

Services for K-12 Schools and Districts



ACT Consulting Services offers a range of solutions for K-12 schools and districts, from SEL consulting to standards alignment, to help you make your students unstoppable.

Social and Emotional Learning: Strengthen Your Program for Greater Positive Impact

Recent research demonstrates the powerful impact that effective social and emotional learning (SEL) programming can have on students' well-being, academic achievement, and preparation for success in college and career. While many schools have some SEL programming in place, often these programs are not coherent, consistent, or systematized to provide the greatest value. A recent survey of principals found that, although they were committed to enhancing SEL for their students, schools lacked the knowledge and resources to enable their faculty to succeed.

Using the ACT Holistic Framework and other resources, we team with schools and districts to build and deliver comprehensive SEL plans. Services for schools include: needs assessments, theory of action and vision development, communications, leadership training and coaching, standards setting and alignment, metrics and assessment, professional development, curricular program development and selection, and continuous improvement. SEL consulting projects typically are 1- or 2-year engagements, designed to deliver all the resources you need to implement a meaningful and sustainable program for your students.

Social and Emotional Learning Assessment and Instruction using the ACT Tessera System

ACT Tessera is an assessment and instructional system that schools can use for effective SEL programming in grades 6 through 12. The program includes assessments, user guides, video content on using results, and the ACT Tessera Teacher Playbook: a collection of nearly 50 lesson plans and activities for teaching SEL. In a 6- to 12-month engagement, we can assist with your school's Tessera system implementation, including advising how to crosswalk Tessera constructs to your intended outcomes, and identifying and communicating your goals for Tessera to your constituents. Our researchers provide a customized interpretation of your Tessera results, and then experienced SEL educators guide you in determining priority improvement areas. Additional services in this 6- to 12-month engagement include: administrator training; Tessera SEL Teacher Playbook training (in a train-the-trainer model); and consulting to improve curriculum and instruction to meet schools' SEL goals.

Assessment for Learning Excellence: Enhance Your Practices for Higher Order Thinking and Formative Assessment

Student learning is enormously enhanced by improved assessment practices; practices that assess students' higher-order thinking and employ proven methods for formative assessment and feedback. Researchers have established that, collectively, these practices may be the most productive approach to raising students' academic achievement.

As leaders in assessment research and development, we offer expertise and experienced educator-consultants to bolster schools' assessment practices at every level. This 6- to 12-month engagement involves intensive and ongoing training and coaching in the use of Webb's Depth of Knowledge and the Cognitive Rigor Matrix as frameworks to elevate the rigor of classroom and district/school designed interim assessments, and assists schools in developing and assessing students' strategic and extended thinking skills. In the formative assessment area, services include training and coaching in the design and use of diagnostic assessment, setting and communicating learning targets, using ordered multiple choice, providing high quality feedback, and much more.

Data Integration, Analysis, and Action Planning: Get the Most from Your Data

We work with schools and districts that want to make their data work harder—to create better insights that lead to enhanced instruction and continuous improvement. Starting with an integration of multiple data sources, we'll perform an analysis and generate insights for: charting student achievement growth; creating customized data reports and dashboards; and conducting benchmarking with other “like” districts. We'll also provide training for administrators and teachers in using data for enhanced instruction, improved achievement, and continuous improvement. This customizable 6- to 18-month engagement can include: advising on multi-metric assessment system development; interpreting and using diagnostic and benchmarking data; assisting principals in regularly monitoring data; reviewing data to discern student learning problems and identifying next steps in supporting students; and developing educational improvement plans from data insights.

K-12 Standards Alignment to College Career Readiness Standards and the Holistic Framework

To provide quality educational programming that leads to well-rounded students, many school and district leaders want to know how to define more encompassing standards. In evaluating achievement data for their students, educators are often also unsure how closely their local standards align to the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards. We can assist by auditing local standards, identifying gaps, and suggesting strategies and resources to meet these needs. We can also help to promote K-12 curricular coherence by facilitating collaboration across elementary, middle, and high school levels.