

# The Reality of College Readiness 2013

Virginia



# Virginia

Annually, ACT provides each state with *The Condition of College & Career Readiness*, a report that details the college readiness of students who took the ACT® college readiness assessment. Based on extensive empirical research, ACT has defined “college and career readiness” as the acquisition of knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year college courses at a postsecondary institution without the need for remediation. This definition has been adopted by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

## *This Report*

This report is a companion to *The Condition of College & Career Readiness*. The report traces the college enrollment, retention, re-enrollment, and migration patterns of the 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state. It also provides a snapshot of the impact that benchmark-meeting behavior has on those patterns and, ultimately, on success in college.

## *Why Is This Report Important?*

Since the middle of the 20th century, attention has been focused on institutional retention and persistence-to-degree rates. Yet, in spite of significant institutional efforts, those rates remain disappointingly stagnant.

Since 1983, ACT has been collecting and reporting on institutional retention and persistence-to-degree rates. Annual reports include data from more than 2,500 colleges and universities. Over that period, first-to-second-year retention rates for four-year colleges have ranged from 72.3% (2008) to 74.9% (1991) and five-year persistence-to-degree rates have ranged from 50.9% (2001) to 55.1% (1989). Narrow and stagnant ranges also characterize statistics for two-year public colleges. Retention rates range from 51.3% (2004) to 55.7% (2011), and three-year persistence-to-degree rates range from 25.5% (2011) to 38.8% (1989). In spite of significant efforts to increase student success, rates remain virtually unchanged.

Unfortunately, retention and persistence-to-degree rates have been used as proxies for institutional effectiveness, and accountability models are built on factors over

which the institution exhibits only limited control. Our opinion is that it is shortsighted to believe that institutional effectiveness is rooted solely in the notion that students should enroll, persist, and graduate in a reasonable time frame from the institution where they first enrolled.

This report is intended to raise awareness of the fact that the path to college success is not a linear one for many students. There are significant numbers of qualified students who move through (or in and out of) multiple postsecondary experiences as they pursue their educational goals.

Consider for a moment the following characteristics of undergraduate students:

- 11% of students simultaneously enrolled in more than one institution
- 41% of graduates attended more than one institution
- 38% enrolled part time
- More than 2 million students brought college credit with them at the time of first full-time enrollment (dual credit, AP, online, or CLEP)
- 30% delayed enrollment a year or more
- 25% of undergraduates were over age 25
- 30% of undergraduates enrolled in an online course
- 29% of community college students transferred to four-year colleges
- 14% transferred from four-year to two-year colleges

Many of these students fail to reach their goals because transitions between and among institutions are fraught with complexities and are far from transparent. In that respect, the discussion must shift to students' achievement of individual postsecondary goals regardless of where they enroll, where they re-enroll, the length of time it takes, and where they ultimately complete their goals.

While we provide information on institutional retention, we hope that reader attention will be directed to the significant numbers and the academic capabilities of other groups of students: those who never enroll, those who do not re-enroll, and those who change institutions. Focusing on state, system, and institutional policies and practices that facilitate the success of these groups is key to increasing the educational attainment level of the American people.

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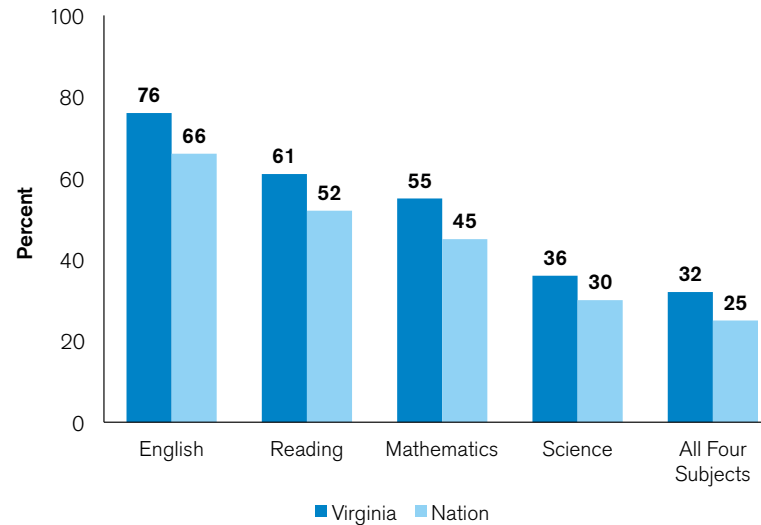
## Attainment of ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks

ACT's research on the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college courses resulted in the establishment of ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks. These benchmarks are ACT subject area scores 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 earning a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. College courses, corresponding subject area tests, and benchmark scores are depicted below.

