



Achieve

American Diploma Project Network

***Closing the Expectations Gap:
Achieve's American Diploma Project***

SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference

August 12-15, 2008

San Diego, CA

Who is Achieve?

Created by the nation's governors and business leaders, Achieve is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all high school graduates for college, careers and life.

Why the American Diploma Project (ADP)? Evidence That Drove the Original ADP Research

- 30% of students drop out of high school.
- 40% - 45% of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills, both in college and the workplace.
- 30% of first year students in postsecondary education are required to take remedial courses.
- Faculty estimate 42% of first year students in credit-bearing courses are academically unprepared.
- Employers estimate 45% of recent high school graduates lack skills to advance.

American Diploma Project

Research Phase 1: 2002 - 2005

- Partnership of Achieve, Education Trust, Fordham Foundation and National Alliance of Business.
- Initial ADP research study conducted in Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nevada and Texas.
- Involved wide variety of K-12, postsecondary education and business representatives.
- Examined the work high school graduates do in the college classroom and on the job, and the preparation they needed to do the work.
- Identified “must-have” knowledge and skills in English and mathematics that graduates need to be successful in college and the workplace.

Key Finding #1: Expectations Are the Same for Both College and “Good Jobs”

The knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to be successful in college are the same as those they need to be successful in a good job.

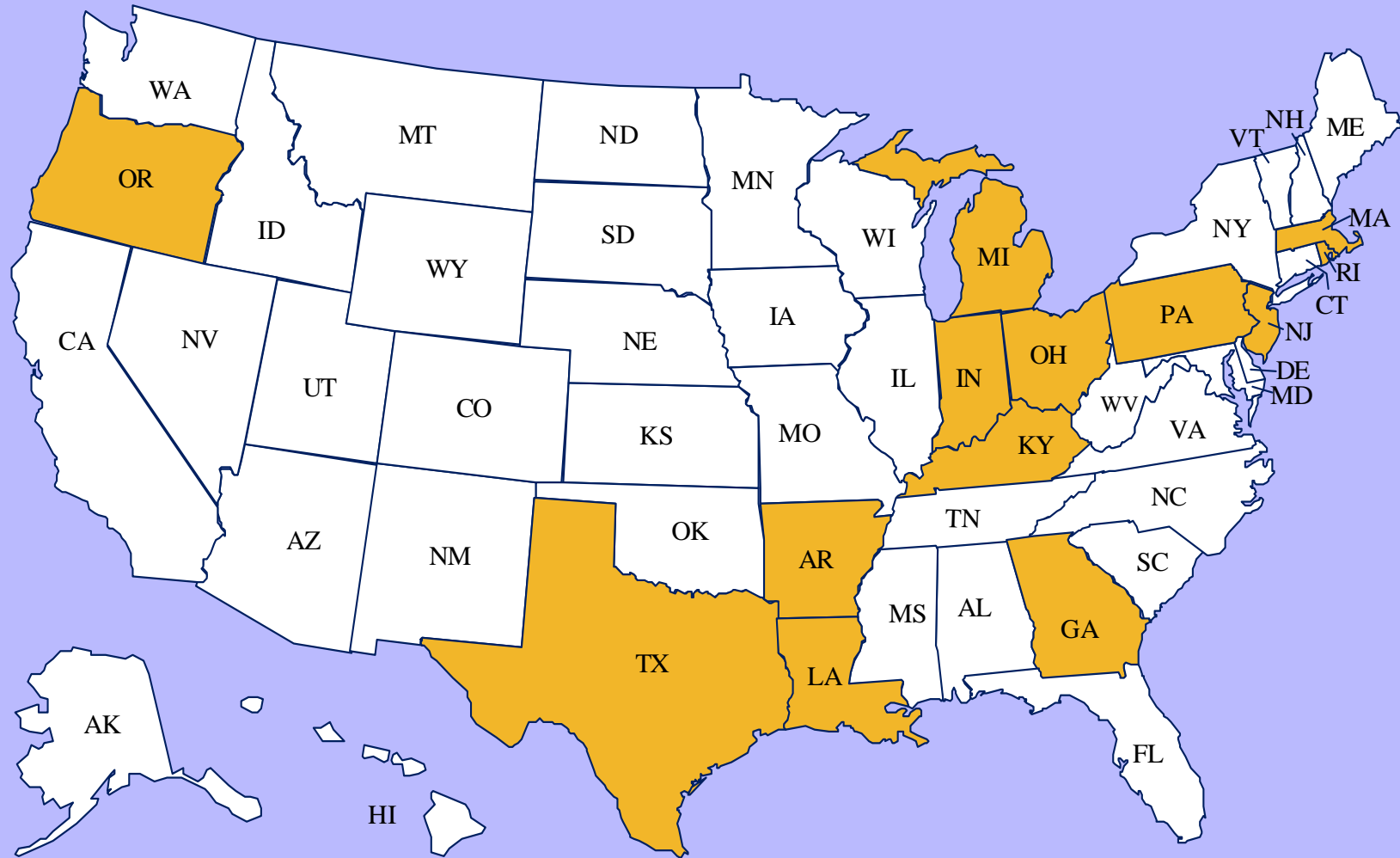
Key Finding #2: The Expectations Gap is Wide

- Academic standards in high school were not aligned with postsecondary and workplace entry requirements.
- High school graduation requirements were too low.
- High school assessments were not meaningfully connected with students' college or career aspirations.
- **RESULT:** Students can earn a high school diploma without the skills necessary for success in college and work.

The 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools

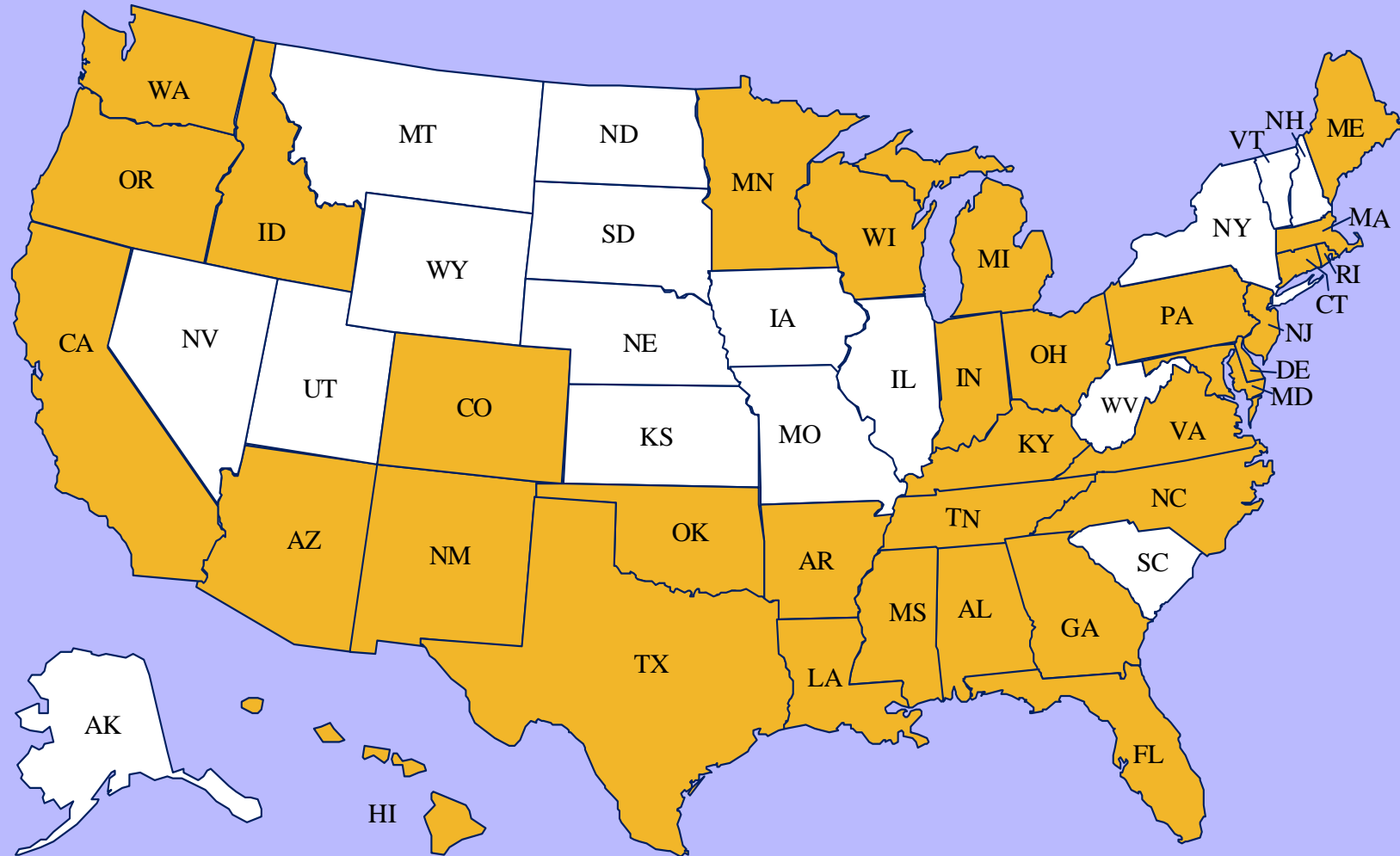
- In February 2005, Achieve and the National Governors Association co-chaired the National Education Summit on High Schools.
- Forty-five governors attended the Summit, along with corporate CEOs and K–12 and postsecondary leaders.
- Addressed the fact that our schools are not adequately preparing students for college and 21st-century jobs.
- Reached the common conclusion that aggressive action is needed to address the expectations gap.
- As a result of the Summit, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project Network.

