

# The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019

## Illinois Key Findings

### Performance of 2019 Graduates

- In the 2019 Illinois graduating class, 50,850 graduates (an estimated 35 percent) took the ACT test with a Composite score average of 24.3. This compares to 157,047 (an estimated 100 percent) with an average of 20.7 in 2015. Nationally, an estimated 52 percent of 2019 graduates took the ACT with an average Composite score of 20.7.
  - There were 4,238 African American graduates from Illinois who took the ACT (8 percent) with an average Composite score of 19.2. This compares to 6,281 (10 percent) with an average of 19.0, and 21,180 (13 percent) with an average of 17.2, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 30,842 White graduates from Illinois who took the ACT (61 percent) with an average Composite score of 25.1. This compares to 35,851 (57 percent) with an average of 25.0, and 75,795 (48 percent) with an average of 22.5, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - There were 6,635 Hispanic graduates from Illinois who took the ACT (13 percent) with an average Composite score of 21.8. This compares to 9,334 (15 percent) with an average of 21.4, and 31,320 (20 percent) with an average of 18.6, for the 2018 and 2015 graduating classes, respectively.
  - The 2019 Illinois graduating class average English score was 24.5. This compares to 24.1 and 20.3 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Illinois graduating class average math score was 23.8. This compares to 23.4 and 20.7 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Illinois graduating class average reading score was 24.7. This compares to 24.2 and 20.8 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.
  - The 2019 Illinois graduating class average science score was 23.7. This compares to 23.4 and 20.6 in 2018 and 2015, respectively.

- In 2019, 47 percent of Illinois graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 45 and 26 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 13 percent of Illinois graduates met zero ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 14 and 33 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 84 percent of Illinois graduates met the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 82 and 63 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 63 percent of Illinois graduates met the ACT Math College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 61 and 41 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 66 percent of Illinois graduates met the ACT Reading College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 64 and 41 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 57 percent of Illinois graduates met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark. This compares to 55 and 37 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
  - In 2019, 31,133 (61 percent) of Illinois graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 37,197 and 59,739 (59 and 38 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, 6 percent of Illinois graduates took the ACT with extended time. This compares to 6 and 11 percent of 2018 and 2015 graduates, respectively.
- 35 percent of 2019 Illinois graduates were Below Proficient in understanding complex texts.

## STEM

- In 2019, 25,420 Illinois graduates (50 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2019 Illinois graduating class average ACT STEM score of 24.0, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM averages of 23.6 and 20.9, respectively.
- Compared to 39 percent of 2019 Illinois graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark, graduates in 2018 and 2015 had STEM Benchmark percentages of 36 and 20, respectively.
  - 2019 Illinois graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average science score of 29.1. This compares to 28.4 in 2015.
  - 2019 Illinois graduates meeting the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark had an average math score of 29.5. This compares to 29.0 in 2015.

## Career Readiness Indicator

- In 2019, 33,723 Illinois graduates (66 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, 46,501 Illinois graduates (91 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 Illinois 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:
  - 102 more students enrolling in college.
  - 120 more students persisting to year two.
  - 70 fewer students needing remedial English.
  - 126 fewer students needing remedial math.
  - 141 more students persisting to year four.
  - 155 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

## Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In Illinois, 30,792 of the 2019 graduates (60.6 percent) taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 25.5, compared to an average of 22.5 for 20,058 of the 2019 graduates (39.4 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.
- 85,929 score reports were sent to colleges by 2019 Illinois ACT-tested graduates.
  - 24,064 score reports were sent to in-state public colleges by 2019 Illinois ACT-tested graduates.
  - For Illinois's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were the University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign, Illinois State University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Iowa, and Loyola University of Chicago.
  - For Illinois's 2019 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were the University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and Purdue University.
- Compared to 66 percent of 2019 graduates nationally, 65 percent of Illinois 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, 82 percent of Illinois African American 2019 graduates opted into EOS.
  - Compared to 64 percent of White students nationally, 61 percent of Illinois White 2019 graduates opted into EOS.
  - Compared to 76 percent of Hispanic students nationally, 78 percent of Illinois Hispanic 2019 graduates opted into EOS.

