The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

American Indian Students

ACT®

CIEA

Dear colleagues,

For Native American students and their communities, college and career preparedness is more important than ever before. The benefits of educational achievement directly translate into meaningful careers and economic development opportunities for individuals and communities. According to the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, between 1973 and 2020, the percentage of jobs that require education and training beyond high school will have more than doubled, from 28% of jobs in 1973 to 65% in 2020. Clearly, the number of jobs that will require postsecondary training and education is large and growing.

On behalf of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and ACT, we hope you will use the following information to support educators and tribal communities in identifying and addressing specific student needs. As the cost of tuition and fees continues to rise and becomes an increasingly large factor in decisions about whether to go to college and where to attend, Native students and their families must carefully prepare and choose high school coursework that ensures readiness for both college and career success. For many American Indian and Alaska Native students, scholarship opportunities, fellowships, and grants will be absolutely critical to efforts to increase postsecondary access.

Data collected through assessments like the ACT® test play an essential role in identifying the critical programming necessary to help students become academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for the demands of college, and for better understanding factors that inhibit equitable access to college and careers.

The data in this report indicate that early interventions can make a substantial difference in outcomes for students from Native communities. Educational planning, monitoring, and interventions must be better aligned to help students realize their aspirations. These aligned efforts must begin early in a student's life and must continue throughout a student's educational career.

Moreover, college access can be strengthened by increasing the programmatic capacity of local agencies to design, implement, and operate more effective academic and evaluation practices that support Native student learning. Using and disaggregating data more effectively will increase the ability of scholastic support systems to positively affect Native student achievement, increase access to resources for college and careers, and strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-determination by developing the tribal leadership of tomorrow.

Through NIEA's partnership with ACT, driven by our similar missions and values, we hope this research provides greater insights on how institutions and programs can better help all students find success in college and careers. While this report sheds light on the successes and struggles faced by Native students, it also illustrates the potential impact that specific coursework has on college and career readiness. By using these data to close the gap between aspirations and reality, we can work together to address the needs of vulnerable students through innovative programming and services designed to increase student success.

Marten Roorda
CEO, ACT

Ahniwake Rose
Executive Director,
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American Indian Students

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2015 is the annual report from ACT 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, tribal 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. Social 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 and career success. 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 Native American 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, tribes, 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[1]

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

- Are your American Indian students graduating from high school prepared for college and career?
- Are enough of your American Indian 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 to improve our current education policies and practices for students to persist toward college and career readiness. 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—American Indian Students

Key Findings	Implications	Recommendations
Academic readiness • Most students are not academically ready for college • This is unchanged since 2011 • Most students are not close to being academically ready See graphs on pp. 6–7	**Individuals** • Many students will have limited postsecondary education opportunities • Students who attend postsecondary institutions with limited academic preparation are at risk to drop out **Institutions** • Increased number of students attend postsecondary institutions unaware of expectations	• Review existing policies to determine the differences across institutions/systems that require students to take remedial courses • Develop partnerships between secondary and postsecondary institutions to align academic expectations
Academic readiness and race/ethnicity • Ethnicity/race and readiness are related; American Indian/Alaska Native students are less likely to be academically ready than are students from most other groups across all subject areas See graphs on pp. 8–9	**Individuals** • Many students will struggle to succeed in postsecondary education, regardless of subject • Many students are required to register for remedial coursework **Institutions** • Potentially lower graduation rates for remediated students	• Increase access to rigorous coursework • Establish academic support systems for students to meet rigorous coursework requirements in high school
Core course taking and readiness • Students who take a core high school curriculum are more likely to be academically ready • Readiness rates for American Indian/Alaska Native students remain low regardless of core course taking See graph on p. 10	**Individuals** • Even most students who take a core curriculum will struggle to succeed in a postsecondary environment **Institutions** • Limited access to resources increases barriers to rigorous academic courses • Hardships related to student preparedness can cause effective teachers to leave rural or isolated school systems	• Align high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements • Create mentoring or induction programs to provide personalized attention for new teachers • Collaborate with colleges/universities to support professional learning and growth
A look at STEM • Ethnicity/race and readiness are related for students with an interest in STEM fields See graph on p. 10	**Individuals** • Many students with an interest in STEM fields will struggle academically in postsecondary institutions • Secondary schools are not equipped instructionally or academically to prepare students for postsecondary STEM programs **Institutions** • STEM majors missing American Indian/Alaska Native students	• Partner with colleges/universities to offer distance learning curriculum and technology for STEM fields • Increase secondary program funding to support student interests in STEM majors
Postsecondary aspirations • Most students aspire to some postsecondary education See graph on p. 14	**Individuals** • Many American Indian/Alaska Native students are highly motivated, seeking out postsecondary opportunities for which they may be ill-prepared academically **Institutions** • Student success is based on academic preparedness and their resiliency	• Create supportive, positive institutional experiences that strengthen a student's self-efficacy to overcome at-risk factors • Provide effective academic advising and workshops to meet student needs
College enrollment • Academic readiness and college enrollment are related; less prepared students have limited postsecondary education opportunities See graph on p. 16	**Individuals** • Most American Indian/Alaska Native students are likely to enroll in a two-year postsecondary educational institution **Institutions** • Students spend more time and money to complete a two- or four-year degree	• Establish a success plan with high school students so they become aware of necessary skills and knowledge needed to earn a postsecondary degree

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American Indian Students

Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- 14,711 American Indian high school 2015 graduates took the ACT.

