

# Implementing the Common Core State Standards

## The Role of the School Counselor

With support from **MetLife  
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A Joint Action Brief by



## Introduction

As shown by MetLife’s 2010 *Survey of the American Teacher*, America’s educators strongly believe that all students should graduate from high school ready for college and a career (85 percent).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, according to MetLife’s 2009 survey, 86 percent of teachers believe that setting high expectations for students will improve student achievement to that end.<sup>2</sup>

*Counselors have learned a hard truth: College eligible does not mean college ready.*

The new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are strongly aligned with those sentiments. Based on evidence of the skills and knowledge needed for college and career readiness, the CCSS expect students to engage deeply in a wide variety of informational and literary texts in ELA/Literacy and to be able to both know and do mathematics by solving a range of problems and engaging in key practices.

Since 2010, 46 states and the District of Columbia, or 85 percent of the nation’s public school students, have adopted the CCSS which effectively reset expectations for all students to a higher level – college and career readiness. The CCSS provide an opportunity to realize systemic change and ensure that American students are held to the same high expectations in mathematics and literacy as their global peers — regardless of state or zip code.

The success of such change requires the thoughtful attention of school leaders. As such, this Action Brief for school counselors is offered as a **starting point**, designed to increase awareness of the standards, create a sense of urgency around their implementation, and provide these stakeholders — who are faced with dramatically increased expectations in the context of fewer resources — with a deeper understanding of the standards and their role in implementing the standards.

Many additional resources are coming online, many of which are captured in Appendix B of this document. This Action Brief will provide no-cost takeaways, talking points, and action steps that school leaders and counselors can begin to put into practice in their schools today.

## A Primer on the Common Core State Standards

Both the mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) standards demonstrate logical progressions through the grades so that teachers will understand how standards being taught on a particular day relate to the standards in other grades. In fact, teachers will be able to understand how their daily instructional plans help foster college and career readiness, provided the CCSS are well implemented.

*Standards alone will not improve schools and raise student achievement, nor will they narrow the achievement gap. It will take implementation of the standards with fidelity by school leaders and teachers to significantly raise student achievement.*

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<sup>1</sup> MetLife (2011, May). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Preparing Students for College and Careers*. Retrieved from [www.metlife.com/assets/cao/contributions/foundation/american-teacher/MetLife\\_Teacher\\_Survey\\_2010.pdf](http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/contributions/foundation/american-teacher/MetLife_Teacher_Survey_2010.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> MetLife (2010, March). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Collaborating for Student Success (Part 1: Effective Teaching and Leadership)*. Retrieved from [www.metlife.com/assets/cao/contributions/foundation/american-teacher/MetLife\\_Teacher\\_Survey\\_2009\\_Part\\_1.pdf](http://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/contributions/foundation/american-teacher/MetLife_Teacher_Survey_2009_Part_1.pdf)

The CCSS provide school leaders with the means to think across grades and to not only understand what students must know and be able to do in the present but also view how the acquisition of mathematics and literacy skills progresses throughout a student’s previous years of schooling as well as what is ahead. Vertically aligned standards encourage school leaders to engage in more frequent conversations with their colleagues and promote vertical articulation among their PK–12 peers.

## The Case for Urgency

For most building leaders and counselors, the CCSS lay out a new set of expectations that are more cognitively demanding. The adoption of these standards means that **all, not just some students should be on the pathway to college and career readiness**. Such a pathway has never been more critical to students for their personal success, success as citizens in a representative democracy, and economic success.

### *Colleges, universities and employers want students to:*

- **Conduct research and apply that research** to solve problems or address a particular issue;
- **Identify areas for research**, narrow those topics and adjust research methodology as necessary, and evaluate and synthesize primary and secondary resources as they develop and defend their own conclusions;
- **Apply skills and knowledge across the content areas** to solve real-world problems; and
- **Model** real-world situations and persevere in solving complex and novel problems.

*“In the past, workers with average skills, doing an average job, could earn an average lifestyle. But, today, average is officially over.”*  
—Thomas Friedman

Being ready for college means that a high school graduate has the English and mathematics knowledge and skills necessary to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework. Being college ready means being prepared for any postsecondary education or training experience, including study at two- and four-year institutions leading to a postsecondary credential (i.e., a certificate, license, associate degree, or bachelor’s degree).

