

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014

First-Generation
Students

ACT[®]

COE
COUNCIL for OPPORTUNITY in EDUCATION

June 2015

Dear colleagues,

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson's groundbreaking federal legislation. In signing the law, President Johnson noted that a promise had been made to future generations of Americans:

So, when we leave here this morning, I want you to go back and say to your children and to your grandchildren, and those who come after you and follow you—tell them that we have made a promise to them. Tell them that the truth is here for them to seek. And tell them that we have opened the road and we have pulled the gates down, and the way is open, and we expect them to travel it.

This promise was then—and is now—particularly important to Americans whose parents did not go to college. And, as this report details, the United States still has quite a long way to go in fulfilling that promise made 50 years ago.

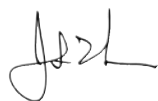
We know much more about the barriers to college graduation facing first-generation students than we did 50 years ago—and, in some ways, those barriers have grown more complex. Not surprisingly, as the ACT/COE report shows, in key academic areas, first-generation students do not perform as well as their peers raised in families with college-educated parents.

We have also learned that academic achievement alone does not constitute college readiness. Other factors essential in “opening the road and pulling down the gates” to allow first-generation students in significant numbers to travel the road to college graduation must include clear, personalized academic and career planning at every stage of their education. Those factors also include supportive services that assist students in making the high school-to-college transition and balancing their lives as students, workers, and family members—a necessity for almost all first-generation students.

ACT and the Council for Opportunity in Education have formed a partnership that sharpens the focus in both of our organizations on the dimensions of college readiness and access as they pertain to first-generation students. We hope that this report increases understanding about the relationship of academic performance to the complex array of barriers facing students from families without college backgrounds and leads to greater support for these students as they struggle to achieve their aspirations.

Jon Erickson

President, Education and Career Solutions
ACT



Maureen Hoyler

President, Council for Opportunity in
Education



First-Generation Students

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014 is ACT's annual report on the progress of the graduating class relative to college readiness. This year, 57% of the high school graduating class took the ACT® college readiness assessment. 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 readiness levels as well as offering a glimpse of the emerging educational pipeline.

Our Commitment to College and Career Readiness

As a research-based nonprofit, ACT is committed to providing a wider range of solutions across a wider range of life decision points in an increasingly individualized manner so everyone can benefit. This commitment has led ACT to a mode of continuous improvement in an ever-changing educational and workplace landscape. Over the last year, ACT has made several key announcements, including:

- **Release of ACT Aspire™.** In spring 2014, ACT released an assessment system that spans grades 3–10. It aligns to the ACT College Readiness Standards, which allows monitoring and intervening to take place much earlier and helps prepare students to succeed at college-level work, culminating with the ACT college readiness assessment. To date, more than 1 million assessments have been taken.
- **Enhancements to the ACT college readiness assessment.** Several key modifications to the ACT were announced. These include:
 - ~ Online, computer-based administration of the ACT, with more than 4,000 students tested in spring 2014
 - ~ Optional constructed-response computer-based testing tasks in mathematics, reading, and science—offered alongside the existing optional Writing Test—assessing whether students can justify, explain, and use evidence to support claims
 - ~ Additional questions on the Reading Test that address whether students can integrate knowledge and ideas across multiple texts
 - ~ Additional statistics and probability items on the Mathematics Test to allow for reporting of student achievement in this area
 - ~ Additional reporting to include a STEM score, career readiness indicator, English language arts score, text complexity indicator, and reporting categories consistent with college and career readiness language
 - ~ Enhanced Writing Test based on the newly developed ACT writing competency framework that provides results in four domains

While the evolution of the ACT continues and additional scores will be provided, it will remain a curriculum-based achievement exam, and the 1–36 score scale will not change.

- **A continued commitment to evidence and validity monitoring.** The ACT National Curriculum Survey®, completed every three to five years, is used to build and update a valid suite of ACT assessments, empirically aligned to the ACT College Readiness Standards. The survey informs the test blueprint for the assessments. Assessment results validate the ACT College Readiness Standards and the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This evidence and the validity cycle drive the development and continuous improvement of ACT's current and future solutions, as well as the associated research agenda.
- **Release of ACT Profile™.** ACT Profile is a first-of-its-kind college and career planning community, built on 30-plus years of ACT research. Mobile, social, and *free to students* (over the age of 13), ACT Profile develops personalized insights and populates an interactive career graph to show students the best career matches based on their self-assessment results. The tool then extends those insights to help students make informed career and educational plans.

ACT is committed to being a leader in education and career success by infusing innovation into our foundation of assessment excellence. We make changes only after a thorough analysis of user need, coupled with our commitment to the highest-quality test development and helping *all* students achieve college and career success.

A Holistic View of College Readiness

ACT continues in its steadfast support of the purpose and intent of the Common Core State Standards, which focus on the key essential standards that can prepare students for college and career success. However, we also believe that academic readiness is just one of several factors that contribute to educational success. Other key factors include the academic behaviors of students and informed career planning (e.g., based on interests). Together, these elements define a clear picture of student readiness for postsecondary education. To encourage progress, the educational system needs to monitor and sustain all key factors of success.

Using This Report¹

This report is designed to help inform the following questions driving national efforts to strengthen P–16 education.

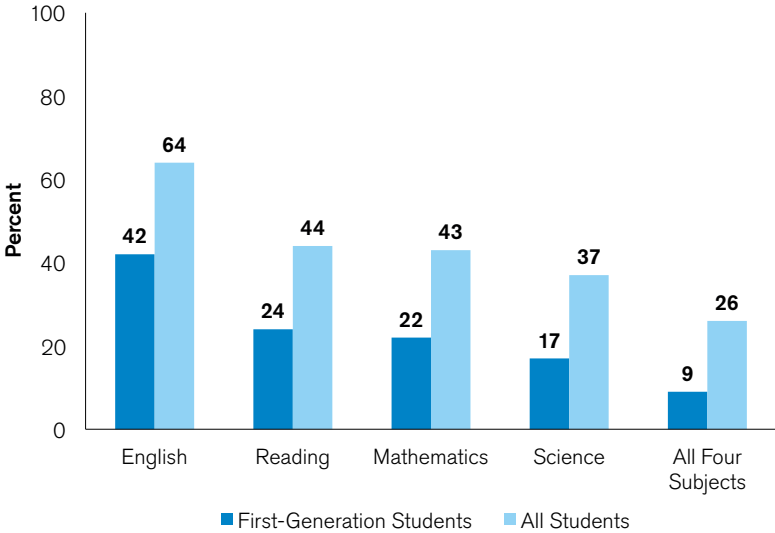
- Are first-generation students prepared for college and career?
- Are enough first-generation students taking core courses?
- Are core courses rigorous enough?
- Are younger first-generation students on target for college and career?
- What other dimensions of college and career readiness should we track?

