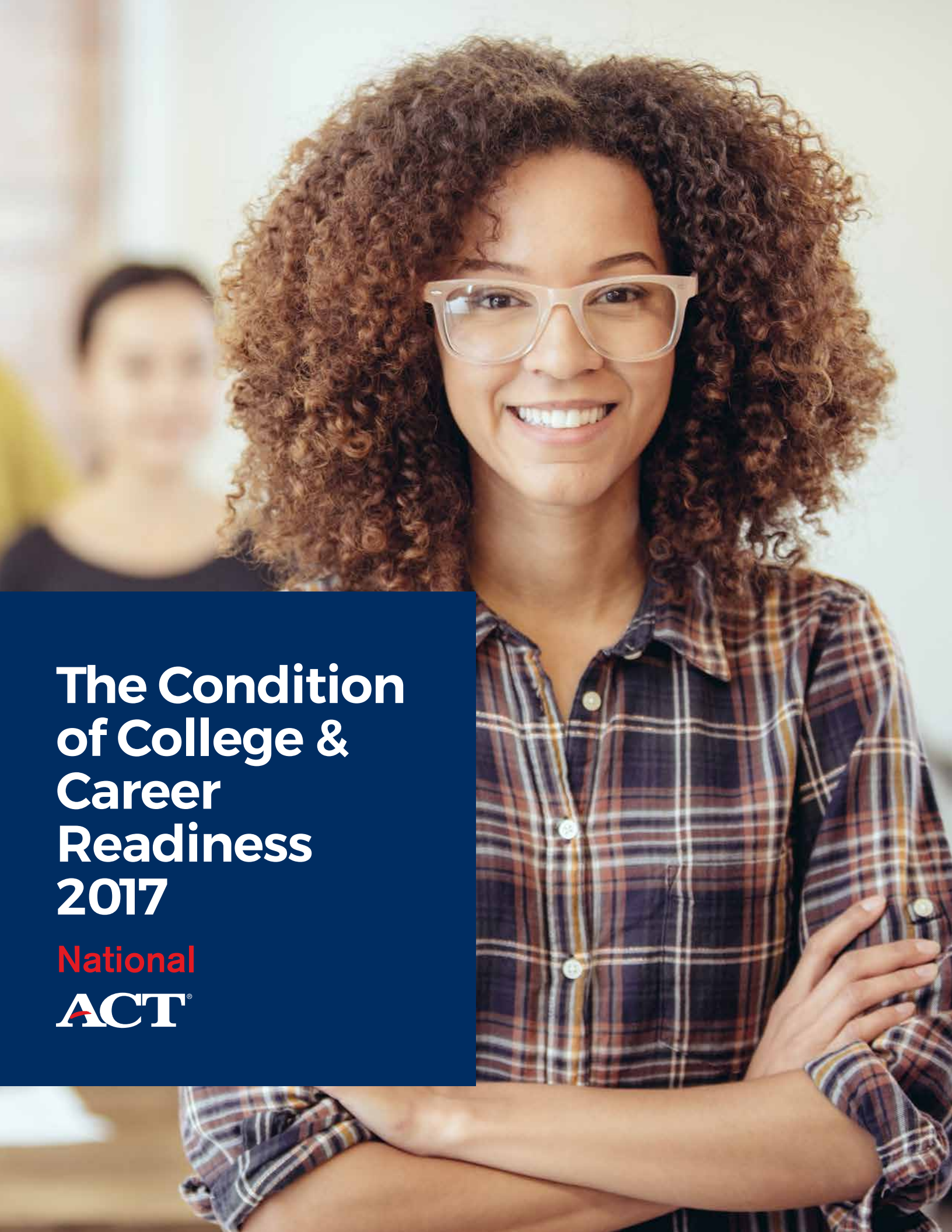

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017

National

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The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017

This report looks at the progress of the 2017 ACT®-tested graduating class relative to college and career readiness. This year's report shows that 60% of students in the 2017 US graduating class took the ACT test, up from 54% in 2013. The increased number of test takers over the past several years enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness, as well as offering a glimpse at the emerging educational pipeline.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to providing more meaningful data for individuals and institutions to make better decisions. The focus is on providing better and more relevant data to students, parents, schools, districts, and states so that all can make more informed decisions to improve outcomes. We accomplish this goal by taking a holistic view and using consistent and reliable historical information so that individuals and institutions have a better context to make critical decisions about the journey they have undertaken.

Performance of 2017 Graduates

- The percentage of graduates ready for college coursework in three or four subject areas rose slightly to 39% for the 2017 US high school graduating class, up from 38% in 2016. These gains can be explained largely by the reduced number of states administering the ACT to all students compared to last year—particularly in Michigan and Illinois, where average scores rose substantially.
- The national average ACT Composite score for the 2017 graduating class rose to 21.0, returning to 2014 and 2015 levels after a drop to 20.8 last year.
- Since 2013, the percentage of ACT-tested graduates who met or surpassed the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks has increased in reading, stayed relatively steady in science, and declined in both English and mathematics.
- Average scores and college readiness levels among Hispanic students improved slightly this year even while their numbers increased.
- Underserved learners (low-income, minority, and/or first-generation college students) continue to struggle in terms of their achievement levels and readiness for college. Less than a fourth of graduates who qualify as underserved met or surpassed three or four of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, compared to more than half of ACT-tested graduates who are not underserved.

2017 Graduates Tested

- More than 2 million US high school graduates (2,030,038)—60 percent of the 2017 graduating class nationally—took the ACT test. Those numbers are down slightly from last year due to changes in statewide testing but remain significantly higher than in previous years.
  - A drop in the number of graduates tested in both Michigan (down 74%) and Illinois (down 14%)—each of which moved away from statewide ACT testing—account for a large portion of the decline this year.
- The largest gain in ACT-tested graduates occurred in the state of Oklahoma, which saw a 29 percent increase compared to 2016. The state's average ACT Composite score dropped a full point.
- The number and percent of Hispanic students taking the ACT continued to rise in 2017, adding to the diversity and representativeness of the tested population.
- The number of African American ACT-tested students in the 2017 graduating class dropped slightly, largely due to the decline of test takers in Illinois and Michigan.
- Underserved students represent roughly half of the students in the graduating class, which is similar to previous years.
- Populations of first-generation college students taking the ACT also remained stable, dropping only a point from 19% to 18% between 2016 and 2017.

STEM

- Nearly half (48%) of 2017 graduates were interested in pursuing a STEM major or occupation, unchanged from 2016. This percentage represents more than 950,000 graduates.
- The percentage of graduates meeting the ACT STEM Benchmark has increased from 19% to 21% since 2013.
- Among graduates meeting the STEM benchmark, the average science score has increased from 28.0 to 28.7 between 2013 and 2017, while the average math score has remained unchanged at 28.7. Differences in score growth may be due to a variety of curricular- and policy-related factors.

- Underserved students lag furthest behind their peers in the area of STEM. Only 2% of students meeting all three underserved criteria met the STEM benchmark, compared to 31% of those who are not considered underserved.

