



Redefining Ready!



ENDORSED BY





Dan Domenech, the executive director of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, and Dr. David R. Schuler, the 2015-16 AASA President and superintendent of the high-performing, 12,000-student High School District 214 in Chicago's northwest suburbs, initiated the **Redefining Ready!** campaign and have been leading the charge nationally. The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK) and the National Superintendents Roundtable (NSR) have endorsed the initiative. A sample endorsement resolution is available at www.RedefiningReady.org.



America's high schools have a profound responsibility to ensure that our nation's students are college ready, career ready and life ready. Standardized test scores – traditionally used as the primary readiness indicator – do not always provide an accurate representation of our students' potential. Today's students are driven by ideas and innovations. They should not be reduced down to, or defined by, a single test score.

Our students are MORE than a SCORE.



Redefining Ready! is a national campaign launched by AASA – The School Superintendents Association, to introduce a new multi-metric, research based approach to determining what it means to be college ready, career ready, and life ready. This campaign is designed to change the national narrative regarding public education from a one-standardized-test judges all (students, teachers, parents, and communities) philosophy to a focus on readiness for our nation’s 50 million plus public school students.

Our nation’s teachers and school leaders provide students with rigorous academic programs, personalized and career-specific learning experiences, along with social and emotional skills that prepare them to be global citizens in an ever-changing world.

Students learn in a variety of ways. Therefore, they should be able to demonstrate readiness in a variety of ways. The new readiness indicators, developed from research by world-class organizations, more accurately reflect the educational landscape of the 21st century. Multiple metrics include Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, Algebra II, early college credits, industry credentials, attendance, and community service, among others.

We invite parents, teachers, school leaders, school boards, communities, advocacy organizations and state and national leaders to learn more about the new college and career readiness indicators and partner with us to embrace **Redefining Ready!**

Providing an opportunity to consider the whole child, we seek to redefine readiness and change the national narrative surrounding public education in the country by focusing on the three main areas of importance to students, parents, teachers, and employers: college readiness, career readiness, and life readiness. Since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, educators have looked to meet the needs of a diverse student body with a narrow focus on assessment results. Now with the Every Student Succeeds Act the law of the land, **Redefining Ready!** offers educators an opportunity to diversify the manner in which we measure student success overall. The following summary provides an overview of the research-based, multi-metric **Redefining Ready!** indicators and the research that led to their development.

To view the research source documents and add your support for the campaign, AASA encourages you to visit the AASA website www.aasa.org or the Redefining Ready! website www.RedefiningReady.org.



College Ready Indicators

Students are **College Ready** if they meet either the academic indicators **OR** standardized testing benchmarks listed below.

Academic Indicators

GPA 2.8 out of 4.0 and **one or more** of the following academic indicators:

- Advanced Placement Exam (3+)
 - Advanced Placement Course (A, B or C)
 - Dual Credit College English and/or Math (A, B or C)
 - College Developmental/Remedial English and/or Math (A, B or C)
 - Algebra II (A, B or C)
 - International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)
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Standardized Testing Benchmarks (minimum score)

- SAT Exam: Math (530) | Reading and Writing (480)
 - ACT Exam: English (18) | Reading (22) | Science (23) | Math (22)
 - College Readiness Placement Assessment (determined by post-secondary institution)
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Additional Factors that Contribute to College Success

Earning As, Bs, Cs; FAFSA completion; enrollment in career pathway course sequence; college academic advising; participation in college bound bridge programs; senior year math class; completion of a math class after Algebra II.

Career Ready Indicators

Students are **Career Ready** if they have identified a career interest and meet two of the behavioral and experiential benchmarks listed below. In addition, students entering the military upon graduation must meet the passing scores on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) for each branch of the military.

Career Cluster Identified and **two or more** of the following benchmarks:

- 90% Attendance
 - 25 hours of Community Service
 - Workplace Learning Experience
 - Industry Credential
 - Dual Credit Career Pathway Course
 - Two or more organized Co-Curricular Activities
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Life Ready

Being **Life Ready** means students leave high school with the grit and perseverance to tackle and achieve their goals.

