

## 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

## Washington Key Findings

### Performance

- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 19,581 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 14,316 in 2013.
  - ~ There was a 15 percent increase in ACT-tested students, or 2,665 more students, compared to Washington's 2016 graduating class.
  - ~ In Washington, 29 percent of 2017 graduates took the ACT, compared to 60 percent nationally.
- Washington graduates of 2017 had an average Composite score of 21.9, compared to the national average of 21.0.
  - ~ Compared to the 2017 Washington graduating class Composite average of 21.9, Washington graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 23.1 and 22.8, respectively.
- In 2017, 36 percent of Washington graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 43 and 39 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ In 2017, 32 percent of Washington graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 21 and 20 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
  - ~ 55 percent of Washington 2017 graduates taking three or more years of math met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 8 percent of students taking less than three years of math.
  - ~ 52 percent of Washington 2017 graduates taking three or more years of science met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 17 percent of students taking less than three years of science.

### STEM

- In 2017, 9,796 Washington graduates (50 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2017 Washington graduating class STEM average of 22.2, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM averages of 23.3 and 22.9, respectively.
- In Washington, 58 percent of graduates taking physics met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark, compared to 28 for students not taking physics.
- For years 2013 and 2017, Washington graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had average science scores of 28.3 and 28.9, respectively.
- For years 2013 and 2017, Washington graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had average math scores of 28.8 and 29.2, respectively.

### Career Readiness

- In 2017, 6,996 Washington graduates (36 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 Washington 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:
  - ~ 38 more students enrolling in college.
  - ~ 45 more students persisting to year two.
  - ~ 32 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - ~ 55 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - ~ 52 more students persisting to year four.
  - ~ 57 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In Washington, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 23.8, compared to 21.0 for single-time testers.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 9,744 (50 percent) White students taking the ACT. This compares to 1,062,439 (52 percent) nationally.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 3,554 (18 percent) Hispanic students taking the ACT. This compares to 347,906 (17 percent) nationally.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 2,217 (11 percent) Asian students taking the ACT. This compares to 96,097 (5 percent) nationally.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 897 (5 percent) African American students taking the ACT. This compares to 256,756 (13 percent) nationally.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 271 (1 percent) Pacific Islander students taking the ACT. This compares to 6,503 (0 percent) nationally.
- Of Washington's 2017 graduating class, there were 161 (1 percent) American Indian students taking the ACT. This compares to 16,135 (1 percent) nationally.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 64 percent of Washington graduates opted into EOS.
  - ~ The ACT "Get Your Name in the Game" initiative provides postsecondary institutions and scholarship programs access to traditionally underserved students who opt into the EOS program free of charge.
- For Washington's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University, Central Washington University, and Eastern Washington University.
  - ~ For Washington's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were Brigham Young University, Brigham Young University-Idaho, and Stanford University.
- ACT issued 9,331 ACT fee waivers to qualified Washington students. However, 3,204 students (34 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.

## Pipeline

- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 2,891 (15 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 678 (3 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.4.
- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 7,613 (39 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.2.
- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 3,640 (19 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 25.4.
- In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 3,644 (19 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 25.1.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 Washington graduates were: Undecided; Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Business Administration and Management, General; and Computer Science and Programming.
  - ~ In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 3,875 (20 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 21.7.
  - ~ In the Washington graduating class of 2017, 688 (4 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 20.3.

## ACT Footprint

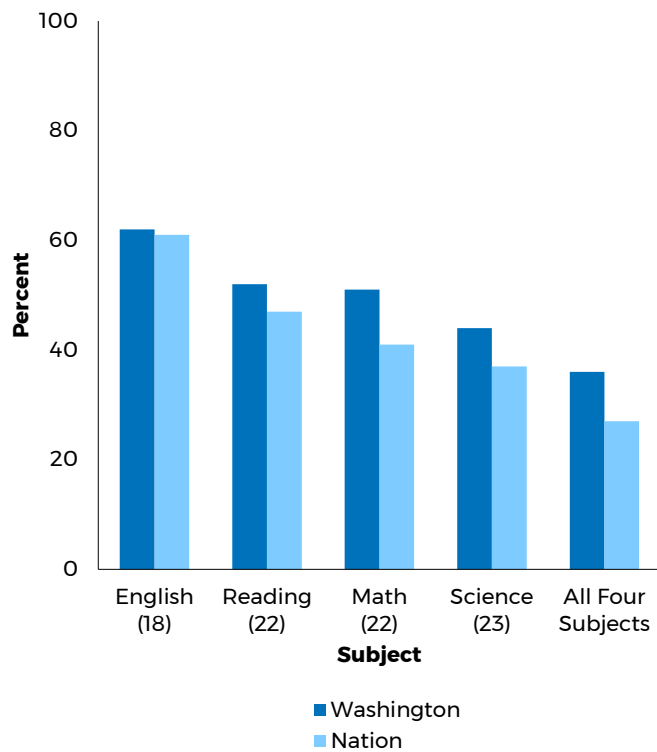
- Number of administrations:
  - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 108
  - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 171
  - ~ ACT Engage®: 184
  - ~ PreACT®: 4,844
  - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 1,855

