

Methodology

On behalf of Achieve, Public Opinion Strategies and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research jointly conducted a national survey of N=800 registered voters between May 23-26, 2010. The poll has a margin of error of $\pm 3.5\%$.

Policymakers vs. The Public?

While many state and local policymakers and education leaders have long embraced the goal of graduating students college and career ready, the agenda has now become a national priority – as evidenced by the more recent dialogue on education reform, including Race to the Top, Common Core State Standards, and common assessments.

So, while policy leaders at all levels are embracing the goal of college and career readiness for all, what does the public think?

To find out, Achieve commissioned a survey of registered voters to determine whether they support both the goal of graduating all students from high school ready for college and careers and the policies necessary to meet that goal.

Background: The College- and Career-Ready Agenda

The college- and career-ready agenda is a state-driven policy agenda that seeks to ensure ALL students graduate from high school – and graduate ready for their next steps.

At the heart of the college- and career-ready agenda is the goal of closing the expectations gap – the gap between what students need to know and be able to do to graduate from high school and the knowledge and skills most demanded in postsecondary and workplace settings.

Since 2005, states—now 35 altogether—formed Achieve’s American Diploma Project Network and committed to the following college- and career-ready policies:

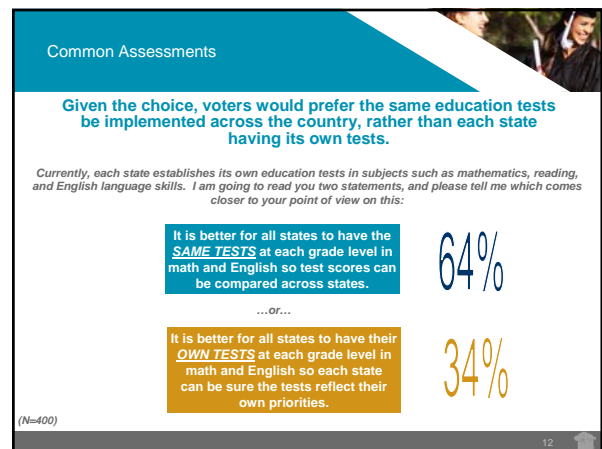
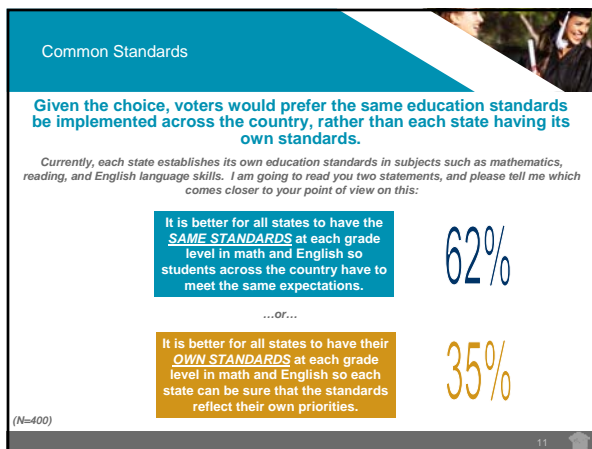
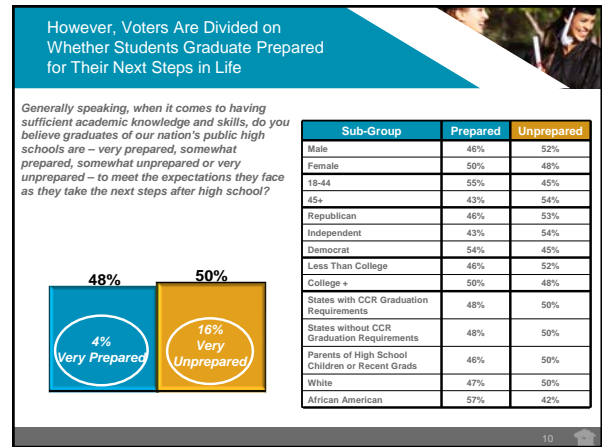
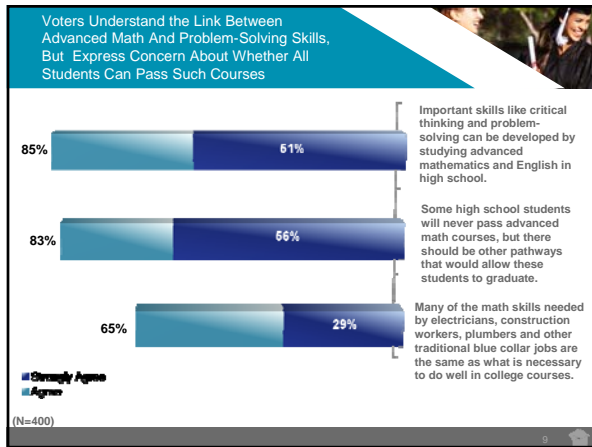
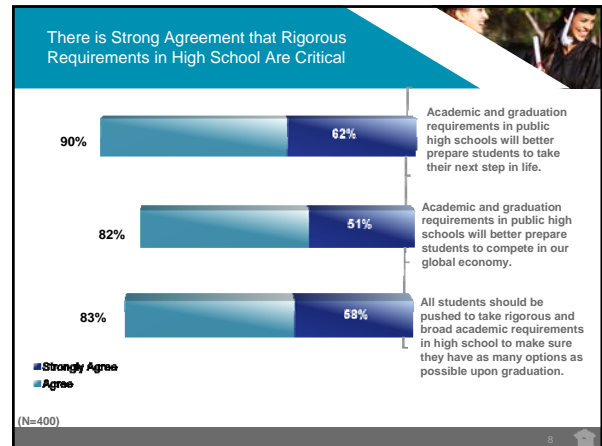
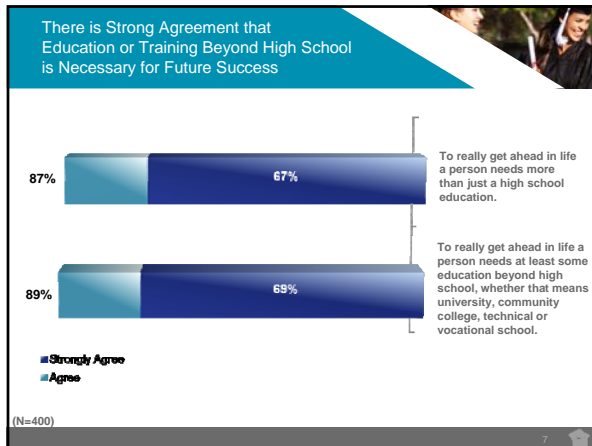
- Aligning high school standards with the demands of college and careers.