- From 2011–2015, the number of ACT test-taking American Indian graduates has decreased by about 2%.

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested American Indian High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject
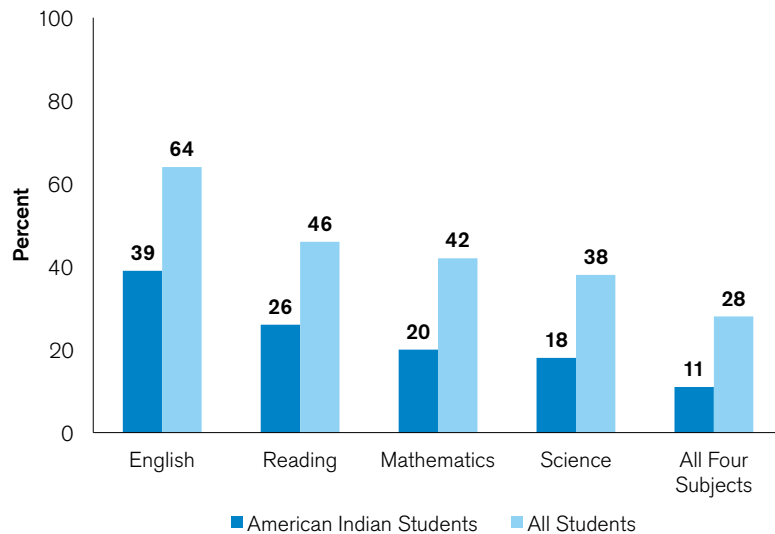
Percent of 2011–2015 ACT-Tested American Indian High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks
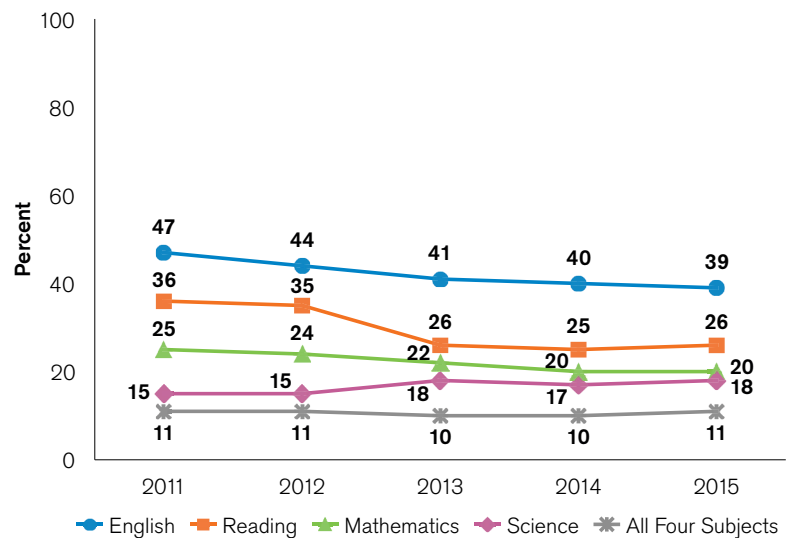
Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Near Attainment of College and Career Readiness

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

Below Benchmark by 3+ Points
Within 2 Points of Benchmark
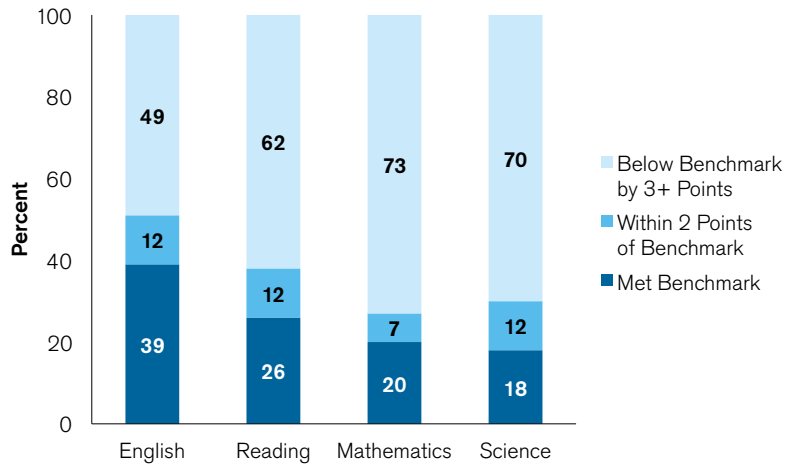Met Benchmark

Subject	Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	Within 2 Points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	49	12	39
Reading	62	12	26
Mathematics	73	7	20
Science	70	12	18