Students who are **Life Ready** possess the growth mindset that empowers them to approach their future with confidence, to dream big and to achieve big.

Our nation's schools provide social and emotional support and experiences to equip students with the **Life Ready** skills they will need for success in their future.



Redefining Ready! for the 21st Century

Preparing students for success beyond graduation is among the most important tasks facing America's educators, and they have responded with innovative determination, creating a relevant 21st century education that includes increased access to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and early college credits that better position students for success; opportunities to complete industry credentials and college-level and career internships while still in high school; and rich exposure to co-curricular activities and community service projects that build skills for life.

Consequently, students should be able to demonstrate their readiness in ways other than solely standardized test scores. While standardized test scores are widely accepted as one key readiness indicator in our schools, they fail to show the whole picture – often inappropriately suggesting only a portion of students are college ready when in fact many more graduates successfully pursue two-year and four-year degrees.

Ready for College

Research from world-class organizations indicates numerous factors that can significantly and more authentically demonstrate college, career and life readiness, including a 2.8 or higher Grade Point Average (GPA), enrollment in AP and IB classes and success on AP and IB exams, early college credits, completion of industry credentials, attendance records, participation in activities and community service.

Data from The National Center for Postsecondary Research, The Diploma Project, the Center for Public Education, the National Center for Education Statistics and others suggest the power of these varying metrics in assessing readiness. Specifically, a 2013 report published by the American Institutes for Research highlighted multiple indicators for success, including participation in dual-enrollment coursework, a score of 3 or higher on AP exams and FAFSA completion.

In 2010, the College Board released a report that specifically emphasized the need for multiple measures of readiness in preparing students for success.

In a University of California study, high school GPA was consistently found to be one of the strongest predictors of four-year college outcomes across all academic disciplines, campuses and freshmen cohorts in the research sample.

Moreover, a Brown University study has found that the courses students take in high school are more predictive of college success than family income and race.

AP coursework success is a widely accepted indicator of college readiness in university applications, and is used to rate and rank the rigor and excellence of high schools for nationally published lists by news organizations like *U.S. News & World Report*. Several studies have highlighted how performance in AP courses relates to college access and success showing that there is a strong relationship between high school students who take and pass AP exams and those who complete college.



Eighty-two percent of the nation's high schools report their students are enrolled in dual credit courses, according to a 2013 report by the National Center for Educational Statistics, concluding this also must be considered a readiness factor. Such courses offer students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school and later ease the transition to a post-secondary academic setting. In looking at data from Florida schools, the National Center for Postsecondary Research found that dual-enrollment students were statistically more significantly likely to persist in college to a second semester and earn a higher college GPA. In addition, male and low-income students, in particular, benefited from dual-enrollment courses in high school.

Additionally, studies show that successful high school completion of Algebra II, a gateway course for many post-secondary math, science, engineering and technology courses, correlates to college and career success. Data links Algebra II success to both college enrollment and bachelor's degree attainment: Students who study math at least through Algebra II in high school are more than twice as likely to earn a four-year degree as those who do not, and the level of math a student reaches in high school is the most accurate predictor of whether they will earn a bachelor's degree.

Success within an International Baccalaureate (IB) program is also predictive of readiness, with research from the Educational Policy Improvement Center determining students who participated in an IB program in high school were more likely than those who did not to earn post-secondary degrees and persist over two years while earning higher GPAs in their first two years of college. The impact on low-achieving students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds is particularly profound; those who took an AP or IB course were found to be 17 percent more likely to persist in four-year colleges and 30 percent more likely to persist in two-year colleges than peers who did not take the coursework.

