

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

Asian American  
Students

**ACT**<sup>®</sup>

**APIASF**<sup>®</sup> Today's Minds,  
Tomorrow's Future<sup>®</sup>  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund



Dear Colleagues,

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population continues to be the fastest-growing racial group in the United States and now makes up the largest share of recent immigrants. Yet, as a nation, we do not adequately understand the diverse and complex identities and experiences of these populations, which include 48 ethnicities that encompass more than 300 languages.

Founded just one decade ago, the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) plays a vital and important role in advocating on behalf of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. APIASF mobilizes people and resources to ensure that students have the opportunity to go to college and have the support they need to succeed in and graduate from college.

Recognizing this aforementioned diversity and complexity, ACT and APIASF publish data on each community separately, disaggregating Asian American student data from Pacific Islander student data. This report—*The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015: Asian American Students*—shows, not surprisingly, that Asian American students are not all the same. While many demonstrate college readiness in key academic areas, many others are meeting college readiness benchmarks at a much lower rate.

Access to a rigorous academic curriculum is particularly important, as students who have had access to a rigorous core curriculum in English, reading, math, and science are more likely to meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, predictors of success in college courses. This information can help students, parents, educators, and policymakers increase the likelihood that students who graduate from high school are poised for success, whether their next step is a one-, two-, or four-year postsecondary program.

APIASF and ACT are working together to increase awareness and understanding of the diversity of the Asian American community and what can be done to help students achieve their educational and career aspirations. We hope that this report, and the separate report we have created on Pacific Islander students, will provide useful insights about the rapidly growing and wonderfully diverse group of young learners in the AAPI community.



**Marten Roorda**  
CEO, ACT



**Neil Horikoshi**  
President and Executive Director, APIASF

# Asian American Students

## The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

*The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015* is the ACT annual report on the progress of US high school graduates relative to college readiness. This year's report shows that 59% of students in the 2015 US graduating class took the ACT® test, up from 57% last year and 49% in 2011. 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.

### *The ACT: Now More Than Ever*

ACT has a longstanding commitment to improving college and career readiness. Through our research, our thought leadership, and our solutions, we seek to raise awareness of issues and best practices aimed at helping individuals achieve education and workplace success. As the landscape of education and assessment rapidly shifts and state education and economic development agendas converge, ACT is uniquely positioned to inform decisions at the individual, institutional, system, and agency levels.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to providing information and solutions to support the following:

- **Holistic View of Readiness.** Our research shows that the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards can help prepare students for college and career success. However, we understand that academic readiness is just one of several factors that contribute to educational success. One 2014 ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness—long the sole focus of monitoring college readiness—as one of four critical domains in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Crosscutting skills, behavioral skills, and the ability to navigate future pathways are also important factors to measure and address. 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.
- **Stability and Validity of Data.** ACT is committed to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the 1–36 score scale, a scale that is familiar to and valued by the many stakeholders served by ACT. Leveraging the power of longitudinal data means avoiding dramatic shifts in the reporting structure.
- **Promoting Access.** Serving the needs of our many stakeholders is a focal point for ACT. We will continue to explore ways to expand college access for all students, promoting initiatives to better meet the needs of underserved learners and developing solutions and

services that make a difference in the lives of those we serve. Through new avenues such as online testing, initiating campaigns targeted at underserved students, and supporting organizations aligned with our mission, ACT is working to reach and help a greater number of individuals.

- **Continuous Improvement Without the Need for Radical Change.** ACT is committed to providing a wider range of solutions, across a broader span of life's decision points, in an increasingly individualized manner so that all can benefit. This has led us to a mode of continuous improvement. However, our goal is to avoid radical change so as to assist our users with transition. Our research agenda takes into account the changes in education and workplace practice and the demographics and evolving needs of those we serve. Accordingly, when research and evidence dictate, we will continue to make necessary changes in our recommendations and/or solutions, including discontinuing outdated programs and services, to bring clarity to the market.
- **Providing Meaningful Data for Better Decisions.** ACT is focused on providing better 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.

### *Using This Report<sup>1</sup>*

This report is designed to help educators understand and answer the following questions:

- Are your students graduating from high school prepared for college and career?
- Are enough of your students taking core courses necessary to be prepared for success, and are those courses rigorous enough?
- What are the most popular majors/occupations, and what does the pipeline for each look like?
- What other dimensions of college and career readiness, outside of academic readiness, should educators measure and track?

We sincerely hope this report will serve as a call to action—or even as a wake-up call—that our nation's current policies and practices are not having the desired effect of increasing the college and career readiness levels of US high school graduates. We remain committed to providing more and better data so individuals and institutions can make better-informed decisions leading to the improved educational outcomes we all desire and help more individuals achieve education and workplace success.

