HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE EDUCATION AND WORKPLACE SUCCESS

ACT Work Ready Communities

Participating in the ACT Work Ready Communities (WRC) initiative helps county and state leaders build and strengthen their workforce development efforts, according to the new ACT report: ACT Work Ready Communities: A Summary of the 2014 Results.

The ACT Work Ready Communities initiative launched three years ago to help workforce developers, economic developers, educators, and business leaders coordinate their efforts to help individuals find and succeed in jobs.

More than 250 counties nationwide are engaged in the initiative, and 67 counties are certified ACT Work Ready Communities. The report includes survey responses from county and state leaders of WRC initiatives, employers, economic developers, and workforce professionals.

Key findings include:

- 71 percent of responding county leaders reported that participating in the WRC initiative has helped their counties form a cohesive workforce development strategy.
- 73 percent also said that participation in the initiative is improving their community workforce development partnerships.
- Among businesses, 82 percent of respondents reported that their companies are "very likely" or "moderately likely" to support WRC initiatives in their communities.

Read the ACT Work Ready Communities: A Summary of the 2014 Results (/research/policymakers/pdf/ACTWorkReadyCommunitiesSummary2014.pdf) report.

Answers to Questions about Student Growth

Administrators, teachers, and parents often have questions about the kinds of information that score reports provide and about how they can use that information to help their students succeed. This is especially true about ACT Aspire™, which measures student growth over time. The reports listed below describe how student growth is reported on ACT Aspire for each of the following audiences: administrators, teachers, and parents. The reports also illustrate the answers with examples showing how growth models work. You can find the reports here:

- Answers to Parents' Questions About Student Growth (/research/policymakers/pdf/Answers-to-Parents-Questions-about-Student-Growth.pdf)
- Answers to Teachers' Questions About Student Growth (/research/policymakers/pdf/Answers-to-Teachers-Questions-about-Student-Growth.pdf)
- Answers to Administrators' Questions About Student Growth (/research/policymakers/pdf/Answers-to-Administrators-Questions-about-Student-Growth.pdf)
Fall Summit for ACT State Organizations Leadership

Council leadership from across the United States convened in Iowa City to hear the latest updates from ACT, have questions answered, and learn through a number of breakout sessions how to advance the work of State Organizations. Leaders will share this information with councils in the coming months through the council conference calls, council meetings, and conferences. Leaders concluded the summit with a plenary session keynoted by Deb Delisle, current president and chief executive officer for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and former US Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education at the US Education Department. Deb shared from her experience how legislation affects not just the work at a federal or national level but also how it impacts students at the state level.
Virginia – CANCELED

Arizona
December 3, 2015

Illinois
Expanding College and Career Readiness (http://www.cvent.com/events/2015-illinois-act-state-organization-conference/event-summary-130de7d7742a44199c94ee2e3eb6f74.aspx?i=ca77b6cb-04ac-4573-85fd-dc7a8f40ec9)
December 10, 2015

Alabama
December 11, 2015

Ohio
January 26-27, 2016

North Carolina
Creating Solutions for Success (http://www.cvent.com/events/2016-north-carolina-act-state-organization-conference/event-summary-745c7d0740af4868390bc81d1eca2a1.aspx?i=78d222c6-244a-4871-b023-5cbb7f43e7ef)
February 23, 2016

College and Career Readiness Campaign

Don’t miss out on these opportunities. Deadlines are approaching soon in several states. Visit www.act.org/readinesscampaign (readinesscampaign) to learn more or complete an application. Help us recognize the great work in your state by encouraging a deserving student, high school, community college, and employer to apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>November 6</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
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<td>Hawai‘i</td>
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US Department of Education’s Principles for Fewer and Smarter Assessments and Their Potential Impact on ACT
On October 24, 2015, as part of its Fact Sheet: Testing Action Plan [http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-testing-action-plan], the US Department of Education (USED) presented seven principles intended to clarify for states and school districts the desirable qualities and amount of state-mandated testing in K–12 education. Because ACT is a major developer of K–12 assessments, many of which are delivered as part of statewide assessment programs, it is likely that these principles will affect ACT's work to some degree, especially after the Department issues formal guidance on reducing testing redundancies (expected in January 2016).

