The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2013
First-Generation Students
November 4, 2013

ACT’s mission—helping people achieve education and workplace success—inspires us to partner with organizations like the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) that share a devotion to helping individuals meet their full potential. Research and the experiences of school and college educators demonstrate that first-generation college students face the same kinds of barriers to become ready for college and to navigate the complex college-going process as their classmates do. However, unlike their peers, first-generation students face these barriers without the aid of acquired familiarity with that process. For these students, the playing field isn’t level.

The obvious question, then, is how do we level it? We at ACT know that we have some, but not all, of the answers. We are therefore grateful to collaborate with COE in its work of serving the educational needs of first-generation college students, in part, through joint research studies such as this one.

What we have learned together through this study is important for a greater understanding of first-generation students. Yes, many such students face multiple challenges to their academic success. And, yes, many are not as academically ready for college as they need to be.

However, our joint report offers genuine optimism, too. Nearly 94% of ACT-tested first-generation students aspired to earn some form of postsecondary degree. Two out of three took ACT’s recommended core curriculum, which includes four years of English and three years each of math, science, and social studies. And 60% of 8th and 10th graders were on target to be academically prepared for college-level courses in at least one subject. As we learn more about not only the challenges faced by first-generation students but also their capabilities, we develop a better understanding of how best to assist such students to succeed in school and the workplace, including through college access programs such as TRIO and GEAR UP.

This report is but the first step in the partnership between ACT and COE. I’d like to thank COE and TRIO professionals everywhere for their lasting commitment and daily efforts to help students. It is because of such work that we at ACT are not merely excited but hopeful for our future together.

Jon Erickson
President, Education and Career Solutions, ACT
November 4, 2013

This report on first-generation students is significant because it acknowledges the necessity of developing policies to promote college readiness with the needs of this population in mind. Not surprisingly, first-generation students lag behind their peers in meeting college readiness benchmarks in core subject areas.

The lack of families' college background makes it all the more vital that schools with large percentages of first-generation students integrate supportive services into the required curriculum to create a college-going culture. Also, they must implement these services and strategies on a school-wide basis to ensure that all students are embarked on a path to college. Further, we recommend that schools partner with local colleges to offer dual enrollment in areas of greater propensity and interest for first-generation students. Dual-enrollment programs capitalize on students' strengths and demonstrate to them that they are capable of doing college-level work.

The findings of this joint ACT/COE report underscore the importance of greater support for college access programs like TRIO and GEAR UP. For decades, these programs have provided academic tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and other supportive services to low-income and first-generation students to make the dream of college a reality. Recent federal initiatives have emphasized early childhood education; the nation must capitalize on that investment by continuing to support these students once they enter elementary and secondary school.

Maureen Hoyler
President, Council for Opportunity in Education
First-Generation Students

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2013

ACT has been measuring college readiness trends for several years. *The Condition of College & Career Readiness* is ACT’s annual report on the progress of the graduating class relative to college readiness. This year, 54.3% of the graduating class took the ACT® college readiness assessment. The increased number of test takers enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of readiness levels as well as offering a glimpse of the emerging educational pipeline.

A Holistic View of College Readiness

Recent ACT research (*The Reality of College Readiness*, 2013; *Readiness Matters*, 2013) demonstrates that academically prepared students, as measured by the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, have greater chances for success in their future educational endeavors. However, academic readiness is just one of several factors that contributes to educational success. The academic behaviors of students and the interest levels in their specific major or career are other key factors. Together, these elements define a clear picture of student readiness for postsecondary education. To encourage progress, the educational system needs to monitor and sustain all key factors of success.

The Science of ACT Assessments

In 2012, ACT conducted the ACT National Curriculum Survey®. Completed every three to five years, the survey is used to build and update a valid suite of ACT assessments, empirically aligned to college readiness standards. The survey informs the test blueprint for the assessments. Results from the assessments validate the ACT College Readiness Standards as well as the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.

