

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

Mississippi Key Findings

Performance

- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 36,026 graduates took the ACT® test, compared to 27,749 in 2013.
 - ~ The 2017 report reflects the second graduating class to participate in Mississippi statewide ACT testing among the public high schools. While ACT averages tend to dip during the first year of the graduating class data after statewide testing, Mississippi has seen improvement during the second class.
- The average ACT Composite score and ACT subject area scores all increased from last year:
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Mississippi graduating class Composite average of 18.6, Mississippi graduates in 2016 and 2013 had Composite averages of 18.4 and 18.9, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Mississippi graduating class English average of 18.2, Mississippi graduates in 2016 and 2013 had English averages of 17.9 and 18.8, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Mississippi graduating class math average of 18.1, Mississippi graduates in 2016 and 2013 had math averages of 18.0 and 18.3, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Mississippi graduating class reading average of 18.8, Mississippi graduates in 2016 and 2013 had reading averages of 18.7 and 19.1, respectively.
 - ~ Compared to the 2017 Mississippi graduating class science average of 18.8, Mississippi graduates in 2016 and 2013 had science averages of 18.5 and 18.8, respectively.
- In 2017, 20 percent of Mississippi graduates met three or four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. This compares to 19 and 21 percent of 2016 and 2013 graduates, respectively.
 - ~ This means that 7,205 students met at least three benchmarks—over 400 more graduates than in 2016 (6,779) and 1,000 more than in 2015 (6,162).

STEM

- In 2017, 17,378 Mississippi graduates (48 percent) indicated having an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.
- Compared to a 2017 Mississippi graduating class STEM average of 18.7, graduates in 2016 and 2013 had STEM averages of 18.5 and 18.8, respectively.
- In Mississippi, 27 percent of graduates taking physics met the ACT Science College Readiness Benchmark, compared to 16 for students not taking physics.

Career Readiness

- In 2017, 4,403 Mississippi graduates (12 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 Mississippi 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:
 - ~ 79 more students enrolling in college.
 - ~ 94 more students persisting to year two.
 - ~ 84 fewer students needing remedial English.
 - ~ 161 fewer students needing remedial math.
 - ~ 104 more students persisting to year four.
 - ~ 109 more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- In Mississippi, 2017 graduates taking the ACT two or more times had an average Composite score of 19.7, compared to 16.6 for single-time testers.
 - ~ 12,425 Mississippi graduates (34 percent) tested only once with the ACT, earning an average ACT score of 16.6.
 - ~ 6,743 students tested multiple times and first tested in their sophomore year. These graduates increased their score by 2.6 points.
 - ~ 15,997 students tested multiple times and first tested in their junior year. These graduates increased their score by 0.8 point.
- Of Mississippi's 2017 graduating class, there were 14,285 (40 percent) African American students taking the ACT. This compares to 256,756 (13 percent) nationally.
- Of Mississippi's 2017 graduating class, there were 190 (1 percent) American Indian students taking the ACT. This compares to 16,135 (1 percent) nationally.
- Of Mississippi's 2017 graduating class, there were 359 (1 percent) Asian students taking the ACT. This compares to 96,097 (5 percent) nationally.
- Of Mississippi's 2017 graduating class, there were 1,238 (3 percent) Hispanic students taking the ACT. This compares to 347,906 (17 percent) nationally.
- Of Mississippi's 2017 graduating class, there were 15,897 (44 percent) White students taking the ACT. This compares to 1,062,439 (52 percent) nationally.
- Compared to 73 percent of 2017 graduates nationally, 81 percent of Mississippi graduates opted into EOS.
- For Mississippi's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University Southern Mississippi, Jackson State University, and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.
 - ~ For Mississippi's 2017 ACT-tested graduates, the top three out-of-state schools to which scores were sent were University of Memphis, University of Alabama, and University of South Alabama.
- ACT issued 23,105 ACT fee waivers to qualified Mississippi students. However, 5,546 students (24 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. Fee waivers represent a great opportunity for students with socio-economic challenges to retest without incurring any fees. Note: This is the number of fee waivers issued for the state, not specific to this graduating class.

- ~ For schools distributing more than 40 ACT fee waivers, Terry High School had the highest attendance rate: 151 of 165 ACT fee waivers were distributed to students who attended on test day (92 percent).

