

TESTIMONY
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There is consensus among educators and policymakers that American education must adapt to the demands of the new economy and our increasingly complex society. Education is more critical than ever in preparing young people for the demands of the workplace. As a society, we need to get more students prepared for -- and successfully through -- post-secondary education.

The leaders in higher education and K-12 have both realized that neither can make the big gains they need unless they find more powerful strategies for collaboration and coordination. What happens in one sector is inexorably linked to what happens in the other. For example, approximately one-half of entering college freshman require at least one remedial course, but higher education cannot reduce remediation without efforts in K-12. Likewise, K-12 needs more teachers and needs for them to be better prepared, but cannot solve this problem without higher education's efforts.

It was in this context that leaders in Maryland and Georgia, with assistance from the Education Trust, invited their counterparts in other states to work on what has become known as the "P-16" agenda. There had been collaboration before -- indeed, in some states there were multiple projects. But these leaders were seeking to take a more comprehensive approach to a few key issues that could drive more powerful improvement efforts. As the work developed, two issues have been particularly central to effective P-16 efforts: (1) aligning expectations for students at the transition from high school exit and entry into post-secondary education and the world of work, and (2) assuring that all teachers are adequately prepared to help their students meet the high standards established by their states.

There are important opportunities for the federal government to support and strengthen these efforts.

- This work needs to be data driven, and measuring its success is dependent on being able to access and analyze reliable data. Some leading states have developed robust data systems, but most have not. While this work need not be terribly expensive, it does require investments that states are hard-pressed to make today, and the long-term benefits to the national economy would greatly outweigh the costs. Congress has begun to provide resources that will promote use of these data systems. Last summer, the House of Representatives passed a reauthorization of Title II of the Higher Education Act that called on states to evaluate teacher preparation on the basis of teacher effectiveness

data. Many states will need help and support to get adequate data systems up and running.

- Currently, students are subjected to multiple assessments during the transition from high school to postsecondary education. At least in part this is due to a lack of consensus *within* any given state about what students are expected to know and be able to do, especially in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. These duplicative systems were developed in a time when relatively few students went on to college. In an era when more than 75% of all high school graduates enter post-secondary education, this lack of coherence is no longer tenable.

- For states and smaller communities to sustain this work, there need to be vehicles that are accountable and responsible for convening stakeholders and pursuing these efforts in the public interest. Small investments can leverage the kind of highly focused, cross-sector collaboration that P-16 work demands.

American education stands at a crossroads: We must seize the initiative to overhaul education to respond to new demands. This will require more coherence between K-12 and higher education. To initiate these efforts and to sustain them where they are already underway will take national leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee.