

## The Condition of College and Career Readiness

This report looks at the progress of the 2016 ACT®-tested graduating class relative to college and career readiness.

This year's report shows that **64%** of students in the 2016 US graduating class took the ACT test, up from 59% in 2015 and 49% in 2011. The increased number of test takers over the past several years enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness, as well as offering a glimpse at the emerging educational pipeline.

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

- **Holistic view of readiness.** The 2014 ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness is only one of four critical domains in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Cross-cutting capabilities, behavioral skills, and the ability to navigate future pathways are also important factors to measure and address. Together, these elements define a clear picture of student readiness for postsecondary education.
- **Providing 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 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 2016

## Kansas Key Findings

### Performance

- In Kansas, the percent of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks remained the same in one subject area and decreased from 2015 in three subject areas:
  - ~ Reading remained the same at 53%.
  - ~ English, mathematics, and science all fell 1% to 70%, 48%, and 43%, respectively.
  - ~ The number of students who hit all four Benchmarks also fell 1% to 31%.
  - ~ Note that in 2016, 24,488 students took the ACT, an increase of 780 students over 2015 and the largest number of test takers in the past five years.
- Relative to ACT Composite score and subject level scores, Kansas saw the following:
  - ~ Even as the size of the state's graduating class taking the ACT has grown, the average ACT Composite score has stayed the same (21.9). This is notable, as average scores tend to decrease with a broadening of the testing base.
  - ~ The average state Composite score, 21.9, currently exceeds the national average of 20.8. Kansas exceeds the national average in all four subjects.
  - ~ In Kansas, reading average score increased by 0.1 from 2015, while English and science stayed the same and math decreased by 0.1.

### STEM

- Kansas graduates who took advanced science and math courses show higher levels of achievement:
  - ~ Students who took physics earned significantly higher average ACT science scores and were more likely to meet or surpass the ACT College Readiness Benchmark in science than those who did not.
  - ~ Students who took a fourth year of math in high school, regardless of course, significantly outperformed those students who did not, in both ACT mathematics scores and in Benchmark attainment.

### Career Readiness

- This year, for the first time, ACT has provided an indicator of career readiness based on ACT composite scores. Table 3.4 in the state ACT Profile Report details how ACT-tested Kansas graduates are progressing toward the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®).
- Progress toward career readiness is based on research linking ACT Composite scores to ACT NCRC levels. The ACT Composite cut score for each ACT NCRC level corresponds to a 50% chance of obtaining that level. If a student's ACT Composite score surpassed the cut score for an ACT NCRC level, they are categorized as making progress towards the next higher ACT NCRC level. Attainment of ACT NCRC levels indicates workplace employability skills that are critical to job success.
- In Kansas, 79% of ACT tested graduates are considered making progress towards at least a gold ACT NCRC level. This compares to 68% nationally.

## Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2016 ACT-tested Kansas high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in the state average ACT Composite score for the 2016 graduating class would result in:
  - ~ 48 more students enrolling in college
  - ~ 58 more students persisting to a second year of college
  - ~ 43 fewer students requiring remedial coursework in English
  - ~ 82 fewer students requiring remedial coursework in mathematics
  - ~ 68 more students persisting to a fourth year of college
  - ~ 76 more students completing a bachelor's degree within six years

