

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019

## New Jersey Key Findings

### Performance of 2019 Graduates

- In the 2019 New Jersey graduating class, 26,266 graduates (an estimated 25 percent) took the ACT test with a Composite score average of 24.2. This compares to 30,263 (an estimated 29 percent) with an average of 23.2 in 2015. Nationally, an estimated 52 percent of 2019 graduates took the ACT with an average Composite score of 20.7.
  - There were 2,117 African American graduates from New Jersey who took the ACT (8 percent) with an average Composite score of 18.9. This compares to 2,998 (9 percent) with an average of 18.3, and 3,159 (10 percent) with an average of 18.0, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 13,737 White graduates from New Jersey who took the ACT (52 percent) with an average Composite score of 24.8. This compares to 16,960 (52 percent) with an average of 24.8, and 17,104 (57 percent) with an average of 24.2, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 3,625 Hispanic graduates from New Jersey who took the ACT (14 percent) with an average Composite score of 21.5. This compares to 4,650 (14 percent) with an average of 20.5, and 3,994 (13 percent) with an average of 20.5, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 2,923 Asian graduates from New Jersey who took the ACT (11 percent) with an average Composite score of 28.1. This compares to 3,241 (10 percent) with an average of 27.5, and 2,550 (8 percent) with an average of 26.6, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
- In 2019, 47 percent of New Jersey graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 44 and 42 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 15 percent of New Jersey graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 18 and 18 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 81 percent of New Jersey graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 79 and 78 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 64 percent of New Jersey graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 62 and 63 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 65 percent of New Jersey graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 63 and 59 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 56 percent of New Jersey graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 53 and 52 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 15,974 (61 percent) of New Jersey graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 19,101 and 17,287 (59 and 57 percent) out of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively. For reference, the national percentage of 2019 graduates meeting three or four benchmarks was 37 percent.
- In 2019, 10 percent of New Jersey graduates took the ACT with extended time. This compares to 8 and 5 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.

## STEM

- In 2019, 12,512 New Jersey graduates (48 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
  - Nationally, 43 percent of graduates indicated having an interest in STEM.
- Compared to a 2019 New Jersey graduating class average ACT STEM score of 24.0, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM averages of 23.5 and 23.4, respectively.
- In 2019, 19,928 New Jersey graduates (76 percent) indicated taking physics. This compares to 75 and 76 percent for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - 2019 graduates taking physics had an average science score of 24.6, compared to 20.1 for students not taking physics.

## Career Readiness Indicator

- In 2019, 17,093 New Jersey graduates (65 percent) were likely to attain the Gold ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate or higher based upon ACT Composite score, compared to 726,923 (41 percent) nationally.
  - The ACT Composite scores associated with a 50% chance of earning each ACT WorkKeys NCRC level or higher are: 13 for Bronze, 17 for Silver, 22 for Gold, and 27 for Platinum. Based on those cut scores, students who earned an ACT Composite score of less than 13 would be classified as “Needs Improvement,” 13 to 16 as “Bronze,” 17 to 21 as “Silver,” and 22 or above as “Gold or Higher.”

## Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2019 ACT-tested New Jersey high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2019 graduating class would result in:
  - 53 more students enrolling in college.
  - 62 more students persisting to year two.
  - 36 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - 61 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - 72 more students persisting to year four.
  - 79 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In New Jersey, 11,066 of the 2019 graduates (42.1 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 26.1, compared to an average of 22.9 for 15,200 of the 2019 graduates (57.9 percent) who took the ACT only once.
  - Nationwide, 765,568 of the 2019 graduates (42.9 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.7, compared to an average of 19.2 for 1,017,252 of the 2019 graduates (57.1 percent) who took the ACT only once.
- 19,053 score reports were sent to colleges by 2019 New Jersey ACT-tested graduates.
  - 5,778 score reports were sent to in-state public colleges by 2019 New Jersey ACT-tested graduates.
  - For New Jersey’s 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were Rutgers University, Montclair State University, Rowan University, the College of New Jersey, and Seton Hall University.
  - For New Jersey’s 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were the University of Delaware, New York University, and Pennsylvania State University.

