



A PROFILE OF 2012 ACT-TESTED  
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

# College Choice Report

## Part 2

Enrollment Patterns

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.

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



ACT has measured the academic achievement of 11th- and 12th-grade students since 1959, their career aspirations since 1969, and their academic preparation in high school since 1985. Since 1992, and every three to five years thereafter, ACT conducts the **ACT National Curriculum Survey®**, in which we survey thousands of high school and college educators to pinpoint the knowledge and skills needed for first-year college coursework.

ACT is the only organization with decades of empirical information showing what happens to high school graduates once they get to college or to work and how they can maximize success—based on their preparation from kindergarten through high school. This unique information is an invaluable resource as ACT works closely with states, school districts, and postsecondary institutions to transform them into better-aligned P–16 education systems.

---

This *College Choice Report* is part of a report series that focuses on the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012. Other reports in this series are *The Condition of College & Career Readiness*, which highlights the academic readiness of high school graduates to enter college or career training, and *The Reality of College Readiness*, which highlights the relationships among readiness, college enrollment, and retention.

---

# College Choice Report—Part 2

## Enrollment Patterns

### *Expanded Content and New Format*

Last year for the first time, ACT released the *Enrollment Management Trends Report* to provide enrollment managers and college admissions personnel with the enrollment patterns of the ACT-tested graduating class of 2011. After receiving positive feedback on the first report and requests for more information, we have expanded the content of the report this year to include information spanning multiple stages of the college choice process. Given this expanded content, we have elected to change the name of the report to more accurately describe it, and we have divided the report into two distinct parts:

- *College Choice Report—Part 1: Preferences and Prospects*
- *College Choice Report—Part 2: Enrollment Patterns*

*Part 1* of this report focused on the self-reported college preferences and ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) participation rates of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012. *Part 2* focuses on the college enrollment of these ACT-tested high school graduates and addresses such topics as student mobility and migration patterns, the extent to which students' college choices match their preferences, and the enrollment rates of students selected through EOS.

In addition to the printed national report, this year we are providing interactive charts and maps online that allow you to view and compare information aggregated by state and region of the country. This new format gives you some opportunity to customize your view of the report content to better address your information needs. To view this content, go to [www.act.org/collegechoice](http://www.act.org/collegechoice).

### *How to Use This Report*

This report builds on a foundation of knowledge about the academic readiness of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 as presented in *The Condition of College & Career Readiness* ([www.act.org/readiness/2012](http://www.act.org/readiness/2012)). An important conclusion of the *Condition* report is that far too many high school graduates are not prepared for success in

college and career as defined by their attainment of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. We encourage you to read through the *Condition* report to have a better context for interpreting the findings of this report.

A little more than half of the graduating class of 2012 took the ACT® college readiness assessment during high school. Whether you are searching for prospective students locally or in other parts of the country, a better understanding of the preferences and college choice behaviors of ACT-tested students can improve your marketing and recruitment strategies. The information presented in this report and in the accompanying online charts and maps can provide insights to inform discussions on your campus about the desired characteristics and locations of prospective students and your strategies for recruiting them. For those colleges that participate in EOS, the information provided in this report can help you to establish or refine your selection criteria to create more efficient student searches. Over time, this report can also serve as a guide to help you gauge the effectiveness of your search, marketing, and recruitment strategies.

### *Sources*

*Part 2* of this report focuses on ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 who subsequently enrolled in a US college. College enrollment for this report is determined by matching the test records of the ACT-tested graduating class with college enrollment records provided to The National Student Clearinghouse®. For the ACT-tested graduating class of 2012, 70% of students were identified by The National Student Clearinghouse as having enrolled in college during fall 2012.

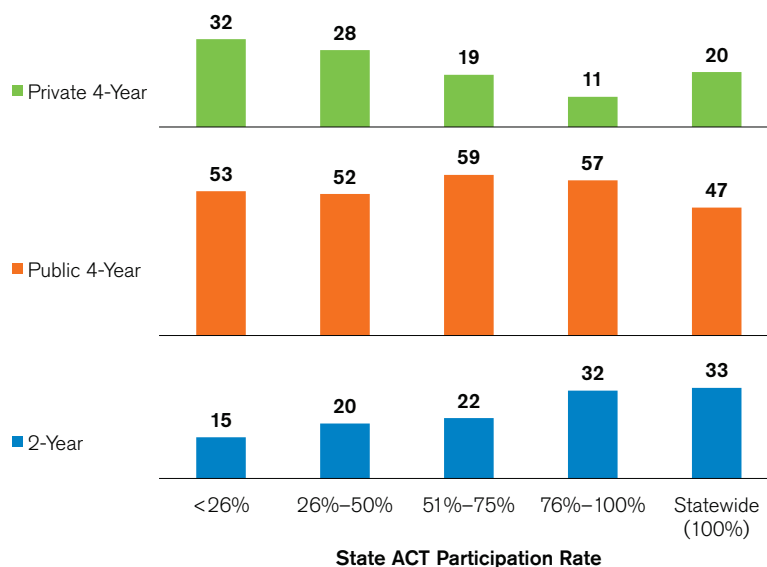
Information in this report—such as the students' background characteristics, grade level at time of testing, ACT scores, college preferences, and participation in EOS—is collected when students register for and take the ACT. College characteristics are provided by The National Student Clearinghouse and are supplemented by information found in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

## Enrollment by College Type

Of the ACT-tested students who enroll in college, 24% attend a 2-year college, 54% attend a public 4-year college, and 22% attend a private 4-year college.

- With the exception of states that administer the ACT statewide, the majority of ACT-tested students attend a public 4-year college.
- The percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a 2-year college increases with state ACT participation rate.
- With the exception of states that administer the ACT statewide, the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a private 4-year college decreases as state ACT participation rate increases.

**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Enrolled in Different College Types by State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**

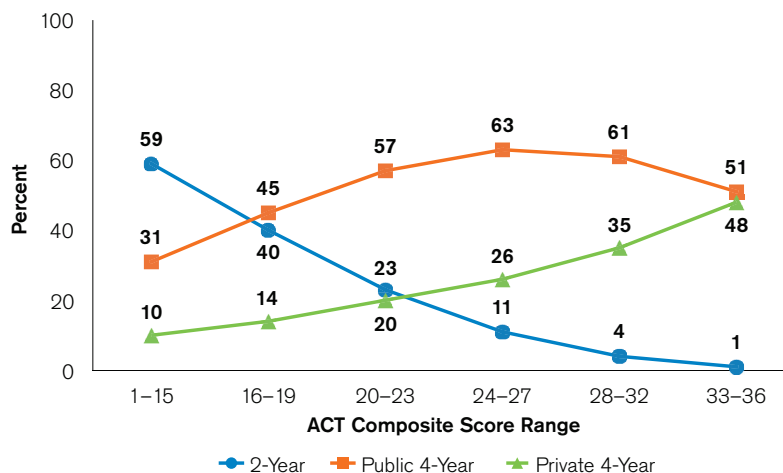


Graph reads: 20% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide attend a private 4-year college.

Note: Percentages within state ACT participation rate may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- As ACT Composite score increases, the percentage of students who attend a 2-year college decreases.
- In contrast, the percentage of students who attend a private 4-year college increases as ACT Composite score increases.
- The percentage of students who attend a public 4-year college peaks at an ACT Composite score range of 24–27 and then declines as ACT Composite score continues to increase.
- Only in the ACT Composite score range of 1–15 do the majority of students attend a 2-year college as opposed to a 4-year college.

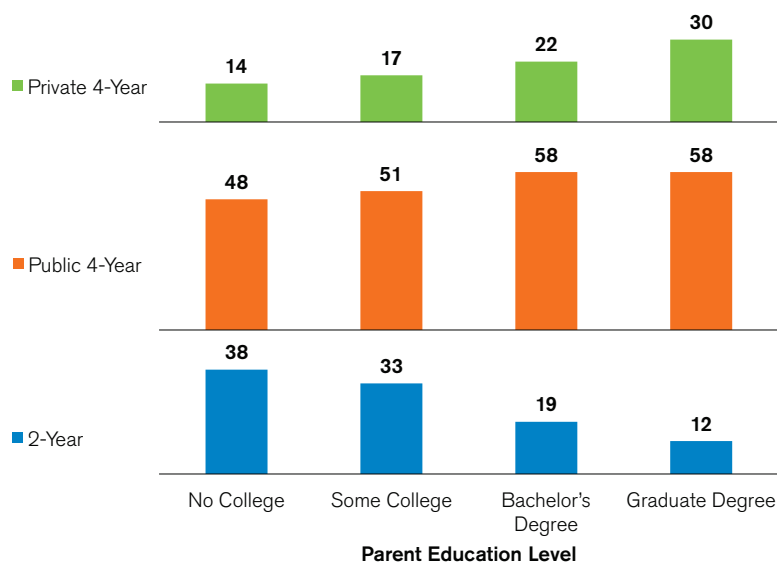
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Enrolled in Different College Types by ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 59% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 attend a 2-year college.