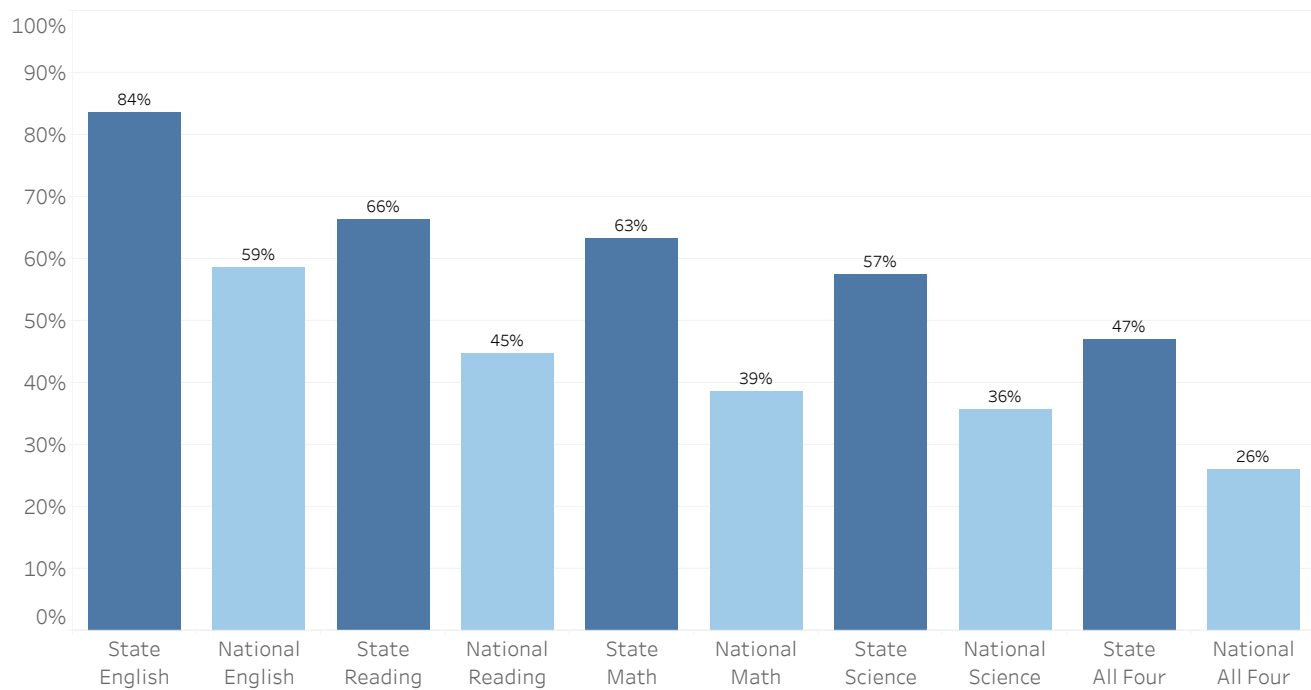
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, ACT issued 8,337 ACT fee waivers to qualified Illinois students across all grades. However, 1,810 students (21.7 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 487,749 waivers issued nationally, of which 135,569 (27.8 percent) students did not take advantage. This represents a great opportunity for high schools within the state to increase the socioeconomic diversity of its students tested.
  - While African American Illinois students represent 34 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 40 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 32 and 34 nationally.
  - While White Illinois students represent 15 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 12 percent of unused fee waivers. This compares to 19 and 17 nationally.
  - While Hispanic Illinois students represent 38 percent of fee waivers issued, they account for 38 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.
  - 21,873 students (43 percent) aspired to attain a graduate or professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 26.1.
  - 22,043 students (43 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 22.9.
- In the Illinois graduating class of 2019, 4,391 students (9 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2019 Illinois graduates were: Undecided; Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Business Administration and Management, General; and Biology, General.
  - In the Illinois graduating class of 2019, 2,388 (5 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 22.3.