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

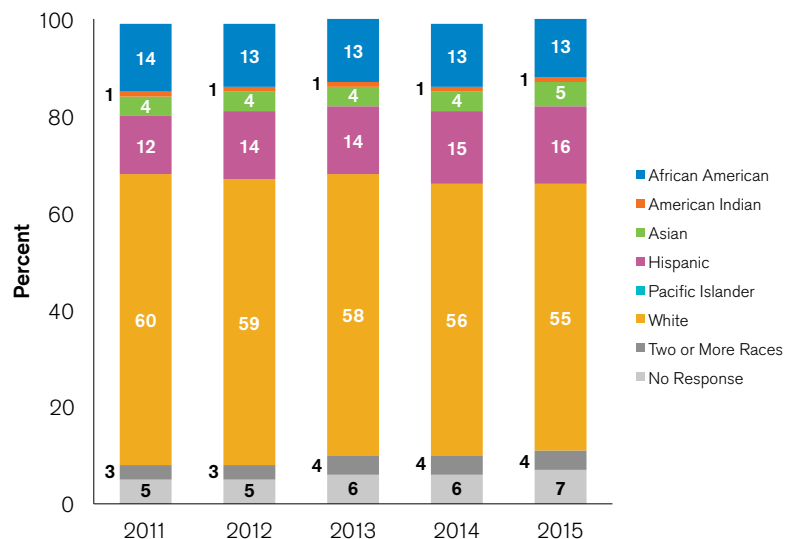| Benchmarks Met	American Indian Students	All Students
0	54	31
1	16	15
2	11	14
3	8	12
4	11	28

ACT
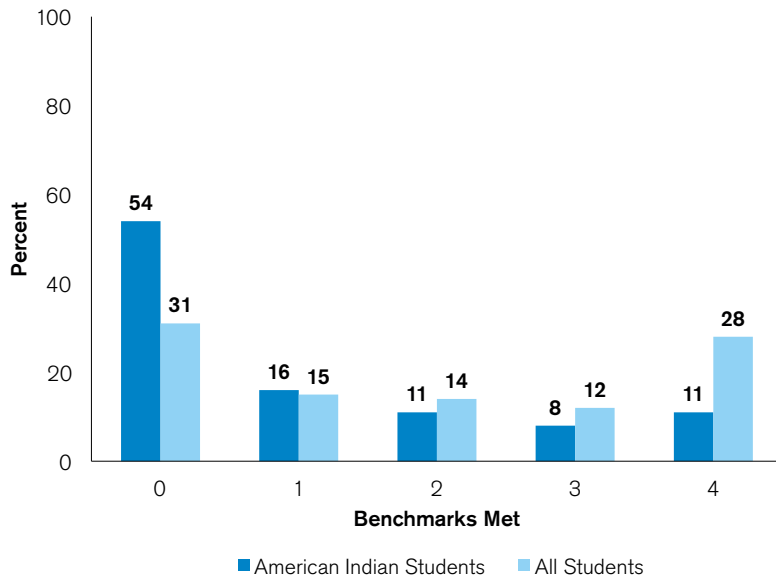
American Indian Students
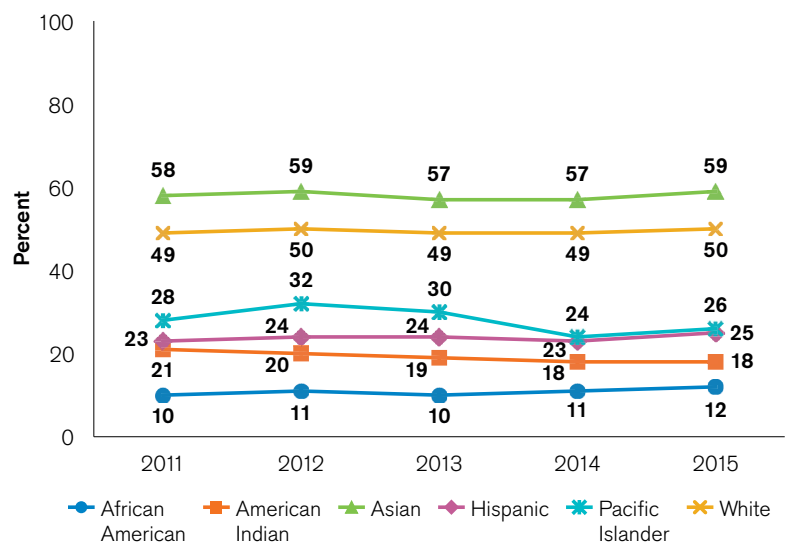
Participation and Opportunity

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*

Legend:
- African American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races
- No Response

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*
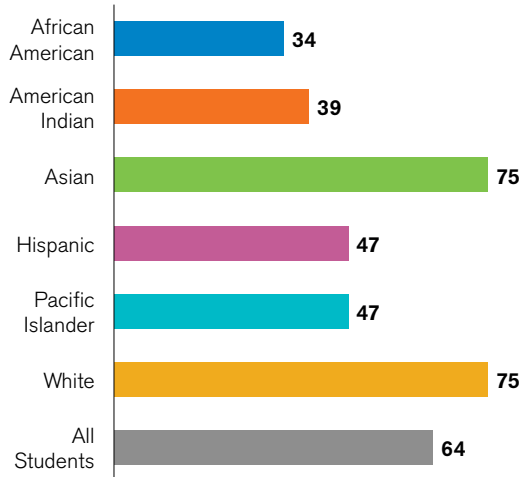

Legend:
- African American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White

* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.[2]
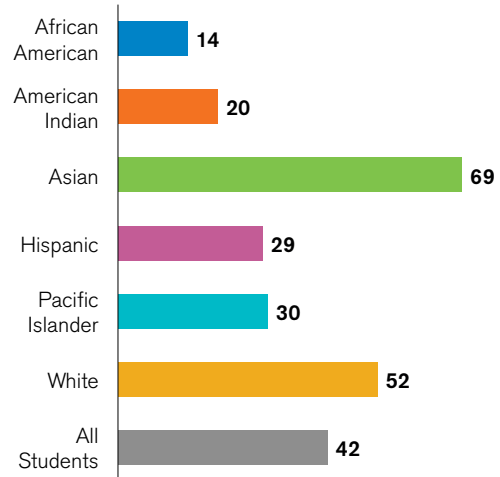
Participation and Opportunity by Subject

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

English

Group	Percent
African American	34
American Indian	39
Asian	75
Hispanic	47
Pacific Islander	47
White	75
All Students	64

Mathematics

Group	Percent
African American	14
American Indian	20
Asian	69
Hispanic	29
Pacific Islander	30
White	52
All Students	42

Reading

Group	Percent
African American	19
American Indian	26
Asian	57
Hispanic	31
Pacific Islander	31
White	56
All Students	46

Science

Group	Percent
African American	12
American Indian	18
Asian	57
Hispanic	23
Pacific Islander	25
White	48
All Students	38

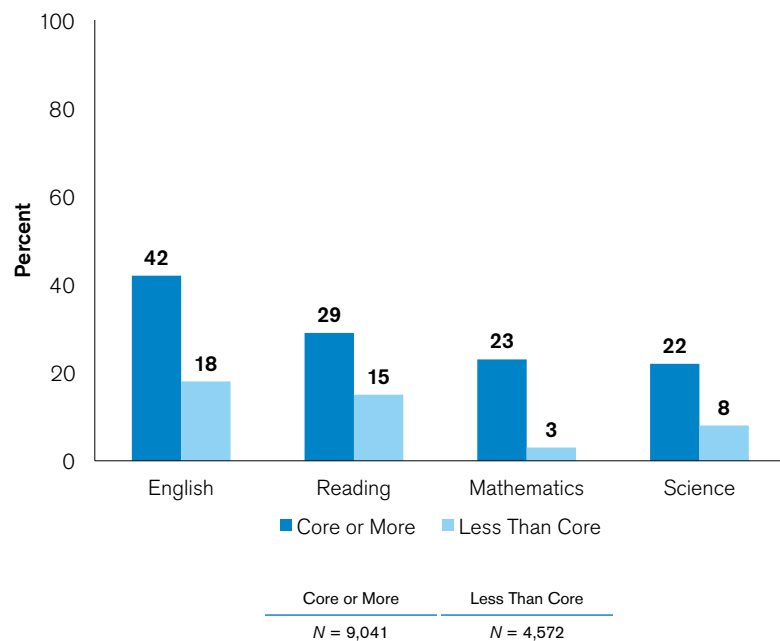| African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	All Students
N = 252,566	N = 14,711	N = 87,499	N = 299,920	N = 6,090	N = 1,057,803	N = 1,924,436

* Race/ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated US Department of Education reporting requirements.[2]

American Indian Students

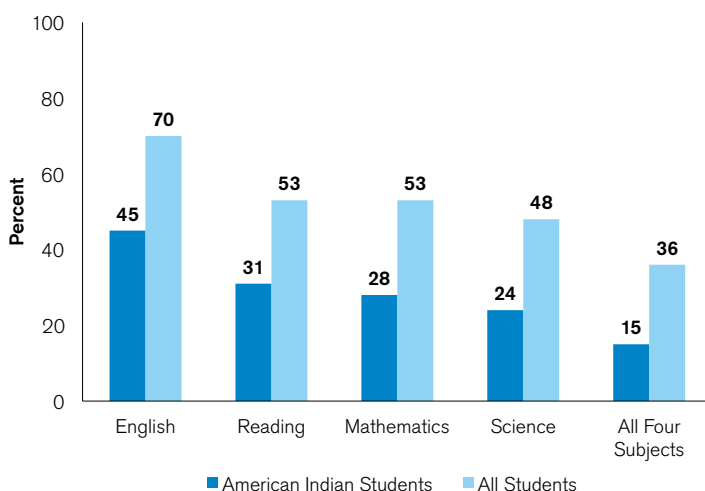## Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance

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

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested American Indian High School Graduates in Core or More vs. Less Than Core Courses Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject

	English	Reading	Mathematics	Science
Core or More	42	29	23	22
Less Than Core	18	15	3	8

■ Core or More ■ Less Than Core

Core or More	Less Than Core
N = 9,041	N = 4,572

A Look at STEM

Percent of 2015 ACT-Tested American Indian High School Graduates with an Interest in STEM Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject (N = 5,255)