Career Readiness

- Fewer than three in 10 ACT-tested 2017 graduates were likely, based on their ACT Composite score, to attain an ACT WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®) at the Gold level (ACT Composite score of 25 or higher) or higher. Individuals at the Gold level have demonstrated the foundational work readiness skills needed for 93% of the jobs recently profiled in the ACT JobPro® database.
- Another 49% of 2017 graduates would be likely to earn a Silver-level NCRC, while 22% would be likely to earn a Bronze-level certificate. The remaining 3% would fall into the "Needs Improvement" category and would not be likely to earn an NCRC.
- The ACT Composite scores associated with a 50% chance of earning each ACT WorkKeys NCRC level or higher are: 13 for Bronze, 17 for Silver, 25 for Gold, and 35 for Platinum. Based on those cut scores, students who earned an ACT Composite score of less than 13 would be classified as "Needs Improvement," 13 to 16 as "Bronze," 17 to 24 as "Silver," and 25 or above as "Gold or Higher." For comparison, individual student score reports classify those who scored 12 to 13, 14 to 17, and 18 and higher as making progress toward Bronze, Silver, and Gold certificates.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- Of 2017 ACT-tested graduates, 45% took the ACT two or more times. This is a slight increase from 44% in 2016. On second testing, average ACT Composite scores in recent graduating classes have risen by nearly a point, compared to first testing. Similarly, more than half of all graduates who take the ACT at least twice see a Composite score gain from first to second testing.
- Nationally, 73% of 2017 ACT-tested graduates participated in the Educational Opportunity Service (EOS), thus allowing them to receive information about opportunities and programs available from colleges across the country.
- Among 2017 ACT-tested graduate records, 65% registered to send free score reports to one or more postsecondary institutions. This compares to 67% of 2016 graduates who registered to send free score reports. ACT encourages students to take advantage of free score report requests during registration.
- During the 2016-2017 academic year, 656,061 fee waivers were awarded to prospective ACT examinees. More than a fourth (28%) of these fee waivers were not used, suggesting that more than 180,000 eligible students missed out on an opportunity to take the ACT free of charge during the past year alone. Note: These numbers are based on fee waivers issued nationwide during this academic year, and not specific to the 2017 graduating class.

Pipeline

- Among 2017 ACT-tested graduates, 82% aspired to postsecondary education, slightly lower than 84% in 2016. Among 2016 ACT-tested graduates, only 64% actually did enroll in a postsecondary institution (2017 enrollment data is not yet available). This enrollment gap means that more than 400,000 of the 2016 graduates who aspired to postsecondary education did not end up enrolling.
- Four out of five 2017 graduates aspired to a two-year degree or higher, and three out of four aspired to a four-year degree or higher.
  - ~ Between 2013 and 2017, the percentage of students reporting aspirations of a four-year degree or higher decreased from 80% to 75%.
- Health Sciences and Technologies continues to be the most popular college major choice among ACT-tested US high school graduates, beating the next-highest-named major (Business) by a nearly two-to-one margin.
- Though Business was the second-highest-named major, the number of students specifically indicating being undecided about major exceeded Business by nearly 95,000.
- Only 4 percent of 2017 graduates (80,873 students) expressed interest in an education major, the same percentage as last year. These numbers are aligned with the projected expansion of the current US teacher shortage to more than 100,000 educators by 2021.

College and Career Readiness Workshops

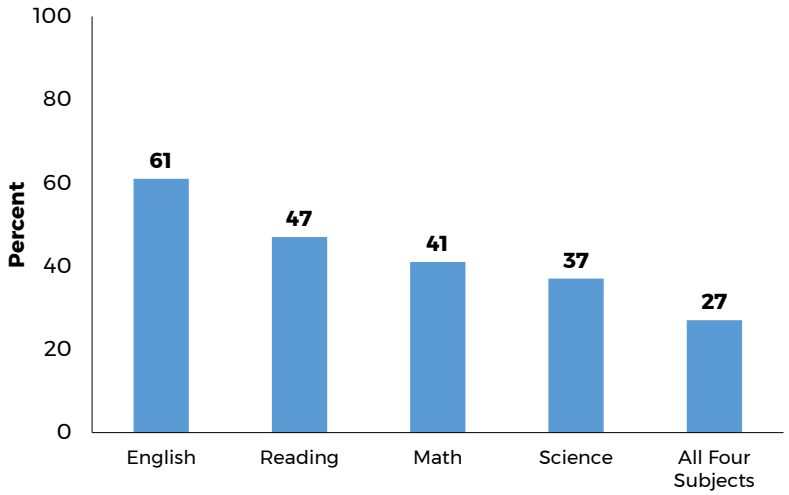
- During the 2016-17 school year, ACT conducted 241 free College and Career Readiness Workshops, registering more than 12,000 educators across the country.
  - ~ Find out more at: http://www.act.org/content/act/en/act-events/college-and-career-readiness-workshops.html

National

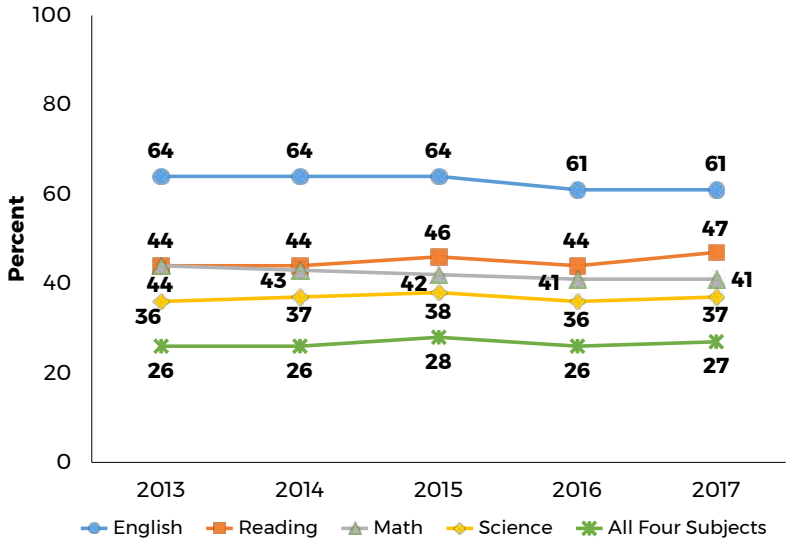
Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- 2,030,038 high school graduates, or an estimated 60% of the graduating class, took the ACT*.
- Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT nationally increased by 230,795 students (13 percent).

