

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

**Pacific Islander  
Students**

**ACT**<sup>®</sup>

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



Dear Colleagues,

For the past several years, ACT has presented data on Pacific Islander students separately from our report on the Asian American population. Our reason for doing so is to highlight the distinctive experiences and needs of this population, which too often are concealed by combining data on Pacific Islander students together with data on the larger Asian American population.

Recognizing this, ACT and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) jointly publish data on each community separately, disaggregating Pacific Islander student data from Asian American student data. This report—*The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015: Pacific Islander Students*—shows that Pacific Islander students are not all the same, and that many are meeting college readiness benchmarks at a much lower rate than other student populations.

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.

ACT is proud to work with APIASF, which 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.

APIASF and ACT are working together to increase awareness and understanding of the diversity of the Pacific Islander 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 Asian American students, will provide useful insights about the rapidly growing and incredibly diverse group of young learners in the AAPI community.



**Marten Roorda**  
CEO, ACT



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



# Pacific Islander 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— Pacific Islander Students

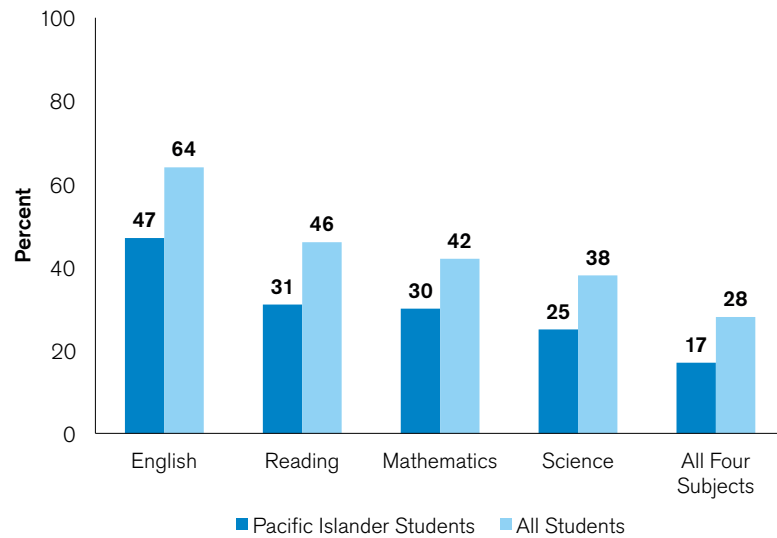
Key Findings	Implications	Recommendations
<p><b>Academic readiness and college preparation.</b> According to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, an average of 14% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have a bachelor's degree or higher—almost half of the national average of 27%. Many Pacific Islander students who took the ACT identify as first-generation high school graduates.<sup>2</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 9% of all ACT-tested first-generation high school graduates met all four of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, and 52% met none.<sup>3</sup> While 94% of these students aspire to attend college, their parents may be unfamiliar with the college selection process. Not being able to adequately prepare for college can have profound consequences on students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College preparation requires early planning. Therefore, it is essential that we expand access to college readiness programs for middle-grade students to educate about the college application process, support student success, and accelerate academic growth for Pacific Islander students.</li> <li>Expand advising efforts to ensure that Pacific Islander students and their parents are aware of the college application process and to support students to select a college that is the right fit for their unique needs.</li> <li>Sustain a culturally appropriate college-going culture for Pacific Islander students in both the mainland United States and Freely Associated States.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Academic achievement, behaviors, and college retention.</b> While academic assessments monitor risk, ACT reports show that academic behaviors are also key to success.<sup>4</sup> 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><b>Academic readiness and family income.</b> Only 17% of Pacific Islander students met the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in all four subjects, compared to 28% of all students. Most Pacific Islanders fall into the low-income category in that Pacific Islander communities have a poverty rate of 20.4% and 27.6% poverty rate among children. Low-income students are at higher risk for underperforming academically. This increases the achievement gap between Pacific Islanders and all other students. Pacific Islanders also tend to have larger families, with an average of 3.63 people per home. Having a low income and a high number of people living in one household brings populations closer to the poverty level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11% of all ACT-tested low-income high school graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.<sup>5</sup> Many Pacific Islander students fall into the low-income category and have limited access to resources from a student's young age. If early intervention strategies are not used effectively, this can lead to limited access to postsecondary opportunities and limited completion of postsecondary schooling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom instruction materials, college preparation materials, and ACT preparation materials must be made available both online and in printed, downloadable format in school systems. Internet access is less reliable in the Pacific Islands, so students need to be able to obtain resources in printed form from schools. In addition, advisors must be aware of available opportunities for low-income Pacific Islander students, including scholarship opportunities (APIASF), transitional support campuses (AANAPISIs), and resources specific to supporting Pacific Islanders and low-income students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data disaggregation.</b> The Pacific Islander community contains great diversity in cultures, languages, and locations. While Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders represent only 0.4% of the population, they are one of the fastest-growing populations.<sup>6</sup> To identify effective strategies for improving Pacific Islander college readiness, it is essential to disaggregate the data among Pacific Islanders in the COFA States, in Hawaii, and on the mainland United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through disaggregating educational data between Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, educators and administrators are best able to identify the needs of key populations. Because of the vast diversity in and among Pacific Island cultures, additional disaggregation of data among Pacific Island locations and sub-ethnicities is needed to implement programs to most effectively support these students. If the data is disaggregated further among islander communities, teachers, administrators, and policymakers can best identify how to support each population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data disaggregation will allow for teachers, administrators, and policymakers to best identify where opportunities for improvement exist, external barriers impacting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, and effective support systems for intervening with students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Academic readiness and English Language Learners.</b> There are more than 1,300 languages spoken throughout the Pacific Islands region.<sup>7</sup> 42.5% of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders speak a language other than English at home. Being an English Language Learner means it is more difficult to comprehend information at a rapid pace and in a school context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17% of ACT-tested linguistically diverse high school graduates met ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in all four subjects.<sup>8</sup> Many Pacific Islander students qualify as linguistically diverse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Language Learners present a rapidly growing population in classrooms. Teachers and administrators should be aware of the unique needs and challenges of these students. College preparation materials should also be available in a variety of languages, where possible. In addition, standardized tests must be implemented with consultation with linguistic experts to ensure accurate assessment.</li> </ul>

