



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARKANSAS JOINS MULTISTATE CONSORTIUM FOR COMMON ALGEBRA II TEST

Achieve, Inc., today announced a joint effort by nine states, including Arkansas, to participate in a new, common student assessment in Algebra II. The test will be used in Arkansas as an additional end-of-course exam for the 25,000-plus students who take the mathematics course each year.

"We are pleased to be among the states cooperating in this bold initiative," said Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education. "Algebra II has become the 'gatekeeper' course for what students need to know to succeed whether they decide to go to college or straight to the world of work. This assessment will help us gauge whether students across the state are learning these skills at an appropriate level."

The joint effort also means a cost-savings for all of the states involved – Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. "With the accountability measures required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act as well as under state laws, testing is a big-ticket item for all of us. To be able to develop and implement a common examination introduces an efficiency that is no doubt beneficial to the states' coffers."

Please find attached the press release and backgrounder released today by Achieve, Inc., the bipartisan, non-profit organization formed by the nation's governors and business leaders to raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship.

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The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.