Pipeline

- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 8,945 (25 percent) had parents who did not attend college.
- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 7,297 (20 percent) aspired to attain a professional degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.1.
- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 3,152 (9 percent) aspired to attain a graduate degree. They had an average Composite score of 21.2.
- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 14,316 (40 percent) aspired to attain a bachelor's degree. They had an average Composite score of 18.6.
- In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 3,590 (10 percent) aspired to attain an associate's degree. They had an average Composite score of 15.9.
- In order of prevalence, the five most commonly indicated college majors of interest for 2017 Mississippi graduates were: Undecided; Nursing, Registered (BS/RN); Medicine (Pre-Medicine); Business Administration and Management, General; and Mechanical Engineering.
 - ~ In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 1,629 (5 percent) indicated planning on majoring in education. They had an average Composite score of 18.4.
 - ~ In the Mississippi graduating class of 2017, 4,269 (12 percent) indicated being undecided about their college major. They had an average Composite score of 18.9.

ACT Footprint

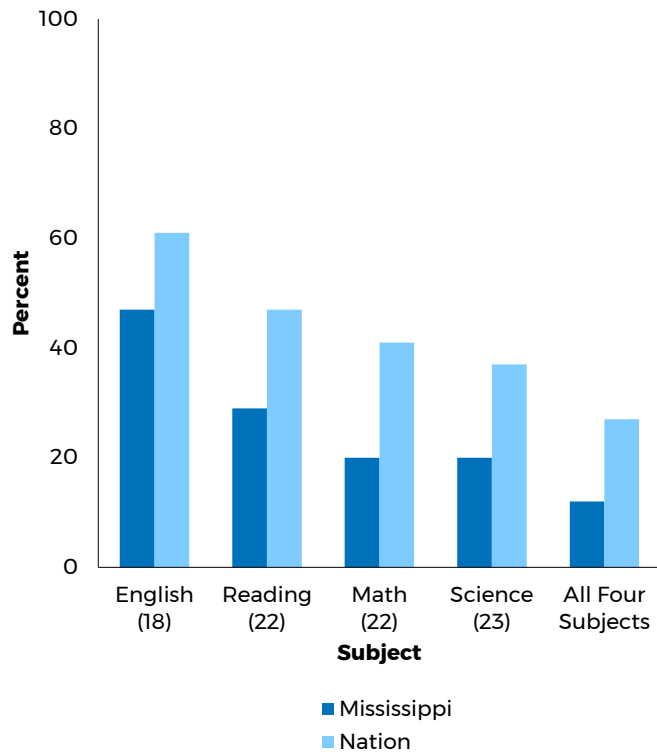
- Number of administrations:
 - ~ ACT Aspire® Summative: 55,151
 - ~ ACT Aspire Periodic: 15,694
 - ~ ACT Engage®: 610
 - ~ PreACT®: 1,701
 - ~ ACT WorkKeys: 43,346

Additional Points

- For the second year in a row, more Mississippi graduates are meeting the ACT score required for Mississippi's state scholarships than ever before:
 - ~ Mississippi HELP scholarship (qualifying ACT score of 20): 13,131 qualified in 2017; 12,429 qualified in 2016
 - ~ Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant (qualifying ACT score of 29): 1,604 qualified in 2017; 1,519 qualified in 2016
- 25,381 Mississippi graduates met the minimum ACT score (16) required for admission into Mississippi's public universities—the most ever for a Mississippi graduating class. 24,438 graduates earned the required score in 2016.