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

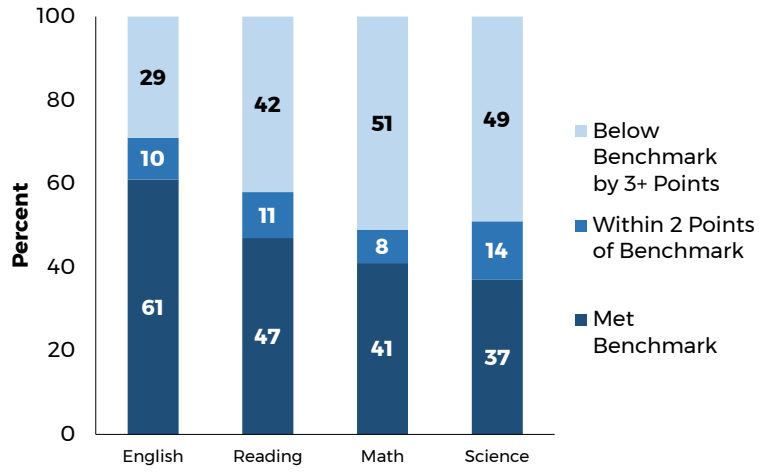


* Totals for graduating seniors were obtained from: 1) Grad 2013-2016: *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 8th edition. Copyright December 2012 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. 2) Grad 2017: *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 9th edition. Copyright December 2016 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

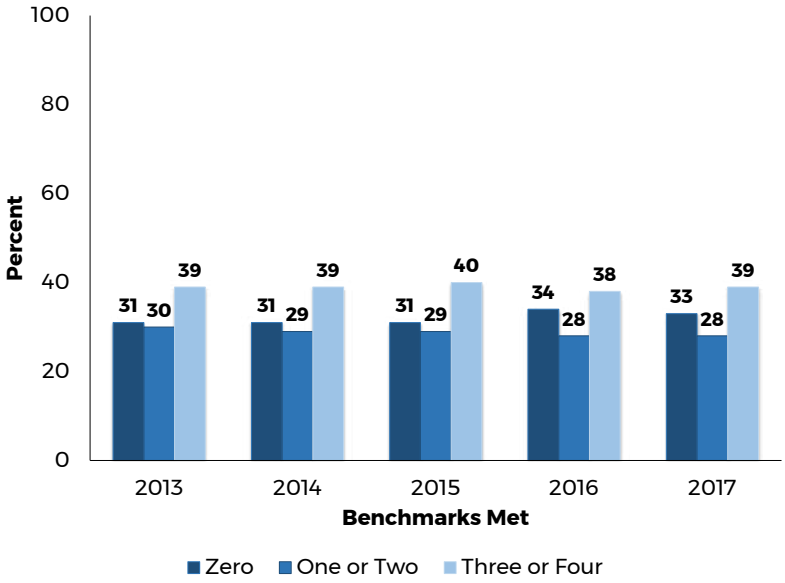
Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Near Attainment of College and Career Readiness

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



Trends in Percentage of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

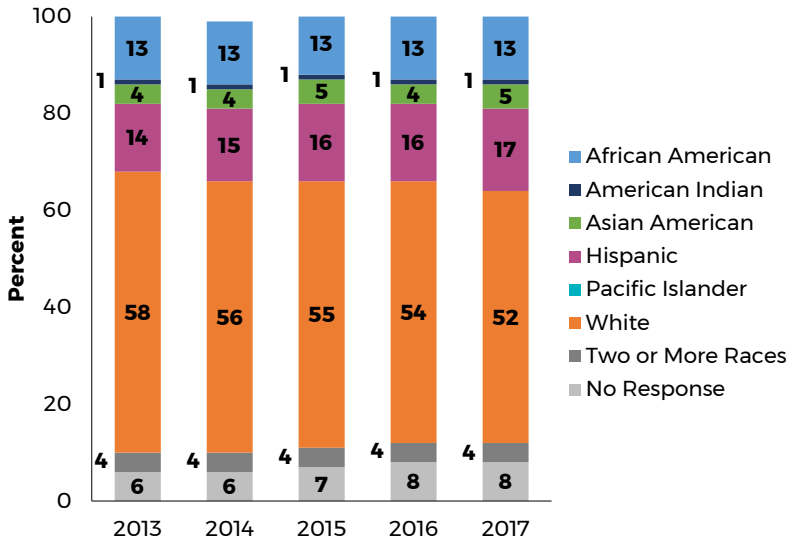


National

Participation and Opportunity

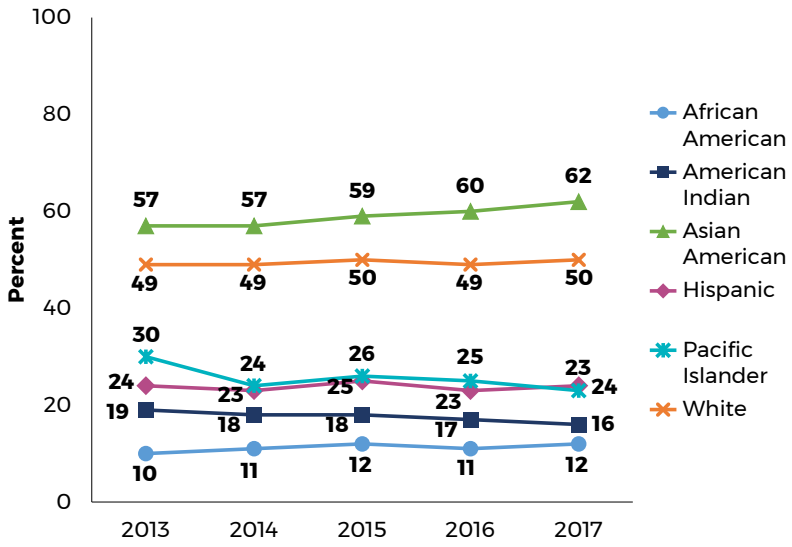
Over the past decade, ACT has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of students tested as well as growth in partnerships with states, districts, and high schools. As a result, the *Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017* report provides a much deeper and more representative sample in comparison to the more self-selected college-going population from a decade ago.

Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

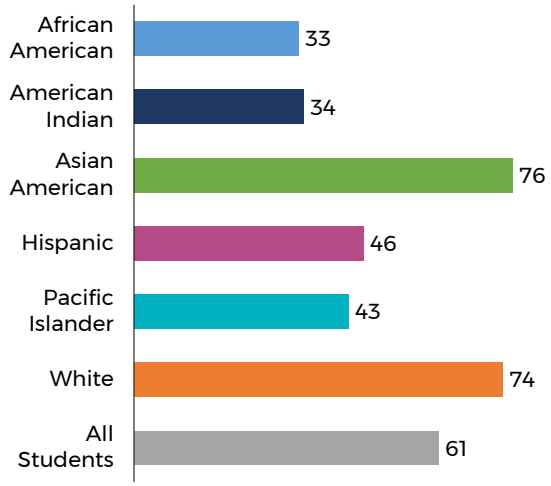
Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



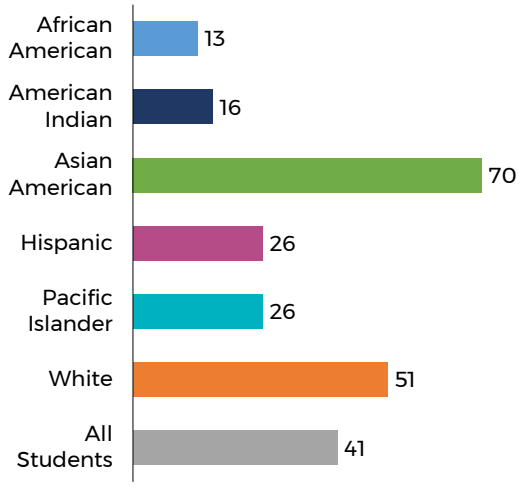
Participation and Opportunity by Subject

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting
ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity and Subject