ADP Network Launched at the 2005 Summit: Thirteen States Committed to Improving Student Preparation



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ADP Network Today: Thirty-Three States Now Committed to Improving Student Preparation



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ADP Network Policy Agenda

- Align high school standards with the demands of college and careers.
- Require students to take a college- and career-ready curriculum to earn a high school diploma.
- Build college- and career-ready measures into statewide high school assessment systems.
- Hold high schools and postsecondary institutions accountable for student preparation and success.

Align high school standards with the demands of college and the workplace

Aligning Standards

- **The goal** for states is to align their high school standards with the demands of college and careers so that students can:
 - Enter into credit-bearing course work in two- or four-year colleges, without the need for remediation and with a strong chance for earning credit toward their program or degree; and
 - Gain entry-level positions in quality job and career pathways, which often require further education and training.

Align High School Standards with the Demands of College and Careers

- Today, **twenty-two states** have adopted high school standards that are aligned with postsecondary expectations.
- **Nineteen** additional states report that they are in the process of aligning their standards, **ten** of which plan to adopt new standards by the end of 2008.

The “Core” of the ADP Benchmarks

www.achieve.org/commoncore

- The “ADP Core” contained within the English and mathematics benchmarks represents a vital subset of college- and career-ready expectations.
- 22 ADP Core English Benchmarks including fundamental skills (e.g., spelling, grammar), traditional expectations (e.g., interpreting informational materials), and critical skills (e.g., developing an argument).
- 34 ADP Core Mathematics Benchmarks including: foundational computational skills, recognize and solve problems that are represented by various equations, identify real world problems that can be solved mathematically, and use appropriate techniques to solve them and interpret the solution.

Key Findings from Achieve's Analysis

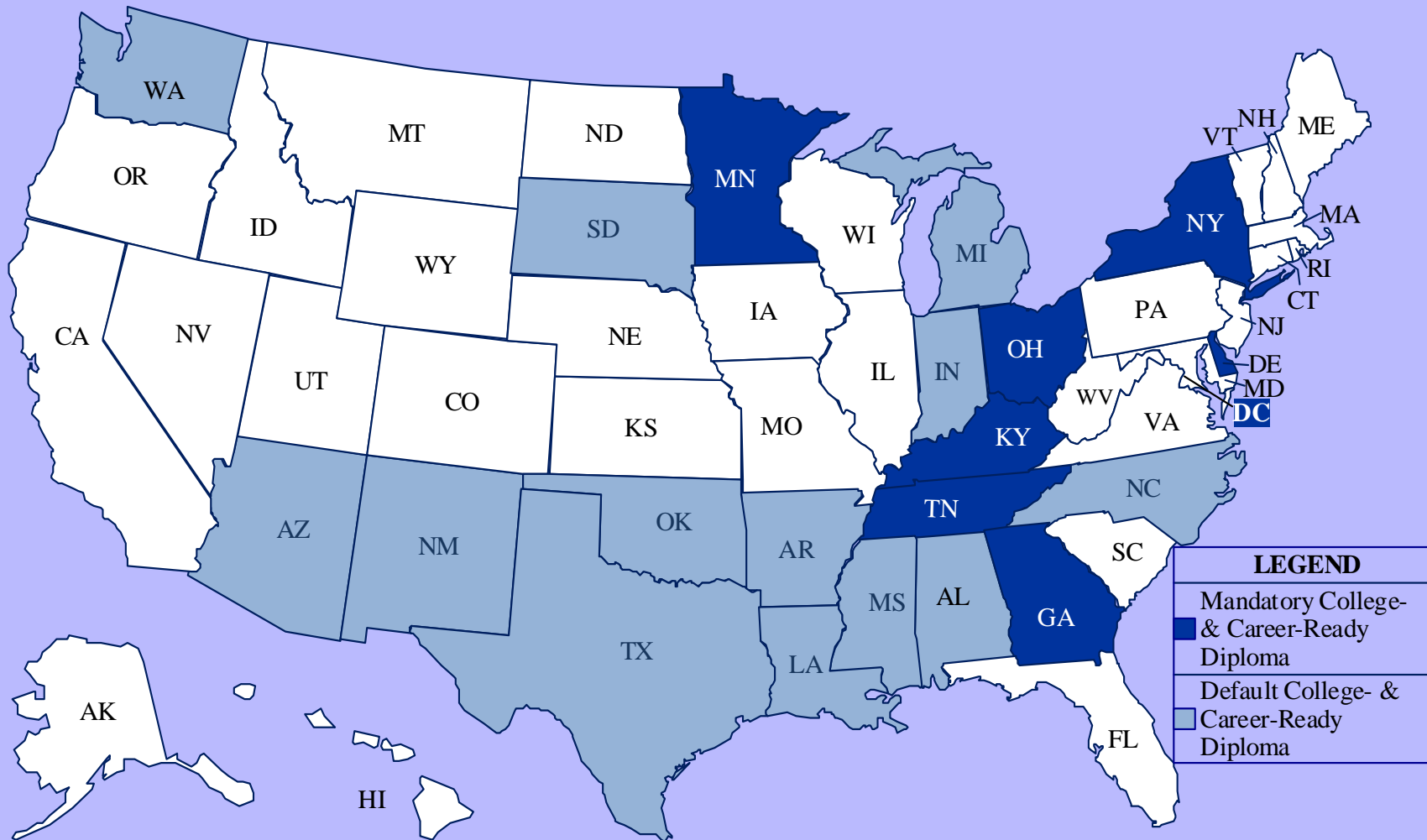
- Achieve reviewed mathematics standards in 16 states and English in 12 states.
- States have increased the rigor of their English and mathematics standards;
- State standards have a clear, well-defined common core in English and mathematics; and
- The common core emerged as a byproduct of aligning standards to real-world—postsecondary and career--demands.