First-Generation Students

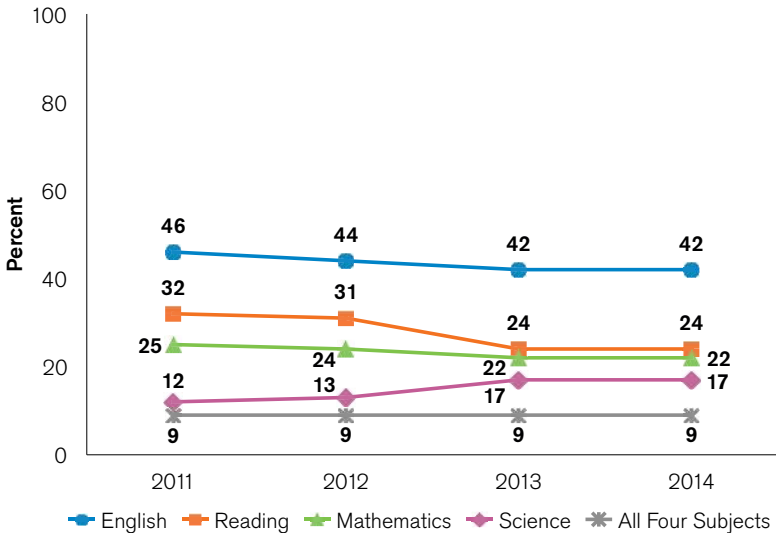
Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- First-generation students are those whose parents did not enroll in postsecondary education.²
- 341,236 first-generation high school 2014 graduates took the ACT.

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



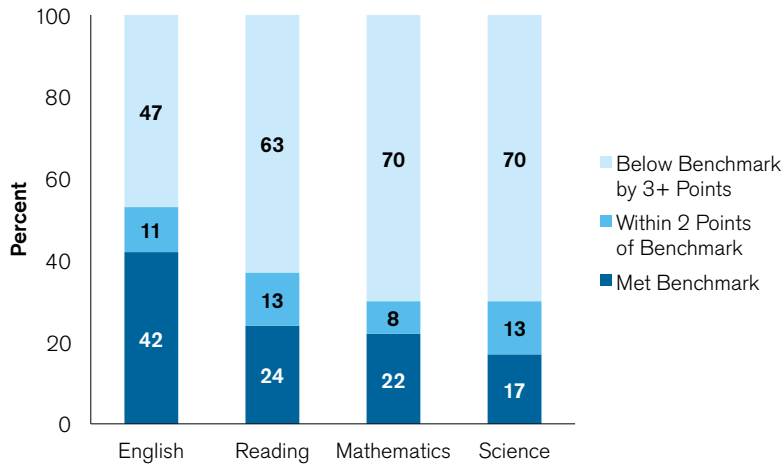
Percent of 2011–2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks



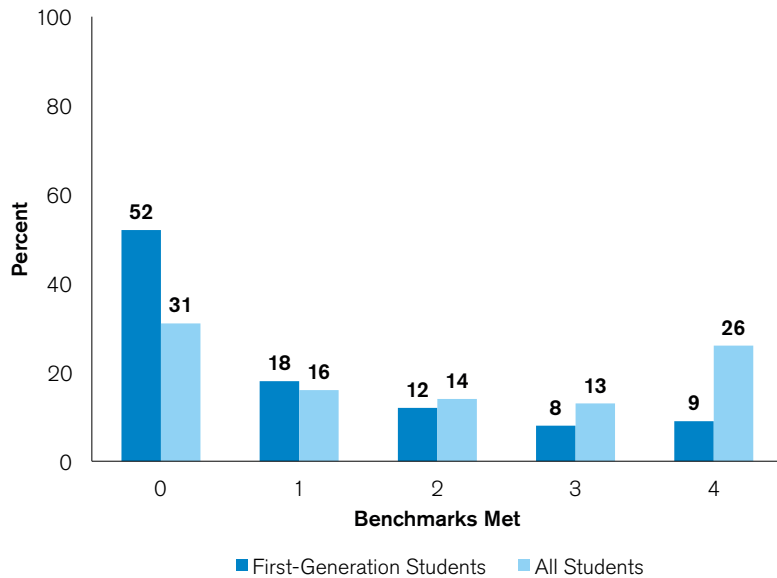
Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Attainment of College and Career Readiness