# ILLINOIS 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

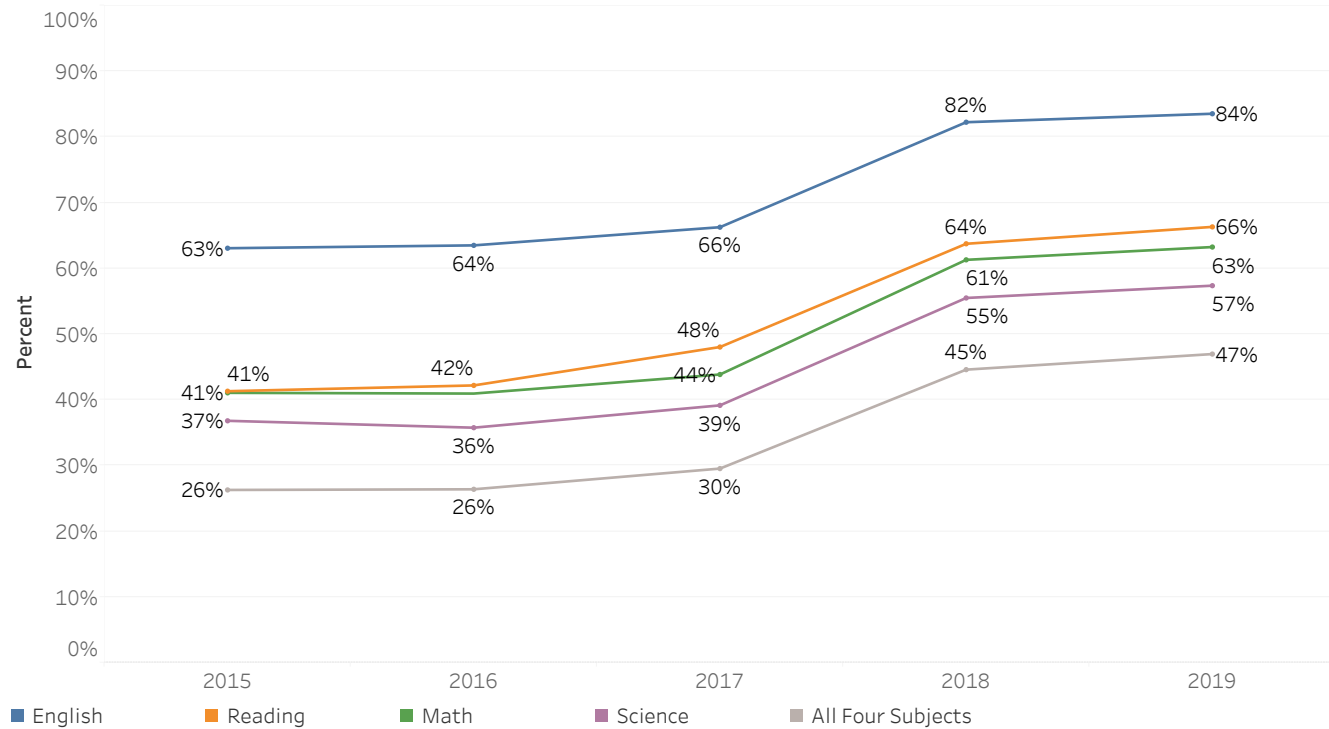
State English	National English	State Reading	National Reading	State Math	National Math	State Science	National Science	State All Four	National All Four
84%	59%	66%	45%	63%	39%	57%	36%	47%	26%

\* 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.