Note: Percentages within ACT Composite score range may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Enrolled in Different College Types by Parent Education Level, 2012

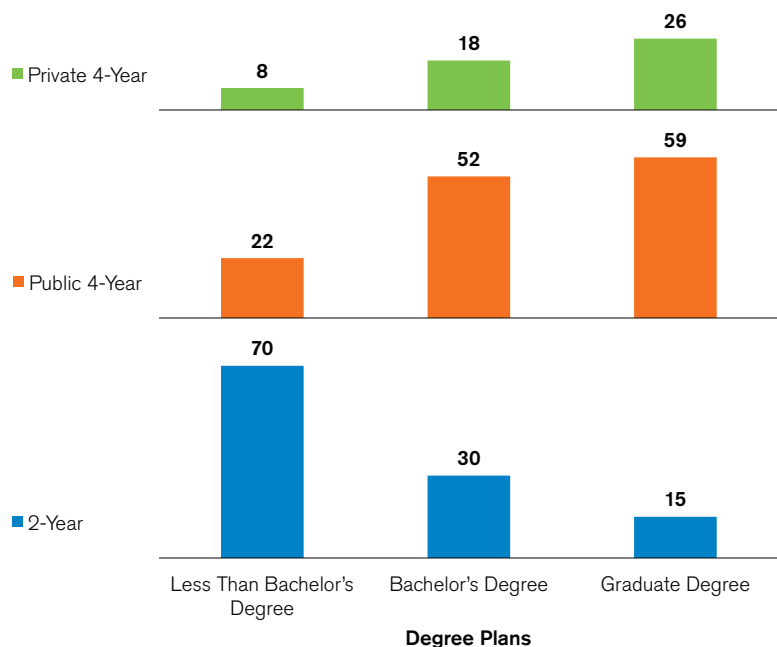


Graph reads: 58% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree attend a public 4-year college.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom parent education level is available. Percentages within parent education level may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- As parent education level increases, the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a 2-year college decreases.
- Conversely, the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a private 4-year college increases with parent education level.
- With the exception of first-generation college students—that is, students whose parents did not attend college—the majority of ACT-tested students attend a public 4-year college.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Enrolled in Different College Types by Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 26% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a graduate degree attend a private 4-year college.

Note: Based on 91% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom degree plans are available. Percentages within degree plans may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- A large majority of ACT-tested students who plan to obtain an associate's degree or an undergraduate certificate attend a 2-year college.
- In contrast, the majority of ACT-tested students who plan to obtain a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree attend a public 4-year college.
- As degree aspirations increase, so does the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a private 4-year college.

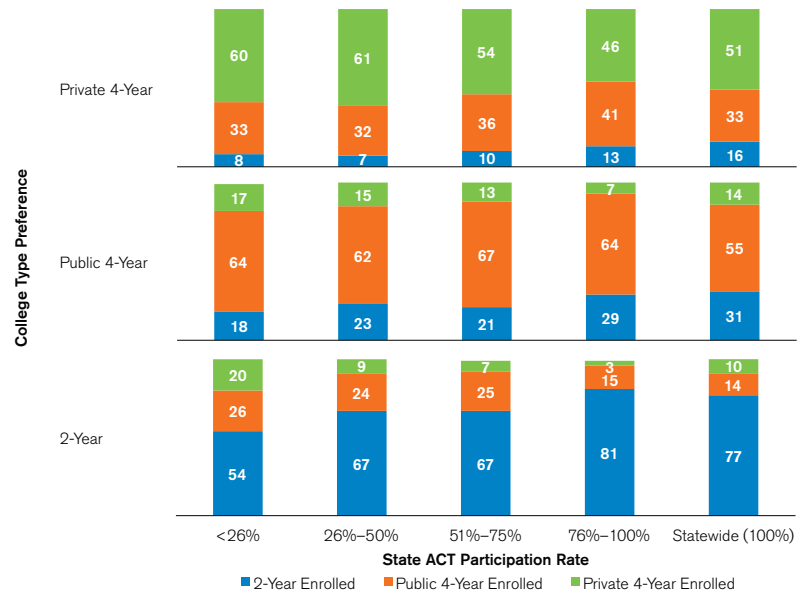
# College Type Preference Match

Among college-enrolled ACT-tested students, 73% with a 2-year college preference, 63% with a public 4-year college preference, and 56% with a private 4-year college preference attend a college that matches their preferred type.

- As state ACT participation rate increases, so does the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their 2-year college preference.
- Conversely, the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their private 4-year college preference decreases as state ACT participation rate increases.
- Statewide administration states are an exception to these patterns.

- As ACT Composite score increases, the share of students who attend a college that matches their 2-year college preference decreases.
- The share of students who attend a college that matches either their public or private 4-year college preference increases as ACT Composite score increases.

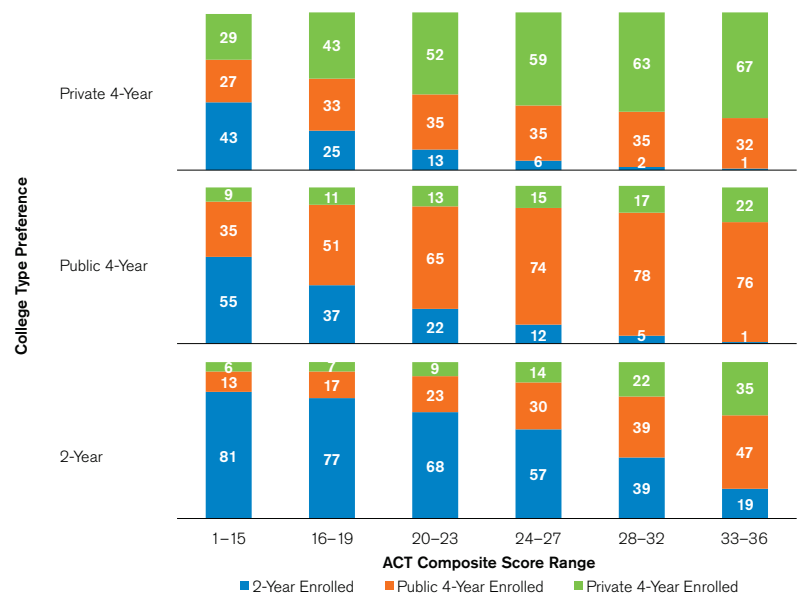
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled at Various College Types by College Type Preference and State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**



Graph reads: 31% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide who preferred to attend a public 4-year college attend a 2-year college instead.

Note: Based on 88% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom college type preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

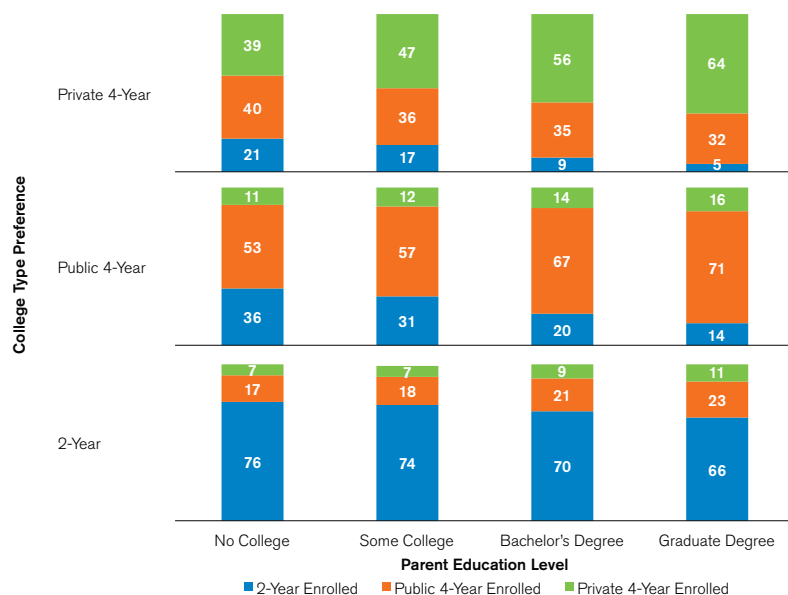
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled at Various College Types by College Type Preference and ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 43% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who preferred to attend a private 4-year college attend a 2-year college instead.

