



ACCT, AACCC and Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards Partner to Improve Educational Standards
Organizations say initially low-test scores are not cause for alarm, but opportunity

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The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), the American Association of Community Colleges, and Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards share a commitment to the implementation of more challenging K-12 standards designed to prepare students for success in college and careers.

Each year, about 50 percent of first year students at two-year colleges and 20 percent of those entering four-year universities require basic developmental courses before they can begin credit-bearing coursework. This lack of preparedness costs students and taxpayers billions of dollars each year. It stagnates the education system and exacerbates the business community's problem of filling jobs.

Community colleges have long filled the need of providing remedial and developmental education to underprepared students who want to pursue higher education. This is a fundamental part of our mission, but students who arrive on our campuses underprepared academically have a very steep hill to climb to persist and complete their degrees. Students should be entering all colleges prepared for college-level work, and that preparation should be completed in high school.

ACCT and AACCC have long advocated greater alignment between K-12 school standards and first year credit-bearing course requirements for community colleges. Community colleges have a vested interest in raising standards so that students who come through community college doors will be able to get started immediately on college-level coursework. Although community colleges have time-tested expertise in filling the need for remediating students and preparing them for college, providing remediation to 50 percent or more of entering students is a tremendous strain on resources that can be applied to teaching students at the college level, not to mention delaying students' progress through higher education and ultimately toward finding gainful employment.

We applaud states that have made great strides over the past several years in implementing more challenging K-12 standards designed to prepare students for success in college and careers. This work holds tremendous potential for increasing the number of students who arrive in our colleges and businesses prepared for success.

This fall will mark a critical milestone in states' efforts to raise educational standards: The results of new K-12 student assessments will be released in dozens of states across the country. For the first time, scores on high school assessments will have a meaningful connection to college and career success. Students who meet the standards will be prepared for successful transition into credit-bearing college coursework and training opportunities.

Standards for these tests have been raised to reflect real expectations of college and career readiness. As a result, the initial scores may be lower than what students, families, and educators



are used to. This should not be cause for alarm nor is it an indictment of our K-12 educators. The tests simply provide a more accurate assessment of our students' readiness for the demands of postsecondary life, the need for which is validated by our own remediation numbers and employer surveys.

ACCT, AACCC, and Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards are collaborating to promote and support strong partnerships between community colleges and high schools to help them leverage the more ambitious K-12 standards and assessments to increase students' college readiness. Over the next year, we will work with community colleges and their governing boards throughout the country to facilitate greater cooperation with K-12 districts that feed into their colleges through a number of advocacy and educational programs designed to support student success. Higher expectations starting in K-12, combined with strong student supports to help them meet these expectations, hold great promise.

The community college sector has been talking about the remediation challenge for a long time. Now, we are taking meaningful and actionable steps to do something about it. All of our nation's public education institutions exist to serve students, and, in doing so, serve our communities, our states, and our nation. Setting higher and better aligned standards—raising the bar—represents an opportunity to make progress toward our shared goal.

About AACCC

Founded in 1920, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) is the primary nonprofit advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level, representing nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACCC's mission is to "Build a Nation of Learners by Advancing America's Community Colleges" by supporting and promoting its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information, and strategic outreach to business and industry as well as the national news media. For more information, visit www.aacc.nche.edu.

About ACCT

Founded in 1972, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is the nonprofit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees of community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond. ACCT's purpose is to strengthen the capacity of community, technical, and junior colleges and to foster the realization of their missions through effective board leadership at local, state, and national levels. For more information, visit www.acct.org. Follow ACCT on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/CCTrustees](https://twitter.com/CCTrustees).

About Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards

Higher Ed *for* Higher Standards is a growing coalition of college presidents, trustees, chancellors, system leaders, and state executive officers who believe college- and career-ready standards are critical to improving student success. The goal of the coalition is to elevate the voices of higher education leaders and support them in the adoption and implementation of aligned policies that leverage more ambitious K-12 standards and assessments. For more information, visit www.higheredforhigherstandards.org.