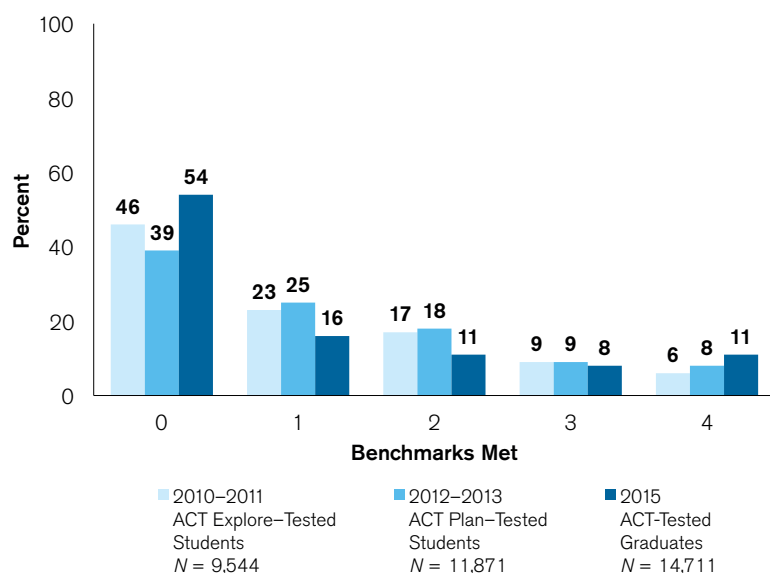|	English	Reading	Mathematics	Science	All Four Subjects
American Indian Students	45	31	28	24	15
All Students	70	53	53	48	36

■ American Indian Students ■ All Students

This chart compares ACT College Readiness Benchmark attainment for 2015 American Indian 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.
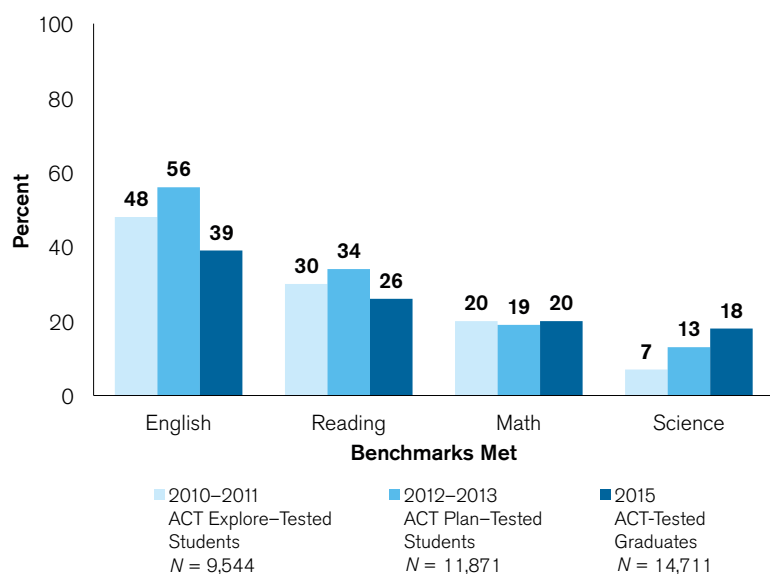
Early Preparation

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

2010–2011
ACT Explore–Tested
Students
N = 9,544

2012–2013
ACT Plan–Tested
Students
N = 11,871

2015
ACT-Tested
Graduates
N = 14,711

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

2010–2011
ACT Explore–Tested
Students
N = 9,544

2012–2013
ACT Plan–Tested
Students
N = 11,871

2015
ACT-Tested
Graduates
N = 14,711

American Indian 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
Undecided	1,986	42	29	21	19	10
No Major Indicated	1,370	17	11	7	7	3
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	768	37	22	13	12	6
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	435	67	50	48	42	30
Business Administration and Management, General	311	40	27	23	17	9
Mechanical Engineering	283	40	26	33	25	18
Criminology	249	34	20	16	13	6
Law (Pre-Law)	231	52	33	25	22	13
Medical Assisting	221	22	14	9	6	3
Athletic Training	213	33	22	17	17	8
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	203	47	32	23	20	11
Graphic Design	152	33	25	13	18	7
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	140	56	36	42	34	22
Accounting	137	46	31	33	25	17
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	135	47	36	27	25	16
Biology, General	133	56	40	38	32	25
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	130	56	35	21	20	12
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	126	51	30	29	22	13
Nursing, Practical/Vocational (LPN)	125	23	11	5	4	2
Hospital/Facilities Administration	123	29	22	8	7	5
Music, General	120	37	23	16	13	10
Art, General	115	30	17	11	10	6
Computer Science and Programming	115	57	48	43	43	28
Health-Related Professions and Services, General	114	49	36	22	22	11
Physical Therapy Assisting	110	30	15	15	7	4
Elementary Education	107	48	30	19	19	11
Health/Medical Technology, General	102	52	31	22	18	13
Psychology, General	102	57	33	25	19	10
Marine/Aquatic Biology	100	51	41	24	22	9
Music, Performance	96	44	27	17	15	13

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[4], as well as the percentages of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. Since only students who completed the ACT Interest Inventory during ACT registration are included here, this table shows results for a subset of the students in the prior table. These planned majors vary considerably in the percentage of students displaying good interest-major fit and meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. The results highlight the importance of examining multiple predictors of college success and affirm the value of a holistic view of college readiness.

