

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

South Carolina Key Findings

Performance

- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 50,936 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 20,868 in 2013.
- South Carolina graduates of 2017 had an average Composite score of 18.7, compared to the national average of 21.0.
- Compared to the 2017 South Carolina graduating class Composite average of 18.7, South Carolina graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 18.5 and 20.4, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Carolina graduating class English average of 17.5, South Carolina graduates in 2016 and 2013 had English averages of 17.3 and 19.7, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Carolina graduating class math average of 18.6, South Carolina graduates in 2016 and 2013 had math averages of 18.5 and 20.3, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Carolina graduating class reading average of 19.1, South Carolina graduates in 2016 and 2013 had reading averages of 19.0 and 20.8, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Carolina graduating class science average of 18.9, South Carolina graduates in 2016 and 2013 had science averages of 18.6 and 20.3, respectively.
- In 2017, 15 percent of South Carolina graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 14 and 22 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
 - ~ This equates to more than 7,600 graduates meeting all four benchmarks, which is 500 more than last year and nearly 1,900 more than two years ago.

STEM

- In 2017, 22,628 South Carolina graduates (44 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2017 South Carolina graduating class STEM average of 19.0, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM averages of 18.8 and 20.5, respectively.
- In South Carolina, 32 percent of graduates taking physics met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark, compared to 20 for students not taking physics.

Career Readiness

- In 2017, 7,351 South Carolina graduates (14 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 South Carolina 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:
 - ~ 111 more students enrolling in college.
 - ~ 131 more students persisting to year two.
 - ~ 115 fewer students needing remedial English.
 - ~ 205 fewer students needing remedial math.
 - ~ 145 more students persisting to year four.
 - ~ 152 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In South Carolina, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 21.4, compared to 17.6 for single-time testers.
- For South Carolina's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were Clemson University, University of South Carolina-Columbia, College of Charleston, Coastal Carolina University, and Winthrop University.
 - ~ For South Carolina's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and University of Georgia.
 - ~ 64.2%, or 1,222, of all unused fee waivers were issued to African Americans.
- The ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) is a free service that allows for students to receive free exposure, for recruiting purposes, to scholarship agencies, colleges, and universities.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 80 percent of South Carolina graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ For South Carolina, this is an increase from 79.1% last year.
- Compared to 85 percent of African American students nationally, 87 percent of South Carolina African American 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
- Compared to 69 percent of White students nationally, 79 percent of South Carolina White 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
- Compared to 83 percent of Hispanic students nationally, 85 percent of South Carolina Hispanic 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
- ACT issued 6,946 ACT fee waivers to qualified South Carolina students. However, 1,904 students (27 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. Fee waivers represent a great opportunity for students with socio-economic challenges to retest without incurring any fees. Note: This is the number of fee waivers issued for the state, not specific to this graduating class.

Pipeline

- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 10,420 (20 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 8,918 (18 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.2.
- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 5,560 (11 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 22.0.
- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 19,648 (39 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 18.6.
- In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 3,821 (8 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.4.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 South Carolina graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Business Administration and Management, General; Medicine (Pre-Medicine); and Biology, General.
 - ~ In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 2,795 (5 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 19.9.
 - ~ In the South Carolina graduating class of 2017, 2,441 (5 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 19.1.
 - Using PreACT in 10th grade will expose students to interest inventories at an earlier age and provide information to counselors to help guide career and major paths.

ACT Footprint

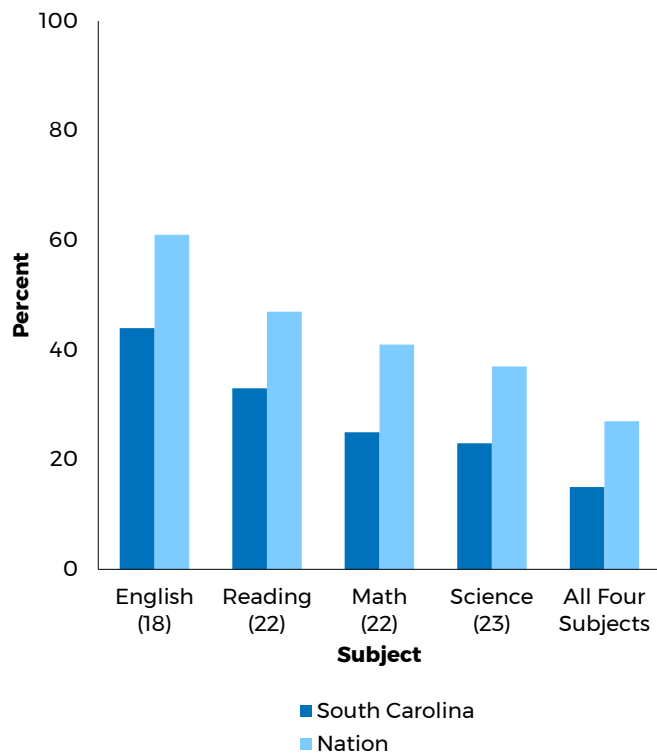
- Number of administrations:
 - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 10,969
 - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 919
 - ~ ACT Engage®: 2,184
 - ~ PreACT®: 10,049
 - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 133,184