# Key Findings

## The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015— Asian American Students

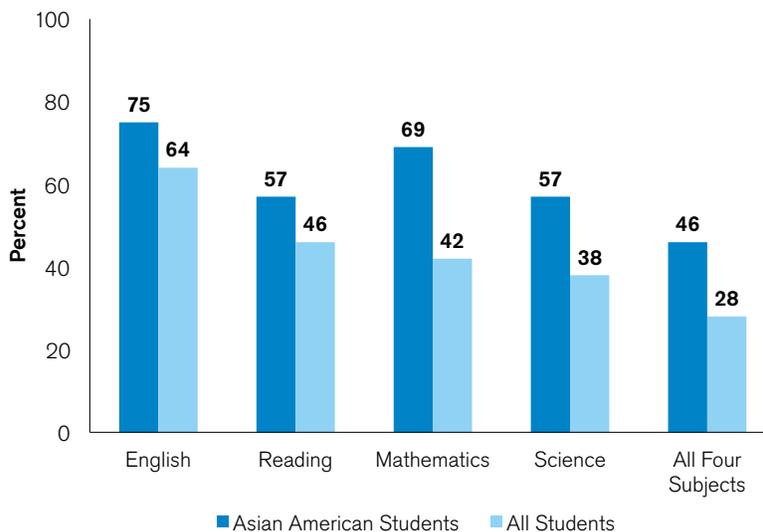
Key Findings	Implications	Recommendations
<p>Because of the diversity of languages spoken across Asian countries, there is much diversity on how frequently English is spoken at home. The most recent Census reported that 64% of Asian American students speak a language other than English at home, and 16.8% of Asian American students indicated that they speak English with difficulty (compared to the national average of 5.1%).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The achievement gap between English Language Learners (ELL) and non-ELL students is considerable.<sup>2</sup> 44% of linguistically diverse students did not meet any of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, and students who identify as ELLs may not be able to properly understand the college selection process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be mindful of and incorporate the unique accessibility needs of English Language Learners and students with disabilities, and the test must be constructed in deep consultation with experts on these populations (<i>The Condition of College &amp; Career Readiness: Linguistically Diverse Students 2014</i>).</li> </ul>
<p>According to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, many Asian American subethnicities have staggering education needs that are overlooked by masked data. While Asian Americans as a whole have the highest percentage of college completion rates (50.5% compared to the national average of 28%),<sup>3</sup> the high school dropout rate among Southeast Asian Americans is staggering, with 40% of Hmong, 38% of Laotian, and 35% of Cambodian Americans not completing high school.<sup>4</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While Asian Americans as a whole have the highest percentage of students meeting all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, certain subethnicities are overlooked by the data. Therefore, it's important to assess each student individually and use data to support instructional decisions in the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers must have 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 there is more to 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 to college.</li> </ul>
<p>While academic assessments monitor risk, ACT reports show that academic behaviors are also key to success. Students who show positive academic behaviors such as resilience and discipline are proven to be more likely to persist in college.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many academic behaviors that support student success are not taught nor assessed in the classroom. Understanding academic behaviors can support student success during the college readiness process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess academic behaviors by incorporating key noncognitive measures into the classroom and college readiness programming. Monitor academic behavior to properly tailor and maximize student interventions.</li> <li>Help students better develop key academic behaviors by offering opportunities to learn study skills, foster resilience, and proper goal setting.</li> </ul>
<p>Asian Americans are currently the fastest-growing racial group in the United States. Approximately one-third of legal immigrants who enter the United States annually are Asian, emigrating from several countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transitioning to a new country and cultural context can be very difficult, especially for students experiencing the American education system for the first time. Students may not be familiar with the process of taking a standardized test, preparing for college, applying to colleges, and entering the workforce. Additionally, they are adjusting to every detail of living within the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College advising for immigrant Asian American students is imperative. In school systems where a high volume of Asian American immigrants is present, specific support structures should be in place in order to best serve the needs of this population. Intentional college preparation, cultural education, and career advising is necessary to ensure the success of these students.</li> </ul>

# Asian American Students

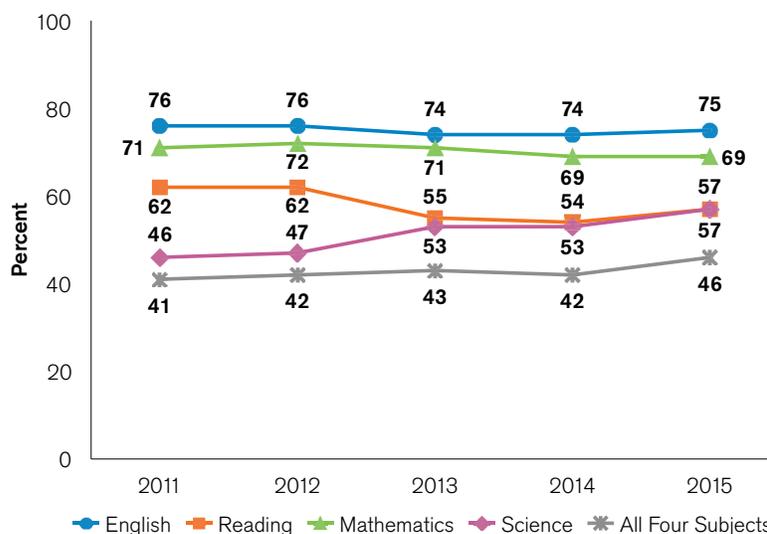
## Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- 87,499 Asian American high school 2015 graduates took the ACT.
- From 2011–2015, the number of ACT test-taking Asian American graduates has increased by about 31%.

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



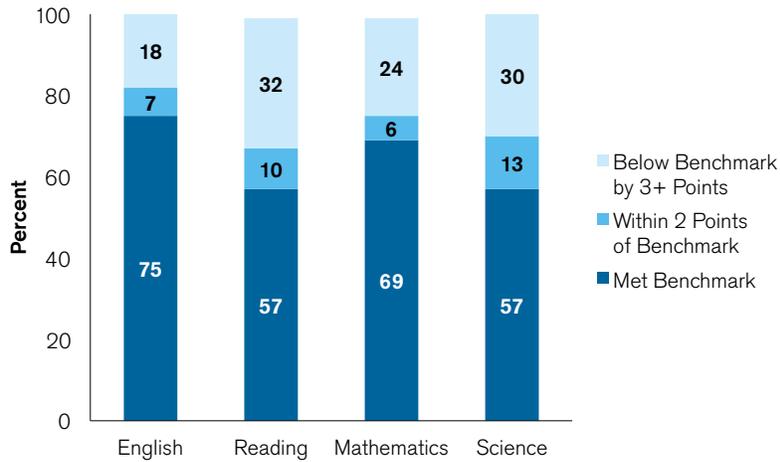
Percent of 2011–2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks



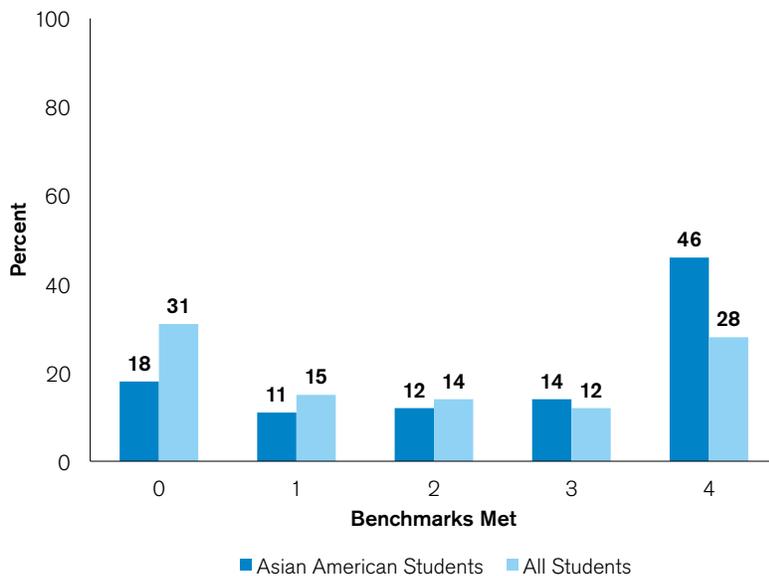
Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Near Attainment of College and Career Readiness

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained

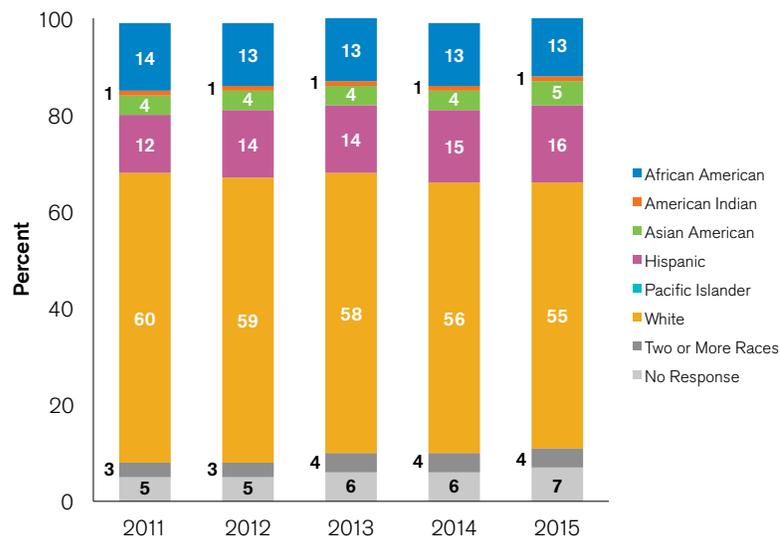


# Asian American Students

## Participation and Opportunity

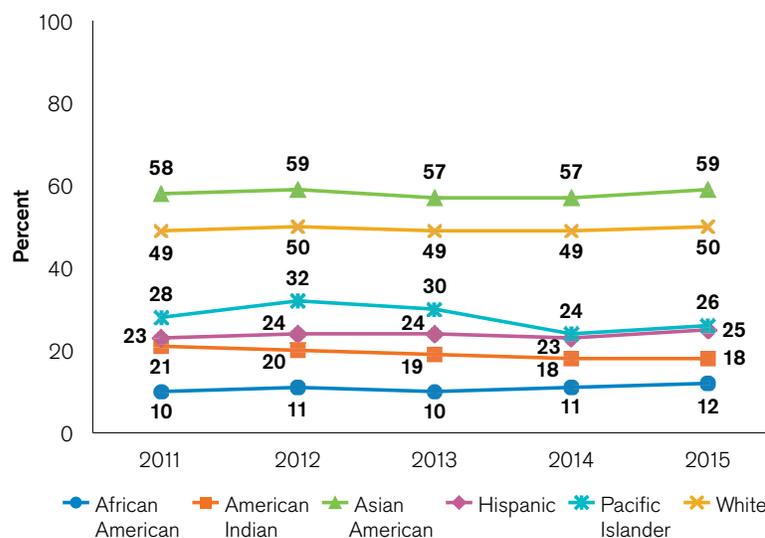
Over the past decade, ACT has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of students tested, as well as statewide partnerships in 14 states and in many districts across the country. As a result, the 2015 *Condition of College & Career Readiness* report provides a much deeper and more representative sample in comparison to a purely self-selected college-going population.

**Percent of 2011–2015 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity\***



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

**Percent of 2011–2015 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity\***

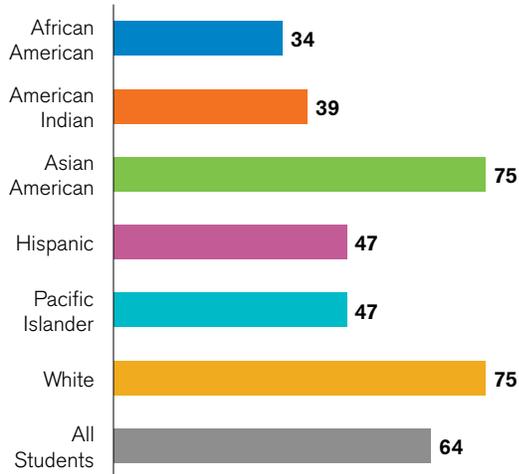


\* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.<sup>5</sup>

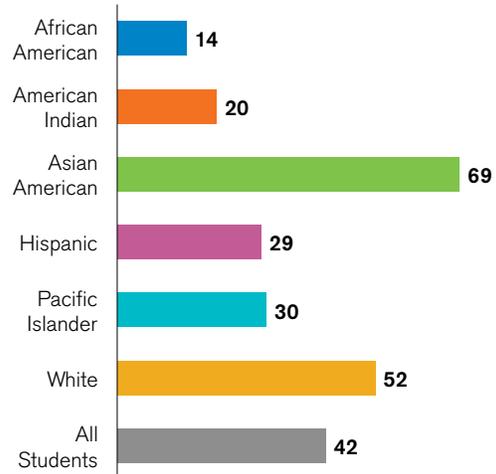
# Participation and Opportunity by Subject