Major Name	N Fit	% Fit	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four
Undecided			No profile available				
No Major Indicated			No profile available				
Nursing, Registered (BS/RN)	200	26	48	26	19	13	8
Medicine (Pre-Medicine)	194	45	71	53	53	45	33
Business Administration and Management, General	76	24	53	32	33	25	13
Mechanical Engineering	93	33	41	26	38	25	18
Criminology	24	10	33	17	4	13	0
Law (Pre-Law)	62	27	66	45	31	29	18
Medical Assisting	61	28	18	18	8	7	3
Athletic Training	33	15	30	27	12	21	12
Physical Therapy (Pre-Physical Therapy)	55	27	56	31	18	20	13
Graphic Design	60	39	33	23	10	17	3
Engineering (Pre-Engineering), General	57	41	54	39	42	32	19
Accounting	68	50	43	34	29	19	13
Veterinary Medicine (Pre-Veterinarian)	61	45	46	34	25	23	16
Biology, General	53	40	57	42	32	30	23
Psychology, Clinical and Counseling	21	16	67	38	19	10	10
Pharmacy (Pre-Pharmacy)	50	40	52	30	30	22	16
Nursing, Practical/Vocational (LPN)	25	20	36	16	4	8	4
Hospital/Facilities Administration	21	17	29	29	0	5	0
Music, General	55	46	44	25	20	13	9
Art, General	39	34	51	26	15	13	8
Computer Science and Programming	38	33	55	45	39	45	29
Health-Related Professions and Services, General			No profile available				
Physical Therapy Assisting	22	20	32	23	14	9	9
Elementary Education	14	13	57	21	14	7	7
Health/Medical Technology, General	43	42	51	40	30	26	19
Psychology, General	22	22	68	36	36	18	18
Marine/Aquatic Biology	50	50	60	38	26	26	10
Music, Performance	55	57	40	22	15	13	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.
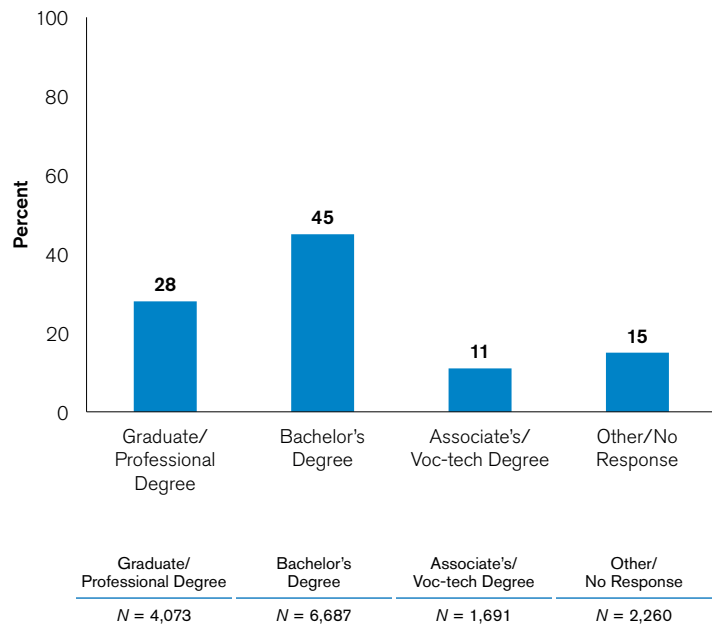
American Indian Students

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 American Indian High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations

Graduate/ Professional Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Associate's/ Voc-tech Degree	Other/ No Response
N = 4,073	N = 6,687	N = 1,691	N = 2,260

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
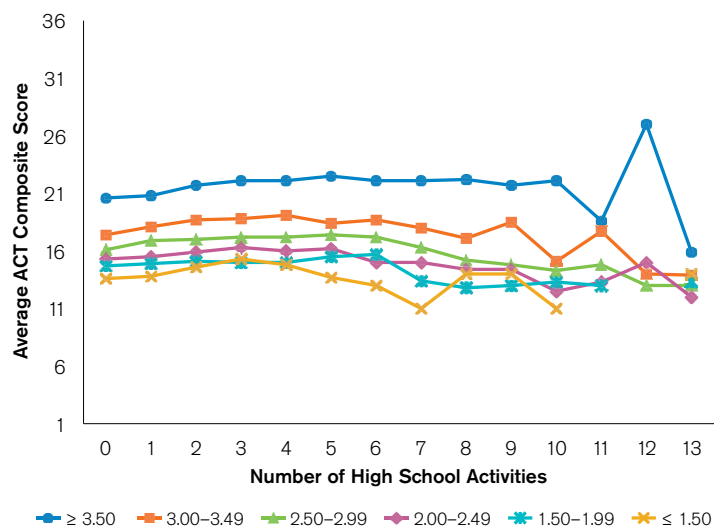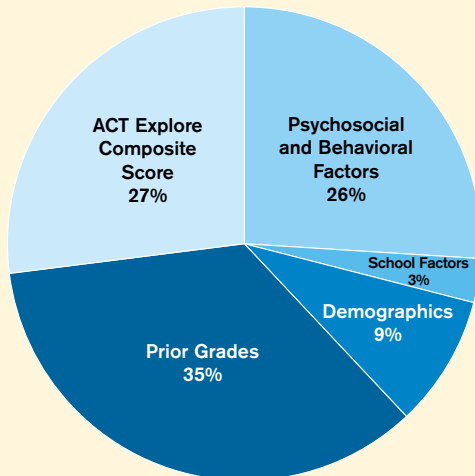

Note: In some cases, high activity counts may represent low numbers of students, giving rise to missing and outlying data points.