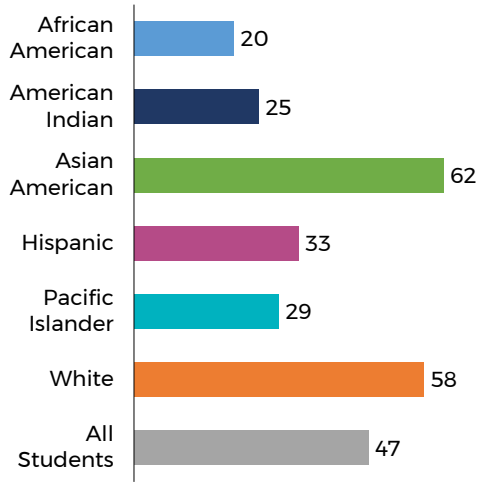
English



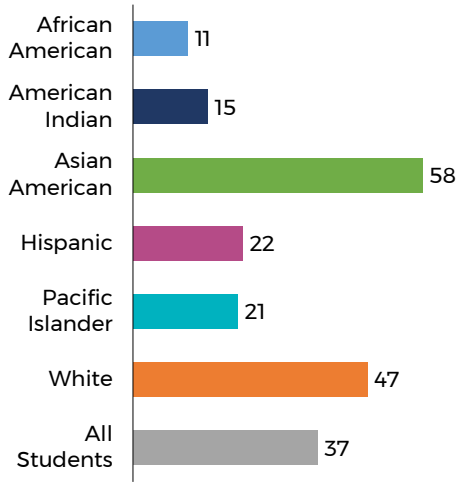
Math



Reading



Science



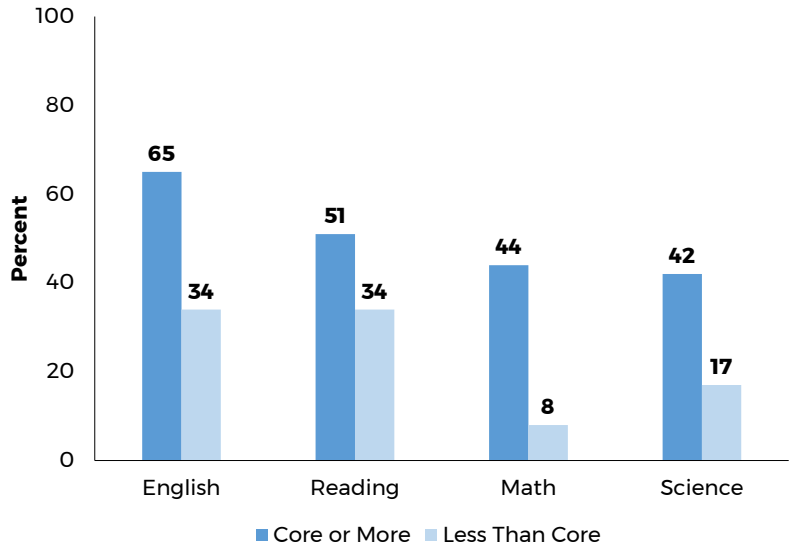
African American	American Indian	Asian American	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	All Students
N = 256,756	*N* = 16,135	*N* = 96,097	*N* = 347,906	*N* = 6,503	*N* = 1,062,439	*N* = 2,030,038

National

Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance

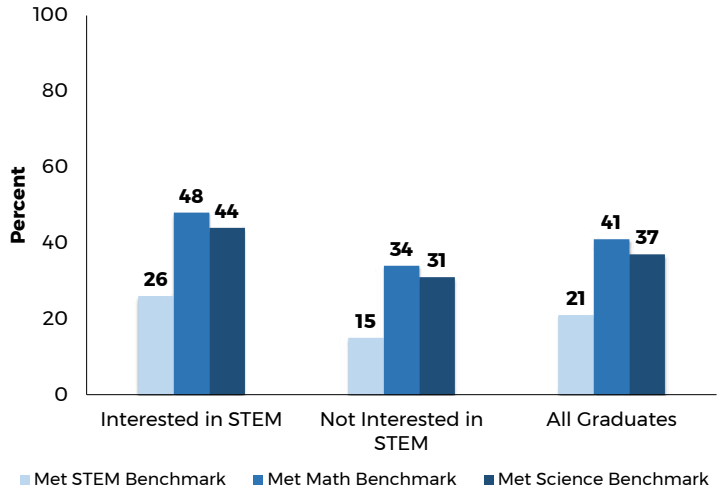
Within subjects, ACT has consistently found that students who take the recommended core curriculum are more likely to be ready for college or career than those who do not. A core curriculum is defined as four years of English and three years each of math, social studies, and science.[1]

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates in Core or More vs. Less Than Core Courses Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



A Look at STEM

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by STEM Cohort



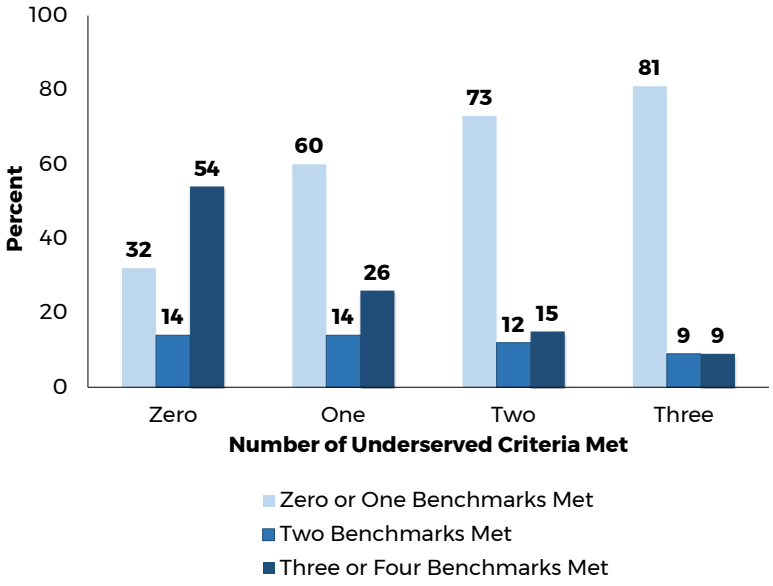
Interested in STEM	Not Interested in STEM	All Graduates
N = 970,532	*N* = 1,059,506	*N* = 2,030,038

For the 2017 ACT-tested graduating class as a whole, and separately for graduates interested in STEM and non-STEM majors/occupations, this chart presents ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment percentages in STEM, math, and science. Students meeting or exceeding a STEM score of 26 (i.e., the ACT STEM Benchmark) are considered ready for first-year STEM college courses such as physics or calculus.

