

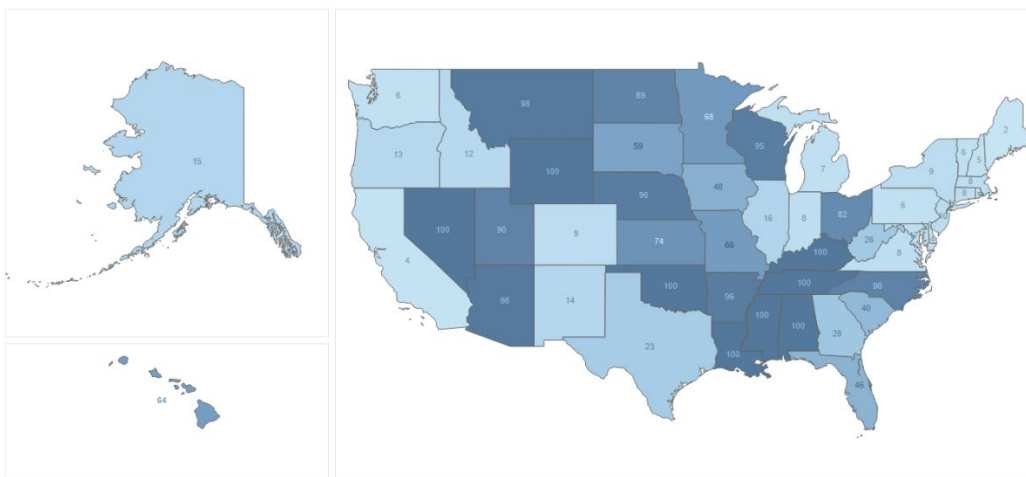
Interpreting Graduating Class Data

Annual reporting on the ACT-tested graduating class summarizes the college readiness of high school graduates who took the ACT test during high school. Each year, the ACT test is offered nationally on seven dates in test centers across the country, and it is offered during several school-day testing windows in states and districts that contract with ACT. ACT uses students' testing records from the three most recent academic years — corresponding with most students' sophomore, junior, and senior years of high school — to create each Graduating Class Data set. Although most ACT-tested graduates take the ACT test only once during high school, some students take the test two or more times; ACT uses only the students' most recent test results as part of the Graduating Class Data set.

The data offer a unique perspective on the college readiness of a cohort of high school graduates from around the country and the academic challenges and successes facing high school students today. It is important to note several nuances for interpreting the data.

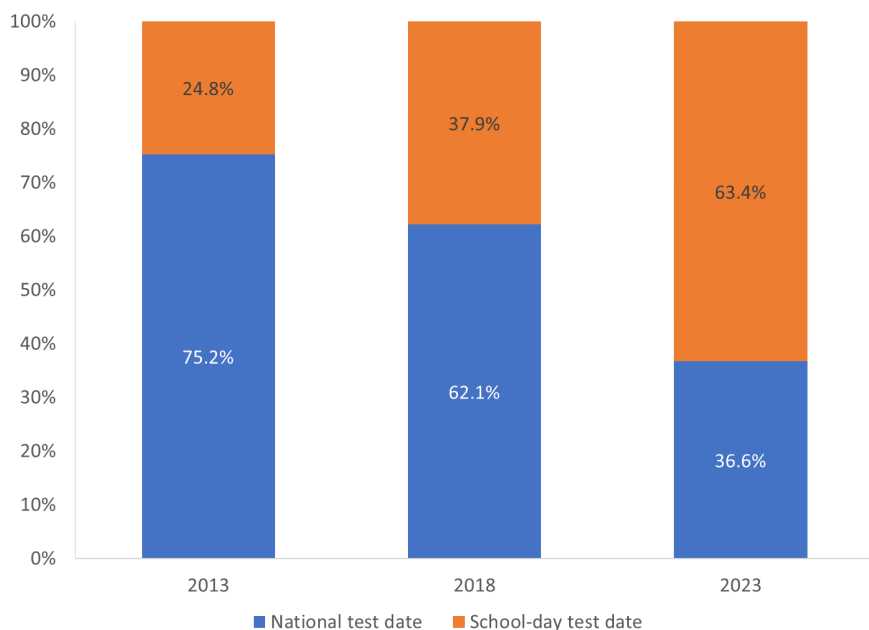
The 2023 ACT-tested graduating class represents approximately 37% of high school graduates nationwide, and more than 1.3 million high school graduates take the ACT each year. The ACT-tested graduating class is not a nationally representative sample of high school graduates. For example, ACT-tested graduates are estimated to represent up to 100% of all high school graduates in states or districts in which ACT has a contract to test high school students during the school day. However, ACT-tested graduates can represent a much smaller share of all high school graduates in states where most testing occurs on national test dates. Figure 1 provides the estimated percentage of the 2023 high school graduating class that took the ACT by state, ranging from a low of 2% in Maine to 100% in several states.

Figure 1. 2023 ACT-tested High School Graduates as an Estimated Percentage of all High School Graduates



It is also important to note that both the size and composition of the ACT-tested graduating class change over time. Since the graduating class of 2002, Graduating Class Data has represented students who elected to test on one of ACT’s national test dates and students who were required to take the ACT test through school-day testing. During the past decade, both the number and share of students testing on a national test date have decreased, whereas the number and share of school-day tested students have increased. Figure 2 illustrates how the composition of the ACT-tested graduating class has changed over the past decade in terms of the type of testing.

Figure 2. Percentage of ACT-tested High School Graduating Class by Test Type



About ACT

ACT is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people achieve education and workplace success. Grounded in more than 60 years of research, ACT is a trusted leader in college and career readiness solutions. Each year, ACT serves millions of students, job seekers, schools, government agencies and employers in the US and around the world with learning resources, assessments, research, and credentials designed to help them succeed from elementary school through career.

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