

WICHE Policy Alert - July 6, 2010 – National Center and Southern Regional Education Board: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy

“Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy,”

(http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/CollegeReadiness.pdf

) a new joint report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Southern Regional Educational Board, examines issues and challenges regarding the postsecondary preparation gap, which is key impediment to college completion. After pointing out that each year nearly 60 percent of first-year postsecondary students are not academically prepared for college-level work, the report explains why a college-preparatory curriculum often leaves students unprepared for postsecondary studies. Reasons include an ongoing disconnect between P-12 and postsecondary expectations, the lack of assessments that truly measure college readiness, and the inability of states to hold higher education accountable for completion rates. After identifying the challenges facing students, the report presents recommendations aimed at state policymakers and education leaders interested in closing the readiness gap. Specific recommendations include the formal adoption of readiness standards by both P-12 and higher education, teacher development that addresses the effective teaching of college readiness standards, the development of high school assessments that truly measure student comprehension of specific state standards, and the creation of accountability systems that create incentives for college readiness and completion. The report concludes that if already cash-strapped states want to reduce the costs of remediation and improve graduation rates, they need to strengthen their college readiness agendas and standards sooner rather than later.

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