most important opportunities inherent in this unprecedented effort.

PART ONE - Higher Education Participation in the Common Standards and Assessments Effort: A Brief History

The origins of the current standards go back to 2002, when four organizations, from very different points on the political spectrum, came together to launch the American Diploma Project. The Fordham Foundation and the National Alliance of Business (both considered right-leaning) joined forces with The Education Trust (considered left-leaning) and Achieve (deliberately bipartisan) in an effort to support state-level K-12 and higher education leaders who wanted to collaborate on developing standards at the juncture of high school and college.

Initially, five states—Massachusetts, Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, and Nevada—volunteered to participate. Leaders in those states knew that there was a gap between learning expectations at the end of high school and those at the beginning of college. And they knew that large numbers of students were falling into that gap. Students who followed all the rules in high school—taking all the courses they were required to take and earning decent grades—often ended up in remedial courses in college, at substantial cost to both them and taxpayers.

Nobody was sure that this gap could be closed. But when the four organizations invited state leaders to participate in an effort to develop "college and career-ready" standards, whatever those were, the state leaders generally concluded that anything with such an improbable group of bedfellows must have some merit. At the very least, it would be entertaining.

With strong staff support from Achieve, what began as an interesting idea gradually grew more concrete. In each participating jurisdiction, statewide committees composed primarily of K-12 and higher education faculty set out to compare the official content and performance standards in K-12 for high school mathematics and English language arts, as well as the standards implicit in definitions of "proficient" on state tests for high-school students, with the standards in the placement tests used by the colleges. The committees identified where these standards were close and where they were far apart. Achieve helped by providing independent analyses of the K-12 and higher education exams, by convening cross-state conversations, and by providing expert facilitators who could help the groups negotiate the occasional political landmines.

These state-level committees also drew extensively upon Achieve's work in analyzing major national examinations (for example, the SAT, the ACT, Accuplacer, Compass, and Work Keys), as well as a series of workplace studies about the skills and knowledge that are critical for various careers. Together, the products from these analyses form the foundation for Achieve's "ADP Benchmarks," one of the foundational documents for the American Diploma Project's later common standards effort.

Some of the states in this initial group moved rather quickly, modifying their high school standards to more closely resemble the requirements of college and work. Some also adopted new course requirements that would align with the standards.

As these states were moving forward, others began expressing interest in the concept. So Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network to provide state leaders with the support they needed to pursue this effort. By 2009, 35 states had joined the network and were at one stage or another in the process of aligning standards, coursework, and assessments.

To be sure, though, the assessment part lagged behind almost everything else. In California, one of the participating states, state university system leaders worked with their counterparts in K-12 to fashion a Part B to the state's eleventh-grade exams that test for college readiness (now considered a national model). A few other states—including Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, and Colorado—adopted the ACT as a common measure of readiness, some even going so far as to persuade their state's colleges to agree to a common cut score to determine readiness for credit-bearing work. But most states didn't change their existing assessments at all. And even in the states like California and the ACT adopters, the impact of the changes was seriously compromised by leaving the (much lower level) tests in other grade levels as is—a problem because tests drive most change in K-12.

However, one important by-product of the individual state efforts to define the skills and knowledge that make a student "college and career ready" was the emergence of a core set of competencies that were common to all the states. In the end, the staff at Achieve found that the demands of college and careers don't vary from state to state.

It is important to note that, throughout this time, nobody said the words "national" or even "common" out loud, and the project did not have nationwide consensus as its goal. The most anybody thought politically feasible (remember, Bill Clinton couldn't even get a *voluntary* national eighth-grade mathematics assessment off the ground) was commonality *within* a state—that is, an agreement across the high schools and colleges within each state on what students should know in order to graduate "college ready."

ENTER NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

While this work was moving forward, increasingly aggressive federal education policy was putting unprecedented pressure on states, districts, and schools to improve achievement, especially among low-income students and students of color. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) replaced loose state accountability policies with demanding federal policies, which set forth bold stretch goals for schools and imposed serious consequences on those that failed to make progress in consecutive years.

