

# ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT DATABASE

## USER GUIDE

This user guide provides an overview of ACT's Enrollment Management Database, including the topics addressed and questions that can be answered by the data, the types of charts provided and how to interpret them, the dropdown menus you can use to refine the information provided in the charts, step-by-step instructions for answering an example question, and a glossary of some key terms found in the database. Currently, the database houses information on the ACT-tested high school graduating classes of 2014-2019. You can access the database from [act.org/researchdigest](http://act.org/researchdigest).

### TOPICS

There are five main topics covered in the database.

Student Background: Explore the demographic and academic backgrounds of ACT-tested students.

College Preferences: Learn about the types of college preferences held by ACT-tested students and about which students are more likely to realize their preferences.

Score Sending Behavior: Find out how many colleges students send scores to and the timing of their score sending behavior.

Enrollment: Understand which types of students enroll in college either directly or one year after high school and the types of colleges they attend.

Retention and Transfer: Examine which types of students are more likely to transfer to another college or drop out of higher education altogether.

The student background topic allows you to explore the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race or ethnicity, and family income) and academic characteristics (e.g., ACT Composite score range, and number of ACT Benchmarks met) of ACT-tested students. You can explore these characteristics for an ACT-tested high school graduating class or for any one of six different subsets of this population: those students who

- Enrolled in college directly after high school
  - Were retained at initial college in second year<sup>1</sup>
  - Transferred to another college before second year<sup>1</sup>
  - Dropped out of college before second year<sup>1</sup>
- Delayed college enrollment by one year<sup>1</sup>
- Were still not enrolled in college two years after high school<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet available for the 2018 high school graduating class

## QUESTIONS

The other four topics—college preferences, score sending behavior, enrollment, and retention and transfer—each have a set of specific questions that you can answer using the database.

- College Preferences:
- What are high school students' college type preferences?
    - How many enroll at a college that aligns with their college type preference?
  - What are high school students' college location preferences?
    - How many enroll at a college that aligns with their college location preference?
  - What are high school students' college distance preferences?
    - How many enroll at a college that aligns with their college distance preference?

- Score Sending Behavior:
- What is the average number of colleges to which high school students send their ACT scores?
  - What is the timing of ACT score sending among high school students?
  - How do students initially rank the college at which they enroll?

- Enrollment:
- How many students enroll directly after high school?
    - How many enroll in specific college types?
    - How many enroll in-state vs. out-of-state?
    - What is the median distance to their college?
  - How many students delay enrollment one year after high school?
    - How many enroll in specific college types?
    - How many enroll in-state vs. out-of-state?
    - What is the median distance to their college?

- Retention and Transfer<sup>2</sup>:
- How many direct enrolled students drop out of higher education before their second year of college?
  - How many college-persisting direct enrolled students transfer to another college for their second year of college?
  - What is the status of ACT-tested students two years after high school graduation?
  - With regard to the type of college attended, what are some of the common paths that direct enrolled students take between their first and second year of college?
  - With regard to the location of the college attended, what are some of the common paths that direct enrolled students take between their first and second year of college?
  - With regard to the distance of the college attended, what are some of the common paths that direct enrolled students take between their first and second year of college?

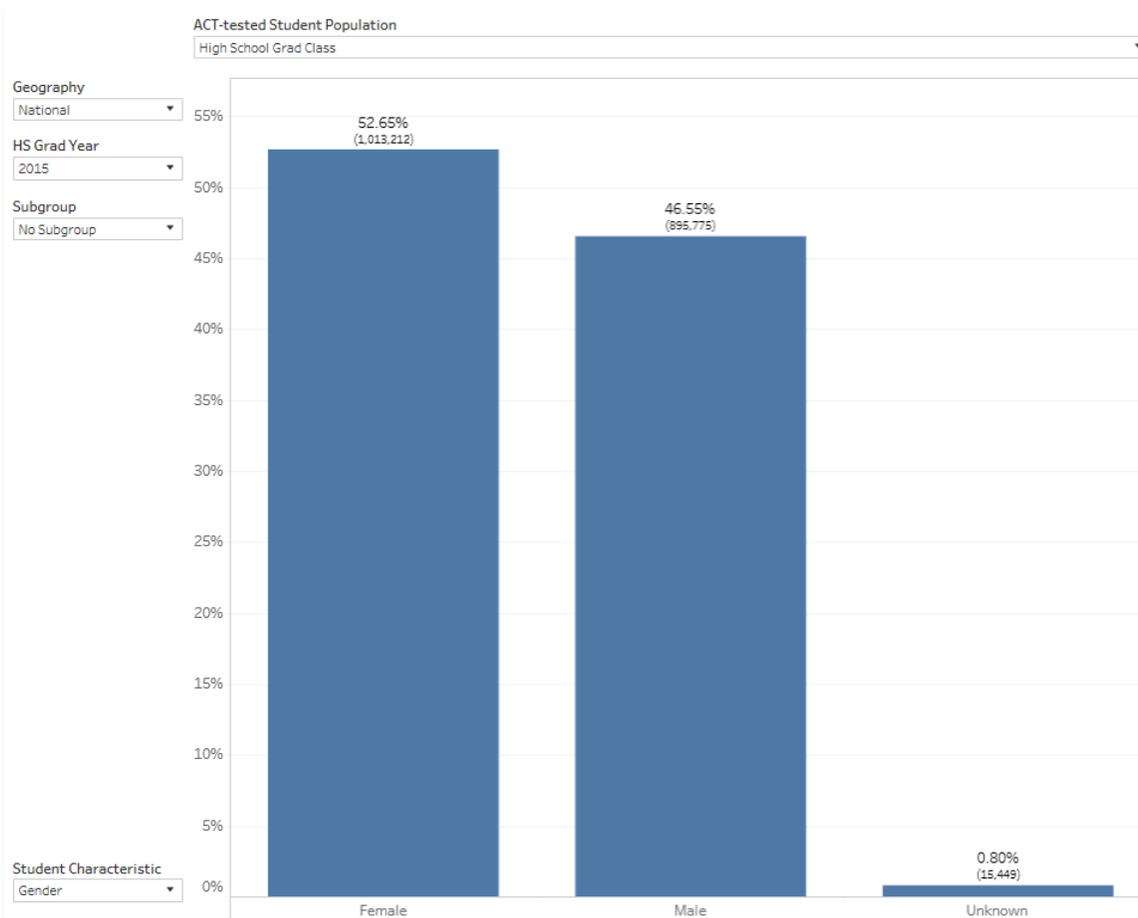
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<sup>2</sup> Not yet available for the 2018 high school graduating class

