

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 Dakota Key Findings

Performance

- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 6,698 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 6,723 in 2013.
 - ~ In South Dakota, 80 percent of 2017 graduates took the ACT, compared to 60 percent nationally.
- South Dakota graduates of 2017 had an average Composite score of 21.8, compared to the national average of 21.0.
 - ~ Of the six states that tested 70 to 90 percent of students, South Dakota has the second-highest average ACT Composite score.
- South Dakota scores have been relatively consistent.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Dakota graduating class Composite average of 21.8, South Dakota graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 21.9 and 21.9, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Dakota graduating class English average of 20.7, South Dakota graduates in 2016 and 2013 had English averages of 20.9 and 20.9, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Dakota graduating class math average of 21.5, South Dakota graduates in 2016 and 2013 had math averages of 21.7 and 21.8, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Dakota graduating class reading average of 22.3, South Dakota graduates in 2016 and 2013 had reading averages of 22.4 and 22.1, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 South Dakota graduating class science average of 22.0, South Dakota graduates in 2016 and 2013 had science averages of 22.2 and 22.1, respectively.
- In 2017, 33 percent of South Dakota graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 33 and 32 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.

STEM

- In 2017, 3,663 South Dakota graduates (55 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
 - ~ Compared to a 2017 South Dakota graduating class STEM average of 22.0, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM averages of 22.2 and 22.2, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to 23 percent of 2017 South Dakota graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 23 and 22, respectively.

Career Readiness

- In 2017, 1,922 South Dakota graduates (29 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 Dakota 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:
 - ~ 13 more students enrolling in college.
 - ~ 16 more students persisting to year two.
 - ~ 13 fewer students needing remedial English.
 - ~ 22 fewer students needing remedial math.
 - ~ 19 more students persisting to year four.
 - ~ 21 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In South Dakota, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.6, compared to 20.6 for single-time testers.
- For South Dakota's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were South Dakota State University, University of South Dakota, Black Hills State University, Augustana University, and Northern State University.
 - ~ For South Dakota's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and North Dakota State University.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 69 percent of South Dakota graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ Compared to 76 percent of American Indian students nationally, 72 percent of South Dakota American Indian 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ Compared to 85 percent of African American students nationally, 80 percent of South Dakota African American 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ Compared to 69 percent of White students nationally, 68 percent of South Dakota White 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ Compared to 83 percent of Hispanic students nationally, 81 percent of South Dakota Hispanic 2017 graduates opted into EOS.
 - ~ The ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) provides an opportunity for students to connect with colleges and scholarship agencies while broadening their postsecondary options. EOS-enrolled students are typically selected by more than 16 colleges and universities, on average. The ACT "Get Your Name in the Game" initiative continues to help improve college access and increase opportunities for underserved students. In addition to impacting students, the program helps colleges build diverse and vibrant freshman classes.
- ACT issued 1,689 ACT fee waivers to South Dakota students who qualify. However, 536 students (32 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This represents a great opportunity for high schools within the state to increase the socio-economic diversity of their students tested.
 - ~ The two largest subgroups who received waivers were American Indian and White students. They had a 59.65 percent and 80.9 percent use rate, respectively.

Pipeline

- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 791 (12 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 1,123 (17 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 24.7.
- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 618 (9 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 24.6.
- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 3,801 (57 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.4.
- In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 450 (7 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 18.6.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 South Dakota graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Elementary Education; and Computer Science and Programming.
 - ~ In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 419 (6 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 21.0.
 - ~ In the South Dakota graduating class of 2017, 1,459 (22 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 21.6.

