

Honor States Grant Program
Phase One State Progress Report
April 2006

ARKANSAS

Arkansas is an active participant in Achieve's American Diploma Project (ADP) and is closely following the ADP-recommended process for developing college-ready standards. In the development of these standards, Arkansas has prioritized the engagement of stakeholders at all levels and has found strong support in the University of Arkansas System, as well as other colleges and universities across the state. In addition, Arkansas has received a grant from the federal government to develop a robust longitudinal data system that will allow it to track the progress of individual students throughout the educational pipeline. Finally, Arkansas participated in American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) field trips to San Diego and Boston where state legislative and team leaders experienced innovative high school reform approaches for the purpose of taking home to Arkansas.

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DELAWARE

The state's P-20 Council subcommittee on graduation requirements has analyzed components of specific content areas and made considerable progress on a set of guiding principles. In parallel, workgroups have begun developing the statewide recommended curriculum. Delaware has created a detailed work plan for the research, development, and execution of Individual Learning Plans and has contracted with Transcend to help implement the program in target schools. In addition, the P-20 Council's Post-Secondary Success subcommittee is building the data cube that will integrate K-12 and higher education student progress data. Finally, the state has joined SREB's Go Alliance in an effort to bolster its efforts in communications and build public demand for high school reform.

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INDIANA

Indiana has focused much of its attention to strengthening community demand for high school redesign and on eliminating state-level barriers. The legislature has passed a dropout prevention bill that includes opportunities for low-income students to enroll in dual-credit classes at no expense. This provision supports expansion of the early college high school model, which several communities across the state of Indiana have expressed interest in developing with planning grant support from the Honor States grant. In addition, the legislature has referred development of a 1-year assessment plan, culminating in end-of-course, college-ready assessments to the state board. Indiana has held meetings with the deans of all colleges to obtain input regarding how to accurately assess the Algebra mastery of math teachers. These meetings have also informed the state's effort to gauge teacher impact on student achievement and interest in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Indiana is on-track to publicly report the NGA 4-year cohort graduation rate in Spring 2006, and its 10-year benchmarks and Education Roundtable are among the best in the Honor States Network.

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LOUISIANA

The state's High School Redesign Commission will make its first round of recommendations to the legislature and governor in April, which address how the state should support low performing students, improve adolescent literacy instruction, increase the rigor and relevance of core

academic courses, and provide more opportunities for students to earn early college credit. An active member of the American Diploma Project, high school and college faculty from key colleges and universities have attended two alignment institutes to develop college and work-ready standards. Continuing its leadership in the area of accountability, the state is developing an annual *High School Counts* report card on all Louisiana schools that will be released in Spring 2006. A colorful information sheet on the state's approach to high school redesign is also being distributed statewide. In addition, seven regional public forums on high school redesign have been convened across the state. Louisiana is on-track to report a 4-year cohort graduation rate in Spring 2006. The Commission has recommended that this measure be included in the *High School Counts* report card.

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MAINE

Maine has become the first state in the nation to implement the SAT as its college readiness assessment. All juniors took the test for the first time on April 1st. The state anticipates a 95% participation rate. The state has also developed a comprehensive communications strategy with which it hopes to increase the demand for high school students to graduate ready for college, citizenship, and career. Maine has allocated significant funds to the project and has contracted with experts in community engagement and media to ensure its success. In addition, the state continues to expand its Early College network (nine new programs opened in January 2006) and provide Advanced Placement opportunities in more schools for more students. Maine recently participated in an American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) field trip to San Diego where state legislative and team leaders experienced innovative high school reform approaches for the purpose of taking home to Maine. Finally, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) community has been engaged in regional conferences with high schools to address academic integration and more specifically, adolescent literacy.

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MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts as part of the American Diploma Project is making considerable headway on the alignment of its math and English standards. Meetings will be held with college math and English faculty as well as business leaders to obtain their input on the standards. The Governor has allocated funding in his budget for dual enrollment with a focus on science and math as well as the training of Advanced Placement teachers. In addition, the Department of Education held a "Turn-Around Partner" conference at which proven support providers met with state and local officials to discuss successful strategies. Work has also begun to link the K-12 and higher education data systems and build an educator database that will allow the state to connect teacher and student performance. Finally, the state hosted an American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) field trip to Boston public schools where state legislative and team leaders from around the country learned how innovative high school reform approaches might inform efforts in their own states.

