

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019

## Arkansas Key Findings

### Performance of 2019 Graduates

- In the 2019 Arkansas graduating class, 34,193 graduates (an estimated 100 percent) took the ACT test with a Composite score average of 19.3. This compares to 26,955 (an estimated 93 percent) with an average of 20.4 in 2015. Nationally, an estimated 52 percent of 2019 graduates took the ACT with an average Composite score of 20.7.
  - There were 5,332 African American graduates from Arkansas who took the ACT (16 percent) with an average Composite score of 16.2. This compares to 5,483 (16 percent) with an average of 16.3, and 4,540 (17 percent) with an average of 16.9, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 19,038 White graduates from Arkansas who took the ACT (56 percent) with an average Composite score of 20.6. This compares to 19,657 (57 percent) with an average of 20.7, and 17,071 (63 percent) with an average of 21.6, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 3,822 Hispanic graduates from Arkansas who took the ACT (11 percent) with an average Composite score of 17.9. This compares to 3,771 (11 percent) with an average of 17.8, and 2,342 (9 percent) with an average of 19.0, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - The 2019 Arkansas graduating class average English score was 19.0. This compares to 19.1 and 20.0 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Arkansas graduating class average math score was 18.7. This compares to 18.9 and 20.0 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Arkansas graduating class average reading score was 19.6. This compares to 19.7 and 20.9 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Arkansas graduating class average science score was 19.2. This compares to 19.4 and 20.3 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
- In 2019, 16 percent of Arkansas graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 17 and 21 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 43 percent of Arkansas graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 43 and 33 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 53 percent of Arkansas graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 53 and 62 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 26 percent of Arkansas graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 27 and 35 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 35 percent of Arkansas graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 36 and 42 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 25 percent of Arkansas graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 26 and 32 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 8,928 (26 percent) of Arkansas graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 9,329 and 9,229 (27 and 34 percent) out of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively. For reference, the national percentage of 2019 graduates meeting three or four benchmarks was 37 percent.

- In 2019, 9 percent of Arkansas graduates took the ACT with extended time. This compares to 7 and 3 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
- 62 percent of 2019 Arkansas graduates were Below Proficient in understanding complex texts.

## STEM

- In 2019, 15,132 Arkansas graduates (44 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2019 Arkansas graduating class average ACT STEM score of 19.2, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM averages of 19.4 and 20.4, respectively.
- Compared to 11 percent of 2019 Arkansas graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 11 and 14, respectively.
  - 2019 Arkansas graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average science score of 28.8. This compares to 28.2 in 2015.
  - 2019 Arkansas graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average math score of 27.9. This compares to 27.8 in 2015.

## Career Readiness Indicator

- In 2019, 10,212 Arkansas graduates (30 percent) were likely to attain the Gold ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate or higher based upon ACT Composite score, compared to 726,923 (41 percent) nationally.
- In 2019, 21,908 Arkansas graduates (64 percent) were likely to attain the Silver ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate or higher based upon ACT Composite score, compared to 1,273,362 (71 percent) nationally.
  - The ACT Composite scores associated with a 50% chance of earning each ACT WorkKeys NCRC level or higher are: 13 for Bronze, 17 for Silver, 22 for Gold, and 27 for Platinum. Based on those cut scores, students who earned an ACT Composite score of less than 13 would be classified as "Needs Improvement," 13 to 16 as "Bronze," 17 to 21 as "Silver," and 22 or above as "Gold or Higher."

## Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2019 ACT-tested Arkansas high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2019 graduating class would result in:
  - 88 more students enrolling in college.
  - 97 more students persisting to year two.
  - 71 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - 116 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - 101 more students persisting to year four.
  - 106 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

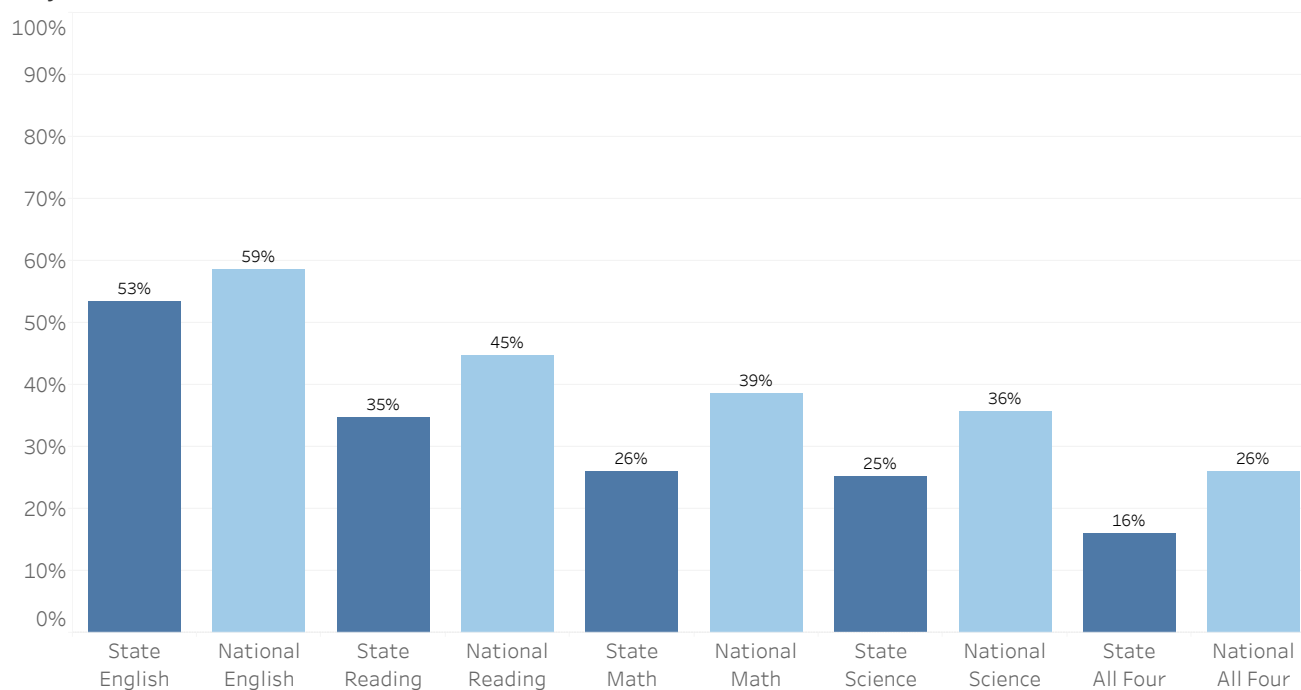
- In Arkansas, 19,901 of the 2019 graduates (58.2 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 21.2, compared to an average of 16.5 for 14,292 of the 2019 graduates (41.8 percent) who took the ACT only once.
  - Nationwide, 765,568 of the 2019 graduates (42.9 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 22.7, compared to an average of 19.2 for 1,017,252 of the 2019 graduates (57.1 percent) who took the ACT only once.
- 75,044 score reports were sent to colleges by 2019 Arkansas ACT-tested graduates.
  - 48,046 score reports were sent to in-state public colleges by 2019 Arkansas ACT-tested graduates.
  - For Arkansas's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were the University of Arkansas, the University of Central Arkansas, Arkansas Tech University, Arkansas State University, and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
  - For Arkansas's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were the University of Memphis, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Oklahoma.
- Compared to 66 percent of 2019 graduates nationally, 77 percent of Arkansas graduates opted into the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS). EOS is a free service that allows students to gain exposure to recruitment, scholarship agencies, colleges, and universities that students may not have accessed on their own. The ACT Get Your Name in the Game initiative encourages colleges and universities to recruit underserved EOS participants to increase access and opportunity for all.
  - Compared to 75 percent of African American students nationally, 84 percent of Arkansas African American 2019 graduates opted into EOS.
  - Compared to 64 percent of White students nationally, 78 percent of Arkansas White 2019 graduates opted into EOS.
  - Compared to 76 percent of Hispanic students nationally, 85 percent of Arkansas Hispanic 2019 graduates opted into EOS.
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, ACT issued 13,315 ACT fee waivers to qualified Arkansas students across all grades. However, 3,091 students (23.2 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 487,749 waivers issued nationally, of which 135,569 (27.8 percent) students did not take advantage. Fee waivers represent a great opportunity for students of low socioeconomic status to retest without incurring any fees.
  - While African American Arkansas students represent 34 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 38 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 32 and 34 nationally.
  - While White Arkansas students represent 37 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 37 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 19 and 17 nationally.
  - While Hispanic Arkansas students represent 18 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 15 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 35 and 36 nationally.

