

The Condition of College & Career Readiness

This report looks at the achievement of the ACT®-tested 2017 graduating class relative to college and career readiness. A total of 60% of students in the 2017 US graduating class took the ACT® test, compared to 64% last year, 54% in 2013, and 42% in 2007. The growing percentage of the nation's graduates taking the ACT over the past decade has enhanced the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to providing information and solutions to support the following:

- **Holistic view of readiness.** The ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness is only one of multiple domains critical in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Social and emotional learning skills (SEL) are also vital. Behavioral skills, cross-cutting capabilities, and navigational skills should be measured and addressed. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive picture of student readiness for success after high school.
- **Meaningful data for better decisions.** ACT is focused on providing better data to students, parents, schools, districts, and states so that all can make more informed decisions to improve educational outcomes. We accomplish this goal by taking a holistic view and using consistent and reliable historical information so that individuals and institutions have a better context to make critical decisions about the journey they have undertaken.

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017

Iowa Key Findings

Performance

- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 23,306 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 22,526 in 2013.
 - ~ In Iowa, 67 percent of 2017 graduates took the ACT, compared to 60 percent nationally.
- Iowa graduates of 2017 had an average Composite score of 21.9, compared to the national average of 21.0.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Iowa graduating class Composite average of 21.9, Iowa graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 22.1 and 22.1, respectively.
 - ~ 2017 Iowa graduates taking three or more years of math had a math average of 21.8, compared to the average math score of 16.6 for students taking less than three years of math.
- In 2017, 31 percent of Iowa graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 32 and 32 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
 - ~ This compares to 27 percent of students tested nationally.
 - ~ In Iowa, 46 percent of students met three or four of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, compared to 39 percent nationally.
 - ~ Iowa students exceeded the national readiness ranges for all reporting categories except for four of those in math.
- In reading complex text, 41 percent scored below proficiency.

STEM

- In 2017, 11,154 Iowa graduates (48 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- In Iowa, 22 percent of students met the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark of 26, compared to 21 percent of students nationally.
- Fully 73 percent of students indicated that they were taking three or more years of math, and 51 percent indicated they were taking physics.
 - ~ In Iowa, 2017 graduates taking three or more years of math had an average math score of 21.8, compared to the average math score of 16.6 for students taking less than three years of math.
 - ~ In Iowa, 2017 graduates taking physics had an average science score of 23.6, compared to the average science score of 20.9 for students not taking physics.

Career Readiness

- In 2017, 6,706 Iowa graduates (29 percent) were likely to attain the Gold ACT WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® or higher based upon ACT Composite score, compared to 538,392 (27 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, 25 for Gold, and 35 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 24 as "Silver," and 25 or above as "Gold or Higher." For comparison, individual student score reports classify those who scored 12 to 13, 14 to 17, and 18 and higher as making progress toward Bronze, Silver, and Gold certificates.

Impact

- Based on the actual test volume and ACT score distributions of 2016 ACT-tested Iowa high school graduates, ACT research estimates that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2017 graduating class would result in:
 - ~ 46 more students enrolling in college.
 - ~ 55 more students persisting to year two.
 - ~ 42 fewer students needing remedial English.
 - ~ 80 fewer students needing remedial math.
 - ~ 65 more students persisting to year four.
 - ~ 73 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In Iowa, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 23.3, compared to 20.3 for single-time testers.
 - ~ The majority of Iowa students only test once: 44.6 percent of White students, 62.2 percent of Hispanic students, and 66.1 percent of African American students.
 - ~ For Hispanic students who tested at least twice, 78 percent who first tested in their junior year increased their score by .09 points and scored 3.4 points higher than 11th-grade Hispanic students who tested only once.
 - ~ For African American students who tested at least twice, 72.9 percent who first tested in their junior year, increased their score by .09 points and scored 3.6 points higher than 11th-grade Hispanic students who tested only once.
 - ~ 25.2 percent of African American students and 21.7 percent of Hispanic students wait to test until their senior year, which can negatively impact post-high school opportunities.
- Of Iowa's 2017 graduating class, there were 787 (3 percent) African American students taking the ACT. This compares to 256,756 (13 percent) nationally.
- Of Iowa's 2017 graduating class, there were 18,538 (80 percent) White students taking the ACT. This compares to 1,062,439 (52 percent) nationally.
- Of Iowa's 2017 graduating class, there were 1,652 (7 percent) Hispanic students taking the ACT. This compares to 347,906 (17 percent) nationally.
- Of Iowa's 2017 graduating class, there were 675 (3 percent) Asian students taking the ACT. This compares to 96,097 (5 percent) nationally.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 70 percent of Iowa graduates opted into EOS.
- For Iowa's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were Iowa State University, The University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, Kirkwood Community College, and Des Moines Area Community College-Ankeny.
 - ~ For Iowa's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were South Dakota State University, Northwest Missouri State University, and University of South Dakota.
- Iowa students sent 46,597 ACT scores to colleges.
- ACT issued 3,920 ACT fee waivers to qualified Iowa students. However, 797 students (20 percent) did not take advantage of this opportunity to test for free. This compares to 656,061 issued nationally, of which 181,092 (28 percent) did not take advantage. This represents a great opportunity for high schools within the

