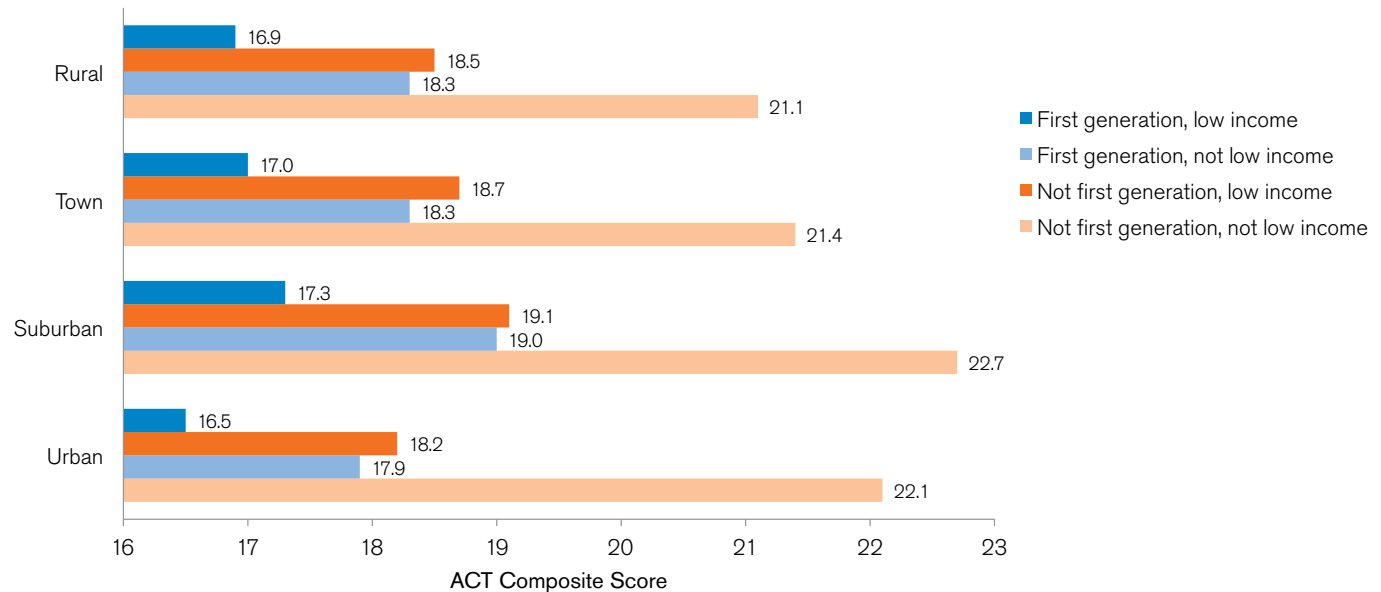


ACT Composite Test Scores by Student Background and School Location

RICHARD BUDDIN

ACT Composite Scores by First-Generation College and Low-Income Status for High School Locations



Note: Data come from 587,008 high school graduates in 2013 in at least one of eleven states that had ACT testing for all students. Families with annual incomes of less than \$36,000 are defined as low income. Students whose parents or guardians have no postsecondary education are defined as first-generation students.

Low-income, first-generation students have lower Composite scores on the ACT® college readiness assessment than students from middle- or high-income families with a parent or guardian who has at least some postsecondary education. Family income and parental education may affect student resources available in the home as well as motivation and support for academic endeavors.

Low-income, first-generation students have lower Composite scores in each type of high school, but they fare better in suburban schools than in urban schools (17.3 versus 16.5, respectively). First-generation students from middle- and high-income families have lower scores than low-income students with a parent or guardian who has some

postsecondary education, suggesting that parental education trumps income status for these student groups.

Middle- and high-income students whose parents or guardians have some postsecondary experience have the highest test scores. These students earned scores 3 to 4 points higher than the best of the other groups in all types of schools.

Students from each background group fare better in suburban schools than in other schools. Meanwhile, urban students have lowest scores for all background groups. ■

Students from all parental education and family income groups fared best in suburban schools compared with schools in other locations.