In some states, education leaders embraced those goals, incorporating them into their own accountability policies and supporting school and district efforts to meet them. In many others, however, leaders resistant to change—or at least to federally mandated change—fostered the notion that the new federal law was unfair. Unfair, first of all in its expectation that states could get *all* of their children to state standards. And second, unfair to states that had adopted more rigorous standards than others. The idea that the law was unfair—that your school might not

have been labeled as needing improvement if it were located one state over—spread like wildfire, creating an ever-growing appetite for "fairness" in the only form that could alleviate this pain: common standards and assessments.

And so what was once politically unthinkable, even in a single grade and subject, suddenly became thinkable. And the unifying theme for all this work became, "Better us than the federal government."

While it was careful to keep arms length from the process, the U.S. Department of Education did provide invaluable leverage and financial support. When Arne Duncan took the helm of the Education Department in 2009, one of his first big moves was to tie stimulus dollars, especially those in the coveted Race to the Top (RTTP) competition, to participation in the common standards effort. RTTP funding would not be available to states that did not adopt college-ready standards and assessments, which were defined as either the Common Standards or standards certified as college ready by the colleges in that state. In March of 2010, the Obama administration went one step further, suggesting in its "blueprint" for reauthorization of NCLB that federal Title I funds be tied to state adoption of college-ready *and* career-ready standards and assessments.

CRAFTING THE STANDARDS

Chief state schools officers and the governors hosted the standards development process, while content-area experts from Achieve, the College Board, and ACT—with assistance from the less well-known Student Achievement Partners—drafted the standards. This content-area group was disbanded once the draft was done. It was followed by a group of lead writers and a much broader group of national experts, including key experts in math and English language arts from about a dozen states, many of whom were higher education faculty.

The drafters used a process that differed significantly from past standards development initiatives. Instead of asking the content experts what students *should* know, which inevitably led to long lists of everything that the drafters thought would be desirable for students to know about their disciplines, the question was what did students *need* in order to be successful in college? Moreover, the process itself was disciplined by a standard of evidence that was wholly unprecedented. It was no longer good enough to argue, for example, that students *should* master a particular concept in mathematics because it seemed important to college success. Instead, *evidence* of the concept's importance to college success had to be produced.

Another significant difference from previous standards-writing processes was a commitment to develop standards that were not just *higher* than our current ones, but also *fewer and clearer*. In fact, "fewer, clearer, higher" became almost a mantra for the entire effort. Virtually all the participants were determined to avoid developing yet another mile-wide, inch-deep curriculum, with teachers never teaching—and students never learning—anything deeply enough to achieve true mastery.

THE DRAFT STANDARDS

The draft K-12 math and English language arts (ELA) standards were released for public comment in March 2010, receiving nearly 10,000 responses from teachers, postsecondary educators, and national organizations. After the final set of standards was released in June 2010, states began the process of formal adoption. By the end of the year, 41 states and the District of Columbia had adopted the common standards in both ELA and math.

State Adoption of Common Standards (as of December 2010)

- Overall, 41 states and the District of Columbia have adopted common standards in ELA and math.
- Five more states have either provisionally adopted common standards or are reviewing them.
- One state has adopted the common ELA standards but is maintaining its own college and career-ready standards in math.
- Three states have adopted their own college and career-ready standards in ELA and math.

Developing Common Assessments

Now that the common ELA and math standards have been drafted, work is under way to develop aligned assessments. In September 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded $330 million in Race to the Top Assessment grants to two state consortia: the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). There is also a third, recently announced effort between the American Council on Education (ACE) and Pearson to rewrite the GED test to align to the new standards.

PARCC and SBAC are charged with developing systems of interim and summative assessments that will measure the extent to which each student is on track, at each grade level tested, toward college and career readiness by the end of high school. The goal is to have the new assessments ready for states to administer by the 2014-15 school year.