Mississippi College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

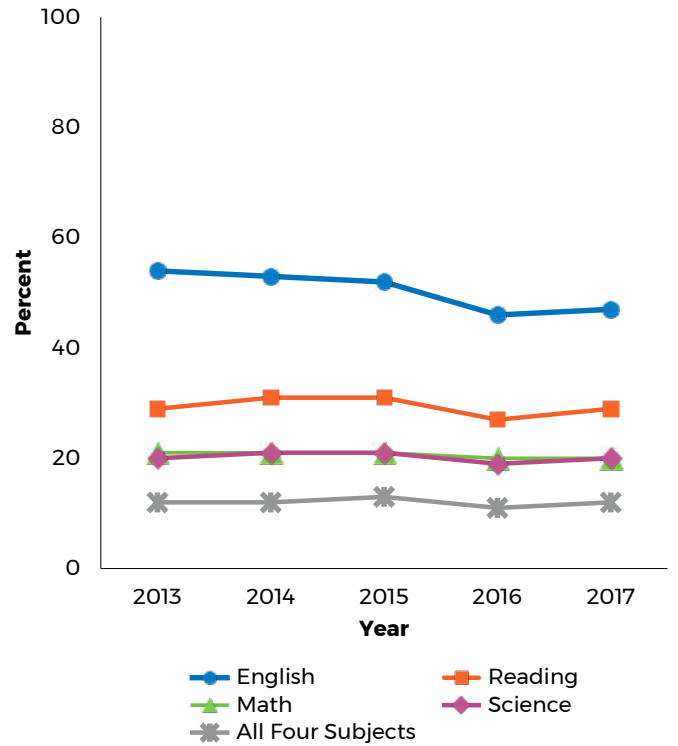
Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks* by Subject



Data from graph above:

State / Nation	English (18)	Reading (22)	Math (22)	Science (23)	All Four
Mississippi	47	29	20	20	12
Nation	61	47	41	37	27

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

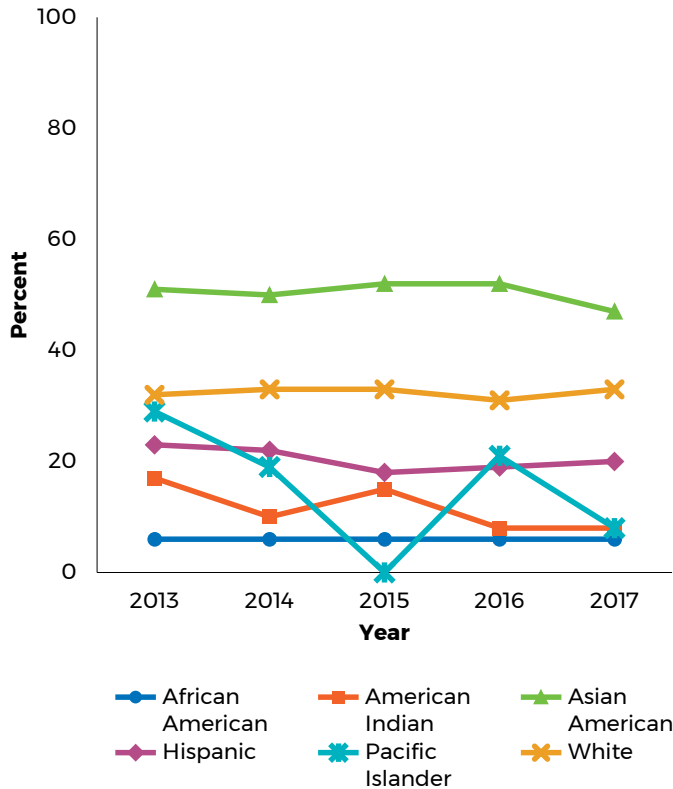


Data from graph above:

Subject	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
English	54	53	52	46	47
Reading	29	31	31	27	29
Math	21	21	21	20	20
Science	20	21	21	19	20
All Four Subjects	12	12	13	11	12