Aligning Standards: Common Challenges

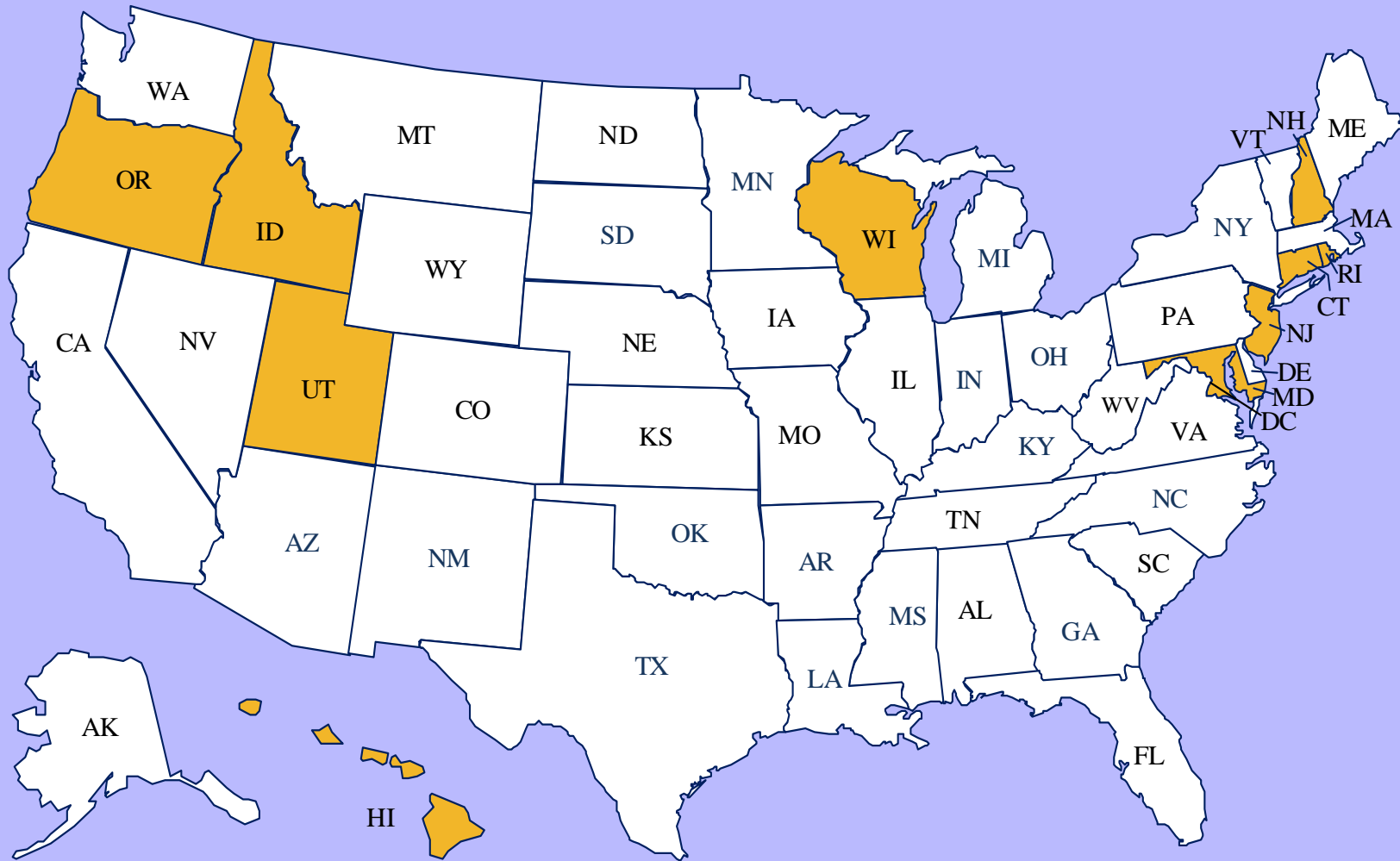
- Postsecondary and Business Engagement
 - States must ensure that the standards produced reflect the demands of postsecondary institutions and employers, and promote real acceptance from those communities.
- Vertical Alignment
 - States must back-map their standards from the end of high school all the way down through the lower grades to ensure that their K–12 standards are vertically aligned.
- Fully Implement Standards
 - States must ensure that their standards provide a foundation for decisions on curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Raise graduation requirements to the college- and career-ready level

Twenty States & DC Now Require a College- and Career-Ready Diploma



Ten States Plan To Raise Requirements to the College- and Career-Ready Level



Raising Graduation Requirements: Common Challenges

- Ensure that as graduation *standards* are raised, graduation *rates* also improve.
- Create a system of intensive and sustained student supports.
- Ensure that teachers have access to better training, professional development and instructional tools.
- Provide guidance to teachers to ensure that rigorous courses are more engaging and relevant for students.
- Guard against course title inflation.
- Encourage proficiency based approaches.

**Build college- and career-
ready measures into statewide
high school assessment
systems**

College- and Career-Ready Measures

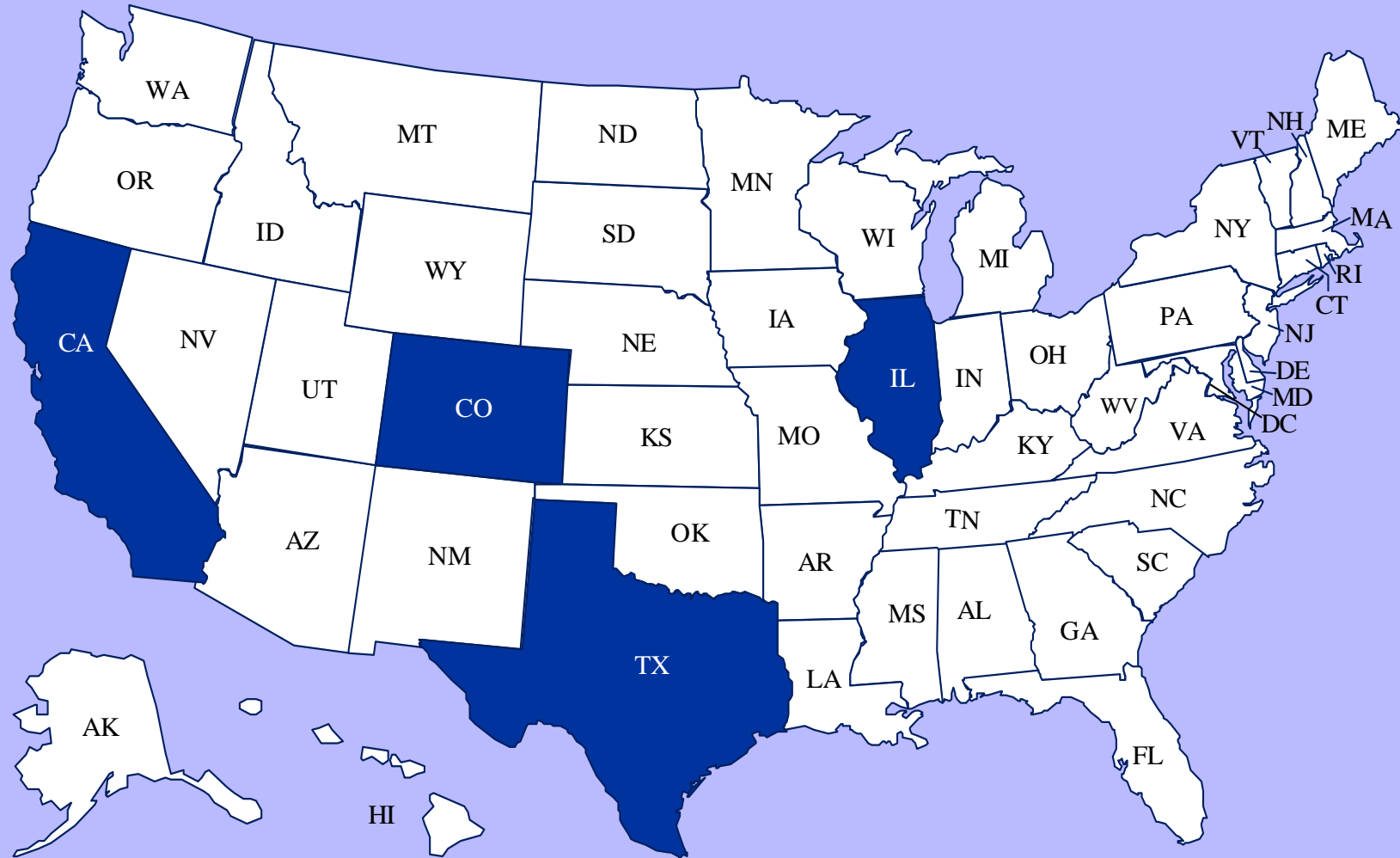
- To help prepare students academically for a successful transition from secondary to post-secondary education and the workplace, states need more than their existing tests.
- States need a component of their high school assessment systems that measures the more advanced skills valued by postsecondary institutions and employers.