Note: Based on 88% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom college type preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled at Various College Types by College Type Preference and Parent Education Level, 2012

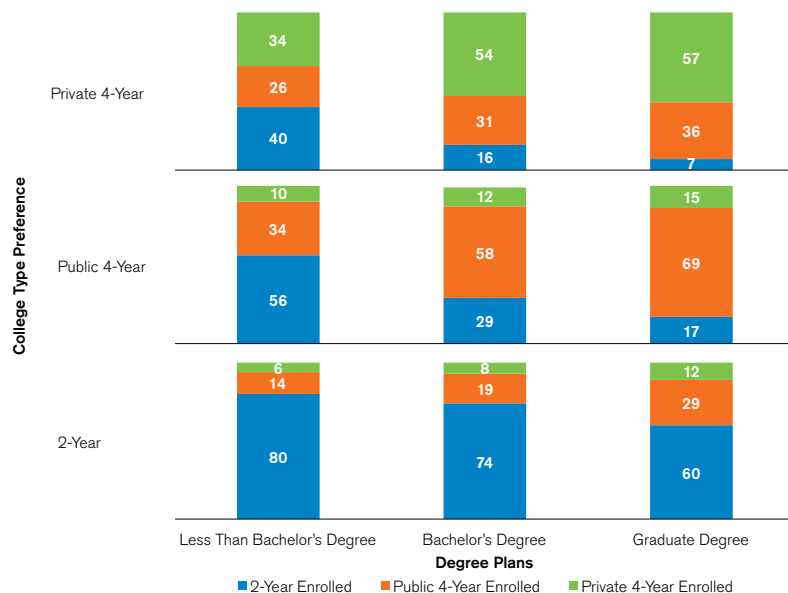


Graph reads: 21% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree and who preferred to attend a 2-year college attend a public 4-year college instead.

Note: Based on 81% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom college type preference and parent education level are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches either their public or private 4-year college preference increases with parent education level.
- The share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their 2-year college preference decreases as parent education level increases.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled at Various College Types by College Type Preference and Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 36% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a graduate degree and who preferred to attend a private 4-year college attend a public 4-year college instead.

Note: Based on 86% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom college type preference and degree plans are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

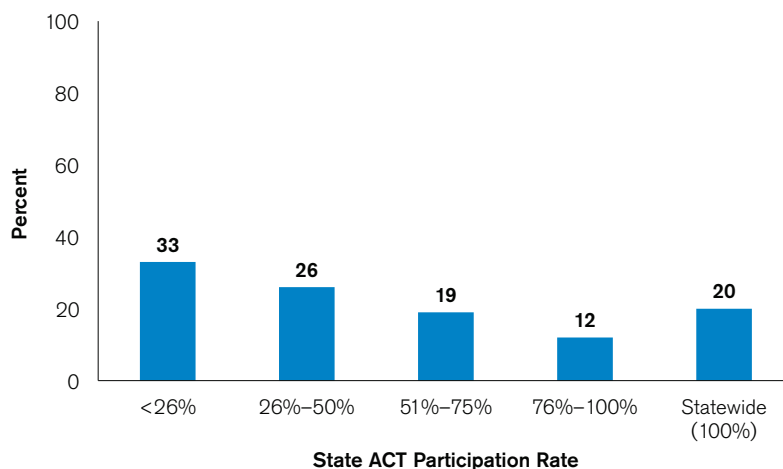
- As degree aspirations increase, the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their 2-year college preference decreases.
- The share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches either their public or private 4-year college preference increases with their degree aspirations.

## Enrollment by State

Of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 that enroll in college, 22% attend an out-of-state college, whereas 78% attend an in-state college.

- As state ACT participation rate increases, the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend college out of state decreases.
- An exception to this pattern is evident in states that administer the ACT statewide, where 1 out of 5 ACT-tested students attend college out of state.

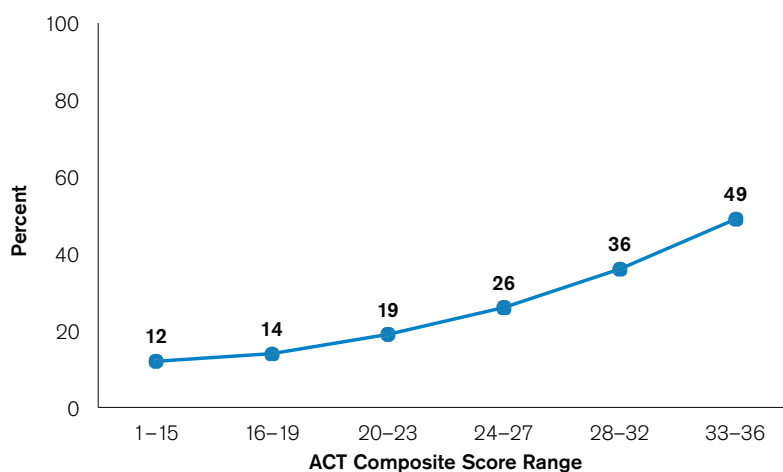
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Attending College Out of State by State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**



Graph reads: 20% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide attend an out-of-state college.

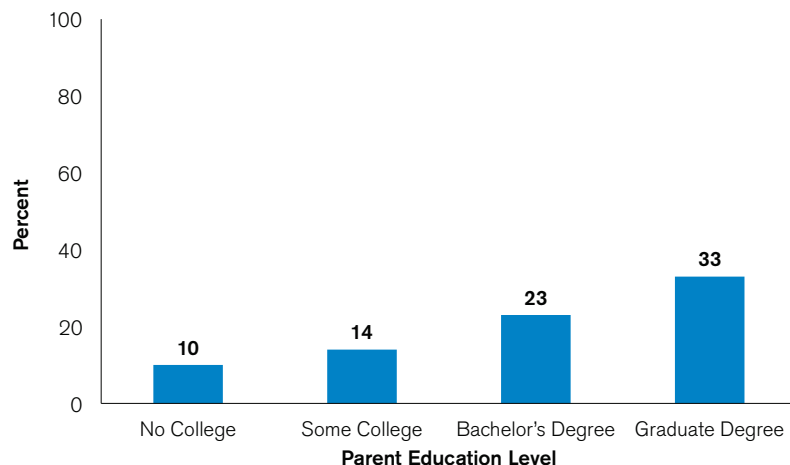
- The percentage of students who attend college out of state increases as ACT Composite score increases.
- Roughly half of all students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 33-36 attend an out-of-state college, compared with only 12% of students in the score range of 1-15.

**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Attending College Out of State by ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 26% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 24-27 attend an out-of-state college.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Attending College Out of State by Parent Education Level, 2012

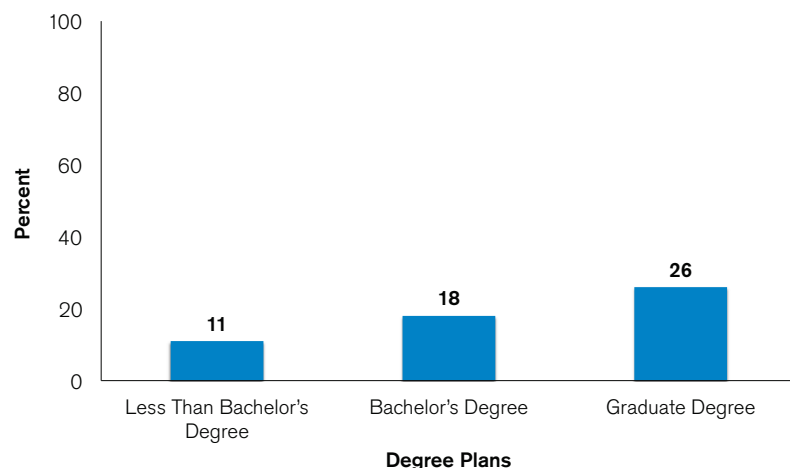


Graph reads: 23% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree attend an out-of-state college.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom parent education level is available.

- The percentage of ACT-tested students who attend an out-of-state college increases as parent education level increases.
- Among those ACT-tested high school graduates who have at least one parent with a graduate degree, 1 out of 3 attends college out of state.
- Among those ACT-tested first-generation college students, only 1 out of 10 attends an out-of-state college.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Attending College Out of State by Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 18% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a bachelor's degree attend an out-of-state college.

Note: Based on 91% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom degree plans are available.

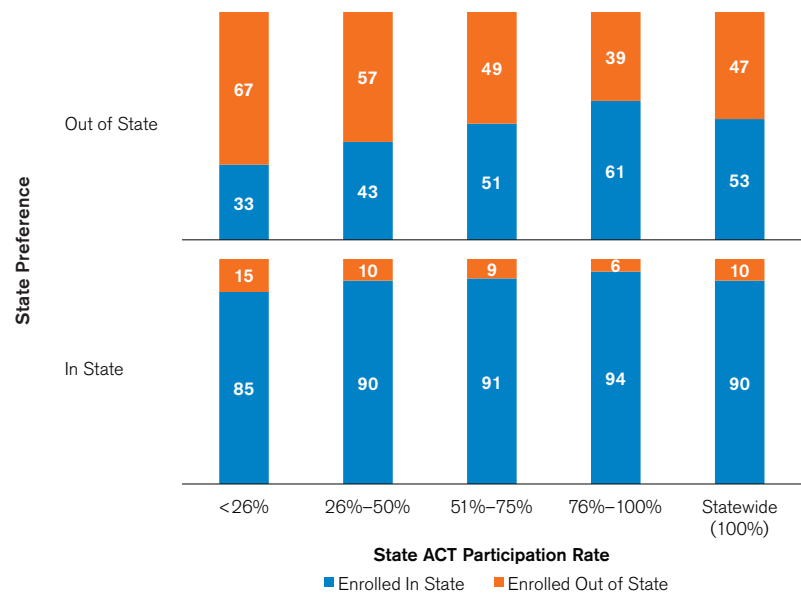
- As degree aspirations increase, so does the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend college out of state.
- Among ACT-tested students who plan to obtain an associate's degree or an undergraduate certificate, roughly 1 out of 10 attend college out of state.
- In contrast, roughly 1 out of 4 ACT-tested students who plan to obtain a graduate degree attend an out-of-state college.

