

**You can customize the following templates to:**

- Publicly express support and make the case for WHY the state's college- and career-ready standards and assessments are so critical *before* the new K–12 assessment results are released. Getting out in front of the score release will be critical.
- Play an active role and shift gears to focus more on explaining HOW you are providing support for students *when* the results of the new K–12 assessment results are released.

**Sample templates for before and when the results are released include:**

- Board resolution (for use before the results are released)
- Op-ed (for use before the results are released, can be adapted for when the results are released or after)
- Press release (for use when the results are released)
- Social media posts and infographics (for use when the results are released)
- Talking points for speakers (for use when the results are released or after)
- State profile template (for use any time)

To download electronic versions, go to: [www.higheredforhigherstandards.org/proficient-means-prepared](http://www.higheredforhigherstandards.org/proficient-means-prepared).

## SAMPLE BOARD RESOLUTION

**NOTE:** *This resolution is adapted from one adopted by the New York State University Board of Trustees on May 7, 2014.*

### MEMORANDUM

#### Action Requested

This resolution provides support, by COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, for college- and career-ready (CCR) standards and aligned assessments. The implementation of these standards in STATE will ensure that all students are college and career ready and lay a foundation for student success at our higher education institutions.

#### Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas in 2009 STATE joined a nationwide coalition to collaboratively improve and increase the rigor of educational standards in the United States; and

Whereas the CCR standards are internationally benchmarked, aligned with postsecondary education expectations, and inclusive of higher-order skills that students need to succeed in college and careers; and

Whereas many high school graduates are not college and career ready, extending time to degree or leading to noncompletion, exacerbating student debt and loan defaults and costing STATE colleges more than \$\_\_\_\_\_ annually to provide remediation; and

Whereas COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY remains committed to partnering with our colleagues in PK-12 education through a cradle-to-career approach to closing the remediation gap; and

Whereas holding our education system and our students to higher standards will make STATE students more competitive in today's global workforce and economy;

Whereas higher standards must be aligned to an equally strong assessment system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, through its Board of Trustees, endorses the CCR standards and aligned assessments and supports the TITLE OF HIGHER ED LEADER's continued leadership in advocating for their effective implementation.

## SAMPLE OP-ED 1: BEFORE THE RESULTS ARE RELEASED

**NOTE:** *This sample op-ed is written assuming it will be placed BEFORE the K–12 test scores are released. It focuses more on WHY the new standards and tests are needed.*

*If you prefer to place it ON THE DAY OF THE RELEASE OR AFTER, you will need to adjust the verb tenses. And at that point we recommend you focus more on the kinds of expanded supports you will be providing students, while continuing to remind people WHY this is so important. See sample 2.*

### By **STATE LEADER**

This past spring students in grades 3 through high school took a new test, the NAME OF TEST. The assessment is very different. And it's better, measuring what graduates should know and be able to do, such as think critically, analyze complex reading material, explain their math answers, and communicate effectively. Everyone now has a shared understanding about what it takes to be ready for college or careers and what we all have to do to help more students succeed.

It's time. The reality is that too many high school graduates aren't ready for college. *ADD 1–2 DATA POINTS [See the "State Profile Template" for advice on where to find state-specific data.]* High percentages of students arrive on our campuses needing remediation, covering material they should have learned in high school. Similarly, many businesses say they cannot fill jobs because applicants do not have the right knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

Although the new test results will not be announced until DATE, we can say with certainty that this test is a better measure of college and career readiness than our previous state assessments. Students who score well in high school will be prepared for college and work. For students who need more help to get ready, STATE U will be able to offer more targeted supports. And high achievers will benefit from more challenging assignments. That's because NAME OF TEST will provide more accurate, meaningful, and timely information to students, educators, and families alike. That's cause for celebration.

We know that some parents, especially of high school students, might be concerned that their child's scores are lower this year compared to previous years.

The standards for the end of high school have been raised to be in line with the expectations we have for students starting college and careers. We will not use these test scores to close doors but to help open them so that more students are able to successfully transition to college and careers without the need for remediation. Our goal is to make sure students are more successful from day one.