As principals, counselors, and business leaders know too well, the reality is that an 18-year-old who does not have the skills for college or career is effectively sentenced to a lifetime of marginal employment and second-class citizenship. School leaders and counselors have embraced the idea that all students should pursue postsecondary education and/or training and be college and career ready.

Counselors have learned a hard truth — college eligible does not mean college ready. U.S. college completion rates have not improved in three decades and currently hover around 50 percent. In 12 years, the United States will be short 25 million college graduates,<sup>3</sup> leading to numerous unfilled jobs.

Simply put, most states’ old standards set the bar too low. Moreover, state assessments were never intended to be an indicator of college or career readiness, at least not for 21<sup>st</sup> century

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<sup>3</sup> Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success (2012, April). *The Credential Differential: The Public Return to Increasing Postsecondary Credential Attainment*. Retrieved from [www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Exec-Summary-The-Credential-Differential.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Exec-Summary-The-Credential-Differential.pdf)

careers. For example, one state that has an 80 percent proficiency rate on state assessments recently reported that only 38 percent of its high school graduates could enroll in credit-bearing courses without the need to take remedial courses.<sup>4</sup>

The time has come for school leaders and counselors to take up the civic and economic necessity to ensure that students leave their schools ready for college and career through focused attention on **strong implementation of the CCSS** and **school transformation**.

## Start Now: Twelve Schoolwide Instructional Shifts

The CCSS require educators and school leaders to make fundamental shifts in practice. Some have called these shifts monolithic in scope. For school leaders and counselors, implementing the CCSS is *not* about thinking out of the box. It is about transforming the box itself.

The CCSS represent a real shift in instructional goals from high school graduation to college and career readiness. This shift in intent means profound changes in the way students learn and are assessed, in the way teachers teach, and in the way instructional leaders lead. The reality is that the responsibility for ensuring high-quality, transformative professional development and fidelity of implementation will fall squarely on the shoulders of the school leaders.

Raising literacy and mathematics achievement cannot be the work of a small group of teachers and cannot be done in one content area. For example, English teachers alone cannot be responsible for teaching reading and writing skills. With the CCSS, explicit literacy instruction is now a shared responsibility of all teachers throughout the school.

### ***These are new, higher standards.***

In reality, most schools are building the capacity to effectively implement the new standards. School leaders, counselors, and teachers will all need to take on the role of learner. Learning new ways of teaching and leading will take months and years of deliberate practice to master. Because each of the instructional shifts below can be expected to take years to implement with fidelity, school leaders will need both short- and long-term plans that are based on the assessed needs of students as well as the professional development needs of teachers.

The respective shifts required by the CCSS are as follows:

Six INSTRUCTIONAL Shifts in ELA/Literacy	
1.	<b>Balancing Informational and Literary Text (PK–5):</b> Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students access the world — science, social studies, the arts and literature — through text. At least 50 percent of what students read is informational.
2.	<b>Building Knowledge in the Disciplines (6–12):</b> Content area teachers outside of the ELA classroom emphasize literacy experiences in their planning and instruction. Students learn through domain-specific texts in science and social studies classrooms — rather than referring to the text, they are expected to learn from what they read.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, Lauren (2012, February 21). Officials offer details on new tests. *BG Daily News*. Retrieved from [www.bgdailynews.com](http://www.bgdailynews.com)

3. **Staircase of Complexity:** To prepare students for the complexity of college- and career-ready texts, each grade level requires a “step” of growth on the “staircase.” Students read the central, grade-appropriate text around which instruction is centered. Teachers are patient, create more time and space in the curriculum for this close and careful reading, and provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for students reading below grade level.
4. **Text-Based Answers:** Students have rich and rigorous conversations that depend on a common text. Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making evidentiary arguments both in conversation and in writing to assess comprehension of a text.
5. **Writing from Sources:** Writing needs to emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument rather than the personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through written arguments that respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments presented in the texts they read.
6. **Academic Vocabulary:** Students constantly build the vocabulary they need to access grade-level complex texts. By focusing strategically on comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words (such as “discourse,” “generation,” “theory,” and “principled”) and less on esoteric literary terms (such as “onomatopoeia” or “homonym”), teachers constantly build students’ ability to access more complex texts across the content areas.