# Pacific Islander Students

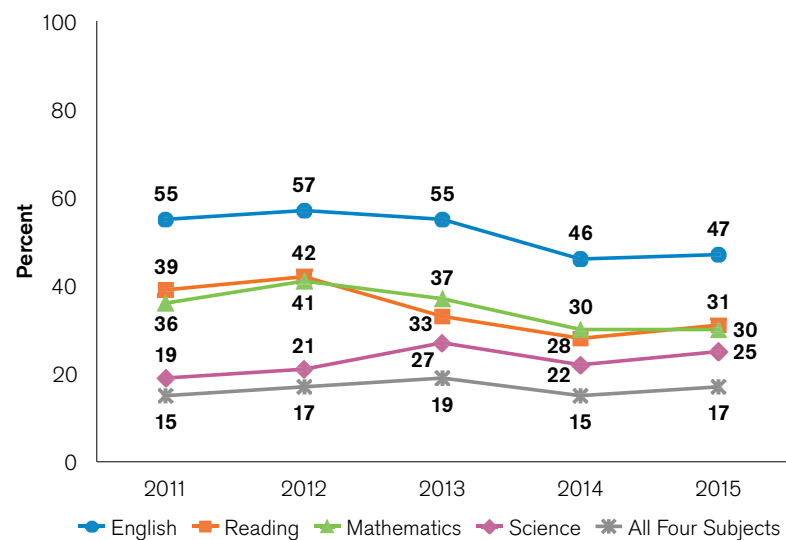
## Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- 6,090 Pacific Islander high school 2015 graduates took the ACT.

**Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Pacific Islander High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject**



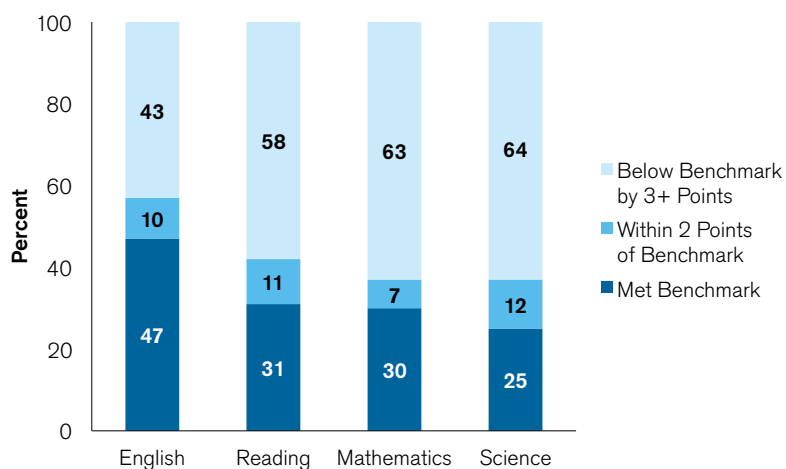
**Percent of 2011–2015 ACT-Tested Pacific Islander High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks**