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained

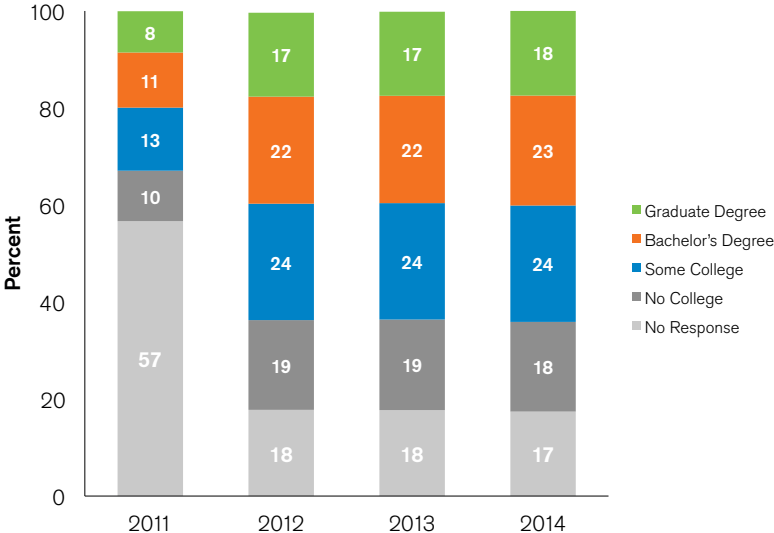


First-Generation Students

Participation and Opportunity

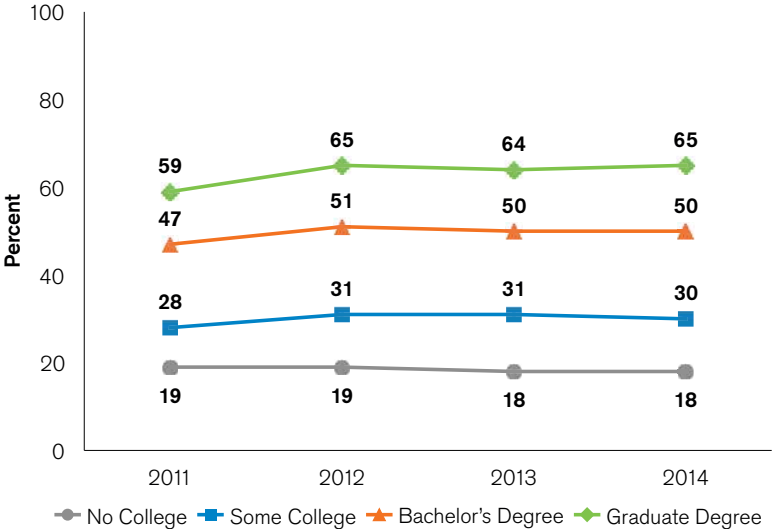
Over the past decade, ACT has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of students tested, as well as statewide partnerships in 13 states and in many districts across the country. As a result, the 2014 *Condition of College & Career Readiness* report provides a much deeper and more representative sample in comparison to a purely self-selected college-going population.

Percent of 2011–2014 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Parental Education



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear. Parental education data were available only to 2011 graduates who tested as seniors and to other grades in later years. This availability might affect findings.

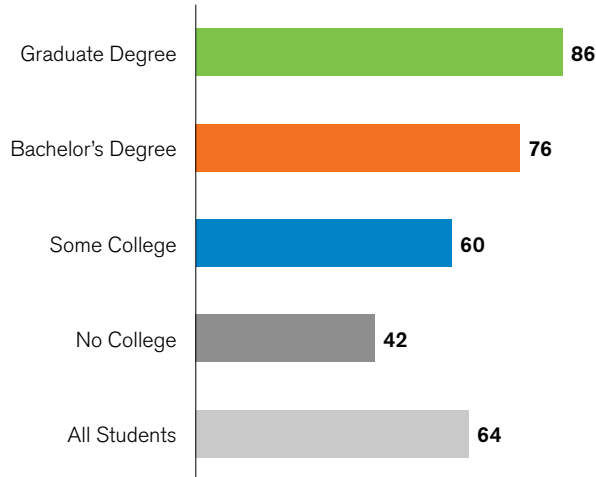
Percent of 2011–2014 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Parental Education



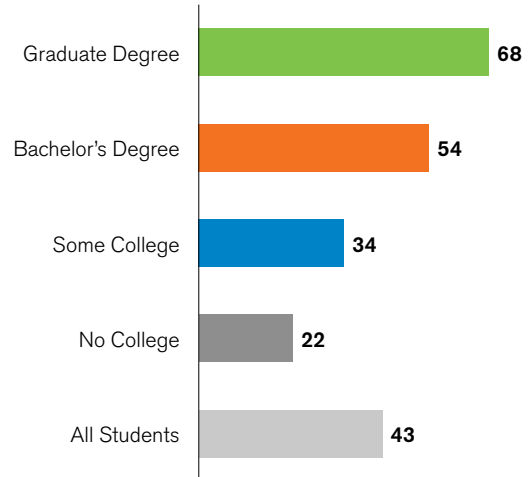
Participation and Opportunity by Subject

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Parental Education and Subject