- Compared to 66 percent of 2019 graduates nationally, 61 percent of New Jersey graduates opted into the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS). EOS is a free service that allows students to gain exposure to recruitment, scholarship agencies, colleges, and universities that students may not have accessed on their own. The ACT Get Your Name in the Game initiative encourages colleges and universities to recruit underserved EOS participants to increase access and opportunity for all.
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, ACT issued 4,712 ACT fee waivers to qualified New Jersey students across all grades. However, 1,451 students (30.8 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 487,749 waivers issued nationally, of which 135,569 (27.8 percent) students did not take advantage. This represents a great opportunity for high schools within the state to increase the socioeconomic diversity of its students tested.

## Postsecondary Aspirations

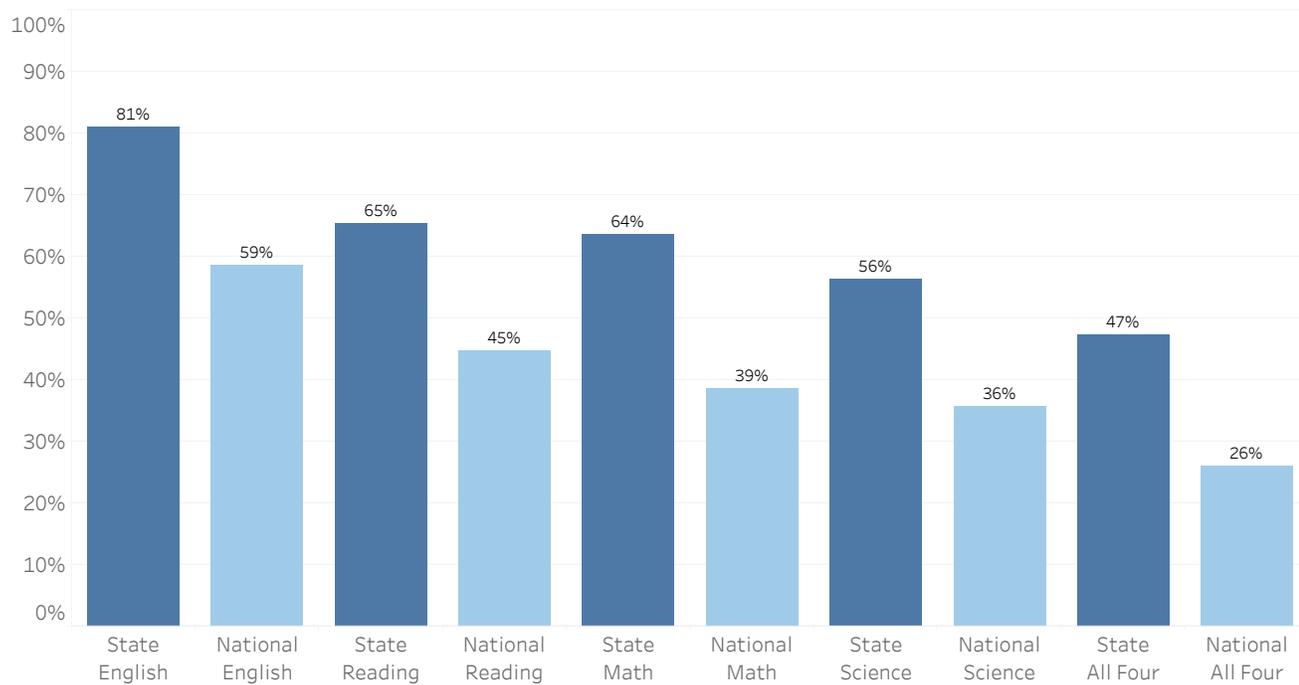
- Aspirations matter. Students who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education typically achieve higher ACT Composite scores.
  - 12,674 students (48 percent) aspired to attain a graduate or professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 25.9.
  - 9,073 students (35 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 22.4.
- In the New Jersey graduating class of 2019, 1,895 students (7 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2019 New Jersey graduates were: Undecided; Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Biology, General; Business Administration and Management, General; and Nursing, Registered (BS/RN).
  - In the New Jersey graduating class of 2019, 5,282 students (20 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 24.6. Decision making regarding college major can be facilitated through activities included in ACT Aspire and PreACT testing experiences. In addition, the Student Score Report is a valuable tool for conversations using the College and Career Planning and Interest-Major Fit sections.
  - In the New Jersey graduating class of 2019, 814 (3 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 21.1.

