

# 5 STRATEGIES FOR USING ACT<sup>®</sup> SCORES

How many times do you get asked by a student, “Do I need to take the ACT<sup>®</sup> test?” or “Why should I take the ACT?” They might assume ACT test results are only used for college admission purposes, but they mean so much more. No matter their chosen paths after graduation, students having an ACT score will have a **predictor** of future achievements, **proof** of what they’ve accomplished to date, and **strategic tools** to help open doors toward success. Here are five strategies for using ACT scores that K-12 professionals can implement today.



## STRATEGY #1 ACADEMIC ADVISING

**451:1** national average student-to-counselor ratio 20/21 school year  
source ASCA

### **Build confidence and gather intel in record time to inform secondary instruction and advisory conversations.**

Using ACT scores can help busy counselors serve more students with personalized insights. Students can take the ACT system of assessments as early as grade 8 (with PreACT<sup>®</sup> 8/9) to predict future achievement and grow confidence. In grades 10-12, you can offer them more test practice or start building an ACT<sup>®</sup> **Superscore** — averaging their best scores from each subject from multiple test attempts.

Use this longitudinal insight to inform instruction, meet benchmarks, and advise students on their next steps.

- Measure progress toward your standards achievement plan.
- Measure critical readiness skills to help students who need more targeted instruction or to inform intervention.
- Identify potential gifted and talented, dual enrollment, and advanced students.
- Uncover strengths and interests for holistic course recommendations and selection process.



## STRATEGY #2 PROMOTE EQUITY

**4 MILLION** underserved students have completed at least one college application  
source ASCA

### **Apply to college for free.**

Having an ACT score can close opportunity and outcome gaps for students of color, first-generation students, families with economic challenges, and exceptional and diverse learners—setting students up for success in college and careers.

- Ensure equitable opportunities.
- Students eligible for ACT fee waivers receive:
  - free additional score reports, and
  - college application fee waivers.
- A half-million students are expected to participate in the American College Application Campaign’s **#WhyApply** effort that expands access to college degrees.



### STRATEGY #3 ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

**48%** of college applicants DID submit test scores in 2022  
source: Common App

#### Have a score ready for students to submit.

Just because test-optional institutions don't require applicants to submit scores doesn't mean they won't consider them if submitted. Continue to help students stand out in a sea of college applicants. With test-optional policies at the higher education institutions changing each season, having a score—whether they use it or not—for admission helps students stand out.

- Show readiness for college-level work verified by benchmark performance.
- Highlight STEM achievement (ACT score exclusive).
- Apply for institutional scholarships.



### STRATEGY #4 SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN APPLICATIONS

**5 Billion** dollars is available in private merit-based scholarships  
source: ASCA

#### Set them up for financial success.

An ACT score can open doors for students and help them avoid financial burden in the future. If they take the test and score well, students will be eligible for thousands of dollars in scholarships just based on their scores.

- Earn merit scholarships offered by colleges and universities.
- Be eligible for private scholarships.
- Get a "full ride"—some schools offer full-tuition **scholarships** starting in the 22–25 ACT score range, but most full-ride scholarships require a 28 or higher. (Source: college aid pro)



### STRATEGY #5 ACCURATE COURSE PLACEMENT

**33%** of private scholarships are provided to STEM students

#### Show more accurate achievement for proper course placement.

Many colleges and universities encourage applicants to submit ACT scores for course placement or direct admission into certain majors—even if their general university policy is test optional. ACT results are standards-based and can often be submitted for math, English, and STEM prerequisites, avoiding additional placement testing.

- Inform advanced course placement.
- Use as a required placement test.
- Save freshmen time and money while avoiding course drop and adds.



Learn more about these and other strategies for using ACT scores at the K-12 professionals resources page.

[act.org/k12resources](https://act.org/k12resources)