state to increase the socio-economic diversity of their students tested. Note: This is the number of fee waivers issued for the state, not specific to this graduating class.

Pipeline

- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 2,462 (11 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 3,544 (15 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 24.5.
- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 2,832 (12 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 24.5.
- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 13,133 (56 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.6.
- In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 877 (4 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 18.4.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 Iowa graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Business Administration and Management, General; and Elementary Education.
 - ~ In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 4,625 (20 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 22.5.
 - ~ In the Iowa graduating class of 2017, 1,639 (7 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 21.1.

ACT Footprint

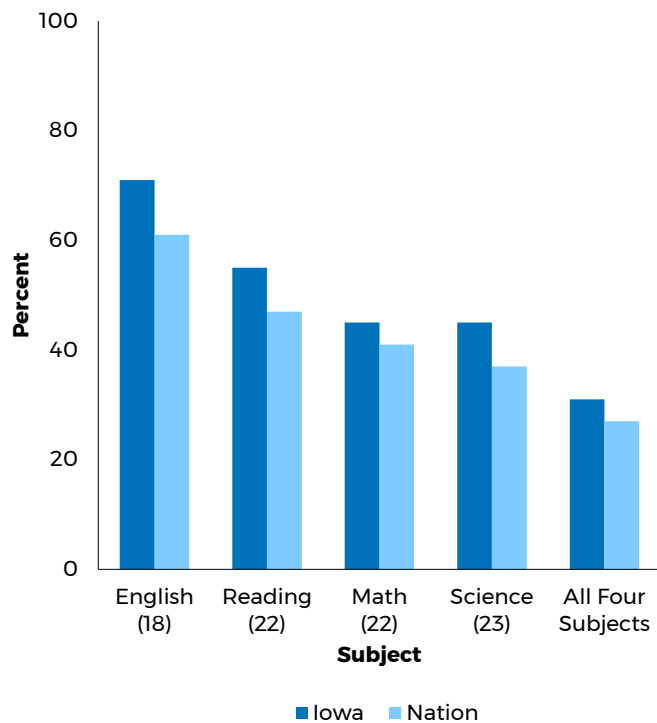
- Number of administrations:
 - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 4,823
 - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 12,305
 - ~ ACT Engage®: 2,244
 - ~ PreACT®: 2,003
 - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 45,417

Additional Points

- The Iowa ACT State Organization hosts a state conference that brings together education and workforce professionals providing a unique and diverse professional development opportunity. In fall 2016, 137 professionals attended the conference.
- ACT College and Career Readiness Workshops will be conducted across the state this fall in Davenport, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, and Sioux City.
- 24 students from the graduating class scored a 36 ACT Composite score, compared to 10 in 2016.
- Females outperformed males in the percentage of students meeting English and reading benchmarks, and males outperformed females in math by 10 percent and 9 percent in science.
- According to the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest-growing careers in Iowa requiring education beyond high school are: wind turbine service technicians, occupational therapy assistants, operations research analysts, information security analysts, and physical therapist assistants.

