

# Action Plan for Increasing College Readiness

## Next Steps for Texas

Steps that will:

- Increase the college readiness of ALL students
  - Increase college enrollments, particularly minority and low-income students
  - Increase college retention and reduce remediation costs
  - Increase college aspirations
- 1. Create a Common Focus for Getting ALL Students Prepared for Postsecondary Success**
    - Using the results of ACT's National Curriculum Study and College Readiness Standards and TEA's TEKS, have secondary and postsecondary educators come to an agreed-upon understanding of what students need to know for college and workplace readiness.
    - Align postsecondary core course requirements with state core course requirements.
    - Use ACT's National College Readiness Standards and College Readiness Benchmarks as the common language P-16 for communicating postsecondary expectations.
  - 2. Establish High Expectations for ALL Beginning Prior to a Student Entering High School**
    - Using ACT's EXPLORE Program in Grade 8, connect higher education expectations to state readiness standards using ACT's National College Readiness Benchmarks.
    - Administer ACT's PLAN Program in Grade 10 to monitor progress of students being on target for postsecondary readiness and provide interventions when they are not.
    - Identify and communicate the need for ALL students to meet rigorous state standards so that ALL high school graduates are prepared for college-entry courses and the workplace without remediation.
  - 3. Require a Rigorous Curriculum**
    - Using ACT's National College Readiness Standards as a baseline, review and evaluate the rigor and alignment of courses offered in high school in English, mathematics, social studies and science to ensure that the foundational skills leading to college readiness are articulated and taught.
    - Incorporate complex reading materials into all courses, not just English and social studies; students must have the opportunity to read such materials across the curriculum so that they are better positioned to comprehend complex texts in all subjects once they enter college or the workplace.
    - Require students to take specific rigorous courses that include: one or more advanced mathematics courses beyond Algebra II; and Chemistry and Physics.
  - 4. Include a Student Guidance Component**
    - Engage all students in early college and career awareness using the same interest inventory, National Benchmarks and same model for interpretation and use Grades 8 through 12.
    - Identify as early as Grade 8 students whose aspirations are not as high as they might be.
    - Insist that students plan and execute a rigorous high school coursework program.
    - At least by middle school, help students identify and explore postsecondary educational and workplace training options.
    - Increase college outreach efforts.
    - Make timely interventions with those students who are not making adequate progress in meeting the established National College Readiness Standards.

## **5. Measure and Evaluate Progress Using a Longitudinally Connected Program Beginning in Grade 8**

- Adopt ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) which includes EXPLORE at Grade 8, PLAN at Grade 10, and the ACT Assessment at Grades 11/12 to monitor college readiness early and throughout high school.
- Measure student progress in meeting established College Readiness Benchmarks beginning in Grade 8 and continuing through high school.
- Provide feedback to schools based on their graduates' readiness for and success in postsecondary institutions.