- Requiring students to complete college- and career-ready graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma.
- Building assessments into the statewide system that measure students’ readiness for college and careers.
- Developing reporting and accountability systems that promote college and career readiness.

Background: State Progress on the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

College- and Career-Ready Policy	2005	2010
College- and Career-Ready Standards	3 States CA, IN, NE	31 States AL, AZ, AR, CA, CO, DE, FL, GA, IN, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, NE, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WV
Common Core State Standards	N/A	33 States (+DC)
College- and Career-Ready Graduation Requirements	3 States AR, SD, TX	21 States (+ DC)
College- and Career-Ready Assessments	3 States CA, CO, IL	14 States AL, CA, CO, GA, HI, IL, KY, LA, ME, MI, NY, TN, TX, WV
P-20 Longitudinal Data System	3 States FL, LA, TX	16 States AL, AK, AR, DE, FL, GA, IA, LA, MO, NV, OR, PA, TX, UT, WA, WY
College- and Career-Ready Reporting and Accountability Systems	0 States	1 State TX

Key Findings from *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda*

- There is widespread agreement that all students need additional education and training beyond high school across voters.
- Support for policies aimed to prepare high school students for college and careers is **broad, deep and fully bipartisan** with equally high numbers of Democratic, Republican and Independent voters supporting such reforms.
- There is strong support for the specific policies that put common expectations in place for all students – including common standards, common assessments and graduation requirements.
- More generally, there is near universal agreement across partisan, ethnic/racial and geographic lines that some education and training beyond high school is necessary – and that stronger expectations in high school will go a long way towards preparing students for their next steps.