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity and Subject\*

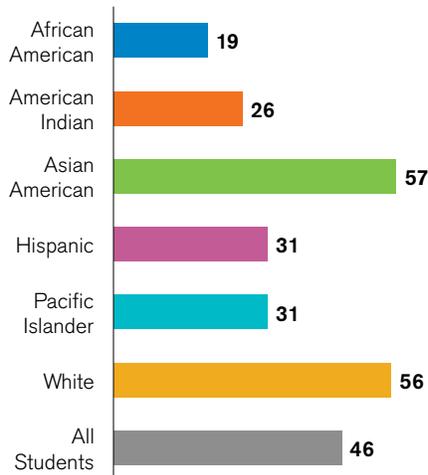
## English



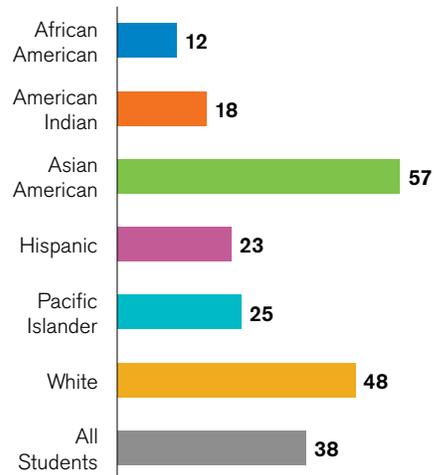
## Mathematics



## Reading



## Science



African American	American Indian	Asian American	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	All Students
N = 252,566	N = 14,711	N = 87,499	N = 299,920	N = 6,090	N = 1,057,803	N = 1,924,436

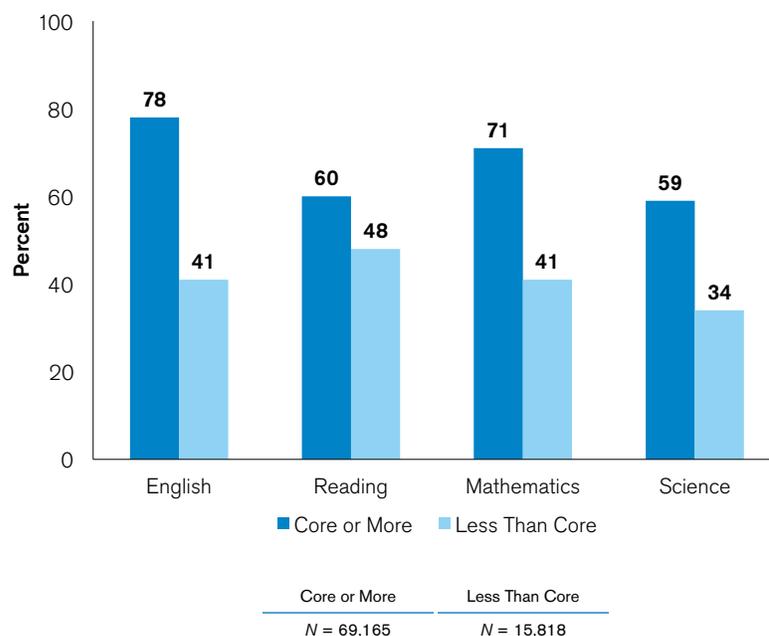
\* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.<sup>5</sup>

# Asian American Students

## Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance

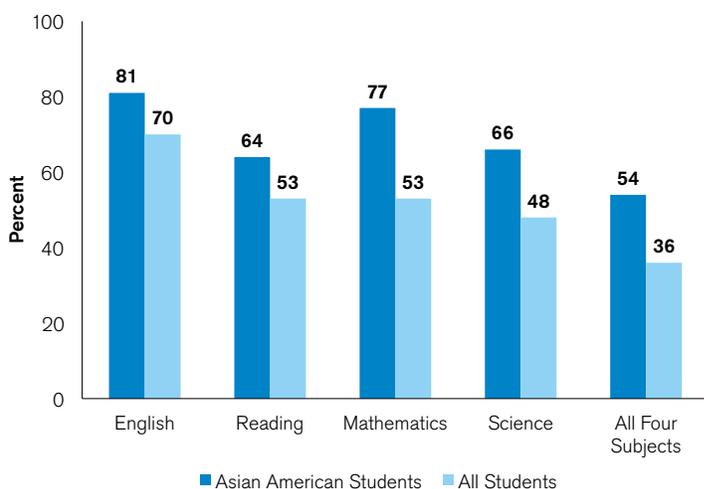
Within subjects, ACT has consistently found that students who take the recommended core curriculum are more likely to be ready for college or career than those who do not. A core curriculum is defined as four years of English and three years each of mathematics, social studies, and science.<sup>6</sup>

**Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American 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 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates with an Interest in STEM Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject (*N* = 44,755)**