## Additional Points

- The New Jersey ACT State Organization continues to grow in membership and in diversity, with more than 130 members from across the state. The membership includes educators from state agencies, K-12, access, and postsecondary institutions, as well as members involved in workforce development.
- In 2019, ACT honored College and Career Readiness Champions in most states. The New Jersey honorees were:
  - Chelsea Castillo, high school senior, Union City High School; Christina Moeller, AVID elective teacher, Hazlet Middle School; and Edem Tetteh, dean of STEM, Rowan College at Burlington County.
- According to the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest-growing careers in New Jersey requiring education beyond high school are: mathematicians, physician assistants, massage therapists, nurse practitioners, and occupational therapy assistants.

# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\* by Subject



Data From Graph Above

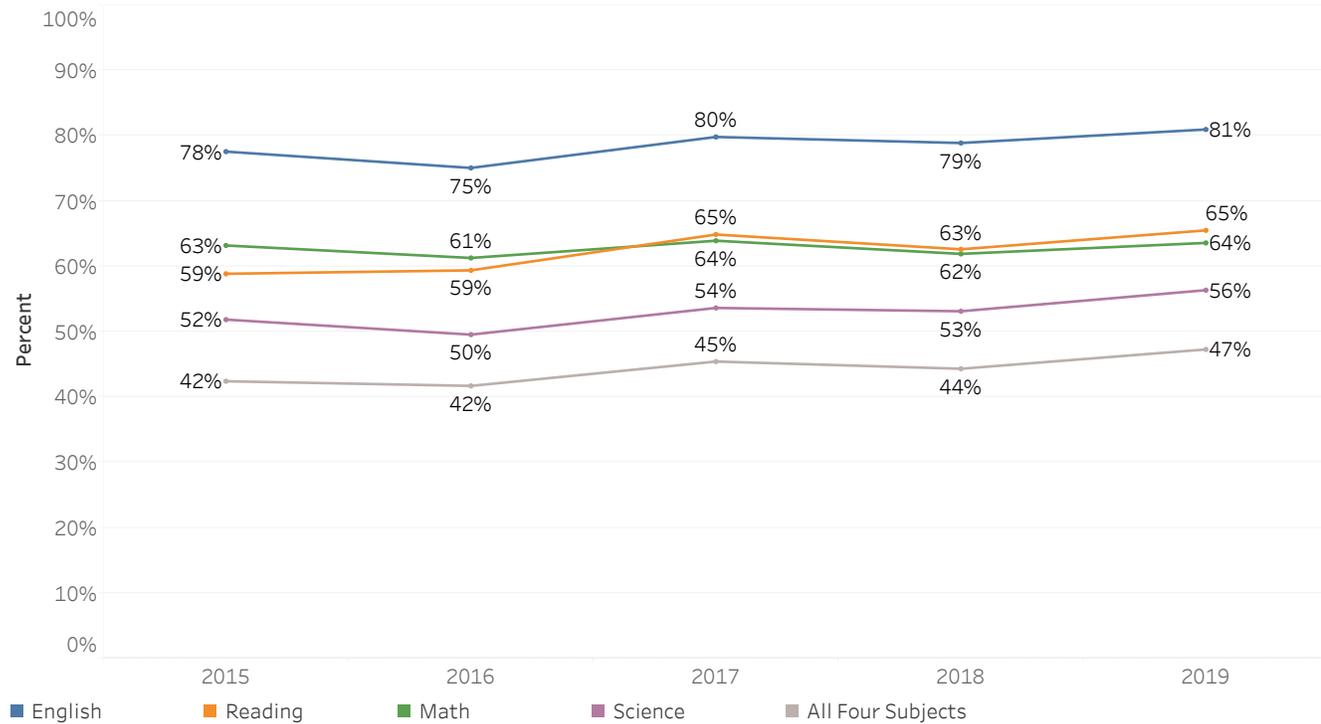
State English	National English	State Reading	National Reading	State Math	National Math	State Science	National Science	State All Four	National All Four
81%	59%	65%	45%	64%	39%	56%	36%	47%	26%

