

Career-Focused Indicator Profile: Assessment of Readiness

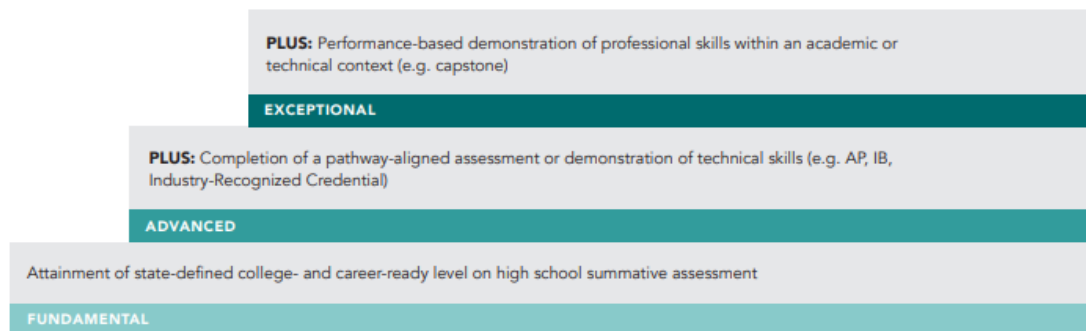
Over thirty states included at least one career-focused indicator in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) accountability systems.ⁱ Now, states are in the midst of putting finishing touches on their business rules,ⁱⁱ guidance to local districts, data collection efforts and report cards.

To help states design and implement the most meaningful career-focused indicators, Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group and the Council of Chief State School Officers have developed a series of indicator profiles, organized around the four types of measures recommended in *Destination Known: Valuing College AND Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems*:

- Progress toward Post-High School Credential
- Co-curricular Learning and Leadership Experiences
- Assessment of Readiness
- Transitions beyond High Schoolⁱⁱⁱ

These profiles provide detailed information how leading states are designing their career-focused accountability indicators to ensure they are based on quality, validated data, are inclusive of all students, and are aligned with meaningful outcomes for students. They should serve as a resource and inspiration for states working on similar indicators.

Assessment of Readiness: *Students scoring at the college- and career-ready level on assessment(s) that are validated by higher education and industry. Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, industry-recognized credentials, technical skills assessments and other performance-based demonstrations of students' knowledge and skills should be incorporated to provide valuable insight into student progression toward college and career in their chosen pathway.*



State Example: Tennessee

Tennessee's new *Ready Graduate* indicator measures the percentage of students who earn a diploma from a Tennessee high school and who have "met measures of success that increase their probability of seamlessly enrolling in postsecondary education and securing high-quality employment."^{iv}

The *Ready Graduate* indicator will be calculated by multiplying a school's or district's on-time graduation rate multiplied by the percentage of students who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Earn a composite score of 21 or higher on the ACT or equivalent score on the SAT;
- Complete four early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs);
- Complete two EPSOs + earn an industry certification; or
- Complete two EPSOs + earn a score of military readiness on the ASVAB.

The industry certifications – which must be on the state-approved list – have been aligned to specific courses in a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) program and converted to credit hours using credit for prior learning policy. Some certifications may count for more than one EPSO based on the rigor of the exam. For example, the American Welding Society (AWS) certification counts towards the certification plus two EPSOs – meaning a student who earns AWS certification has met the criteria as a “ready graduate.” On the other hand, the NCCER Carpentry Level One only counts towards the certification requirement, so a student earning that certification would still be required to complete two additional EPSOs.^v

To ensure consistent data collection, certifying agencies, such as AWS or NCCER, provide data, which is matched to students in Tennessee's statewide longitudinal data system. In order to ensure students who obtain certifications the summer after their high school graduation are included, the data for certifications will be pulled on August 1 each year, after which Tennessee will run the accountability data.

State Example: Ohio

Through ESSA, Ohio expanded its *Prepared for Success* indicator, which will account for 15 percent of a school's or district's grade, to include a set of core measures, as well as other measures that count as “bonus” points.^{vi}

To be considered “prepared for success,” students must:

- Meet the remediation-free score on all parts of the ACT or SAT (as set by Ohio's Department of Higher Education); or
- Earn an honors diploma; or
- Earn an industry-recognized credential or group of credentials in one of 13 high-demand career fields.