## Postsecondary Aspirations

- Aspirations matter. Students who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education typically achieve higher ACT Composite scores.
  - 8,691 students (25 percent) aspired to attain a graduate or professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 22.5.
  - 14,925 students (44 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 19.5.
- In the Arkansas graduating class of 2019, 8,029 students (23 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2019 Arkansas graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Business Administration and Management, General; and Computer Science and Programming.
  - In the Arkansas graduating class of 2019, 1,643 (5 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 19.6.

# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\* by Subject



### Data From Graph Above

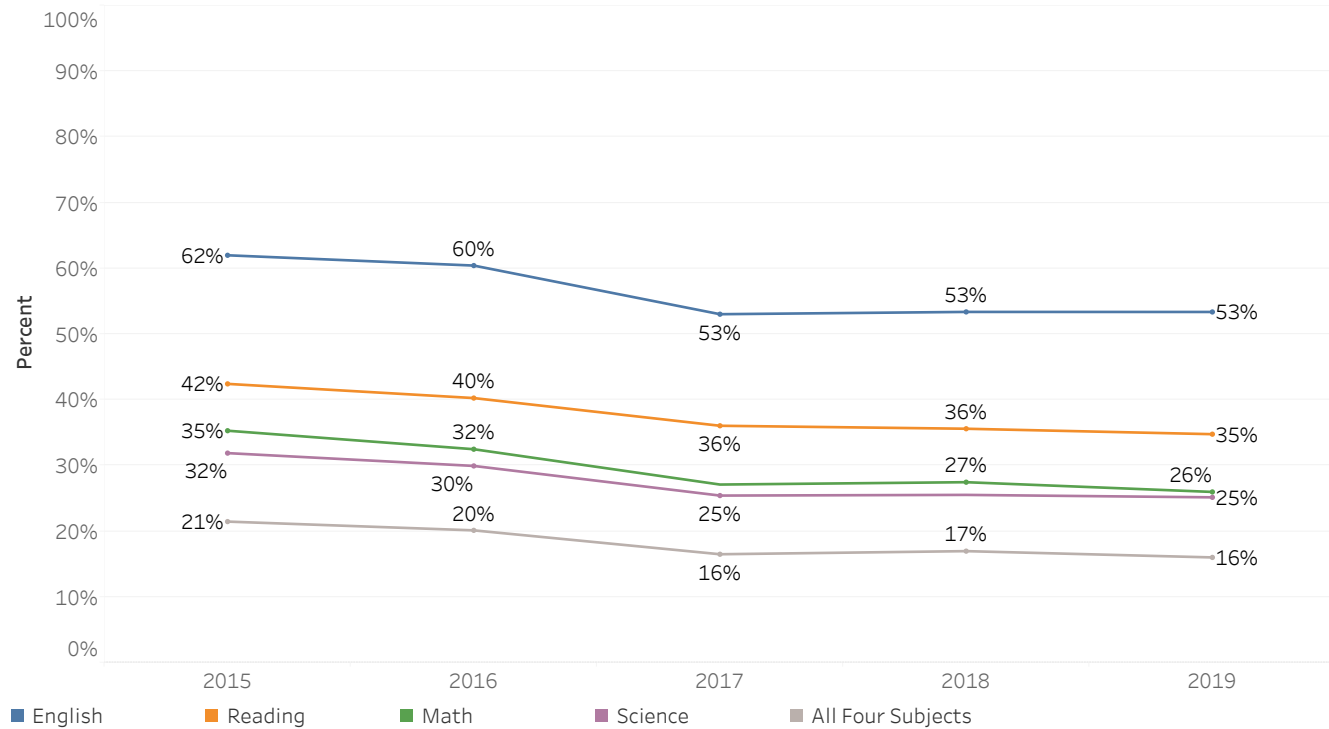
State English	National English	State Reading	National Reading	State Math	National Math	State Science	National Science	State All Four	National All Four
53%	59%	35%	45%	26%	39%	25%	36%	16%	26%