# State Preference Match

Among college-enrolled ACT-tested students, 90% with an in-state college preference and 52% with an out-of-state college preference enrolled at a college that matches their preference.

- As state ACT participation rate increases, so does the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their in-state preference.
- Conversely, the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their out-of-state preference decreases as state ACT participation rate increases.
- Statewide administration states are an exception to these patterns.

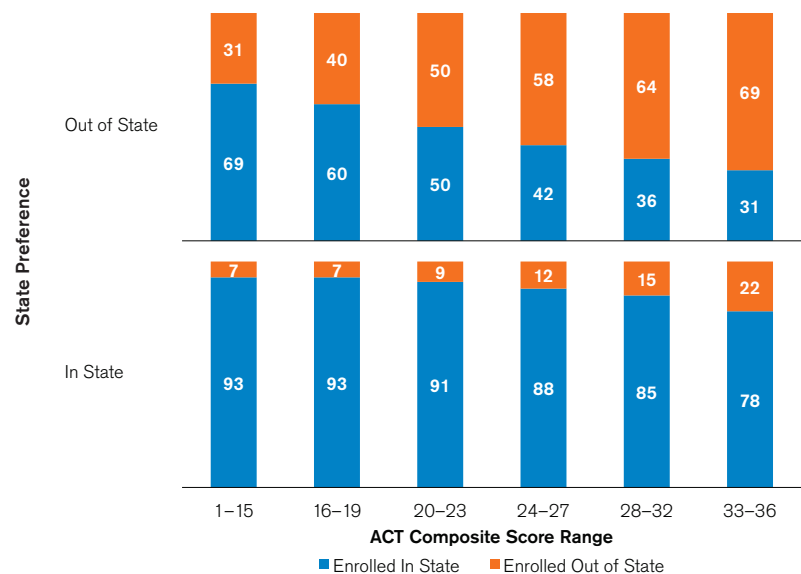
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled In State and Out of State by State Preference and State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**



Graph reads: 53% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide who preferred to attend an out-of-state college attend an in-state college instead.  
 Note: Based on 86% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom state preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

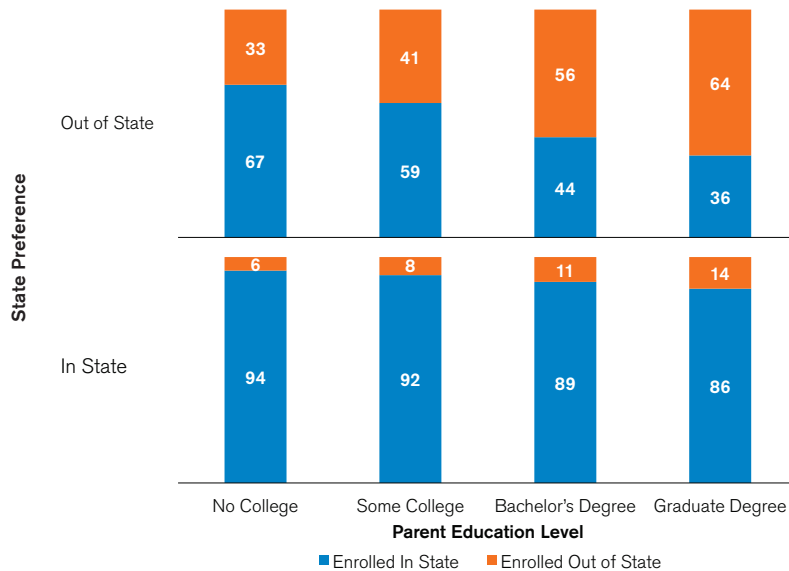
- As ACT Composite score increases, the share of students who attend a college that matches their preference to stay in state decreases.
- In contrast, the percentage of students who enroll at a college that matches their out-of-state college preference increases with their ACT Composite score.
- Roughly 7 out of 10 students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 33–36 attend a college that matches their preference to enroll out of state, compared to only 3 out of 10 students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15.

**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled In State and Out of State by State Preference and ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 7% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who preferred to attend an in-state college attend an out-of-state college instead.  
 Note: Based on 86% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom state preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled In State and Out of State by State Preference and Parent Education Level, 2012

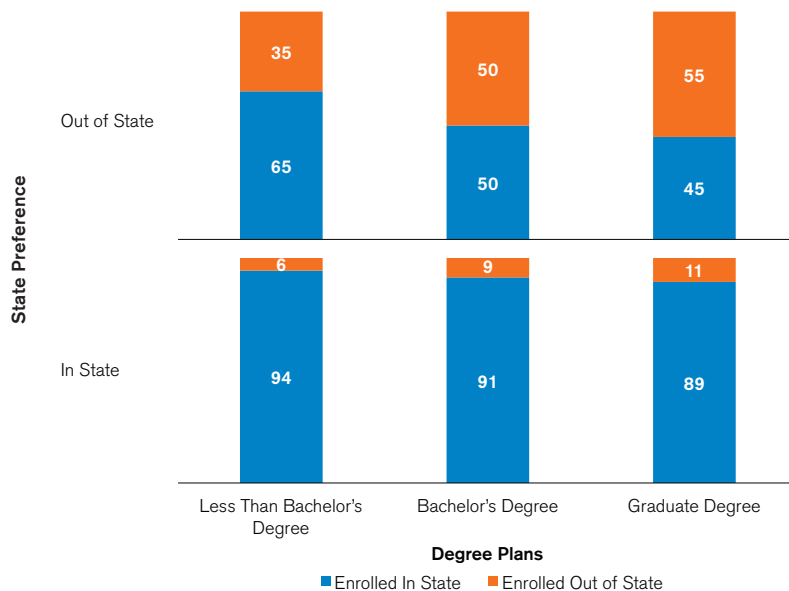


Graph reads: 11% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree and who preferred to attend an in-state college attend an out-of-state college instead.

Note: Based on 80% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom state preference and parent education level are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The percentage of ACT-tested students who enroll at a college that matches their preference to attend an in-state college decreases as parent education level increases.
- Conversely, the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their preference to enroll out of state increases with parent education level.
- Roughly 2 out of 3 ACT-tested students whose parents earned a graduate degree attend a college that matches their preference to attend college out of state, compared to only 1 out of 3 ACT-tested first-generation college students.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled In State and Out of State by State Preference and Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 45% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a graduate degree and who preferred to attend an out-of-state college attend an in-state college instead.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom state preference and degree plans are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

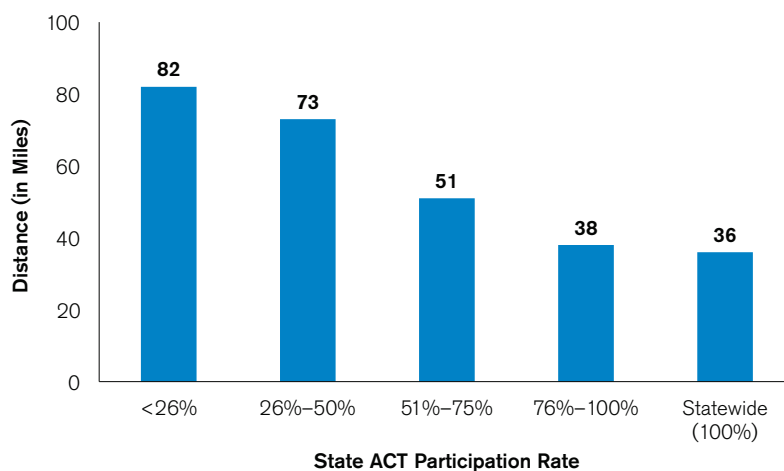
- As degree aspirations increase, so does the percentage of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their preference to enroll out of state.
- The share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their preference to stay in state, however, decreases as their degree aspirations increase.

## Enrollment by Distance

The median distance to college among all ACT-tested students is 51 miles.

- As state ACT participation rate increases, the median distance between home and college decreases.
- In states where 25% or fewer high school graduates take the ACT, the median distance to college is 82 miles.
- Comparatively, in states administering the ACT statewide, the median distance to college is 36 miles.