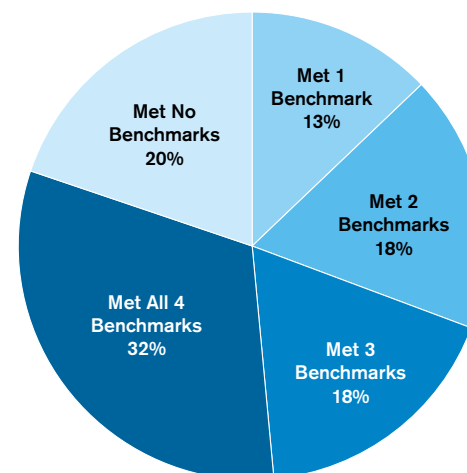
| College Course              | ACT Subject Test | ACT Benchmark Score |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| English Composition         | English          | 18                  |
| Introductory Social Science | Reading          | 21                  |
| College Algebra             | Mathematics      | 22                  |
| Biology                     | Science          | 24                  |

The charts to the right provide information on 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state. The top chart compares the national and state percentages of students meeting each of the benchmarks. The pie chart (bottom right) depicts the percentage of high school graduates by number of readiness benchmarks met. ACT research consistently shows there is a direct relationship between the number of benchmarks met and retention to the second year, progress to degree, grade point average and ultimately, degree completion.

Percent of 2011 ACT-Tested Virginia High School Graduates Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



Percent of 2011 ACT-Tested Virginia High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



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The table below describes the fall 2011 and fall 2012 enrollment status of all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state. Re-enrollment status represents any two-year or four-year institution. The table also reports the ACT Composite average and the percentage of students meeting the ACT benchmarks for each subgroup. Data are derived from matched files of ACT-tested graduates and National Student Clearinghouse® (NSC) enrollment data.

Weighted averages of 2012 re-enrollment percentages for all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates are reported below. These averages are based on 15 states with 20–59% ACT-tested high school graduates in 2011 (AK, AZ, CA, CT, GA, HI, IN, MA, NV, NY, OR, SC, TX, VA, and VT). The weighted average is the percentage of ACT-tested high school graduates from all states in this group who fall into each cell in the table.

## Enrollment and Retention Status for Virginia 2011 ACT-Tested Graduates

| Fall 2011 Status                                                | Fall 2012 Status                  | Weighted Averages | State Percentage | State Average Composite | Number of College Readiness Benchmarks Attained |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                                 |                                   |                   |                  |                         | Zero                                            | One       | Two       | Three     | Four      |
| Enrolled In State<br>(See Note 1 Below)<br><b>N = 11,969</b>    | Retained In State                 | 86                | 89               | 22.8                    | 16                                              | 12        | 18        | 19        | 34        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 2                 | 3                | 20.8                    | 25                                              | 18        | 20        | 17        | 20        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 13                | 8                | 19.2                    | 38                                              | 20        | 18        | 9         | 15        |
|                                                                 | <b>All In-State Enrollees</b>     | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>22.4</b>             | <b>18</b>                                       | <b>13</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>32</b> |
| Enrolled Out of State<br>(See Note 2 Below)<br><b>N = 5,372</b> | Re-Enrolled In State              | 9                 | 7                | 21.3                    | 24                                              | 15        | 19        | 17        | 24        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 82                | 83               | 23.5                    | 14                                              | 11        | 16        | 20        | 39        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 9                 | 11               | 21.1                    | 30                                              | 14        | 15        | 14        | 27        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Out-of-State Enrollees</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>23.1</b>             | <b>17</b>                                       | <b>11</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>37</b> |
| Not Enrolled/Unknown*<br><b>N = 3,436</b>                       | Enrolled In State                 | 18                | 15               | 20.3                    | 29                                              | 18        | 20        | 14        | 19        |
|                                                                 | Enrolled Out of State             | 6                 | 12               | 21.0                    | 29                                              | 14        | 18        | 17        | 22        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 76                | 73               | 20.9                    | 30                                              | 15        | 16        | 15        | 24        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Non-Enrollees</b>          | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>20.8</b>             | <b>30</b>                                       | <b>15</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>23</b> |
| All 2011 Graduates<br>(See Note 3 Below)<br><b>N = 20,777</b>   | Re-Enrolled In State              | 55                | 55               | 22.6                    | 17                                              | 13        | 18        | 19        | 33        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 19                | 25               | 23.1                    | 16                                              | 11        | 17        | 19        | 36        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 26                | 20               | 20.5                    | 32                                              | 16        | 17        | 13        | 22        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Students</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>22.3</b>             | <b>20</b>                                       | <b>13</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>32</b> |