ACT is committed to validity research, the first type of which is research into content validity. This step involves the validation of the ACT College Readiness Standards, built upon a foundation of empirical data and validated through the ACT National Curriculum Survey, plus frequent external standards reviews.

Predictive validity is equally important. Using actual student course performance, we validate that the test correctly predicts performance.

Our evidence-based assessments and ongoing research are critical components to answering the key question of what matters most with college and career readiness. This evidence and the validity cycle drive the development and continuous improvement of ACT’s current and future solutions, as well as the associated research agenda. Research is one of the many ways that ACT fulfills its mission of helping all individuals achieve success.

Evidence and Validity Monitoring and a Review of Reporting Practices Led to Minor but Important Changes at ACT

As part of ACT’s commitment to continuous improvement and our efforts toward improving student achievement at all levels and based on results of the 2012 ACT National Curriculum Survey, ongoing research, and user requests, ACT will make several progressive modifications, which are described below. (For more information about these modifications, go to [www.act.org/announce/improvements](http://www.act.org/announce/improvements).

1. **Minor reformatting of the ACT College Readiness Standards.** As part of our ongoing content validity process, ACT recognized that tighter alignment was needed between the ACT College Readiness Standards and the Common Core State Standards. Our goal was simple—eliminate confusion by providing a more transparent connection. It is important to realize that the ACT College Readiness Standards have not changed. Where practical and feasible, we reformatted the language to align with the Common Core State Standards to facilitate comparison by users. The ACT College Readiness Standards will continue to represent the backbone of our assessment systems.

2. **Updating of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.** The empirically derived ACT College Readiness Benchmarks predict the likelihood of success in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses in each specific subject area. During the routine practice of monitoring predictive validity, ACT analyzes the performance of students in college, looking at what is happening to students in the credit-bearing first-year college course in each specific content area. The data gathered through this routine review indicated a need to make adjustments to current ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in Science and Reading. Refer to the table on page 5 for more detail about the Benchmarks.

3. **Changes to the ACT aggregate reporting practices regarding the inclusion of college-reportable scores for accommodated students.** Starting with the graduating class of 2013, results from all ACT-approved accommodated administrations that result in college-reportable ACT scores will be included as part of the ACT summary reports. Prior to this year, scores for these time-extended accommodated students were
How Does ACT Determine if Students Are College Ready?

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. Based on a nationally stratified sample, the Benchmarks are median course placement values for these institutions and represent a typical set of expectations. The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Course</th>
<th>Subject Area Test</th>
<th>ACT Explore® Benchmark</th>
<th>ACT Plan® Benchmark</th>
<th>ACT Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Algebra</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Reading and Science ACT Explore, ACT Plan, and ACT Benchmarks changed in 2013: trend data prior to 2013 uses previous ACT Benchmarks.
First-Generation Students

Attainment of College and Career Readiness

- First-generation students are those whose parents did not enroll in postsecondary education.²
- 335,711 first-generation high school 2013 graduates took the ACT.

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Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>First-Generation Students</th>
<th>All Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met All Four Benchmarks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Percent of 2012–2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Near Attainment of College and Career Readiness

Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Benchmark Attainment and Subject

- English: 46% Met Benchmark, 13% Below Benchmark by 3+ Points, 24% Within 2 Points of Benchmark
- Reading: 64% Met Benchmark, 13% Below Benchmark by 3+ Points, 22% Within 2 Points of Benchmark
- Mathematics: 70% Met Benchmark, 8% Below Benchmark by 3+ Points, 17% Within 2 Points of Benchmark
- Science: 69% Met Benchmark, 14% Below Benchmark by 3+ Points, 17% Within 2 Points of Benchmark

Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Attained

- Met No Benchmarks: 52%
- Met 1 Benchmark: 18%
- Met 2 Benchmarks: 12%
- Met 3 Benchmarks: 8%
- Met All 4 Benchmarks: 9%
First-Generation Students