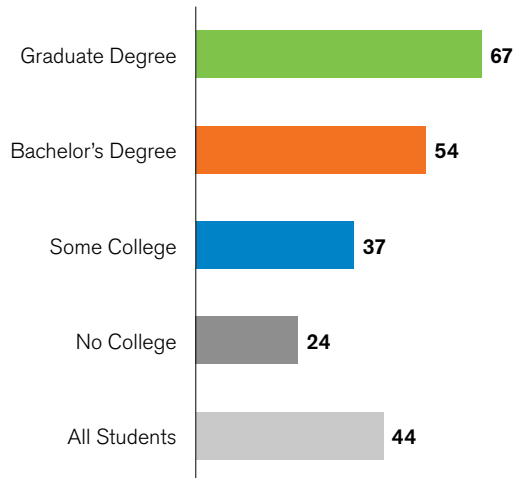
English



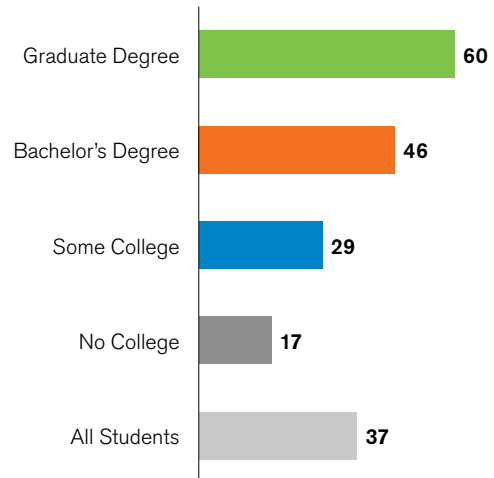
Mathematics



Reading



Science

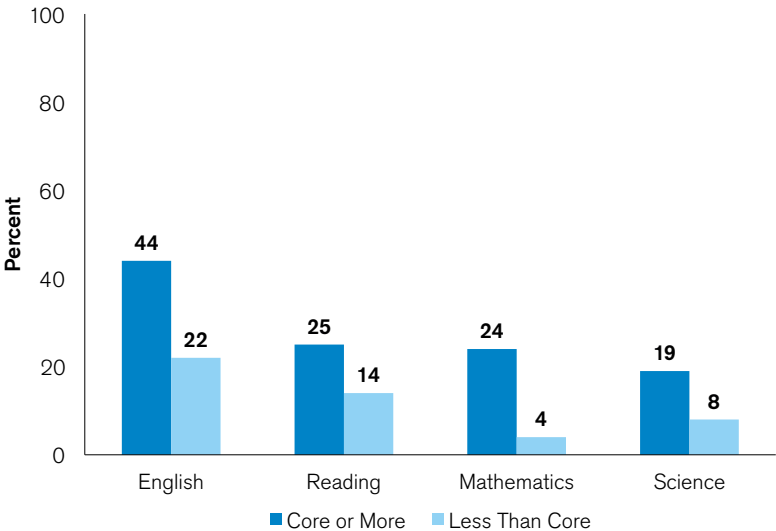


First-Generation Students

Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance

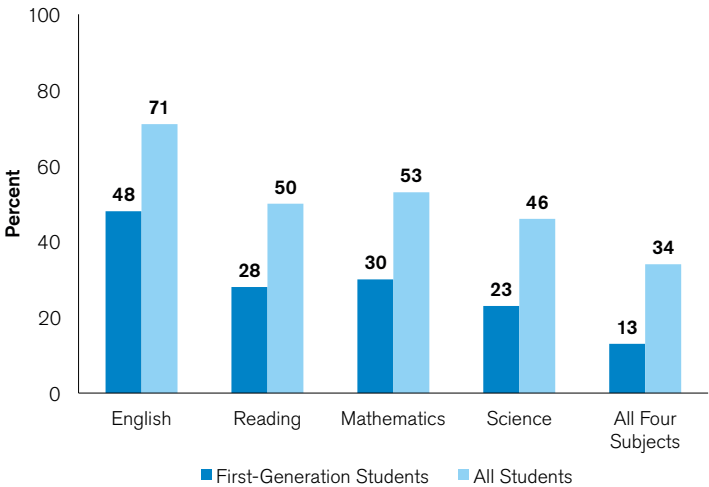
Within subjects, ACT has consistently found that students who take the recommended core curriculum are more likely to be ready for college or career than those who do not. A core curriculum is defined as four years of English and three years each of mathematics, social studies, and science.³

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates in Core or More vs. Less Than Core Courses Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



A First Look at STEM

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates with an Interest in STEM Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject

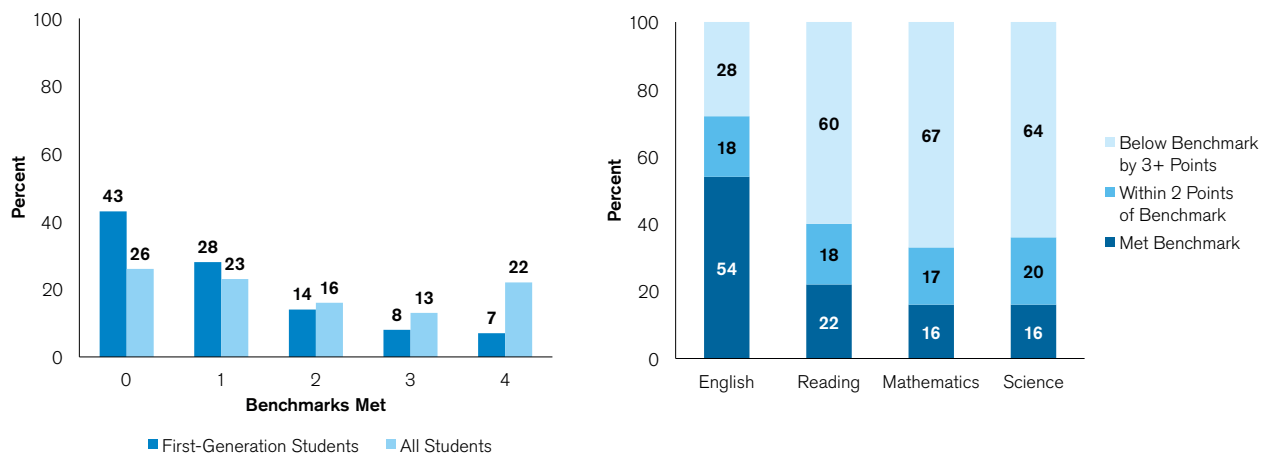


This chart describes ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment for 2014 high school graduates nationwide who have an interest in STEM majors or occupations. Characteristics of students with an interest in STEM were addressed in greater depth in the *Condition of STEM 2014* report.