* 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*



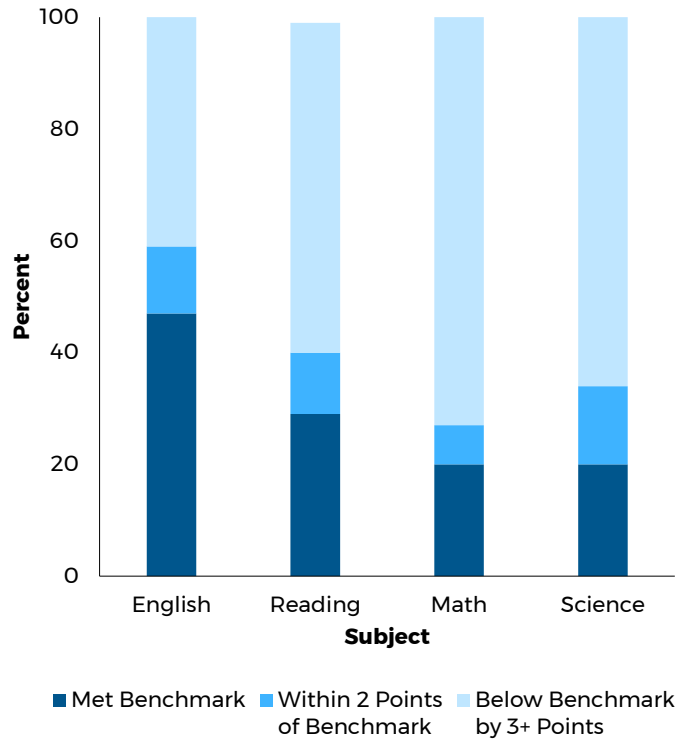
Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	6	6	6	6	6
American Indian	17	10	15	8	8
Asian American	51	50	52	52	47
Hispanic	23	22	18	19	20
Pacific Islander	29	19	0	21	8
White	32	33	33	31	33

* 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

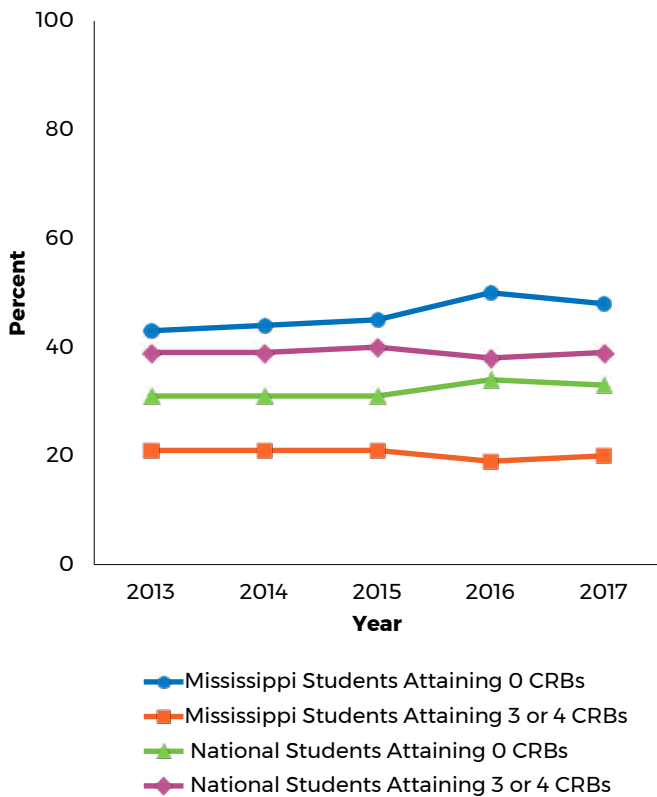
Note: Percents in this graph may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5% will not appear.



Data from graph above:

Attainment	English	Reading	Math	Science
Met Benchmark	47	29	20	20
Within 2 Points of Benchmark	12	11	7	14
Below Benchmark by 3+ Points	41	59	73	67