Ready for Careers

Preparing students to enter two-year and four-year institutions of higher education is an integral piece of the readiness equation. In addition to college readiness, we cannot underestimate the importance of identifying students who are ready to enter the workforce after leaving high school, particularly given the abundance of idea-driven and high-profile middle-skill jobs that do not require a full college degree.

In 1988, the William T. Grant Foundation published a report that called the then 20 million non-college-bound youth the "forgotten half," warning they were "in danger of being caught in a massive bind that can deny them full participation in our society." A narrowly defined "college for all" goal – one that does not include a strong focus on career-oriented programs that lead to occupational credentials – appears doomed to fail.

More than two decades later, the Harvard Graduate School of Education published the Pathways to Prosperity Project in 2011, calling on America's high schools to increase work-based learning to equip those students who do not finish four years of college for success in the workplace.

Students need hands-on workplace learning experiences such as internships that enable them to explore their career interests while still in high school. The National Career Clusters® Framework is comprised of 16 Career Clusters and related Career Pathways to help students explore different career options. Identifying a career pathway is critical since it provides exposure to coursework directly related to a future career and often leads to an industry credential that allows students to be immediately employable upon graduation.



Research shows that students often lack the knowledge of the requirements for specific careers. One study highlighted the fact that young men in Career Academies earned more after high school because of their participation in internships and improved awareness of specific careers.

When students' interests and career aspirations are explored and connected through curriculum, their high school experience is elevated, with research showing career pathways in education can make school real, relevant and exciting to students and answer the "Why do we need to learn this?" question across courses. In particular, an *EdWeek* article noted the impact of internships on high school students, by equipping them with real-world skills including communications and teamwork.

Data shows school attendance, something at the very core of education, is central to success. In a report by Attendance Works, absenteeism influences not just chances for graduating but also for completing college. An analysis of Rhode Island data found that only 11 percent of chronically absent students who graduated from high school made it to a second year of college.

Additionally, civically engaged students make greater scholastic progress during high school, with data showing that community service to fulfill class requirements enhances the average odds of college graduation by 22 percentage points.

Finally, co-curricular activities promote student achievement, engagement and attitudes that lead to college aspirations and ultimately success, according to a study by the National Center for Educational Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education. The study indicated students involved in activities were more likely to aspire to higher education, and two-thirds were expected to complete a bachelor's degree or higher.

Redefining Ready!

It is imperative that we consider multiple metrics when assessing readiness for life after high school. We know that our students are more than one standardized test score and using a "one score judges all" approach is simply unfair to our students, our teachers, our school boards and our communities. We need a more authentic, appropriate, and relevant definition of readiness in this country.

We are educating a generation of innovators – motivated by ideas and ingenuity. They learn in a variety of ways. And, they should be able to demonstrate college, career and life readiness in a variety of ways. A multitude of decisions are based on student readiness including college acceptance, which oftentimes sets a course for a student's success in career and life.

Higher education institutions and businesses will have a broader look into a student's commitment, character and resilience rather than basing their decisions on a standardized test score that may or may not accurately reflect a student's readiness level.

This new definition provides a full picture of how well students are prepared for a 21st century workforce that relies on creativity, vision, communication and other skills that cannot be measured through standardized tests.



OVERALL Research META Analysis

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International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)

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College Readiness Placement Assessment

Locally identified placement assessments, such as Compass, AccuPlacer, ALEKS.

SAT College Readiness Benchmarks

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Industry Credential

What is a Credential?

https://www.actonline.org/uploadedFiles/Assets_and_Documents/Global/files/Publications/What_is_a_Credential-UpdatedAug2015.pdf

Co-Curricular Participation

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Help us champion the **Redefining Ready!** initiative.

Redefining Ready! has a growing list of supporters who agree America's students are more than a score, based on numerous data points to support the metrics.

Use the Twitter hashtag **#RedefiningReady** to add your voice to the conversation, or contact **RedefiningReady@aasa.org** to share stories, ideas or additional research. Visit **www.redefiningready.org** to download materials or add your endorsement.