\* NSC data account for 95% of all enrollments in Title IV, degree-granting institutions in the nation. This percentage includes a small number of students for whom no match could be found.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about three times as likely to be retained at an in-state institution.
2. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about four times as likely to re-enroll in an out-of-state institution.
3. 35% of 2011 ACT-tested graduates who were not enrolled or their enrollment status could not be verified in 2012 attained 3 or 4 benchmarks.

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The table below describes the fall 2012 status of 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state who initially enrolled in a two-year college in fall 2011. Re-enrollment status represents any two-year or four-year institution. The table also reports the ACT Composite average and the percentage of students meeting the ACT benchmarks for each subgroup. Data are derived from matched files of ACT-tested graduates and NSC enrollment data.

Weighted averages of 2012 re-enrollment percentages for all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates who enrolled in two-year colleges are reported below. These averages are based on 15 states with 20–59% ACT-tested high school graduates in 2011 (AK\*, AZ, CA, CT, GA, HI, IN, MA, NV, NY, OR, SC, TX, VA, and VT). The weighted average is the percentage of ACT-tested high school graduates from all states in this group who fall into each cell in the table.

\* Not included due to low N count.

## Enrollment and Retention Status for Virginia 2011 ACT-Tested Graduates for Two-Year Enrollees

| Fall 2011 Status                                              | Fall 2012 Status                  | Weighted Averages | State Percentage | State Average Composite | Number of College Readiness Benchmarks Attained |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                               |                                   |                   |                  |                         | Zero                                            | One       | Two       | Three     | Four      |
| Enrolled In State<br>(See Note 1 Below)<br><b>N = 1,579</b>   | Retained In State                 | 73                | 70               | 18.3                    | 45                                              | 19        | 17        | 10        | 9         |
|                                                               | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 3                 | 4                | 19.8                    | 32                                              | 21        | 17        | 14        | 16        |
|                                                               | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 25                | 26               | 17.2                    | 52                                              | 20        | 15        | 6         | 6         |
|                                                               | <b>All In-State Enrollees</b>     | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>18.1</b>             | <b>46</b>                                       | <b>20</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| Enrolled Out of State<br>(See Note 2 Below)<br><b>N = 268</b> | Re-Enrolled In State              | 13                | 11               | 18.3                    | 47                                              | 23        | 10        | 10        | 10        |
|                                                               | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 59                | 61               | 20.0                    | 35                                              | 15        | 23        | 11        | 17        |
|                                                               | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 29                | 28               | 18.7                    | 53                                              | 8         | 16        | 9         | 14        |
|                                                               | <b>All Out-of-State Enrollees</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>19.4</b>             | <b>41</b>                                       | <b>14</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>15</b> |
| All 2011 Graduates<br>(See Note 3 Below)<br><b>N = 1,847</b>  | Re-Enrolled In State              | 70                | 61               | 18.3                    | 45                                              | 19        | 17        | 10        | 9         |
|                                                               | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 6                 | 12               | 19.9                    | 34                                              | 16        | 21        | 12        | 17        |
|                                                               | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 25                | 26               | 17.4                    | 52                                              | 19        | 15        | 7         | 7         |
|                                                               | <b>All Students</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>18.3</b>             | <b>46</b>                                       | <b>19</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>9</b>  |

