



# QUICK FACTS

*Pennsylvania Common Core: Advancing Student Achievement*

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*The American Association of University Women believes that quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society. AAUW is committed to ensuring strong academic principles and bias-free public education that closes the achievement gap for all children.*

AAUW strongly supports high-quality public education for all students. AAUW supports states' voluntary adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Pennsylvania's leaders worked with education officials from across the country to draft the standards to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Pennsylvania initially adopted CCSS in 2010 and joined 44 other states and the District of Columbia in raising the bar for student achievement in math and reading.

Across the country, too many of today's high school graduates are not ready for college or the workforce, including students in Pennsylvania. According to a recent study, one out of four high school graduates requires remedial education to enroll in college courses.<sup>1</sup> CCSS will help prepare students throughout the nation for success in college and careers.

### Pennsylvania's students deserve a high-quality and robust education

Today, nearly every high-paying job requires some postsecondary education or training. To compete for 21st century jobs, Pennsylvania's students need a strong academic base that prepares them for success in the knowledge-based economy.

Currently, the system in Pennsylvania is failing to help all students achieve their full potential. Thirty thousand Pennsylvania students between the ages of 16 and 19 dropped out of high school in 2011<sup>2</sup>. Even more alarming, Pennsylvania's college graduation rate among adults lags 29 percent behind America's highest-performing state.<sup>3</sup>

### Pennsylvania's students are not prepared for future high-skilled jobs

- 85% of Pennsylvania jobs are middle- or high-skill, requiring education beyond a high school diploma<sup>4</sup>
- 35.8% of Pennsylvania adults have an associate's degree or higher<sup>5</sup>
- 34% of employers deem the preparation of newly-hired high school graduates as "deficient"<sup>6</sup>

### If we want Pennsylvania's students to achieve, we need to expect more.

CCSS provides a new path for teachers to develop a more rigorous curriculum and raise the bar for students to become active learners and independent thinkers. By raising expectations and providing support to help students reach them, children in Pennsylvania will be better prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to prosper in higher education and future careers.

In Pennsylvania, adults with a bachelor's degree earn more than twice as much as high school dropouts.

#### Mean annual income

- Bachelor's: \$48,200
- High school dropout: \$20,835

#### Unemployment Rate

- Bachelor's: 3.8%
- High school dropout: 16.3%

#### Poverty Rate

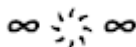
- Bachelors: 3.9%
- High school dropout: 24.8%

#### College graduation rates among Pennsylvania adults

- All students: 27.8%
- Hispanic students: 13.7%
- Black students: 15.7%

### There is broad support for Common Core in Pennsylvania

- 58% of Pennsylvania teachers believe CCSS will improve students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills.
- "The Common Core will provide teachers, students, families and communities with the truth about how children are doing academically and ensure that students graduate from high school ready for college or the workforce."  
— Rosalyn J. McPherson, President of the Urban League of Philadelphia
- "If we want to truly help the commonwealth's high school graduates be prepared for the next chapter of their lives, we need to recalibrate our expectations and expect more from students so they can achieve more in the classroom. The higher-order problem-solving and critical-thinking skills reflected in the Pennsylvania Core Standards are what our students need to succeed."  
— William Bartle, Education Policy Director, Pennsylvania Partnership for Children, Harrisburg
- "The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) prepares students through fewer, clearer, and higher standards; therefore, it's not about having students do more, but ensuring students have a mastery understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful."  
— A+ Schools Pittsburgh, Education Committee



### Additional Resources

- American Association of University Women, Position on No Child Left Behind/ Elementary and Secondary Education Act <http://www.aauw.org/resource/aauws-position-on-no-child-left-behind/>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative, Frequently Asked Questions <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>
- Thomas Fordham Institute, Common Core in the Districts: An Early Look at Early Implementers <http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/common-core-in-the-districts>
- Scholastic, California Teachers Are Enthusiastic About the Implementation of the Common Core, Even as They Acknowledge Challenges Ahead <http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/ca-2.htm>
- National Center for Literacy Education, Remodeling Literacy Learning Together: Paths to Standards Implementation <http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/remodeling-together>

<sup>1</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, "Hot Topics in Higher Education: Reforming Remedial Education," available at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/improving-college-completion-reforming-remedial.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," Census ID S1501

<sup>4</sup> National Skills Coalition, "Middle-Skill Jobs State-by-State: Pennsylvania," <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/middle-skill-fact-sheets-2014/NSC-Pennsylvania-MiddleSkillFS-2014.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," Census ID S1501.

<sup>6</sup> Civic Enterprises and Corporate Voices for Working Families, "Across the Great Divide: Perspectives of CEOs and College Presidents on America's Higher Education and Skills Gap" (2011), [http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/across\\_the\\_great\\_divide.pdf](http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/across_the_great_divide.pdf).