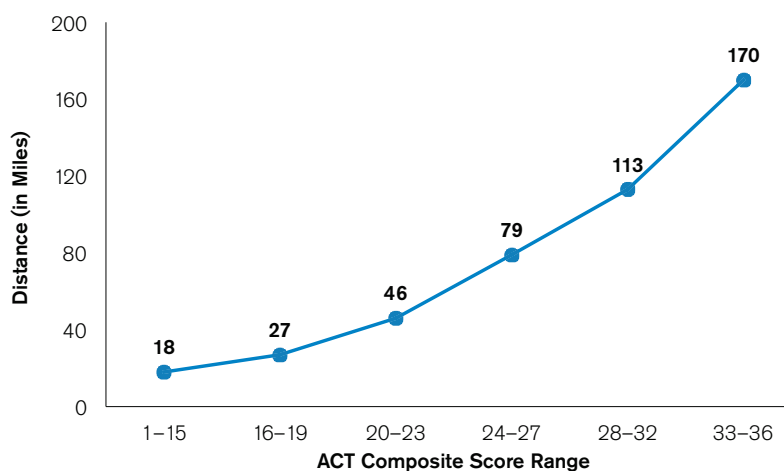
**Median Distance to College Among College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates by State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**



Graph reads: In states where 76%–100% of high school graduates take the ACT, the median distance to college is 38 miles.

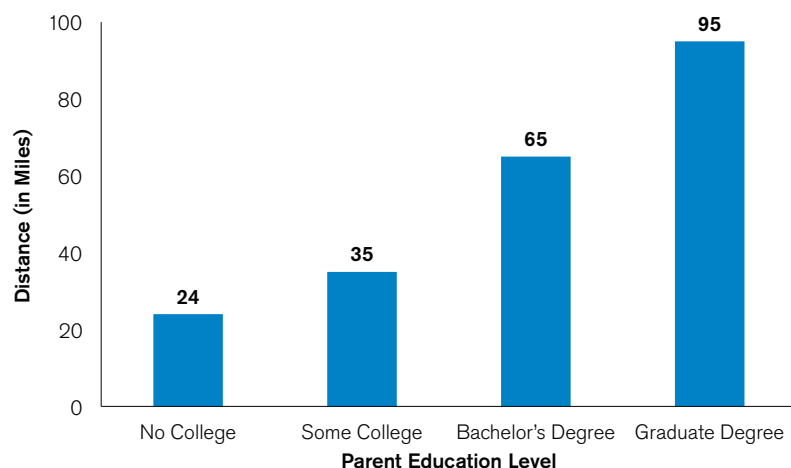
- The median distance between home and college increases exponentially as ACT Composite score increases.
- For students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15, the median distance to college is less than 20 miles.
- In contrast, the median distance to college for students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 33–36 is 170 miles.

**Median Distance to College Among College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: The median distance to college among students with an ACT Composite score in the score range of 24–27 is 79 miles.

### Median Distance to College Among College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Parent Education Level, 2012

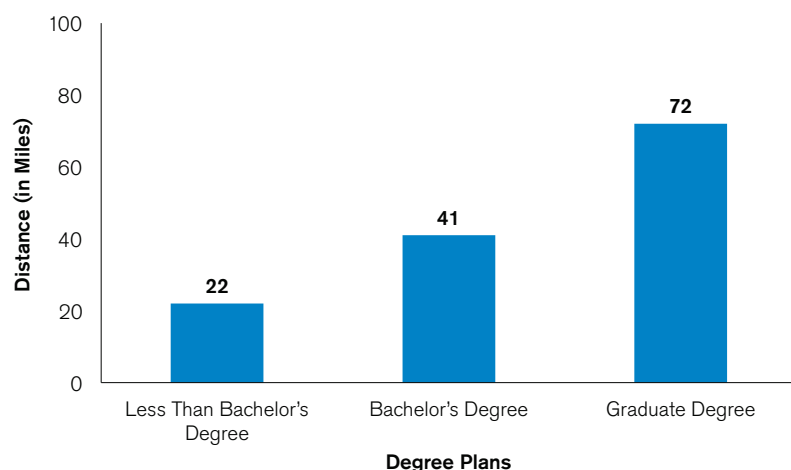


Graph reads: Among ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree, the median distance to college is 65 miles.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom parent education level is available.

- As parent education level increases, ACT-tested students typically attend college farther from home.
- Among ACT-tested first-generation college students, the median distance to college is 24 miles.
- Comparatively, the median distance to college among ACT-tested students whose parents earned a graduate degree is 95 miles.

### Median Distance to College Among College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: ACT-tested students who plan to earn a bachelor's degree travel a median distance of 41 miles to attend college.

Note: Based on 91% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom degree plans are available.

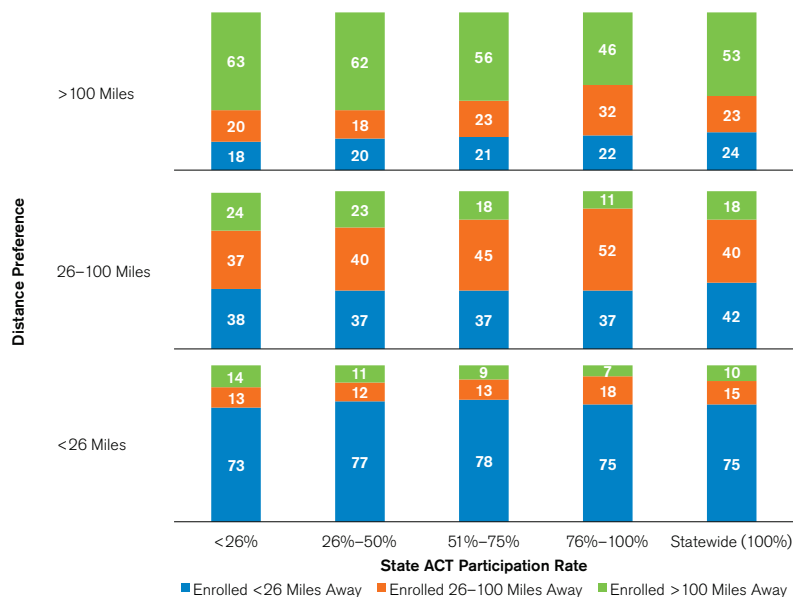
- ACT-tested students with higher degree aspirations typically attend college farther from home.
- Among ACT-tested students who plan to obtain an associate's degree or an undergraduate certificate, the median distance to college is 22 miles.
- In contrast, ACT-tested students who plan to obtain a graduate degree travel a median distance to college of 72 miles.

## Distance Preference Match

Among college-enrolled ACT-tested students, 76% with a distance preference of less than 26 miles, 43% with a distance preference of 26–100 miles, and 56% with a distance preference of more than 100 miles attend a college at a distance from home that matches their preference.

- The share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their preference to attend college more than 100 miles from home decreases as state ACT participation rate increases.
- Conversely, as state ACT participation rate increases, the share of ACT-tested students who attend a college that matches their preference to attend college 26–100 miles from home also increases.
- Statewide administration states are an exception to these patterns.
- As ACT Composite score increases, the share of students who attend a college that matches their preference to stay within 25 miles of their home decreases.
- The share of students who enroll at a college that matches their preference to attend college more than 100 miles from home increases as ACT Composite score increases.
- As ACT Composite score increases, students who do *not* enroll at a college that matches their distance preference of 26–100 miles from home are increasingly more likely to select a college that is farther from home.

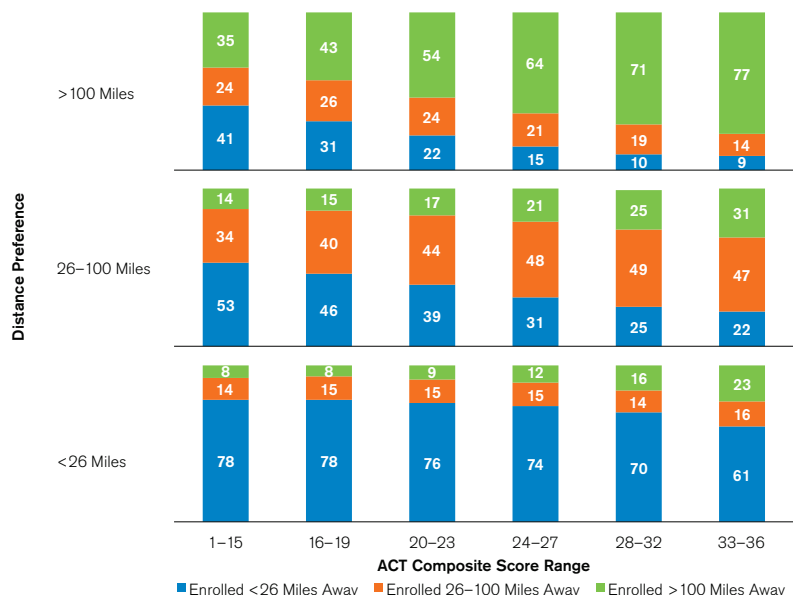
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled in Colleges at Various Distances by Preferred Distance and State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**



Graph reads: 24% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide who preferred to attend a college more than 100 miles from home attended a college within 25 miles of home.