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MICHIGAN

The state has developed and presented to the State Board draft English/Language Arts and mathematics high school content expectations. These content expectations were vetted by representatives of higher education, have been posted on the Michigan web site for public review and input, and have been reviewed by Achieve. The science and social studies content expectations teams have also begun their work ahead of schedule. The State Board will vote on the new standards at its April meeting. The state legislature has agreed to adopt mandatory graduation requirements, which would include 4 years of math and English, 3 years each of

science and social studies. A conference committee is reconciling implementation timelines and whether or not to include 2 years of a foreign language. A subcommittee working in conjunction with the Community College Research Council has made a set of recommendations for how to remove physical and financial barriers that inhibit dual enrollment participation. The State Board will consider these at its April meeting as well. Finally, Michigan has received a grant from the federal government to develop a robust longitudinal data system that will allow it to track the progress of individual students throughout the educational pipeline.

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MINNESOTA

The Governor's Education Council met three times since being established in the fall of 2005 and approved P-16 goals and benchmarks for system accountability. 125 statewide "Science-Technology-Engineering-Math" leaders convened in March for a Governor's Roundtable on STEM workforce needs. Governor Pawlenty announced goals for national STEM leadership and a P-14 minimum level of education for students. The MN P-16 Education Partnership began its third year in June with aggressive plans to improve high school student transitions to postsecondary education through one seamless student identification system, identifying college and work readiness knowledge and skills, aligning the state's HS math assessment to postsecondary needs, reducing remediation rates for high school graduates in postsecondary, expanding successful college access programs, and coordinating web sites for career planning. A state team attended the February ADP alignment institute to evaluate current standards' alignment with national college readiness standards. Higher education leaders assisted the Commissioner to set a state proficiency cut score for the CLEP exam with new state funding for low income students. The state also purchased EPAS college readiness assessments for grade 8 and 10 students with almost 100% sign-up by schools. Competitive grants of \$400,000 were awarded to 20 high schools for developing state models in digital content, technology and engineering design, math/science remediation, and Lighthouse action research sites. Legislation just introduced in both houses would provide a \$5 million grant initiative for high school/district redesign of STEM programs, and a requirement for all students to take Algebra I, II, and chemistry or physics before graduation. Minnesota participated in an American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) field trip to visit Boston's high school reform sites, and a staff team attended a March Triangle conference of national STEM leaders.

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RHODE ISLAND

The state's PK-16 Council is highly engaged and provides valuable leadership on all facets of Rhode Island's Honor States grant. The council was briefed on preliminary findings and recommendations in a Jobs for the Future evaluation of the state's dual enrollment policies and program. In addition, Rhode Island contracted with Achieve to develop a side-by-side comparison between the state's college-ready standards and Grade Span expectations in reading, writing and math with Achieve's American Diploma Project benchmark standards and standards from other states. The results for English Language Arts were then presented to the PK-16 Council to identify next steps; Achieve's analysis in math will be scheduled for a presentation later this year. The Physics First science sequence is being piloted in a group of five selected schools and is gaining considerable national attention. The governor recently met with the Rhode Island Board of Regents, calling on them to increase the graduation requirement for science to three years. The Board will be undertaking that task as part of their work to update the state's basic education plan. Finally, the effort to link the state's K-12, postsecondary, adult education, and workforce development data systems is on target. The chief information officer for the state will be presenting to the PK-16 Council in April on the state's efforts to link information systems.

It is anticipated these initiatives will result in expanded research capacity to issue reports and inform policy as well as increased technical support to house and manage data.

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VIRGINIA

In October 2005, Virginia's P-16 Education Council was established by executive order. The council will focus on creating a more seamless education system and improving transitions from secondary to postsecondary education. Virginia has selected 30 honor schools with higher than average 9th-grade retention rates to be the focus of its honor states grant efforts. Following a High School Best Practices and Transition Symposium, grants are being awarded to principals of all 30 honor schools to establish 9th-grade transition programs in their schools. To support expansion of the state's Algebra Readiness Program, 23 of the honor schools have received \$5,000 grants to provide summer programs for rising 9th graders at risk of not passing Algebra I in the 9th grade. The state is also seeking to expand Project Graduation, which provides tutorial and remedial services to 11th and 12th graders, and has distributed funds for this purpose to almost all 30 of the honor schools. The state's administrative coaching program is well under way with the training of principal mentors in all 30 honor schools. Virginia has also provided high school counselors with guidance on identifying eligible students for the Early College Scholars program. Teams of over 200 middle and high school teachers have registered to attend the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) training in Summer 2006. PSSS testing materials were ordered from the College Board at state expense, and in February, tests were administered to all 10th-grade students in the honor schools who had not taken the PSAT in Fall 2005. Finally, Virginia participated in an American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) field trip to Boston where state legislative and team leaders experienced innovative high school reform approaches for the purpose of taking home to Virginia. More information is available on Virginia's Web site at:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/honorschools/index.html>.

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