Graduation Requirements

By almost a *two-to-one margin*, voters tell us it is better to have rigorous graduation requirements for all students, than to have different requirements for different students.

Now, when it comes to setting high school graduation requirements, which statement comes closer to your point of view?

It is better to implement the **SAME RIGOROUS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR EVERYONE** so all students are being pushed to succeed and achieve their potential.

63%

It is better to implement **HIGHER GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TOP-PERFORMING STUDENTS** and have lower requirements for students who are struggling.

32%

College- and Career-Ready (CCR) Graduation Requirements

Voters heard the following information and were asked if they favor or oppose having these kinds of high school graduation requirements for all students:

Many states require that all students in public high schools complete four years of English, three or four years of math (including Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II), three or four years of science (including biology and chemistry), three or four years of social studies (including U.S. and World History, and economics), and various electives chosen from fine arts, career technical, or foreign language subjects, in order to graduate.

There is Virtually Unanimous Support for CCR Requirements For All Students

Do you favor or oppose having these kinds of high school graduation requirements for all students?

86%

65%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

Sub-Group	Strongly Favor	Total Favor
Male	54%	87%
Female	65%	84%
18-44	63%	88%
45+	66%	84%
White	66%	85%
African American	51%	84%
Less Than College	59%	85%
College +	71%	87%
States with CCR Graduation Requirements	62%	86%
States without CCR Graduation Requirements	67%	85%
Parents of High School Children or Recent Grads	63%	85%

This Unanimous Support Exists Across Party Lines

86%

70%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

85%

65%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

87%

61%
Strongly

Favor

12%

Oppose

Republicans
(36%)

Independents
(23%)

Democrats
(38%)

...And Among Parents and Non-Parents

86%

65%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

84%

63%
Strongly

Favor

16%

Oppose

86%

63%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

87%

62%
Strongly

Favor

13%

Oppose

Total
(N=294)

All Parents
(37%)
(N=294)

Half-Parent, Grand Parents
(17%)
(N=133)

Non-Parents
(66%)
(N=505)