\* The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Throughout this report, benchmark attainment corresponds with students meeting or exceeding 18 in English, 22 in Reading, 22 in Math and 23 in Science.

Note, missing data points in tables and graphs reflect insufficient data for reporting.

# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



## Data From Graph Above

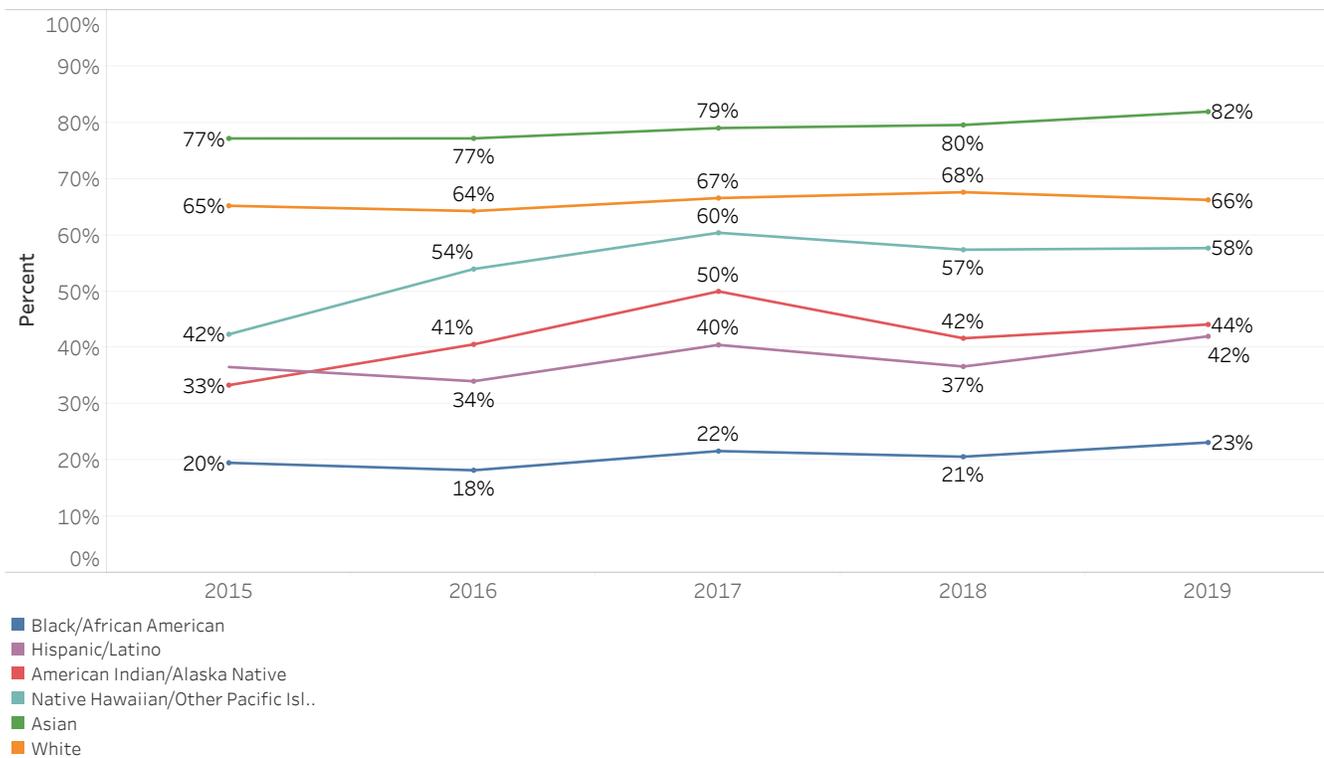
	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four Subjects
2015	78%	59%	63%	52%	42%
2016	75%	59%	61%	50%	42%
2017	80%	65%	64%	54%	45%
2018	79%	63%	62%	53%	44%
2019	81%	65%	64%	56%	47%

