## The Condition of College & Career Readiness

This report looks at the achievement of the ACT®-tested 2017 graduating class relative to college and career readiness. A total of 60% of students in the 2017 US graduating class took the ACT® test, compared to 64% last year, 54% in 2013, and 42% in 2007. The growing percentage of the nation's graduates taking the ACT over the past decade has enhanced the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to providing information and solutions to support the following:

- **Holistic view of readiness.** The ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness is only one of multiple domains critical in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Social and emotional learning skills (SEL) are also vital. Behavioral skills, cross-cutting capabilities, and navigational skills should be measured and addressed. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive picture of student readiness for success after high school.

- **Meaningful data for better decisions.** ACT is focused on providing better data to students, parents, schools, districts, and states so that all can make more informed decisions to improve educational outcomes. We accomplish this goal by taking a holistic view and using consistent and reliable historical information so that individuals and institutions have a better context to make critical decisions about the journey they have undertaken.

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017

## New Mexico Key Findings

## Performance

- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 13,523 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 13,423 in 2013.
- New Mexico graduates of 2017 had an average Composite score of 19.7, compared to the national average of 21.0.
  - ~ Compared to the 2017 New Mexico graduating class Composite average of 19.7, New Mexico graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 19.9 and 19.9, respectively.
  - ~ Since 2013, Hispanic/Latino students increased to 54 percent of the tested population, which is a record high percentage, while maintaing an average ACT Composite score of near 18.8.
  - ~ White students (3,318) who participated in the ACT in 2017 achieved a record-high average ACT Composite score of 22.7.
- In 2017, 18 percent of New Mexico graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 19 and 19 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2017, 50 percent of New Mexico graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 53 and 56 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2017, 29 percent of New Mexico graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 31 and 33 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2017, 39 percent of New Mexico graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 39 and 38 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2017, 28 percent of New Mexico graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 28 and 29 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.

## STEM

- In 2017, 7,725 New Mexico graduates (57 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2017 New Mexico graduating class STEM average of 20.0, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM averages of 20.0 and 20.2, respectively.
- Compared to 12 percent of 2017 New Mexico graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 13 and 13, respectively.

## Career Readiness

- In 2017, 2,266 New Mexico graduates (17 percent) were likely to attain the Gold ACT WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® or higher, based upon ACT Composite score, compared to 538,392 (27 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, 25 for Gold, and 35 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 24 as "Silver," and 25 or above as "Gold or Higher." For comparison, individual student score reports classify those who scored 12 to 13, 14 to 17, and 18 and higher as making progress toward Bronze, Silver, and Gold certificates.

# Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2016 ACT-tested New Mexico high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2017 graduating class would result in:
  - ~ 29 more students enrolling in college.
  - ~ 34 more students persisting to year two.
  - ~ 32 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - ~ 56 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - ~ 39 more students persisting to year four.
  - ~ 42 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

# Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In New Mexico, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 20.8, compared to 18.5 for single-time testers.
- Nearly 42 percent of tested graduates waited until their senior year to take the ACT, which is far above the national rate of 17 percent.
- For New Mexico's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, Eastern New Mexico University, Central New Mexico Community College, and Arizona State University.
  - ~ For New Mexico's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were Arizona State University, Texas Tech University, and Fort Lewis College.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 83 percent of New Mexico graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 85 percent of African American students nationally, 87 percent of New Mexico African American 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 76 percent of American Indian students nationally, 89 percent of New Mexico American Indian 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 69 percent of White students nationally, 73 percent of New Mexico White 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 83 percent of Hispanic students nationally, 88 percent of New Mexico Hispanic 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 76 percent of Asian students nationally, 80 percent of New Mexico Asian 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ Compared to 77 percent of Pacific Islander students nationally, 89 percent of New Mexico Pacific Islander 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
- ACT issued 12,295 ACT fee waivers to qualified New Mexico students. However, 2,779 students (23 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 656,061 issued nationally, of which 181,092 (28 percent) did not take advantage. This represents a great opportunity for high schools within the state to increase the socio-economic diversity of their students tested. Note: This is the number of fee waivers issued for the state, not specific to this graduating class.
  - ~ ACT offers eligible students two fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity.
- During the 2017-2018 academic year, ACT is introducing English Language supports including extended time, word-to-word bilingual dictionary, and test directions in 12 native languages (including Spanish).

