**In the vast majority of middle school and high school classrooms, teachers would need to use a computer lab to provide simultaneous computer access to all students for testing purposes.**

Every three to five years, the ACT National Curriculum Survey asks educators about what they teach (or don't teach) in their courses and how important they feel various topics in their discipline are for students to know to be successful in these courses and in future coursework. The survey also asks educators for their opinions on educational topics of current interest, such as the college readiness of their students or the implementation of improved standards like the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards or the Common Core State Standards.

This brief highlights a finding from the most recent (2012) survey particularly relevant to current education policy efforts.

ACT National Curriculum Survey®: Computer Access in Middle School and High School Classrooms

Middle School and High School Teachers' Responses to the Question "How Would You Provide Computer Access to All of Your Students Simultaneously?"
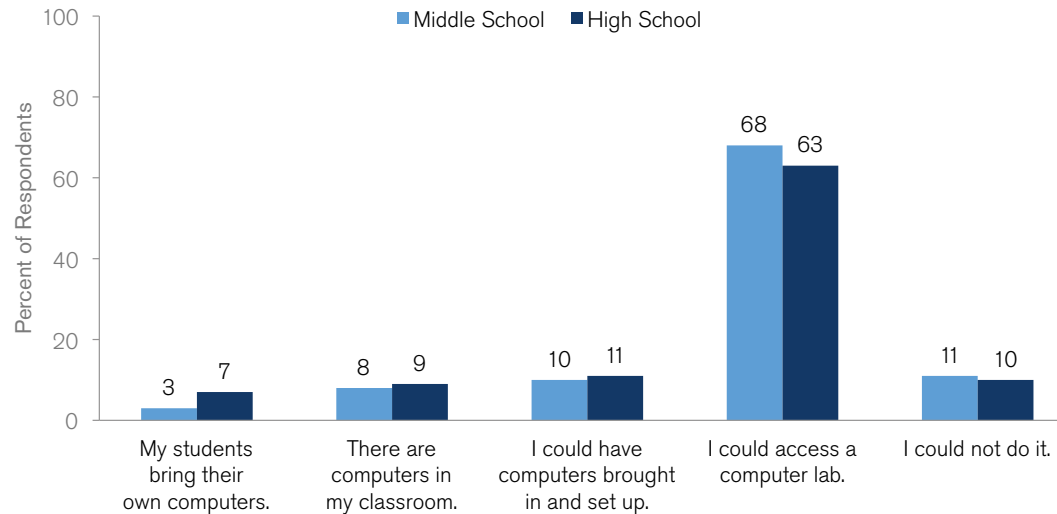
Many of the proposed college and career readiness assessments tied in whole or in part to mastery of college- and career-ready standards intend to accomplish a great deal of assessment through computer-based testing. If the results of the ACT National Curriculum Survey are an accurate indication, it appears that very few middle school or high school classes would currently be able to take such assessments as intended without dependable access to their school's computer lab.[1]

Using a computer lab may not be the most efficient way to administer the formative components of these assessments, given that such components are designed to provide regular and frequent feedback on student progress so that teachers can adjust individual instruction as needed. Therefore, many schools may need to improve the availability of technology to individual classrooms before significant numbers of students can take advantage of 21st-century assessment technologies. In the meantime, this may mean that designers of assessments linked to college- and career-ready standards will need to provide traditional alternatives to their planned innovative assessments, at least temporarily, until computers are more broadly available in schools throughout the United States.

[1] ACT, Inc., *ACT National Curriculum Survey 2012: Policy Implications on Preparing for Higher Standards* (Iowa City, IA: Author, 2013). http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/NCS-PolicySummary2012.pdf.