These new expectations are set at the right level. They reflect *our* expectations in higher education. Indeed, our faculty were involved in developing the new standards and tests and in setting more meaningful achievement levels. Everyone now has a shared understanding about what it takes to be college and career ready, which in turns means that more students will be prepared for success, which is good for everyone.

Setting high expectations is the right thing to do. Every year, many students who "did well" in high school and earned a diploma are surprised when they get to college and learn they have to take basic English and math courses over again. Parents have sticker shock when they learn they have to pay for college courses that do not lead to a degree. High school graduates often are surprised and disappointed when they don't get hired. Others say they have not been challenged enough. No more surprises.

By getting more accurate information about students' college readiness in 11th grade, we will have an extra year to work more closely with our K–12 colleagues to help students prepare. And having better information in the earlier grades will help ensure that more students are on track every step of the way.

Indeed, we have been working intensively over the past several months to expand our 12th Grade College Bridge Programs and take steps to reduce the need for costly freshmen remediation courses. Priority one is supporting students. And we will have some important announcements later this summer/fall.

Meanwhile, let's stay the course. Educators and students have been working very hard over the past three years to implement these new standards. Don't undermine their hard work by turning backward, as some policymakers have proposed.

With our collective support, students can meet these higher expectations. But only if we give them a chance.

---

*Add boilerplate about state leader and institution.*

## SAMPLE OP-ED 2: WHEN THE RESULTS ARE RELEASED

**NOTE:** *This sample op-ed is written assuming it will be placed when the K–12 test scores are released or after.*

### By STATE LEADER

The state ANNOUNCED TODAY/RECENTLY RELEASED results of the new test that students in grades 3 through high school took last spring. The results confirmed what we already know: Too many high school graduates aren't ready for college or careers. And too many students fall off track in the earlier grades and never catch up. ADD 1–2 DATA POINTS *[See the "State Profile Template" for advice on where to find state-specific data.]*

High percentages of students arrive on our campuses needing remediation, re-learning material they should have learned in high school. Similarly, many businesses say jobs remain vacant because applicants do not have the right preparation.

That's old news.

What's new is that we now have standards and assessments in place that will provide the information we need to get more students college and career ready before they graduate. And offer the high achievers more opportunities to excel.

These new expectations are set at the right level. They reflect *our* expectations as higher education leaders. Indeed, we were involved in developing the new standards and tests and in setting more meaningful achievement levels. Everyone now has a shared understanding about what it takes to be college or career ready. That means schools can focus their resources to help many more students graduate well prepared for their next steps. And they can offer more challenging assignments to the higher achieving students.

We at STATE U are prepared to help. Armed with the new, more meaningful assessments, we will partner with high schools to provide college-ready bridge courses and other supports to help students transition to our institutions better prepared.

For example, GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU WILL BE WORKING WITH K–12 PARTNERS TO STRENGTHEN STUDENTS' PREPARATION IN GRADES K–12.

And on our own campus, we will GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU WILL BE STRENGTHENING YOUR OWN PROGRAMS IN REMEDIATION, MENTORING, COUNSELING, ETC.

Setting high expectations is the right thing to do. With more accurate information about students' college readiness in 11th grade, we will have an extra year to work more closely with our K–12 colleagues to help students prepare. We can strengthen our own programs so that entering freshmen get on track from the start. And having better information in the earlier grades will help ensure that more students are on track every step of the way.

That's good news for students, for higher education, and for our communities.

---

*Add boilerplate about state leader and institution.*

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

**NOTE:** *This assumes the release will be announced WHEN OR AFTER the test results are shared publicly.*

### **STATE U ANNOUNCES TWO NEW PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS; SCORES WILL BE USED TO “OPEN DOORS” AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES**

DATE—\_\_\_\_\_ today announced plans to step up its efforts to work with K–12 systems to help prepare more students for college — and to better support them when they arrive on campus. The university will expand its 12th grade bridge initiative to help more students get on track for entering college without the need for remediation. And for entering freshmen who still need help, \_\_\_\_\_ is developing an approach that has them take credit-bearing courses along with intensive supports rather than simply putting them in traditional remedial courses that haven’t been as effective.