Participation and Opportunity

Over the past decade, ACT has experienced unprecedented growth in the number of students tested, as well as statewide partnerships in 13 different states and in many districts across the country. As a result, the 2013 *Condition of College & Career Readiness* report provides a much deeper and more representative sample in comparison to a purely self-selected college-going population.
Participation and Opportunity by Subject

Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Parental Education and Subject

**English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Level</th>
<th>No College</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mathematics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Level</th>
<th>No College</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Level</th>
<th>No College</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Level</th>
<th>No College</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Graduate Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Course-Taking Patterns and Benchmark Performance**

Within subjects, ACT has consistently found that students who take the recommended core curriculum are more likely to be ready for college or career than those who do not. A core curriculum is defined as four years of English and three years each of mathematics, social studies, and science.\(^3\)

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**Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Taking a Core Curriculum by Parental Education**

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**Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates in Core or More vs. Less Than Core Courses Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject**
Early Preparation

ACT research shows that younger students who take rigorous curricula are more prepared to graduate from high school ready for college or career. Moreover, our research (The Forgotten Middle, 2008) found that “the level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than anything that happens academically in high school.”

Percent of 2013 ACT Plan–Tested First-Generation 10th Graders Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (N = 251,128)

Percent of 2013 ACT Explore–Tested First-Generation 8th Graders Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (N = 216,148)
First-Generation Students

Other College and Career Readiness Factors

ACT has found several other substantial factors that impact college and career readiness for students. They include career and educational planning and the academic behaviors of students.

**Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested High School Graduates with Career Interests in Jobs Calling for a Two-Year Degree or More in the Five Fastest-Growing Career Fields**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Field</th>
<th>First-Generation Students</th>
<th>All Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Information Specialties</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Sales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preparation for Careers in High-Growth Fields**

Many students who are interested in these career areas fall short of meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, suggesting that they are not on the right path to take advantage of career opportunities in these high-growth fields.

**Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested First-Generation High School Graduates Interested in High-Growth Careers Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Information Specialties</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Sales</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other College and Career Readiness Factors

Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations

![Bar chart showing the percent of 2013 ACT-tested high school graduates by educational aspirations.](chart)

Aligning Student Behaviors, Planning, and Aspirations

Most students aspire to a post–high school credential. To help them meet those aspirations, educational planning, monitoring, and interventions must be aligned to their aspirations, begin early, and continue throughout their educational careers.

Academic Achievement and Academic Behaviors: Both Matter

First-Year College Enrollment Rates by 8th Grade ACT Explore Benchmarks and ACT Engage® Graduation Index Level*

ACT research illustrates the importance of combining measures of academic achievement and behavior to obtain a more holistic picture of students, including their likelihood of enrolling in college following high school graduation. Since this information can be available in middle school, it allows for early identification of students who may be less likely to complete high school and go to college. These students can be engaged in interventions that can assist them to prepare for the transition to postsecondary education or work after high school.

Across all ACT Explore Benchmark attainment levels, students with higher ACT Engage Graduation Index scores (which are based on a combination of ACT Engage scale scores and other self-reported student information) enrolled in a postsecondary institution after high school at substantially higher rates than students with lower ACT Engage Graduation Index scores.

* Based on N = 3,356 8th graders in 24 middle schools across the country who took ACT Explore and ACT Engage Grades 6–9. These data do not reflect the 2013 ACT-tested high school graduate cohort.
How to Increase College Readiness

Approximately 52% of all 2013 ACT-tested first-generation high school graduates (i.e., high school graduates from families where no parent received any postsecondary training) did not meet any of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This is 40% higher than for high school graduates as a whole and 63% higher than for high school graduates from families where at least one parent received a bachelor's degree. This points to the need for special attention to students from families where neither parent attended nor graduated from college.

Essential Standards. Since ACT first released Making the Dream a Reality in 2008, it has called for states to adopt education standards that prepare all students for college or careers. With the adoption of college- and career-ready standards by 45 states and the District of Columbia, most states have taken that first step. It is imperative that policymakers and educators continue this process by aligning all aspects of their systems to college and career readiness.

