



Transitions Work Group’s Draft

The Transitions Work Group has drafted several messages about the Big 3 reforms (college and career-ready standards, aligned tests, and improved evaluation and support systems). Feel free to draw on them to brainstorm your talking points.

Aspirational Message
For our students to succeed in today’s increasingly competitive world, we must transform our school systems by unifying efforts that are too often insolated and disconnected to ensure every classroom has an excellent teacher and every school has an excellent leader.
Key Overarching Messages
Why we are raising standards, measuring progress and helping students and teachers improve
To truly transform our public school system, we must combine high expectations for students, better information about their progress, and new, data-driven supports so teachers and principals can work together to continually improve their performance to help students succeed.
Students will succeed if they think critically and creatively, solve problems and learn to work together. Our new standards move past what you need to know to get by and emphasize what you need to know to thrive in each grade while also providing a clear and consistent yardstick by which teaching and learning can be measured.
To ensure all of our students can meet our new standards and the challenges ahead, we need a new generation of assessments that more accurately measure student learning and replace outdated bubble tests that focus only on minimum expectations. Because the new assessments will be closely aligned with our new standards, they’ll also allow us to identify educator successes and areas for improvement.
To meet these new standards and challenges, teachers and principals need as much information as possible about their impact on student performance. We will measure educator effectiveness through a comprehensive evaluation system that uses multiple measures to recognize excellent teaching, offers relevant and actionable feedback and timely supports, and provides a clear path toward continuous improvement.
Additional State Priority 1
Message 1
Message 2
Message 3
Message 4

Additional State Priority 2
Message 1
Message 2
Message 3
Message 4
NOTE: The messages/proof points below amplify the above. We recommend the focus of today's discussion be on the top-line messages above.
Integration: Why We Are Raising Standards, Measuring Progress and Helping Students and Teachers Improve
<p><i>To truly transform our public school system, we must bring together high expectations for students, better information about their progress and new, data-driven supports so teachers and principals can work together to continually improve their performance and outcomes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Currently, less than half (44%) of U.S. students meet college- and career-readiness standards in reading and mathematics.¹ All students, from every corner of the nation, deserve to be held to a high – but achievable – bar. Fifty states with 50 different sets of standards is illogical and shortchanges our students. b. These goals will be accomplished by holding all students to high but achievable standards, measured using high-quality tests that will indicate if students are on track for success after in today's globally competitive marketplace, and providing all educators with information about their students' progress as well as the feedback and support they need to be both effective and inspirational in the classroom. c. Integrating these new standards, aligned assessments and comprehensive evaluations will provide the real-time data and feedback necessary to measure student success and determine where additional supports are necessary.
Standards and Teaching with Proof Points
<p><i>Students will succeed if they think critically and creatively, solve problems and learn to work together. Our new standards move past what students need to know to get by and emphasize what they need to know to thrive in each grade – and after graduation while also providing a clear and consistent yardstick by which teaching and learning can be measured.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Our new, improved standards will provide students with the relevant, real world knowledge and skills teachers, college professors and employers agree are needed to succeed in today's globally competitive marketplace.

¹ ACT, "The Condition of College and Career Readiness," 2013.

- b. These higher standards serve as guides for our educators to follow in the classroom and are aligned with new tests that will both measure readiness for college and careers and identify where students need more support.
- c. The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. The new standards go far beyond just what students need to know and teachers decide how to teach the content based on their expertise, judgment and individual student needs.
- d. And educator support for these new standards is strong. Nearly three in four teachers (73%) have a favorable view of the Common Core State Standards, and 74% support their state's decision to adopt Common Core.²

Assessments with Proof Points

To ensure all of our students can meet our new standards and the challenges ahead, we need a new generation of assessments that more accurately measure student learning and replace outdated bubble tests that focus only on minimum expectations. Because the new assessments will be closely aligned with our new standards, they'll also allow us to identify educator successes and areas for improvement.

- a. These new tests will be one of the most accurate measurement tools our teachers have to measure student performance and gauge their readiness for success in today's globally competitive marketplace.
- b. Our new tests measure the essential critical thinking and problem-solving skills that students need today to be successful in college, careers and in life after high school.
- c. The new tests will provide accurate information about educator effectiveness, what individual students are learning, and whether they are on track or need extra help.
- d. These deliberate actions will help reverse trends which show graduation exams in some states tend to measure only 8th, 9th, or 10th grade content, rather than the skills students need to succeed in college and the workplace.³
- e. And, again, support is broad among educators, with nearly two-thirds of teachers (64%) supporting implementation of the CCSS assessments.⁴
- f. Our commitment to continually improve as educators demands that we frequently update our standards, tests and supports.

² Chiefs for Change, "Teacher Survey on Common Core," 2013.

³ Achieve, Inc., "Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams," 2004.

⁴ Achieve, Inc., "Growing Awareness, Growing Support Poll," 2012.

Evaluations and Supports with Proof Points

To meet these new standards and challenges, teachers and principals need as much information as possible about their impact on student performance. We will measure educator effectiveness through a comprehensive evaluation system that uses multiple measures to recognize excellent teaching, offers relevant and actionable feedback and timely supports, and provides a clear path toward continuous improvement.

- a. Effective educators are the single most important school-based factor in student success and we must ensure they have the supports they need to improve and succeed.
- b. For too long our evaluation systems have been a perfunctory, superficial routine, more about meeting requirements than providing valuable feedback to educators. Studies have shown that as recently as 2009, 94% of teachers received top ratings on their evaluations while only 1% received a rating of ‘unsatisfactory.’⁵ This is no longer the case.
- c. Our new evaluation system is designed to provide timely, actionable feedback to our teachers and administrators and help them identify the professional development opportunities they need to improve.
- d. Just as we’re measuring how well students are learning the new standards, we’re measuring teacher effectiveness with new educator evaluations and supporting teachers to get better every day.

⁵ TNTP, “The Widget Effect,” 2009.