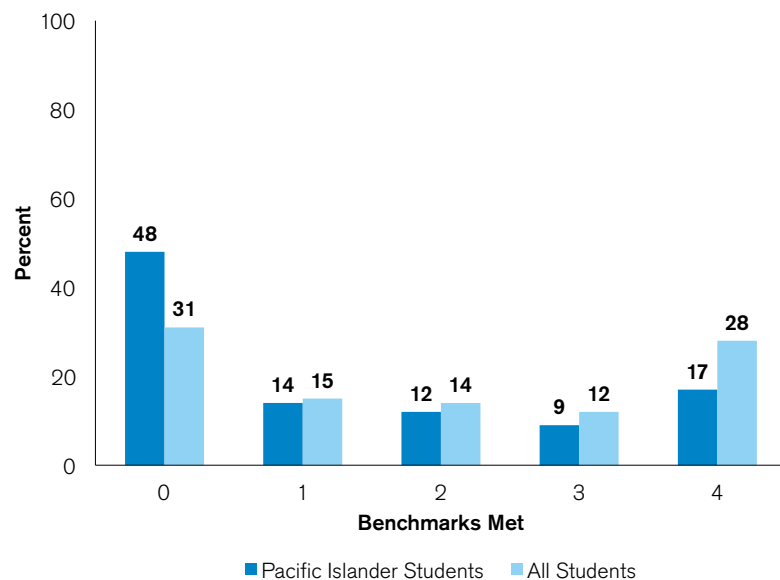
Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Near Attainment of College and Career Readiness

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



Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Pacific Islander High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained

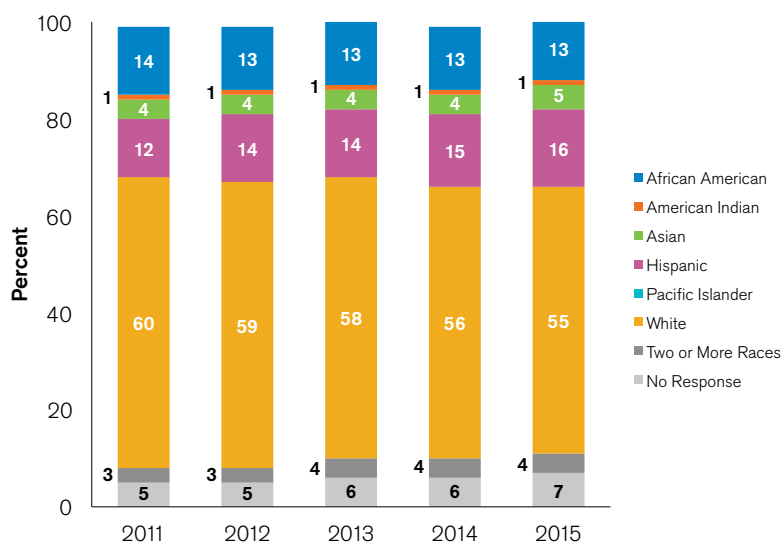


# Pacific Islander Students

## Participation and Opportunity

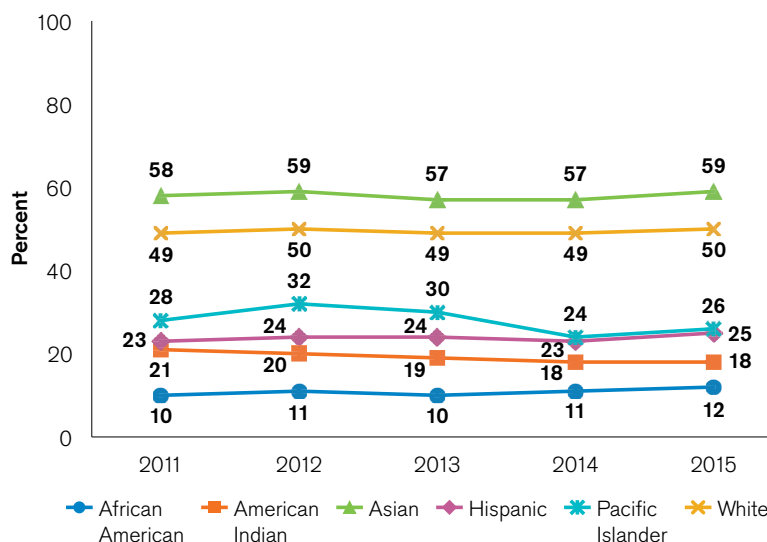
Over the past decade, ACT has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of students tested, as well as statewide partnerships in 14 states and in many districts across the country. As a result, the 2015 *Condition of College & Career Readiness* report provides a much deeper and more representative 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\***



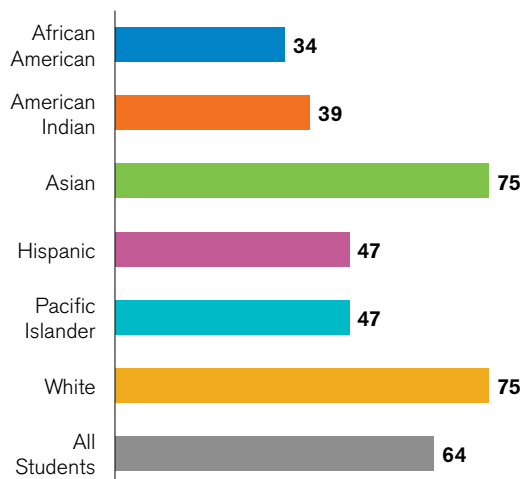
\* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.<sup>9</sup>