# Pipeline

- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 3,508 (26 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 590 (4 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.8.
- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 6,651 (49 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 18.9.
- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 1,756 (13 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 22.6.
- In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 3,160 (23 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.6.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 New Mexico graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Mechanical Engineering; and Criminology.
  - ~ In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 2,072 (15 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 19.8.
  - ~ In the New Mexico graduating class of 2017, 441 (3 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 18.9.

# ACT Footprint

- Number of administrations:
  - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 1,247
  - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 177
  - ~ ACT Engage®: 102
  - ~ PreACT®: 785
  - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 18,790

# Additional Points

- ACT conducted an ACT College and Career Readiness Workshop for New Mexico educators in fall 2016. The workshop was held at the Central New Mexico Workforce Training Center and was attended by 65 educators from across the state.
- ACT Partnerships in New Mexico: Gear Up New Mexico
- New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is providing ACT WorkKeys/Career Ready 101™, and ACT NCRC.
- Quay and San Juan counties are recognized as ACT Work Ready Communities. Eighty-seven employers and businesses in these communities recognize the value of a New Mexico residents holding an ACT NCRC.
- According to the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest-growing careers in New Mexico requiring education beyond high school are: Physical Therapists Assistants, Statisticians, Physical Therapist, and Nurse Practitioner.

# New Mexico College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity
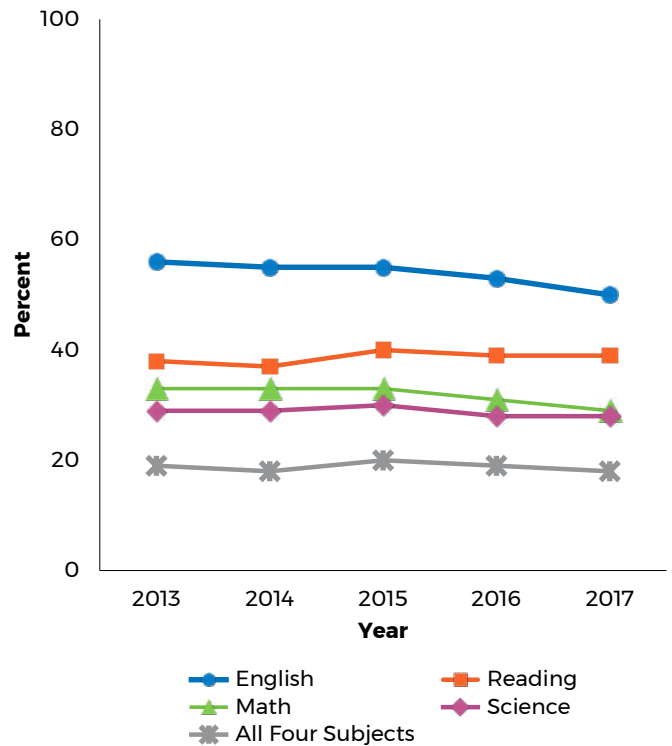
## Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject
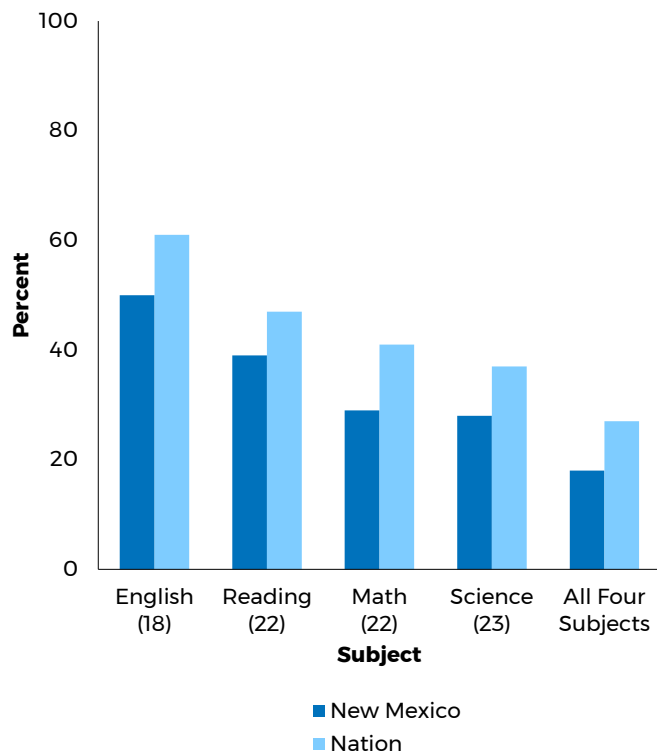