### Six INSTRUCTIONAL Shifts in Mathematics

1. **Focus:** Teachers use the power of the eraser and significantly narrow and deepen the scope of how time and energy is spent in the mathematics classroom. A deep focus is placed only on the concepts that are prioritized in the standards so that students reach strong foundational knowledge and conceptual understanding and are able to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades.
2. **Coherence:** Principals and teachers carefully connect the learning within and across grades so that, for example, fractions or multiplication spiral across grade levels and students can build new understanding onto foundations built in previous years. Teachers can begin to count on deep conceptual understanding of core content and build on it. Each standard is not a new event but an extension of previous learning.
3. **Fluency:** Students are expected to have speed and accuracy with simple calculations; teachers structure class and/or homework time for students to memorize, through repetition, core functions such as arithmetic operations so they are better able to understand and manipulate more complex concepts.
4. **Deep Understanding:** Teachers teach more than “how to get the answer” by supporting students’ ability to access concepts from a number of perspectives. As a result, students are able to see mathematics as more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures. Students demonstrate deep conceptual understanding of core mathematics concepts by applying them to new situations as well as by writing and speaking about their understanding.
5. **Applications:** Students are expected to use mathematics and choose the appropriate concept for application even when they are not prompted to do so. Teachers provide opportunities at all grade levels for students to apply mathematics concepts in real-world situations. Teachers in content areas outside of math, particularly science, ensure that students are using mathematics — at all grade levels — to make meaning of and access content.
6. **Dual Intensity:** Students are practicing and understanding. There is more than a balance between these two endeavors in the classroom — both are occurring with intensity. Teachers create opportunities for students to participate in “drills” and make use of those skills through extended application of mathematics concepts. The amount of time and energy spent practicing and understanding learning environments is driven by the specific mathematical concept and, therefore, varies throughout the given school year.

Collectively, these shifts in the **CCSS mean teaching and learning need to be organized to have students:**

- **Conduct** short, focused projects and longer term in-depth research;
- **Produce** clear and coherent writing, whatever the selected format;
- **Communicate** research findings (speaking and listening skills) and mathematical thinking;
- **Model** quantitative problems with mathematics;
- **Persevere** in solving problems; and
- **Reason** deeply about mathematics and mathematical situations by applying concepts to real world situations while demonstrating higher-level thinking.

Beyond knowing about the standards, principals and counselors need to know how schools must change to successfully implement the CCSS. School leaders need a practical understanding of the schoolwide changes made necessary by the new CCSS and how to lead those changes to create a culture of success in schools. Such change does not happen by itself in schools. It results from changes in attitudes encouraged by new information, reflection, and changes in practice.

School leaders will need to engage in both instructional leadership and systemic leadership to affect the necessary changes.

## Implementing the CCSS for School Counselors

The shift in instructional goals from high school completion to college and career readiness effectively places each and every student on a pathway to college and career readiness. The CCSS were developed using a **backward design** beginning with college- and career-ready standards and working back through each grade, resulting in **grade-level shifts** in content down through the grades.

*To be effective, school counselors must have accurate information and understanding about the standards.*

Knowing about the standards is important. Learning how schools must change to meet the CCSS is critical. School counselors need an understanding of how the standards will affect the three domains of professional school counselors — academic, career, and personal/social<sup>5</sup> — in relation to the needs of their students.

### Taking Action

As part of a school team consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, and students, school counselors have a critical role to play in the successful implementation of the new standards. School counselors are uniquely positioned to influence and implement many of the schoolwide goals and initiatives to ensure that all students are college and career ready.

Counselors must play an active role — working collaboratively with the school leader — to move the CCSS forward and make the necessary instructional and cultural shifts within their school environments.

This document presents a three-step approach to help school counselors take action:

- Step 1 — Understand It
- Step 2 — Support It
- Step 3 — Act On It

### Step 1 — Understand It

Despite the increased accountability of individual state standards, the portrait of American schools continues to show a significant disparity in school and student performance based on geography and student demographics.

States began work on the development of a set of common standards. In 2010, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers released the CCSS. Currently, 46 states have adopted the CCSS.