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# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



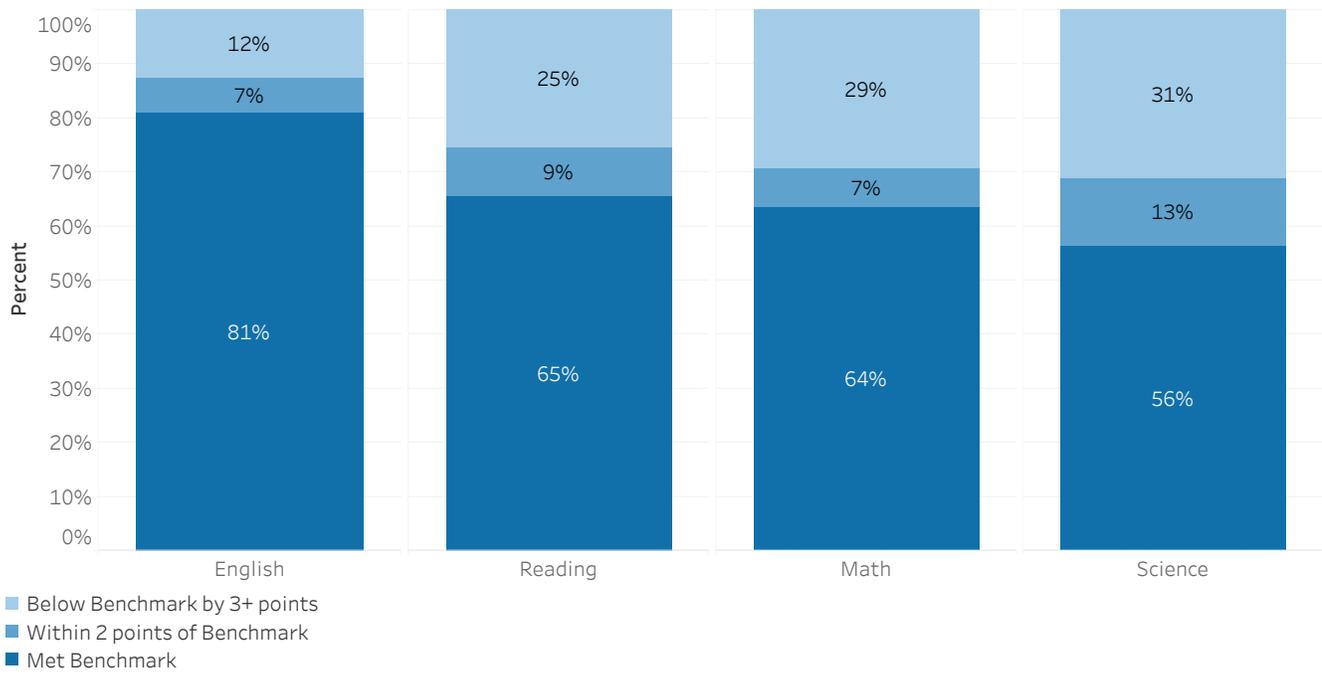
## Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	American Indian/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Asian	White
2015	20%	37%	33%	42%	77%	65%
2016	18%	34%	41%	54%	77%	64%
2017	22%	40%	50%	60%	79%	67%
2018	21%	37%	42%	57%	80%	68%
2019	23%	42%	44%	58%	82%	66%

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# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