Iowa College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

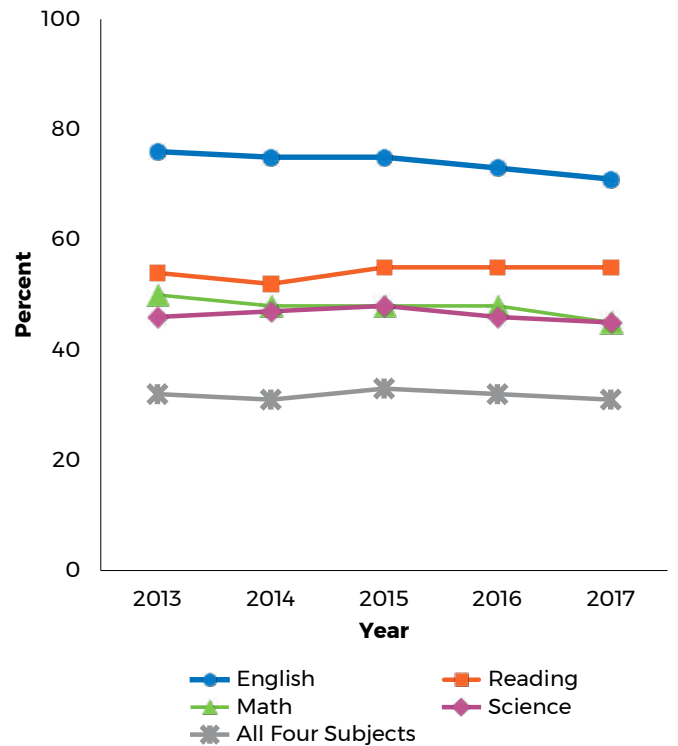
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject



Data from graph above:

State / Nation	English (18)	Reading (22)	Math (22)	Science (23)	All Four
Iowa	71	55	45	45	31
Nation	61	47	41	37	27

Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

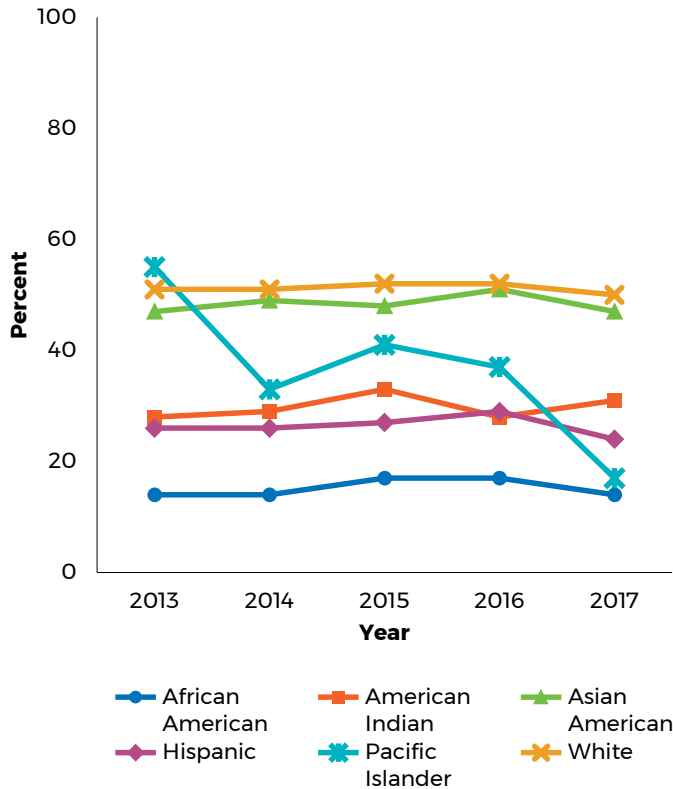


Data from graph above:

Subject	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	76	75	75	73	71
Reading	54	52	55	55	55
Math	50	48	48	48	45
Science	46	47	48	46	45
All Four Subjects	32	31	33	32	31

* 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 score values in parentheses ().

Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity*



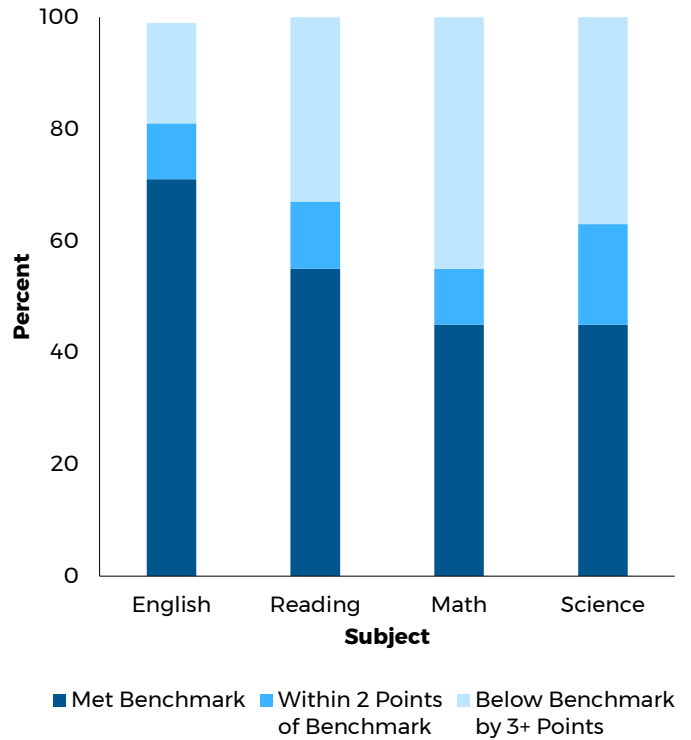
Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	14	14	17	17	14
American Indian	28	29	33	28	31
Asian American	47	49	48	51	47
Hispanic	26	26	27	29	24
Pacific Islander	55	33	41	37	17
White	51	51	52	52	50

* Percentages for groups with insufficient counts will be missing.

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject

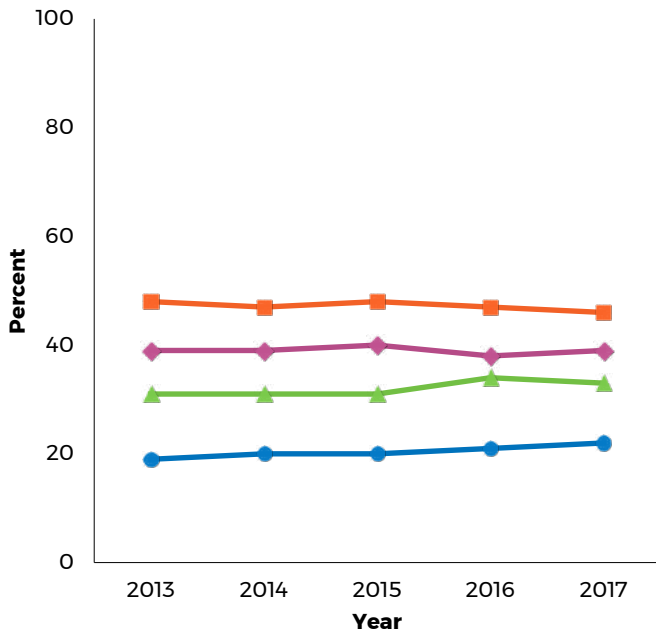
Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



Data from graph above:

Attainment	English	Reading	Math	Science
Met Benchmark	71	55	45	45
Within 2 Points of Benchmark	10	12	10	18
Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	18	33	45	37

Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained



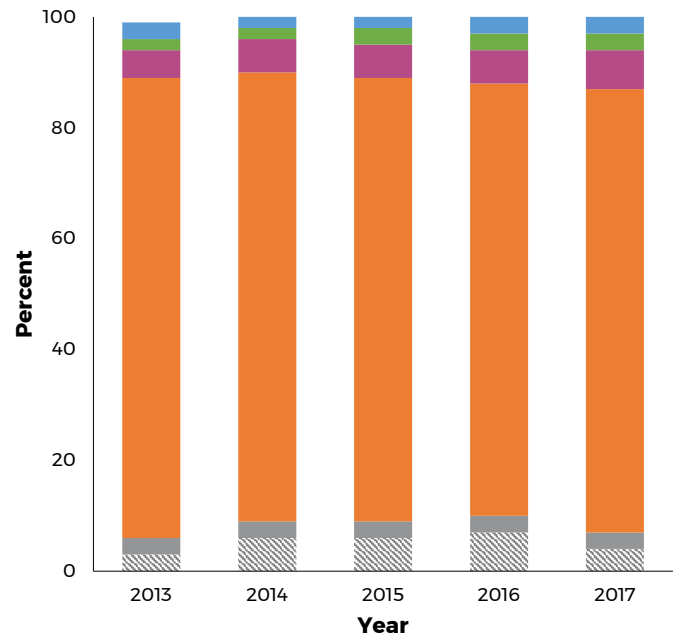
- Iowa Students Attaining 0 CRBs
- Iowa Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs
- National Students Attaining 0 CRBs
- National Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs

Data from graph above:

Attainment	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Iowa Students Attaining 0 CRBs	19	20	20	21	22
Iowa Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	48	47	48	47	46
National Students Attaining 0 CRBs	31	31	31	34	33
National Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	39	39	40	38	39

Percent of 2013–2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



- African American
- American Indian
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races
- No Response

Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	3	3	3	3	3
American Indian	0	0	0	0	0
Asian American	2	2	3	3	3
Hispanic	5	6	6	6	7
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
White	83	81	80	78	80
Two or More Races	3	3	3	3	3
No Response	3	6	6	7	4

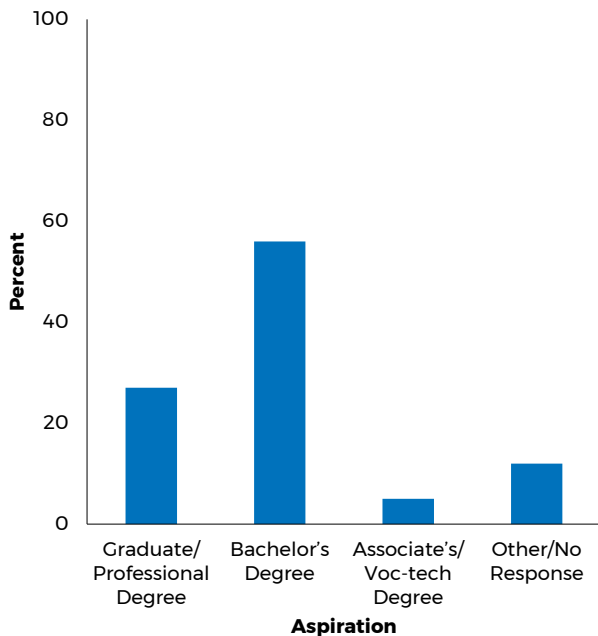
Iowa: Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in Iowa increased by 780 students (4 percent).

Student Data Trends: 2013-2017, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent Tested	Iowa	66	68	67	68	67
	Nation	54	57	59	64	60
N Tested	Iowa	22,526	22,931	22,675	23,132	23,306
	Nation	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038
Average English Score	Iowa	21.5	21.5	21.6	21.4	21.2
	Nation	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3
Average Reading Score	Iowa	22.5	22.5	22.7	22.7	22.6
	Nation	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4
Average Math Score	Iowa	21.6	21.4	21.5	21.4	21.3
	Nation	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7
Average Science Score	Iowa	22.2	22.2	22.3	22.3	22.1
	Nation	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0
Average Composite Score	Iowa	22.1	22.0	22.2	22.1	21.9
	Nation	20.9	21.0	21.0	20.8	21.0

Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations

Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



There is good news in that 88% of Iowa's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 89% of Iowa's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 76% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 3,026 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from Iowa would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

Data from graph

Aspiration	Percent
Graduate / Professional Degree	27
Bachelor's Degree	56
Associate's / Voc-tech Degree	5
Other / No Response	12



Iowa State Exemplar

2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

Grace Tsui

Dubuque Senior High School, Dubuque Community School District

“College will provide a whole new world to deepen my understanding of each field I have an interest in. And whatever I end up doing, I know I will never stop learning.”

Grace initially worried when her classmates seemed to know exactly what they wanted to do in life, but her wide variety of courses and extracurriculars in high school has led her to understand that she has time in college to find her passion and that a diversity of experiences will only enhance her education and her life.

Grace’s numerous college-level courses will enable her to succeed in her chosen major, and she is interested in career paths including engineering, biochemistry, and medicine.