ACT is pleased to note that the document outlines qualities that have been part of ACT's solutions for decades and in many cases reflect positions ACT has advocated for publicly. Further, many of the principles are restatements of positions the Department has taken in prior contexts and that ACT therefore already is honoring. The information below briefly summarizes ACT's analyses of each of the seven principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Action Plan Overview</th>
<th>Analysis and Potential Impact on ACT</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Plan states that assessments must be:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Worth Taking</td>
<td>This principle was the motivation behind the USED's Race to the Top initiative, which drove assessment consortia funding. ACT's achievement-based assessments are—to use the words of this principle—&quot;aligned to the content and skills a student is learning&quot; and require &quot;the same kind of complex work students do in an effective classroom—or in the real world.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Quality</td>
<td>This principle has been part of the requirements for testing since the release of the Department's ESEA blueprint three years ago and is currently the backbone of the recently announced revised guidelines for Peer Review of state assessment systems. ACT assessments provide &quot;actionable, objective information about student knowledge and skills,&quot; measuring them against &quot;college- and career-ready standards&quot; as called for in this USED's principle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time-limited</td>
<td>While it is not yet clear how school time devoted to testing will be calculated in precise terms, or whether formative and interim tests are part of this calculus, capping total assessment time to no more than 2 percent of classroom instructional time will likely have a minimal impact on the ACT® or ACT Aspire™ summative assessments. Using very rough figures, 2 percent of classroom time would in most cases amount to approximately 15 to 20 hours of testing time, which is more than sufficient to accommodate ACT solutions' testing time.</td>
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<td>Fair – and Supportive of Fairness – in Equity in Educational Opportunity</td>
<td>This principle requires that assessments provide &quot;fair measures of student learning for students with disabilities and English learners,&quot; which the accessibility features of ACT solutions are designed to accomplish. In addition, this principle states that assessments must be used only &quot;for the purposes for which they were intended and designed&quot; (a requirement that ACT has made publicly for decades about its own assessments), and concludes with the encouraging statement, long championed by ACT, that &quot;annual statewide tests are an essential part of guiding supports&quot; for struggling students and schools.</td>
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<td>Fully Transparent to Students and Parents</td>
<td>This principle states that &quot;parents, educators and, as appropriate, students should also get the results of assessments in a timely and understandable manner, to have a shared understanding of how students are doing, and how educators and parents can help them succeed.&quot; Provisions in current ESEA language make similar stipulations, and ACT's public language describes its scores, College Readiness Benchmarks, and score reports in terms virtually identical to these.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Just One of Multiple Measures</td>
<td>The principle states that assessments should never be &quot;the sole factor in making an educational decision about a student, an educator, or a school,&quot; which echoes a position that ACT has taken for decades.</td>
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</table>
| Tied to Improved Learning | This principle states that assessments must be "tools in a broader strategy to improve teaching and learning," to "inform and guide
ACT is also encouraged that the Testing Action Plan offers opportunities for assessment developers such as ACT that are engaged in efforts to provide innovative solutions for student assessment. For example, in the “Administration Actions to Reduce Over-Testing” section of the Plan, the Department states that it will provide flexibility for innovative assessment practices.

Confident in the knowledge that its solutions and expertise conform to the Testing Action Plan, ACT looks forward to continuing efforts, such as assisting states navigating the Department’s Peer Review process and working with clients to comply with any new requirements arising from the Department’s formal guidance.

Southeast District News

Bobby Rush, bobby.rush@act.org

ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign: Do you know of a student, school, or business that deserves recognition for their contributions to College and Career Readiness? Please take a look at the due dates for applications at http://www.act.org/readinesscampaign/applications.html and forward the links to potential candidates. States with application deadlines in the Southeast for November include: Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Alabama: The Alabama Council met on October 28 in Montgomery to finalize plans for the upcoming Conference on December 11 and to select our College and Career Readiness Exemplars! We are looking forward to a very successful event, which will include the presentation of this year’s exemplars. If you have not registered already, you can do so here (http://www.cvent.com/events/2015-alabama-act-state-organization-conference/event-summary-94d4cb380f8a425981f1dca7bfe02496.aspx?i=e126b1e8-6871-48fc-b97f-a2a2325eb41f).

Georgia: The Georgia Council meeting is coming up on November 19 at Georgia Tech! Thank you to Chair-Elect Mary Tipton Woolley for hosting. Among several other agenda items, we will be selecting our 2015/16 College and Career Readiness Exemplars and presenting a webinar geared toward parents and students about the college admissions process.