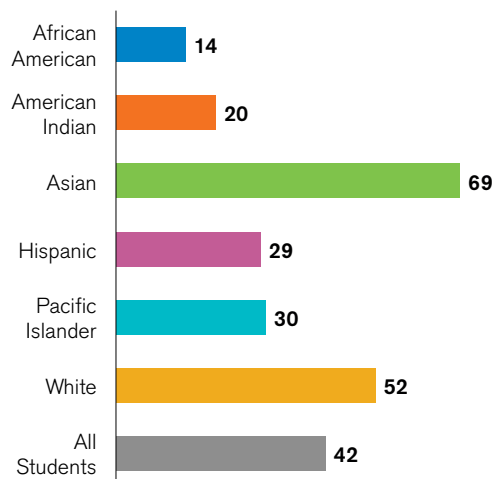
## Participation and Opportunity by Subject

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

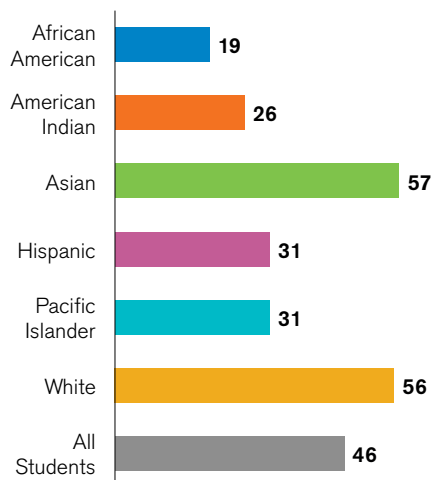
### English



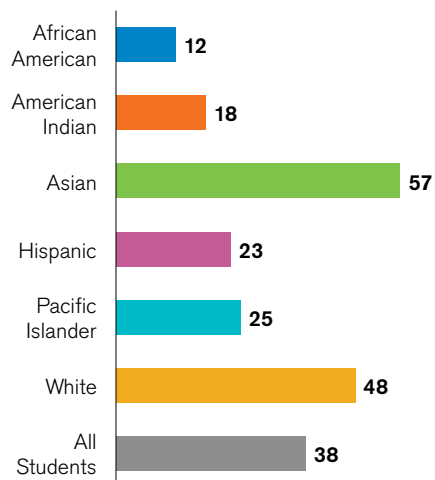
### Mathematics



### Reading



### Science



African American	American Indian	Asian	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

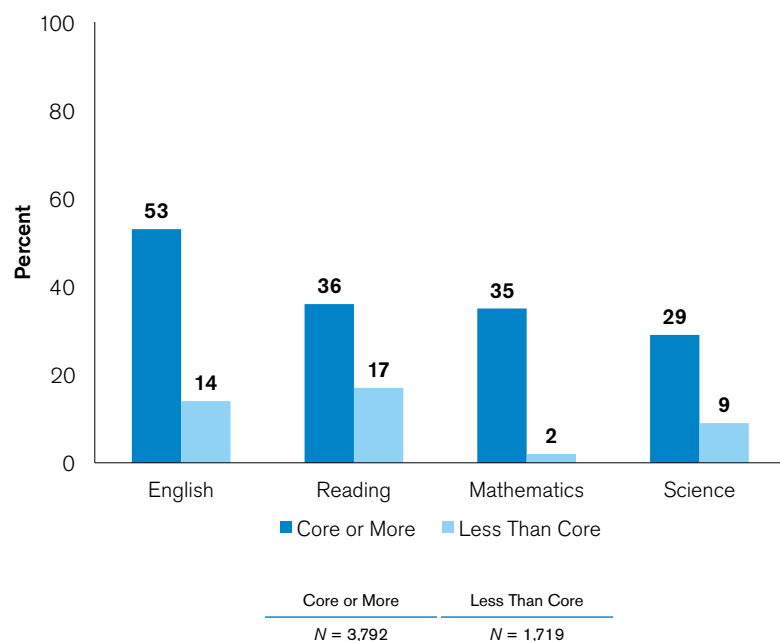
\* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.<sup>9</sup>