Information and products for further review

	Knowledge & Skills	Social & Emotional
Assessments	ACT Aspire®	ACT Tessera™
	PreACT®	ACT Engage®
	The ACT® Test	
	ACT WorkKeys®	
Research	Condition of College & Career Readiness	A Rosetta Stone for Noncognitive Skills
	ACT® National Curriculum Survey®	
	The Forgotten Middle	Tessera Comprehensive Theory of Action
	Rigor at Risk	
	ACT Holistic Framework™	
Resources	PLDs Learning Description Review	Tessera Teacher Playbook
	Curriculum Review Worksheets	
	OpenEd Learning Resources	
	Test Prep	
Training	Professional Learning Sessions	
	College & Career Readiness Workshops	
	Holistic Framework Webinars	

We are more than just the ACT test. ACT products and services encompass a variety of research- and assessment-based solutions.

As research leaders, we continue to innovate education and workforce solutions to help guide individuals to education and career success.

Find out more at www.act.org.

Key ACT Research

As students navigate their education and career journeys, it is critical for them to be ready for college and career success. College and career readiness is supported by the ACT Holistic Framework, a research-based, multidimensional model for understanding the essential knowledge and skills needed for success, and the solutions that can meet students' navigation needs. Visit act.org/condition2017 to access key reports listed below.

- Serving students' navigation needs from kindergarten to career requires a holistic approach:
 - ~ *Beyond Academics: A Holistic Framework for Enhancing Education and Workplace Success*
 - ~ *The Importance of Behavioral Skills and Navigation Factors for Education and Workforce Success*
- The ACT Holistic Framework is supported by prolific research:
 - ~ Core Academic Skills:
 - 2017 State and National Condition Reports
 - *Profiles of STEM Students: Persisters, Joiners, Changers, and Departers*
 - *ACT Composite Score by Parental Education Level, 2012-2016*
 - *Comparisons of Student Achievement Levels by District Performance and Poverty*
 - ~ Behavioral Skills (also called Social and Emotional Learning):
 - *The Development of Behavioral Performance Level Descriptors*
 - ~ Cross-Cutting Capabilities:
 - *ACT National Curriculum Survey 2016*
 - ~ Student journeys continue into postsecondary education and careers:
 - *Higher Education Research Digest*
 - *Predicted Attainment of ACT National Career Readiness Certificates for the 2016 ACT-tested High School Cohort*

Recommendations

- 1. Use a holistic assessment model for school accountability that measures student readiness for college and career across multiple domains.** While it is essential to measure students' academic achievement in assessing college and career readiness, it is not enough. Social and emotional learning skills are important and measurable, and they can be impacted. Assessment models should take into account core academic skills, behavioral skills, cross-cutting capabilities, and education and career navigation skills to provide an integrated picture of college and work readiness.
- 2. Make special efforts to ensure that underrepresented students have equal access and opportunity to pursue postsecondary education.** According to ACT research, most underrepresented students want to continue their education after high school, but they face many barriers. Ensuring they have access to the same rigorous core curriculum as others is just one step. Many also lack the resources, information, and familial and peer support they need to prepare for success after high school. Special efforts must be made to level the playing field for underrepresented students so they have equal opportunity to succeed.
- 3. Increase emphasis on STEM readiness initiatives, measures, and programs.** With technology advancing rapidly, the importance of STEM readiness is only increasing. The threat of robotic and computer-assisted technologies eliminating jobs is growing while the remaining and emerging jobs will likely require higher-level skills. ACT data continue to show that many graduates are not ready. Without improvement in STEM readiness, far too many will be ill-prepared for the future workforce.
- 4. Focus on fewer, higher, and clearer learning standards in K-12 schools.** Far too many students continue to graduate from high school without all of the core skills they will need to ably succeed at the next level. Many will struggle, and many will likely fail to realize their aspirations. The push toward raising the bar on learning standards and focusing on the essential skills necessary for success must continue.
- 5. Begin assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies early.** Early assessment and intervention are critical to improving educational outcomes. If students are not on track for college and career readiness by the time they reach middle school, it may be too late. Assessing learning and implementing intervention strategies to help students get on the right path for college and career readiness must begin in elementary school.