Using assessments to inform 12th grade interventions and accelerations

With 47 states now administering high school assessments to gauge students’ mastery of college and career readiness standards in English language arts and math, states have an opportunity to use test results to make the final year of high school more impactful.

This ECS Education Policy Analysis delves into statewide high school college and career readiness assessments and how states are using them to overcome two persistent challenges – the “wasted senior year” and high postsecondary remediation rates.

The report is being released with an accompanying 50-state database containing information about how states use college readiness assessments to improve the 12th-grade year.

“In order to make the most of college and career readiness assessments, state policymakers should consider using results from those tests to make the senior year more meaningful,” said Jennifer Zinth, director of ECS’ High School Policy Center and STEM Policy Center. “This could mean using test results to identify students needing 12th-grade interventions or acceleration opportunities, for example. Utilizing the data by integrating college-ready cut scores into college admissions or placement policies also could help ‘signal’ college readiness.”

Some important takeaways from this report:

- Statewide college and career readiness assessments present an opportunity for states to identify students who would benefit from college readiness interventions or advanced coursework in 12th grade.
- Relatively few states have articulated the scores on these assessments that deem a student college ready or in need of interventions to achieve college readiness by the end of 12th grade.
- Adopting and implementing meaningful statewide intervention and acceleration policies means making numerous critical decisions on student identification metrics, forms of intervention, curriculum and instructional supports, to name just a few.

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Related ECS resources that you’ll find useful:

- Explore state approaches to ensure dual enrollment courses offered at high schools deliver college-level content.
- Examine 13 model state-level policy components that may increase student participation and success in dual enrollment programs.
- ECS’ Blueprint for College Readiness reviews important policy approaches designed to increase the number of U.S. students who earn a postsecondary degree or certification.
For questions, contact ECS Director of Communications Amy Skinner at askinner@ecs.org or (303) 299. 3609.

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