

## How High School Diploma Requirements Fall Short of College Admission Standards

By Catherine Gewertz on April 2, 2018 12:07 AM. No comments

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Most state high school graduation requirements are so poorly designed that they trap students in a "preparation gap," where they don't qualify for admission to public universities, according to [a study released Monday](#).

The Center for American Progress analyzed how states' requirements for a standard diploma match up with the admissions criteria at their respective state universities. The think tank found that in most states, in at least one subject area, students must exceed their state's high school graduation requirements in order to cross the threshold of the public four-year institutions in their state.

The CAP report describes two big problems. **Most state diploma requirements:**

- **Don't meet admissions criteria for the state's public universities.** Noted by other researchers as well, this "preparation gap" can form a barrier to college when students find that the diploma requirements they completed fall short of the ones their state colleges and universities expect for admission.
- **Leave too much up to the student.** In many states, students can decide which core courses to take in order to fulfill graduation requirements. That means they could finish high school with a relatively weak lineup of classes, or courses that don't match well with their postsecondary goals.

Against the backdrop of a series of graduation-rate scandals—like the [recent one in California](#)—the CAP report is a call to keep expectations high, and to **let students graduate**—the CAP report is a call to keep expectations high, and to let students graduate.

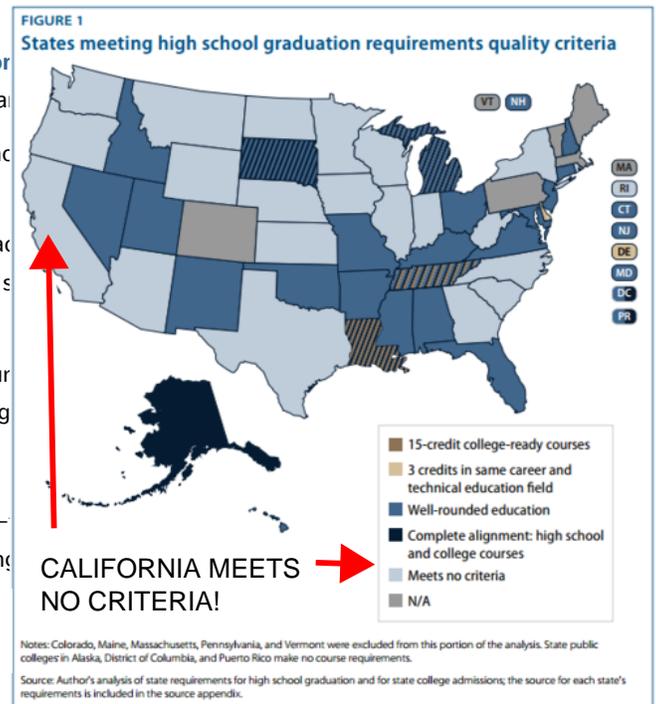
The report warns that resources are a crucial piece of the work to ensure a smooth transition. Meeting graduation requirements for all students are just the first step, it says.

All students must have the ingredients to succeed in tough courses: a good teacher, access to those classes, the study says. Any missing piece boosts the risk that students are not really ready for college or postsecondary training.

"Without sufficient resources to ensure that all students can meet rigorous course requirements, states are more likely to offer less rigorous courses and using nefarious practices to get students across the gap."

### Comparing States' Graduation Requirements

The Center found that states' graduation requirements for a standard diploma—some states—matched up with those of their state universities most often in England.



## The "preparation gap" that trips students up at the college door

**In most states, students must exceed high school diploma requirements in order to be admitted to their state's public, four-year college.**

Since our first year in operation, Cambrian Academy has set higher standards for graduation. Cambrian Academy's graduation requirements are not based on those of the state of California, they are based on the admission standards of reputable four-year universities.

Yet, with the support provided by our outstanding faculty, most students exceed our "A to G plus 2" graduation requirements and enter college in advanced standing.