\*\* NSC data include 94.4% of all students enrolled in two-year colleges. This percentage includes a small number of students for whom no match could be found.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- 52% of 2011 ACT-tested students who initially enrolled in an in-state two-year college and were not enrolled one year later had attained none of the benchmarks.
- 53% of 2011 ACT-tested students who initially enrolled in an out-of-state two-year college and were not enrolled one year later had attained none of the benchmarks.
- 14% of all 2011 ACT-tested graduates who were not enrolled or their enrollment status could not be verified in 2012 attained 3 or 4 benchmarks.

# Virginia

The table below describes the fall 2012 status of 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state who initially enrolled in a public four-year college in fall 2011. Re-enrollment status represents any two-year or four-year institution. The table also reports the ACT Composite average and the percentage of students meeting the ACT benchmarks for each subgroup. Data are derived from matched files of ACT-tested graduates and NSC enrollment data.

Weighted averages of 2012 re-enrollment percentages for all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates who enrolled in public four-year colleges are reported below. These averages are based on 15 states with 20–59% ACT-tested high school graduates in 2011 (AK, AZ, CA, CT, GA, HI, IN, MA, NV, NY, OR, SC, TX, VA, and VT). The weighted average is the percentage of ACT-tested high school graduates from all states in this group who fall into each cell in the table.

## Enrollment and Retention Status for Virginia 2011 ACT-Tested Graduates for Public Four-Year Enrollees

| Fall 2011 Status                                                | Fall 2012 Status                  | Weighted Averages | State Percentage | State Average Composite | Number of College Readiness Benchmarks Attained |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                                 |                                   |                   |                  |                         | Zero                                            | One       | Two       | Three     | Four      |
| Enrolled In State<br>(See Note 1 Below)<br><b>N = 8,648</b>     | Retained In State                 | 90                | 93               | 23.7                    | 11                                              | 11        | 18        | 21        | 40        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 1                 | 2                | 22.0                    | 16                                              | 16        | 22        | 19        | 26        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 9                 | 5                | 21.5                    | 21                                              | 19        | 20        | 13        | 26        |
|                                                                 | <b>All In-State Enrollees</b>     | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>23.6</b>             | <b>11</b>                                       | <b>11</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>39</b> |
| Enrolled Out of State<br>(See Note 2 Below)<br><b>N = 2,377</b> | Re-Enrolled In State              | 9                 | 7                | 21.9                    | 14                                              | 19        | 23        | 16        | 28        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 83                | 86               | 23.8                    | 10                                              | 10        | 17        | 23        | 40        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 8                 | 8                | 22.2                    | 19                                              | 14        | 22        | 15        | 30        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Out-of-State Enrollees</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>23.5</b>             | <b>11</b>                                       | <b>11</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>38</b> |
| All 2011 Graduates<br>(See Note 3 Below)<br><b>N = 11,025</b>   | Re-Enrolled In State              | 74                | 74               | 23.7                    | 11                                              | 11        | 18        | 21        | 39        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 17                | 20               | 23.6                    | 10                                              | 11        | 18        | 23        | 39        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown*             | 9                 | 5                | 21.7                    | 21                                              | 18        | 21        | 14        | 27        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Students</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>23.6</b>             | <b>11</b>                                       | <b>11</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>39</b> |

\* NSC data include 99.6% of all students enrolled in public four-year colleges. This percentage includes a small number of students for whom no match could be found.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about six times as likely to be retained at an in-state public four-year institution.
2. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about six times as likely to re-enroll in an out-of-state public four-year institution.
3. 41% of 2011 ACT-tested graduates who initially enrolled in public four-year institutions but were not enrolled or their enrollment status could not be verified in 2012 attained 3 or 4 benchmarks.

# Virginia

The table below describes the fall 2012 status of 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates in your state who initially enrolled in a private four-year college in fall 2011. Re-enrollment status represents any two-year or four-year institution. The table also reports the ACT Composite average and the percentage of students meeting the ACT benchmarks for each subgroup. Data are derived from matched files of ACT-tested graduates and NSC enrollment data.

