



## WHAT IS COLLEGE AND CAREER READY?

It is commonly said that the goal of high school is to ensure all students graduate “college and career ready.” But what does it really mean to be “college and career ready?” Simply put, “college and career readiness” refers to the content knowledge and skills high school graduates must have in literacy and mathematics – including, but not limited to, reading, writing communications, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving – to be successful in future endeavors. Of course, a student’s readiness for college and careers depends on more than knowledge in all subject areas. To be successful after high school, all graduates must possess the knowledge, habits and skills that can only come from a rigorous, rich and well-rounded pre-K- grade 12 school curriculum. ALL high school graduates need to be prepared for some postsecondary education and/or training if they are to have options and opportunities in the job market.

### What is “COLLEGE” ready?

College today means much more than just pursuing a four-year degree at a university. Being “college ready” means being prepared for any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to a postsecondary credential (i.e. a license, Associates or Bachelor’s degree). Being ready for college means that a high school graduate has the literacy and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to qualify and succeed in college without the need for remedial coursework.

### What is “CAREER” ready?

In today’s economy, a “career” is not just a job. A career provides a liveable wage and pathways to advancement and requires postsecondary training or education. A job may be obtained with only a high school diploma, but offers no guarantee of advancement or mobility. Being ready for a career means that a high school graduate has the literacy 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).

### Are ready for COLLEGE and ready for CAREER the same thing?

With respect to the knowledge and skills in literacy and mathematics expected by employers and postsecondary faculty, the answer is yes. In the last decade, research conducted by Achieve as well as others shows a convergence in the expectations of employers and colleges in terms of the knowledge and skills high school grads need to be successful after high school. Economic reality reflects these converging expectations. Education is more valued and more necessary than ever before.

- Nearly 80% of future job openings in the next decade in the U.S. will require postsecondary education or training.
- While the U.S. still ranks 3rd in the adult population (25-64 year olds) with an associates degree or higher among 30 countries, we now rank 10th among 25-34 year olds with a two-year degree and above. Competing countries are catching up to – and even outpacing – the U.S. in the educational attainment of their new generation of adults.
- Higher levels of education lead to elevated wages, a more equitable distribution of income and substantial gains in productivity. For every additional average year of schooling U.S. citizens complete beyond high school, the Gross Domestic Product would increase by about 0.37 percentage points – or 10% – over time.