5 STRATEGIES
FOR USING ACT® SCORES

How many times do you get asked by a student, “Do I need to take the ACT® test?” or “Why should I take the ACT?” They might assume ACT test results are only used for college admission purposes, but they mean so much more. No matter their chosen paths after graduation, students having an ACT score will have a **predictor** of future achievements, **proof** of what they’ve accomplished to date, and **strategic tools** to help open doors toward success. Here are five strategies for using ACT scores that K-12 professionals can implement today.

STRATEGY #1
ACADEMIC ADVISING

376:1
national average student-to-counselor ratio 23/24 school year
source ASCA

Build confidence and gather intel in record time to inform secondary instruction and advisory conversations.

Using ACT scores can help busy counselors serve more students with personalized insights. Students can take the ACT system of assessments as early as grade 8 (with PreACT® 8/9) to predict future achievement and grow confidence. In grades 10-12, you can offer them more test practice or start building an ACT® **Superscore** — averaging their best scores from each subject from multiple test attempts.

Use this longitudinal insight to inform instruction, meet benchmarks, and advise students on their next steps.

- Measure progress toward your standards achievement plan.
- Measure critical readiness skills to help students who need more targeted instruction or to inform intervention.
- Identify potential gifted and talented, dual enrollment, and advanced students.
- Uncover strengths and interests for holistic course recommendations and selection process.

STRATEGY #2
PROMOTE ACCESS

210,000
high school students applied to college using a fee waiver
source ACT

Apply to college for free.

An ACT score can help close opportunity and outcomes gaps for students with economic challenges. **ACT Fee Waivers** provide eligible students with access to free test prep, up to two free test attempts, and college application fee waivers—removing financial barriers so students can apply to schools they might have thought out of reach.

- Ensure opportunities for a college education.
- Join ACT’s **American College Application Campaign** which helps first-generation and under-resourced students complete and submit at least one college application.

STRATEGY #3
ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

43% of college applicants DID submit test scores in the 24/25 cycle

source Common App

Have a score ready for students to submit.

Just because test-optional institutions don't require applicants to submit scores doesn't mean they won't consider them if submitted. Continue to help students stand out in a sea of college applicants. With test-optional policies at the higher education institutions changing each season, having a score—whether they use it or not—for admission helps students stand out.

- Show readiness for college-level work verified by benchmark performance.
- Highlight STEM achievement (ACT score exclusive).
- Apply for institutional scholarships.

STRATEGY #4
SCHOLARSHIP AND LOAN APPLICATIONS

5 BILLION dollars is available in private merit-based scholarships

source ASCA

Set them up for financial success.

An ACT score can open doors for students and help them avoid financial burden in the future. If they take the test and score well, students will be eligible for thousands of dollars in scholarships just based on their scores.

- Get matched to colleges and scholarships and find college funding sources through **ACT Recruit Me**.
- Get a "full ride"—some schools offer full-tuition **scholarships** starting in the 22–25 ACT score range, but most full-ride scholarships require a 28 or higher. (Source: College Aid Pro)

STRATEGY #5
ACCURATE COURSE PLACEMENT

33% of private scholarships are provided to STEM students

Show more accurate achievement for proper course placement.

Many colleges and universities encourage applicants to submit ACT scores for course placement or direct admission into certain majors—even if their general university policy is test optional. ACT results are standards-based and can often be submitted for math, English, and STEM prerequisites, avoiding additional placement testing.

- Inform advanced course placement.
- Use as a required placement test.
- Save freshmen time and money while avoiding course drop and adds.

Learn more about these and other strategies for using ACT scores at the K-12 professionals resources page.

act.org/k12resources

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