Weighted averages of 2012 re-enrollment percentages for all 2011 ACT-tested high school graduates who enrolled in private four-year colleges are reported below. These averages are based on 15 states with 20–59% ACT-tested high school graduates in 2011 (AK\*, AZ, CA, CT, GA, HI, IN, MA, NV\*, NY, OR, SC, TX, VA, and VT). The weighted average is the percentage of ACT-tested high school graduates from all states in this group who fall into each cell in the table.

\* Not included due to low N count.

## Enrollment and Retention Status for Virginia 2011 ACT-Tested Graduates for Private Four-Year Enrollees

| Fall 2011 Status                                                | Fall 2012 Status                  | Weighted Averages | State Percentage | State Average Composite | Number of College Readiness Benchmarks Attained |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                                 |                                   |                   |                  |                         | Zero                                            | One       | Two       | Three     | Four      |
| Enrolled In State<br>(See Note 1 Below)<br><b>N = 1,742</b>     | Retained In State                 | 91                | 86               | 20.9                    | 24                                              | 17        | 22        | 17        | 20        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 2                 | 5                | 19.1                    | 39                                              | 23        | 16        | 13        | 9         |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 7                 | 10               | 18.6                    | 45                                              | 22        | 18        | 5         | 10        |
|                                                                 | <b>All In-State Enrollees</b>     | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>20.6</b>             | <b>27</b>                                       | <b>18</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>19</b> |
| Enrolled Out of State<br>(See Note 2 Below)<br><b>N = 2,000</b> | Re-Enrolled In State              | 7                 | 5                | 21.5                    | 33                                              | 4         | 15        | 21        | 27        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 86                | 85               | 25.0                    | 10                                              | 8         | 13        | 20        | 50        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 8                 | 10               | 23.1                    | 19                                              | 15        | 10        | 16        | 39        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Out-of-State Enrollees</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>24.6</b>             | <b>12</b>                                       | <b>8</b>  | <b>13</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>47</b> |
| All 2011 Graduates<br>(See Note 3 Below)<br><b>N = 3,742</b>    | Re-Enrolled In State              | 48                | 43               | 21.0                    | 25                                              | 16        | 21        | 17        | 21        |
|                                                                 | Re-Enrolled Out of State          | 45                | 47               | 24.7                    | 11                                              | 8         | 13        | 20        | 48        |
|                                                                 | Not Enrolled/Unknown**            | 7                 | 10               | 21.0                    | 31                                              | 18        | 14        | 11        | 26        |
|                                                                 | <b>All Students</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>       | <b>22.8</b>             | <b>19</b>                                       | <b>13</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>34</b> |

\*\* NSC data include 94.3% of all students enrolled in private four-year colleges. This percentage includes a small number of students for whom no match could be found.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about twice as likely to be retained at an in-state private four-year institution.
2. When compared with students attaining none of the benchmarks, students attaining 3 or 4 benchmarks are about seven times as likely to re-enroll in an out-of-state private four-year institution.
3. 37% of 2011 ACT-tested graduates who initially enrolled in a private four-year institution but were not enrolled or their enrollment status could not be verified in 2012 attained 3 or 4 benchmarks.