Kentucky: The Condition of STEM Webinar that the Kentucky Council has been working on is coming up November 18 at 9:30 a.m. EST. The webinar is geared toward our K-12 educators and administrators and can be viewed live at this link: http://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/watch-live/. A recorded version will be available on the Kentucky Department of Education site a few days after the event.

Mississippi: The Mississippi Council is looking forward to the November 17 conference, Launching Students to College and Career Readiness, in Pearl! The Council met in Jackson last month to finalize plans for the event. Be on the lookout for updates from the conference on twitter @ACTStateOrgs, #msACT
North Carolina: A special thanks to Council member Sarah Martin for hosting the NC Council again at the North Carolina PTA building in Raleigh! The Council discussed Dual and Concurrent Enrollment with Greg Kienzl, senior research associate with ACT. The Council also continued planning for the 2016 Conference in Greensboro among other exciting learning opportunities!

South Carolina: Due to the flooding that occurred in early October in Columbia and throughout the state, our South Carolina Council meeting scheduled for October 6 was canceled. Our thoughts are with all of the families affected by this terrible tragedy!

Virginia: The Virginia Council will meet at New College Institute in Martinsville this month to finalize plans for the December 2 conference (http://www.cvent.com/events/2015-virginia-act-state-organization-conference/event-summary-a1e71c590cb747668360fc073ef245ed.aspx?i=76bda84b-7583-4cc0-ab90-6d57db3d1688) in Newport News! We hope to see you there as we celebrate our College and Career Readiness Campaign Exemplars and learn more about the Condition of STEM in Virginia from our key speaker, Steven Triplett, director, STEM Client Partnerships.

Alaska: With HB44 passing at a special legislative session late spring, the ACT and ACT WorkKeys® will not be offered to the students after this school year. The Alaska Council convened to discuss what this means for Alaska, as well as what measures they might undertake to advocate for the access to college and career readiness assessments for their students.

Idaho: The Idaho Council rescheduled the fall meeting for November in Boise. We will be evaluating the College and Career Readiness Campaign applicants and deciding on our state exemplars! Additionally, we will discuss an event to honor the 2016 state exemplars.

Northwest District News

Jo Martell, jo.martell@act.org (@jo_martell (http://twitter.com/jo_martell))

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Idaho: The Idaho Council rescheduled the fall meeting for November in Boise. We will be evaluating the College and Career Readiness Campaign applicants and deciding on our state exemplars! Additionally, we will discuss an event to honor the 2016 state exemplars.

Kansas: The Kansas Council held its fall in-person meeting at Wichita State University. We were honored to have State Commissioner of Education Randy Watson join us. Given the K-Continuum representation of the Council, Commissioner Watson asked for their feedback regarding supports and needs to transition all secondary students to postsecondary success—no matter what their postsecondary path may be. In addition to their guest joining, the Council made some decisions regarding their
Oregon: The Oregon Council was the first Northwest Council to name its 2016 College and Career Readiness campaign exemplars! Convening in Lake Oswego for the fall in-person meeting, the Council not only reviewed the applications and made decisions but also discussed next steps regarding an event to honor our exemplars. Additionally, the Council was provided with the Oregon 2015 Condition of College and Career Readiness (thanks to Dick Moody, ACT senior account executive).

Montana: The Montana Council convened in Billings for its fall in-person meeting. Discussions centered on the direction of initiatives for the Council, as well as the College and Career Readiness Campaign. Council member Greg Upham, Assistant Superintendent of Helena Public Schools (HPS), provided a thought-provoking presentation regarding HPS's College and Career Readiness initiative and the success they are experiencing at Helena Public Schools. Professional Learning Communities, ACT data, and course-taking patterns are the cornerstones of this fantastic work, and HPS is on a trajectory to make a real impact on their students. Thanks for sharing, Greg!

Nevada: Thanks to the Nevada System of Higher Education, the Nevada Council met virtually for its in-person fall meeting in both Reno and Las Vegas. The Council is quickly approaching its January 29, 2016, conference to be held at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Registration will be launching in late November or early December, so keep an eye out!

Wyoming: Just prior to our Council meeting in Casper, the Wyoming media misconstrued recent recommendations of the assessment task force, a group that the Wyoming
Council members across the Midwest have been very actively engaged in dialogue and conversation this fall as we move deeper into the academic year. Many Councils have tackled the significant topics of dual enrollment and FAFSA changes, capitalizing on the diverse perspectives of Council members across the education and workforce spectrum. Many Councils are still accepting ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign applications at www.act.org/readinesscampaign/.