\* 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. Throughout this report, benchmark attainment corresponds with students meeting or exceeding 18 in English, 22 in Reading, 22 in Math and 23 in Science.

Note, missing data points in tables and graphs reflect insufficient data for reporting.

# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



## Data From Graph Above

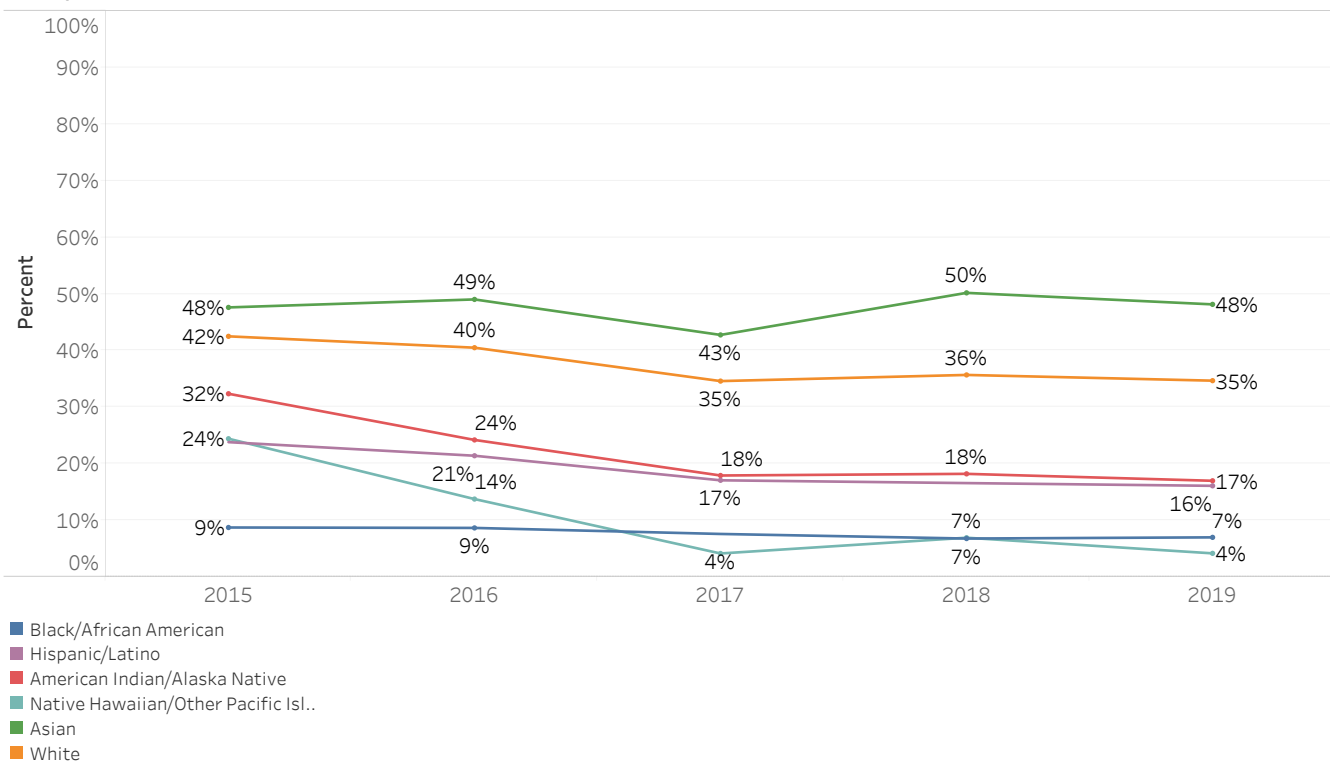
	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four Subjects
2015	62%	42%	35%	32%	21%
2016	60%	40%	32%	30%	20%
2017	53%	36%	27%	25%	16%
2018	53%	36%	27%	26%	17%
2019	53%	35%	26%	25%	16%