## Additional Points

- ACT provided ACT College and Career Readiness Workshops for 108 K-12 administrators in western and eastern Washington. ACT also presented, exhibited, and participated in the Washington School Counselor Association, Washington Association of School Administrators/Association of Washington School Principals, and Washington Hispanic Caucus "Latinx" conferences, as well as the 2016 Pacific Northwest Association for College Admission Counseling Conference at St. Martin's University.
- 2017 Washington ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign exemplars:
  - ~ Student Readiness: Samuel Stringer, Skyview High School, Vancouver
  - ~ College and Career Transition: Science and Math Institute, Tacoma
- Based on the US Department of Labor, the top five growth occupations in Washington from 2014-2024 are: wind turbine service technicians, web developers, hearing aid specialists, chiropractors, and exercise physiologists.

# Washington College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

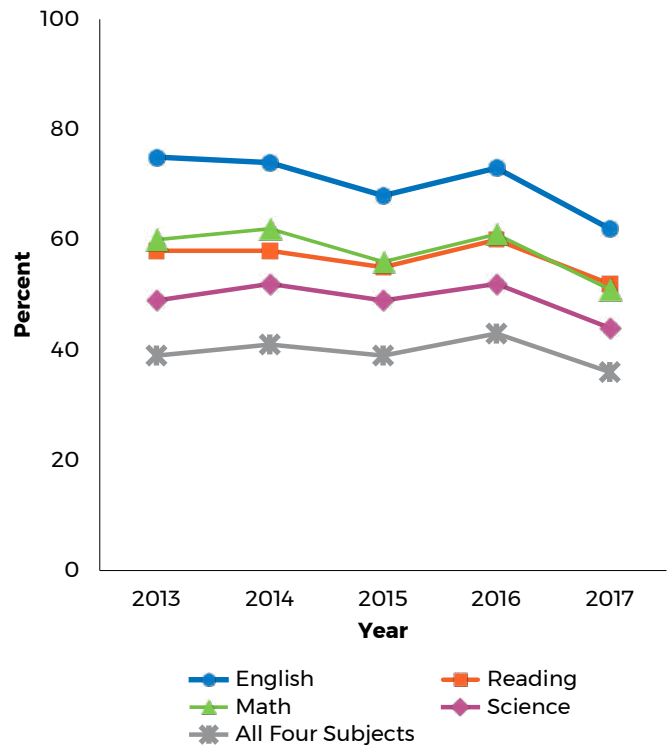
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\* by Subject



Data from graph above:

State / Nation	English (18)	Reading (22)	Math (22)	Science (23)	All Four
Washington	62	52	51	44	36
Nation	61	47	41	37	27

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

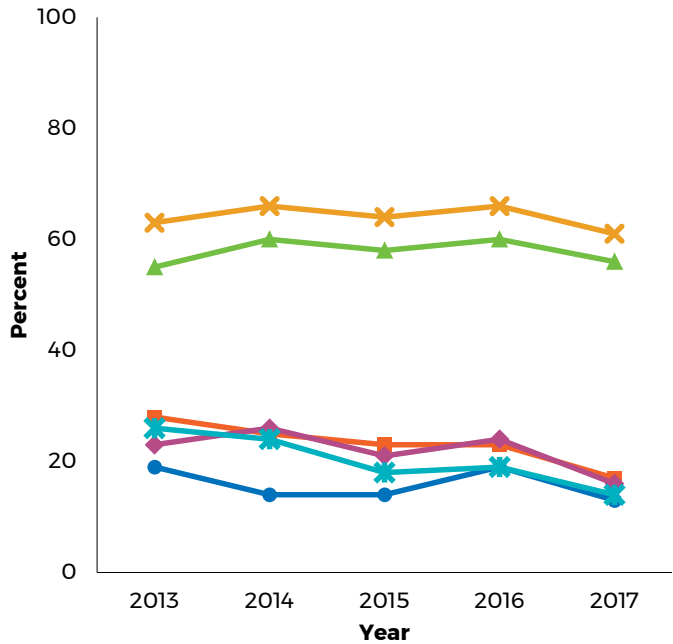


Data from graph above:

Subject	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	75	74	68	73	62
Reading	58	58	55	60	52
Math	60	62	56	61	51
Science	49	52	49	52	44
All Four Subjects	39	41	39	43	36

\* 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\***



● African American  
■ American Indian  
▲ Asian American  
◆ Hispanic  
✱ Pacific Islander  
✱ White

