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What Does College and Career Readiness Mean?

While there is no official national definition of college and career readiness, several groups have developed definitions. The following organizations define college and career readiness in different ways:

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC): “CCR Determinations in ELA/literacy and mathematics describe the academic knowledge, skills, and practices in English language arts/literacy and mathematics students must demonstrate to show they are able to enter directly into and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses and relevant technical courses in those content areas at two- and four-year public institutions.”

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC): “Students who perform at the College Content-Ready level in English language arts/literacy demonstrate reading, writing, listening, and research skills necessary for introductory courses in a variety of disciplines. They also demonstrate subject-area knowledge and skills associated with readiness for entry-level, transferable, credit-bearing English and composition courses. Students who perform at the College Content-Ready level in mathematics demonstrate foundational mathematical knowledge and quantitative reasoning skills necessary for introductory courses in a variety of disciplines. They also demonstrate subject-area knowledge and skills associated with readiness for entry-level, transferable, credit-bearing mathematics and statistics courses.”

Achieve Inc.: “College and career readiness refers to the content knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics — including, but not limited to, reading, writing communications, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving — to be successful in any and all future endeavors.”

ACT: “The level of achievement a student needs to be ready to enroll and succeed — without remediation — in credit-bearing first-year postsecondary courses. And by postsecondary we mean primarily two-year or four-year institutions, trade schools, and technical schools. Today, however, workplace readiness demands the same level of knowledge and skills as college readiness.”

EPIC (Educational Policy Improvement Center): Defines four “Different Types of Readiness —

- Work ready = Meets basic expectations regarding workplace behavior and demeanor
- Job ready = Possesses specific training necessary to begin an entry-level position
- Career ready = Possesses key content knowledge and key learning skills and techniques sufficient to begin studies in a career pathway
- College ready = Is prepared in the four keys to college and career readiness necessary to succeed in entry-level general education courses”

How do SREB States Define College and Career Readiness?

SREB’s College and Career Readiness efforts have been over a decade in the making. SREB has worked with almost every state in the region and many states outside of the South on developing college-ready policies and practices and assisting with implementation of both. SREB’s comprehensive readiness agenda highlights five key elements for success in increasing students’ readiness for a variety of postsecondary and workforce pursuits.

SREB’s College- and Career-Readiness Action Agenda

1. Adopt statewide readiness standards.
2. Assess high school juniors.
3. Offer transitional readiness courses.
4. Apply the standards in college.
5. Hold schools accountable.

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The following matrix summarizes how SREB states define readiness and measure students' readiness.

State	State Definition of Readiness	Incorporates College (C) OR College & Career (CR)	Policy Location	Student Readiness Assessment	Transitional Courses
Alabama	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	No
Arkansas	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	In progress
Delaware	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	No
Florida	Students are "... college and career ready when they have the knowledge, skills, and academic preparation needed to enroll and succeed in introductory college credit-bearing courses within an associate or baccalaureate degree program without the need for remediation. These same attributes and levels of achievement are needed for entry into and success in postsecondary workforce education or directly into a job that offers gainful employment and career advancement."	C & CR	Law — SB 1908 (2008) & HB 1255 (2011)	P.E.R.T.	Yes
Georgia	"The College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) has been designed around a comprehensive definition of college and career readiness, or the level of achievement required in order for a student to enroll in two or four year colleges and universities and technical colleges without remediation, fully prepared for college level work and careers."	C & CR	Law — HB 186 (2012)	SAT/ACT	In progress — required by law in 2012
Kentucky	"College readiness is the level of preparation a student needs to succeed in credit-bearing courses in college. 'Succeed' is defined as completing entry-level courses at a level of understanding and proficiency that prepares the student for subsequent courses." "Career readiness is the level of preparation a high school graduate needs to proceed to the next step in a chosen career, whether that is postsecondary coursework, industry certification, or entry into the workforce."	Separate targets for CR	Law — SB 1 (2008)	ACT	Yes
Louisiana	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	In progress
Maryland	No official state definition, but in 2010 a P-20 Taskforce identified certain characteristics of a college-ready student.	C & CR	Law — SB 740 (2013)	Not identified	In progress – required by law
Mississippi	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	In progress
North Carolina	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	In progress
Oklahoma	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	In progress
South Carolina	No official state definition	N/A	N/A	Not identified	No
Tennessee	"The knowledge and skills needed for entry-level work and college freshmen coursework [and] success whether pursuing a career or a college education."	C & CR	Board of Education	ACT	In progress
Texas	"What students should know and be able to accomplish in order to succeed in entry-level college courses or workforce opportunities upon graduation from high school."	C & CR	Law — HB 1 (2006)	STAAR	No
Virginia	"The level of achievement students must reach to be academically prepared for success in entry-level credit-bearing college courses ... or to meet employers' expectations of candidates for entry-level jobs."	C & CR	Board of Education	SOL exams	In progress
West Virginia	No official state definition	N/A	Regulations; SB 359 effective June 20, 2013	WESTEST 2	Yes

Information collected via web searches and interviews by SREB staff. Revised June 2013.