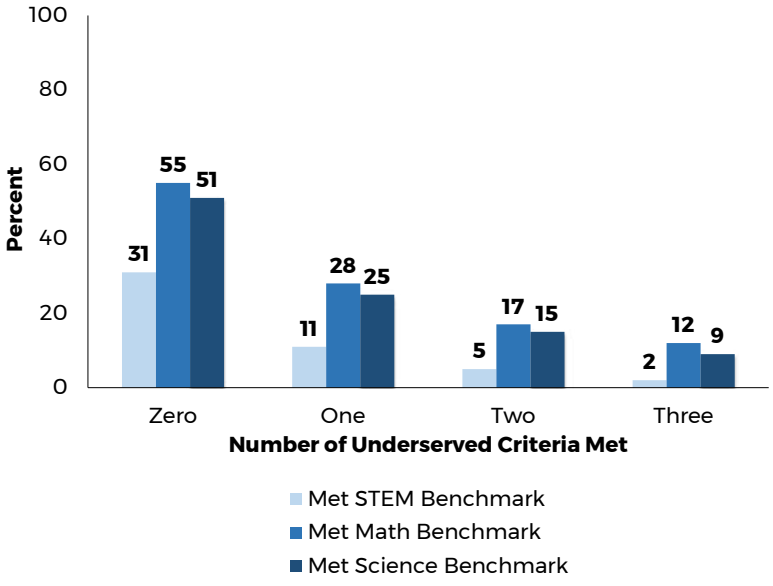
The Underserved Learner*

In recent years, approximately half of each ACT graduating class has consisted of students who could be considered underserved. That is, they would be the first generation to attend college, come from low-income families, and/or self-identify their race/ethnicity as minority. Given the enormity of this population, ACT seeks to fully understand how students' statuses relative to being underserved impacts readiness for college and careers.

2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Number of Underserved Criteria Met



Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness and STEM Benchmarks by Number of Underserved Criteria Met



ACT research has shown that students meeting at least one underserved criterion tend to realize lower college and career readiness levels than students meeting none of the criteria. However, that relationship comes into tighter focus when we take into account how many criteria are met. In many instances, the impact of meeting underserved criteria is additive: Students who meet increasingly more underserved criteria tend to demonstrate progressively lower college and career readiness rates. The adjacent graphs reflect the relationship between number of underserved criteria and readiness levels for 2017 graduates.

Underserved Criteria *N* Counts apply to both adjacent charts:

Zero	One
N = 1,101,679	*N* = 559,976

Two	Three
N = 253,961	*N* = 114,422

* *Underserved learners self-report: Highest parental education level excluding college; family income less than $36,000 per year; or race/ethnicity of African American, American Indian, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander.*

National

ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment for Top Planned College Majors: 2017 Graduates

When students register for the ACT, they can select a college major—from a list of 294 majors—that they plan to pursue. Among recent ACT-tested high school graduates nationwide, roughly three out of every four selected a specific planned major, whereas the remaining one in four indicated that they were undecided or did not select a major.

This table ranks the nation's top (most frequently selected) majors among 2017 graduates. The percentages of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are shown for each major. Across these planned majors, there are considerable differences in the percentage of students who are ready to succeed in college.

Major Name	*N*	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four
Undecided	280,367	68	54	48	43	33
No Major Indicated	254,789	35	24	18	18	11
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	84,015	57	38	27	25	15
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	71,286	83	69	63	59	48
Business Administration and Management, General	56,059	63	46	43	37	26
Biology, General	38,364	81	67	60	57	45
Mechanical Engineering	36,673	67	53	60	52	41
Computer Science and Programming	31,784	79	66	67	61	50
Criminology	28,520	52	38	25	24	14
Law (Pre-Law)	25,223	65	53	41	38	29
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	24,733	74	60	67	59	48
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	23,363	67	47	42	37	25
Accounting	23,182	68	49	55	43	31
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	21,234	70	55	36	34	23
Biochemistry and Biophysics	19,428	84	72	70	65	55
Athletic Training	18,127	52	35	29	26	15
Psychology, General	17,464	76	61	45	43	32
Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering	15,950	83	71	75	69	58
Marketing Management and Research	15,894	72	55	49	41	30
Elementary Education	15,831	66	46	34	30	19
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	14,943	66	50	36	37	24
Computer Engineering	14,487	73	60	64	57	47
Medical Assisting	14,307	42	27	19	16	10
Graphic Design	14,079	59	43	30	29	18
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	13,893	75	57	55	49	36
Health-Related Professions and Services, General	13,079	67	49	41	37	25
Finance, General	12,388	84	70	74	64	54
Theatre Arts/Drama	12,274	75	61	42	42	31
Civil Engineering	12,051	73	57	66	54	42
Chemical Engineering	12,016	86	75	81	74	64

Note: *Undecided* and/or *No Major Indicated* are included in the table, if applicable. The former refers to students who selected the option *Undecided* from the list of majors. The latter refers to students who did not respond to the question.

ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment for the Top Planned College Majors with Good Fit: 2017 Graduates

Many students gravitate toward majors that align with their preferred activities and values. ACT research has shown that greater *interest-major fit* is related to important student outcomes such as persistence in a major or college. This table shows, for each planned major, the numbers and percentages of students displaying good interest-major fit,[2] as well as the percentages of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. Since only students who completed the ACT Interest Inventory during ACT registration are included here, this table shows results for a subset of the students in the prior table. These planned majors vary considerably in the percentage of students displaying good interest-major fit and meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. The results highlight the importance of examining multiple predictors of college success and affirm the value of a holistic view of college readiness.

Major Name	*N* Fit	% Fit	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four
Undecided			No profile available				
No Major Indicated			No profile available				
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	26,773	32	66	46	33	31	19
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	34,218	48	87	73	67	63	52
Business Administration and Management, General	18,870	34	67	50	47	39	28
Biology, General	19,028	50	85	71	63	61	49
Mechanical Engineering	12,017	33	70	55	62	56	43
Computer Science and Programming	8,561	27	79	67	67	63	51
Criminology	3,757	13	63	49	29	29	18
Law (Pre-Law)	8,674	34	76	62	48	44	34
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	8,083	33	74	61	67	61	48
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	6,426	28	75	55	49	45	31
Accounting	12,155	52	71	51	59	45	33
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	3,743	18	82	69	45	45	32
Biochemistry and Biophysics	10,445	54	87	75	73	68	59
Athletic Training	3,365	19	64	44	35	33	20
Psychology, General	4,028	23	85	72	51	51	39
Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering	5,666	36	86	75	79	73	62
Marketing Management and Research	4,582	29	78	62	54	46	35
Elementary Education	3,808	24	71	50	35	31	21
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	5,967	40	72	56	42	44	29
Computer Engineering	4,071	28	77	64	67	63	50
Medical Assisting	3,829	27	49	32	24	21	12
Graphic Design	5,858	42	66	48	32	31	20
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	5,753	41	80	62	62	56	42
Health-Related Professions and Services, General	4,050	31	74	57	47	43	30
Finance, General	5,501	44	87	71	75	65	55
Theatre Arts/Drama	5,635	46	82	67	45	45	33
Civil Engineering	3,873	32	72	55	66	55	40
Chemical Engineering	5,224	43	90	80	85	81	70

Note: *Undecided* and/or *No Major Indicated* are included in the table, if applicable. The former refers to students who selected the option *Undecided* from the list of majors. The latter refers to students who did not respond to the question.

