

# Our Responsibility, Our Promise

Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession

# Our Responsibility, Our Promise

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To ensure students in the United States receive an education that is the best in the world, and one where they graduate from high school college- and career-ready, chief state school officers and their agencies have raised the bar. States across the country have increased expectations for what our educational system can achieve and what our students can learn by adopting and implementing college- and career-ready standards. One way in which a majority of states have raised expectations is through the adoption of the state-led and developed common core state standards in English language arts and mathematics. Our students are now expected to master rigorous content, think critically and solve problems, and work collaboratively. These standards set higher expectations for our students and articulate the skills they need to thrive personally and professionally.

With the adoption of these more rigorous learning standards, it is the responsibility of chief state school officers to keep the promise to our students of a better education. To accomplish this, we must examine and transform how we prepare teachers and principals so that they can provide instruction and organize learning environments to help students reach these heightened expectations. To fulfill this promise, teachers and principals have asked for assistance in implementing a new vision of teaching students and leading schools that will require them to obtain and master new knowledge and skills to improve student achievement and growth.

This report, *Our Responsibility, Our Promise*, was written by the Task Force on Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession. The task force is made up of current and former chiefs who are members of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) with input from our partners at the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and the National Governors Association (NGA). This report is a call to action for chiefs and an invitation to our colleagues, especially members of NASBE and NGA who contributed to this report. We ask those in educator preparation and others interested in transforming entry into the education profession for teachers and principals to join us in supporting the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. While the report attempts to focus on the state policy levers chiefs can activate, it is clear that the work required by these recommendations is not easy and will require the leadership and collaboration of all stakeholders involved in P-20 education.

The focus of the task force is on teacher and principal preparation and entry into professional roles. While an educator's development will span his or her career, the entry point into the profession is the foundation for cultivating the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching and leading. Given this belief, the task force has defined learner-ready teachers and school-ready principals and focused on key actions that must be taken by CCSSO's membership in partnership with members of NASBE and NGA to implement the changes now needed.

A learner-ready teacher is one who is ready on day one of his or her career to **model and develop** in students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed today including the ability to think critically and creatively, to apply content to solving real world problems, to be literate across the curriculum, to collaborate and work in teams, and to take ownership of their own continuous learning. More specifically, learner-ready teachers have **deep knowledge of their content and how to teach it**; they **understand the differing needs** of their students, **hold them**

**to high expectations**, and personalize **learning** to ensure each learner is challenged; they **care about, motivate, and actively engage students in learning**; they **collect, interpret, and use student assessment data** to monitor progress and adjust instruction; they systematically **reflect, continuously improve, and collaboratively problem solve**; and they **demonstrate leadership and shared responsibility** for the learning of all students.

A school-ready principal is ready on day one to blend their energy, knowledge, and professional skills to collaborate and motivate others to **transform school learning environments in ways that ensure all students will graduate college and career ready**. With other stakeholders, they craft **the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals** to focus on and support high levels of learning for all students and high expectations for all members of the school community. To help transform schools, they lead others in using **performance outcomes and other data to strategically align people, time, funding, and school processes to continually improve student achievement and growth**, and to **nurture and sustain a positive climate and safe school environment for all stakeholders**. They work with others to **develop, implement, and refine processes to select, induct, support, evaluate, and retain quality personnel** to serve in instructional and support roles. They **nurture and support professional growth in others and appropriately share leadership responsibilities**. Recognizing that schools are an integral part of the community, they **lead and support outreach to students' families and the wider community to respond to community needs** and interests and to integrate community resources into the school.

The recommendations contained in this report focus on the levers for change that are the responsibility of state education agencies (SEAs) and, where applicable, their partner professional standards boards: licensure; program approval; and data collection, analysis, and reporting.

CCSSO pledges to support chief state school officers as they move to implement the state actions recommended in this report. In doing so, we will ensure that teachers and principals entering the system are truly ready to teach and lead. Utilizing the three state levers, chiefs should consider taking the following actions to ensure that teachers and principals entering the profession are prepared for what their profession requires on day one. The members of the task force are calling on the full CCSSO membership to commit to implementing the recommendations and state actions that follow in order to ensure that the education workforce is prepared to have a positive impact on all students' achievement upon entry into the learning environment regardless of where they teach or lead.

## Licensure

1. States will revise and enforce their licensure standards for teachers and principals to support the teaching of more demanding content aligned to college- and career-readiness and critical thinking skills to a diverse range of students.
2. States will work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that are aligned to the revised licensure standards and include multiple measures of educators' ability to perform, including the potential to impact student achievement and growth.
3. States will create multi-tiered licensure systems aligned to a coherent developmental continuum that reflects new performance expectations for educators and their implementation in the learning environment and to assessments that are linked to evidence of student achievement and growth.
4. States will reform current state licensure systems so they are more efficient, have true reciprocity across states, and so that their credentialing structures support effective teaching and leading toward student college- and career-readiness.

## Program Approval

5. States will hold preparation programs accountable by exercising the state's authority to determine which programs should operate and recommend candidates for licensure in the state, including establishing a clear and fair performance rating system to guide continuous improvement. States will act to close programs that continually receive the lowest rating and will provide incentives for programs whose ratings indicate exemplary performance.
6. States will adopt and implement rigorous program approval standards to assure that educator preparation programs recruit candidates based on supply and demand data, have highly selective admissions and exit criteria including mastery of content, provide high quality clinical practice throughout a candidate's preparation that includes experiences with the responsibilities of a school year from beginning to end, and that produce quality candidates capable of positively impacting student achievement.
7. States will require alignment of preparation content standards to PK-12 college- and career-ready standards for all licensure areas.
8. States will provide feedback, data, support, and resources to preparation programs to assist them with continuous improvement and to act on any program approval or national accreditation recommendations.

## Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

9. States will develop and support state-level governance structures to guide confidential and secure data collection, analysis, and reporting of PK-20 data and how it informs educator preparation programs, hiring practices, and professional learning. Using stakeholder input, states will address and take appropriate action, individually and collectively, on the need for unique educator identifiers, links to non-traditional preparation providers, and the sharing of candidate data among organizations and across states.
10. States will use data collection, analysis, and reporting of multiple measures for continuous improvement and accountability of preparation programs.