Both consortia are led by a group of governing states, which guide policy and operational decisions for their respective consortium and are committed to fully implementing the new assessments. Non-governing states, referred to as participating states for PARCC and advisory states for SBAC, have the option to participate in both consortia until 2014-15. They may consult on design and policy, but have no decision-making authority. Both are managed by external project managers—Achieve in the case of PARCC and WestEd for SBAC.

State Membership in Assessment Consortia (as of December 2010)

PARCC

- 24 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 30 million K-12 students
- Governing states: Arizona, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee
- Participating states: Alabama, California, Colorado, Delaware, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina

SBAC

- 31 states, serving more than 20 million K-12 students
- Governing states: Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
- Advisory states: Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, West Virginia

Both consortia have developed partnerships with postsecondary educational institutions. PARCC, for example, has established an Advisory Committee on College Readiness consisting of the following:
Both consortia have developed partnerships with postsecondary educational institutions. PARCC, for example, has established an Advisory Committee on College Readiness, consisting of the following:

- One higher ed representative (system leader, college or university president or chancellor) from each governing state;
- Four at-large members selected from PARCC participating states;
- One representative each from Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); and
- Five national higher education leaders with a demonstrated interest in aligning higher education with K-12 standards and assessments, from such groups as the American Council on Education (ACE), State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and American Association of Community Colleges.

Members will be nominated by the governing states and Achieve and approved by the PARCC governing board. The committee is charged with developing a strategy for engaging postsecondary systems in the development and implementation of the new assessments.

Moreover, more than 200 two-year and four-year institutions, which receive 90 percent of all students across the PARCC states entering college within two years of high school, already have committed to using a common college-readiness cut score on the assessment to place students directly into credit-bearing, entry-level coursework without remediation.

SBAC is expected to set up a committee similar to PARCC's. Here, too, more than 170 two-year and four-year institutions in the 31 SBAC states already have committed to helping design the new assessments and using the assessments to make placement decisions.

To carry out the work of the ACE/Pearson partnership, a new public-private corporation is being formed. They plan to develop: 1) a new, more rigorous GED Test aligned with Common Core State Standards designed to ensure career- and college-readiness; 2) a national test preparation program featuring an expanding array of innovative and personalized learning resources; and, 3) a transition network that connects GED test-takers to career and postsecondary educational opportunities.

PART TWO: Big Opportunities for Public University Systems

Opportunity One: Support (or derail) adoption and use of new standards and assessments.

The authority to adopt standards and assessments generally rests with state boards of education or, in some instances, state legislatures, in which case, higher education actually holds most of the cards. The truth is that if higher education faculty and leaders don't embrace the new standards and assessments as legitimate representations of college readiness, the movement to use them is likely to crumble. Imagine, if you will, a state superintendent of schools trying to convince his or her state legislators to adopt a set of assessments for measuring college readiness that the state's college leaders say are not truly college ready!

That's why it is in the strong self-interest of the states that are leading the two consortia to have significant higher education involvement at every step of the way—especially when it comes to determining the performance level (or "cut score") that will carry the label "college ready". It's also why, if your state is not a governing state in one of the two consortia, but, rather, one that will sign on later, you will want to agree with your chief on a broad review process.

One important note: Those new to this process will want to understand an important difference between the level of performance on these exams that will be considered and labeled "college ready" (or "on track to college ready," at the lower grade levels) and other performance levels that are likely to be designated on these exams. For example, in no state are leaders confident enough in their improvement abilities to think they can get all high school students college ready in the near term. Nor, in the short term, do these leaders intend to deny high school diplomas to students who don't hit the college-ready level. So, for the foreseeable future, while states will publicly report the proportions of their graduates who are fully college ready, and aim to get more and more to that level every year, most will probably set a lower performance level that is "good enough" for a high school diploma over the next few years.

The good news about this is that the usual pressures to set realistic definitions of "proficient," so as to avoid denying too many diplomas, won't be present: "College ready," in other words, should be truly college ready. The bad news is that higher education leaders will have to keep steady pressure on to regularly raise the levels deemed "acceptable" for progression, so state K-12 systems do, in fact, reach their stated goal of all graduates ready for college and career.