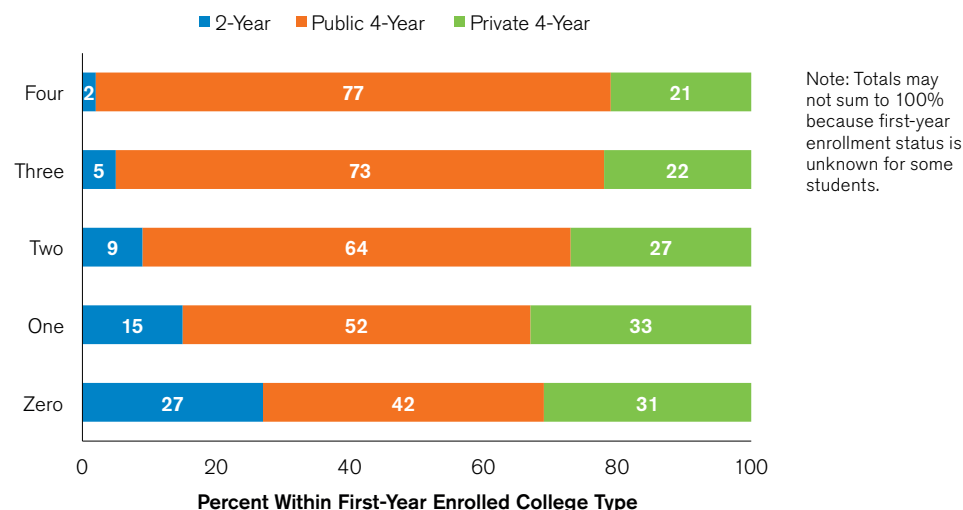
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The data presented on this page are also based on matched files of ACT-tested high school graduates and NSC enrollment files. But unlike the previous tables and charts, these data include all first-time enrollees in your state regardless of state of residence at the time of ACT testing.

The chart to the right documents the percentage of enrolled students meeting benchmarks by institutional type. For example, of those enrolled students meeting all four benchmarks, 2% were enrolled in two-year colleges, 77% were enrolled in public four-year colleges, and 21% were enrolled in private four-year colleges.

The findings depicted here are intuitive: as the number of benchmarks met increases, the likelihood of enrolling in a four-year institution also increases.

**Percent of All Enrollees Meeting Benchmarks by Institutional Type**



**Percent of First-Year Enrollees by Re-Enrollment Status for Virginia and National 2011 ACT-Tested Graduates**

|                                          | Total State | Total National | 2-Year State* | 2-Year National* | Public 4-Year State* | Public 4-Year National* | Private 4-Year State* | Private 4-Year National* |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Retained Within Institution              | 81          | 72             | 58            | 72               | 93                   | 89                      | 93                    | 92                       |
| Retained In State, Different Institution | 5           | 8              | 27            | 21               | 4                    | 8                       | 2                     | 4                        |
| Re-Enrolled Out of State                 | 6           | 4              | 15            | 7                | 3                    | 3                       | 5                     | 4                        |

\* Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The table above tracks the retention/migration patterns of students who first enrolled in 2011 and continued their enrollment in 2012.

- Institutions within the state do a reasonably good job of retaining students.
- Significant percentages of enrolled students re-enroll out of state or at another institution within the state.

- Data from a variety of sources tell us that 34% of college students attended two or more colleges, 11% simultaneously enrolled in more than one college, and 23% took one or more online courses.

- When coupled with data from the tables presented on pages 4–7, it becomes clear that student movement between and among institutions calls for policies that focus on a seamless transition process.

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The chart on this page includes all enrolled students regardless of state of residence in which the student took the ACT.

## Interests and College Success

Research indicates that if students' interests are similar to the interests of people in their chosen college majors, they will be more likely to:

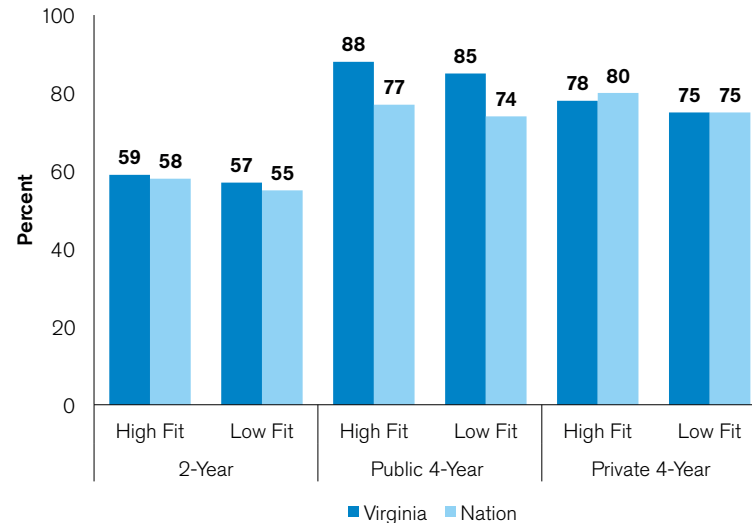
- Persist in college (Tracey & Robbins, 2006<sup>1</sup>; Allen & Robbins, 2008<sup>2</sup>)
- Remain in their major (Allen & Robbins, 2008<sup>2</sup>)
- Complete their degree in a timely manner (Allen & Robbins, 2010<sup>3</sup>)
- Earn high GPAs (Tracey, Allen, & Robbins, 2012<sup>4</sup>)