Note: Based on 61% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom distance preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

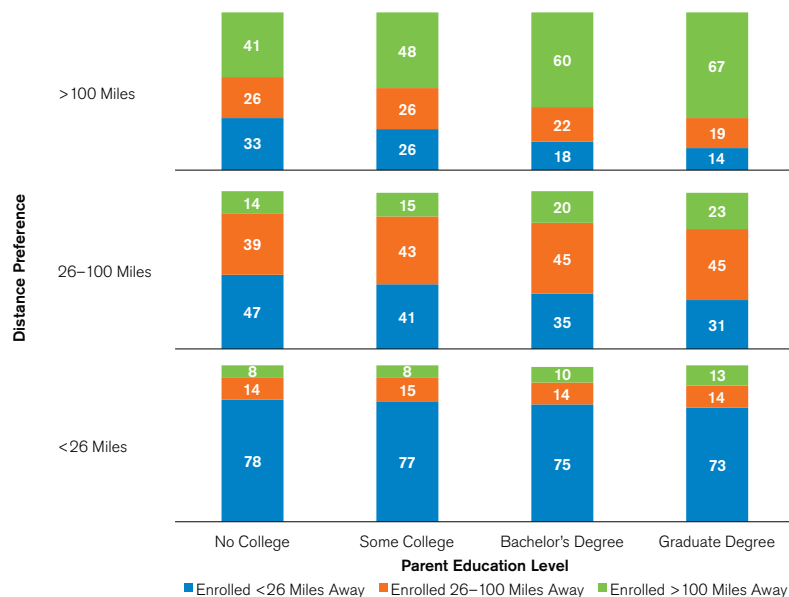
**Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled in Colleges at Various Distances by Preferred Distance and ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 41% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who preferred to attend a college more than 100 miles from home attended a college within 25 miles of home.

Note: Based on 61% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom distance preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

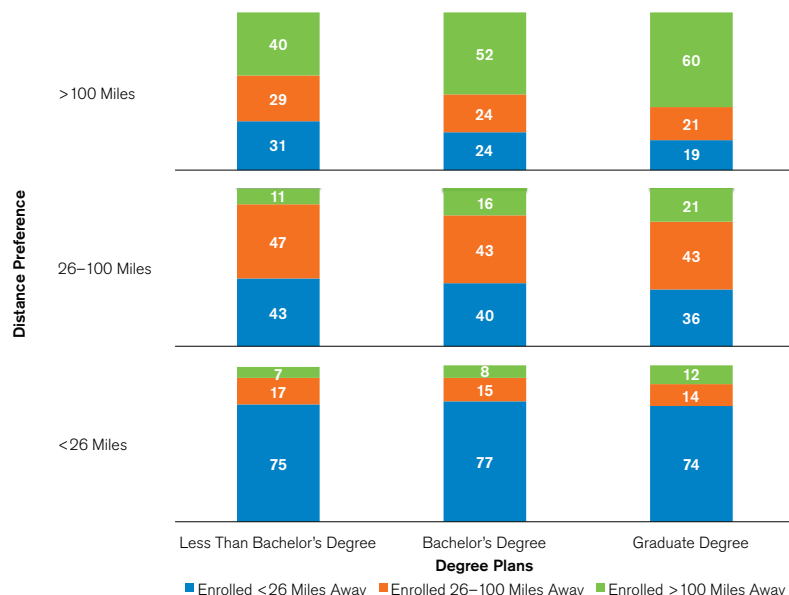
### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled in Colleges at Various Distances by Preferred Distance and Parent Education Level, 2012



Graph reads: 18% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree and who preferred to attend a college more than 100 miles from home attended a college within 25 miles of home.

Note: Based on 57% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom distance preference and parent education level are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled in Colleges at Various Distances by Preferred Distance and Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 19% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a graduate degree and who preferred to attend a college more than 100 miles from home attended a college within 25 miles of home.

Note: Based on 60% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom distance preference and degree plans are available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The percentage of students who attend a college that matches their preference to stay within 25 miles of their home decreases as parent education level increases.
- As parent education level increases, so does the share of students who enroll at a college that matches their preference to attend college more than 100 miles from home.

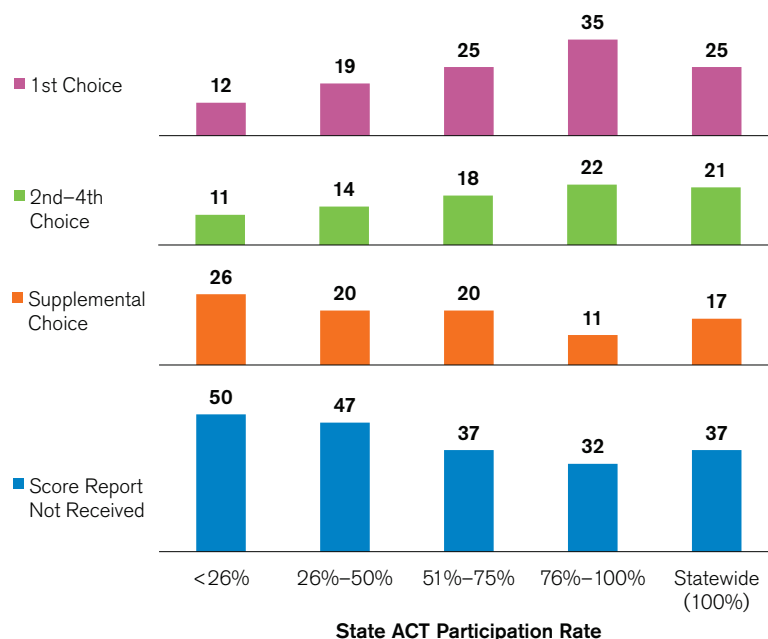
- The share of students who enroll at a college that matches their preference to attend college more than 100 miles from home increases with their degree aspirations.
- The percentage of ACT-tested students who choose a college that matches their preference to attend college within 25 miles of their home is fairly stable across degree aspirations.

## Enrollment by Choice Number

Students can send their test scores to up to four colleges in preferential order when registering for the ACT. This ranking of college choices provides an early indicator of students' intentions.

- As state ACT participation rate increases, so do the percentages of ACT-tested students who attend either their 1st choice college or a college that was among their 2nd–4th choices.
- Conversely, the percentages of students who attend either a college that received an official ACT score report outside of the ACT registration process—i.e., supplemental choices—or did not receive an official ACT score report decrease as state ACT participation rate increases.
- Statewide administration states are an exception to these patterns.

**Choice Number of College Attended by State ACT Participation Rate, 2012**

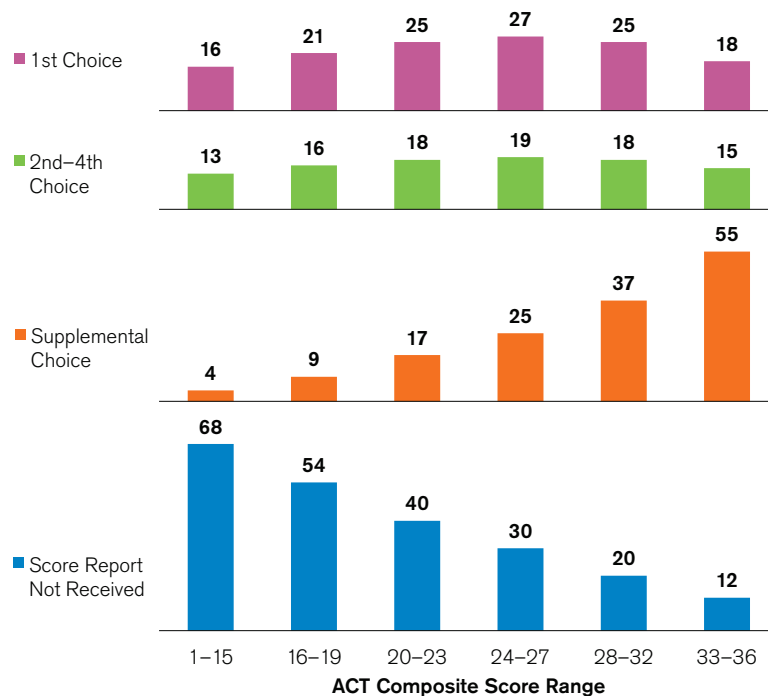


Graph reads: 25% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from states administering the ACT statewide attend their 1st choice college.

Note: Percentages within state ACT participation rate may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The share of students who attend their 1st choice college or a college among their 2nd–4th choices is larger for students in the middle ranges of the ACT Composite score scale compared to their peers in the upper or lower ranges of the score scale.
- As ACT Composite score increases, the percentage of students who attend a supplemental college choice also increases.
- Conversely, the percentage of students who attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report decreases as ACT Composite score increases.