The announcement was made as the state released scores on the new tests that students in grade 3 through high school took this spring. The proportion of students meeting grade-level standards is lower than it was last year. That’s not because students are learning any less, but because the test is very different, with a greater emphasis on writing, communications, and problem solving.

“We’re not using these test scores to close doors, but to help open them so that more college students are more successful from day one,” said \_\_\_\_\_, who leads STATE U. “These scores do not surprise us. In fact, they confirm what we already know: Too few students are adequately prepared to succeed in college or careers. Now we have the information we need to help them.”

ADD relevant remediation or NAEP data from your state—2 data points. [See the “State Profile Template” for guidance on where to find this data.]

Reflecting on the scores released today, education and business leaders said K–12 students deserve an honest and timely assessment of where they stand. Too many students who “did well” in high school and earn a diploma are surprised when they get to college and learn they have to take basic English and math courses over again. And parents have sticker shock when they learn they have to pay for college courses that do not lead to a degree.

Having more accurate information earlier helps students catch up before they get to college. And it helps colleges be more effective, so that they are helping more students earn their degrees on time. These higher standards and tests help ensure that proficient in high school means truly prepared for college or careers, whatever path each student chooses.

“Priority one is supporting students,” said \_\_\_\_\_. The expanded 12th Grade College Bridge program will do \_\_\_\_\_, serving more than \_\_\_\_\_ students.

Starting in school year \_\_\_\_, the university’s co-requisite remediation program will do \_\_\_\_\_. More than \_\_\_\_\_ students will be helped.

“Our goal is to help more students graduate on time. These K–12 scores provide a helpful early warning about how prepared students are to succeed at \_\_\_\_\_,” said \_\_\_\_\_. “The initiatives we announced today will help accelerate success. That’s good for everyone: students, families, higher education, and the communities we serve.”

#####

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

### Tweets

- “Lower test results are not bad news. Now we can give our kids the help they need.” @StateUPresident
- “With new standards and tests, being proficient truly means students are prepared or on track for college and careers.” @StateUPresident
- “With new standards and tests, we can help kids avoid college remediation, saving families time and money.” @StateUPresident
- “With new standards and tests, we can better prepare our students for today’s careers and life.” @StateUPresident
- “New test scores are no surprise and won’t stand in the way of your child going to college or being promoted.” @StateUPresident
- “New test results mean we now have the info to help students be ready from day 1.” @StateUPresident
- “Parents deserve to have a true picture of how their children are performing.” @StateUPresident
- “Better-prepared high school graduates will graduate college faster, saving money and filling local jobs.” @StateUPresident
- We are helping better prepare our kids for college and careers. Find out how: [link](#)
- Our 12th grade bridge program can help your child be better prepared for college. Find out more: [link](#)

### Facebook

- Test results released today show that only XX percent of our state’s students are proficient. But the good news is that now we really know where our kids stand. Too many high school graduates aren’t ready for college or careers. And too many younger students are off track. Find out how we are working with K–12 to close these preparation gaps: [link](#)
- Now we know: Only XX percent of our state’s students are proficient. With good information from the new state standards and tests, we can help students better prepare for college and careers. And make sure younger students are on track. Find out how we are working with K–12 to close these preparation gaps: [link](#)
- The test results are in. And for the first time they are based on honest expectations for what it takes to be college or career ready. High school students who pass these tests will be able to avoid remediation, saving time and money. Younger students will know they’re on track. High achievers will be offered more challenges. Proficient will mean prepared. [Link to state release](#)
- The test results are in. Now we need to stay the course because setting higher expectations is the right thing to do — for our students, our businesses, and our communities. [Link to state release](#)

# INFOGRAPHICS

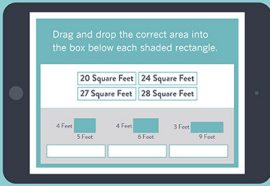

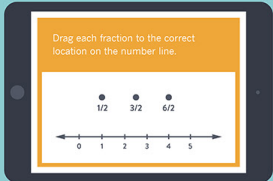


The state profile template in this section contains charts and graphics that you can customize to use with your social media posts.