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- Testing patterns
  - ~ The percent of Kansas ACT-tested graduates who took the exam only one time, 36.5% (average Composite of 19.5), is substantially lower than the national average of 56.5% (average Composite of 19.4).
  - ~ The percent of Kansas ACT-tested graduates who took the exam twice, 31.4% (average Composite of 22.2), is higher than the national average of 24.7% (average Composite 22.2).
  - ~ In 2008 in Kansas, 54% of White students, 67% of Hispanic students, and 64% of African American students took their first and only test as a senior. By 2016 in Kansas, those numbers had dropped to 15.5% of White students, 22.9% of Hispanic students, and 23.1% of African American students taking their first and only test as a senior.
  - ~ For the past five years, White students have been the testing majority in Kansas; however, the percentage has been on the decline from 74% (17,635) in 2012 to 68% (16,564) in 2016.
  - ~ Over the past five years, the number of Hispanic graduates in Kansas taking the ACT has been on the rise: 2,367 (10%) to 3,328 (14%). With this increase in the number of Hispanic students taking the ACT, there has also been a slight decrease in the average Composite score during this period: 19.5 in 2012 to 19.2 in 2016.
  - ~ Of the ACT-tested 2016 graduates testing during their 10th-, 11th-, or 12th-grade years:
    - 32% of White students, 48.6% of Hispanic students, and 51.9% of African American students tested only once.
    - 68% of White students, 51.4% of Hispanic students, and 48.1% of African American students tested more than once.
    - 15.5% of White students, 22.9% of Hispanic students, and 23.1% of African American students took their first and only test as a senior
- Below are the top five colleges and universities to which Kansas graduates sent their ACT scores:
  1. Kansas State University
  2. University of Kansas
  3. Wichita State University
  4. Emporia State University
  5. Pittsburg State University
- University of Missouri–Kansas City is the out-of-state school that receives the most scores from Kansas students.
- Students can opt into the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) when they register for the ACT. EOS provides students with information about educational opportunities and scholarships by making their names available to colleges and scholarship agencies that meet EOS eligibility guidelines. While the national opt-in rate is 73.1%, the opt-in rate for EOS for Kansas is 75.7%.

- Since the beginning of ACT's "Get Your Name in the Game" initiative for underserved learners in 2015, 11 Kansas colleges and universities have accessed more than 1 million student names for outreach and recruitment into targeted postsecondary programs.
- Fee Waiver Usage
  - ~ In Kansas, there were 6,149 fee waivers issued and 4,780 of those were used. This equates to a 77.7% usage rate. The national rate was 74.5%.
  - ~ 24.3%, or 535, of waivers issued to Hispanic/Latinos went unused.
  - ~ ACT provides students fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity for students.

## Pipeline

- Only 6% of ACT-tested Kansas 2016 graduates expressed an interest in pursuing education as a major or career. Those students earned an average ACT Composite score of 21.2. The largest percentage, 18%—other than Undecided (19%),—expressed an interest in pursuing Health Sciences and Technologies.
- Aspirations matter. Students in Kansas who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education achieve higher ACT Composite scores.
  - ~ Graduates who aspire to a graduate degree earn an average Composite score of 24.6.
  - ~ Graduates who aspire to a bachelor's degree earn an average Composite score of 21.3.
  - ~ Graduates who aspire to an associate's degree earn an average Composite score of 17.6.

## ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
82,733	53,777	4,590	–	1,094*	29,787

\* PreACT refers to preorders for FY17.

*These are the number of each of these assessments delivered in the state and not reflective of the 2016 ACT-tested graduating class.*

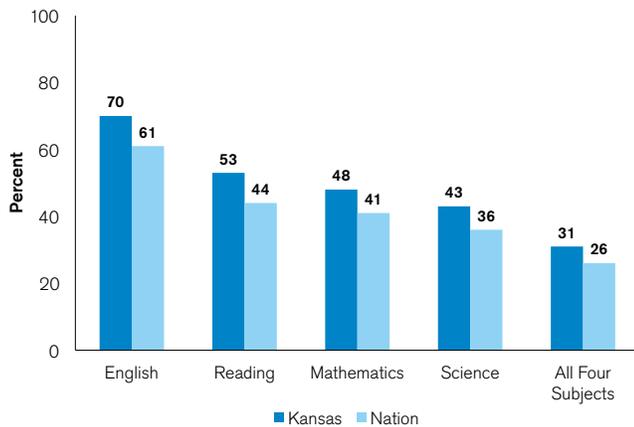
## Special State Talking Points

- In 2016, ACT honored exemplars in 41 states as part of our ACT College & Career Readiness Campaign. In Kansas, these honorees include:
  - ~ Student: Nhung Huynh Vuong from Wichita High School South
  - ~ High School: Lyons High School
  - ~ Two-Year School: Garden City Community College
  - ~ Career/Workforce: Crossland Construction Company (also chosen as the National Exemplar)
- In April of 2016, 152 educators participated in the Kansas ACT State Organization conference
- There are four counties that have gone public (Cherokee, Labette, McPherson, and Geary) with their ACT Work Ready Community initiative, and others are starting the process. Cherokee County is certified Gold.