National

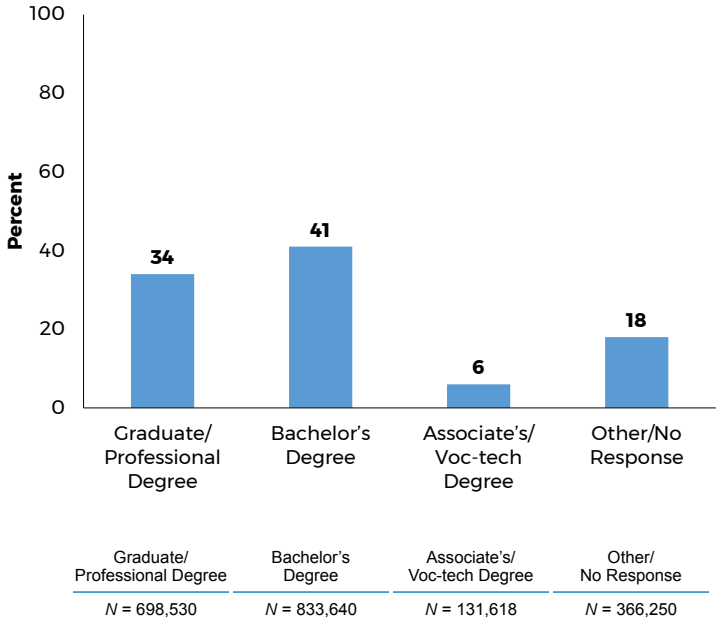
Other College and Career Readiness Factors

Aligning Student Behaviors, Planning, and Aspirations

ACT research shows most students aspire to a post–high school credential, which can be facilitated through educational planning, monitoring, and interventions. These efforts must begin early, be aligned to their aspirations, and continue throughout their educational careers.

There is good news in that 82% of 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 84% of the national 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 64% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 411,178 of the nation's 2016 ACT-tested graduates would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

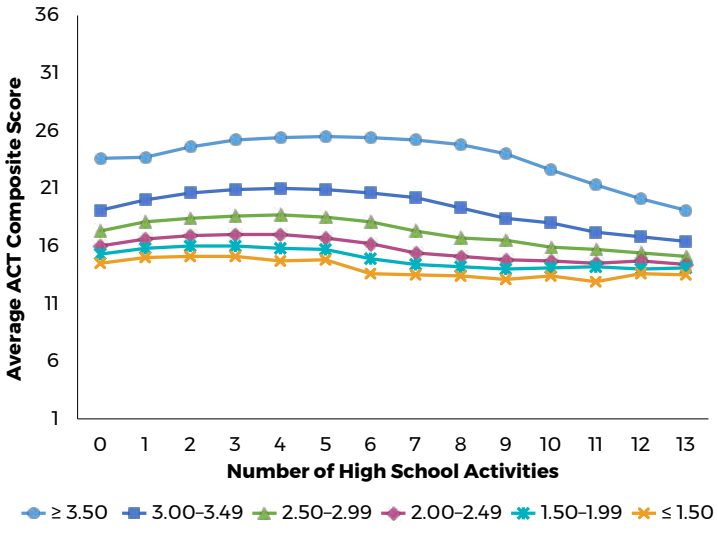
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



Activity and Achievement: What's the Connection?

There are wide-ranging benefits to student participation in high school activities. Students can develop new skills, broaden their experiences, practice social skills, and increase their appeal to college admissions personnel. In addition, ACT data indicate that, regardless of a student's high school GPA, involvement in high school activities is often associated with higher ACT Composite scores. At the same time, results typically identify a point of diminishing returns, one where many activities are associated with a drop in ACT scores. The adjacent graph depicts the relationship between ACT scores and the number of high school activities for 2017 graduates.

Average ACT Composite Score by Number of Activities within High School GPA Ranges for 2017 Graduates

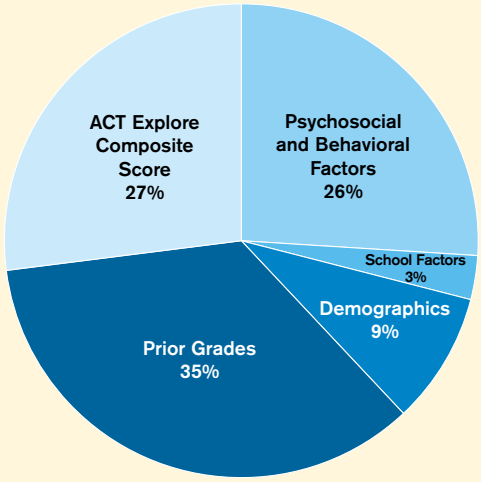


Note: In some cases, high activity counts may represent low numbers of students, giving rise to missing and outlying data points.

Other College and Career Readiness Factors

Early Prediction of High School Outcomes

Relative Importance of Predictors of 12th-Grade Cumulative High School Grade Point Average

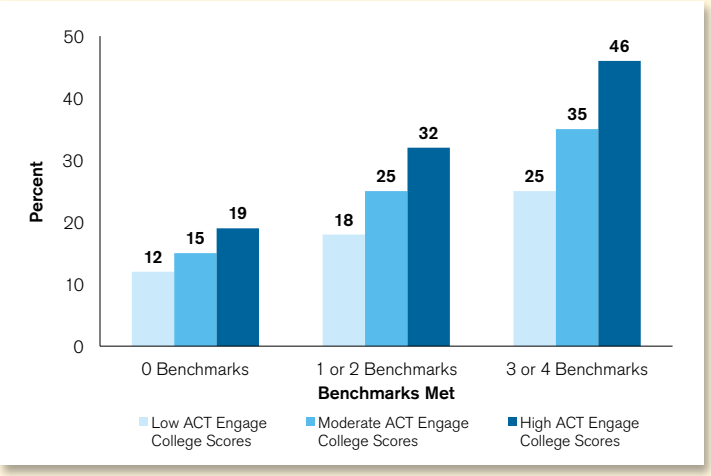


Note: The data used for this analysis came from a longitudinal sample of 3,768 students from 21 schools who took both ACT Explore and ACT Engage Grades 6–9 in 2006, when most students were in 8th grade. Additional waves of data were collected each fall, ending in 2011, when most students should have graduated from high school. The total variance explained in the model was $R^2 = 0.51$.

Understanding which student characteristics can predict future performance is essential to early identification and support for students at risk for later academic difficulties. A longitudinal research study found that, in 8th grade, the most important predictor of 12th-grade GPA was student grades, followed by academic achievement (measured by ACT Explore®) and psychosocial and behavioral factors (measured by ACT Engage® Grades 6–9). Demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, and parent education) and school factors (percent eligible for free/reduced lunch and percent minority) were less important predictors. These findings underscore the value of using multiple measures, including academic achievement and behaviors to provide a more holistic approach to assessment that can better assist students in developing the knowledge and skills needed for success.

Academic Achievement, Behaviors, and College Completion

Percentage Attaining a Postsecondary Degree by ACT and ACT Engage College Scores



Academic behaviors also matter for college outcomes. Across all ACT College Readiness Benchmark levels, students with higher ACT Engage College scores (based on the mean percentile scores of ACT Engage scales Academic Discipline, Commitment to College, and Social Connection) attained a postsecondary degree within four years of college at higher rates than students with lower ACT Engage College scores. For students meeting three or four Benchmarks, those with high ACT Engage College scores attained a timely postsecondary degree at nearly twice the rate as those with low ACT Engage College scores.

Note: Based on a longitudinal sample of 9,446 ACT-tested students from 48 postsecondary institutions who took ACT Engage College during their first semester of college in 2003. Additional waves of data were collected each semester through 2008. Students with a mean percentile score of less than 25 were classified as low, those with scores between 25 and 75 were classified as moderate, and those with scores greater than 75 were classified as high.