The research is based on a calculation called interest-major fit: the relationship between student choice of major and career-related interests. The ACT Interest Inventory is a 72-item survey completed by students who take the ACT. Results identify the career areas and programs of study that are closely aligned with student interest patterns. Fit, then, is based on the similarity (or lack thereof) between Inventory results and a student's first choice of college program. High fit indicates that student interests are most similar to students enrolled in a program of study. Low fit suggests that interests are dissimilar.

## The Chart

The chart reports institutional retention rates by level of fit. It supports the contention that there is a relationship between retention to the second year and interest-major fit. Those with higher fit are retained at a higher rate. At first, the percentage differences may seem small, but even a small increase in the percentage of students retained can have a significant impact on the institution.

## Retention Rates by Institution Type of First College Choice and Interest-Major Fit\*: Virginia vs. National



\* Fit reflects the correlation between student Interest Inventory scores and intended college major.

## Observations

Addressing the differences in retention rates for high-fit and low-fit students leads to several interventions touted by the *What Works in Student Retention* survey. Use of the ACT Interest Inventory in advising, first-year seminars, and career development workshops could increase the number of students who enroll in programs more consistent with their Interest Inventory scores.

<sup>1</sup> Tracey, T. J. G., & Robbins, S. B. (2006). The interest major congruence and college success relation: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, 64–89.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, J., & Robbins, S. (2008). Prediction of college major persistence based on vocational interests, academic preparation, and first-year academic performance. *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 62–79.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, J., & Robbins, S. (2010). Effects of interest-major congruence, motivation, and academic performance on timely degree attainment. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57, 23–35.

<sup>4</sup> Tracey, T. G., Allen, J., & Robbins, S. B. (2012). Moderation of the relation between person–environment congruence and academic success: Environmental constraint, personal flexibility and method. *Journal Of Vocational Behavior*, 80(1), 38–49.

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## Retention Practices

### *Recommendations for Policymakers*

1. Actively pursue P–20 collaborations to develop integrated education systems.
2. Expand the current retention definition to focus on individual student success—the achievement of student educational goals rather than the completion of a degree at a specific institution within a specific time frame.
3. Measure and reward individual student success across the postsecondary system. Success should not be measured solely by retention and graduation rates within an institution.
4. Review and revise policies and agreements that increase the transparent movement of students from one educational experience to another.
  - Common course numbering system
  - System or statewide degree audit
  - Expanded articulation agreements
5. Establish a clearinghouse that serves as a repository for a student-owned educational portfolio used to facilitate institution-to-institution transitions.

### *Retention Recommendations for Institutional Practice*

1. Initiate collaboration and dialogue with K–12 teachers.
2. Explore the redesign of teacher preparation programs.
3. Validate and refine course placement practices.
4. Provide advising that supports transition to other institutions.
5. Review and revise policies that impede transparent movement of students both to and from other institutions.
6. Participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) or the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA).

### **Two-Year College Retention Interventions Cited in *What Works in Student Retention*\***

| Highest-Rated Retention Practices                          | Practices Which Differentiate Campuses with High Retention Rates from Those with Low Retention Rates |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading center/lab                                         | Reading center/lab                                                                                   |
| Comprehensive learning assistance center                   | Comprehensive learning assistance center                                                             |
| Tutoring                                                   | Increased number of academic advisors                                                                |
| Mandated course placement of students based on test scores | Required remedial/developmental coursework                                                           |
| Required remedial/development coursework                   | Pre-enrollment financial aid advising                                                                |
| Increased number of academic advisors                      | Diagnostic academic skills assessment                                                                |
| Writing center/lab                                         | Integration of advising with career/life planning                                                    |
| Math center/lab                                            | Staff mentoring                                                                                      |
| Program for first-generation students                      |                                                                                                      |