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<sup>5</sup>American School Counselor Association, National Standards for Students, 2004. Retrieved from <http://ascamodel.timberlakepublishing.com/files/NationalStandards.pdf>

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should master during their K–12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the shifts noted above, it is important to note that the standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top-performing countries so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence based.

### **What Are the Standards?**

The standards for mathematics and the standards for ELA/literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects focus on students in K–12 developing the skills and knowledge needed to be college and career ready.

### **Key Points in ELA/Literacy**

#### **Reading**

- The standards require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from whatever they read.
- Through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective.
- The standards mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, seminal works of American literature, and the writings of Shakespeare.

#### **Writing**

- The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is a cornerstone of the writing standards.
- The standards require students to perform research — both short, focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term in-depth research.
- Annotated samples of student writing accompany the standards and help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades.

#### **Speaking and Listening**

- The standards require that students gain, evaluate and present increasingly complex information, ideas and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through media.

#### **Language**

- The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The standards will help students determine

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<sup>6</sup> [www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards](http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards)



word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their repertoire of words and phrases.

### **Media and Technology**

- Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the 21st century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media) are integrated throughout the standards.

### **Key Points in Mathematics**

- The K–5 standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals.
- In kindergarten, the standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council’s Early Math Panel report by focusing kindergarten work on the number core.
- The standards stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels.
- Having built a strong foundation in grades K–5, students can do hands-on learning in geometry, algebra, and probability and statistics. The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.
- The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real-world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.
- The high school standards emphasize mathematical modeling — the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, understand them better, and improve decisions.

### **Step 2 — Support It**

The CCSS make the issue of college and career readiness relevant to all school counselors across all grade levels, not just high school.

School counselors have struggled with issues including course articulation, student transferability, vertical course alignment, and grading fidelity. Although the CCSS cannot solve these issues exclusively, the standards do provide a foundation for the work of course equity to begin and create a benchmark for more students to be on equal academic footing across school districts and states.

In short, the CCSS equip school counselors with the rigorous academic standards and foundation necessary to:

- Think across grade levels;
- Develop comprehensive school counseling plans;
- Provide focused professional support to teachers and academic supports to students;
- Work in alignment with American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national standards for professional school counseling;
- Create standards-based college- and career-focused lessons; and
- Design clearer processes for course sequencing and credit articulation.

### **Step 3 — Act On It**

The final step for school counselors is to move toward implementation and integration of the CCSS within their daily work and throughout the school community. There are a number of action steps school counselors can take to begin the work of implementing and integrating the standards.

For example, school counselors can play an important role in working with school leadership and teachers to overcome common misconceptions about literacy instruction.

#### **1. “Students ‘should’ already know how to read.”**

Response: “First, with a few exceptions, students are functionally literate but lack the skills needed to read academically at grade level. Second, all students can learn, but not all students learn at the same rate or in the same way. Many students, particularly under-resourced students, need direct, explicit literacy instruction every year, or their skills will not improve. Finally, literacy instruction is not just for struggling learners. Even our best students need to improve their reading and writing skills.”

#### **2. “I don’t have the time.”**

Response: “The best place to teach literacy skills is in the content areas. Reading, writing, listening, and discussing course content improves student understanding and promotes higher-level thinking, application, and long-term retention of learned content.”

#### **3. “I’m not a reading teacher.”**

Response: “Teachers teach using language. We do not expect teachers to be reading teachers. All we ask is that each teacher teach the language of the content area — more directly and more explicitly. For example, science teachers need to teach students to read science text, write like a scientist, and think and discuss employing the scientific method. It is our job to show you, the teacher, how to do that.”

Various components of the standards affect the academic, social/personal, and career domains of students across all grade levels. Likewise, the academic shifts brought about by the standards affect teacher pedagogy, instructional delivery, and classroom environments. The following action steps provide a brief overview of activities school counselors can carry out to support the needs of their students and staff.