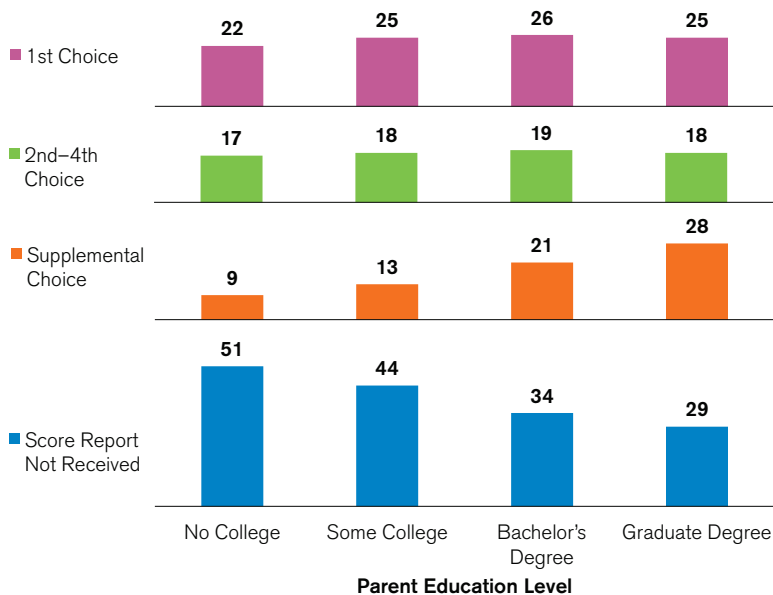
**Choice Number of College Attended by ACT Composite Score, 2012**



Graph reads: 68% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report for that student.

Note: Percentages within ACT Composite score range may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Choice Number of College Attended by Parent Education Level, 2012

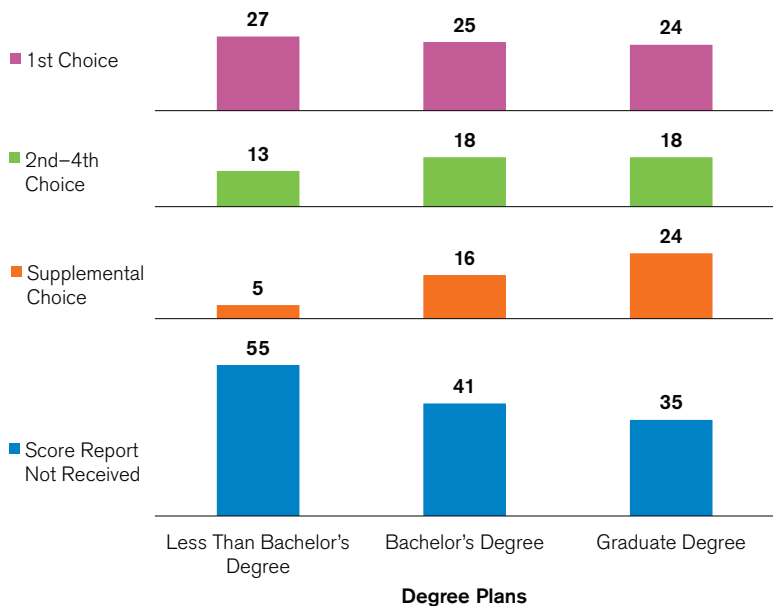


Graph reads: 26% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree attend their 1st choice college.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom parent education level is available. Percentages within parent education level may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The percentages of students who attend their 1st choice college or a college among their 2nd-4th choices remain fairly stable across parent education levels.
- As parent education level increases, however, the percentage of students who attend a supplemental college choice also increases.
- Conversely, the percentage of students who attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report decreases as parent education level increases.

### Choice Number of College Attended by Degree Plans, 2012



Graph reads: 24% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students who plan to earn a graduate degree attend their 1st choice college.

Note: Based on 91% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom degree plans are available. Percentages within degree plans may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- The percentage of students who attend their 1st choice college decreases slightly as degree aspirations increase.
- As degree aspirations increase, so does the percentage of students who attend a supplemental college choice.
- In contrast, the percentage of students who attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report decreases as degree aspirations increase.

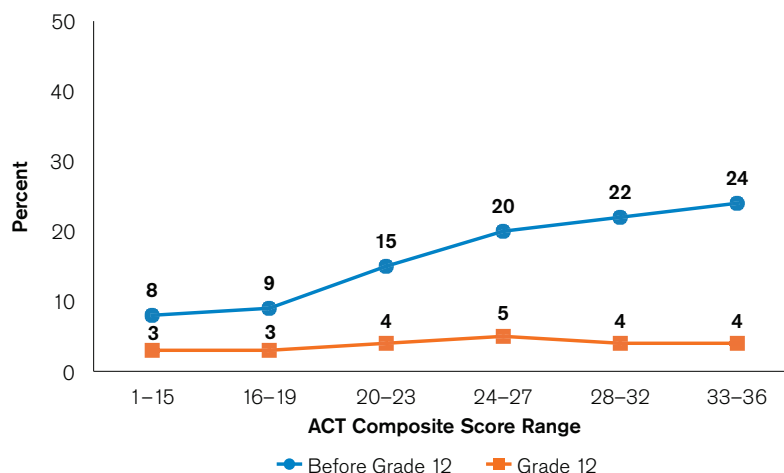
## EOS Enrollment

Among those college-enrolled ACT-tested students who were selected by one or more colleges through EOS, 13% subsequently enroll at a college that selected them.

- For students who first test before 12th grade, the percentage of EOS-selected students who enroll at one of the colleges that selected them increases as ACT Composite score increases.
- For students who first test during 12th grade, the percentage of EOS-selected students who enroll at one of the colleges that selected them remains fairly stable as ACT Composite score increases.
- Within any ACT Composite score range, a larger percentage of EOS-selected students who first test before 12th grade enroll at one of the colleges that selected them. This gap widens as ACT Composite score increases.

- Among college-enrolled EOS-selected students who enroll at a college that selected them, 80% attend college in state, whereas 20% attend college out of state.
- Roughly 74% of these students attend a public college, whereas 26% attend a private college.
- Only 13% of these students attend a 2-year college. Another 12% attend a highly selective 4-year college.

**Percent of College-Enrolled EOS-Selected Students Who Attend a College that Selected Them by ACT Composite Score and Grade Level at First Testing, 2012**



Graph reads: 3% of college-enrolled EOS-selected students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who first test in the 12th grade attend a college that selected them.

Note: Based on 78% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates who opted into EOS during high school and were selected by at least one college.

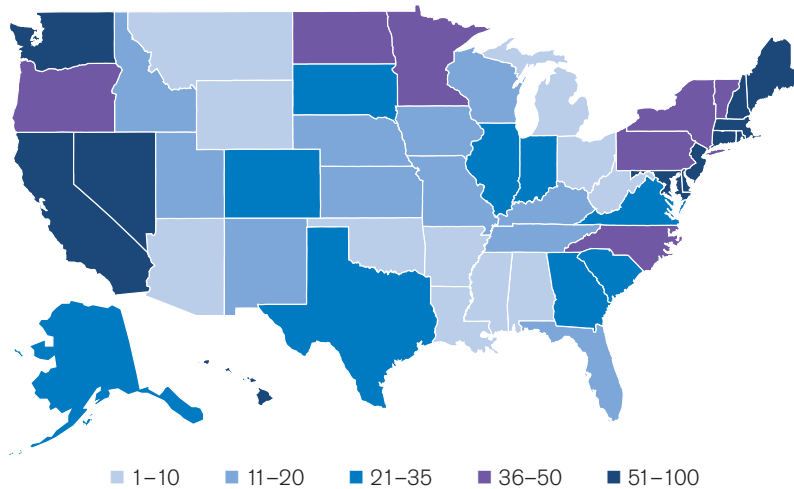
**College Destination of Students Who Attend a College That Selected Them Through EOS**

College Category	In State		Out of State		Row Total %
	% Public	% Private	% Public	% Private	
2-Year	13.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	13.1
4-Year No Test Required	4.4	2.0	0.5	1.1	7.9
4-Year Less Selective	22.6	4.2	2.3	1.5	30.6
4-Year Moderately Selective	19.2	7.6	4.8	4.5	36.0
4-Year Highly Selective	5.7	1.5	1.5	3.7	12.4
Column Total %	64.7	15.3	9.2	10.8	100.0

Table reads: 13% of students who attend a college that selected them through EOS enroll at an in-state public 2-year college.

Note: Based on 10% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates who opted into EOS during high school, were selected by at least one college, and enrolled at a college that selected them. Row and column percentages may not sum correctly due to rounding.