# ILLINOIS 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

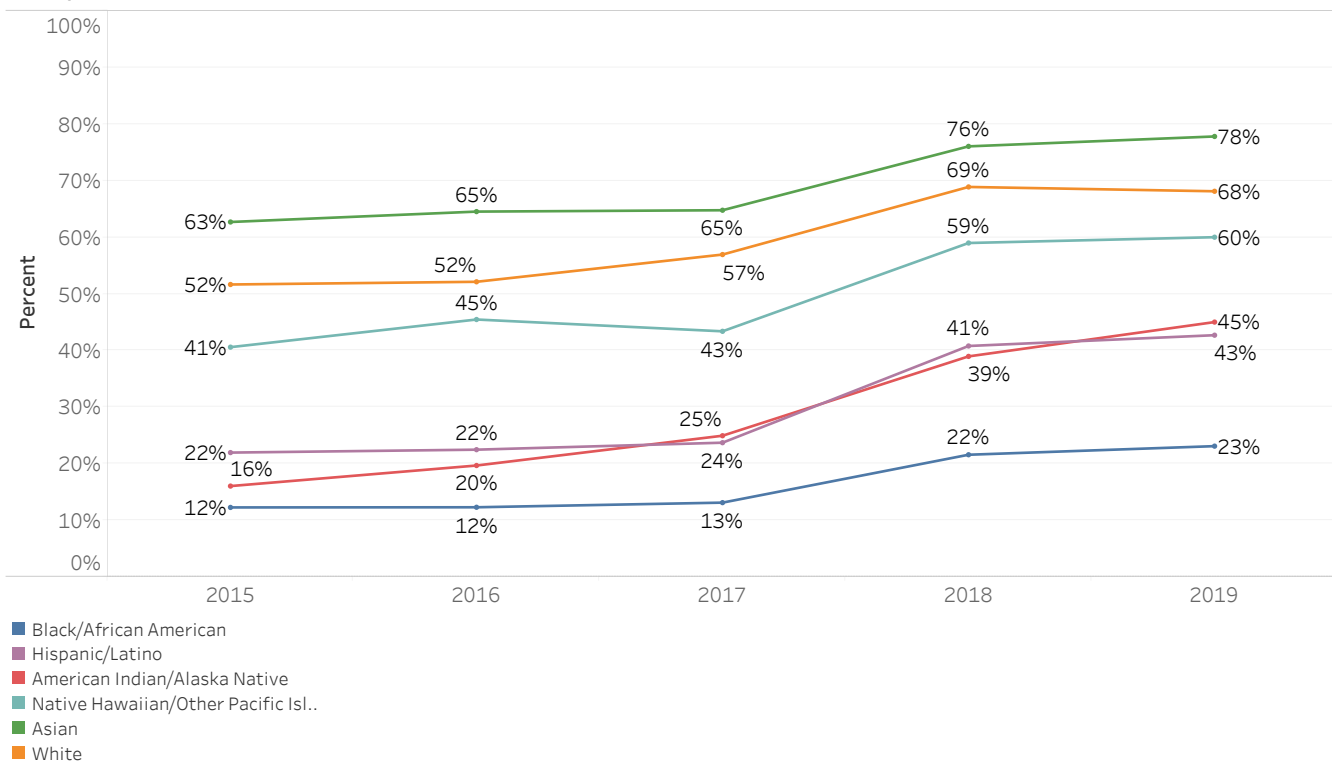
	English	Reading	Math	Science	All Four Subjects
2015	63%	41%	41%	37%	26%
2016	64%	42%	41%	36%	26%
2017	66%	48%	44%	39%	30%
2018	82%	64%	61%	55%	45%
2019	84%	66%	63%	57%	47%

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# ILLINOIS 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