#### **KEY ACTION STEPS**

- Literacy Instruction
- Mathematics Instruction
- Instructional Time
- Instructional Practices
- Professional Learning
- Assessment
- Technology Integration
- Culture

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Literacy Instruction

- Familiarize yourself with the CCSS literacy standards.
- Advocate for a school counselor to be a member of the school leadership team as well as the school literacy council.
- Work with school literacy leaders to analyze the current state of your school from a literacy perspective. Gather and analyze data related to standardized test scores, state assessments, grades, quantitative measures of student reading comprehension, and the number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Monitor student progress and participate in discussions with the staff related to the readiness of students and the capacity of teachers to integrate literacy skills into content area instruction.
- Familiarize yourself with the common misconceptions of literacy instruction as a conversation starter with the school leadership team. School counselors are an important part of the changes in the conversation.
- Identify students with literacy needs and work with staff to match those needs to appropriate interventions.
- Integrate strategies for addressing literacy instruction standards into your Comprehensive School Counseling Plan.

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Mathematics Instruction

- Begin by working with the school leadership team to analyze data on student mathematics participation, including:
  - Number of students who are remaining on-track for college and career readiness in the elementary grades.
  - Number of students repeating mathematics courses.
  - Number and percentage of students who successfully complete a three-year mathematics sequence of either Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or a combined sequence of Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, and Mathematics 3.
  - Students enrolled in International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, or dual-enrollment mathematics and science courses as well as the scores on the externally moderated exams.
- Advocate for four years of mathematics as the graduation standard, if it is not already in place.
- Review the school's course selection, offerings, and sequencing policies to ensure that all students have access to higher-level mathematics courses.

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Systemic Approaches

- Participate in discussions of rigor in your school.
- Assist in the gathering of data on the number of students currently on target to be college and career ready as indicated by assessment data (Explore, Plan, ACT or the PSAT, SAT, ACCUPLACER).
- Determine the number of students taking rigorous courses of study.
- Explore dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities with local colleges.
- Join the school literacy council.
- Analyze available assessment data to identify the current expected reading comprehension level of students, comparing quantitative measures of student reading to text expectations.

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Instructional Time

- Participate in a discussion of the relationship of learning time to student achievement with the school leadership team.
- Help identify the various ways that teachers are extending learning time for students, including such Tier 2 interventions as tutoring and additional review sessions.
- Monitor student participation in Tier 2 interventions.
- Help identify the number of opportunities students have to participate in extended learning opportunities, including such Tier 3 interventions as reading classes and extended time or “double-block” mathematics classes.
- Monitor the participation and progress of students in Tier 3 interventions.
- Determine the effect of interventions on student achievement.
- Help identify extended learning opportunities for students to participate in accelerated or enriched learning opportunities that go beyond standard course offerings.

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Instructional Practices

- Determine the impact of the CCSS on systemic approaches to helping students develop appropriate education plans.
- Develop and continually update a six-year individual educational plan for every student relating to college and career readiness.
- Develop college and career readiness lesson plans that are aligned with CCSS college- and career-ready anchor standards, and reinforce subject-specific standards.
- Develop a calendar for when you will conduct lessons and push into classrooms.
- Prepare to present and/or share your action plan for ensuring that all students have a completed and up-to-date Individualized Education Plan.

### Action Steps for School Counselors: Professional Learning

- Be a part of discussions with the school leadership team, data team, and literacy council related to professional learning needs based on the assessed needs of the students and the observed needs of the teachers as they relate to implementation of the CCSS.
- Attend and participate in schoolwide professional development sessions.
- Reference ASCA tools and Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning when developing professional development sessions.
- Set expectations for professional development within your Comprehensive School Counseling Plan.

### Action Steps: Assessment

- Ensure that students understand themselves through interpretation of current state and standardized assessments as well as the implications of the results relating to readiness levels for college and career.
- Begin learning about and communicating about upcoming common assessments ([www.parconline.org](http://www.parconline.org) or [www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org)).
- Use data to identify student needs and monitor progress.

### Action Steps: Technology Integration

- Be aware of the technology requirements of the standards and how those skills are integrated throughout the school in various content areas.
- Familiarize yourself with online technology, social media, interactive and adaptive tools.

- ❑ Access the “Facebook for School Counselors” guide developed by Facebook, iKeepSafe, and ASCA from the ASCA website.

### Action Steps: Culture

- ❑ Develop a written statement of philosophy for the school counseling program.
- ❑ Indicate an agreed-upon set of beliefs and expectations relating to the ability of every student to achieve at high levels.
- ❑ Align the statement of philosophy with the school’s vision and mission statements.
- ❑ Obtain buy-in from the principal and school leadership team.
- ❑ Start with the low-hanging fruit and enhance the visual and auditory signals that indicate a school culture focused on college and career success of all students.