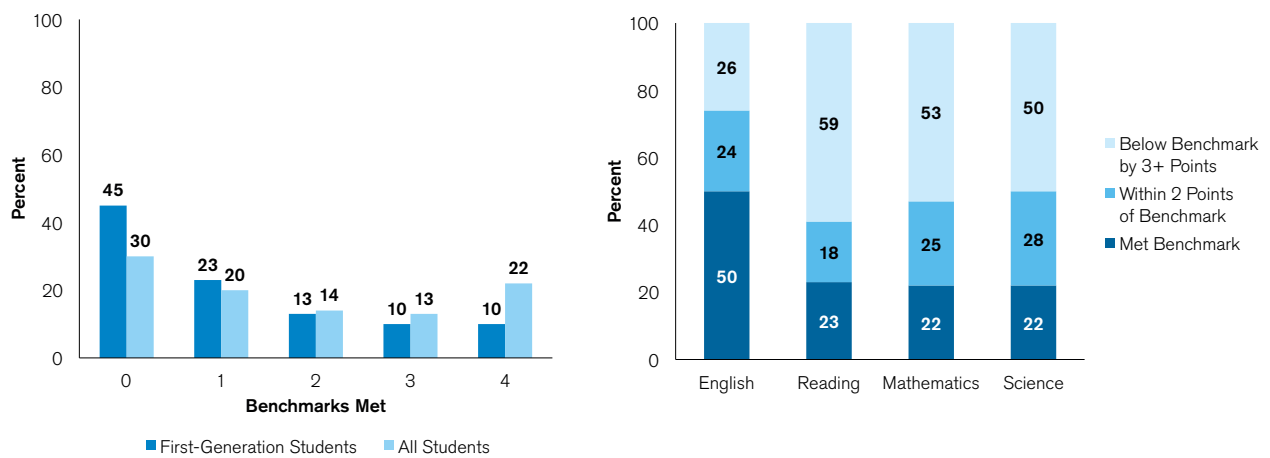
Early Preparation

ACT research shows that younger students who take rigorous curricula are more prepared to graduate from high school ready for college or career. Moreover, our research (*The Forgotten Middle*, 2008) found that “the level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than anything that happens academically in high school.”

Percent of 2013–2014 ACT Plan®–Tested First-Generation 10th Graders Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (N = 288,231)



Percent of 2013–2014 ACT Explore®–Tested First-Generation 8th Graders Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (N = 196,869)



First-Generation Students

ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment for Top Planned College Majors: 2014 Graduates

When students register for the ACT, they can select a college major—from a list of 294 majors—that they plan to pursue in college. Among recent ACT-tested high school graduates nationwide, about 80% selected a specific planned major, whereas about 20% indicated that they were undecided or did not select a major.

This table ranks the nation's top (most frequently selected) majors among 2014 first-generation 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	38,917	42	24	22	17	9
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	20,967	40	20	15	12	5
No Major Indicated	13,703	14	7	5	4	1
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	9,492	66	43	44	35	23
Business Administration and Management, General	9,017	42	23	23	17	9
Criminology	7,587	37	20	16	13	6
Medical Assisting	6,096	28	13	11	8	3
Mechanical Engineering	5,837	40	23	33	23	14
Law (Pre-Law)	5,760	40	24	19	15	9
Accounting	4,988	48	24	38	23	12
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	4,821	57	34	24	19	11
Biology, General	4,301	63	40	40	32	20
Hospital/Facilities Administration	4,229	30	15	12	8	4
Nursing, Practical/Vocational (LPN)	4,002	27	11	8	5	2
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	3,507	59	34	40	30	18
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	3,496	47	25	24	19	9
Athletic Training	3,230	38	19	18	14	6
Elementary Education	3,187	47	24	18	14	7
Psychology, General	3,185	61	38	29	23	14
Computer Science and Programming	3,184	62	43	47	38	26
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	3,135	50	30	22	21	11
Graphic Design	3,130	44	24	18	16	8
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	3,084	51	31	43	32	20
Music, General	2,780	41	21	17	16	8
Physical Therapy Assisting	2,720	31	14	13	9	3
Early Childhood Education	2,638	35	17	11	8	4
Health/Medical Technology, General	2,613	43	22	20	16	8
Medical Radiologic Technology	2,415	42	20	15	13	5
Medical/Clinical Assisting, General	2,397	30	12	10	7	3
Music, Performance	2,371	41	22	16	14	7

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: 2014 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 first-generation students displaying good interest-major fit⁴, 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.

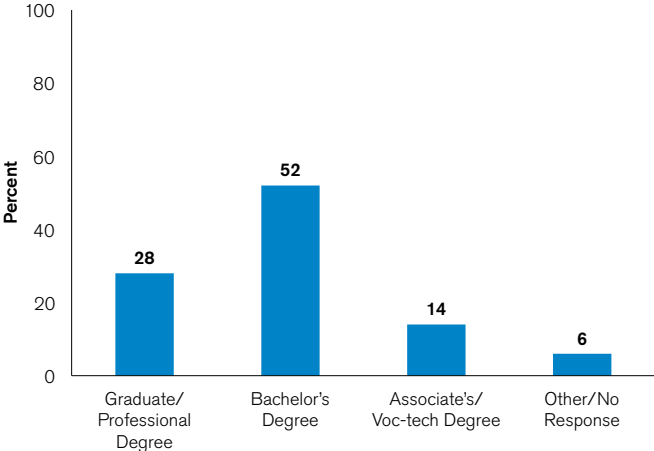
Major Name	N Fit	% Fit	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four
Undecided			No profile available				
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	5,775	28	48	25	19	16	7
No Major Indicated			No profile available				
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	4,366	46	73	49	50	41	27
Business Administration and Management, General	3,236	36	47	25	27	19	10
Criminology	894	12	44	25	17	15	7
Medical Assisting	1,550	25	32	15	14	10	4
Mechanical Engineering	1,931	33	43	25	36	26	16
Law (Pre-Law)	1,657	29	52	34	25	20	12
Accounting	2,944	59	51	27	42	25	14
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	708	15	70	46	29	28	17
Biology, General	2,164	50	68	45	44	36	24
Hospital/Facilities Administration	766	18	31	14	12	7	4
Nursing, Practical/Vocational (LPN)	846	21	39	17	15	9	4
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	1,336	38	65	38	49	37	23
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	828	24	57	32	30	24	12
Athletic Training	525	16	49	22	21	16	7
Elementary Education	746	23	52	28	18	14	6
Psychology, General	655	21	69	48	33	28	18
Computer Science and Programming	981	31	64	45	49	43	28
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	1,172	37	56	36	27	27	14
Graphic Design	1,397	45	49	27	18	17	8
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	1,048	34	52	34	45	37	21
Music, General	1,115	40	50	26	18	17	9
Physical Therapy Assisting	485	18	37	16	20	12	5
Early Childhood Education	580	22	40	22	10	9	4
Health/Medical Technology, General	836	32	50	27	25	20	11
Medical Radiologic Technology	662	27	43	22	17	15	6
Medical/Clinical Assisting, General	594	25	39	15	15	11	4
Music, Performance	1,003	42	44	24	16	15	8

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.