ACT Footprint

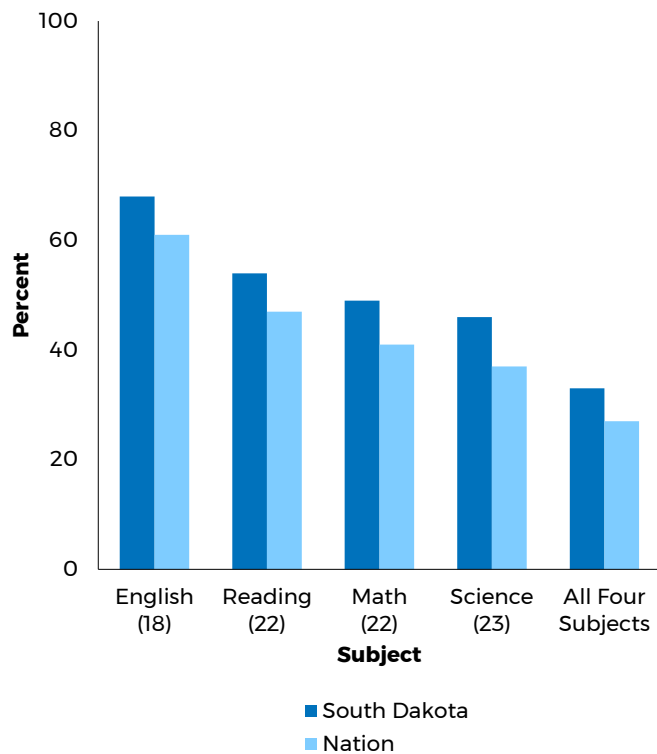
- Number of administrations:
 - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 1,754
 - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 593
 - ~ PreACT®: 1,551
 - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 13,711

Additional Points

- South Dakota Workforce Initiatives (SDWINS) includes the NCRC as one of their training opportunities for skilled jobs. Components include: Career Cluster Camps, expanded AP and dual credit sources, internships, remedial coursework (K-12), SD MyLife (career exploration), and University Student Success (designed to improve student success and retention, and increase the number of PS graduates).
- ACT partners with the Dakota ACAC Association for workshops across South Dakota each fall. In fall 2017, we will be in Aberdeen (September 6), Watertown (September 7), Rapid City (September 11), Pierre (September 12), Mitchell (September 13), and Sioux Falls (September 14).
- Some of the fastest-growing occupations in South Dakota include Nurse Practitioners, Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Computer Programmers (and computer-related occupations), and Brick/Stone Masons.
- The South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) and the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) offer juniors and seniors the opportunity to participate in the ACT NCRC. The number of students assessed is a local decision, and the initial cost is covered by the state. The ACT NCRC is also incorporated into the College and Career Readiness Indicator for the School Performance Index. This initiative can help students demonstrate they are ready for the workplace as they enter the workforce immediately after graduation or pursue postsecondary education.

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

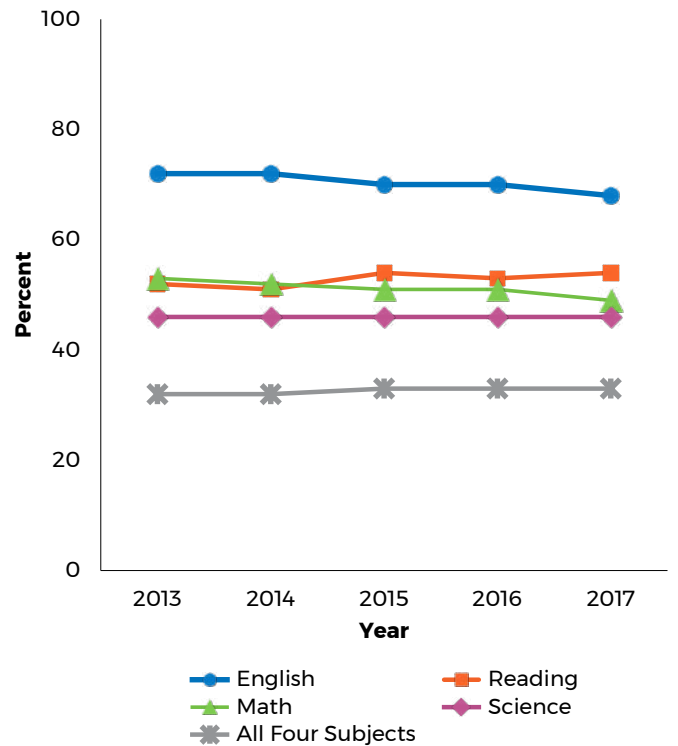
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject



Data from graph above:

State / Nation	English (18)	Reading (22)	Math (22)	Science (23)	All Four
South Dakota	68	54	49	46	33
Nation	61	47	41	37	27

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

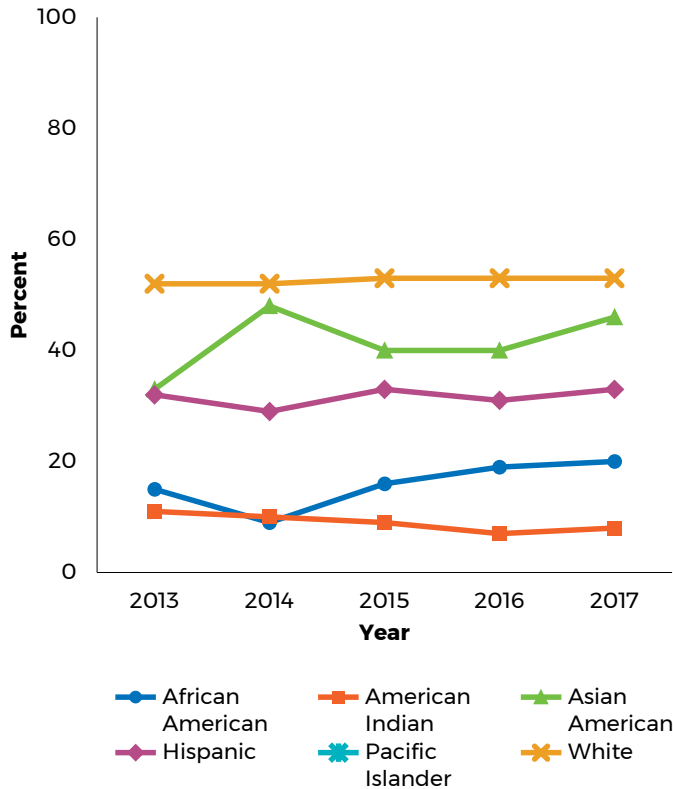


Data from graph above:

Subject	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	72	72	70	70	68
Reading	52	51	54	53	54
Math	53	52	51	51	49
Science	46	46	46	46	46
All Four Subjects	32	32	33	33	33

* 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*



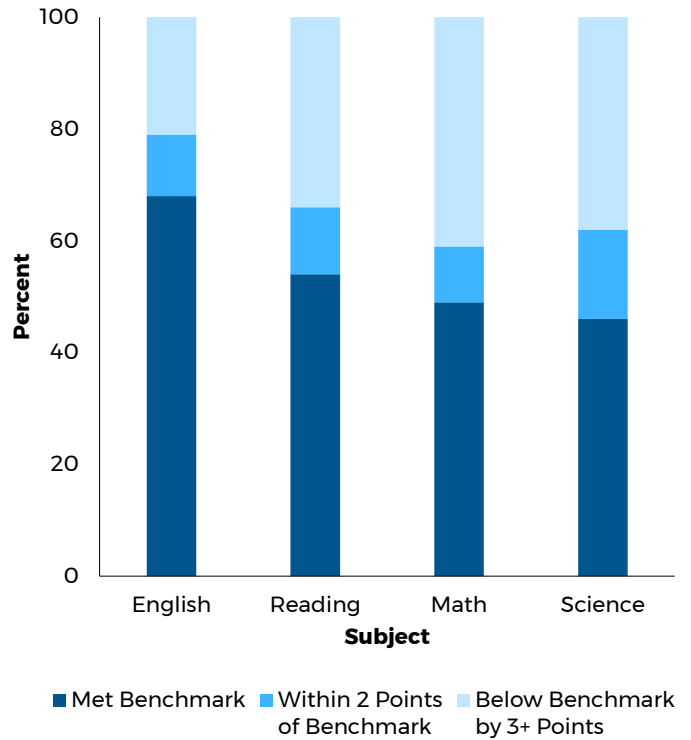
Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	15	9	16	19	20
American Indian	11	10	9	7	8
Asian American	33	48	40	40	46
Hispanic	32	29	33	31	33
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-
White	52	52	53	53	53