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



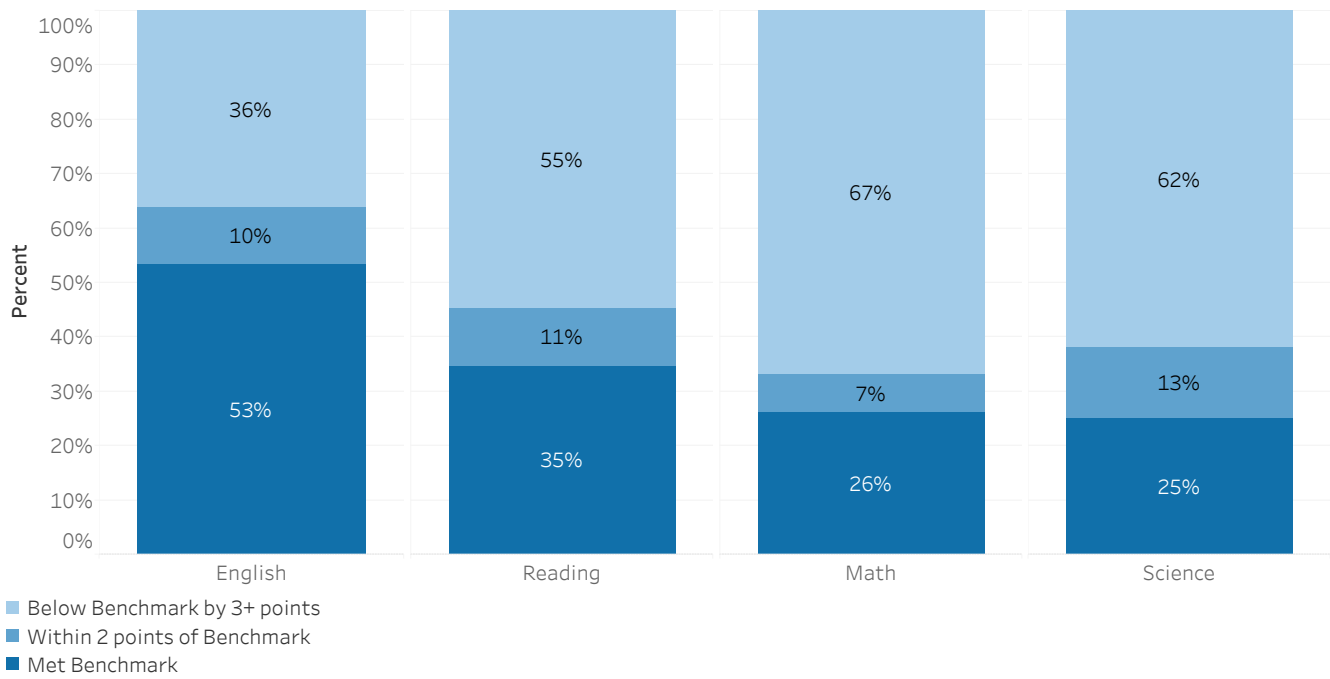
### Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	American Indian/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Asian	White
2015	9%	24%	32%	24%	48%	42%
2016	9%	21%	24%	14%	49%	40%
2017	8%	17%	18%	4%	43%	35%
2018	7%	17%	18%	7%	50%	36%
2019	7%	16%	17%	4%	48%	35%