Additional Points

- This year, ACT will host six ACT College and Career Readiness Workshops throughout the state.
- The 2016-2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign Honorees for South Carolina: Student Readiness—Brittany Moore (Wade Hampton High School, Hampton); College and Career Transition—JL Mann High School (Greenville); Career Preparedness—Florence-Darlington Technical College (Florence); Workplace Success—JTEKT/Koyo Bearings North America (Orangeburg).

South Carolina College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

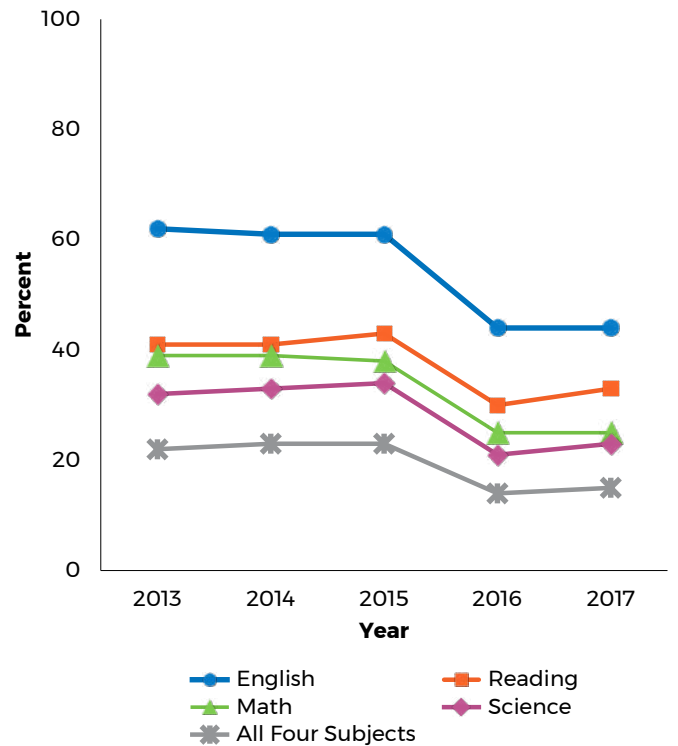
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject



Data from graph above:

State / Nation	English (18)	Reading (22)	Math (22)	Science (23)	All Four
South Carolina	44	33	25	23	15
Nation	61	47	41	37	27

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

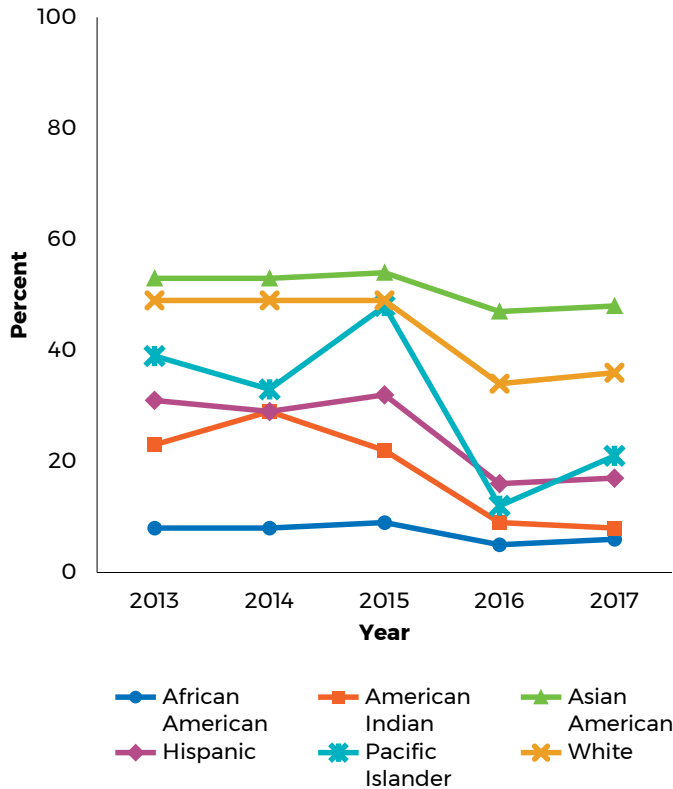


Data from graph above:

Subject	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	62	61	61	44	44
Reading	41	41	43	30	33
Math	39	39	38	25	25
Science	32	33	34	21	23
All Four Subjects	22	23	23	14	15

* 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*



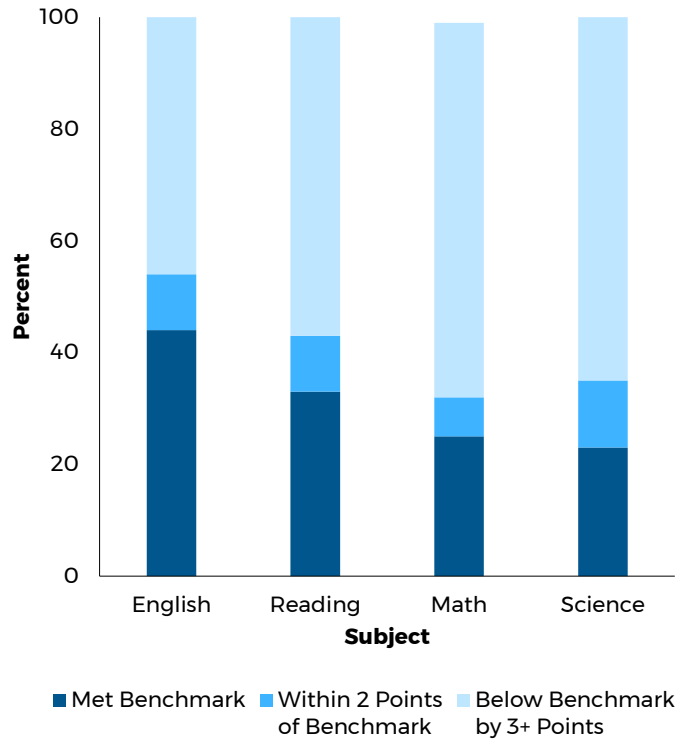
Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	8	8	9	5	6
American Indian	23	29	22	9	8
Asian American	53	53	54	47	48
Hispanic	31	29	32	16	17
Pacific Islander	39	33	48	12	21
White	49	49	49	34	36

* Percentages for groups with insufficient counts will be missing.

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

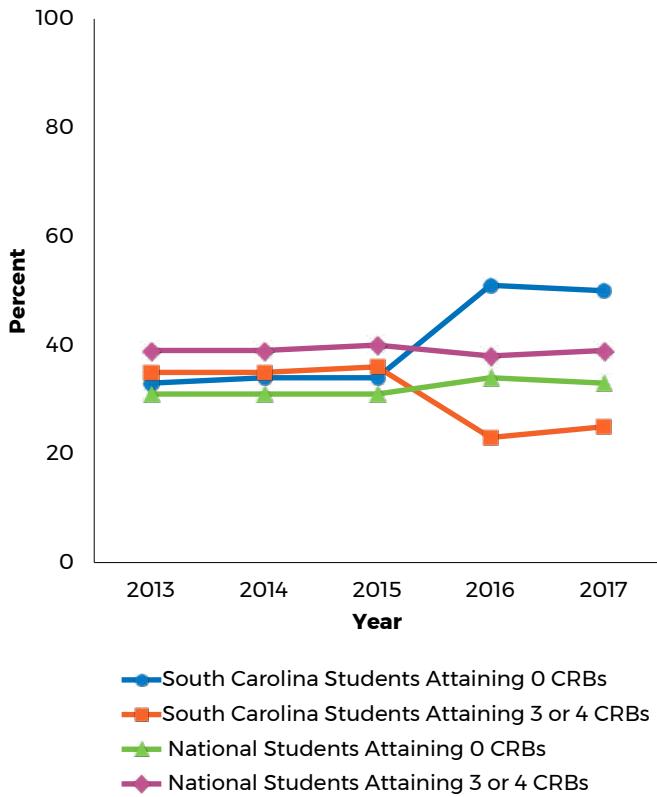
Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



Data from graph above:

Attainment	English	Reading	Math	Science
Met Benchmark	44	33	25	23
Within 2 Points of Benchmark	10	10	7	12
Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	46	57	67	65