Build College- and Career-Ready Measures into Statewide High School Assessment Systems

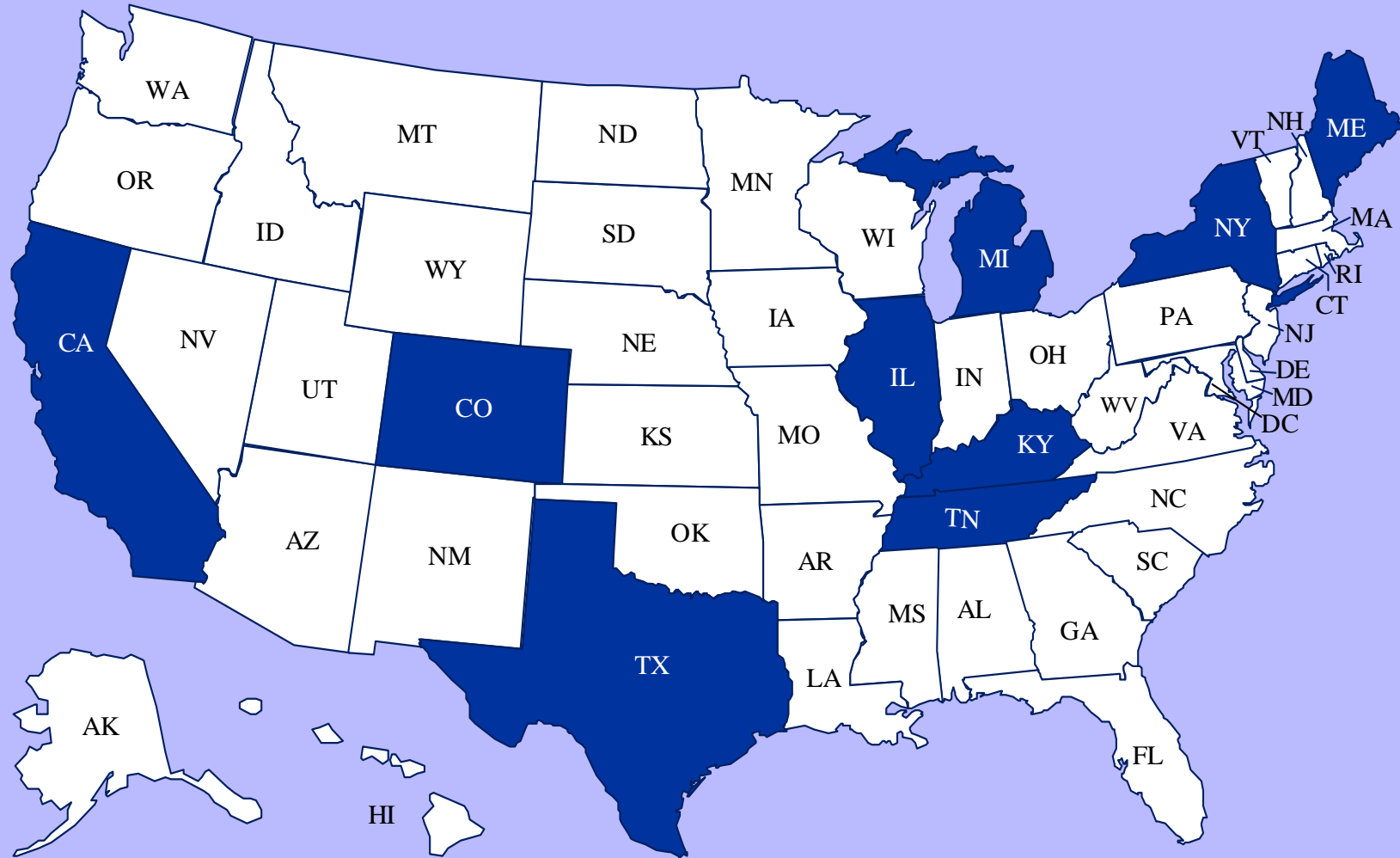
- **Nine states** administer high school assessments also used by postsecondary institutions.
 - End-of-course: **one** state
New York
 - Comprehensive high school assessments: **two** states
California and Texas
 - College admissions tests – the ACT or SAT: **six** states
Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan and Tennessee

- **Twenty-three** additional states report plans to build college- and career-ready assessments into their statewide testing system.

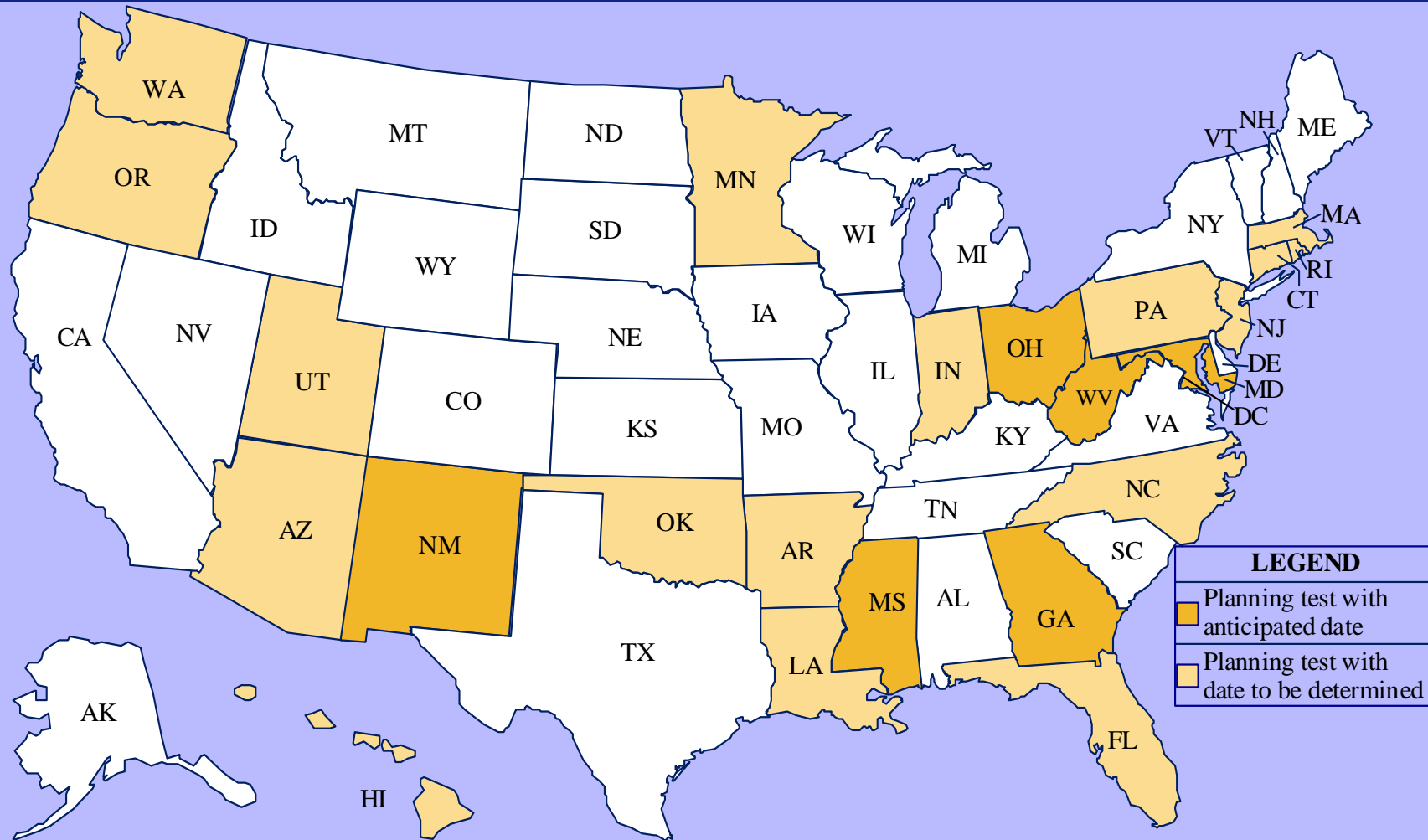
States with a College- and Career- Ready Assessments at the Time of the 2005 Summit