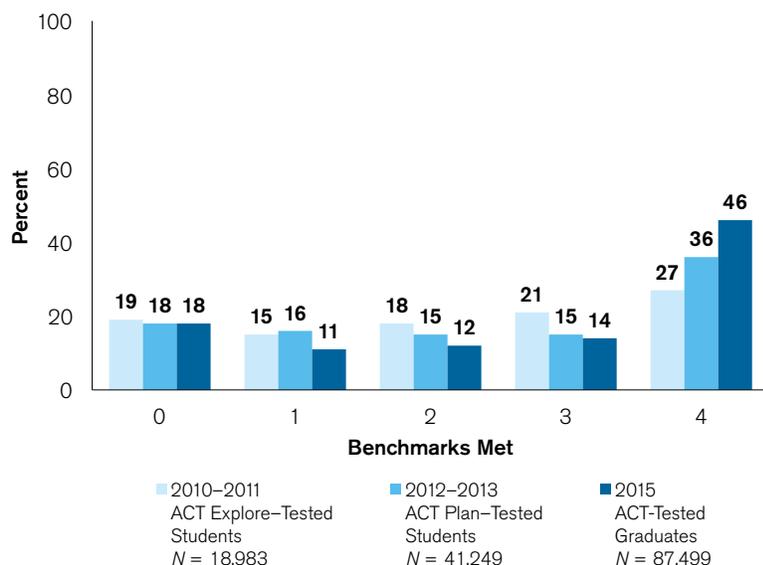


This chart compares ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment for 2015 Asian American high school graduates nationwide who have an interest in STEM majors or occupations to STEM-interested graduates nationally. Characteristics of students with an interest in STEM were addressed in greater depth in the *Condition of STEM 2014* report.

## Early Preparation

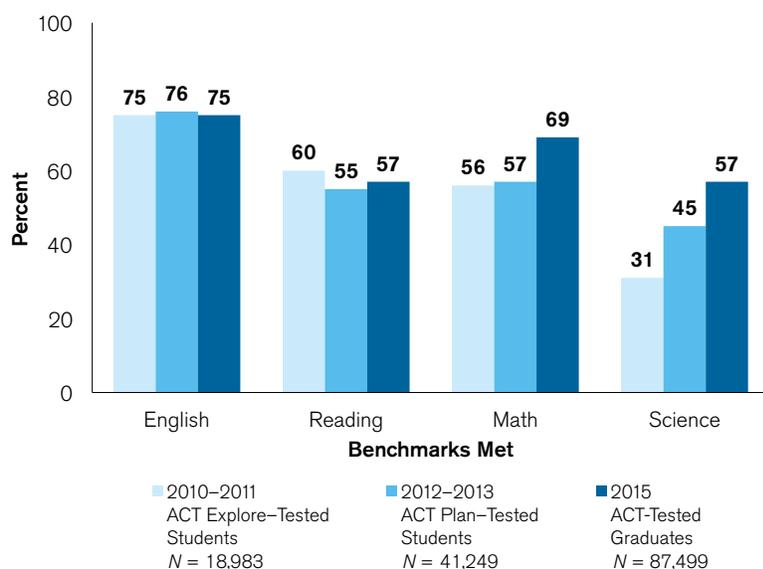
ACT research shows that younger students who take rigorous curricula are more prepared to graduate from high school ready for college or career. Moreover, our research (*The Forgotten Middle*, 2008) found that “the level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on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

**Percent of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks at Three Stages of Academic Development**



In past *Condition* reports, ACT Explore®, ACT Plan®, and ACT results all reflected data from students testing or graduating in the current year. This year, ACT Explore and ACT Plan results reflect 2015 graduating class examinees (both tested and not tested with the ACT) when they were assessed in 8th and 10th grades. The goal of this change is to describe the condition of college and career readiness for this year's graduates and their counterparts as they progressed from 8th grade to 10th grade and through graduation.

**Percent of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Content Area at Three Stages of Academic Development**



# Asian American Students

## ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment for Top Planned College Majors: 2015 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 top (most frequently selected) majors among 2015 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
<b>Undecided</b>	12,490	76	59	71	57	47
<b>Medicine (Pre-Medicine)</b>	7,038	93	79	87	79	70
<b>No Major Indicated</b>	3,254	35	23	30	22	15
<b>Biology, General</b>	3,242	89	74	82	72	62
<b>Computer Science and Programming</b>	2,937	83	69	84	72	61
<b>Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)</b>	2,663	63	40	46	35	23
<b>Business Administration and Management, General</b>	2,503	72	50	69	51	38
<b>Biochemistry and Biophysics</b>	2,316	88	74	86	75	65
<b>Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)</b>	2,196	76	56	70	57	43
<b>Mechanical Engineering</b>	1,872	75	57	77	65	51
<b>Computer Engineering</b>	1,785	75	58	75	62	51
<b>Accounting</b>	1,727	65	43	68	47	32
<b>Biomedical Engineering</b>	1,335	95	83	93	85	77
<b>Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General</b>	1,307	81	67	83	72	59
<b>Chemical Engineering</b>	1,096	88	72	91	80	67
<b>Cell/Cellular Biology</b>	989	90	78	85	75	67
<b>Chemistry</b>	956	88	70	87	75	62
<b>Electrical, Electronics and Comm. Engineering</b>	931	79	62	83	68	56
<b>Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering</b>	920	82	67	85	70	58
<b>Dentistry (Pre-Dentistry)</b>	900	80	57	72	58	45
<b>Medical Assisting</b>	883	55	35	41	32	20
<b>Finance, General</b>	821	87	69	89	74	62
<b>Law (Pre-Law)</b>	737	81	67	69	58	51
<b>Computer and Information Sciences, General</b>	731	79	60	78	65	52
<b>Psychology, General</b>	727	86	68	74	61	50
<b>International Business Management</b>	725	75	50	76	54	38
<b>Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)</b>	692	77	53	62	48	33
<b>Health-Related Professions and Services, General</b>	691	76	55	68	53	42
<b>Marketing Management and Research</b>	682	78	58	70	51	40
<b>Hospital/Facilities Administration</b>	675	57	38	48	34	25