*Data from graph above:*

| State / Nation | English (18) | Reading (22) | Math (22) | Science (23) | All Four |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Mexico | 50 | 39 | 29 | 28 | 18 |
| Nation | 61 | 47 | 41 | 37 | 27 |

## Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks



*Data from graph above:*

| Subject | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 56 | 55 | 55 | 53 | 50 |
| Reading | 38 | 37 | 40 | 39 | 39 |
| Math | 33 | 33 | 33 | 31 | 29 |
| Science | 29 | 29 | 30 | 28 | 28 |
| All Four Subjects | 19 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 18 |

\* 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 score values in parentheses ( ).

**Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity***



Legend:
- African American
- American Indian
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White

**Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject**

Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



Legend:
- Met Benchmark
- Within 2 Points of Benchmark
- Below Benchmark by 3+ Points
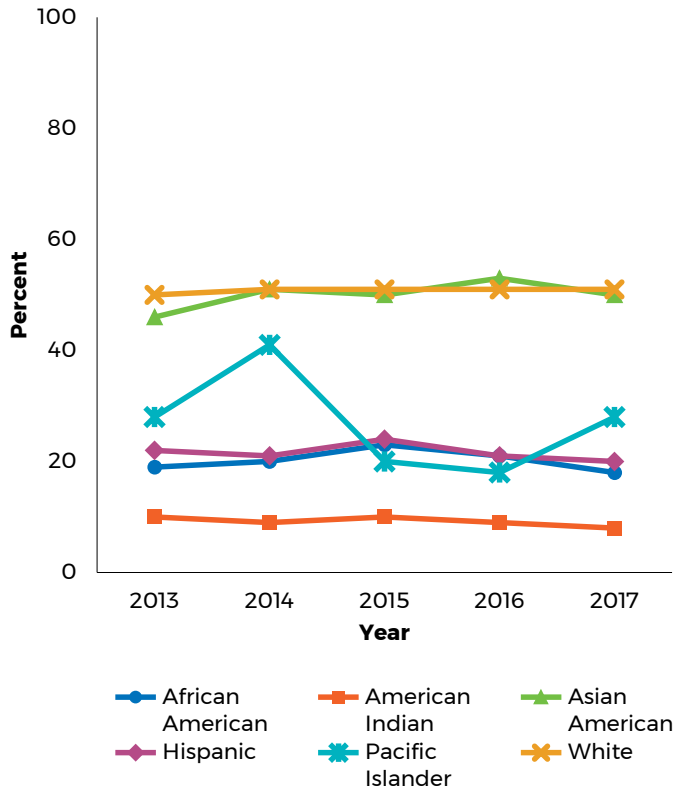
*Data from graph above:*

| Race | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| African American | 19 | 20 | 23 | 21 | 18 |
| American Indian | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| Asian American | 46 | 51 | 50 | 53 | 50 |
| Hispanic | 22 | 21 | 24 | 21 | 20 |
| Pacific Islander | 28 | 41 | 20 | 18 | 28 |
| White | 50 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
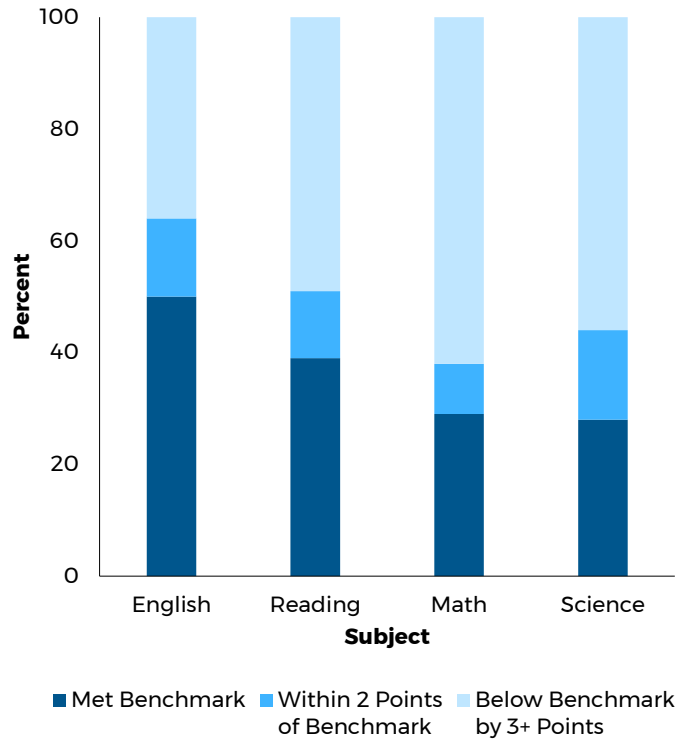
*Data from graph above:*