Nine States Have Now Built College- and Career-Ready Measures into Statewide Assessment Systems



Twenty-three States Are Developing or Planning College- and Career-Ready Tests



ADP Algebra II End-of-Course Exam

- Fourteen states have developed a common end of course exam in Algebra II aligned with ADP math benchmarks
 - AR, AZ, HI, IN, KY, MA, MD, MN, NC, NJ, OH, PA, RI & WA
- Purposes of the test:
 - To improve Algebra II curriculum and instruction in high schools;
 - To serve as an indicator of readiness for first-year college credit-bearing courses;
 - To provide a common and consistent measure of student performance across states over time.
- Nearly 100,000 students in 12 states took the exam in spring, 2008. First results to be issued this month.

College-and Career-ready Testing: Common Challenges

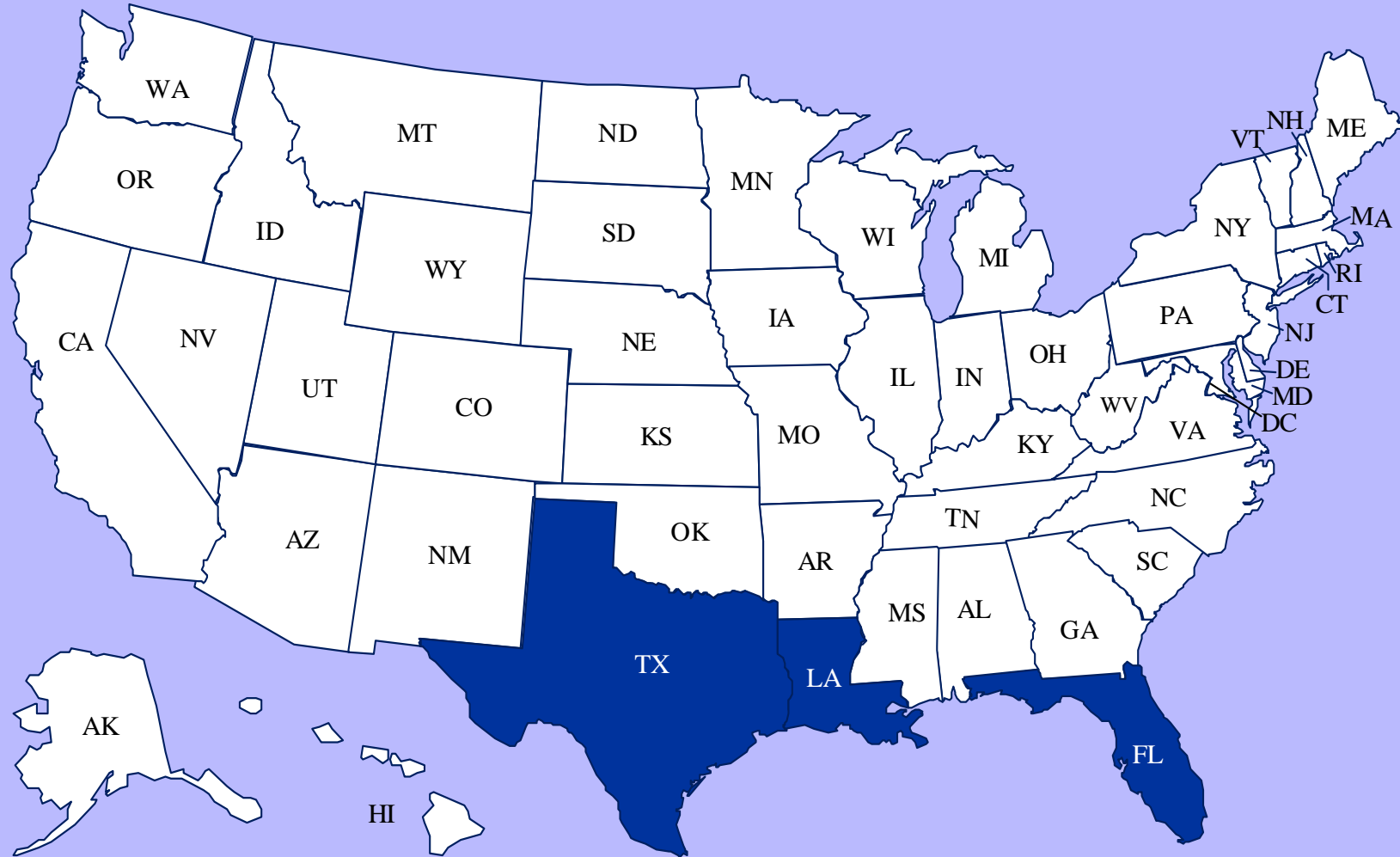
- Ensure alignment of assessments with state college/career-ready standards.
- Involve postsecondary systems & institutions in development/review of high school assessments to ensure their acceptance.
- Work with postsecondary systems/institutions to waive placement tests for students scoring at the college/career-ready level on high school assessments.
- Develop strategies for helping students who do not score at the college/career-ready level.