Opportunity Two: Use results of the eleventh-grade assessments to place students—and agree on a common performance level for "college ready."

Because admissions requirements are such a sticky wicket, the goal of the process from the beginning has been to develop standards and assessments useful in the process of placing students into credit-bearing work. So, ask number one on the list for higher education is: "Validate our instrument by using it."

But it is also hugely important to the architects of this effort that at least the public colleges within each state agree to a common definition (cut point) for readiness. Their rationale is very clear: If high schools are to be held increasingly accountable for getting their graduates ready for college without remediation, they will need a metric to track their progress that doesn't bounce around from year to year, depending on what mix of colleges their graduates enter. As one high school principal said, "Sure, hold me accountable for getting students ready for college without remediation, but not for 17 different definitions of remediation."

Many colleges initially bristle at this idea, regarding placement—like admissions—as all theirs. The highly selective institutions are particularly resistant. But the desire in K-12 for a stable goal post is pretty compelling. Moreover, analysts at Achieve have found that, despite the insistence of many colleges that their standards for credit bearing-work are unique, most of these exams measure pretty much the same things. And, in truth, most institutions award transfer credit for the first credit-bearing courses students take at their initial institution, which means that they are, de facto, agreeing to a common standard of entry into those courses.

Opportunity Three: Join the fun of defining the features of state accountability systems for high schools (perhaps the biggest game-changing opportunity of all).

The cross-state assessments aligned with the new college and career-ready standards are expected to be rolled out in leading states in 2014-15, with use in other states following shortly thereafter. (Some states have signaled that they will sit out the common assessment business, preferring to fashion their own assessments of college and career readiness. But most observers expect their numbers to dwindle over time under pressure from state policymakers who want to see how local students stack up, or from the often huge developmental costs inherent in test development.)

Once these tests come on line, and there are at least baseline data on student performance, (or perhaps even before this, depending on when the new federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act is enacted) state policymakers will face a host of related decisions to which higher education leaders should be attentive. Among the most important of these will be the features and components of a new accountability system for high schools. For example, how many more students will schools be expected to get to the college-ready level each year? Are average improvements adequate, or should there be specific targets for the groups of students who have been behind? Beyond test performance, what else should be included in the accountability system: graduation rates, completion of college-preparatory classes, submission of college applications, or even college-going rates?

Addition of the latter measures—college applications and college going—would, of course, be a major breakthrough for colleges and universities. If schools were under state and federal pressure to improve their performance on those measures, colleges wouldn't be left alone to pull students toward them: There would be a parallel push from high schools. That, of course, would be a very good thing for kids, especially those from homes without strong college

knowledge. As research from the Chicago Consortium compellingly shows, high schools are often in a stronger position to reshape college attendance patterns than colleges.

Fortunately, reform-oriented high school leaders are already taking up this mantle. But they are not likely to prevail in getting college-oriented measures into the high school accountability systems in most states without strong support from higher education. Leaders from higher education need to be at the table, and shouldn't be shy in pushing for a focus on college going, especially for low-income students and students of color. After all, such a focus is in the best interest of the students themselves.

Opportunity Four: Design "catch up" courses and other high school courses and curriculum.

Now that the standards themselves are clear, attention is beginning to turn toward curriculum. For if analysts of past successes and failures agree on one thing, it is that the last version of "standards based reform" left too large a burden on teachers. Instead of stepping in with strong curricular resources (including syllabi, model lessons, units, and assignments) to help teachers teach to the new standards, most state departments of education left this to individual districts and, even more often, individual teachers, who had to make all this up for themselves.

Most state leaders know that we need to do better this time. But most have only the faintest ideas of what "better" looks like because they are trapped in old ways of thinking about curriculum. There are big opportunities here for higher education faculty to work with their counterparts in K-12, designing courses to get students to the college-ready standards.