First-Generation Students

Other College and Career Readiness Factors

Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations

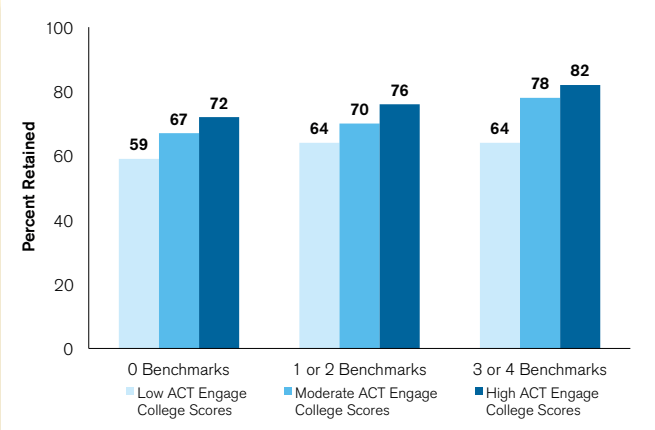


Aligning Student Behaviors, Planning, and Aspirations

Most students aspire to a post-high school credential. To help them meet those aspirations, educational planning, monitoring, and interventions must be aligned to their aspirations, begin early, and continue throughout their educational careers.

Academic Achievement, Behaviors, and College Retention

College Retention Rates by Number of ACT Benchmarks Met and ACT Engage® College Scores*



Across all ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment 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) remain enrolled in a postsecondary institution after the first year of college at substantially higher rates than students with lower ACT Engage College scores.

* Based on N = 13,697 ACT-tested graduates of 2011 and 2012 who also took the ACT Engage College assessment and enrolled in college. 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.

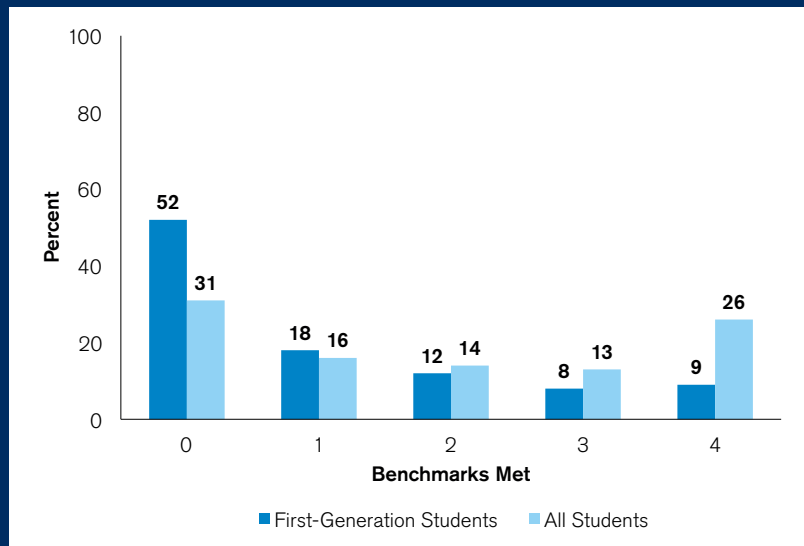
Looking Back at the Class of 2013

Students from First-Generation Families

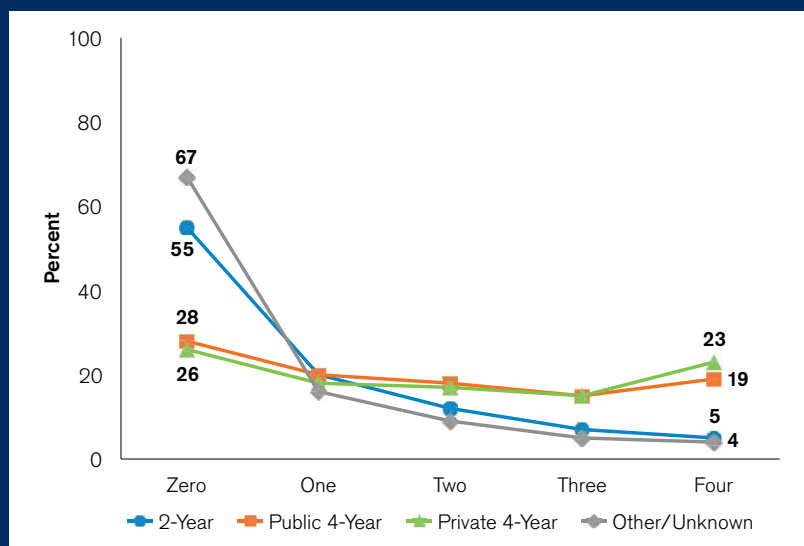
ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and Fall 2013 College Enrollment

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 4-year institutions. Graduates who enrolled in 2-year colleges or pursued other options after high school were more likely to have met fewer Benchmarks. For the sizable number of 2013 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 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained and Fall 2013 College Enrollment Status



Policies and Practices

How to Increase Readiness

Approximately 9% of all 2014 ACT-tested first-generation high school graduates met all four of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks indicating academic readiness for credit-bearing first-year college courses in English Composition, College Algebra, Biology, and the social sciences. At the same time, 18% of all 2014 ACT-tested first-generation high school graduates met only one Benchmark, and 52% met none. Based on decades of ACT research, the following recommendations include steps that states, districts, schools, and classrooms can take to increase student readiness for college-level work.

Advance college and career readiness through a renewed focus on teaching and learning. With the majority of states and the District of Columbia having adopted more rigorous college and career readiness standards—and assessments to measure student progress toward those standards—it is more important than ever for state and local systems to align other educational elements to these standards. These elements include curriculum alignment to standards; experiential learning opportunities; and teacher professional development, especially as it relates to integrating the standards into current teaching practices and increasing assessment literacy. Research shows that systemic alignment of key policies and school activities empowers educators to support students in making notable gains in student achievement.