Stand for Children and other advocacy organizations also have infographics that you can share on social media, such as:

## POP QUIZ: WHY DO WE NEED BETTER TESTING?

With high academic standards come better assessments that measure critical thinking, not just rote memorization.

COMPARE THESE REAL TEST QUESTIONS AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF WHICH IS BETTER.

THE NEW TESTS	OLD TESTS
<p><b>MATH - 3RD GRADE</b> The following questions ask students to solve measurement calculations.</p>	
 <p>Drag and drop the correct area into the box below each shaded rectangle.</p> <p>20 Square Feet   24 Square Feet 27 Square Feet   28 Square Feet</p> <p>4 Feet   4 Feet   3 Feet 5 Feet   6 Feet   9 Feet</p>	<p>Look at the array.</p>  <p>What is the perimeter of this array?</p> <p>A. 14 units   B. 18 units C. 20 units   D. 21 units</p>
<p><b>MATH - 3RD GRADE</b> These questions ask students to understand a fraction as a number on the number line.</p>	
 <p>Drag each fraction to the correct location on the number line.</p> <p><math>\frac{1}{2}</math>   <math>\frac{3}{2}</math>   <math>\frac{6}{2}</math></p> <p>0   1   2   3   4   5</p>	<p>Which number names the point on the number line.</p>  <p>A. <math>\frac{1}{2}</math>   B. <math>\frac{3}{2}</math>   C. 1.1%   D. 1%   E. Not here</p>
<p><b>READING AND WRITING - 5TH GRADE</b> These questions ask students to read a passage and respond based on their learnings.</p>	
 <p>Today you will research three popguns and research other things all night. You will need to research and have you and read a novel. As you review these sources, you will gather information and answer questions about the source of popguns for you can with an essay.</p> <p>Directions: Read the passage about popguns. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be around these animals. Then use the passage to help you write a multi paragraph story.</p> <p>Writing Topic: Imagine what it would be like to live around popguns. Write a multi paragraph story for your teacher that includes the popguns around on one of the characters. Use what you have learned about popguns to help you create your story.</p>	<p>Directions: Read the passage about popguns. As you read the passage, think about what it would be like to be around these animals. Then use the passage to help you write a multi paragraph story.</p> <p>Writing Topic: Imagine what it would be like to live around popguns. Write a multi paragraph story for your teacher that includes the popguns around on one of the characters. Use what you have learned about popguns to help you create your story.</p>

### THE NEW TESTS vs OLD TESTS


Students are asked to **solve multiple equations** so that "guess C" and move on" is a thing of the past.

Tests on computers give students experience with the technology they'll use in **school, college and career.**

Students are asked to **identify key components** of written pieces, and to **provide evidence** in their answers.

Share this infographic to help others decide which is better.

SHARE THIS INFOGRAPHIC



<http://stand.org/national/action/better-tests-you-decide>

# THE ACADEMIC CHECKUP

## ANATOMY OF A GOOD TEST



IT'S TIME TO MEASURE STUDENT LEARNING IN A NEW WAY - HERE'S HOW TO IDENTIFY A GOOD TEST FROM A BAD ONE:



### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

It helps your child succeed in college or career. Testing should be used to measure progress towards high expectations that set them up for success beyond high school.



### FAIRNESS

Your child's cousin in a neighboring city is held to the same expectations. All kids should have fair tests that hold them to the same high benchmarks.



### PROBLEM SOLVING & CRITICAL THINKING

Gone are the days of guessing "C" on an answer sheet. Good tests ask students to use critical thinking and problem solving by showing their work and providing evidence.



### INFORMS TEACHERS

Teachers can help students reach higher expectations by identifying early warning signs when a student is behind. Good tests should give teachers the data to identify when students are falling behind and tailor instruction to their needs.



### EMPOWERS PARENTS

Things parents should get out of good tests: timely feedback, clear results to discuss with their child's teacher, and ways to support their child's learning at home. Things they shouldn't get: confusion, frustration, and delayed results.