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



## Data From Graph Above

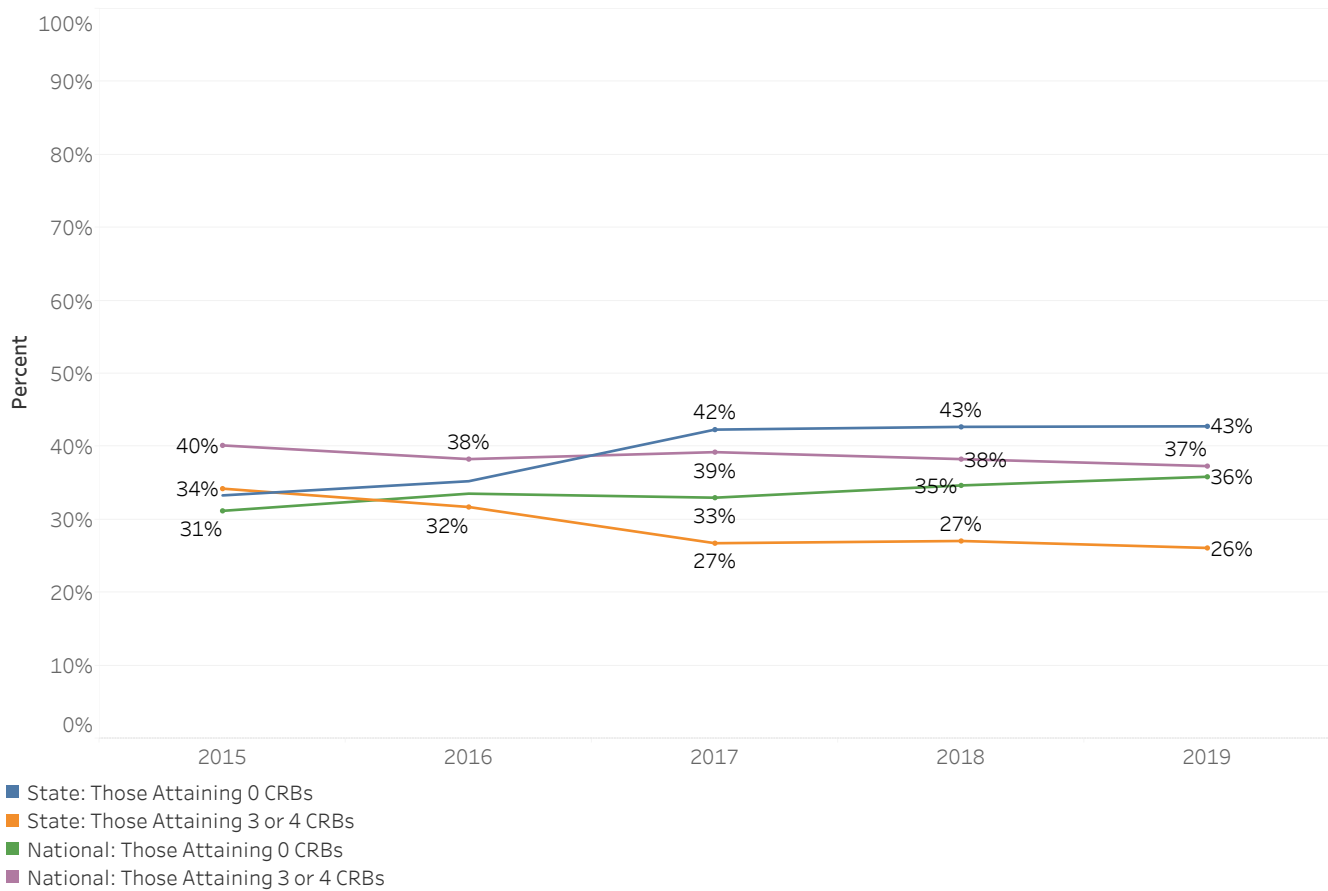
	Below Benchmark by 3+ points	Within 2 points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	36%	10%	53%
Math	67%	7%	26%
Reading	55%	11%	35%
Science	62%	13%	25%

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015–2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks\*