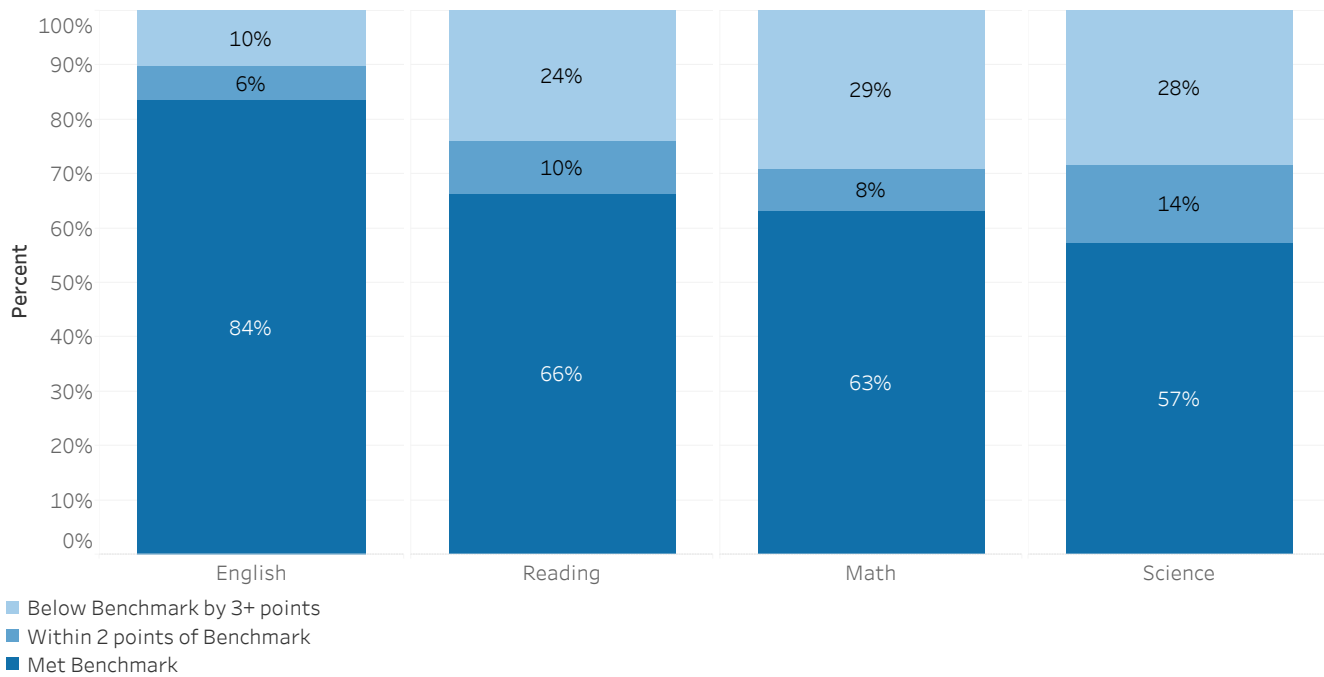
## Data From Graph Above

	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	American Indian/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Asian	White
2015	12%	22%	16%	41%	63%	52%
2016	12%	22%	20%	45%	65%	52%
2017	13%	24%	25%	43%	65%	57%
2018	22%	41%	39%	59%	76%	69%
2019	23%	43%	45%	60%	78%	68%

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# ILLINOIS 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

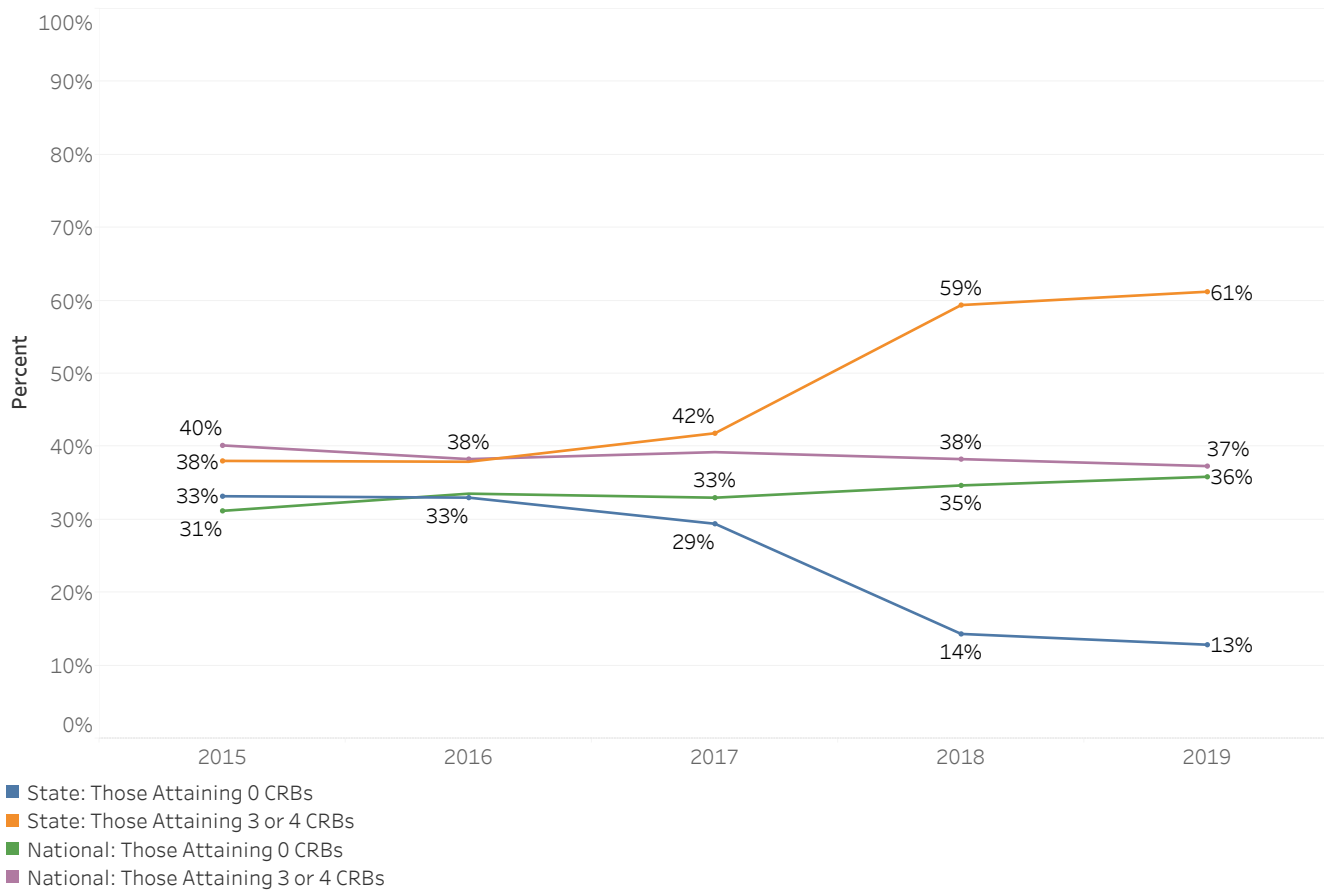
	Below Benchmark by 3+ points	Within 2 points of Benchmark	Met Benchmark
English	10%	6%	84%
Math	29%	8%	63%
Reading	24%	10%	66%
Science	28%	14%	57%