There are some existing models for this work. After it succeeded in convincing the K-12 leaders in California to add a college-ready portion to the state's eleventh-grade exam, for example, the California State University faculty worked to design a twelfth-grade course for students who didn't hit the college-ready level on the exam. The idea, of course, is to get the "remedial" work done in the twelfth grade, rather than put it off until college.

And in a few places, there have been really exciting collaborations between college faculty, high school teachers, and employers that repackage existing standards into course packages that are far more engaging to students—course sequences in forensic, environmental, or health sciences, for example, that integrate the study of biology, chemistry, and physics in a far more hands-on framework.

Another interesting set of decisions revolving around twelfth grade have to do with not just what kind of coursework would be helpful for students who perform "not ready," but also what to do with those who perform at the "ready" level by the end of eleventh grade or earlier. Do we start college courses (through concurrent enrollment)? Do we increase their enrollment in AP/IB courses?

Because many states will head down the path to course redesign and materials development, NASH leaders ought to talk directly with their counterparts in K-12 about where K-16 collaboration will be most critical, and design some vehicles to get it done.

The two cross-state assessment consortia will also be doing work on curriculum and other tools for teachers. Indeed, they've recently been awarded $15.8 million in supplemental funds from the U.S. Department of Education to support this work.

These tools will range from a set of model instructional units to digital training modules aimed at helping teachers develop their practices. In addition to training them in the new standards and assessments, the consortia will also work to help teachers use the tools.

Opportunity Five: Professional Development for Teachers

The new standards are hugely different from existing standards. They are not simply more rigorous—or, as has been much discussed, less numerous to permit deeper study. They actually require students to do things that most teachers don't even do, at least not regularly. In English language arts, for example, students are meant to engage in close reading of texts considerably more complex than the ones they are asked to read now. And instead of being immersed mostly in fiction, they'll be spending at least half of their time in informational texts, from the founding documents of our country to articles from scientific journals.

Teaching students to the new standards will require that our teachers themselves be immersed in doing the things that will be asked of their students, and that they learn the best ways of engaging their students in serious intellectual work.

New course designs and better materials (described above) will help. But the vast majority of teachers will need considerable professional development. Higher education faculty—especially perhaps those in the less selective institutions who themselves have had to struggle to engage students in these ways—are well positioned to be helpful.

Some states have built vehicles—the California Subject Matter Projects are a good example—to foster this kind of cross-system professional growth. Others may have to assemble them from scratch. One can even imagine that, since the new standards are so very different, states might give teachers a specified number of years to earn a certificate to teach redesigned courses

All of this will be tough in these difficult financial times. Certainly, creative use of technology will be required. But let's be clear: States that profess commitment to the Common Standards without a parallel commitment to bringing their teachers along aren't really committed at all.

Opportunity Six: Overhauling Teacher Preparation

Let's be honest: Nothing about changing teacher preparation is ever easy. And it won't be easy this time, either. That said, the new standards and the sample learning progressions, which help illustrate what they actually mean, provide both a stronger rationale and a stronger, more

unified direction for change. They are a welcome upgrade from 50 sets of standards and the 15,000 curricula they replaced—which gave our schools of education an excuse to keep things as they are: "Our students go everywhere. How could we possibly prepare them to teach all these different standards and reading programs?"

For starters, the clear demand for vastly more rigorous intellectual work from students in elementary and secondary schools should give us pause about the caliber of teachers that many of us are preparing. Most, of course, don't come from the top of our entering student populations but from closer to the bottom. And there is a serious question as to whether we can or should continue that practice. Like the countries that are outperforming us, we ought to be drawing the teachers we produce from the top of the class—and that means taking steps to close the door on some would-be teachers even as we reach out to our stars.

But it is not just—or perhaps even mostly—about who comes in. It's about what we ask them to do while they are preparing. For years, many leaders in higher education have cringed internally but done nothing when top students tell them they want to become teachers, but that the coursework required is mind-numbingly low level. Moreover, countless studies—including the recent *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa—validate student claims that education coursework simply isn't as rigorous as coursework in other disciplines.