# Pacific Islander Students

## Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance

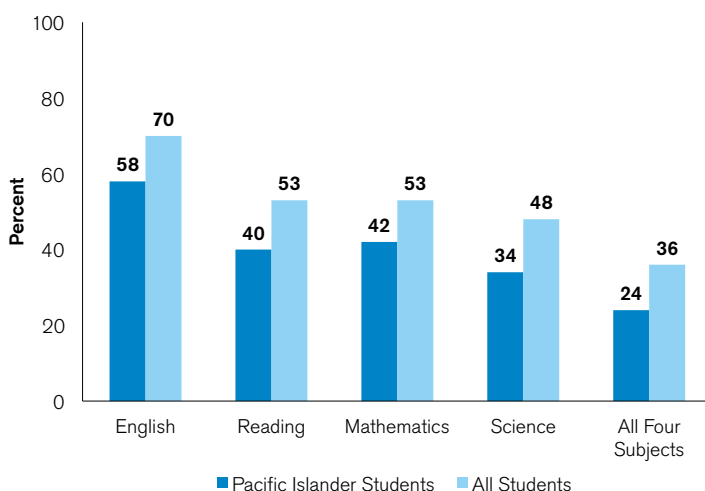
Within subjects, ACT has consistently found that students who take the recommended core curriculum are more likely to be ready for college or career than those who do not. A core curriculum is defined as four years of English and three years each of mathematics, social studies, and science.<sup>10</sup>

**Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Pacific Islander 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 Pacific Islander High School Graduates with an Interest in STEM Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject (N = 2,195)**

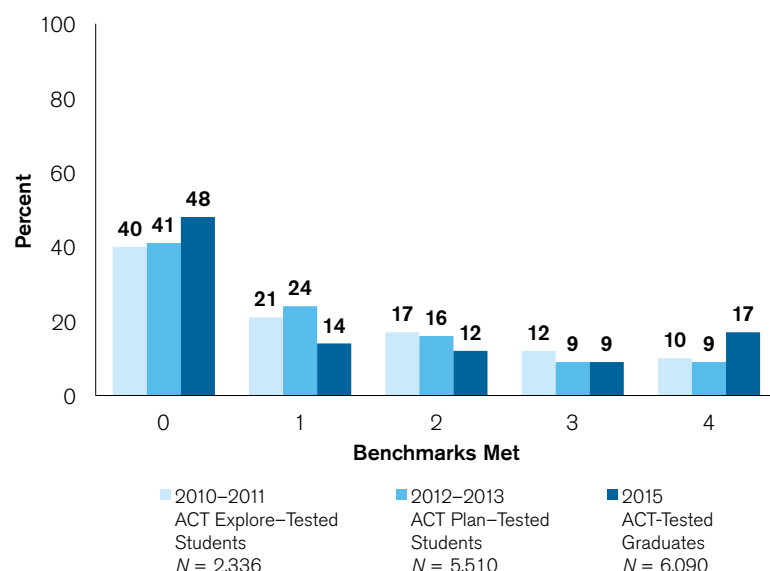


This chart compares ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment for 2015 Pacific Islander high school graduates nationwide who have an interest in STEM majors or occupations to STEM-interested graduates nationally. Characteristics of students with an interest in STEM were addressed in greater depth in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

## Early Preparation

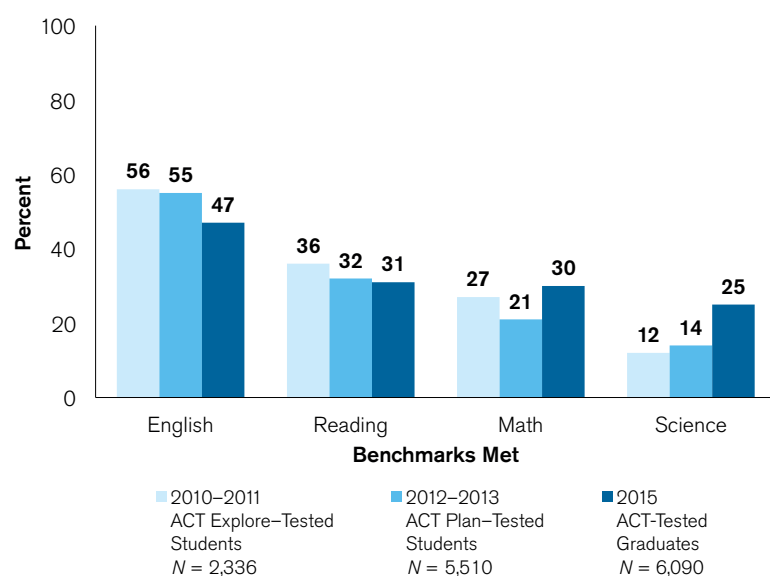
ACT research shows that younger students who take rigorous curricula are more prepared to graduate from high school ready for college or career. Moreover, our research (*The Forgotten Middle*, 2008) found that “the level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on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



