

The U.S. faces mounting competition from developed and developing countries across the globe, and our education system simply has not been keeping up. Young adults — ages 25-34 — in the U.S. are 12th in postsecondary attainment behind Korea, Japan, Norway, and Canada, even though they are just as likely to earn a college degree as older Americans.

U.S. educational achievement and attainment rates are staying flat, while competitors are surpassing us by any measure used.

### An Internationally Competitive Education System

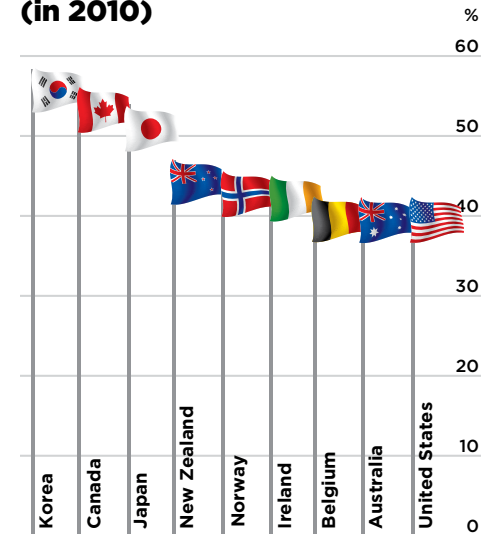
The global economy and technological advances are accelerating the demand for skilled employees.

Countries with the most successful education systems have some unique strategies in place. For one, they typically have common academic standards, which ground their systems and allow teachers to focus instruction on the most important topics, help students

gain a deeper understanding of their subjects, and reflect the skills most demanded by employers. These international K-12 standards set up students for success in college and careers.

The U.S. is now moving in this direction, with most states adopting common standards that are internationally benchmarked — meaning they are more focused and anchored

**Percent of 25-34 Year Olds With a Secondary Degree (in 2010)**






Source: OECD. Education at a Glance, 2010

in real-world expectations. Support for these college- and career-ready standards from the business community is critical to helping our students be ready for the global economy, and to ensuring the U.S. maintains the most talented workforce in the world.

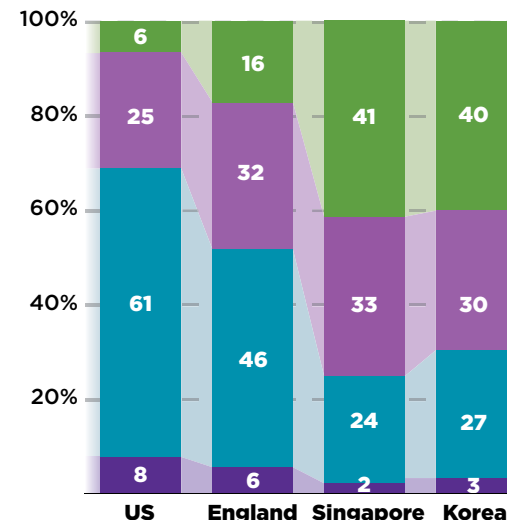
## Why College- and Career-Ready Expectations?

- On a 2009 international assessment of 15-year-olds, more than 20 countries had higher average achievement scores than the U.S., but also had higher percentages of students performing at the highest levels of mathematics literacy.<sup>1</sup>
- Americans 55 years old and over still have the highest postsecondary degree attainment in the world; young adults (ages 25-34) have the 12th highest post-secondary degree attainment in the world, even though they are just as likely to have a degree as older Americans.<sup>2</sup>
- Our education system has grown stagnant, while other countries are accelerating. We can no longer afford to stand still.
- Our education system — and therefore our students — can't compete internationally unless we set the right expectations and goals for them. Standards, such as the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English/literacy and the Next Generation Science Standards, provide the necessary foundation upon which the rest of the system can be built, including curriculum and instruction.

**Japan and Korea are producing more engineers each year than the U.S.<sup>3</sup> despite having only a fraction of our population.**

			
Population (in millions)	127.5	48.9	311.6
# of Engineers (in 2008)	95,216	77,238	69,908

## Too few U.S. students acquire strong math skills<sup>4</sup>



- Students are below low International Benchmark.
- Students have some knowledge and/or can apply basic mathematical knowledge in straight-forward situations.
- Students can apply their understanding and knowledge in a variety of relatively complex situations.
- Students can organize and draw conclusions from information, make generalizations, and solve non-routine problems.

<sup>4</sup> TIMSS 2007 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (page 71, Exhibit 2.2) Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (page 71, Exhibit 2.2)

<sup>1</sup> <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/index.asp>

<sup>2</sup> OECD, "Education at a Glance," 2010 (All rates are self-reported)

<sup>3</sup> National Science Foundation, 2012, Table 2-33. [www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind12/c0/appendix.htm#c4](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind12/c0/appendix.htm#c4)