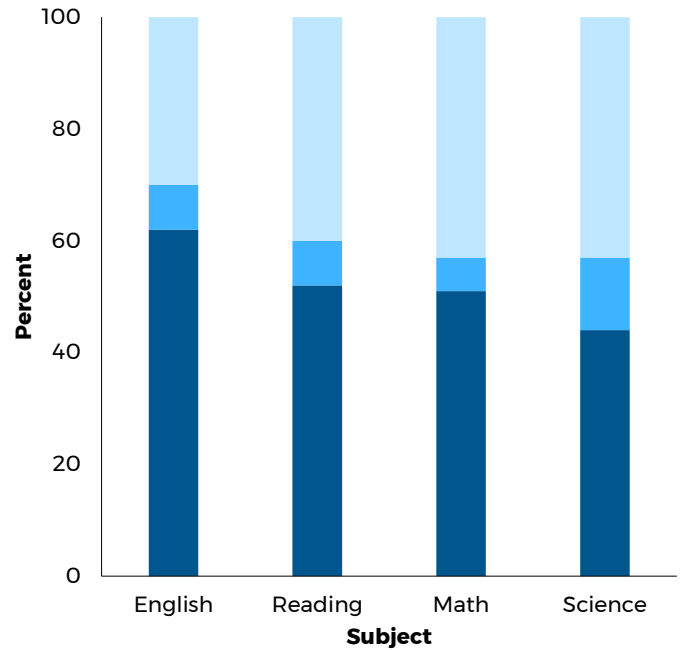
Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	19	14	14	19	13
American Indian	28	25	23	23	17
Asian American	55	60	58	60	56
Hispanic	23	26	21	24	16
Pacific Islander	26	24	18	19	14
White	63	66	64	66	61

\* 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.

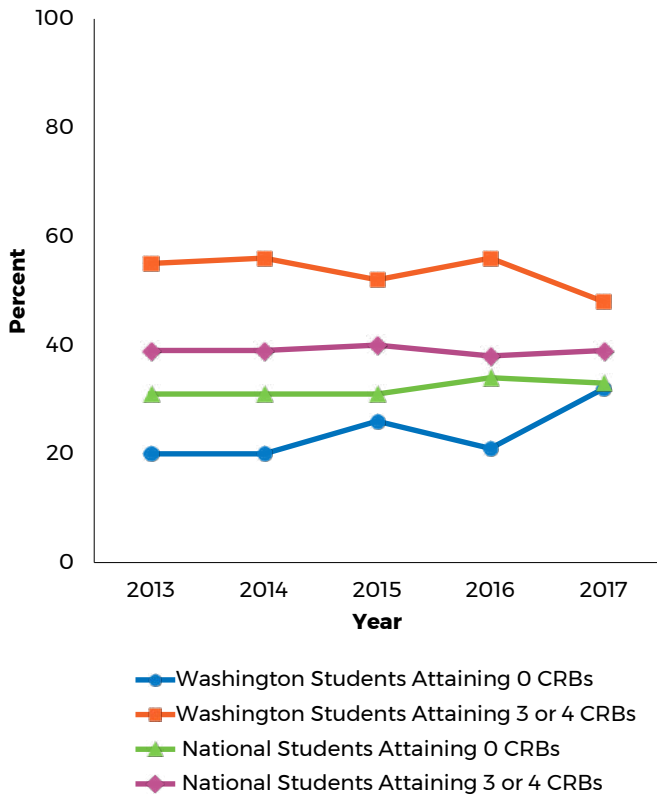


■ Met Benchmark  
■ Within 2 Points of Benchmark  
■ Below Benchmark by 3+ Points

Data from graph above:

Attainment	English	Reading	Math	Science
Met Benchmark	62	52	51	44
Within 2 Points of Benchmark	8	8	6	13
Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	30	40	43	43