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: 2015 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<sup>7</sup>, 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
<b>Undecided</b>			No profile available				
<b>Medicine (Pre-Medicine)</b>	3,173	45	94	80	87	80	71
<b>No Major Indicated</b>			No profile available				
<b>Biology, General</b>	1,363	42	90	74	81	72	61
<b>Computer Science and Programming</b>	685	23	81	68	84	72	59
<b>Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)</b>	745	28	69	41	47	37	23
<b>Business Administration and Management, General</b>	726	29	73	50	68	51	38
<b>Biochemistry and Biophysics</b>	1,118	48	89	75	86	77	66
<b>Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)</b>	842	38	78	59	74	63	47
<b>Mechanical Engineering</b>	547	29	75	55	80	66	49
<b>Computer Engineering</b>	441	25	78	62	79	66	54
<b>Accounting</b>	672	39	66	44	68	48	32
<b>Biomedical Engineering</b>	497	37	97	86	93	87	80
<b>Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General</b>	372	28	78	67	82	73	59
<b>Chemical Engineering</b>	388	35	90	76	91	83	71
<b>Cell/Cellular Biology</b>	445	45	89	75	82	71	62
<b>Chemistry</b>	396	41	89	68	87	76	62
<b>Electrical, Electronics and Comm. Engineering</b>	276	30	78	57	84	68	52
<b>Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering</b>	286	31	82	69	87	74	62
<b>Dentistry (Pre-Dentistry)</b>	287	32	82	58	75	59	46
<b>Medical Assisting</b>	225	25	61	40	48	38	27
<b>Finance, General</b>	261	32	88	68	87	72	62
<b>Law (Pre-Law)</b>	226	31	91	73	71	62	54
<b>Computer and Information Sciences, General</b>	171	23	74	56	77	63	47
<b>Psychology, General</b>	146	20	92	75	74	65	58
<b>International Business Management</b>	173	24	84	62	76	64	49
<b>Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)</b>	192	28	80	55	65	51	34
<b>Health-Related Professions and Services, General</b>			No profile available				
<b>Marketing Management and Research</b>	156	23	82	62	64	53	38
<b>Hospital/Facilities Administration</b>	92	14	57	37	41	34	24

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.

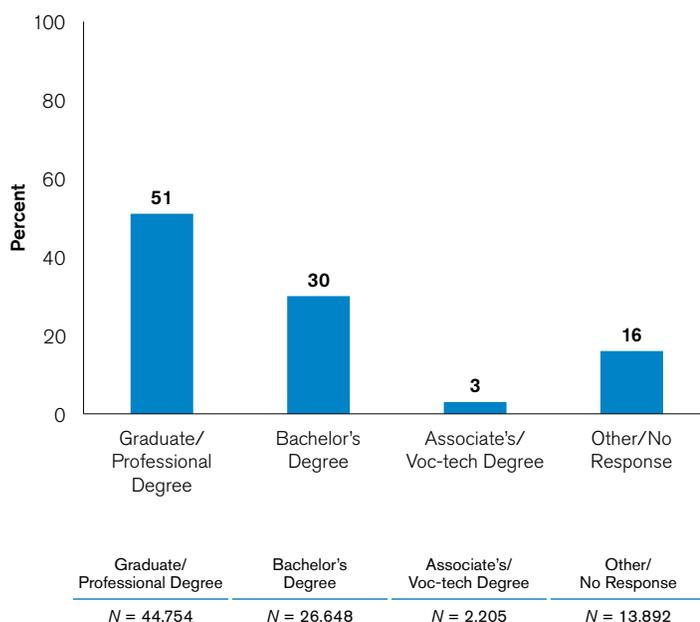
# Asian American Students

## Other College and Career Readiness Factors

### *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.

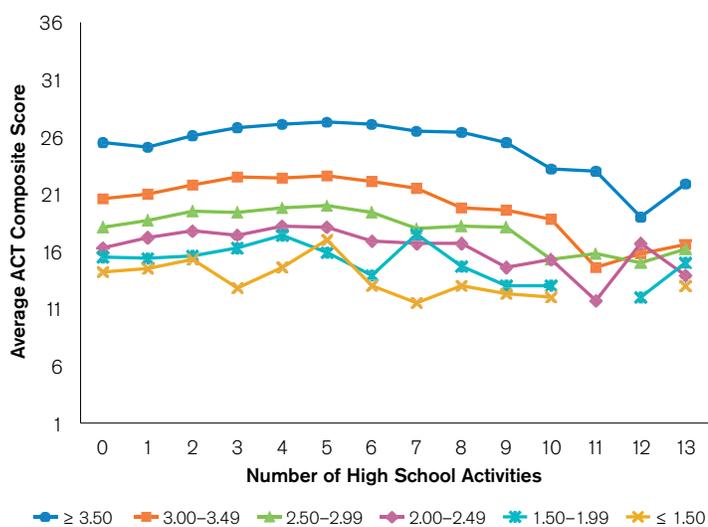
**Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations**



### *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 2015 graduates.

**Average ACT Composite Score by Number of Activities within High School GPA Ranges for 2015 Graduates**

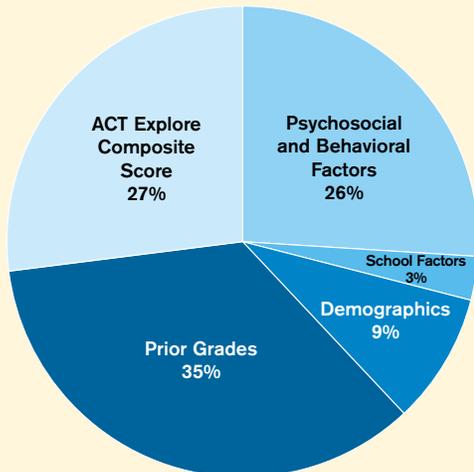


Note: In some cases, high activity counts may represent low numbers of students, giving rise to missing and outlying data points.

