

# BLUEPRINT FOR COLLEGE READINESS STATE PROFILE



## MONTANA



Montana has addressed seven of the 10 Blueprint policies to improve college readiness in the state. The state has put programs in place for two of the four high school anchor policies. Montana has adopted and is implementing the Common Core State Standards and is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

It has developed policies to address all four of the college anchor benchmarks. It is one of 15 states with systemwide uniform admission requirements for four-year colleges and one of 21 states with statewide policies on the use of and testing for remedial education for incoming college students.

Montana has implemented one of the two bridge policies — P-20 data sharing and reporting.

POLICY REVIEW	MONTANA	NATIONAL
<b>1. CCR STANDARDS</b> AP, IB and/or dual credit required	<b>YES</b> No	48 states + D.C. 25 states
<b>2. ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>YES</b> , SBAC; ACT	14 – SBAC 11 – PARCC 18 – ACT 4 – SAT 10 – state developed 14 – end-of-course
<b>3. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</b> H.S. course requirements match statewide college admissions	<b>NO</b> , policies exist but not aligned	18 states match courses Including 6 states that align all courses and 12 states that align all courses but foreign language
<b>4. K-12 ACCOUNTABILITY</b> CCR is indicator in system	<b>NO</b>	24 states use CCR to determine performance
<b>5. ADMISSION STANDARDS</b> Statewide or systemwide	<b>YES</b> Systemwide (single system) GPA; Assessments; High school coursework; Class rank	28 – common admission standards 15 – systemwide 13 – statewide
<b>6. REMEDIAL AND PLACEMENT POLICIES</b> Statewide or systemwide remedial policies Statewide or systemwide placement policies	<b>YES</b> Statewide Statewide	27 – both remedial and placement policies 39 – remedial policies 27 – placement policies
<b>7. TRANSFER (3 OUT OF 4 POLICIES)</b> Transferable core of lower-division courses Common course numbering Guaranteed transfer of associate degree Credit by assessment	<b>YES</b> Yes Yes Yes Partial	23 have at least 3 of the following policies: 36 – transferable core 16 – Common course numbering 36 – guaranteed transfer of associate degrees 16 – credit by assessment
<b>8. HIGHER-ED ACCOUNTABILITY (ALL 3)</b> Statewide attainment goals Completion or attainment goals in master plan Performance-funding model and metrics	<b>YES</b> Yes Yes Yes, Retention; Graduation	19 have all 3 of the following policies: 26 states have a statewide attainment goal 36 states have completion or attainment goal in master plan 32 states have performance-funding
<b>9. STATEWIDE CCR DEFINITION</b>	<b>NO</b>	32 states + D.C. have CCR definition
<b>10. P-20 DATA</b> High school feedback report annually	<b>YES</b> Yes	50 states + D.C. have data system 42 states + D.C. have feedback report
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7 out of 10</b>	

## STRENGTHS

Montana has enacted comprehensive statewide transfer policies among its public colleges. It is one of 35 states with a statewide transferable core of lower-division courses and one of 36 states with a guaranteed transfer of associate degree policy. One-third of college students transfer at least once before graduation, according to national data. Therefore, transfer policies are a key tool to make sure students don't have to repeat courses that add expense and extend the time spent in college.

Montana also is one of 19 states with comprehensive higher education accountability systems that incorporate goals to increase college attainment rates and performance measures in the funding model. Montana also includes college completion goals in its strategic plan. These are important tools to hold higher education institutions accountable for improving student outcomes.

Further, Montana is one of 42 states that produces publicly available high school feedback reports that provide information on how a class of high school graduates are performing in college and the workforce.

## CONSIDERATIONS

Montana should consider joining the 18 states that have aligned high school graduation requirements with college admission requirements. Six of the states have complete alignment and 12 have aligned in all core instruction except for foreign language. Montana is one of eight states that has requirements for both graduation and admission, but they do not match each other. Alignment can increase transparency between high schools and colleges over what constitutes college readiness and lead to an increase in high school graduates enrolling in college.

The state should also look into establishing indicators of college and career readiness for determining school performance and for school accountability report cards. It is one of 27 states where the information is not available in the reports to parents and the general public. Some states consider college-going rates, ACT/SAT results or college remediation rates as indicators of readiness. Others measure participation in and completion of dual enrollment courses, Advanced Placement (AP) exam scores or the number of industry certifications earned.

## RESOURCES AND STATE EXAMPLES

*When Success is the Only Option: Designing Competency-Based Pathways for Next Generation Learning*, <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/csd6174.pdf>.

*Rethinking "Seat Time:" State Approaches to Earning Credit in Out-of-School Time*, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/educ/SeatTime.pdf>.

### South Dakota – Alternative course requirements

South Dakota's high school and graduation requirements and statewide higher education admission policies are good examples of setting competency-based proficiency for courses. A provision in the high school graduation requirements policy (**S.D. Admin. R. 24:43:11:09**) provides course equivalency exam exceptions for students to take the place of course requirements. Similarly, the statewide higher education admission policy provides alternate opportunities to meet the minimum course requirements beyond seat time. Students can receive credit by achieving scores on standardized assessments such as ACT or SAT or on end-of-course exams such as AP tests.

### Wisconsin – Stakeholder engagement

Wisconsin's **Act 20** enacted in 2013 mandates the development and adoption of college and career readiness standards by seeking information from a broad range of sources, including elementary and secondary teachers, instructors and experts from postsecondary institutions. This approach attempts to strengthen the connection between secondary and postsecondary schools, better communicating what it means for students to be college and career ready.