...And Across Ethnic/Racial Lines

86%

65%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

85%

63%
Strongly

Favor

14%

Oppose

84%

63%
Strongly

Favor

16%

Oppose

88%

62%
Strongly

Favor

12%

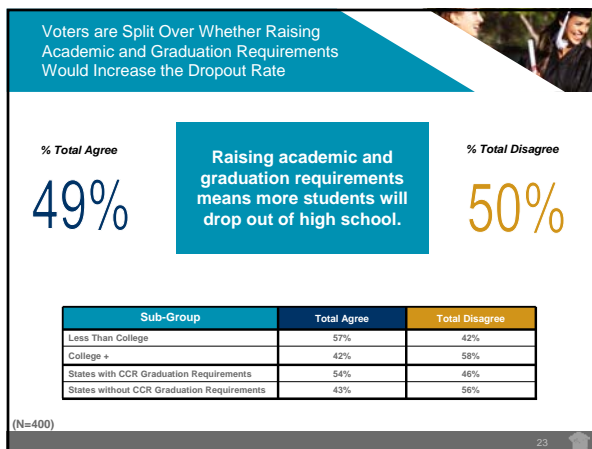
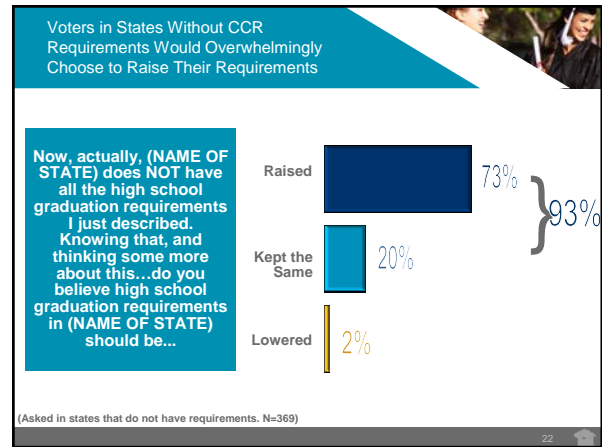
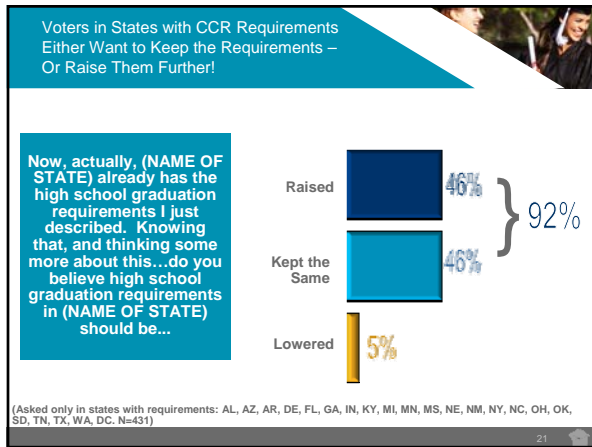
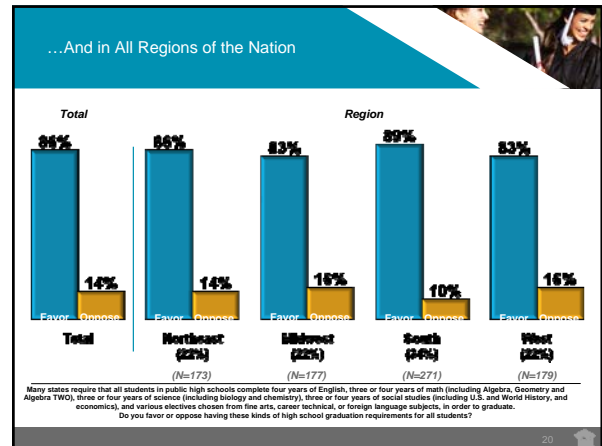
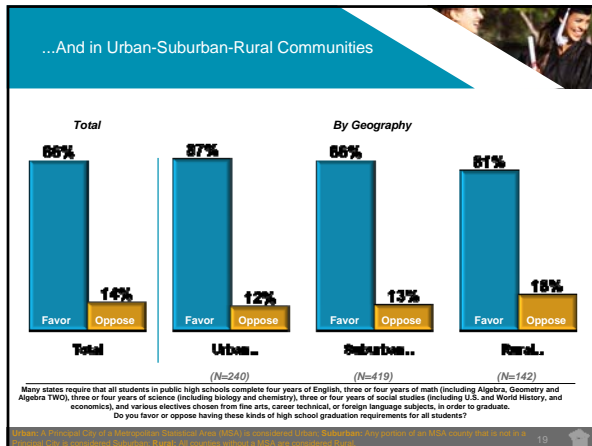
Oppose

Total
(N=608)

White
(N=608)

African-American
(N=96)

Hispanic
(N=64)



The Bottom Line

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- ◆ The survey data suggest there is strong agreement among voters that all students need some education and training beyond high school – and that academic requirements in high school should prepare students for these next steps.
- ◆ The survey also finds broad and deep support for specific college- and career-ready high school policies, including common standards, assessments and course requirements.
- ◆ In particular, there is overwhelming majority support for “college- and career-ready” graduation requirements across the board.
 - Importantly, at a time when partisanship is as sharp as we have ever seen, more than 80% of Republicans, Democrats and Independents support these requirements, making college and career readiness a truly bipartisan issue.

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Achieve is a bipartisan, non-profit organization that helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for college, careers and life.

For more information, see www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible
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**Achieving the Possible:
What Americans Think About the
College- and Career-Ready Agenda**