# Pacific Islander 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
No Major Indicated	778	13	8	7	6	3
Undecided	747	53	36	37	31	23
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	283	49	28	30	24	13
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	202	77	60	59	49	39
Business Administration and Management, General	188	47	25	31	21	13
Mechanical Engineering	124	44	35	40	37	24
Biology, General	102	81	60	57	47	40
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	99	62	38	33	29	19
Athletic Training	91	47	23	22	16	8
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	91	49	38	47	37	25
Biochemistry and Biophysics	73	78	62	66	51	34
Criminology	70	49	24	16	17	6
Law (Pre-Law)	66	47	26	26	24	18
Accounting	64	50	36	41	34	19
Computer Science and Programming	64	73	52	52	53	38
Medical Assisting	64	38	31	22	13	9
Psychology, General	60	68	52	33	27	18
Music, Performance	58	43	24	21	16	14
Marine/Aquatic Biology	56	57	32	23	21	7
Music, General	53	36	21	21	19	11
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	51	55	33	41	31	14
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	50	68	50	42	34	20
Computer Engineering	49	76	61	65	57	51
Graphic Design	49	49	37	22	24	14
Therapy and Rehabilitation, General	49	51	29	31	22	12
Elementary Education	45	56	33	27	16	9
Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering	44	70	48	61	52	39
Hospital/Facilities Administration	44	43	30	20	18	9

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>11</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
No Major Indicated			No profile available				
Undecided			No profile available				
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	55	19	69	40	42	36	18
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	88	44	80	63	61	52	42
Business Administration and Management, General	49	26	57	33	45	27	14
Mechanical Engineering	44	35	61	45	52	50	32
Biology, General	48	47	88	60	54	48	38
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	22	22	68	50	27	23	23
Athletic Training	16	18	81	44	38	44	31
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	28	31	54	39	54	32	25
Biochemistry and Biophysics	31	42	87	71	71	65	45
Criminology	2	3	Insufficient data				
Law (Pre-Law)	16	24	63	25	25	31	19
Accounting	24	38	42	25	46	42	21
Computer Science and Programming	12	19	50	25	25	17	17
Medical Assisting	14	22	43	43	36	21	14
Psychology, General	14	23	86	43	29	21	14
Music, Performance	19	33	42	26	21	21	16
Marine/Aquatic Biology	13	23	77	31	31	23	8
Music, General	19	36	53	37	32	26	16
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	15	29	67	47	67	40	13
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	6	12	Insufficient data				
Computer Engineering	15	31	93	80	80	80	67
Graphic Design	18	37	44	50	17	17	11
Therapy and Rehabilitation, General	11	22	64	27	27	27	0
Elementary Education	14	31	57	43	57	29	29
Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering	9	20	Insufficient data				
Hospital/Facilities Administration	8	18	Insufficient data				

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.



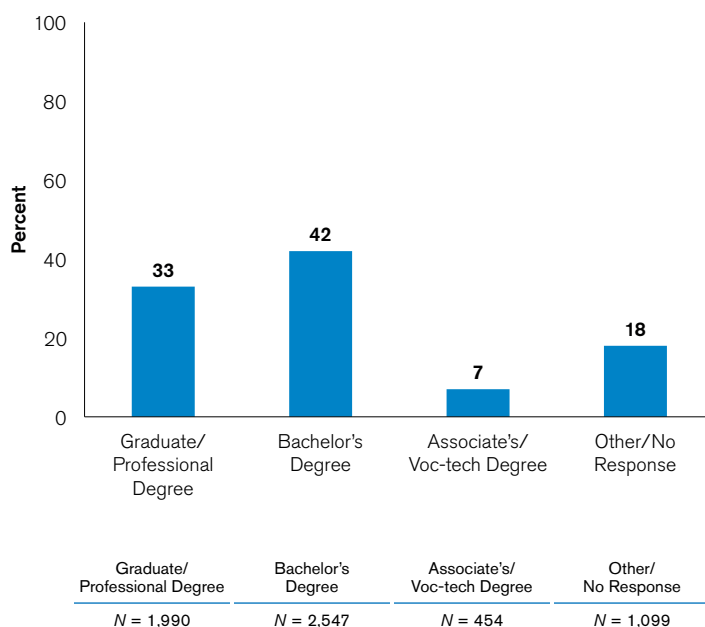
# Pacific Islander Students

## 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.

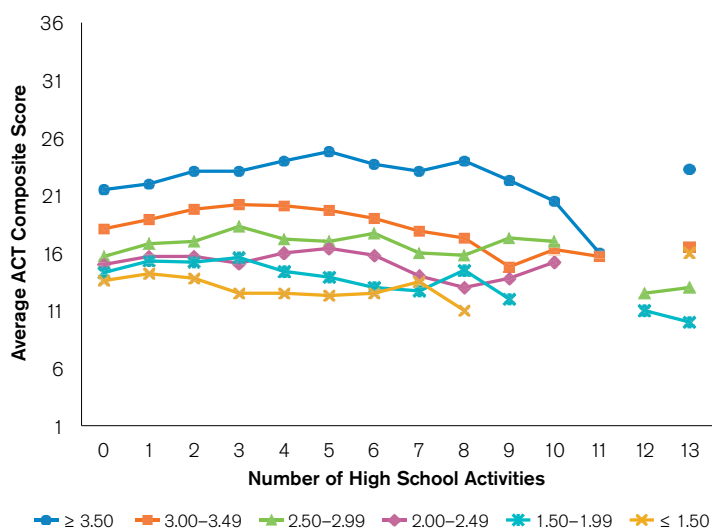
**Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested Pacific Islander High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations**