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

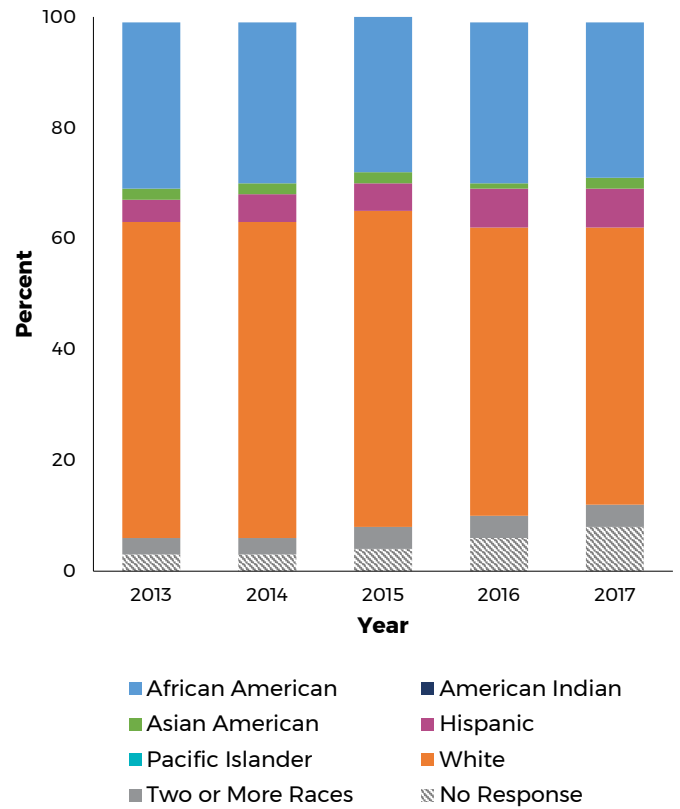


Data from graph above:

Attainment	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
South Carolina Students Attaining 0 CRBs	33	34	34	51	50
South Carolina Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	35	35	36	23	25
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.



Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	30	29	28	29	28
American Indian	0	0	0	0	0
Asian American	2	2	2	1	2
Hispanic	4	5	5	7	7
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
White	57	57	57	52	50
Two or More Races	3	3	4	4	4
No Response	3	3	4	6	8

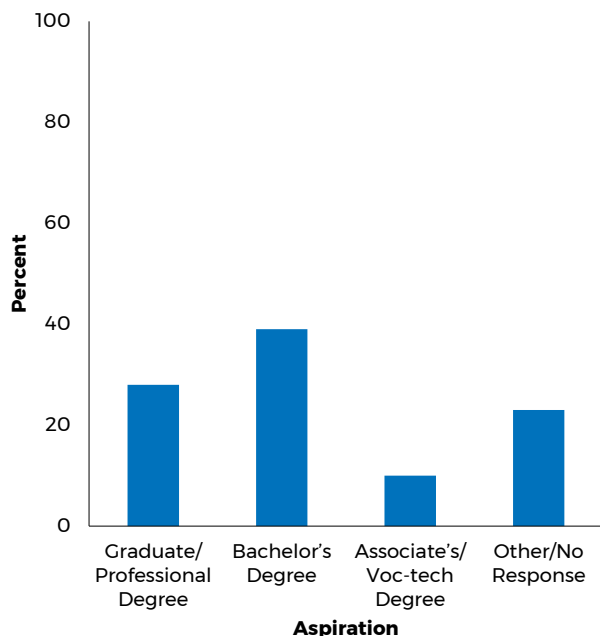
South Carolina: Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in South Carolina increased by 30,068 students (144 percent).

Student Data Trends: 2013-2017, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent Tested	South Carolina	51	58	62	100	100
	Nation	54	57	59	64	60
N Tested	South Carolina	20,868	23,232	25,151	51,098	50,936
	Nation	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038
Average English Score	South Carolina	19.7	19.7	19.8	17.3	17.5
	Nation	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3
Average Reading Score	South Carolina	20.8	20.9	20.9	19.0	19.1
	Nation	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4
Average Math Score	South Carolina	20.3	20.3	20.2	18.5	18.6
	Nation	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7
Average Science Score	South Carolina	20.3	20.4	20.4	18.6	18.9
	Nation	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0
Average Composite Score	South Carolina	20.4	20.4	20.4	18.5	18.7
	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 77% of South Carolina's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 83% of South Carolina's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 55% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 14,175 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from South Carolina would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

Data from graph

Aspiration	Percent
Graduate / Professional Degree	28
Bachelor's Degree	39
Associate's / Voc-tech Degree	10
Other / No Response	23



South Carolina State Exemplar 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

Brittany Moore

Wade Hampton High School, Greenville County Schools

“Since I was very young, I knew I wanted to be a doctor, and I worked hard so that I would one day be able to accomplish that goal.”

Brittany, a leader in her school marching band, has taken advanced classes throughout high school, including dual enrollment courses at the local technical college, in order to be prepared for college.

Brittany hopes to earn her bachelor’s degree in biological science or health science at the University of South Carolina or Clemson University, and then attend medical school in order to become a pediatrician.

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.