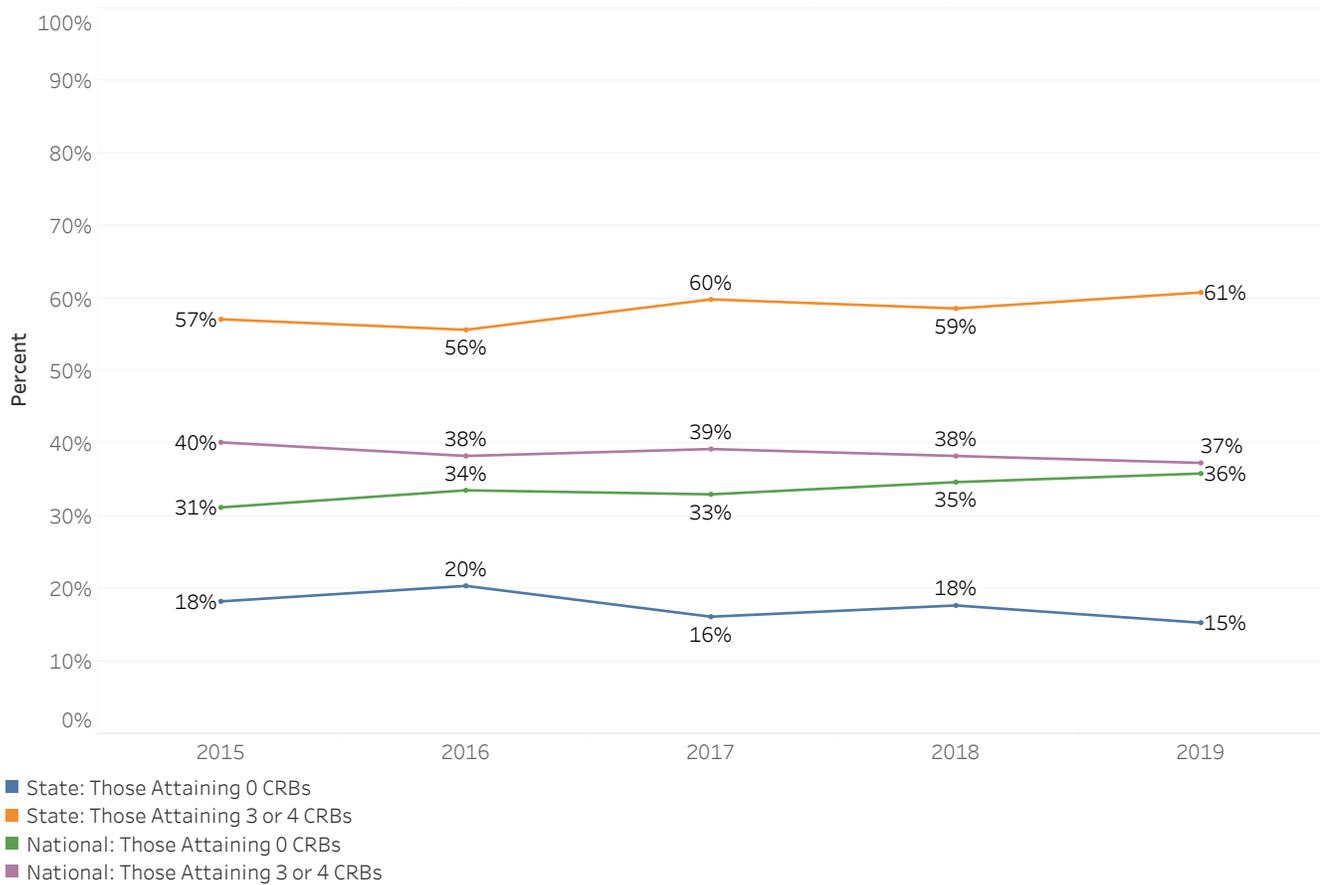
## Data From Graph Above

	Below Benchmark by 3+ points	Within 2 points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	12%	7%	81%
Math	29%	7%	64%
Reading	25%	9%	65%
Science	31%	13%	56%

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Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