P-20 Longitudinal Data Systems

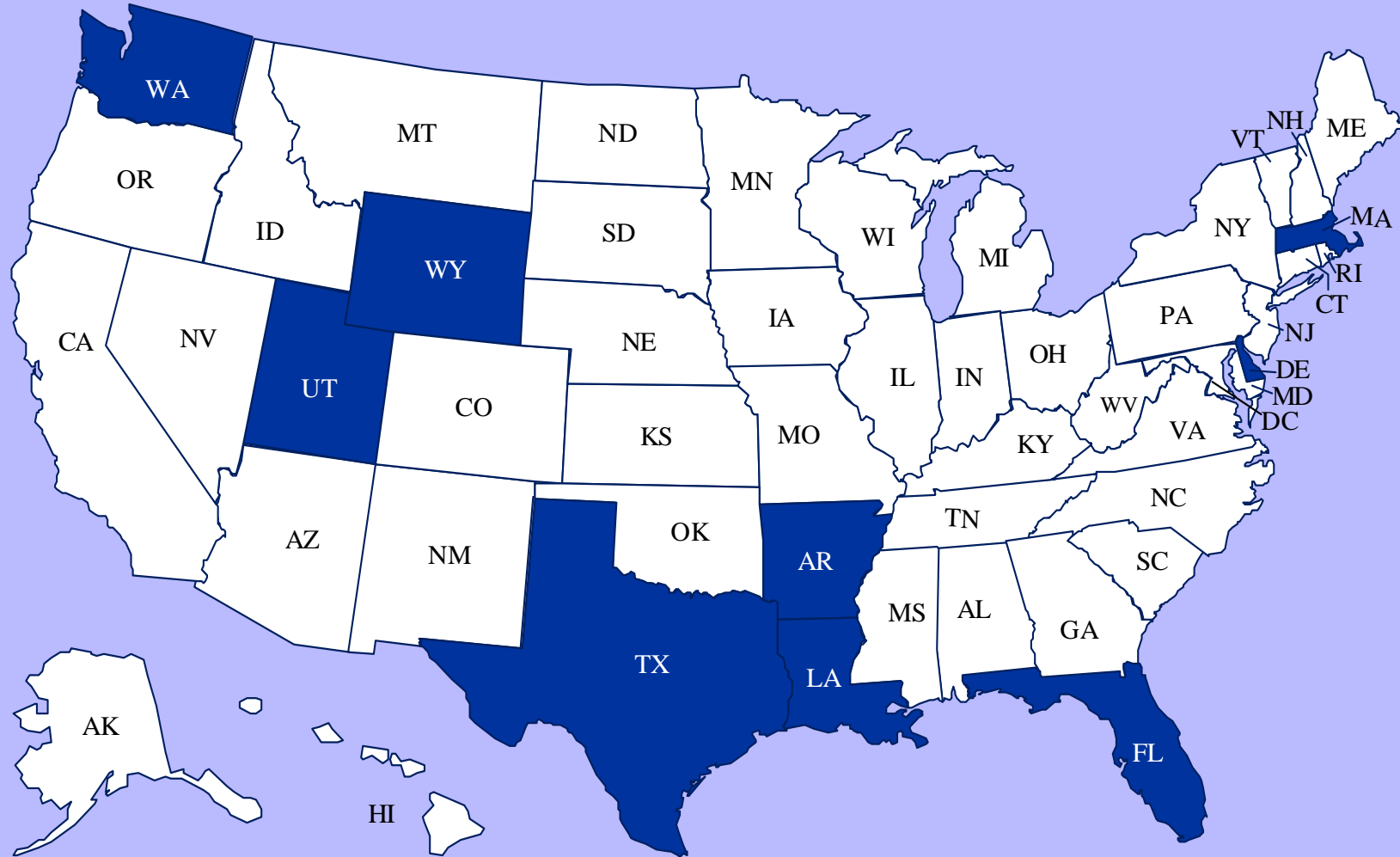
Nearly Every State Plans To Create a P–20 Longitudinal Data System

- **Nine states** report that they have P-20 longitudinal data systems in place, capable of tracking an individual student's progress from pre-K through college graduation.
- **Thirty-seven others** and the **District of Columbia** have plans to develop or operationalize P-20 longitudinal data systems, including at least two in 2008.
- The remaining **four states** report having no plans.
 - *Montana, Nebraska, Vermont and West Virginia*

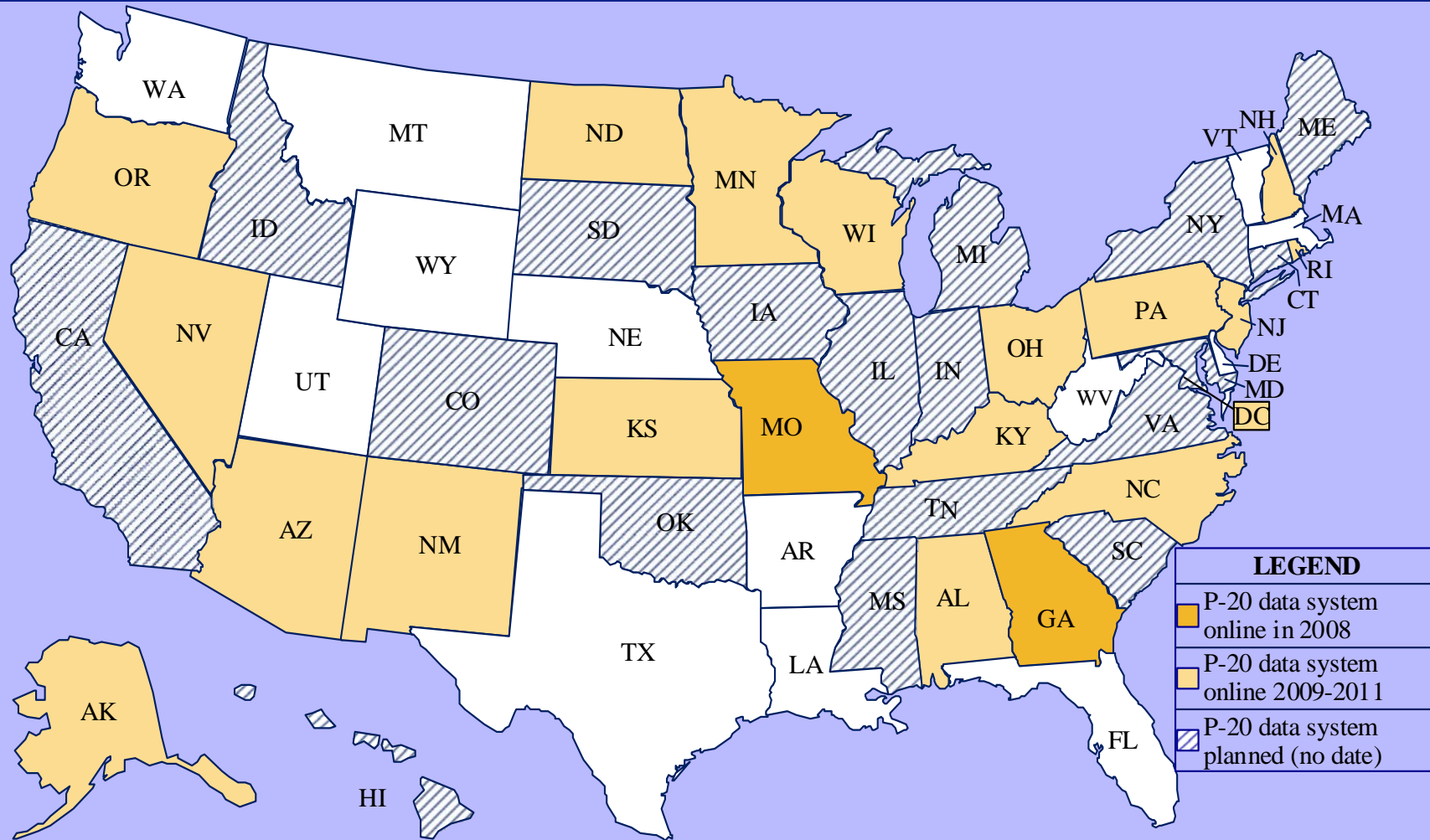
States with P-20 Longitudinal Data Systems at the Time of the 2005 Summit



Nine States Have Now Created a P-20 Longitudinal Data System



Thirty-Seven States & DC Are Developing or Planning P-20 Longitudinal Data Systems



P–20 Longitudinal Data Systems: Common Challenges

- Policy & resource barriers more significant than technical ones.
- Privacy concerns a challenge for most states.
- Data systems must be accompanied by tools & training to help schools and school systems access, understand and act on the data.