### *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**

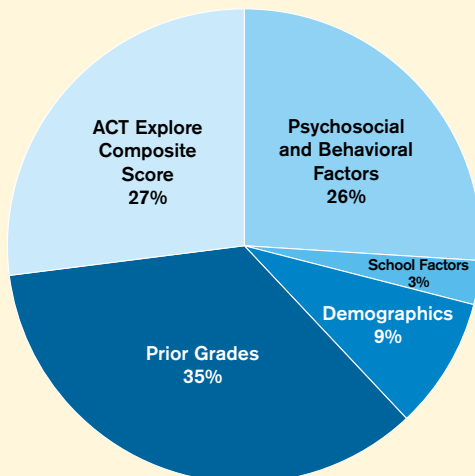


Note: In some cases, high activity counts may represent low numbers of students, giving rise to missing and outlying data points.

# 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**

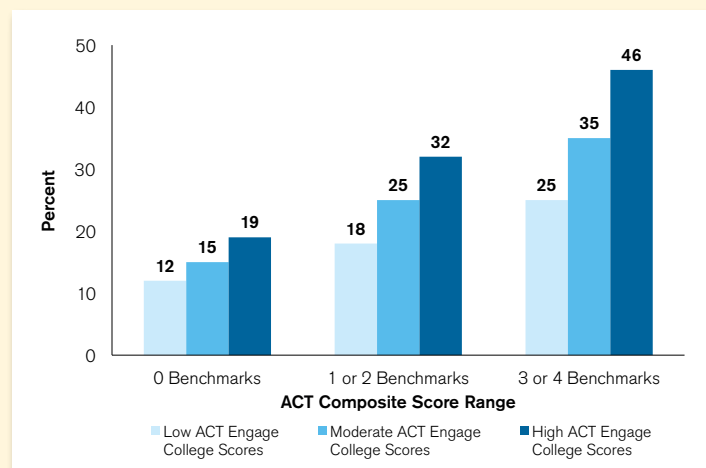


Note: The data used for this analysis came from a longitudinal sample of 3,768 students from 21 schools who took both ACT Explore and ACT Engage Grades 6–9 in 2006, when most students were in 8th grade. Additional waves of data were collected each fall, ending in 2011, when most students should have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

