Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma that Counts (2004), American Diploma Project (a partnership of Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation)

## Influence Index: 22

## Citation

Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, & The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. (2004). *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma that Counts.* Washington, DC: American Diploma Project.

## Description

Achieve, Inc., the Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation established the American Diploma Project (ADP) with the goal of better aligning secondary education with postsecondary education and work. The American Diploma Project's *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts* contends that the high school diploma too often fails to signify that students are well-prepared for postsecondary education or the workplace. This failure, the report notes, stems from a lack of connection between high school graduation requirements and the knowledge and skills required for adult success. As evidence, the report cites statistics showing that large percentages of high school graduates require remediation in college and eventually fall short of a college degree.

To remedy this situation, the report provides college and workplace readiness benchmarks designed to help states align their high school assessments and graduation requirements with the demands of credit-bearing college courses and quality jobs. The report outlines standards for high school English and mathematics. In addition it assembles samples of workplace tasks and postsecondary assignments. These examples are intended to show rigor of the real-world environment that awaits young adults after high school. ADP also suggests that the postsecondary education and business communities must be involved in efforts to raise standards and expectations for high school students.

The American Diploma Project was launched at the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools. Continuing dissemination of project's work and the findings and recommendations of *Ready or Not* are facilitated by the 22-state American Diploma Project Network.

The state Network provides an important dimension to the ADP's work and a vehicle for implementing the solutions recommended in *Ready or Not*. The states comprising the ADP Network have signed on to the same set of commitments around college and work readiness. Those states are also eligible to receive services from Achieve, which include: expert advice, public support for sweeping changes, tools and resources to mobilize advocates, and technical assistance for building data systems.

## **Availability**

The *Ready or Not* report and information about the American Diploma Project Network are available online at the Achieve, Inc. website <a href="https://www.achieve.org">www.achieve.org</a>.