**Hold high schools accountable
for the preparation of
students for postsecondary
success**

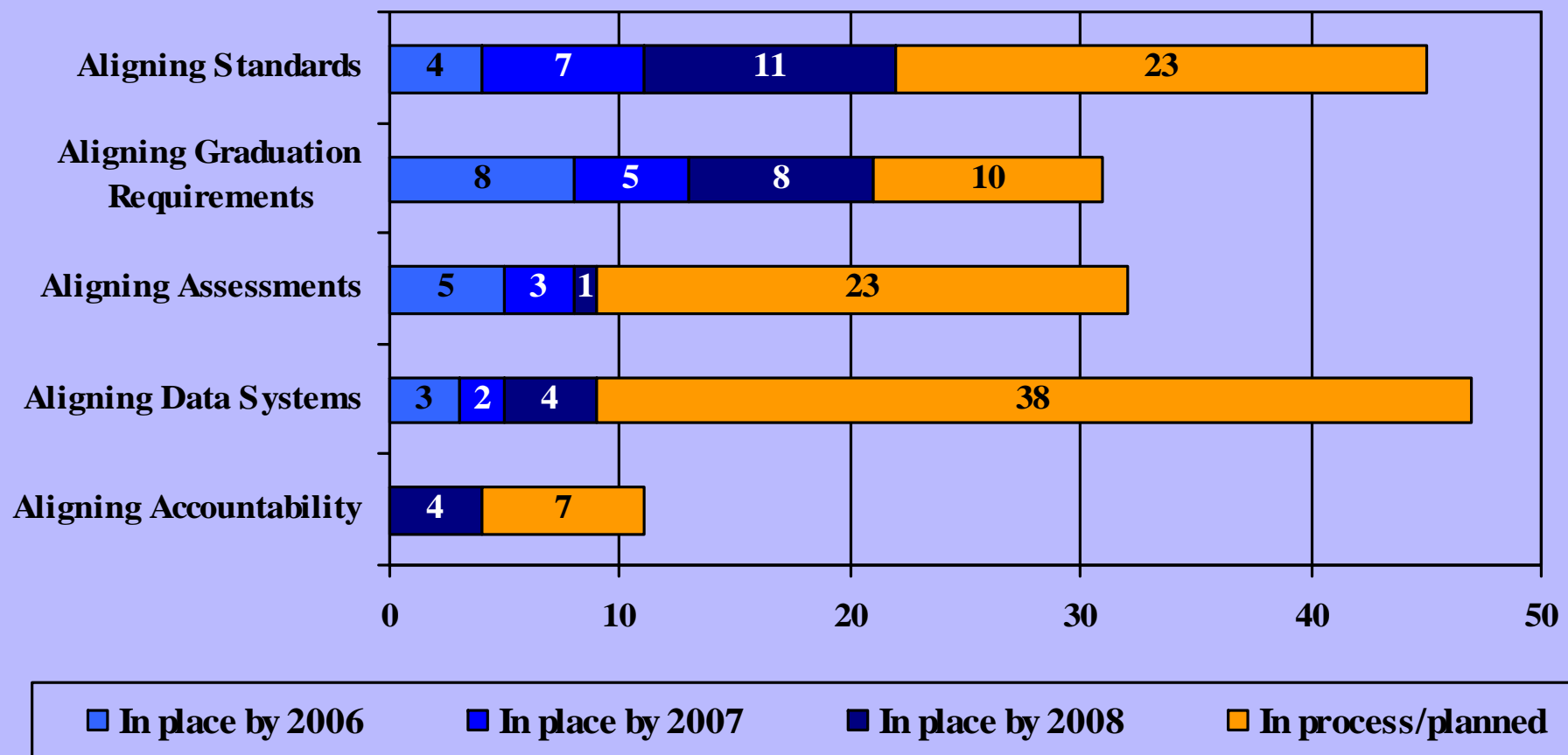
What Do Current High School Accountability Systems Value?

- “Proficiency” on tests measuring knowledge & skills students should learn by early in high school.
- Graduation rates.
- Other measures, such as attendance.
- But college and career readiness rarely measured and valued.

Few States Hold High Schools Accountable for College and Career Readiness

- An accountability system that measures college- and career-readiness should take into account key indicators including:
 - an accurate graduation rate (AZ, TX, AR, LA, FL, NC, SC, NY, MA, VT);
 - whether students have completed a college- and career-ready curriculum (OK, TX, LA, GA, NC, VA and NY) ;
 - whether students have reached a statewide college- and career-ready cut score on a high school assessment (none);
 - whether students have been placed into credit-bearing, non-remedial courses in reading, writing and mathematics (GA, and OK).

A Growing Number of States Have Policies that Help Prepare Graduates for College & Careers



What does it take for ADP to be successful?

- Strong *leadership*—governor, K-12, higher education and business leaders working towards the common goal of ensuring that all high school graduates are college and career ready.
- A sense of *urgency*, that solving this challenge is critical to a state's ability to compete in a global economy.
- Long term *commitment* to seeing the agenda implemented and sustained.

Contact Information

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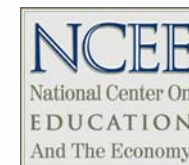
San Diego, CA



TOUGH CHOICES TOUGH TIMES

THE REPORT OF THE *new* COMMISSION ON
THE SKILLS OF THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE

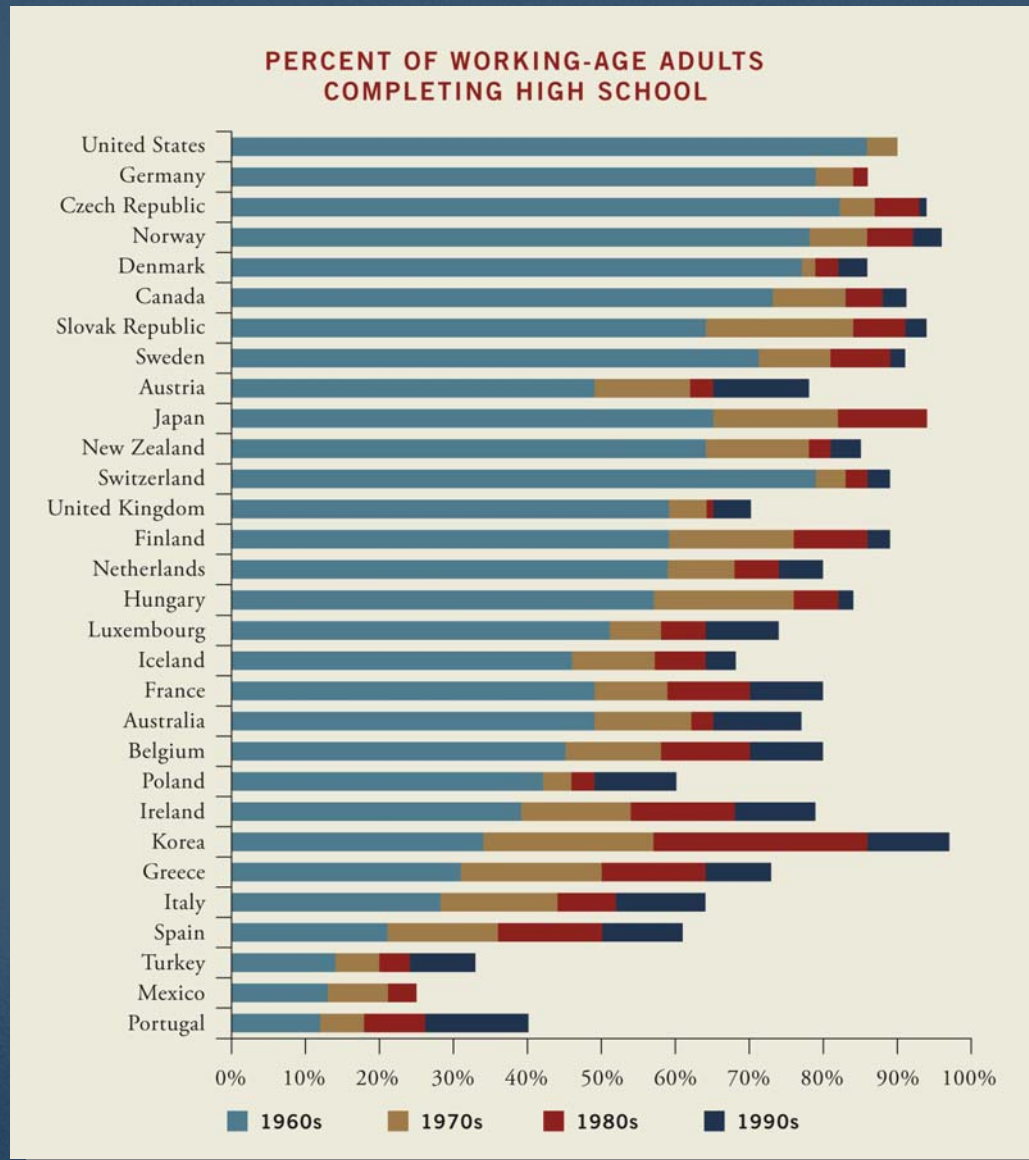
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Three Propositions