### SICK OF TESTS THAT DON'T HELP YOU OR YOUR CHILD?

Across the country, we've moved to higher standards and the next generation of better tests. Share this infographic to show others how to identify a good test.

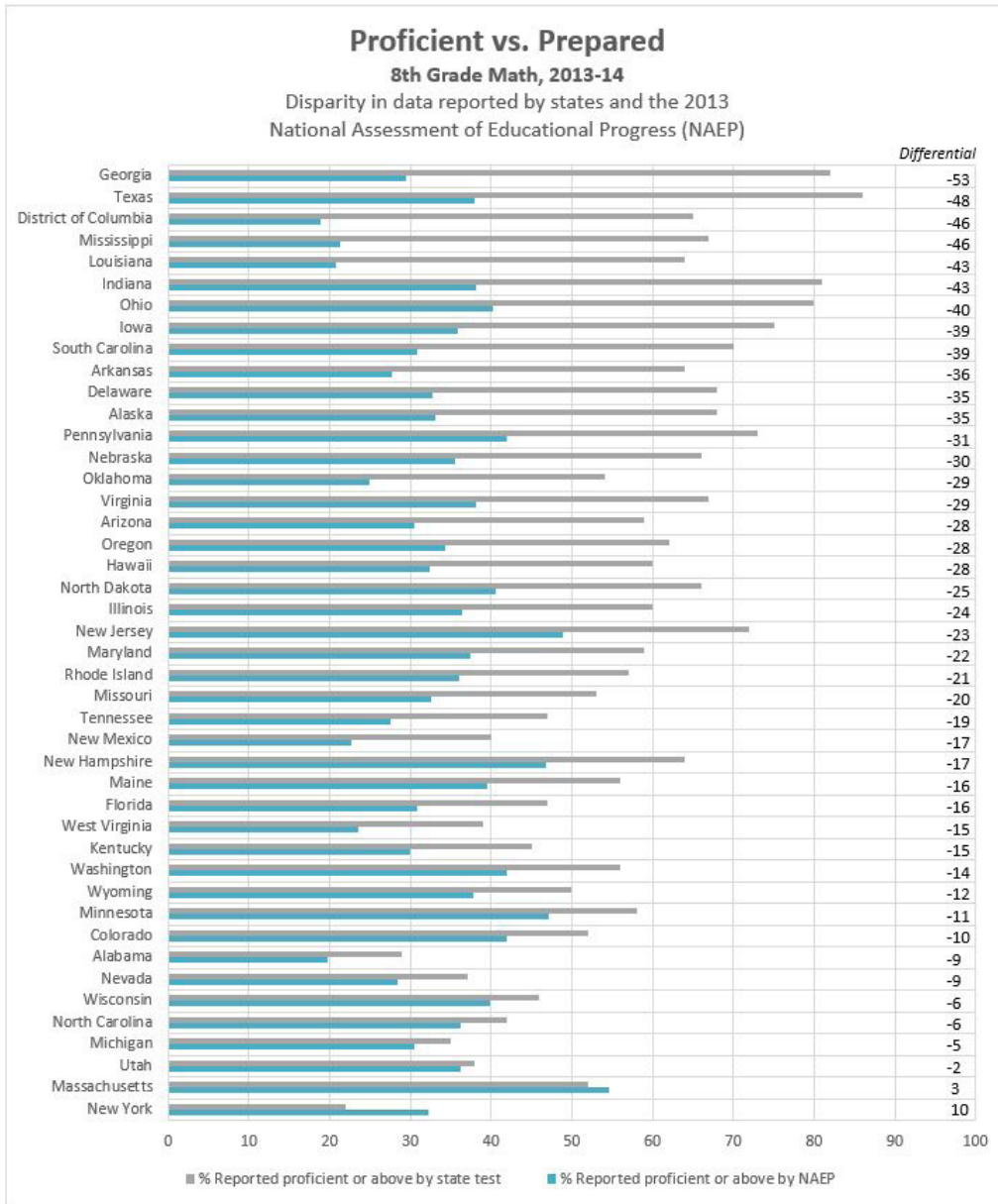
SHARE THIS INFOGRAPHIC



<http://stand.org/academic-check>



The Honesty Gap ([www.honestygap.org](http://www.honestygap.org)) and Achieve's *Proficient vs. Prepared* report ([www.achieve.org/files/NAEPBriefFINAL051415.pdf](http://www.achieve.org/files/NAEPBriefFINAL051415.pdf)) also provide data and graphics that can be used or turned into compelling visuals, then shared over social media with the proper attribution.