The bottom line for us is clear: If we want high school teachers to stop giving dumb assignments like "Write in your journal (or design a poster) about your feelings about *To Kill a Mockingbird,*" we'll have to make sure that they don't get assignments like the following real assignment from a college course on the teaching of reading: "Construct an extended literacy autobiography in which you describe who you are as a literate person in the various contexts of your life and how you developed into that person. End the autobiography with your personal theory of literacy learning and teaching."

One other advantage we should have this time: much better information on the effectiveness of the teachers we produce in growing their students toward the new standards. Of course, such data—called "value-added"—are already available to teacher preparation programs in states that have strong data systems including Louisiana, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Deep suspicions about test quality among our faculty, however, have interfered with the use of these data in improvement efforts. The expected quality of the assessments being designed by the two consortia should put much of that angst and dubiety to rest. Although these exams, like all others, won't be perfect, they will be considerably better than our current set. Moreover, it will be possible to compare the products of our universities, not just within but also across states.

Opportunity Seven: PK-16+ Data Systems

Speaking of data systems, many NASH systems are already cooperating with state-led efforts to build data systems that can not only track teachers back to the institutions that produced them,

but—even more important—track students from preschool through college and even into the workforce.

Following the lead of Florida, which built such a system decades ago, most states are at least on a path toward building data systems that track the ten core elements set forth by the Data Quality Campaign. Certainly, building these systems can be extraordinarily complicated and expensive—not to mention the politics for CEOs when the costs inevitably overrun the early estimates. Among the tough problems to be solved along the way is the choice of common student identifiers and principles on who has access to what.

That said, these systems should not only help us to produce better data both for improvement purposes—including analyses of what is working and what isn't—but also for accountability purposes, including showing success rates for far more of our students than the cohort rates from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System currently reveal.

Actors and decision points for **postsecondary** role in the implementation of CCSS for Math and Language

Topic	**National/cross-state (for example PARCC, SBCC, SHEEO/CSSO)**	**Statewide/K-12 and PSE (Superintendents, State Boards, Governors, Legislatures, SHEEO, 2 and 4-year System Heads)**	**System and institutional level (2- and 4-year) (Governing boards, system leaders including faculty)**
Development of readiness standards	Development of recommendations for K-12 readiness standards	Adoption of K-12 readiness standards	
Development of assessments to support the standards.	• Development of recommendations for K-12 assessments (PARCC, SBAC) • ACE/Pearson development of new GRE aligned to new standards.	Adoption of K-12 assessments	
Using the readiness standards and assessments.		• Determination about use of assessments to determine readiness for credit-bearing coursework at the college level (placement, NOT admission). • Use of assessments for early identification of students on-track for college readiness. • Systems of support within K-12 for students who are off track.	• Substituting assessments for placement examinations. • Development of potentially new/revised common course-taking requirements for college readiness. • Development of potentially new/revised common course-taking requirements for college readiness. • Early identification at system level even if statewide adoption is not feasible. Partnerships with feeder high schools to improve.
Revision of K-12 Curriculum to support standards, alignment with admissions.		• Development of potentially new/revised common course-taking requirements for college readiness.	• Adoption of common course requirements OR additional requirements. • Revision of admissions standards • Re-evaluation of first-year UG curriculum in light of new readiness standards
Reform of teacher education, including licensure, pre- and in-service.		• Change in requirements for initial entry into teaching • Change in continuing education requirements • Development of teacher tools aligned with new standards	• Revision of teacher education pre- and in-service programs
Data and reporting, and using data for accountability	Revision to ESEA to change mandatory reporting to align to standards/assessments	• Adoption of P-20 data systems to support integrated cross-sector use of data on performance • Decisions about state action relative to performance (sanctions/incentives)	• System/campus level data on readiness • Campus-level detail about student readiness and success
Public communication: What do the new standards mean? How do they relate to existing standards? What does it mean about who gets into college?		TBD	TBD