Common Expectations. All states—especially those that have adopted the Common Core State Standards—should be aligning college and career readiness standards to a rigorous core curriculum for all high school students whether they are bound for college or work. The levels of expectation for college readiness and workforce training readiness should be comparable. To ensure students master the knowledge and skills to succeed after high school, ACT supports the core curriculum recommendations of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform—specifically that students take a core curriculum consisting of at least four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies.

Clear Performance Standards. States must define “how good is good enough” for college and career readiness. In addition to a consistent, rigorous set of essential K–12 content standards, states must define performance standards so that students, parents, and teachers know how well students must perform academically to have a reasonable chance of success at college or on the job. Based on decades of student performance data, ACT defines “college readiness” as students having a 50% chance of earning a grade of B or higher or about a 75% chance of earning a grade of C or higher in first-year college English Composition; College Algebra; Biology; or History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, or Economics.

Rigorous High School Courses. Having appropriate and aligned standards, coupled with a core curriculum, will adequately prepare high school students only if the courses are truly challenging and teachers have the appropriate training and support to teach these classes. Students who take a rigorous core curriculum should be ready for credit-bearing first-year college courses without remediation.

Out-of-School Support. Policymakers must take into consideration the fact that families where parents have higher levels of education are better equipped to assist students with challenging coursework and provide supplemental experiences that contribute to their academic performance. Local communities must come together to provide these out-of-school experiences to as many students as possible through colleges, schools, community-based agencies, and churches. These experiences should be made available on Saturdays, during the summer, and after school. Communities should take full advantage of federally funded initiatives such as TRIO and GEAR UP as the infrastructure to provide out-of-school programs focused on assisting first-generation students to become college ready.

Early Monitoring and Intervention. We know from our empirical data that students who take challenging curricula are much better prepared to graduate high school ready for college and career opportunities. If first-generation students are to be ready for college or careers when they graduate from high school, their progress must be monitored closely so that their talents can be nurtured and any deficiencies in foundational skills identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Data-Driven Decisions. States have invested significant resources in developing longitudinal P–16 data systems. It is important that such data systems clearly identify students by parents’ educational levels and report data to citizens by this and other factors. Such data systems, where possible, must also integrate information about both in-school and out-of-school experiences for students so that teachers, school leaders, and out-of-school programs working with youth are enabled to support and reinforce students’ college and career aspirations and readiness.
District, School, and Classroom Practices

The Path to Readiness: It Takes a System
Research by ACT shows that no single program or isolated reform can be a substitute for a coherent, long-term, systemwide approach to improving teaching and learning. We all want our students to graduate prepared to take on future opportunities with success. So, what are consistently higher performing schools doing to place more students on the path to college and career readiness?

The ACT Core Practice™ Framework, built upon the study of more than 550 schools across 20 states, identifies the core practices that distinguish a higher performing school from its average performing counterparts. ACT studies the practices of those schools and school systems that have more success in preparing their students for college and careers than their peers who serve similar student populations. Our ongoing research supports the framework and adds content and information to each of the core practices below.

The 15 Practices of Higher Performing School Systems

The ACT Core Practice Framework outlines the evidence-based educator practices at each level of a school system—district, school, and classroom—that will help all students master high standards. The framework focuses on five themes:

**Theme 1: Curriculum and Academic Goals**

**District Practice:** Provide clear, prioritized learning objectives by grade and subject that all students are expected to master.

**School Practice:** Set expectations and goals for teaching and learning based on the district's written curriculum.

**Classroom Practice:** Study and use the district’s written curriculum to plan all instruction.

**Theme 2: Staff Selection, Leadership, and Capacity Building**

**District Practice:** Provide strong principals, a talented teacher pool, and layered professional development.

**School Practice:** Select and develop teachers to ensure high-quality instruction.

**Classroom Practice:** Collaborate as a primary means for improving instruction.

**Theme 3: Instructional Tools—Programs and Strategies**

**District Practice:** Provide evidence- and standards-based instructional tools that support academic rigor for all students.