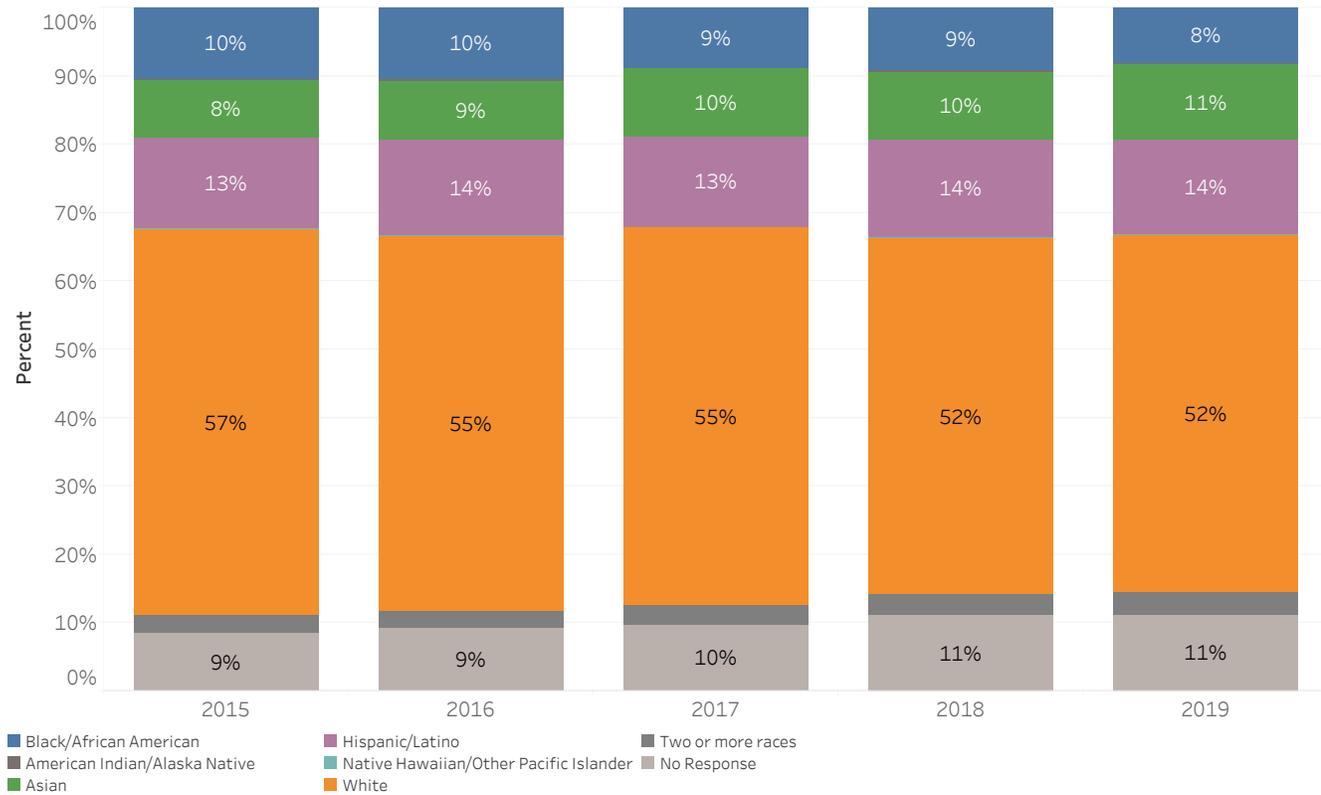
## Data from Graph Above

	State: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	State: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
2015	18%	57%	31%	40%
2016	20%	56%	34%	38%
2017	16%	60%	33%	39%
2018	18%	59%	35%	38%
2019	15%	61%	36%	37%

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# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or more races	No Response
2015	10%	0%	8%	13%	0%	57%	3%	9%
2016	10%	0%	9%	14%	0%	55%	3%	9%
2017	9%	0%	10%	13%	0%	55%	3%	10%
2018	9%	0%	10%	14%	0%	52%	3%	11%
2019	8%	0%	11%	14%	0%	52%	3%	11%

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# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