National

2017 State Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates, Average Composite Score, and Percent Meeting Benchmarks by Subject

State	Percent of Graduates Tested*	Average Composite Score	Percent Meeting English Benchmark	Percent Meeting Reading Benchmark	Percent Meeting Math Benchmark	Percent Meeting Science Benchmark
Alabama	100	19.2	52	36	23	25
Arkansas	100	19.4	53	36	27	25
Colorado	100	20.8	61	46	38	37
Kentucky	100	20	58	41	30	31
Louisiana	100	19.5	57	36	26	27
Minnesota	100	21.5	63	50	48	42
Mississippi	100	18.6	47	29	20	20
Missouri	100	20.4	59	43	34	34
Montana	100	20.3	55	44	37	33
Nevada	100	17.8	38	27	21	19
North Carolina	100	19.1	46	36	30	27
Oklahoma	100	19.4	52	39	26	26
South Carolina	100	18.7	44	33	25	23
Tennessee	100	19.8	56	39	29	29
Utah	100	20.3	58	43	35	34
Wisconsin	100	20.5	59	42	39	37
Wyoming	100	20.2	58	42	34	34
North Dakota	98	20.3	56	40	40	33
Illinois	93	21.4	66	48	44	39
Hawaii	90	19	47	33	29	26
Nebraska	84	21.4	67	50	42	41
South Dakota	80	21.8	68	54	49	46
Ohio	75	22	69	54	48	44
Florida	73	19.8	52	43	32	29
Kansas	73	21.7	69	54	46	41
West Virginia	69	20.4	64	47	30	32
Iowa	67	21.9	71	55	45	45
New Mexico	66	19.7	50	39	29	28
Alaska	65	19.8	53	41	35	29

2017 State Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates, Average Composite Score, and Percent Meeting Benchmarks by Subject

State	Percent of Graduates Tested*	Average Composite Score	Percent Meeting English Benchmark	Percent Meeting Reading Benchmark	Percent Meeting Math Benchmark	Percent Meeting Science Benchmark
Arizona	62	19.7	51	38	34	29
Georgia	55	21.4	66	51	41	38
Texas	45	20.7	57	45	40	35
Oregon	40	21.8	67	53	47	43
Idaho	38	22.3	73	58	50	45
Indiana	35	22.6	74	58	55	47
New Jersey	34	23.9	80	65	64	54
District of Columbia	32	24.2	73	64	59	54
California	31	22.8	73	57	55	46
Connecticut	31	25.2	88	74	70	64
New York	31	24.2	82	68	67	59
Massachusetts	29	25.4	88	75	75	65
Michigan	29	24.1	84	68	64	58
Vermont	29	23.6	80	66	61	55
Virginia	29	23.8	80	67	60	56
Washington	29	21.9	62	52	51	44
Maryland	28	23.6	77	64	59	54
Pennsylvania	23	23.7	80	66	62	55
Rhode Island	21	24	81	68	61	56
Delaware	18	24.1	82	68	61	55
New Hampshire	18	25.5	89	75	74	66
Maine	8	24.3	84	68	67	57
National	60	21	61	47	41	37

* Totals for graduating seniors were obtained from *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*, 9th edition. Copyright December 2016 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

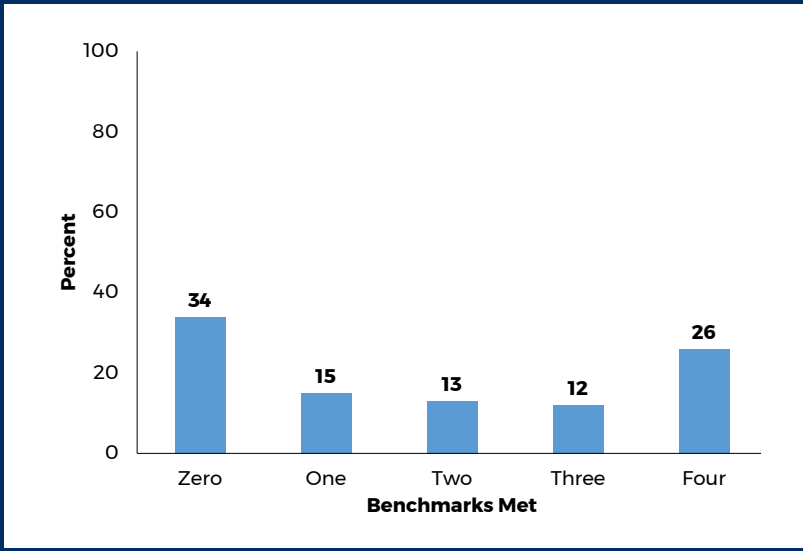
Looking Back at the Class of 2016

National

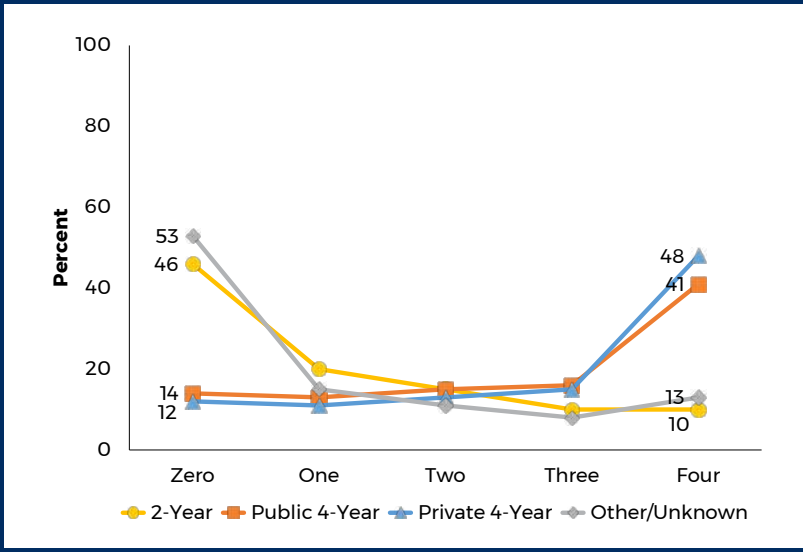
*ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and **Fall 2016** College Enrollment*

Academic achievement, as measured by ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment, has a clear and distinctive relationship with the path taken by high school graduates. Those who were more academically ready were more likely to enroll in four-year institutions. Graduates who enrolled in two-year colleges or pursued other options after high school were more likely to have met fewer Benchmarks. For the sizable number of 2016 graduates who did not meet any Benchmarks, their post-high school opportunities appear to have been limited compared to their college-ready peers.