**School Practice:** Promote strategies and build structures and schedules to support academic rigor.

**Classroom Practice:** Use proven instructional tools to support rigorous learning for students.

**Theme 4: Monitoring Performance and Progress**

**District Practice:** Develop and use student assessment and data management systems to monitor student learning.

**School Practice:** Monitor teacher performance and student learning.

**Classroom Practice:** Analyze and discuss student performance data.

**Theme 5: Intervention and Adjustment**

**District Practice:** Respond to data through targeted interventions or curricular/instructional adjustments.

**School Practice:** Use targeted interventions to address learning needs of teachers and students.

**Classroom Practice:** Use targeted interventions or adjustments to address learning needs of students.

Another layer behind the framework, the Critical Actions, provides additional support for educators by outlining how to successfully implement the key components of each core practice.

The Core Practice Framework

Reading from bottom to top, the path to readiness begins with the ACT College Readiness Standards, Common Core State Standards, and district learning objectives. Applying the 15 core practices of teaching and learning leads to high-quality instruction, which in turn creates the opportunity for all students to reach the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.
Resources

Statewide Partnerships in College and Career Readiness

States that incorporate ACT’s college and career readiness solutions as part of their statewide assessments provide greater access to higher education and increase the likelihood of student success in postsecondary education. Educators also have the ability to establish a longitudinal plan using ACT’s assessments, which provide high schools, districts, and states with unique student-level data that can be used for effective student intervention plans.

State administration of ACT’s programs and services:
- Increases opportunities for minority and middle- to low-income students.
- Promotes student educational and career planning.
- Reduces the need for remediation.
- Correlates with increases in college enrollment, persistence, and student success.
- Aligns with state standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Aspire</th>
<th>ACT Explore</th>
<th>ACT Plan</th>
<th>The ACT</th>
<th>ACT QualityCore</th>
<th>ACT WorkKeys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd- through 8th-grade students</td>
<td>8th- and 9th-grade students</td>
<td>10th-grade students</td>
<td>11th- and 12th-grade students</td>
<td>8th- through 12th-grade students</td>
<td>11th- and 12th-grade students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACT National Career Readiness Certificate®

ACT WorkKeys®-based certificates

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wyoming
**Endnotes**

1. With the exception of the top graph on page 6, data related to students who did not provide information or who responded “Other” to questions about gender, race/ethnicity, high school curriculum, etc., are not presented explicitly.

2. The term “first-generation student” is defined differently by a number of organizations, often differing in the extent of exposure to postsecondary education (e.g., enrolled, attended, or completed) as experienced by disparate combinations of parent/guardian arrangements (e.g., highest extent of exposure for one parent/guardian or both parents/guardians). The definition used in this report’s analysis is consistent with that used by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

3. Data reflect subject-specific curriculum. For example, English “Core or More” results pertain to students who took at least four years of English, regardless of courses taken in other subject areas.

4. Five highest-growth fields were identified by using the 2010–2020 projected job openings from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Example occupations for the five highest-growth career fields nationally are: Education (secondary school teachers, secondary school administrators); Computer/Information Specialties (computer programmers, database administrators); Community Services (social workers, school counselors); Management (hotel/restaurant managers, convention planners); Marketing/Sales (insurance agents, buyers).
About ACT

ACT is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development. Each year, we serve millions of people in high schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies, nationally and internationally. Though designed to meet a wide array of needs, all ACT programs and services have one guiding purpose—helping people achieve education and workplace success.

About the Council for Opportunity in Education

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose membership includes more than 1,100 colleges and community-based organizations with a particular commitment to expanding college opportunity. COE, which was incorporated in 1981, is the only national organization with affiliates in all 50 states, the Caribbean, and Pacific Islands focused on assuring that low-income students and first-generation students have a realistic chance to prepare for, enter, and graduate from college.

A copy of this report can be found at www.act.org/readiness/2013