Set clear performance standards to evaluate college and career readiness. States must define performance standards so that everyone knows “how good is good enough” for students to have a reasonable chance of success at college or on the job. ACT defines college readiness in English, reading, math, and science using decades of student performance data. For each area, students who are considered college ready have a 50% chance of earning a B or higher or about a 75% chance of earning a C or higher in the corresponding first-year English Composition, introductory social science, College Algebra, or Biology course. Longitudinal, real-world data and research on what constitutes student success are now available to every state and district, as are standards and benchmarks against which the performance of students and schools can be measured and state progress noted.

Implement a high-quality student assessment system. As states adopt and implement new high-quality assessment systems, they should ensure that those systems measure and provide timely and actionable information about student performance aligned to college and career readiness. High-quality assessments must:

- Monitor growth over a student's educational experience, starting in elementary school and through high school, so that educators can make timely instructional decisions and interventions based on reliable information.

- Be aligned, linked, and longitudinal in nature to be an effective tool for students, teachers, administrators, and parents in monitoring student progress.
- Be mindful of and incorporate the unique accessibility needs of English language learners and students with disabilities, and the tests must be constructed in deep consultation with experts on these populations.
- Vary according to the type of standards that need to be measured. These multiple measures can be used to offer more comprehensive evaluations of student achievement, from multiple-choice and constructed-response assessments to performance tasks and project-based learning.
- Be offered through multiple platforms. While computer-based testing is highly applicable to formative assessments that can be conducted on an on-demand basis, paper-and-pencil testing may be a reality for states and districts with less technological capacity. Until computer and broadband access for such large groups of students are sufficiently widespread in schools, both platforms must be available.
- Offer multiple stakeholders—especially teachers—ongoing, real-time, interactive reporting and access to assessment results and other related data.

These principles are consistent with the goals of other principles for high-quality college and career readiness assessments set forth by experts in the field.⁵

Support programs targeted at developing behaviors that aid students' academic success. Monitoring students' academic performance is critical, but certain academically related behaviors also contribute to student persistence and success. If students are to be successful in meeting a core set of academic standards, they need to be sufficiently motivated to persist at their work. The behavioral habits that contribute most directly to student postsecondary success include motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation.⁶ Measuring these and other academically related factors is possible, and doing so can assess risk at important points in students' academic trajectories and identify areas of need and support.⁷ Cultivating behavioral habits that contribute to postsecondary and workforce achievement can have a noticeable impact on students' achievement and persistence levels.

Provide all students with access to a rigorous high school core curriculum. While in recent years, most states have increased course requirements for high school graduation, too often those requirements have not specified the particular courses that prepare students for postsecondary success. In the absence of such specific and rigorous high school graduation requirements, too many students are not taking either the right number or the right kinds of courses they need to be ready for college and

Policies and Practices

career. All states, therefore, should specify the number and kinds of courses that students need to take to graduate academically ready for life after high school. At minimum, ACT recommends the following:

- Four years of English
- Three years of mathematics, including rigorous courses in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- Three years of science, including rigorous courses in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
- Three years of social studies

Invest in early childhood education programs so that more children are ready to learn. Improving college and career readiness for all students begins as early as kindergarten—where gaps between low-income students and their more advantaged peers already exist.⁸ Large numbers of underserved students enter kindergarten behind academically in early reading and mathematics skills, oral language development, vocabulary, and general knowledge. Gaps also exist in the development of academic and social behaviors such as listening, following instructions, and resolving conflicts. States should not only continue to invest in, but also expand access to, high-quality, research-based early learning opportunities for *all* students from prekindergarten to third grade to address learning gaps well before eighth grade, by which time these gaps become much more difficult to reverse.

Continue to implement monitoring and early warning systems that help educators identify and intervene with at-risk students. An effective monitoring system should provide an evolving picture of students over time and identify their unique learning needs at various points along their educational careers. Adoption of such systems in states where they do not yet exist—as well as expansion of system capabilities in states where they currently exist—will support earlier and more effective interventions by providing teachers with information to implement the necessary interventions to maximize student potential. Teachers, who have been consistently identified as the most important school-based factor in student achievement, should be equipped with as much relevant data as possible to inform and supplement their efforts.⁹ The data should help to identify students in need of intervention and model student growth toward college and career readiness.

Continue development of thoughtful and fair teacher evaluation systems that include multiple measures of performance—including student growth data. To help ensure that teachers and administrators have access to relevant feedback about their effectiveness at preparing all students for college and career, it is critical to offer continued support for developing and implementing robust teacher evaluation systems that include multiple measures of performance. Such development and implementation must proceed thoughtfully and be accompanied by education and communication about the appropriate use of student growth data in these systems.

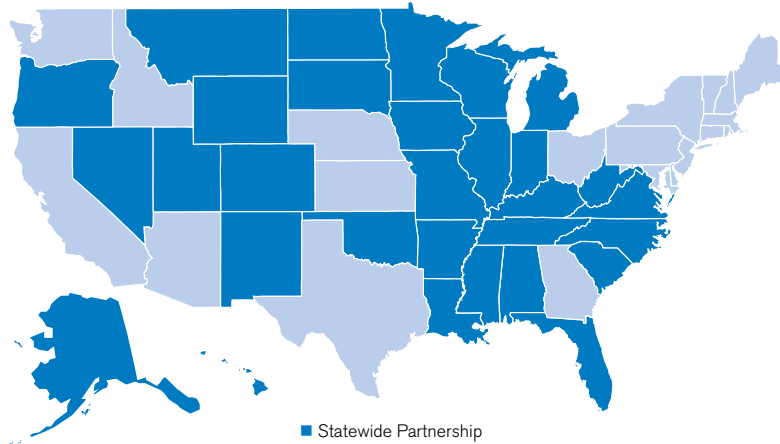
Increase support for the development of STEM-related courses to meet the coming demand for a larger STEM workforce. Education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is vital to the ability of the United States to maintain its position of global leadership and economic competitiveness. With more than 8.6 million STEM-related jobs anticipated by the year 2018, preparing and encouraging students to pursue STEM majors and careers becomes even more important. To identify new programs that will better attract students to and retain them in STEM-related careers, states should seek opportunities to collaborate with multiple entities, including business; national workforce and job readiness groups; local chambers of commerce; and universities, community colleges, and technical schools.