### Percent Who Enroll Out of State Among Students Who Attend a College That Selected Them Through EOS, 2012

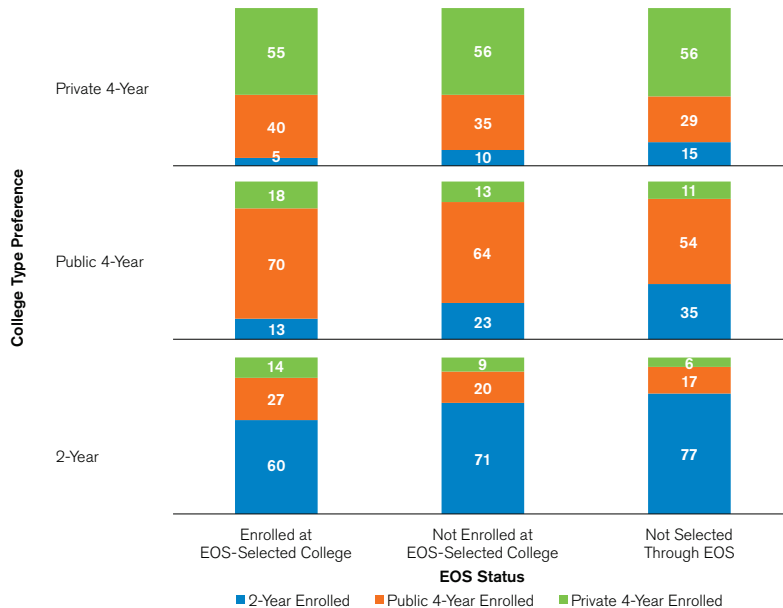


Map reads: In California, more than 50% of students who attend a college that selected them through EOS enroll at an out-of-state college.

Note: Based on 10% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates who opted into EOS during high school, were selected by at least one college, and enrolled at a college that selected them.

- Compared with much of the Midwest and South, states located in the Northeast and in the far western part of the country have a larger share of EOS-selected students who attend an out-of-state college that selected them.
- In Delaware, Hawaii, and Maine, 100% of college-enrolled EOS-selected students attend an out-of-state college that selected them. This large share is due to no in-state colleges selecting these students through EOS.

### Percent of College-Enrolled ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled at Various College Types By College Type Preference and EOS Status, 2012



Graph reads: 40% of students who attend a college that selected them through EOS and who preferred to attend a private 4-year college attend a public 4-year college instead.

Note: Based on 88% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates for whom college type preference is available. Percentages within stacked bars may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- Compared with students who either were not selected by a college through EOS or enrolled at a college that did not select them through EOS, students who enrolled at a college that selected them through EOS are:
  - More likely to attend a college that matches their preference to attend a public 4-year college
  - Equally likely to attend a college that matches their preference to attend a private 4-year college
  - Less likely to attend a college that matches their 2-year college preference
  - More likely to attend a 4-year college alternative when not enrolling at their college type preference

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Key Finding 1: Enrollment Preferences Vary by Student Characteristics

As students' ACT Composite scores, parent education levels, and degree aspirations increase, so does their likelihood of attending 4-year colleges (in general), private 4-year colleges (in particular), out-of-state colleges, and colleges located farther from their homes. These findings are consistent with the findings of numerous research studies conducted over the past few decades that highlight the systematic differences among students in the type and location of colleges in which they enroll. College preferences differ by student characteristics in similar ways both at the time of score sending and at the time of enrollment. Information presented in *Part 1* and *Part 2* of the *College Choice Report* suggests that self-reported preferences are fairly stable throughout the college choice process and that many students act on their preferences when making their enrollment decisions.

#### Recommendations:

- Admissions personnel should use self-reported college preferences in tandem with student characteristics to identify prospective students who are more likely to enroll and to track yield rates for students at different stages of the enrollment funnel.
- Admissions personnel should use self-reported college preferences as a means of developing marketing messages that reinforce enrollment preferences fitting the characteristics of the college as well as messages intended to modify students' college preferences when they don't match the characteristics of the college.

### Key Finding 2: College Choice Behaviors Differ in Predictable Ways by Student Achievement Level

ACT research has consistently found that student academic achievement as measured by ACT Composite score is an important indicator of student behavior during the college choice process. For example, with the exception of students in states that administer the ACT statewide to all 11th graders,

students' chances of first taking the ACT before 12th grade increase with their academic achievement level. Students with higher ACT Composite scores also tend to send their test scores to a greater number of colleges, and they are more likely to send their test scores to at least one college that selected them through EOS.

#### Recommendations:

- When placing EOS orders, admissions personnel should segment their search names using tighter ACT Composite score ranges (e.g., 3–5 points) to more effectively track yield rates for students at different stages of the enrollment funnel. This tracking will help colleges to better understand the differences in college choice behaviors by academic achievement level that are unique to that institution.
- When placing EOS orders, admissions personnel should use ACT Composite score ranges that exhibit desired testing and enrollment behaviors.

### Key Finding 3: Enrollment Preferences and College Choice Behaviors Vary by State

As the ACT participation rate in a state increases, ACT-tested students look and behave more like typical high school graduates in the state. As the ACT participation rate in a state decreases, ACT-tested students tend to be a more select subset of high school graduates in the state. These differences are evident both in the college preferences and college choice behaviors of ACT-tested students across states. For example, ACT-tested students in states with *lower* ACT participation rates are more likely than their peers to attend a 4-year college (especially a private 4-year college), an out-of-state college, and a college located farther from their homes. In contrast, relative to ACT-tested students in other states, those in states with *higher* ACT participation rates are more likely to have taken the ACT before 12th grade, opted into EOS, and sent their ACT scores to at least one college that selected them through EOS. For any market where a college searches for students, the ACT participation rate provides important clues to student enrollment intentions and likely enrollment behaviors.

### *Recommendations:*

- Admissions personnel should take into consideration both the historic trends and future state policy changes that may have an impact on the ACT participation rates in their state and other states in which they recruit ACT-tested students. For example, in the 2013 graduating class, North Carolina's ACT participation rate will increase to nearly 100% due to a recent policy to administer the ACT to all public high school 11th graders.
- When placing EOS orders, admissions personnel should pay close attention to the testing environment in a given market and choose the source of names that is most likely to provide a group of students that match the desired student characteristics and enrollment behaviors of their search pool.

### **Key Finding 4: Significant Numbers of Students Enroll at Institutions Through Unofficial ACT Scores**

Unofficial test scores are scores taken from a high school transcript rather than official score reports received directly from ACT. Enrolling on the basis of unofficial scores is a behavior seen for students at all achievement levels, for all degree objectives, and in all state types, but it is especially pronounced among first-generation students, students who plan to obtain an associate's degree, students in the highest ACT Composite score range, and students in states with the lowest ACT participation rate. Just over half of all first-generation college students attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report for that student. More than half of all students who plan to obtain an associate's degree or undergraduate certificate attend a college that did not receive an official ACT score report for that student. Finally, half of all students in states with the lowest ACT participation rates are attending colleges that did not receive an official ACT score report for that student. For students in states with low ACT participation rates, it may be the case that many of these students are enrolling using official SAT® scores.

Official score reports contain more than 250 data elements compared with the four ACT subscores and ACT Composite score contained in the unofficial scores from the high school transcript. The information from the full score report provides a great deal of information on student interests, needs, preferences, and abilities and is valuable for a variety of preenrollment and post-enrollment uses.

### *Recommendations:*

- All institutions that require or recommend test scores for admission should consider requiring official scores at point of enrollment and, when possible, at the point of admission. This is especially true for institutions in states that do statewide administrations of the ACT.
- Open admission institutions, including community colleges, that admit students regardless of test score should still consider requiring or recommending ACT score reports for students enrolling directly from high school as a way of reducing the number of students required to take course placement tests at point of entry.

# ACT Research

As a nonprofit educational research organization, ACT is committed to producing research that focuses on key issues in education and workforce development. Our goal is to serve as a data resource. We strive to provide policymakers with the information they need to inform education and workforce development policy and to give educators the tools they need to lead more students toward college and career success. What follows are some of ACT's recent and most groundbreaking research studies. To review these studies, go to [www.act.org/research/summary](http://www.act.org/research/summary).

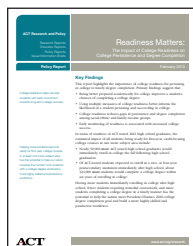
## The Condition of College & Career Readiness



Using ACT scores and the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2012* provides a series

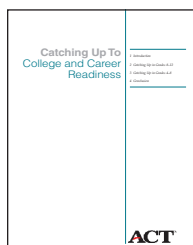
of graphics highlighting the college and career readiness of the ACT-tested high school class of 2012. This report is updated annually.

## Readiness Matters: The Impact of College Readiness on College Persistence and Degree Completion



This report contains ACT's most recent research on the importance of college readiness for college persistence and timely degree completion.

## Catching Up to College and Career Readiness



How many "far off track" 4th and 8th graders catch up to college and career readiness before they graduate?

## The Reality of College Readiness



Matching data from ACT's high school graduate file and The National Student Clearinghouse, these state-level reports identify the 2012 enrollment and

migration status of 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates. Data are provided for two-year, public four-year, and private four-year colleges and include percentages of students meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.

## Enrollment Planners Conference



The ACT Enrollment Planners Conference is ACT's national enrollment management conference that draws more than 600 presenters and attendees from across the country every July.

## Enrollment Management Briefs



ACT's **Information Brief Series** presents quick snapshots of recent ACT research findings on a variety of topics in education and work, drawing on our extensive college readiness and career skills data. As part of that series, **Enrollment**

**Management Briefs** focus on topics that are of particular interest to enrollment managers.

ACT National Office

500 ACT Drive  
P.O. Box 168  
Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168  
Telephone: 319.337.1000

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