Key Term: Credential of Value

The precise definition and use of industry-recognized credentials vary from state to state, but most include a few common elements, in that they are exam-based, administered by third parties and supplemental to a traditional postsecondary award.

To be a “credential of value” requires that the credential is recognized in the labor market, is portable across state borders and is a valid assessment of student skills. They can take many different forms, including educational degrees, certificates, certifications and licenses.

Number of students in the denominator of the 4- and 5-year cohorts who met one of the criterion

Number of students in the denominator of the 4- and 5-year graduation cohorts of previous two years

The State Superintendent and Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation are jointly responsible for identifying credentials that are tied to Ohio's in-demand jobs and valued by Ohio employers.^{vii} Only those approved industry-recognized credentials are eligible for inclusion in the *Prepared for Success* component and as part of the state's new high school graduation requirements.

For the report cards in 2016 and beyond, only credentials totaling 12 points from the approved list, within the same Career Cluster, count towards the *Prepared for Success* component. Individual credentials count for between one and 12 points, depending on the rigor and value of the credential. The list will be updated annually, and all of the credentials are included in the state's data collection system (the Education Management Information System). And, some of the credentials qualify students for postsecondary articulated credit.

All students in the four-year and five-year graduation rate cohorts are included in the denominator of this component regardless of whether they graduate or not. A student who meets one of the three metrics earns one point for its school and district; a student can earn an additional weight of 0.3 bonus points if he or she also earn a three or higher on at least one AP exams, earns a four or higher on at least one IB exam, or earns at least three college credits before leaving high school.

What Stands Out

The inclusion of industry-recognized credentials and other assessments of readiness is increasingly become the norm under ESSA, with the majority of states including one or more of these assessments in their college- and career-ready indicators. With regards to industry-recognized credentials, Ohio and Tennessee have made progress in setting criteria and methodology for credentials that can be counted in their accountability systems and, in the case of Tennessee, tying postsecondary credit to those assessment. This is critical to ensure learners are earning credentials of value, rather than just one of the innumerable credentials currently available on the market.^{viii}

What also stands out about these states is that while they are using meta-indicators, which allow students to demonstrate their readiness by an industry credential OR an AP/IB exam OR meeting a college-ready score on an assessment, they have created incentives for students to meet multiple indicators through Ohio's bonus metrics and Tennessee's stacked design. However, neither state has stretched fully to reach the "Exceptional" level on this indicator.

These Career-Ready Indicator Profiles are part of a broader effort to analyze states' approaches to measuring career readiness and continue to push the field forward by designing and implementing effective and meaningful indicators.

All of these issues will be explored in *Making Career Readiness Count: A 2018 Update*, which will be released later in 2018 by Advance CTE, Achieve, Education Strategy Group and the Council of Chief State School Officers as part of the New Skills for Youth Initiative, supported by JP Morgan Chase & Co.

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- ⁱ Advance CTE & Education Strategy Group (2018). *Mapping Career Readiness in the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/mapping-career-readiness-essa-full>
- ⁱⁱ Business rules typically describe the procedures used to produce outcome data. This may include identifying the data elements that should be sourced to populate analysis databases, the programming codes used to formulate inquiries and the years of data to respond to a given indicator.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Education Strategy Group and Council of Chief State School Officers (2017). *Destination Known: Valuing College AND Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/destination-known>
- ^{iv} Tennessee Department of Education (2018). *Ready Graduate Indicator in Accountability (2017-18) Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/eps/epso_essa_ready_graduate_indicator.pdf
- ^v Tennessee Department of Education (2018). *ESSA Industry Certification Conversion Table*. Retrieved https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/cte/cte_certs_ESSA_conversion.xlsx
- ^{vi} Ohio Department of Education. *Appendix B: ESSA Sections A.1-A.4OH*. Retrieved <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA/ESSA-Appendix-B.pdf.aspx>
- ^{vii} Ohio Department of Education's List of State-Approved Industry-Recognized Credentials. Retrieved <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements/Industry-Recognized-Credentials-and-WorkKeys/Industry-Recognized-Credentials>
- ^{viii} Advance CTE (2016). *Credentials of Value: State Strategies for Identifying and Endorsing Industry-Recognized Credentials*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/credentials-of-value>