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

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



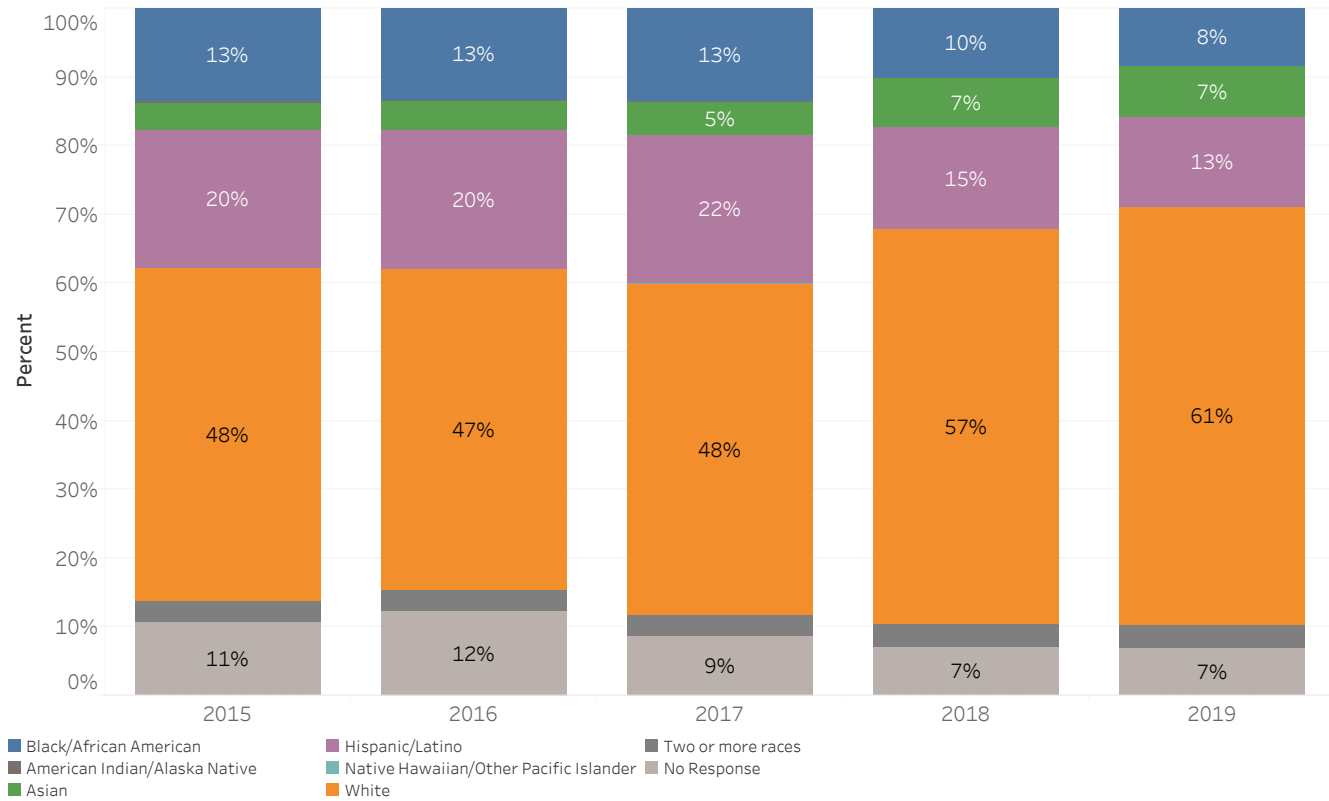
## Data from Graph Above

	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%	38%	31%	40%
2016	33%	38%	34%	38%
2017	29%	42%	33%	39%
2018	14%	59%	35%	38%
2019	13%	61%	36%	37%