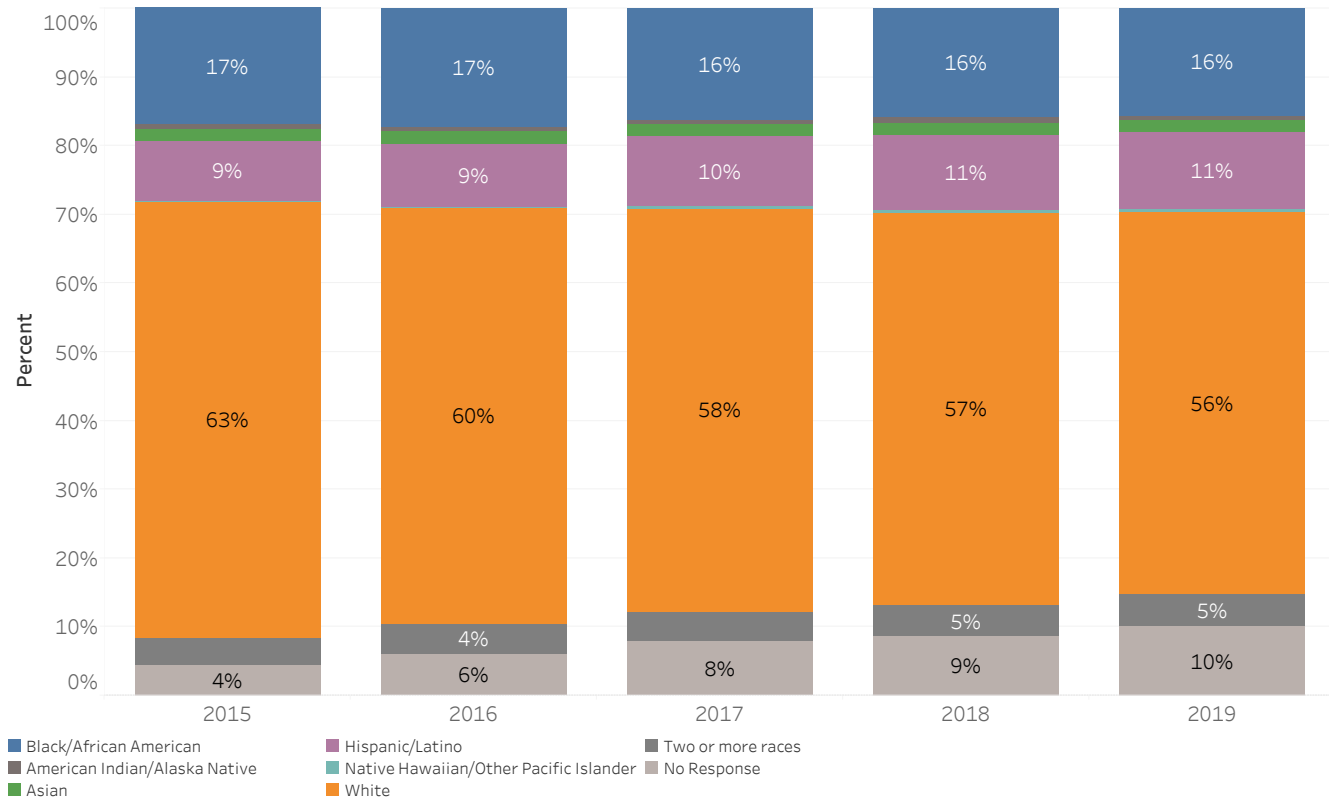
## Data from Graph Above

	State: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	State: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 0 CRBs	National: Those Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
2015	33%	34%	31%	40%
2016	35%	32%	34%	38%
2017	42%	27%	33%	39%
2018	43%	27%	35%	38%
2019	43%	26%	36%	37%

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Percent of 2015-2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or more races	No Response
2015	17%	1%	2%	9%	0%	63%	4%	4%
2016	17%	1%	2%	9%	0%	60%	4%	6%
2017	16%	1%	2%	10%	0%	58%	4%	8%
2018	16%	1%	2%	11%	0%	57%	5%	9%
2019	16%	1%	2%	11%	0%	56%	5%	10%

