



# THE CONDITION OF COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS 2019

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation #1

#### **Ensure that all students take rigorous academic courses.**

Students who report taking at least a minimum core academic curriculum continue to outperform students who report not taking the core (in 2019, with an average Composite score of 22.2 versus 18.9). All students—particularly those who meet one or more underserved criteria, who are less likely to complete a core curriculum—should have access to, and be able to take, a rigorous high school curriculum.

#### *What is ACT doing to help?*

ACT has released several landmark reports emphasizing the importance of taking a core curriculum to students' college and career readiness, including *Crisis at the Core* and *Rigor at Risk*. ACT, particularly through our Center for Equity in Learning and its network of partners, continues to advocate for equitable access to rigorous courses in high school, as well as early intervention so that students can get and remain on target for success before high school.

### Recommendation #2

#### **Give educators resources to personalize instruction according to students' individual needs.**

Given the critical role of teachers in preparing students for college and career, teachers should have the resources and professional development opportunities necessary to personalize their students' learning, particularly for those students who meet one or more underserved criteria and may need extra support.

#### *What is ACT doing to help?*

ACT<sup>®</sup> Academy<sup>™</sup> provides free online resources for teachers and students. It supports teachers by recommending personalized lessons for their students, and offers students free access to personalized, high-quality learning content. Our open educational resources reflect ACT's commitment to ensuring that all learners, particularly those who are underserved, have access to high-quality educational materials.

## Recommendation #3

### **Assess student learning and implement improvement strategies throughout students' education careers.**

ACT research suggests that preparing students for college and career starts in elementary school, and that students' readiness is especially jeopardized if they are not on target by middle school. Assessing what students—again, especially those who may come from underserved populations—have learned and implementing strategies to help them improve their skills and get on target for college and career readiness must begin in elementary school and continue throughout a student's education.

#### *What is ACT doing to help?*

ACT® Aspire® and PreACT® measure younger students' progress toward readiness while identifying their specific challenges and strengths in English, reading, writing, math, and science, allowing students to receive personalized supports. Further, ACT fee waivers for students from low-income backgrounds can be used for two different ACT test administrations; research shows that, on average, students who take the ACT a second time have a mean increase of almost a full point in their ACT Composite score compared to the first test.

## Recommendation #4

### **Ensure that students' education is holistic and addresses the needs of the “whole learner.”**

ACT research shows that students with the same grades and test scores but stronger Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills are more successful academically. Developing students' SEL skills is a critical component of their academic success, ensuring that the needs of each student, including students from underserved populations, are being identified and addressed.

#### *What is ACT doing to help?*

ACT's release and ongoing use of our Holistic Framework® spotlights our commitment to the whole learner. The Holistic Framework provides a research support for solutions such as ACT® Tessera®, our SEL assessment system, as well as Mawi™ Learning, our newly acquired evidence-based SEL system.