# 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**

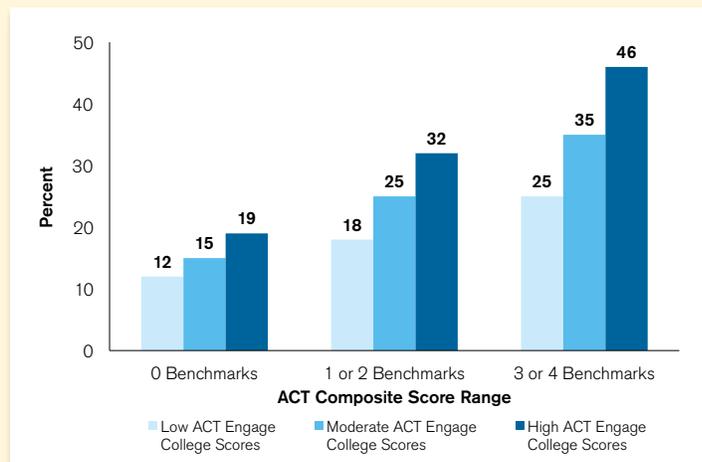


Note: The data used for this analysis came from a longitudinal sample of 3,768 students from 21 schools who took both ACT Explore and ACT Engage Grades 6–9 in 2006, when most students were in 8th grade. Additional waves of data were collected each fall, ending in 2011, when most students should have 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 eligible 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.

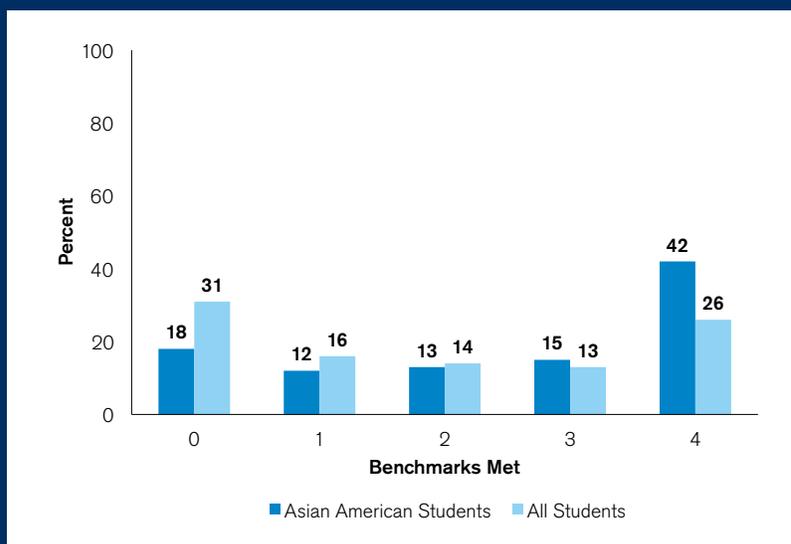
# Looking Back at the Class of 2014

## Asian American Students

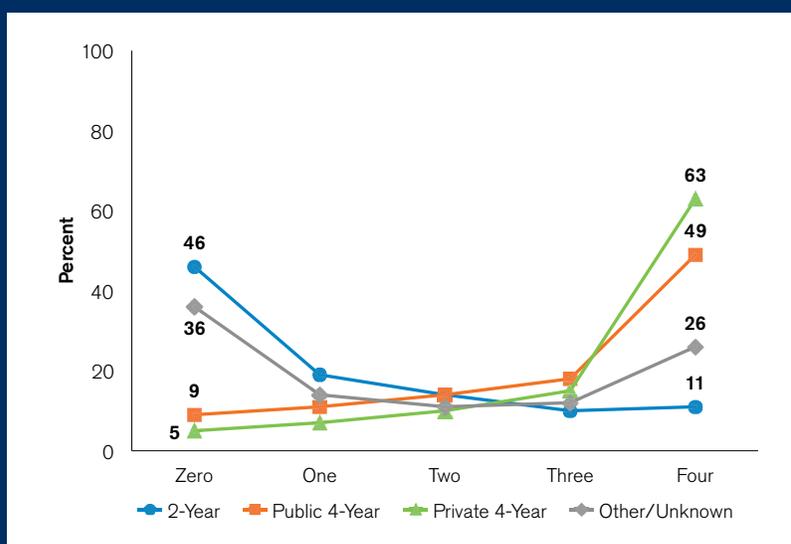
### *ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and Fall 2014 College Enrollment*

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 2014 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 2014 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested Asian American High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained and Fall 2014 College Enrollment Status



# Policies and Practices

## Call to Action

*The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015* points to the need for federal, state, and local policymakers and agency heads to support the readiness of *all* students for college and career. Over the last several years, the average national ACT Composite score and ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment of students taking the ACT has remained relatively constant. This is commendable given the increase in the number of students taking the ACT but little comfort to the students, teachers, and administrators working every day to increase student achievement. Because the current direction and aim of our education system is to prepare *all* students for postsecondary and career success, this year's results continue to signal the need for increased wholesale systemic supports and reforms.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to identifying solutions that are informed by data and that reinforce the need for students to meet appropriate achievement benchmarks at every point along the continuum from kindergarten through career. As part of this commitment, ACT released a series of policy platforms ([www.act.org/policyplatforms](http://www.act.org/policyplatforms)) in December 2014 containing extensive recommendations in three areas: K–12 education, postsecondary education, and workforce development.