| Attainment | English | Reading | Math | Science |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Met Benchmark | 50 | 39 | 29 | 28 |
| Within 2 Points of Benchmark | 14 | 12 | 9 | 16 |
| Below Benchmark by 3+ Points | 36 | 49 | 62 | 56 |

* Percentages for groups with insufficient counts will be missing.

**Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained**



- New Mexico Students Attaining 0 CRBs
- New Mexico Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
- National Students Attaining 0 CRBs
- National Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
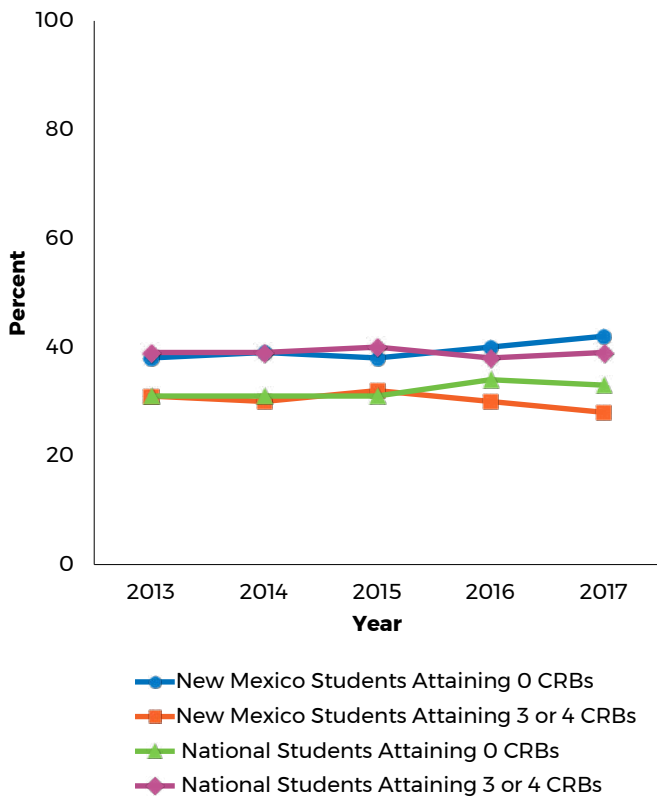
*Data from graph above:*

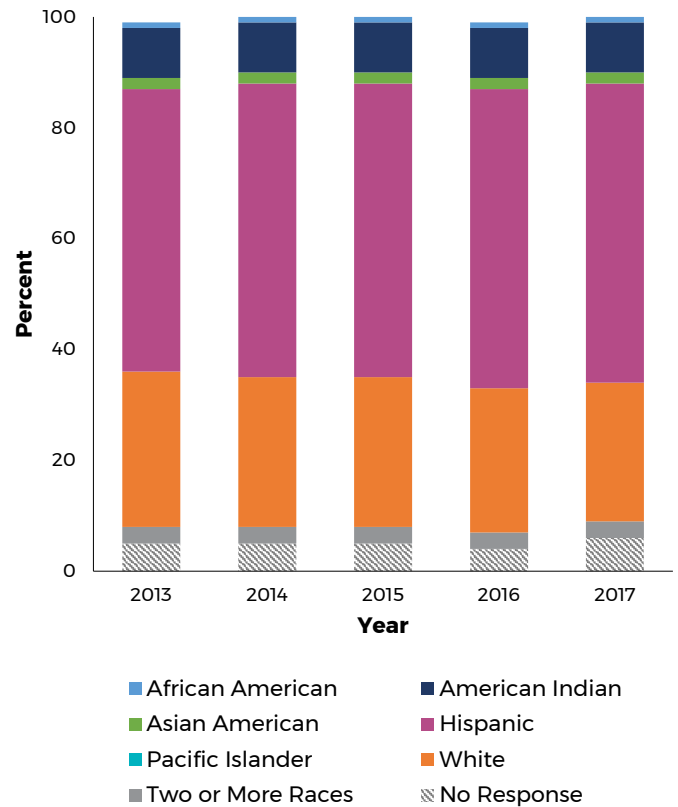| Attainment | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Mexico Students Attaining 0 CRBs | 38 | 39 | 38 | 40 | 42 |
| New Mexico Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs | 31 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 28 |
| National Students Attaining 0 CRBs | 31 | 31 | 31 | 34 | 33 |
| National Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs | 39 | 39 | 40 | 38 | 39 |

**Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity**

Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



- African American
- American Indian
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races
- No Response

*Data from graph above:*

| Race | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| African American | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| American Indian | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Asian American | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Hispanic | 51 | 53 | 53 | 54 | 54 |
| Pacific Islander | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White | 28 | 27 | 27 | 26 | 25 |
| Two or More Races | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| No Response | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 |

**New Mexico:** Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in New Mexico increased by 100 students (1 percent).

**Student Data Trends: 2013–2017, State vs. Nation**

| Outcome | Cohort | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percent Tested | New Mexico | 70 | 69 | 71 | 70 | 66 |
| | Nation | 54 | 57 | 59 | 64 | 60 |
| N Tested | New Mexico | 13,423 | 12,945 | 13,393 | 13,435 | 13,523 |
| | Nation | 1,799,243 | 1,845,787 | 1,924,436 | 2,090,342 | 2,030,038 |
| Average English Score | New Mexico | 19.0 | 18.9 | 19.1 | 18.9 | 18.6 |
| | Nation | 20.2 | 20.3 | 20.4 | 20.1 | 20.3 |
| Average Reading Score | New Mexico | 20.4 | 20.5 | 20.6 | 20.5 | 20.4 |
| | Nation | 21.1 | 21.3 | 21.4 | 21.3 | 21.4 |
| Average Math Score | New Mexico | 19.7 | 19.7 | 19.8 | 19.5 | 19.4 |
| | Nation | 20.9 | 20.9 | 20.8 | 20.6 | 20.7 |
| Average Science Score | New Mexico | 20.1 | 20.1 | 20.3 | 20.1 | 20.0 |
| | Nation | 20.7 | 20.8 | 20.9 | 20.8 | 21.0 |
| Average Composite Score | New Mexico | 19.9 | 19.9 | 20.1 | 19.9 | 19.7 |
| | Nation | 20.9 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 20.8 | 21.0 |

**Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations**

Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
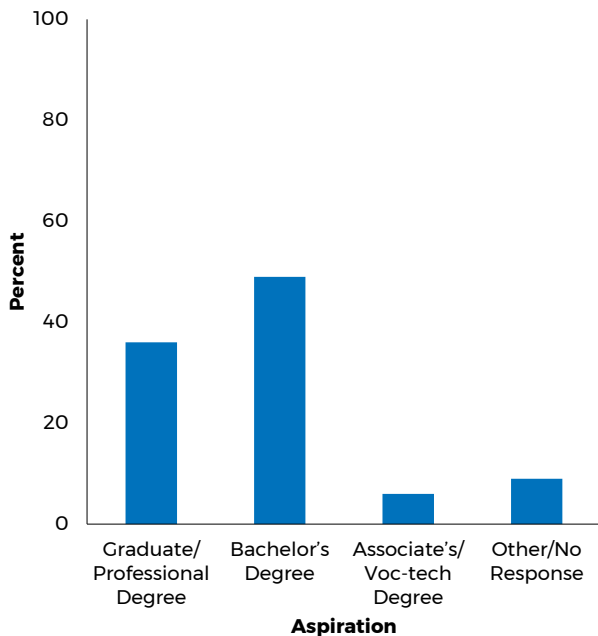


There is good news in that 91% of New Mexico's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 92% of New Mexico's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 70% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 2,968 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from New Mexico would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

*Data from graph*

| Aspiration | Percent |
|---|---|
| Graduate / Professional Degree | 36 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 49 |
| Associate's / Voc-tech Degree | 6 |
| Other / No Response | 9 |

## New Mexico State Exemplar
### 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

**Julian Garcia**

Los Lunas High School, Los Lunas Schools

*"I've been educated through as much luck as effort because I live in a community in which education seems to be a secondary matter. So the challenge I've faced is that of not being guided towards a proper, college preparatory, education."*

Julian has not let the limited options in his rural town deter him from his goal of attending college, and will be well prepared after taking every college-level course available to him in high school and interning at a local laboratory.