Percent of **2016** ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



Percent of **2016** ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained and **Fall 2016** College Enrollment Status



Recommendations

1. **Use a holistic assessment model for school accountability that measures student readiness for college and career across multiple domains.** While it is essential to measure students' academic achievement in assessing college and career readiness, it is not enough. Social and emotional learning skills are important and measurable, and they can be impacted. Assessment models should take into account core academic skills, behavioral skills, cross-cutting capabilities, and education and career navigation skills to provide an integrated picture of college and work readiness.
2. **Make special efforts to ensure that underrepresented students have equal access and opportunity to pursue postsecondary education.** According to ACT research, most underrepresented students want to continue their education after high school, but they face many barriers. Ensuring they have access to the same rigorous core curriculum as others is just one step. Many also lack the resources, information, and familial and peer support they need to prepare for success after high school. Special efforts must be made to level the playing field for underrepresented students so they have equal opportunity to succeed.
3. **Increase emphasis on STEM readiness initiatives, measures, and programs.** With technology advancing rapidly, the importance of STEM readiness is only increasing. The threat of robotic and computer-assisted technologies eliminating jobs is growing while the remaining and emerging jobs will likely require higher-level skills. ACT data continue to show that many graduates are not ready. Without improvement in STEM readiness, far too many will be ill-prepared for the future workforce.
4. **Focus on fewer, higher, and clearer learning standards in K–12 schools.** Far too many students continue to graduate from high school without all of the core skills they will need to ably succeed at the next level. Many will struggle, and many will likely fail to realize their aspirations. The push toward raising the bar on learning standards and focusing on the essential skills necessary for success must continue.
5. **Begin assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies early.** Early assessment and intervention are critical to improving educational outcomes. If students are not on track for college and career readiness by the time they reach middle school, it may be too late. Assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies to help students get on the right path for college and career readiness must begin in elementary school.

Information and Products for Further Review

	Knowledge & Skills	Social & Emotional
Assessments	ACT Aspire® PreACT® The ACT® Test ACT WorkKeys®	ACT Tessera™ ACT Engage®
Research	Condition of College & Career Readiness ACT® National Curriculum Survey® The Forgotten Middle Rigor at Risk ACT Holistic Framework™	A Rosetta Stone for Noncognitive Skills Tessera Comprehensive Theory of Action
Resources	PLDs Learning Description Review Curriculum Review Worksheets OpenEd Learning Resources Test Prep	Tessera Teacher Playbook
Training	Professional Learning Sessions College & Career Readiness Workshops Holistic Framework Webinars	

We are more than just the ACT test. ACT products and services encompass a variety of research- and assessment-based solutions.

As research leaders, we continue to innovate education and workforce solutions to help guide individuals to education and career success.

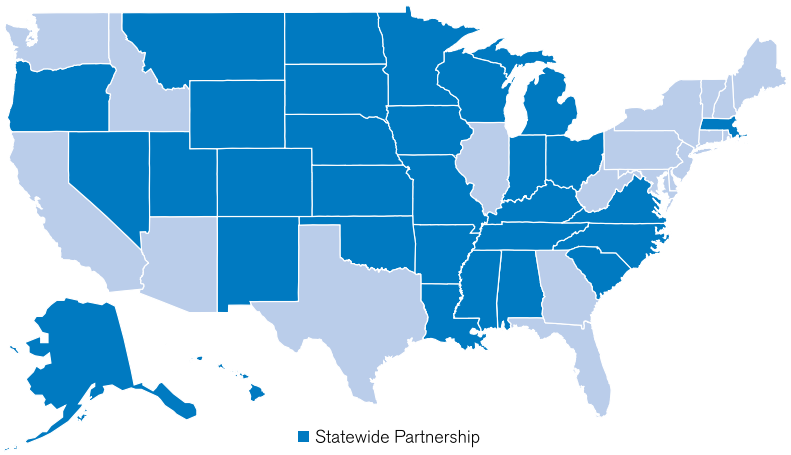
find out more at www.act.org

Resources

K–12 Statewide Partnerships in College and Career Readiness

States that incorporate ACT college and career readiness solutions as part of their statewide assessments provide greater access to higher education and increase the likelihood of student success in postsecondary education. Educators also have the ability to establish a longitudinal plan using ACT assessments, which provide high schools, districts, and states with unique student-level data that can be used for effective student intervention plans.

State administration of ACT programs and services:



- Increases opportunities for minority and middle- to low-income students
- Promotes student educational and career planning.
- Reduces the need for remediation
- Correlates with increases in college enrollment, persistence, and student success
- Aligns with state standards

ACT Aspire
Alabama
Arkansas
Hawaii
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ACT QualityCore
Alabama
Kentucky

The ACT
Alabama
Arkansas
Hawaii
Kentucky
Louisiana
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
North Carolina
North Dakota
Oklahoma
Ohio
South Carolina
Tennessee
Utah
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ACT WorkKeys
Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Colorado
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Nevada
New Mexico
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Utah
Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ACT National Career Readiness Certificate
Alabama
Alaska
Arkansas
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Nevada
New Mexico
North Carolina
North Dakota
Oklahoma
Oregon
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Utah
Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ACT Online Prep
Alabama
Montana
Nebraska

PreACT
North Carolina
Oklahoma

All listed partnerships are effective as of July 2017.

ACT Research

Key ACT Research

As students navigate their education and career journeys, it is critical for them to be ready for college and career success. College and career readiness is supported by the ACT Holistic Framework, a research-based, multidimensional model for understanding the essential knowledge and skills needed for success, and the solutions that can meet students' navigation needs. Visit **act.org/condition2017** to access key reports listed below.

- Serving students' navigation needs from kindergarten to career requires a holistic approach:
  - *Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*
  - *The Importance of Behavioral Skills and Navigation Factors for Education and Work Success*
- The ACT Holistic Framework is supported by prolific research:
  - Core Academic Skills:
    - 2017 State and National *Condition* Reports
    - *Profiles of STEM Students: Persisters, Joiners, Changers, and Departers*
    - *ACT Composite Score by Parental Education Level, 2012–2016*
    - *Comparisons of Student Achievement Levels by District Performance and Poverty*
  - Behavioral Skills (also called Social and Emotional Learning):
    - *The Development of Behavioral Performance Level Descriptors*
  - Cross-Cutting Capabilities:
    - *ACT National Curriculum Survey 2016*
  - Student journeys continue into postsecondary education and careers:
    - *Higher Education Research Digest*
    - *Predicted Attainment of ACT National Career Readiness Certificates for the 2016 ACT-tested High School Cohort*

How Does ACT Determine if Students Are College Ready?

The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Based on a nationally stratified sample, the Benchmarks are median course placement values for these institutions and represent a typical set of expectations. The STEM readiness benchmark in math and science represents the 50% probability of earning a B or better in identified STEM classes such as calculus and chemistry. The STEM benchmark was introduced in 2013 graduating class reporting. The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are:

College Course/ Course Area	Subject Area Test	ACT College Readiness Benchmark
English Composition	English	18
Social Sciences	Reading	22
College Algebra	Math	22
Biology	Science	23
STEM	N/A	26

Notes

1. Data reflect subject-specific curriculum. For example, English "core or more" results pertain to students who took at least four years of English, regardless of courses taken in other subject areas.
2. The interest-major fit score measures the strength of the relationship between the student's profile of ACT Interest Inventory scores and the profile of students' interests in the major shown. Interest profiles for majors are based on a national sample of undergraduate students with a declared major and a GPA of at least 2.0. Major was determined in the third year for students in four-year colleges and in the second year for students in two-year colleges. Interest-major fit scores range from 0–99, with values of 80 and higher indicating good fit.

ACT is an independent, mission-driven, nonprofit organization that provides assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development. Each year, we serve millions of people in high schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies, nationally and internationally. Though designed to meet a wide array of needs, all ACT programs and services have one guiding purpose—helping people achieve education and workplace success.

A copy of this report can be found at

www.act.org/condition2017

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