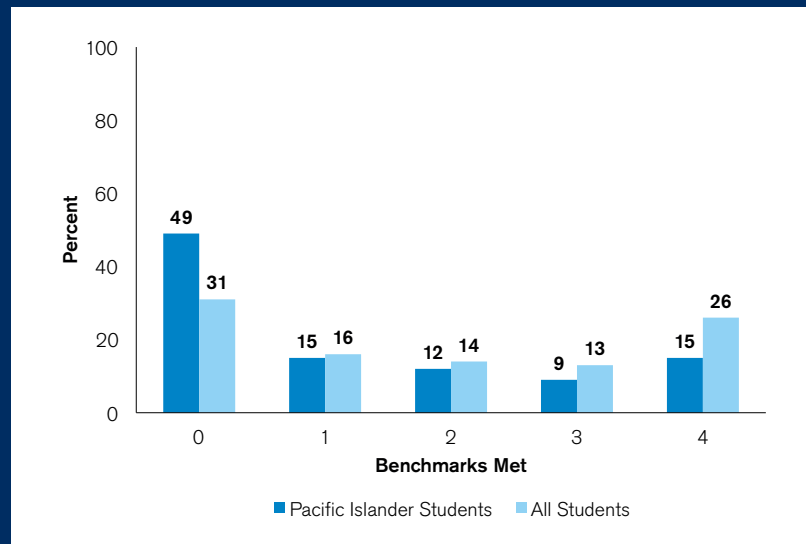
# Looking Back at the Class of 2014

## Pacific Islander Students

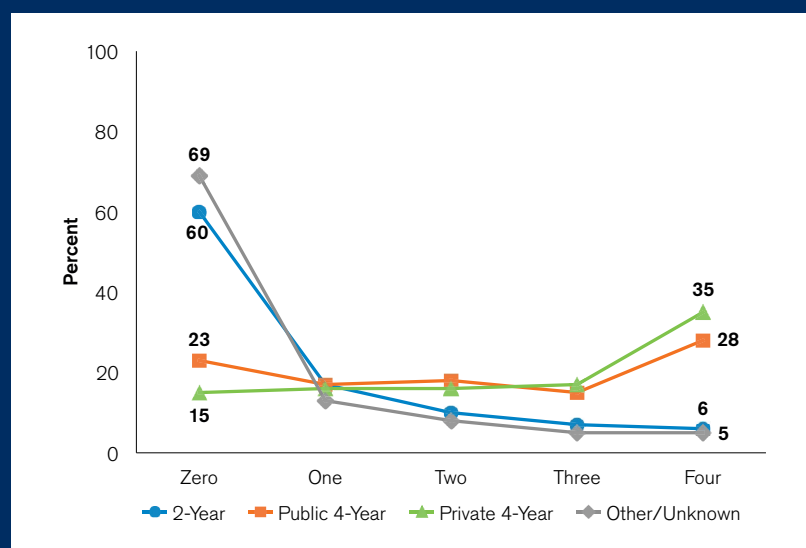
### *ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and Fall 2014 College Enrollment*

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 Pacific Islander High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



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



# Policies and Practices

## Call to Action

Education is a priority for multiple stakeholders. In order to improve the overall state of education and its effectiveness, all stakeholders need to work together for the student's benefit. Parents, teachers, administrators, students, and policymakers at the district, national, and federal levels need to act on data findings to improve the educational climate for Pacific Islander students.

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.** In 2012, Pacific Islander children had a poverty rate of 27.4%, compared to the national average of 22.2%. Improving college and career readiness begins as early as kindergarten—where gaps between low-income students and their more advantaged peers already exist.<sup>12</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, Pacific Islander students 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 a low of 9.4% for Samoans.<sup>13</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.**

Only 53% of Pacific Islander students took a core curriculum in English, and only 36% of students took a core curriculum of math compared to the national average of 67% and 45%, respectively. 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 needed to prepare 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

**Provide teacher support and development.** In the United States, 1.5% of teachers and 0.5% of principals are of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent. Because Pacific Islander teachers and administrators are in a unique place to serve as role models, mentors, and support systems, it is important to recruit and build local teacher capacity, especially within the Pacific Islands. Having an advocate who understands a student's cultural experience and/or language helps students to thrive in the classroom and school environment. Additionally, local personnel should provide cultural education training for non-minority teachers to educate them on cultural norms and how they may be represented in the classroom. This allows all teachers to further understand a student's performance and effectively implement early intervention practices.

**Provide access to technology.** Not all school communities have adequate access to technological resources. This inhibits students from learning from additional resources and developing their technological literacy. The integration of technology into a classroom allows students the opportunity to develop skills that will inevitably be valuable to a workplace environment and also exposes them to the rest of the world. Without access to Internet and without being skilled in research, students are ill prepared for college-level work.

---

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 Aspire</b>	<b>ACT Explore</b>	<b>ACT Plan</b>	<b>The ACT</b>	<b>ACT QualityCore</b>	<b>ACT WorkKeys</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>	<b>ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™</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	Utah
Alabama		Utah	Kentucky		North Carolina	Louisiana	Virginia
Arkansas			Louisiana		North Dakota	Minnesota	Wisconsin
Hawaii			Minnesota		South Carolina	Missouri	
Wisconsin			Mississippi		Wisconsin	New Mexico	
Wyoming			Montana		Wyoming	North Carolina	
			Nevada				
			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 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).

---

## 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 Pacific Islander 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. “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>.
3. ACT. *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014: First-Generation Students*. (Iowa City, IA, 2015).
4. Wayne Camara, Ryan O’Conner, Krista Mattern, and Mary Ann Hanson, *Beyond Academic: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*. (Iowa City, IA: ACT, 2015).
5. ACT and NCCEP. *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015: Students from Low-Income Families*. (Iowa City, IA, 2016).
6. Lindsay Hixson, Bradford B. Hepler, and Myoung Ouk Kim, *The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2010*. (Washington, DC, US Census Bureau, 2012).
7. “World Languages—Pacific,” *Ethnologue.com*, <http://www.ethnologue.com/region/Pacific>.
8. ACT. *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2014: Linguistically Diverse Students*. (Iowa City, IA, 2015).
9. Trends to previous reports may not be available for all race/ethnicity categories.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. See, for example: <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/importanceofearlylearning.pdf>; <http://aapidata.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AAPIData-CAP-report.pdf>; <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/how-pacific-islander-students-are-slipping-through-cracks-n144281>; <https://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/rac1/pacific.pdf>.
13. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/asian-americans-initiative/what-you-should-know.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](http://www.act.org).



Based in Washington, DC, the Pacific Islander & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) is the nation's largest nonprofit provider of college scholarships for Pacific Islander 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 Pacific Islander American and Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions scholarship program, and the Gates Millennium Scholars/Pacific Islander 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)