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# ILLINOIS 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	13%	0%	4%	20%	0%	48%	3%	11%
2016	13%	0%	4%	20%	0%	47%	3%	12%
2017	13%	0%	5%	22%	0%	48%	3%	9%
2018	10%	0%	7%	15%	0%	57%	3%	7%
2019	8%	0%	7%	13%	0%	61%	3%	7%

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

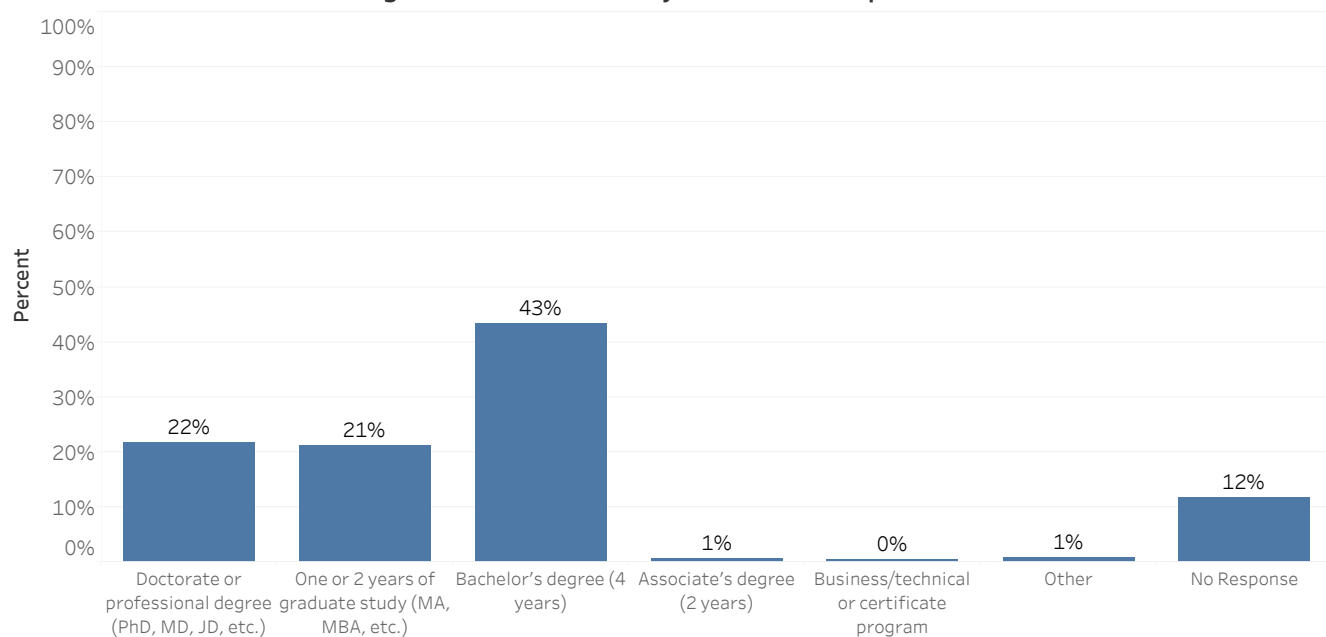
## Student Data Trends: 2015-2019, State vs. Nation

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
State N-count	157,047	156,403	134,901	62,626	50,850
National N-count	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038	1,914,817	1,782,820
Average ACT English Score - State	20.3	20.5	21.0	24.1	24.5
Average ACT English Score - National	20.4	20.1	20.3	20.2	20.1
Average ACT Reading Score - State	20.8	21.0	21.6	24.2	24.7
Average ACT Reading Score - National	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.2
Average ACT Math Score - State	20.7	20.6	21.2	23.4	23.8
Average ACT Math Score - National	20.8	20.6	20.7	20.5	20.4
Average ACT Science Score - State	20.6	20.6	21.3	23.4	23.7
Average ACT Science Score - National	20.9	20.8	21.0	20.7	20.6
Average ACT Composite Score - State	20.7	20.8	21.4	23.9	24.3
Average ACT Composite Score - National	21.0	20.8	21.0	20.8	20.7

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# ILLINOIS 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.)	22%
One or 2 years of graduate study (MA, MBA, etc.)	21%
Bachelor's degree (4 years)	43%
Associate's degree (2 years)	1%
Business/technical or certificate program	0%
Other	1%
No Response	12%

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