- Swiftly integrating world-wide labor market at ALL skill levels
- Poor countries producing large and growing numbers of HIGH SKILL, LOW COST workers
- Either United States produces best-educated, highest skilled, and most creative workforce in the world, OR
- our standard of living will STEADILY FALL

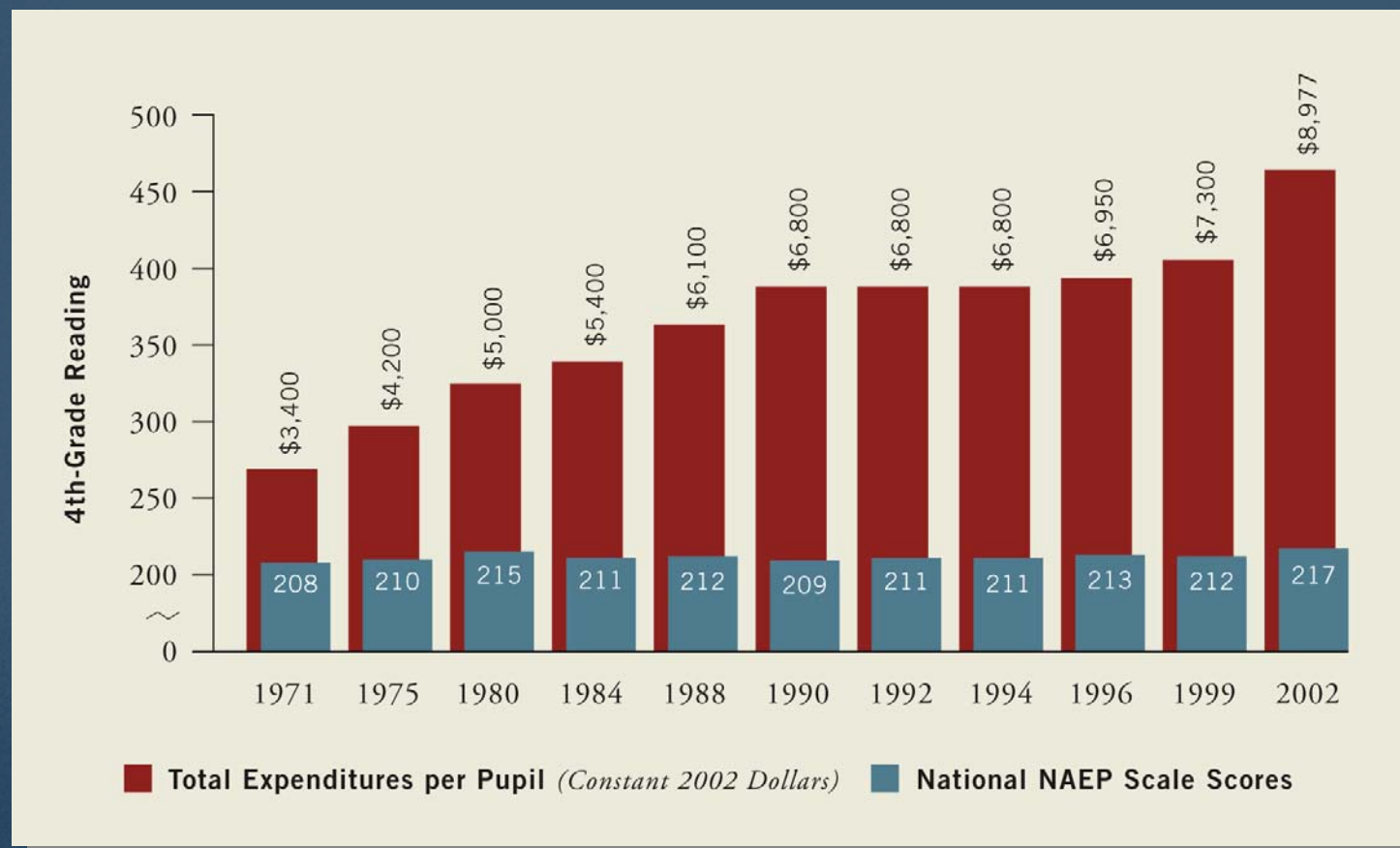
International Attainment



The Quality of Our Graduates is Mediocre

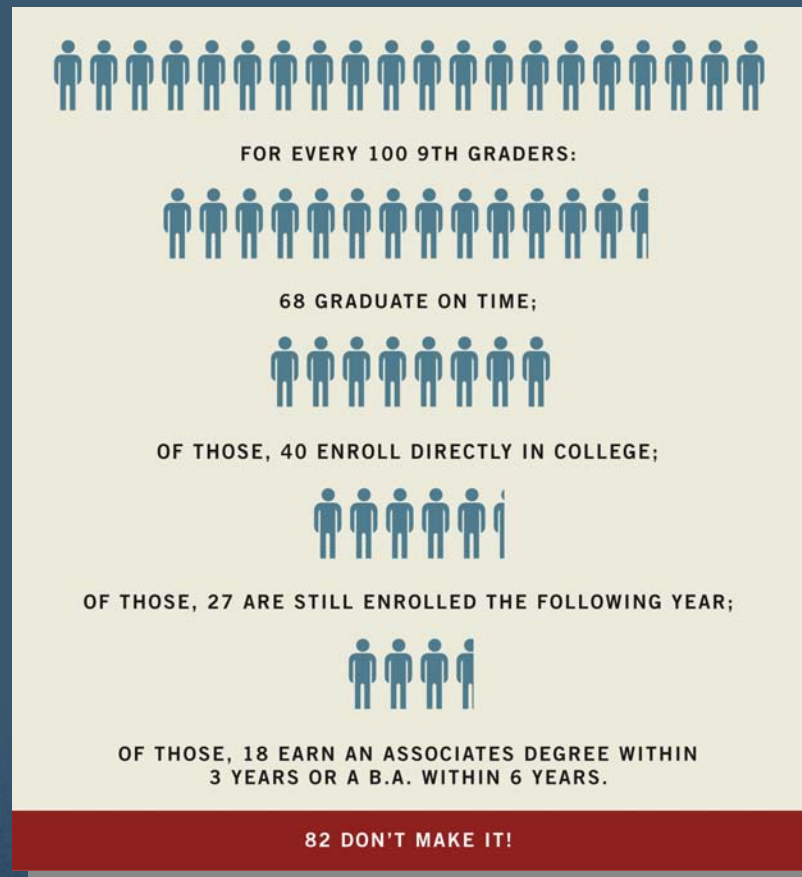
- OECD-PISA
 - Consistently below the median
- TIMSS
 - High School: We beat only Cyprus
- OECD Adult Literacy Survey
 - “Mediocre” Performance

U.S. Education System: Small Gains at Ever-Higher Cost



Sources: NCES NAEP Trends in Academic Progress Through 1999; NCES Digest of Education Statistics 2003.

Portrait of a Failing System



Source: James Hunt, Jr. and Thomas Tierney, *American Higher Education: How Does It Measure Up for the 21st Century?* (San Jose, Calif.: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, May 2006).

Why The Current System Isn't Up to the Job

- More money, more programs, more initiatives have all been tried and all have failed
- THE PROBLEM IS THE SYSTEM

Our Proposals



Building A NEW System
for the 21st Century

Step 1: Assume We Will Do the
Job Right the 1st Time

Step 2: Make Much More Efficient
Use of Our Resources

Step 3: Invest in Early
Childhood Education

Step 4: Recruit Teachers From the
Top 3rd of College Grads

Step 5: Create High Performance
Schools, Districts Everywhere
-Contract Schools
-Finance


Step 6: Provide Strong Support to
Disadvantaged Students

Step 7: Rebuild Standards,
Assessment and Curriculum

Step 8: Provide Free Education
For All to New Standard

Step 9: Create New GI Bill—
Lifelong Learning Support

Step 10: Create Regional
Economic Development Authorities



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