

## Why College and Career Ready Standards?

**The world is changing – as are the expectations for what individuals need to be able to know and do in order to be successful in college, careers, and life. Our education system must change to meet these challenges.**

- To be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, American students must have the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and in the knowledge-based economy and be prepared to compete with students from the highest performing countries around the world. Today's students will be competing with their peers from Japan, Korea, Finland, and Singapore, not just peers from other states.
- U.S. mathematics scores rank well below those of other high performing countries on international mathematics tests. If the U.S. is going to maintain its edge in innovation, research, and development, we need our students to be top mathematics performers.

**Today, too few high school students graduate and, among those who do, too few graduate well-prepared for life after high school.**

- Approximately 30 percent of students do not graduate high school in four years, a rate that grows to nearly 50 percent for minority and low-income students.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 20 percent of students entering four-year colleges, and at least 40 percent of students entering two-year community colleges, must take remedial courses in English and/or mathematics in order to learn, or relearn, high school level skills before they can even begin taking credit-bearing college courses — all the while paying college tuition.<sup>2</sup>
- We cannot prepare students well unless we set the right expectations and goals. States must have college and career ready, internationally benchmarked standards in mathematics and English.

**The best way to prepare students for college and career is to ensure they graduate with a strong foundation in the core academic areas that will leave all doors open in the future.**

- ALL students must have access to an education that will prepare them for the real-world challenges they will face after high school. In a competitive world economy where some education after high school is increasingly the norm, to prepare students for anything less is to, by definition, deny opportunity.
- Access to a college and career ready education should not be determined by the zip code in which a student lives.
- College and career ready academic standards, while alone are no silver bullet, provide the necessary foundation upon which curriculum, assessments, and instruction are formed. Standards – developed and validated by K-12, higher education, and industry leaders – are a critical first step in improving America's education system.

<sup>1</sup> Education Week (2011). Graduation in the United States.  
[http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/dc/2010/34sos\\_gradrate.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/dc/2010/34sos_gradrate.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (2003).  
Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2000.