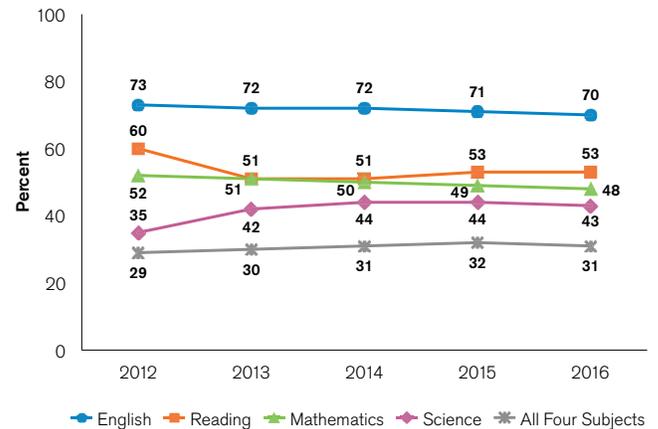
# Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Kansas

Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



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

\* ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in reading and science were revised in 2013.

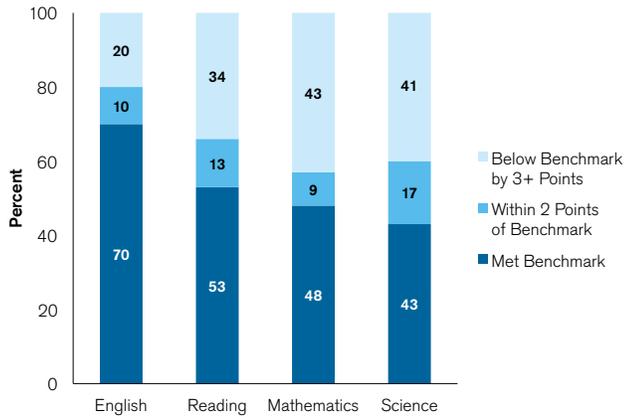
## Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in Kansas increased by 2.4%.

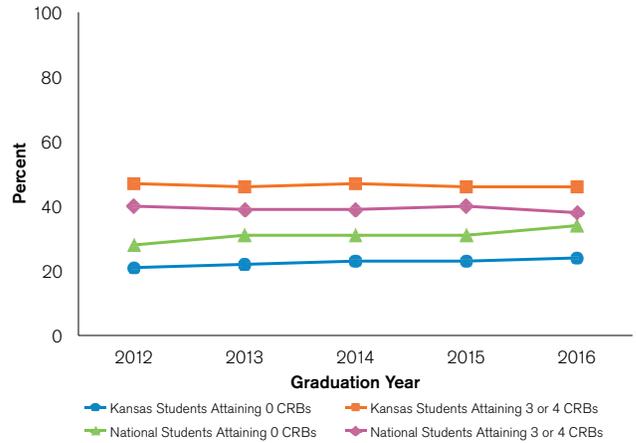
Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	Kansas	81%	75%	75%	74%	74%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	Kansas	23,907	24,268	23,924	23,708	24,488
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	Kansas	21.3	21.2	21.4	21.3	21.3
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	Kansas	22.3	22.3	22.5	22.4	22.5
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	Kansas	21.8	21.7	21.7	21.6	21.5
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	Kansas	21.7	21.7	21.8	21.8	21.8
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	Kansas	21.9	21.8	22	21.9	21.9
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