**North Dakota:** The North Dakota Council met at North Dakota State University in Fargo and welcomed Lori Listopad from the University of Jamestown to her first in-person council meeting. The council looks forward to participating in the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign for the first time this year and is actively promoting applications from students, institutions, and employers in the state. After several hours of great roundtable discussion, the council looks forward to continuing that on council calls in the year ahead.

**South Dakota:** Mitchell Technical Institute, national exemplar for the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign in 2014-15, hosted the South Dakota Council for a great meeting and delicious lunch provided by MTI's culinary program. South Dakota's Council is excited to structure its membership in a way that connects closely with the many professional organizations in the state and allows for a direct line of communication from those organizations to the Council and to ACT. The Council members look forward to engaging in many major statewide topics and conversations with the added viewpoint of these new members.

**Missouri:** Council member Phil Lewis hosted the Missouri Council at the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals in Columbia—though we missed having him in attendance! The Council went through its first full selection process for the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign and looks forward to recognizing exemplars at the Missouri ACT State Organization conference on February 22 in Columbia. The theme, Mission: ACT, reflects the Council's commitment to once again building a dynamic slate of speakers who will present on best practices around readiness being conducted across the state.

**Illinois:** The Illinois Council will kick off the Midwest conference season with its December 10 conference in Oak Brook around the theme of Expanding College and Career Readiness. The Council's focus this year in conference planning shifted heavily to improving practice, and the sessions on the agenda dive into complex topics that will encourage attendees to think deeply about what their own practice and how to take it to the next level. The Council encourages attendees to use #powerofone and #takeittothenextlevel when tweeting about the conference.

Thank you to all 10 Midwest Councils for their continued commitment and engagement to the work of college and career readiness, whether in person or over email, conference call, Twitter, and more. As the Midwest gears up to elect its representatives to the national steering committee, it is evident that there are members who are very strong thought leaders in their respective fields and on the ACT Councils.

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**Midwest District News**

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@rose_babington

[http://twitter.com/rose_babington](http://twitter.com/rose_babington)

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As Councils across the Northeast district hold fall meetings, our State Organization leaders are discussing how ACT State Organizations can align the important policy initiatives within their states to the mission of ACT and the array of resources available from ACT. These conversations are paving the way for innovative initiatives to be developed in our states.

Maryland/Delaware/DC: The MD/DE/DC Council met the last week of October to discuss ACT updates and policy initiatives within the region. In discussing Council initiatives that can improve college and career readiness, the Council is now exploring the feasibility of these ideas. We are excited for the opportunity to spend more time working with state leaders on key education issues.

New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) Council leadership from each state will be holding a series of calls and in-person meetings to determine a regional strategy for ACT State Organizations. A primary goal is to increase awareness of the ACT State Organizations as well as the array of solutions and resources available from ACT.

New Jersey: Work continues in New Jersey around the College and Career Readiness Campaign. We are excited to recognize the good work being done in New Jersey and are seeking nominations through the [ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign website](https://ebappsprd.corporate.act.org/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?page=/oracle/apps/fnd/framework/navigate/webui/NewHomePG&homePage=Y&_ti=1910699735&retainAM=Y&OAMC=G&WFEBizWorklist=Y&oapc=15&oas=HihZJB7KMtyIjJJCdIS_kw..). The Council also continues to seek new State Organization members who are interested in joining this ever-growing group.

New York: The New York Council is scheduled to meet in early December to begin work on New York state initiatives. We are excited for the work ahead this year with our New York State Council and look forward to welcoming new members to our Council.

Ohio: Registration for this year's ACT Ohio State Conference is now open: [Creating Opportunities in Changing Times](http://www.cvent.com/events/2016-ohio-act-state-organization-conference/event-summary-8eebf0fe6771d4c4cb4dafe795bfbe30.aspx?i=e4a50e86-ac6b-48c4-a0c8-6713006674c). With a number of changes impacting the education and workforce landscape in Ohio, this year's conference will focus on addressing these changes while also emphasizing the opportunities being created.

We have created a dynamic set of sessions and keynote addresses, providing topics of interest for K-12, postsecondary, and workforce development professionals throughout the state. We hope to see you all there!

Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Council is scheduled to meet in early December in State College. A primary agenda item will be to identify partner organizations and new Council members to help implement work focused upon improving the state of college and career readiness within Pennsylvania.