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

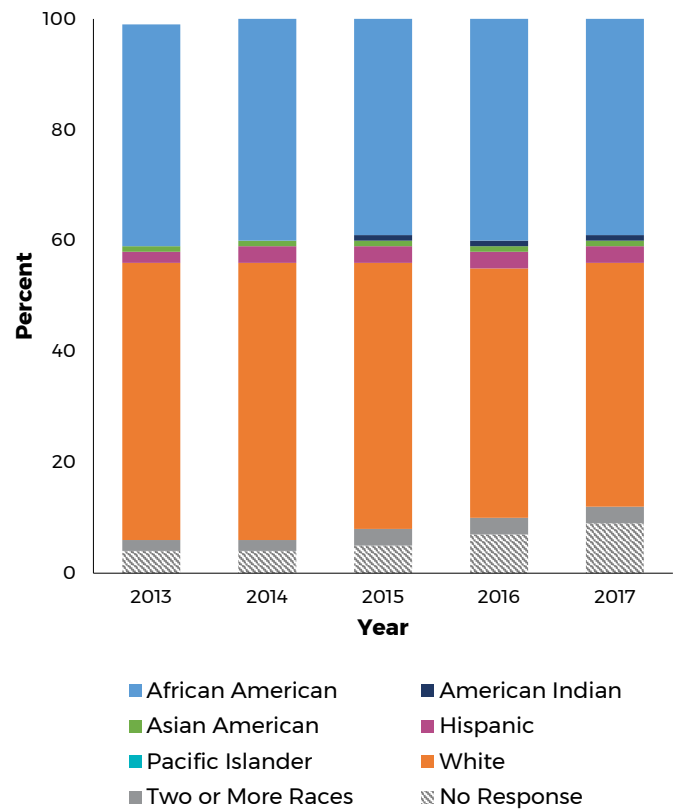


Data from graph above:

Attainment	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Mississippi Students Attaining 0 CRBs	43	44	45	50	48
Mississippi Students Attaining 3 or 4 CRBs	21	21	21	19	20
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.



Data from graph above:

Race	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
African American	40	40	40	40	40
American Indian	0	0	1	1	1
Asian American	1	1	1	1	1
Hispanic	2	3	3	3	3
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
White	50	50	48	45	44
Two or More Races	2	2	3	3	3
No Response	4	4	5	7	9

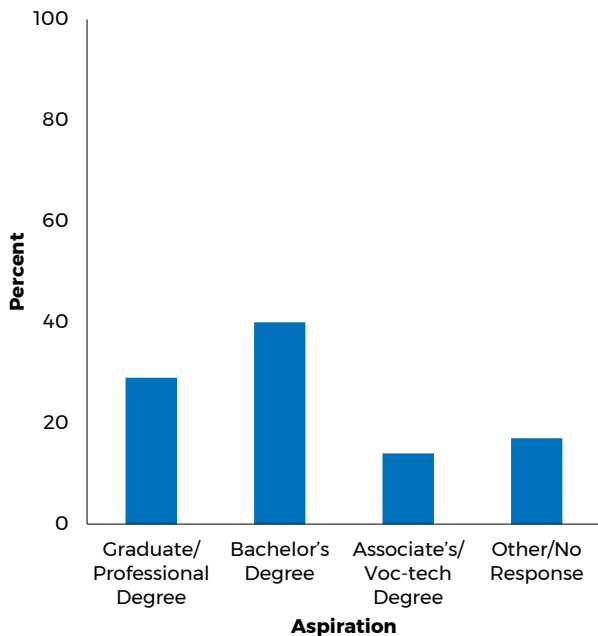
Mississippi: Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students taking the ACT in Mississippi increased by 8,277 students (30 percent).

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

Outcome	Cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Percent Tested	Mississippi	95	100	100	100	100
	Nation	54	57	59	64	60
N Tested	Mississippi	27,749	28,481	29,345	35,678	36,026
	Nation	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342	2,030,038
Average English Score	Mississippi	18.8	18.8	18.7	17.9	18.2
	Nation	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1	20.3
Average Reading Score	Mississippi	19.1	19.4	19.3	18.7	18.8
	Nation	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4
Average Math Score	Mississippi	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.0	18.1
	Nation	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6	20.7
Average Science Score	Mississippi	18.8	18.9	19.0	18.5	18.8
	Nation	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8	21.0
Average Composite Score	Mississippi	18.9	19.0	19.0	18.4	18.6
	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 83% of Mississippi's 2017 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 87% of Mississippi's 2016 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 61% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 9,302 of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from Mississippi would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

Data from graph

Aspiration	Percent
Graduate / Professional Degree	29
Bachelor's Degree	40
Associate's / Voc-tech Degree	14
Other / No Response	17



Mississippi State Exemplar 2017 ACT College and Career Readiness Campaign

Nishiana Heard

Gulfport High School, Gulfport School District

“I am more than just a test score. I am an honor roll student. I am a leader in my school. I am a charitable community member. I am an active member of several clubs. I am Nishiana Arkel Heard.”

Nishiana was unsatisfied with her initial ACT scores so she practiced and participated in ACT workshops, which enabled her to substantially raise her score. She also worked hard in advanced classes and participated in extracurriculars to demonstrate to colleges her dedication and breadth of abilities.

Nishiana plans to earn her bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering—studying abroad, volunteering, and completing internships during her undergraduate experience—before attending medical school to become an ophthalmologist.

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.