\* Complete reports can be found at: [www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html)

# Virginia

## Retention Practices *continued*

### Public Four-Year College Retention Interventions Cited in *What Works in Student Retention*\*

| Highest-Rated Retention Practices                           | Practices Which Differentiate Campuses with High Retention Rates from Those with Low Retention Rates |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Academic advising center                                    | Increased number of academic advisors                                                                |
| Increased number of academic advisors                       | Advising interventions with selected student populations                                             |
| Advising interventions with selected student populations    | Supplemental instruction                                                                             |
| Comprehensive learning assistance center/lab                | Summer bridge program                                                                                |
| Supplemental instruction                                    | Program for honors students                                                                          |
| Program for first-generation students                       | Integration of advising with first-year transition programs                                          |
| Required on-campus housing for first-year students          | Training for non-faculty academic advisors                                                           |
| Reading center/lab                                          | Faculty mentoring                                                                                    |
| Tutoring                                                    | Residential living/learning communities                                                              |
| Summer bridge program                                       | Program for international students                                                                   |
| Integration of advising with first-year transition programs | Staff mentoring                                                                                      |

\* Complete reports can be found at: [www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html)

### Private Four-Year College Retention Interventions Cited in *What Works in Student Retention*\*

| Highest-Rated Retention Practices                           | Practices Which Differentiate Campuses with High Retention Rates from Those with Low Retention Rates |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Academic advising center                                    | Academic advising center                                                                             |
| Advising interventions with selected student populations    | Advising interventions with selected student populations                                             |
| Increased number of academic advisors                       | Integration of advising with first-year transition programs                                          |
| Reading center/lab                                          | Tutoring                                                                                             |
| Comprehensive learning assistance center/lab                | Faculty mentoring                                                                                    |
| Integration of advising with first-year transition programs | Required on-campus housing for first-year students                                                   |
| Program for first-generation students                       | Peer mentoring                                                                                       |
| Early warning system                                        | Program for honors students                                                                          |
| Pre-enrollment financial aid advising                       | Staff mentoring                                                                                      |

\* Complete reports can be found at: [www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/retain.html)

## ACT Research

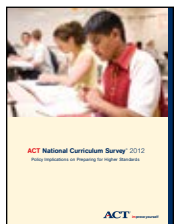
As a not-for-profit educational research organization, ACT is committed to producing research that focuses on key issues in education and workforce development. Our goal is to serve as a data resource. We strive to provide policymakers with the information they need to inform education and workforce 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*



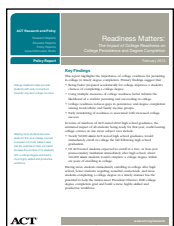
Using ACT scores and the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2012* provides a series of graphics highlighting the college and career readiness of the ACT-tested high school class of 2012. This report is updated annually.

### *ACT National Curriculum Survey®*



The ACT National Curriculum Survey is a nationwide survey of educational practices and expectations. Conducted every three to five years by ACT, the survey collects data about what entering college students should know and be able to do to be ready for college-level coursework in English, math, reading, and science. This survey is a critical step in the process used to build and regularly update a valid suite of ACT assessments that is empirically aligned to college readiness standards.

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



This report contains recent ACT research on the importance of college readiness for persisting in college to timely degree completion. It is based on data from nearly 25,000 ACT-tested 2003 high school graduates who enrolled in college following high school and were tracked across institutions over seven years using National Student Clearinghouse data. The study identifies pre-college factors that give high school graduates early momentum toward degree completion. It also determines the

extent to which college readiness helps reduce gaps in college success rates across racial/ethnic groups and family income ranges.

### *College Choice Report—Parts 1 and 2*



ACT created the *College Choice Report* to provide enrollment managers and other college administrators with information about college choice patterns of 2012 high school graduates who took the ACT. This report covers topics such as students' migration patterns, the time in which they first took the ACT, their participation in ACT's Educational Opportunity Service, and their

score-sending behavior. The information provided in this report will give institutions insight into their current enrollment management practices and offer effective strategies for improvement.

### *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.

### *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.