* 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

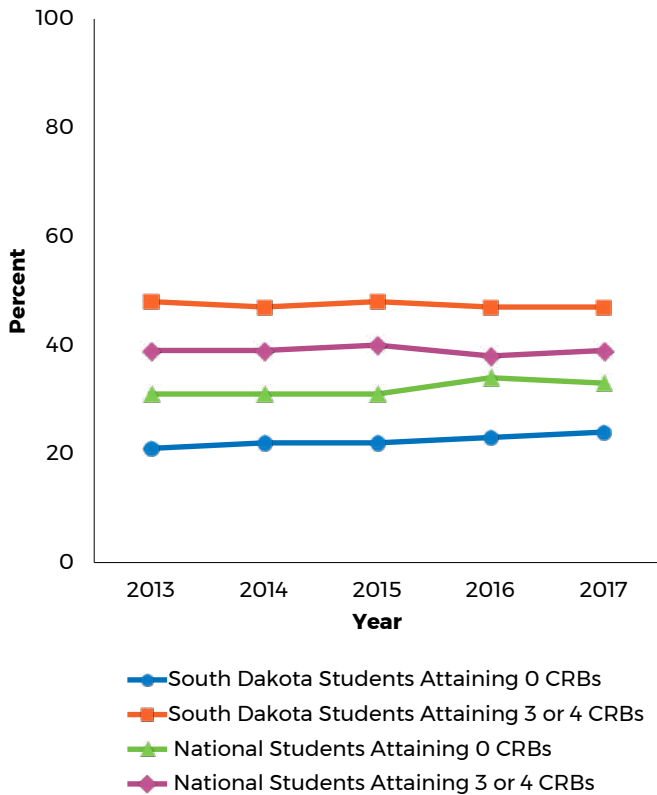
Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



Data from graph above:

Attainment	English	Reading	Math	Science
Met Benchmark	68	54	49	46
Within 2 Points of Benchmark	11	12	10	16
Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	21	34	41	38

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

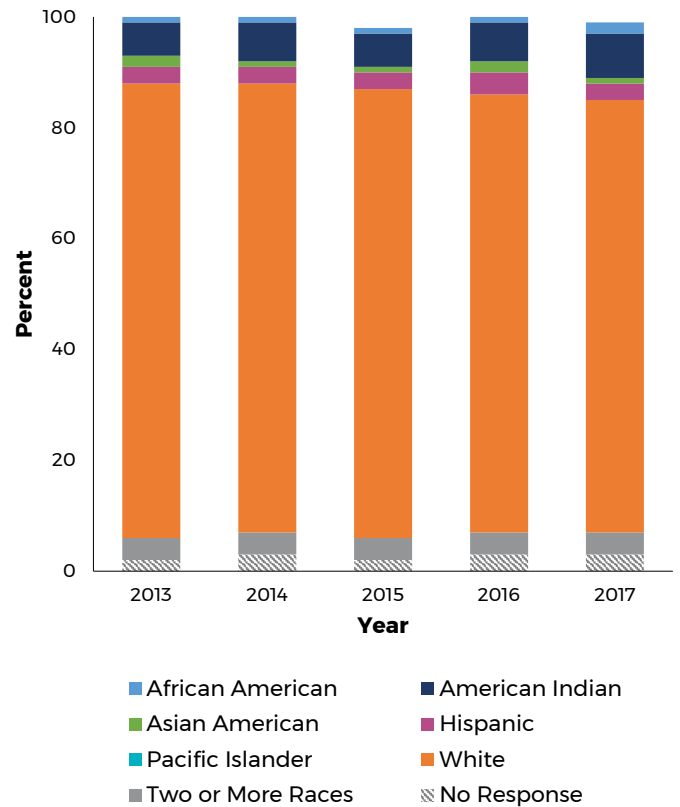


Data from graph above:

Attainment	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
South Dakota Students Attaining 0 CRBs	21	22	22	23	24
South Dakota Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	48	47	48	47	47
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	1	1	1	1	2
American Indian	6	7	6	7	8
Asian American	2	1	1	2	1
Hispanic	3	3	3	4	3
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
White	82	81	81	79	78
Two or More Races	4	4	4	4	4
No Response	2	3	2	3	3

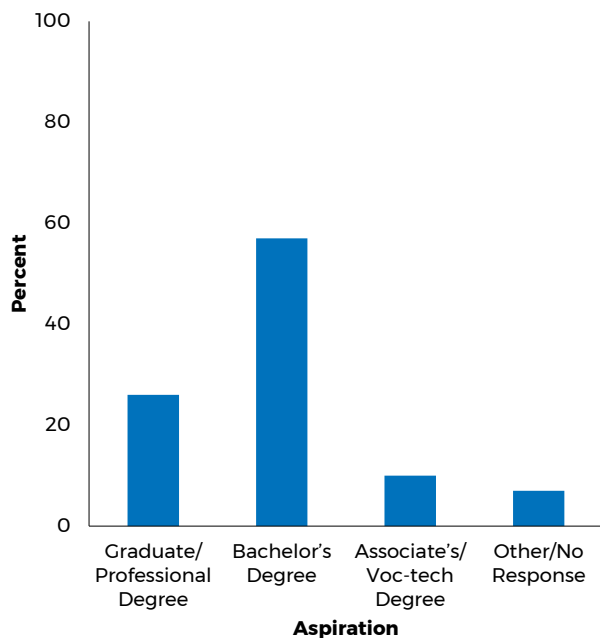
South Dakota: Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in South Dakota decreased by 25 students (0 percent).

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

Outcome	Cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent Tested	South Dakota	78	78	76	76	80
	Nation	54	57	59	64	60
N Tested	South Dakota	6,723	6,724	6,615	6,552	6,698
	Nation	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038
Average English Score	South Dakota	20.9	21.0	21.0	20.9	20.7
	Nation	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3
Average Reading Score	South Dakota	22.1	22.3	22.4	22.4	22.3
	Nation	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4
Average Math Score	South Dakota	21.8	21.8	21.7	21.7	21.5
	Nation	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7
Average Science Score	South Dakota	22.1	22.1	22.1	22.2	22.0
	Nation	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0
Average Composite Score	South Dakota	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.8
	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 93% of South Dakota's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 93% of South Dakota's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 75% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 1,193 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from South Dakota would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

Data from graph

Aspiration	Percent
Graduate / Professional Degree	26
Bachelor's Degree	57
Associate's / Voc-tech Degree	10
Other / No Response	7



South Dakota State Exemplar 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

Alyssa Bursott

West Central High School, West Central School District 49-7

“I was placed in a difficult scenario that I could not control, but I was successful. I pushed myself physically, intellectually, and emotionally.”

Alyssa ran her family farm, including taking care of 30 cattle, while her father fought, and ultimately lost, his battle against cancer. Despite this heavy load, she maintained straight A's while playing in band and on the varsity tennis and basketball teams. She has also taken eight college-level classes in high school and done high-level research, leaving her exceptionally well prepared to start college.

Alyssa plans to earn her bachelor's degree in neuroscience before attending medical school to become a surgeon. In college, she plans to continue her habit of interning and volunteering in local hospitals, and she hopes to work with the Peace Corps after graduation.

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.