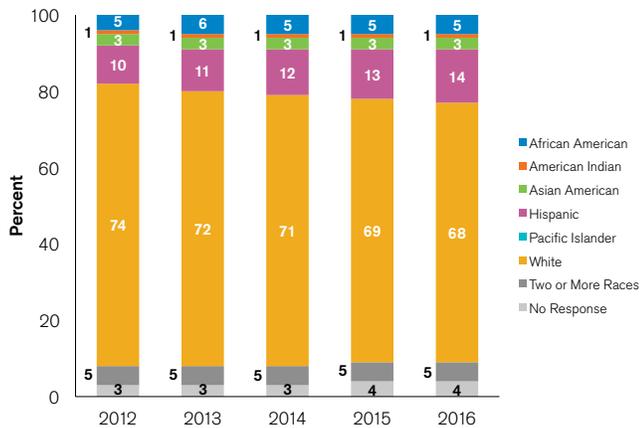
**Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject**



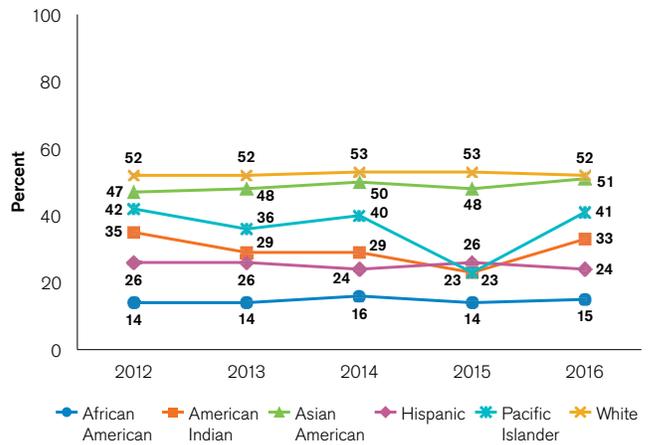
**Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained**



**Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity**

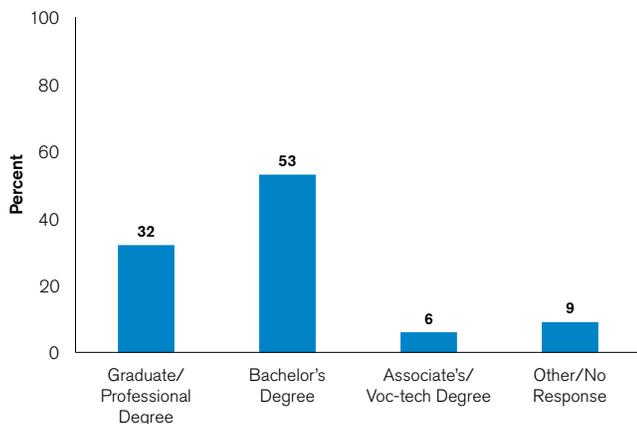


**Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity**



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

**Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations**



There is good news in that 91% of Kansas's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 93% of Kansas's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 71% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 5,034 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from Kansas would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

## What You Need to Know

At ACT, we are inspired every day to make a positive difference. Here are a few ways we are making an impact each day in the lives of students, teachers, education, policy makers, and workforce leaders.

### The ACT<sup>®</sup>

- Enhancements to ACT Score Reports starting in September 2016
- Introduction of ACT Kaplan Online Prep Live in September 2016
- New Score Reports

### Pre ACT<sup>™</sup>

- Affordable cost—\$12 per student tested for schools, districts, and states
- Flexible administration—Schools, districts, and/or states may administer on any date between September 1, 2016 and June 1, 2017
- Structured test environment—Similar to what the student will experience when taking the ACT test

### Online Prep Live

#### ACT<sup>®</sup> KAPLAN

- A virtual classroom experience that delivers all the benefits of ACT Online Prep, plus an interactive teaching experience
- Live learning experiences available at no cost to students who register for the ACT using a fee waiver
- Recorded sessions available on demand to provide maximum flexibility to students