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

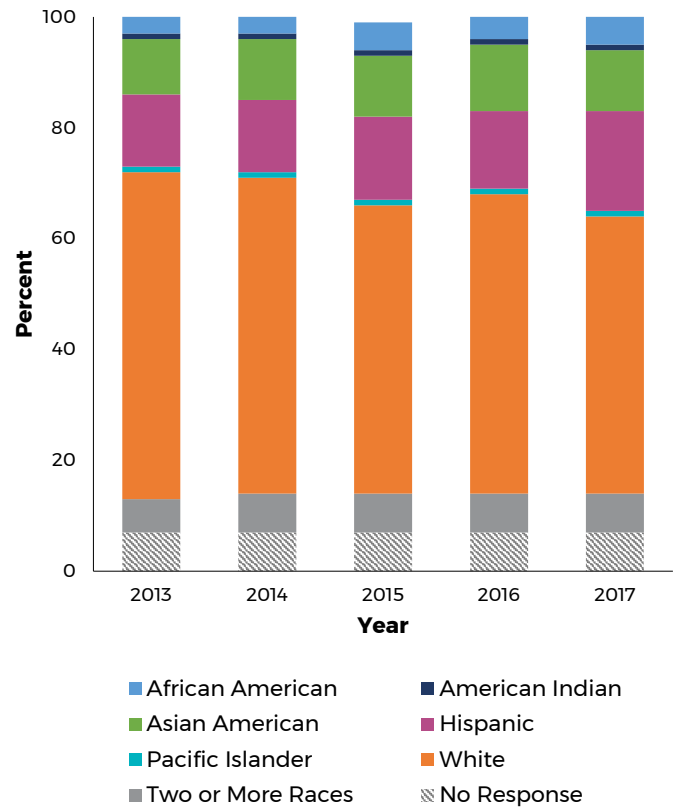


Data from graph above:

Attainment	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Washington Students Attaining 0 CRBs	20	20	26	21	32
Washington Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	55	56	52	56	48
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	4	4	5	4	5
American Indian	1	1	1	1	1
Asian American	10	11	11	12	11
Hispanic	13	13	15	14	18
Pacific Islander	1	1	1	1	1
White	59	57	52	54	50
Two or More Races	6	7	7	7	7
No Response	7	7	7	7	7

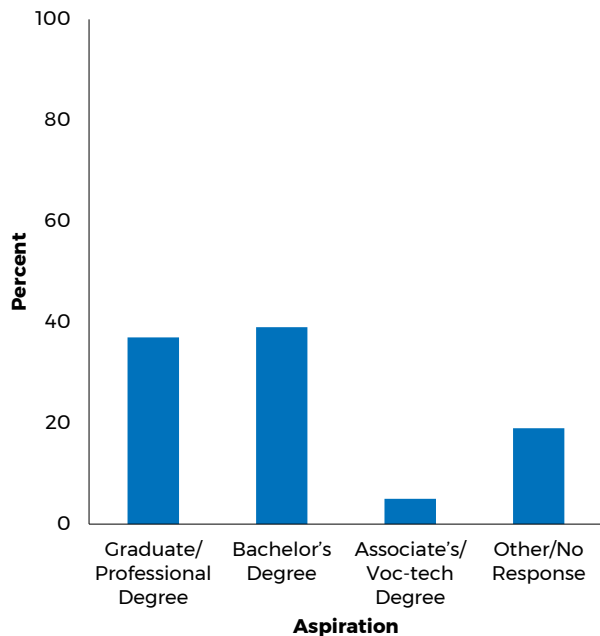
**Washington:** Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in Washington increased by 5,265 students (37 percent).

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

Outcome	Cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent Tested	Washington	21	22	25	25	29
	Nation	54	57	59	64	60
N Tested	Washington	14,316	14,667	16,944	16,652	19,581
	Nation	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038
Average English Score	Washington	22.1	22.3	21.5	22.3	20.9
	Nation	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3
Average Reading Score	Washington	23.3	23.4	22.7	23.6	22.1
	Nation	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4
Average Math Score	Washington	22.8	23.3	22.4	23.2	21.9
	Nation	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7
Average Science Score	Washington	22.5	22.7	22.4	22.9	22.0
	Nation	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0
Average Composite Score	Washington	22.8	23.0	22.4	23.1	21.9
	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 81% of Washington's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 86% of Washington's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 69% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 2,931 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from Washington would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

*Data from graph*

Aspiration	Percent
Graduate / Professional Degree	37
Bachelor's Degree	39
Associate's / Voc-tech Degree	5
Other / No Response	19



## Washington State Exemplar

### 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

#### Samuel Stringer

Skyview High School, Vancouver School District

*“I would make sure to give all that I had to make sure that the people or community I would be helping is okay and have everything that they need. I love community service and outreach to people who cannot support themselves or need external help.”*

Samuel, a member of his school’s diversity committee, is a passionate advocate for inclusion of those who are different than himself. After the death of his boyfriend, he was inspired to turn his pain into hard work towards a better future for himself and others.

Samuel plans to study international business in college, studying abroad and hopefully participating in an internship in another country. After graduation, he hopes to volunteer with the Peace Corps, then settle into the business world.

## Information and products for further review

	Knowledge & Skills	Social & Emotional
<b>Assessments</b>	ACT Aspire®	ACT Tessera™
	PreACT®	ACT Engage®
	The ACT® Test	
	ACT WorkKeys®	
<b>Research</b>	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™	
<b>Resources</b>	PLDs Learning Description Review	Tessera Teacher Playbook
	Curriculum Review Worksheets	
	OpenEd Learning Resources	
	Test Prep	
<b>Training</b>	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](http://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](http://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.