## SAMPLE TALKING POINTS FOR SPEAKERS

**NOTE:** *The following talking points can be used in various settings: with your board and other internal stakeholders; the media; policymakers; and others. They are drawn from the “Key Messages” tool.*

*These points can be used before the K–12 test scores are released or after. If after, we recommend you focus more on Point 3, the kinds of expanded supports you will be providing students.*

### 1. Too many high school graduates aren’t ready for college or careers. We need to close the preparation gap so that **proficient in high school** means **truly prepared for college or work**.

- Setting high expectations is the right thing to do.
- These K–12 expectations are set at the right level and reflect *our* expectations in higher education.
- This is an education issue, an economic issue, and a moral issue.
- Only about one-third of high school students are proficient in reading and math, according to NAEP.
- Internationally, our students trail their peers. On the latest PISA assessment taken by high school students around the world, U.S. students rank 36th in math, 28th in science, and 24th in reading. And according to a recent study by the Educational Testing Service, young adults in the U.S. (ages 16–34) rank at or near the bottom on international comparisons of problem solving, numeracy, and literacy skills. *[You can also use state-specific data for this message point. See “State Profile Template” for more.]*

### 2. These new standards and assessments will open doors for students and provide them with greater opportunities.

- We’re not using these test scores to close doors but to help open them so that more college students are more successful from day one.
- K–12 students deserve an honest and timely assessment of where they stand.
- We are working closely with our K–12 colleagues to use these new data to better prepare students before they start college. *[Add 1–2 specifics.]*
- And we are working on our own campuses to better prepare students to succeed once they enroll in college. *[Add 1–2 specifics.]*

### 3. We can do this.

- Students will rise to the challenge if we raise expectations and provide supports.
- Kentucky, for example, has greatly increased its college-ready rates after several years of implementing more challenging standards and assessments.
- Stay the course and don’t undermine our hard-working educators and students.

## STATE PROFILE TEMPLATE

**NOTE:** *The following page contains a sample state profile that you can update with your state's information to highlight the need for college- and career-ready standards and assessments. The profile also includes space for you to provide information about ways you are collaborating with the K–12 system and working at your own institutions to help students succeed in college.*

The charts can be edited in Word. If you do not have data for each indicator, you can get state-specific information from several sources, such as:

- **8th Grade Proficiency:** National Assessment of Educational Progress, [www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_math\\_2013/#/state-performance](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/state-performance)
- **College Readiness:** ACT, [www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr14/states.html](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr14/states.html)
- **Transition to College:** National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, [www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=119&year=2010&level=nation&mode=map&state=0](http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=119&year=2010&level=nation&mode=map&state=0)
- **Remediation:** Complete College America, <http://completecollege.org/college-completion-data>
- **Skills Gap:** National Skills Coalition, [www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/states](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/states)

You also can find information on the gap between proficiency levels on your state's previous test and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) — known as the honesty gap — at [www.honestygap.org](http://www.honestygap.org). This will provide a good indication of the level of rigor of your state's previous standards compared to the national NAEP benchmark.