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
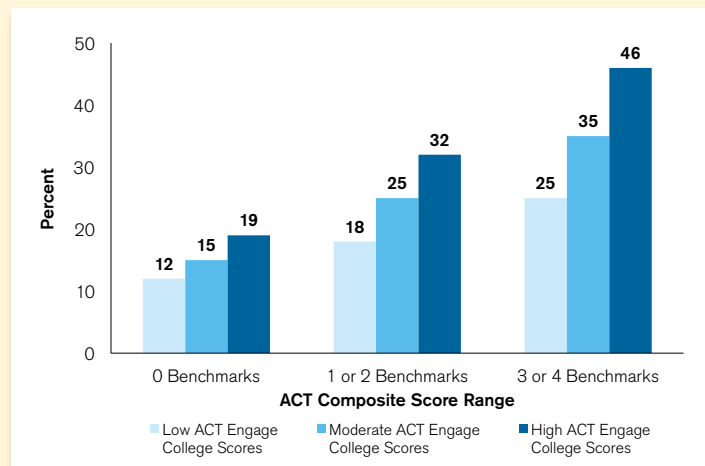
Academic behaviors also matter for college outcomes. Across all ACT College Readiness Benchmark levels, students with higher ACT Engage College scores (based on the mean percentile scores of ACT Engage scales Academic Discipline, Commitment to College, and Social Connection) attained a postsecondary 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

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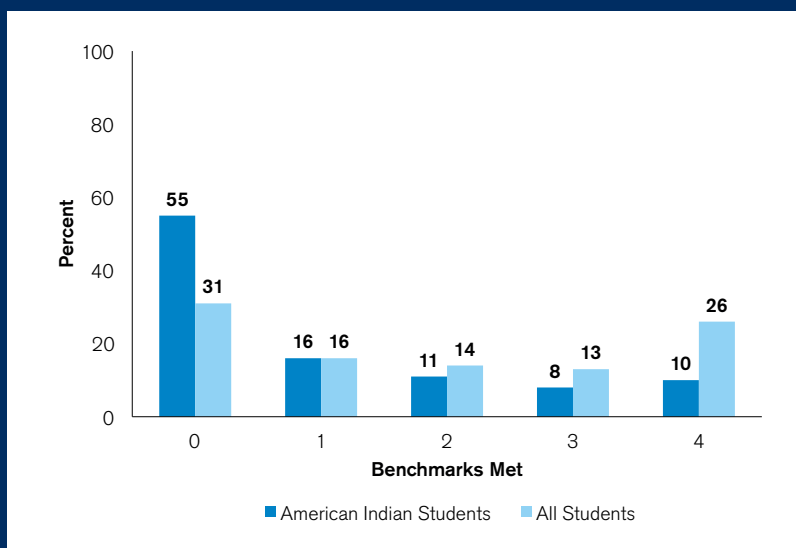
Percent of 2014 ACT-Tested American Indian High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained and Fall 2014 College Enrollment Status
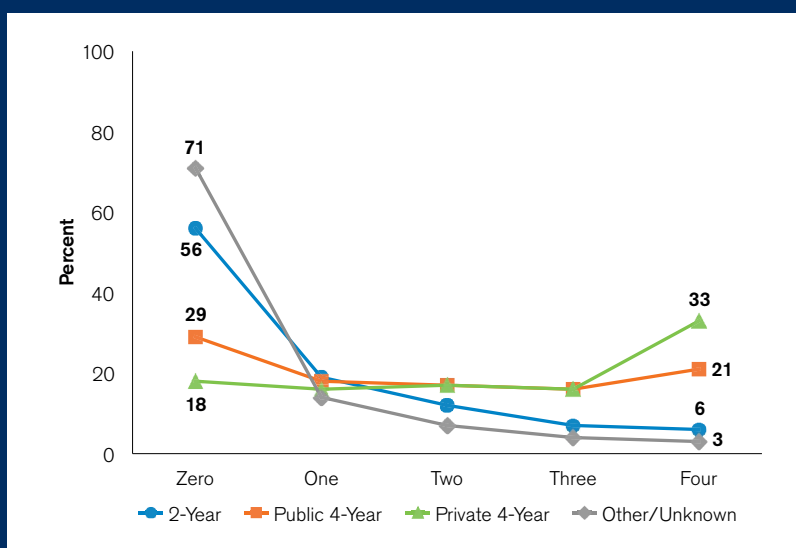
Policies and Practices

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 (**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 offers the following recommendations as a call to action for the entire education community: students; parents; educators; and policymakers at the district, state, tribal, and federal levels.

Data Use

Ensure that student data collected are appropriately safeguarded and used responsibly, balancing data's potential to help students achieve education and workplace success with the responsibility to ensure students' privacy and confidentiality. ACT takes steps to protect the privacy of student data and encourages others to do so, as well. The science behind the ACT assessments—the evidence base and ongoing research—relies on our ability to collect and analyze student assessment data and is critical in answering the key question of what matters most in helping people to succeed in education and work. Further, some student data are used for the ACT Educational Opportunity Service, an opt-in program that provides students—including many underserved and first-generation college students—with information about educational, scholarship, career, and financial aid opportunities. We call on policymakers and tribal leadership to seek innovative solutions that secure student data and at the same time provide expanded opportunities for students and advance educational research.

