Multiple measures for college readiness

There are many reasons why approximately one-third of U.S. high school graduates do not move on to college soon after earning a diploma, from concerns over cost to work obligations. Many of these students want to continue their education.

This new ECS Education Trends report stresses the need to turn this aspiration into action by making the transition from high school to college a policy priority for states. The report reviews the multiple measures to assess college readiness, provides a deeper look at competency-based assessments and offers policy considerations for state and system leaders.

"For a more seamless and successful transition for students between high school and college, policymakers in many states will need to more clearly define, align and communicate what is expected of a student to be college ready," said Mary Fulton, an ECS policy analyst and co-author of the report. "Additionally, meaningful collaboration among K-12 and higher education faculty and leaders is a positive step toward accomplishing this goal."

Some important takeaways from this report:

- At least 18 states have complete or partial alignment between high school graduation course requirements and statewide or system-wide admission standards.
- More states are considering multiple factors -- including coursework, course rigor, GPA and assessments -- for students to meet high school graduation and college admission requirements.
- Instead of completing coursework, a growing number of states allow high school students to pass competency-based assessments to demonstrate mastery of subject content. Colleges are just beginning to include these tests in their admissions process.

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Related ECS resources that you’ll find useful:

- ECS Blueprint for College Readiness 50-state policy analysis and 50-state database.
- Developmental strategies for college readiness and success.

For questions, contact ECS Director of Communications Amy Skinner at askinner@ecs.org or (303) 299.3609.

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