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

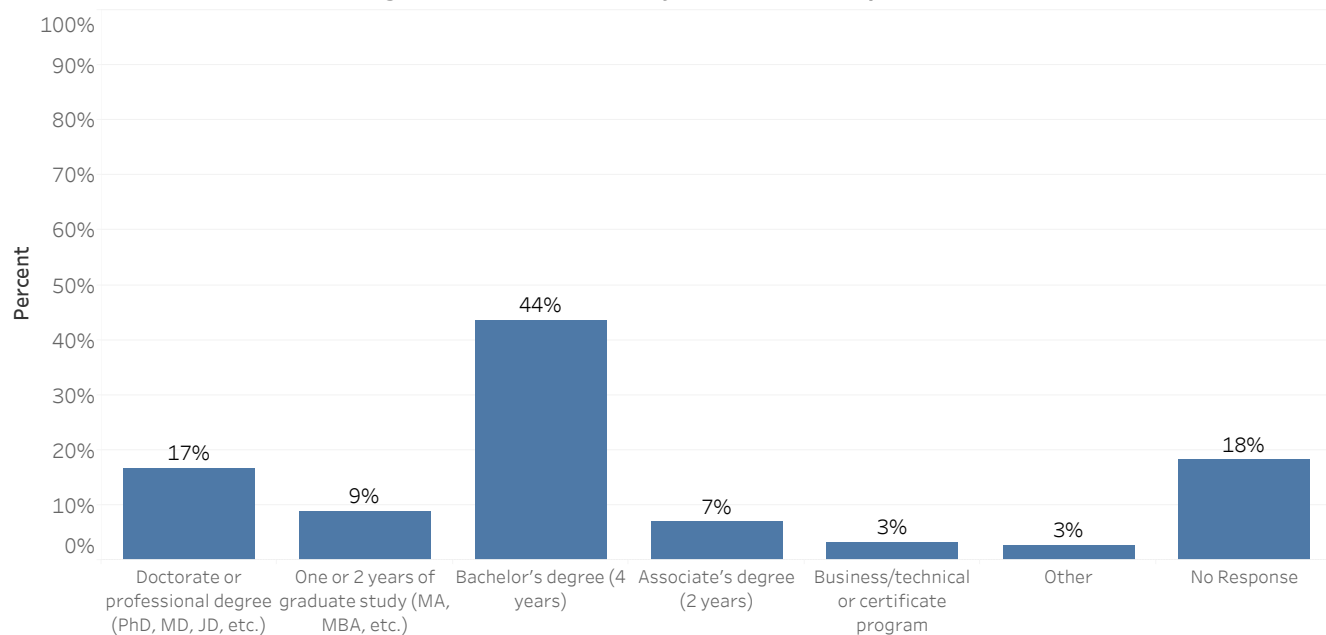
## Student Data Trends: 2015-2019, State vs. Nation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
State N-count	26,955	28,120	34,451	34,468	34,193
National N-count	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038	1,914,817	1,782,820
Average ACT English Score - State	20.0	19.8	18.9	19.1	19.0
Average ACT English Score - National	20.4	20.1	20.3	20.2	20.1
Average ACT Reading Score - State	20.9	20.7	19.7	19.7	19.6
Average ACT Reading Score - National	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.2
Average ACT Math Score - State	20.0	19.6	19.0	18.9	18.7
Average ACT Math Score - National	20.8	20.6	20.7	20.5	20.4
Average ACT Science Score - State	20.3	20.2	19.5	19.4	19.2
Average ACT Science Score - National	20.9	20.8	21.0	20.7	20.6
Average ACT Composite Score - State	20.4	20.2	19.4	19.4	19.3
Average ACT Composite Score - National	21.0	20.8	21.0	20.8	20.7

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# ARKANSAS College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

## Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



### Data From Graph Above

	% of Graduates
Doctorate or professional degree (PhD, MD, JD, etc.)	17%
One or 2 years of graduate study (MA, MBA, etc.)	9%
Bachelor's degree (4 years)	44%
Associate's degree (2 years)	7%
Business/technical or certificate program	3%
Other	3%
No Response	18%

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