Implement policies for data-driven decision making. Teachers must have access to high-quality, actionable data that can be used to improve instruction. Without such data, opinion can overly influence key instructional decisions. To address this challenge, states have been hard at work developing longitudinal P–16 data systems. This work should continue, but more must be done. To ensure that students are prepared for the 21st century, states must have systems that allow schools and districts to closely monitor student performance at every stage of the learning pipeline, from preschool through college. Policies governing teacher and administrator preparation and professional development must include an emphasis on developing skills to use data appropriately to improve the practices of teaching and learning for all students in the pipeline.

Resources

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[™]	ACT[®] Explore[™]	ACT[®] Plan[™]	The ACT[®]	ACT[®] QualityCore[™]	ACT[®] WorkKeys[™]		ACT National Career Readiness Certificate[™]
3rd- through 8th-grade students	8th- and 9th-grade students	10th-grade students	11th- and 12th-grade students	8th- through 12th-grade students	11th- and 12th-grade students		
Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alaska	Alabama	Oklahoma
South Carolina	Arkansas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Kentucky	Illinois	Alaska	Oregon
	Hawaii	Florida	Colorado		Hawaii	Arkansas	South Carolina
	Illinois	Hawaii	Hawaii		Michigan	Indiana	South Dakota
	Kentucky	Illinois	Illinois		North Carolina	Iowa	Tennessee
	Louisiana	Kentucky	Kentucky		North Dakota	Kentucky	Tennessee
	Michigan	Louisiana	Louisiana		Wyoming	Minnesota	Utah
	Minnesota	Michigan	Michigan			Missouri	Virginia
	North Carolina	Minnesota	Minnesota			New Mexico	Wisconsin
	Oklahoma	New Mexico	Mississippi			North Carolina	
	South Carolina	North Carolina	Missouri				
	Tennessee	Carolina	Montana				
	Utah	Oklahoma	Nevada				
	West Virginia	Tennessee	North Carolina				
	Wyoming	Utah	North Dakota				
		West Virginia	South Carolina				
		Wyoming	Tennessee				
			Utah				
			Wisconsin				
			Wyoming				

All listed partnerships are effective as of December 31, 2014.

ACT Research

The continued increase of test takers enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current college readiness levels of the graduating class as well as offering a glimpse of the emerging national educational pipeline. It also allows us to review various aspects of the ACT-tested graduating class, including the following reports:

Releasing in the 2014–2015 Academic Year

- *The Condition of STEM 2014*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—African American Students*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—American Indian Students*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—Asian Students*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—Hispanic Students*

- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—Pacific Islander Students*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—First-Generation Students*
- *The Condition of College & Career Readiness—Students from Low-Income Families*

Other ACT Research Reports

College Choice Report (for the graduating class of 2012)

- *Part 1: Preferences and Prospects*—November 2012
- *Part 2: Enrollment Patterns*—July 2013
- *Part 3: Persistence and Transfer*—April 2014

College Choice Report (for the graduating class of 2013)

- *Part 1: Preferences and Prospects*—November 2013
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- *Part 3: Persistence and Transfer*—April 2015

To be notified of exact release dates, please subscribe here:

www.act.org/research/subscribe.html.

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. ACT College Readiness Benchmarks were revised for 2013 graduating class reporting. The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are:

College Course	Subject Area Test	Original ACT College Readiness Benchmark	Revised ACT College Readiness Benchmark
English Composition	English	18	18
Social Sciences	Reading	21	22
College Algebra	Mathematics	22	22
Biology	Science	24	23

Notes

1. With the exception of the top graph on page 6, data related to students who did not provide information or who responded “Other” to questions about gender, race/ethnicity, high school curriculum, etc., are not presented explicitly.
2. The term “first-generation student” is defined differently by a number of organizations, often differing in the extent of exposure to postsecondary education (e.g., enrolled, attended, or completed) as experienced by disparate combinations of parent/guardian arrangements (e.g., highest extent of exposure for one parent/guardian or both parents/guardians). The definition used in this report’s analysis is consistent with that used by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
3. 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.
4. 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 4-year colleges and in the second year for students in 2-year colleges. Interest-major fit scores range from 0–99, with values of 80 and higher indicating good fit.
5. See, for example, Council of Chief State School Officers, *Transition to High-Quality, College- and Career-Ready Assessments: Principles to Guide State Leadership and Federal Requirements* (Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers, May 23, 2013), http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013/CCSSO_State_Principles_on_Assessment_Transition_5-23-13.pdf; and Linda Darling-Hammond et al., *Criteria for High-Quality Assessment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, June 2013), https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/criteria-higher-quality-assessment_2.pdf.
6. ACT, *Enhancing College and Career Readiness and Success: The Role of Academic Behaviors* (Iowa City, IA: ACT), http://www.act.org/engage/pdf/ENGAGE_Issue_Brief.pdf.
7. ACT, *Importance of Student Self-Regulation* (Iowa City, IA: ACT, January 2013), <http://www.act.org/research/researchers/briefs/pdf/2013-3.pdf>.
8. Chrys Dougherty, *College and Career Readiness: The Importance of Early Learning Success* (Iowa City, IA: ACT, February 2013), <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ImportanceofEarlyLearning.pdf>.
9. Daniel F. McCaffrey, J.R. Lockwood, Daniel M. Koretz, and Laura S. Hamilton, *Evaluating Value-Added Models for Teacher Accountability* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2003), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND_MG158.pdf.

ACT is an independent, 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.

For more information, visit www.act.org.



The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose membership includes more than 1,100 colleges and community-based organizations with a particular commitment to expanding college opportunity. COE, which was incorporated in 1981, is the only national organization with affiliates in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands focused on assuring that low-income students and first-generation students have a realistic chance to prepare for, enter, and graduate from college.

For more information, visit www.coenet.us.



A copy of this report can be found at
www.act.org/readiness/2014