WICHE’s efforts to strengthen the high school-to-college pipeline: the State Scholars Initiative

Jere Mock | Vice President
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
The State Scholars Initiative (SSI)

★ WICHE began the administration of SSI in **October 2005**
★ Total funding is **$6.6 million**. $2.1 million funding supports WICHE’s administration costs and $4.5 million is passed through to support states.
The State Scholars Initiative (SSI)

The goal of State Scholars Initiative is two-fold:

1) Increase the number of high school students taking a rigorous course of study

2) Engage the business community in this endeavor through volunteering in middle and high schools and other support
The State Scholars core course of study recommends four years of English, three of math (algebra I and II, geometry), three of lab science (biology, chemistry, physics), three and a half of social studies (chosen from U.S. and world history, geography, economics, and government), and two of a language other than English.
What is State Scholars?

State Scholars Core Course of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSES</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGLISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English I, English II, English III, English IV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATHEMATICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCIENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology, Chemistry, Physics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL STUDIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chosen from U.S. History, World History, World Geography, Economics, Government</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years of a language other than English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4-Year College

Workforce (Civilian & Military)

Community or Technical College
The State Scholars Initiative (SSI)

In July 2008

- 20 active states – each state received $300,000 in federal funding over two years

- WICHE will serve as program administrator through mid 2009

- Tracking student performance over time to help states make better policy decisions based on data
SSI Data Collection

Three types of state performance data:

- **Qualitative Information**
  - successful business-education partnerships
  - Effective business engagement practices
  - identifying promising student academic support practices

- **Student Course Level** data

- **Perception surveys regarding importance of a rigorous course of study**
Student Course Level Findings

Data from:
★ 47 districts
★ 10 SSI states
★ Representing 121,417 individual students
★ Enrollments in over 1.3 million courses in 2006-07
Nearly 80% of students in these districts took English; over 60% enrolled in some form of social studies.

However, despite physics being offered by all these districts, less than 7% of students enrolled.

Only about 35% enrolled in a language other than English during the academic year.
Higher failure rates are seen in classes that are “gateway” courses for academic sequences in mathematics and science such as other mathematics courses, algebra I, geometry, and biology.
National Summit on Academic Rigor and Relevance

★ 36 state teams in attendance at April 29-30 summit


★ Summit proceedings publication summer 2008
WICHE State Accomplishments

★ **Utah** – In 2008, received a nearly $1 million appropriation to create and fund a Regents’ Scholarship that provides a $1,000 base scholarship to any student who completes the Utah Scholars Core Course of Study with a minimum GPA, and a scholarship equal to 75 percent of tuition for two years of full-time college enrollment to students who complete the Core Course of Study with a 3.5 GPA and a 26 score on the ACT.
Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)

Students who are Pell-eligible U.S. Citizens enrolled full-time and have participated in a rigorous high school course of study, like the SSI Core Course of Study, may qualify for:

- Up to $750 for first year college students
- Up to $1,300 for second year college students

Students check “State Scholar Graduate” on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form to apply.
Contact

Terese Rainwater
Program Director
State Scholars Initiative
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
trainwater@wiche.edu
303-541-0225

SSI is administered by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), based in Boulder, CO, and funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 at $6.6 million. The work reported herein was supported under State Scholars Initiative, PR/Award Number (V051U050006) as administered by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.