Julian plans to earn his bachelor's and then master's degrees in computer science while helping with the family trucking business.

# Information and products for further review

| | Knowledge & Skills | Social & Emotional |
|---|---|---|
| **Assessments** | ACT Aspire® | ACT Tessera™ |
| | PreACT® | ACT Engage® |
| | The ACT® Test | |
| | ACT WorkKeys® | |
| **Research** | Condition of College & Career Readiness | A Rosetta Stone for Noncognitive Skills |
| | ACT® National Curriculum Survey® | |
| | The Forgotten Middle | Tessera Comprehensive Theory of Action |
| | Rigor at Risk | |
| | ACT Holistic Framework™ | |
| **Resources** | PLDs Learning Description Review | Tessera Teacher Playbook |
| | Curriculum Review Worksheets | |
| | OpenEd Learning Resources | |
| | Test Prep | |
| **Training** | Professional Learning Sessions | |
| | College & Career Readiness Workshops | |
| | Holistic Framework Webinars | |

We are more than just the ACT test. ACT products and services encompass a variety of research- and assessment-based solutions.

As research leaders, we continue to innovate education and workforce solutions to help guide individuals to education and career success.

**Find out more at www.act.org.**

# Key ACT Research

As students navigate their education and career journeys, it is critical for them to be ready for college and career success.  College and career readiness is supported by the ACT Holistic Framework, a research-based, multidimensional model for understanding the essential knowledge and skills needed for success, and the solutions that can meet students' navigation needs. Visit **act.org/condition2017** to access key reports listed below.

- Serving students' navigation needs from kindergarten to career requires a holistic approach:
  - ~ *Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*
  - ~ *The Importance of Behavioral Skills and Navigation Factors for Education and Workforce Success*
- The ACT Holistic Framework is supported by prolific research:
  - ~ Core Academic Skills:
    - 2017 State and National *Condition* Reports
    - *Profiles of STEM Students: Persisters, Joiners, Changers, and Departers*
    - *ACT Composite Score by Parental Education Level, 2012–2016*
    - *Comparisons of Student Achievement Levels by District Performance and Poverty*
  - ~ Behavioral Skills (also called Social and Emotional Learning):
    - *The Development of Behavioral Performance Level Descriptors*
  - ~ Cross-Cutting Capabilities:
    - *ACT National Curriculum Survey 2016*
  - ~ Student journeys continue into postsecondary education and careers:
    - *Higher Education Research Digest*
    - *Predicted Attainment of ACT National Career Readiness Certificates for the 2016 ACT-tested High School Cohort*

# Recommendations

1. **Use a holistic assessment model for school accountability that measures student readiness for college and career across multiple domains.** While it is essential to measure students' academic achievement in assessing college and career readiness, it is not enough. Social and emotional learning skills are important and measurable, and they can be impacted. Assessment models should take into account core academic skills, behavioral skills, cross-cutting capabilities, and education and career navigation skills to provide an integrated picture of college and work readiness.

2. **Make special efforts to ensure that underrepresented students have equal access and opportunity to pursue postsecondary education.** According to ACT research, most underrepresented students want to continue their education after high school, but they face many barriers. Ensuring they have access to the same rigorous core curriculum as others is just one step. Many also lack the resources, information, and familial and peer support they need to prepare for success after high school. Special efforts must be made to level the playing field for underrepresented students so they have equal opportunity to succeed.

3. **Increase emphasis on STEM readiness initiatives, measures, and programs.** With technology advancing rapidly, the importance of STEM readiness is only increasing. The threat of robotic and computer-assisted technologies eliminating jobs is growing while the remaining and emerging jobs will likely require higher-level skills. ACT data continue to show that many graduates are not ready. Without improvement in STEM readiness, far too many will be ill-prepared for the future workforce.

4. **Focus on fewer, higher, and clearer learning standards in K–12 schools.** Far too many students continue to graduate from high school without all of the core skills they will need to ably succeed at the next level. Many will struggle, and many will likely fail to realize their aspirations. The push toward raising the bar on learning standards and focusing on the essential skills necessary for success must continue.

5. **Begin assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies early.** Early assessment and intervention are critical to improving educational outcomes. If students are not on track for college and career readiness by the time they reach middle school, it may be too late. Assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies to help students get on the right path for college and career readiness must begin in elementary school.

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