### ACT<sup>®</sup> Aspire<sup>®</sup>

- New Performance Level Descriptors coming in August 2016
- More than 5 million ACT Aspire online assessments administered to US students since January 2016, a major milestone for the program and up by more than 130% compared to the previous year
- New Score Reports

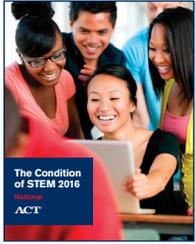
### ACT<sup>®</sup> Engage<sup>®</sup>

- Helps schools face the challenge of preparing students for success after high school. Read the latest white paper, *Identifying Skills to Succeed in School, at Work, and in the "Real World."*
- New Score Reports

### ACT<sup>®</sup> WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>

- Updated versions of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC) assessments and credential coming in summer 2017
- Fully updated ACT WorkKeys curriculum and test prep available in summer 2017 to support the updated ACT NCRC assessments
- Will include a new test delivery platform that will introduce features and functionality important to ACT WorkKeys customers

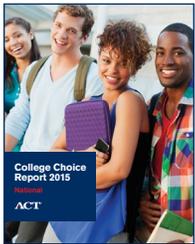
## Key ACT Research



### **The Condition of STEM 2016— Releasing November 2016**

This report provides national and state data about the 2016 graduating class in

the context of STEM-related fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) to determine student interest levels in specific STEM fields and, more importantly, readiness in math and science of those interested in STEM careers.



### **College Choice Report 2015**

This report follows the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2015, focusing on specific testing behaviors that

may expand college opportunities available to students. This is an important topic for enrollment managers and admissions officers to consider, as students' participation in these testing behaviors have implications for colleges' chances to recruit, advise, and place these prospective students.

## Recommendations

### **1. Create an assessment model that measures a variety of skill domains and competencies required for college and career success.**

Historically, college and career readiness assessments have focused only on academic skills. ACT research has clearly established areas of competency important for college and career readiness success. While our research shows that ACT solutions independently measure key components of college AND career readiness, we and others have begun to realize that no single solution can measure the full breadth of this readiness, nor should it. Simply put, the ACT alone is not enough to measure the full breadth of career readiness. A more holistic assessment model, incorporating multiple domains and specific skills associated with career clusters or occupations, will typically be most appropriate for describing and evaluating student readiness for college and career.

### **2. Optimize opportunities to influence awareness and engagement of underserved learners.**

Initiatives designed to aid underserved learners are only as effective as they are visible. We must inform advocates and ALL underserved learners about the available and effective programs designed for this purpose. For example, in the 2015–2016 academic year, approximately 730,000 students registered to take the ACT using fee waivers valued at more than \$36 million. Yet, not all eligible students took advantage of this offer. Similarly, institutions must use data to inform intervention strategies if they are going to help underserved students be prepared for postsecondary success.

### **3. Take the guesswork out of STEM.**

It is critically important to align STEM initiatives to capitalize on performance, measured interest, and expressed interest. Essential to this effort is expanding and nurturing interest in STEM, which will impact the emerging pipeline of STEM majors, teachers, and workers. This requires capturing a wider range of students and employing concrete measures to inform intervention and programming. To do so, states and districts must look for partnering opportunities from K–12 to postsecondary education to the workplace.

### **4. Focus on the implementation of fewer, higher, clearer, standards in K–12 classrooms to raise the bar for all students.**

No matter the adopted standards, proper implementation must focus on the most critical component for increasing readiness—effective, high-quality teaching. This requires investment in postsecondary teaching programs, professional development, and state-level collaboration among K–12 and higher education.

### **5. Don't over test students.**

When states, schools, and districts build an assessment strategy that recognizes the limits and promise of test scores, they will reduce the likelihood of over testing. Used ethically and appropriately, assessments can inform decisions at individual and institutional levels. Misunderstood, misused, or abused, assessments cause confusion, can be perceived as punitive, or result in ill-conceived strategies. To quote ACT founder E.F. Lindquist, "Assessment is valuable to the extent it bridges teaching and learning."