System Alignment

Encourage education system alignment so that *all* components work together. In a climate conditioned to the strict accountability mandates in the No Child Left Behind Act, alignment seems to refer only to how assessments align to particular standards, and in many cases has forced educators to think only about test scores. True education system alignment means that all components—standards, curricula, assessments, and instruction—work together to achieve desired goals (Ananda, 2003; Resnick, Rothman, Slattery, and Vranek, 2003; Webb, 1997b). State, tribal, and federal policymakers must prioritize funding to ensure that the necessary pieces are in place to help all students meet college and career readiness standards.

Teacher Support and Development

Develop robust teacher evaluation systems. Efforts to safeguard and use data appropriately and to fully align the education system are moot if we do not invest in one of the most important components of student learning: teachers. As stated in our K–12 education platform, ACT applauds states' and districts' development and use of robust teacher evaluation systems that include multiple measures of performance to identify effective teaching and focus on professional development. All teacher evaluations should include classroom observations, parent and student surveys, and measures of student growth on assessments, and teachers should be involved in the creation and rollout of these systems.

Strengthen admissions criteria for teacher education programs and offer professional development to new teachers. We must ensure that the admissions criteria for teacher education programs are rigorous and produce high-quality candidates armed with the tools—sound instructional methods, content mastery, and data literacy—to teach effectively. Once in the classroom, teachers must have the opportunity to participate in professional development opportunities that enhance their work.

Increase teacher compensation. Given that teachers are the most important school-based factor in student achievement, if we truly want the best teaching force in the world, teachers must be compensated correspondingly. Doing so demonstrates investment not only in teachers but in students.

It is time to take these and other meaningful steps to solve the issues hindering student success. ACT sincerely hopes 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. ACT stands 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.

■ Statewide Partnership
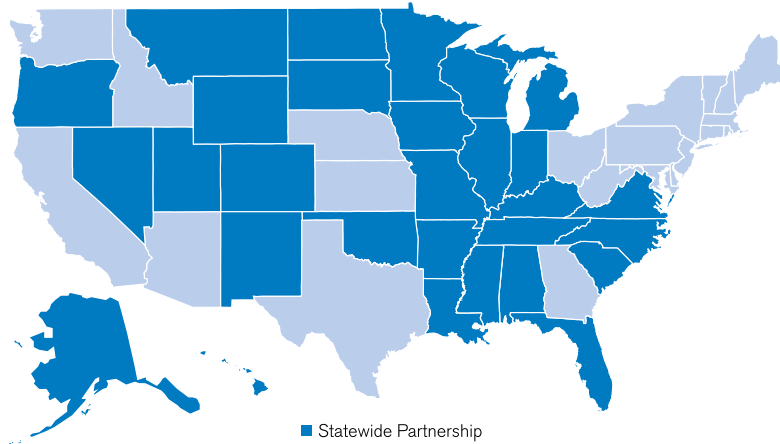
State administration of ACT programs and services:

- Increases opportunities for minority and middle- to low-income students.
- Promotes student educational and career planning.
- Reduces the need for remediation.

- Correlates with increases in college enrollment, persistence, and student success.
- Aligns with state standards.

ACT Aspire 3rd- through 8th-grade students	**ACT** Explore 8th- and 9th-grade students	**ACT** Plan 10th-grade students	The**ACT** 11th- and 12th-grade students	**ACT** QualityCore 8th- through 12th-grade students	**ACT** WorkKeys 11th- and 12th-grade students	★ ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™
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
8th- through 10th-grade students	Tennessee	Oklahoma	Hawaii		Louisiana	Iowa / Tennessee
Alabama	Utah	Tennessee	Illinois		Michigan	Kentucky / Utah
Arkansas		Utah	Kentucky		North Carolina	Louisiana / Virginia
Hawaii			Louisiana		North Dakota	Minnesota / Wisconsin
Wisconsin			Minnesota		South Carolina	Missouri
Wyoming			Mississippi		Wisconsin	New Mexico
			Missouri		Wyoming	North Carolina
			Montana			
			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**.

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 American Indian Students*, accessible at **www.act.org/readiness/2015**. With the exception of the top graph on page 6, data related to students who did not provide information or who responded "Other" to questions about gender, race/ethnicity, high school curriculum, etc., are not presented explicitly.

2. The 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.

3. Data reflect subject-specific curriculum. For example, English "Core or More" results pertain to students who took at least four years of English, regardless of courses taken in other subject areas.

4. The interest-major fit score measures the strength of the relationship between the student's profile of ACT Interest Inventory scores and the profile of students' interests in the major shown. Interest profiles for majors are based on a national sample of undergraduate students with a declared major and a GPA of at least 2.0. Major was determined in the third year for students in 4-year colleges and in the second year for students in 2-year colleges. Interest-major fit scores range from 0–99, with values of 80 and higher indicating good fit.

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**.

ACT®

About NIEA

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is the nation's premier advocacy organization working to advance comprehensive education opportunities for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Formed by Native educators in 1969 to encourage a national discourse on education, NIEA adheres to the organization's founding principles—to bring educators together to explore ways to improve schools and the educational systems serving Native children; to promote the maintenance and continued development of language and cultural programs; and to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and decision makers. Through advocacy, capacity building, and education, NIEA helps Native students and their communities succeed.

For more information, visit **www.niea.org**.

A copy of this report can be found at
www.act.org/readiness/2015