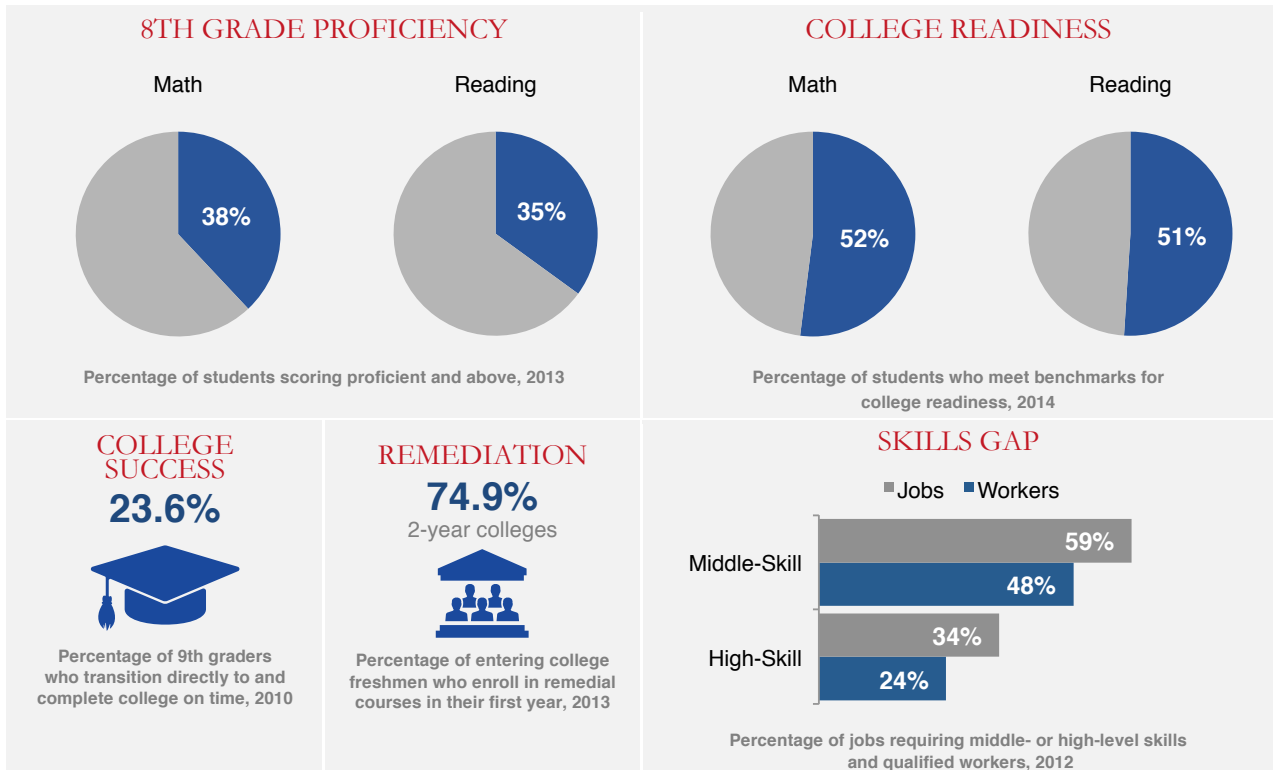
Often-cited international statistics that could supplement your state information include that on the latest **PISA** assessment taken by high school students around the world, U.S. students rank 36th in math, 28th in science, and 24th in reading. And according to a recent study by the **Educational Testing Service**, young adults in the U.S. (ages 16–34) rank at or near the bottom on international comparisons of problem solving, numeracy, and literacy skills.

To access the electronic version of the Word template, go to: [www.higheredforhigherstandards.org/proficient-means-prepared](http://www.higheredforhigherstandards.org/proficient-means-prepared).

[STATE NAME]

Proficient  
MEANS  
Prepared

The vast majority of students are currently not prepared or on track to succeed in college or in careers. That's a major reason why [STATE] is raising the standards and providing more supports.



### What higher education is doing to help better prepare students:

Add some specifics about what your institution is doing.

Sources: ACT, 2014, [www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr14/states.html](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr14/states.html); Complete College America, 2013, <http://completecollege.org/college-completion-data>; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2013, [www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_math\\_2013/#/state-performance](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/state-performance); National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2010, [www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=119&year=2010&level=nation&mode=map&state=0](http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=119&year=2010&level=nation&mode=map&state=0); National Skills Coalition, 2012, [www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/states](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/state-policy/states).