West Virginia: Following a successful Fall meeting in West Virginia, the Council is busy implementing two new initiatives for the state. In addition to its inaugural participation in the College and Career Readiness Campaign, the Council is working on an initiative to help educators throughout the state better understand ACT score data and the benefits this data has for educators, parents, and students. Planning is under way to offer these learning opportunities throughout the state.

Southwest District News

Linda Vasquez
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Hawai'i: As the school semester meets its midway mark, counselors, teachers, and administrators are busy assisting students with their college applications, essays, and scholarship applications. One of those applications includes the ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign (/readinesscampaign/); the deadline for Hawai'i is November 30! The Council met via conference call this month to strategize marketing and promotion of this prestigious statewide program.

California: Planning for their 2016 ACT State Organization Conference is well under way. The conference, The CA Promise: Achieving Social Justice through College and Career Readiness, aims to elevate the discussion about access, persistence, and opportunities for underserved learners in California. We hope you will consider joining us! Registration opens later this month—sign up before it sells out! The Council is meeting later this month to continue finalizing details for breakout sessions and other conference details, if you'd like to be involved with this event, please email the District Manager. The California Council is also spearheading its own ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign (/readinesscampaign/) to recognize entities and students who are doing great work to promote college and career readiness in California; the application deadline is November 6.

Arizona: The Council has been busy these past few months with the coordination of their ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign (/readinesscampaign/) and 2015 Arizona ACT State Organization Conference (http://www.cvent.com/events/2015-arizona-act-state-
Leading with Research: Expanding College and Career Readiness. Congratulations to the Council members for their work in raising awareness to support college and career readiness initiatives and develop toolkits for educators and students in Arizona. Your contribution to the Council is invaluable, and this work would not be possible without your input. One of our Council members, Linda Jensen, director of the Arizona College Access Network, has shared a toolkit that will help college access and success practitioners apply the AzCAN Standards and the NCAN Common Measures to their own communities. You can find the toolkit here (http://collegesuccessarizona.org/about-us/azcan/standards-toolkit/).

New Mexico: Are you passionate about the future of New Mexico? Are you interested in learning how you can positively shape the future of its workforce? The Council is spearheading its very first conference in 2016. Developing New Mexico's Workforce to Achieve Global Competitiveness will be held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Albuquerque on March 21, 2016. Registration details will come later this month. With an exciting lineup of speakers, the conference will surely be a hit!

Texas: The Council convened last month to review its applications submitted for its Texas ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign (readinesscampaign); they plan to make a decision by the end of November.

Arkansas: Invigorated, energized, and hopeful, the Council is spearheading its first ACT State Organization conference in March 2016 at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The conference aims to raises awareness about preparing students for a successful college and career, with a specific focus on preparing them with skills that the 21st century demands. Stay tuned through this newsletter for more information in the coming months!
Louisiana: The Council has been busy these past couple of months promoting its statewide campaign to recognize entities and students who are doing great work to promote college and career readiness in Louisiana. The applications closed in October, and the Council is currently reviewing them. Thank you to everyone who submitted an application for review. The Council will reach out to candidates in early December with a final decision.
• Reviewing Your Options: The Case for Using Multiple Choice Items
  (/research/policymakers/pdf/2015-Issue-Brief-Reviewing-Options.pdf)

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[Join us on Twitter](https://twitter.com/ACTStateOrgs)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 3
Wyoming Council Conference Call

November 4
Georgia Council Conference Call

November 5
Indiana Council Meeting

November 6
Virginia Council Meeting
Hawaii Council Conference Call
New Mexico Council Conference Call

November 10
Kentucky Council Conference Call
North Carolina Council Conference Call
South Carolina Council Conference Call
Alabama Council Conference Call
Nebraska Council Conference Call

November 11
Idaho Council Meeting

November 12
Tennessee Council Conference Call

Montana Council Conference Call
California Council Conference Call
Mississippi Council Conference Call
Wisconsin Council Conference Call

November 13
New Jersey Council Conference Call

November 17
Idaho Council Conference Call
Mississippi ACT State Organizations Conference
Oregon Council Conference Call
North Dakota Council Conference Call
South Dakota Council Conference Call

November 18
Iowa Council Conference Call
Kentucky STEM Webinar
Utah Council Meeting
Ohio Council Meeting
Florida Council Conference Call

November 19
Georgia Council Meeting
West Virginia Council Conference Call

Share your Intersections newsletter with colleagues, friends, and community stakeholders. We would love for them to know about the good work of ACT State Organizations.