### Signaling a College-Going Culture

Principals, school counselors, and teachers send signals every day that indicate to students whether the school is focused on their college and career success or on students simply earning a diploma. These signals can be explicit or unintentional, but as high schools make dramatic shifts in school culture to ensure that all students are not just eligible for college admissions but also equipped to successfully matriculate and complete postsecondary education and training, schools must be deliberate in their messaging.

School counselors are often relegated to serving as class advisers and have to spend an enormous amount of time planning school activities and social events focused on celebrating high school, rather than on culture-building activities that celebrate preparing and launching students toward postsecondary success.

There are four domains of signaling often associated with schools. School counselors can quickly align with the school leadership team to ensure that various school practices and processes celebrate student achievement and signal a culture of college and career readiness for all students.

<b>Visuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College posters</li> <li>• Posting of scholarship information</li> <li>• Posting of a list of college acceptances</li> <li>• Posting of a list of Advanced Placement scholars or other honor roll awards</li> </ul>
<b>Auditory Signals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements about student college acceptances, scholarship winners, SAT/ACT date reminders</li> <li>• Conversations with students about college readiness and preparation</li> <li>• College talk among teachers and students</li> </ul>
<b>Practices/Rituals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrations for academic achievement</li> <li>• Honors luncheon</li> <li>• National Honor Society inductions</li> </ul>
<b>Systems and Structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open access to Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses</li> <li>• Guidance counselors being required to conduct lessons on college going in grades 9–12</li> <li>• All students registered for classes that meet university requirements</li> <li>• Students encouraged to take a minimum of four years of math, science, and foreign language</li> <li>• College-positive advisory curriculum in place for all students</li> </ul>

## Summary

The transition to the CCSS will challenge schools most directly in terms of implementation.<sup>7</sup> In placing every student on a pathway to college and career readiness, our schools are embarking on a journey into uncharted waters that will challenge our willingness to learn and our resolve to persist in the face of adversity.

Underlying this Action Brief is a belief in the power of collaboration and collective action. No one person alone can possibly affect the kind of transformation in school culture necessary to successfully implement the CCSS. School counselors must work to help build collaborative communities of learners.

Used separately, each of the action steps and talking points suggested in this Action Brief will positively affect student achievement. Employing the high-leverage suggestions in concert will produce a synergistic effect that will transform the school culture to support each student, regardless of zip code or circumstances, in their effort to become college and career ready.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.cep-dc.org/index.cfm?DocumentSubSubTopicID=5](http://www.cep-dc.org/index.cfm?DocumentSubSubTopicID=5)

## Appendix A: Resources

- **Achieve:** [www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org) — a nonprofit, bipartisan organization supporting states as they implement policies to ensure students graduate prepared for college and career. Achieve is guiding states in their implementation of the CCSS
- **ASCD:** [www.ascd.com](http://www.ascd.com)
- **The Aspen Institute:** [www.aspeninstitute.org/publications?program=27](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications?program=27)
- **College Summit:** [www.collegesummit.org](http://www.collegesummit.org) — a national education non-profit supporting schools and districts in increasing college enrollment rates and creating college-going cultures
- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)
- **Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO):** [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)
- **Doing What Works:** <http://dww.ed.gov/>
- **Hunt Institute:** [www.hunt-institute.org](http://www.hunt-institute.org) — a nonprofit supporting many areas of education, including implementation of the CCSS
- **Illustrative Mathematics:** [www.illustrativemathematics.org](http://www.illustrativemathematics.org) — a website devoted to illustrating the CCSS for mathematics
- **Institute of Educational Sciences (IES), What Works Clearinghouse:** <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
- **MetLife Foundation:** [www.metlifefoundation.org](http://www.metlifefoundation.org)
- **National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP):** [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org)
- **National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP):** [www.nassp.org/commoncore](http://www.nassp.org/commoncore)
- **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** [www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org) — an assessment consortium of 24 states building a common assessment system aligned to the CCSS
- **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC):** [www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org) — a second assessment consortium of 28 states building a common assessment system aligned to the CCSS
- **Student Achievement Partners:** [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org) — a nonprofit organization supporting implementation of the CCSS