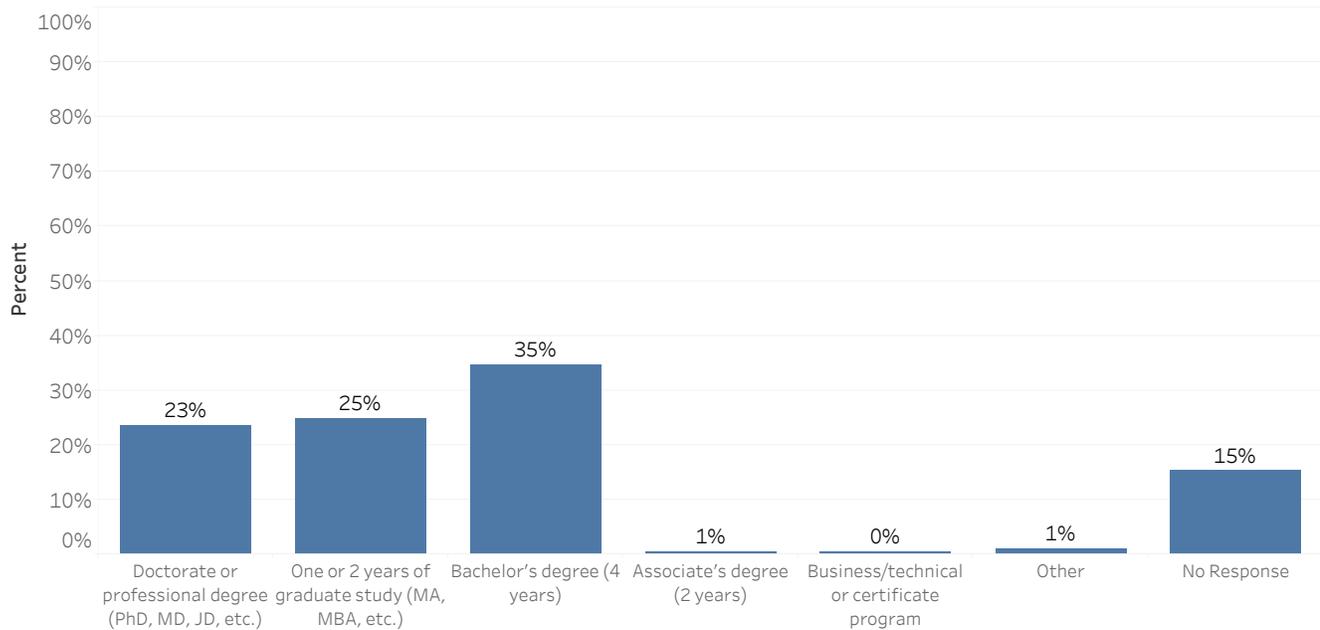
## Student Data Trends: 2015-2019, State vs. Nation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
State N-count	30,263	33,646	35,257	32,590	26,266
National N-count	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038	1,914,817	1,782,820
Average ACT English Score - State	22.9	22.7	23.8	23.8	24.3
Average ACT English Score - National	20.4	20.1	20.3	20.2	20.1
Average ACT Reading Score - State	23.3	23.5	24.1	24.0	24.6
Average ACT Reading Score - National	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.2
Average ACT Math Score - State	23.7	23.3	23.8	23.6	24.0
Average ACT Math Score - National	20.8	20.6	20.7	20.5	20.4
Average ACT Science Score - State	22.6	22.5	23.2	23.0	23.6
Average ACT Science Score - National	20.9	20.8	21.0	20.7	20.6
Average ACT Composite Score - State	23.2	23.1	23.9	23.7	24.2
Average ACT Composite Score - National	21.0	20.8	21.0	20.8	20.7

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# NEW JERSEY College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



## Data From Graph Above

	% of Graduates
Doctorate or professional degree (PhD, MD, JD, etc.)	23%
One or 2 years of graduate study (MA, MBA, etc.)	25%
Bachelor's degree (4 years)	35%
Associate's degree (2 years)	1%
Business/technical or certificate program	0%
Other	1%
No Response	15%

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