In this same spirit, ACT and APIASF offer the following recommendations as a call to action for the entire education community: students; parents; educators; and policymakers at the district, state, and federal levels.

**Invest in early childhood programming so more children are ready to learn.** Asian Americans are the fastest-growing population in the United States and make up, on average, one of every three legal immigrants coming to the country. Improving college and career readiness begins as early as kindergarten—where gaps between low-income students and their more advantaged peers already exist.<sup>8</sup> Large numbers of disadvantaged students enter kindergarten behind 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, when these gaps become much more difficult to reverse.

**Implement policies for data-driven decision making.** According to the most recent Census data, some Asian American sub-ethnicities have staggering educational needs that may be overlooked or masked by aggregated data. The importance of disaggregation of data within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community can be seen in

bachelor's degree attainment rates among ethnic subgroups from a high of 69.1% for Asian Indians to less than 10% for Laotian Americans, Khmer Americans, and Cambodian Americans.<sup>9</sup> Teachers must have 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 there is more to 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 to 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.

**Provide all students with access to a rigorous high school core curriculum.** 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. Most states have increased course requirements for high school graduation in recent years. But too often, these 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 Pacific Islander students are not taking either the right number or the right kinds of courses they need to be prepared for college and the workforce after graduating from high school. 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

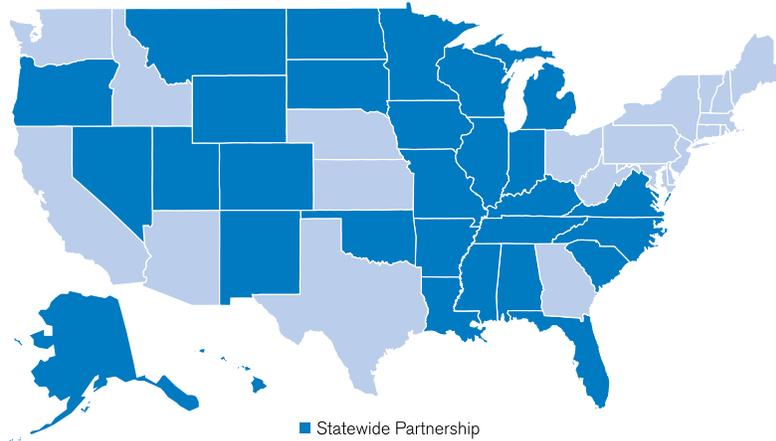
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It is time to take these and other meaningful steps to solve the issues hindering student success. ACT and APIASF sincerely hope that this call to action, informed by decades of educational research, contributes to the enhancement of education and career opportunities for all students, including our nation's most underserved individuals. We stand ready to work with like-minded organizations to support systemic education reforms. Ensuring a world-class US educational system should be a responsibility shared by all of us: our future rests on the education of tomorrow's leaders. We must do better.

# 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.

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

All listed partnerships are effective as of July 2015.

# 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 2015–2016 Academic Year

### *The Condition of STEM 2015*

- National report
- State reports
- Underserved learners

### *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2015*

- National report
- State reports
- African American students
- American Indian students
- Asian American students

- Hispanic students
- Pacific Islander students
- First-generation students
- Linguistically diverse students
- Students from low-income families

## Other ACT Research Reports

### **College Choice Report (for the graduating class of 2013)**

- *Part 1: Preferences and Prospects*—November 2013
- *Part 2: Enrollment Patterns*—July 2014
- *Part 3: Persistence and Transfer*—April 2015

### **College Choice Report (for the graduating class of 2014)**

- *Part 1: Expanding Opportunities: Preferences and Prospects*—November 2014
- *Part 2: Expanding Opportunities: Enrollment Patterns*—July 2015

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

[www.act.org/research/subscribe.html](http://www.act.org/research/subscribe.html).

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## 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. The data presented herein are based on the *ACT Profile Report—National: Graduating Class 2015 for Asian American Students*, accessible at [www.act.org/research](http://www.act.org/research). 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. [http://www.act.org/research/researchers/reports/pdf/ACT\\_RR2012-1.pdf](http://www.act.org/research/researchers/reports/pdf/ACT_RR2012-1.pdf).
3. “14 Important Statistics About Asian Americans,” *Asian Nation*, <http://www.asian-nation.org/14-statistics.shtml>.
4. “Critical Issues Facing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,” The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/data/critical-issues>.
5. The race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements; trends to previous reports may not be available for all race/ethnicity categories.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ImportanceofEarlyLearning.pdf>.
9. “20 Amazing Stats About Asian American Achievement,” *Online College.org*, <http://www.onlinecollege.org/2011/12/13/20-amazing-stats-about-asian-american-achievement/>.







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](http://www.act.org).



Based in Washington, DC, the Asian American & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) is the nation's largest nonprofit provider of college scholarships for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). APIASF works to create opportunities for students to access, complete, and succeed after postsecondary education; thereby developing future leaders who will excel in their careers, serve as role models in their communities, and ultimately contribute to a vibrant America. Since 2003, APIASF has distributed nearly \$90 million in scholarships to AAPI students across the country and in the Pacific Islands. APIASF manages three scholarship programs: APIASF's general scholarship, the APIASF Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions scholarship program, and the Gates Millennium Scholars/Asian Pacific Islander Americans, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

For more information, visit [www.apiasf.org](http://www.apiasf.org).



A copy of this report can be found at  
[www.act.org/research](http://www.act.org/research)