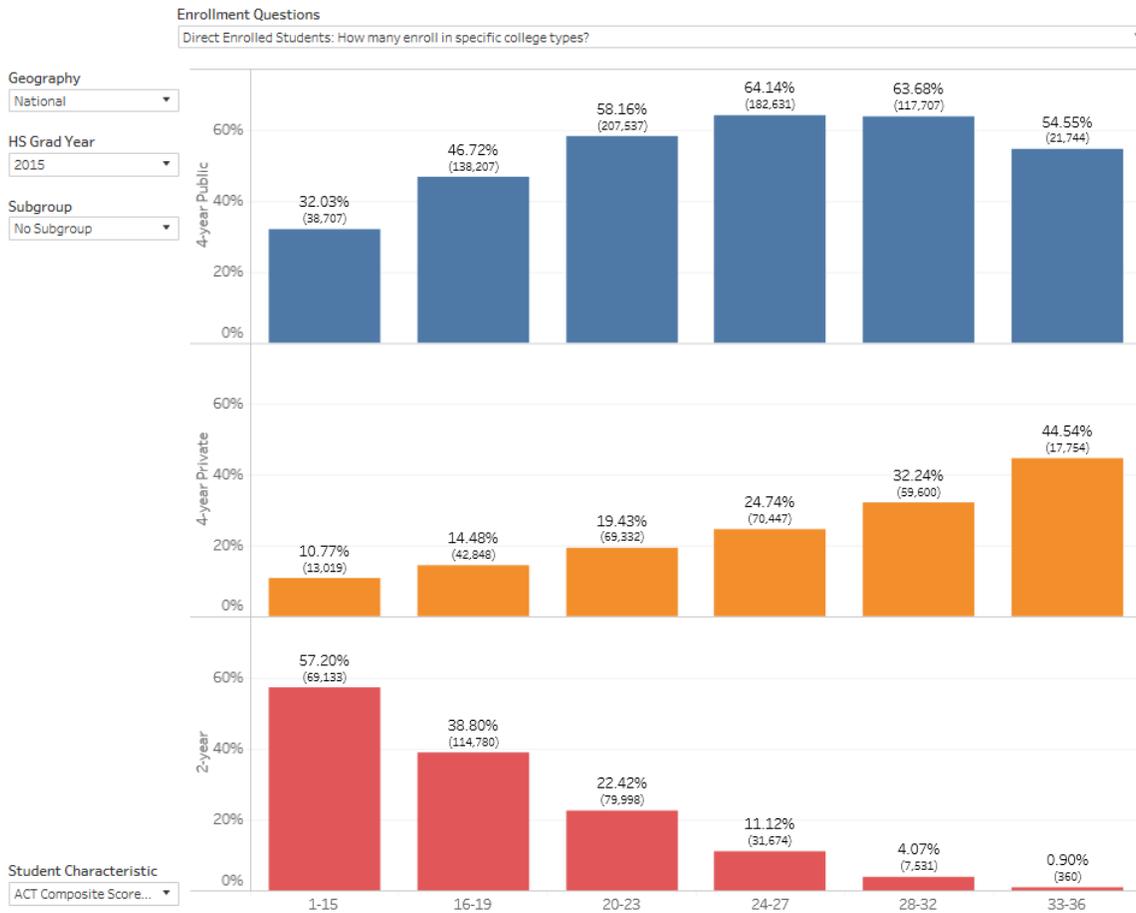
## CHART TYPES AND INTERPRETATION

There are three types of charts provided in the database:

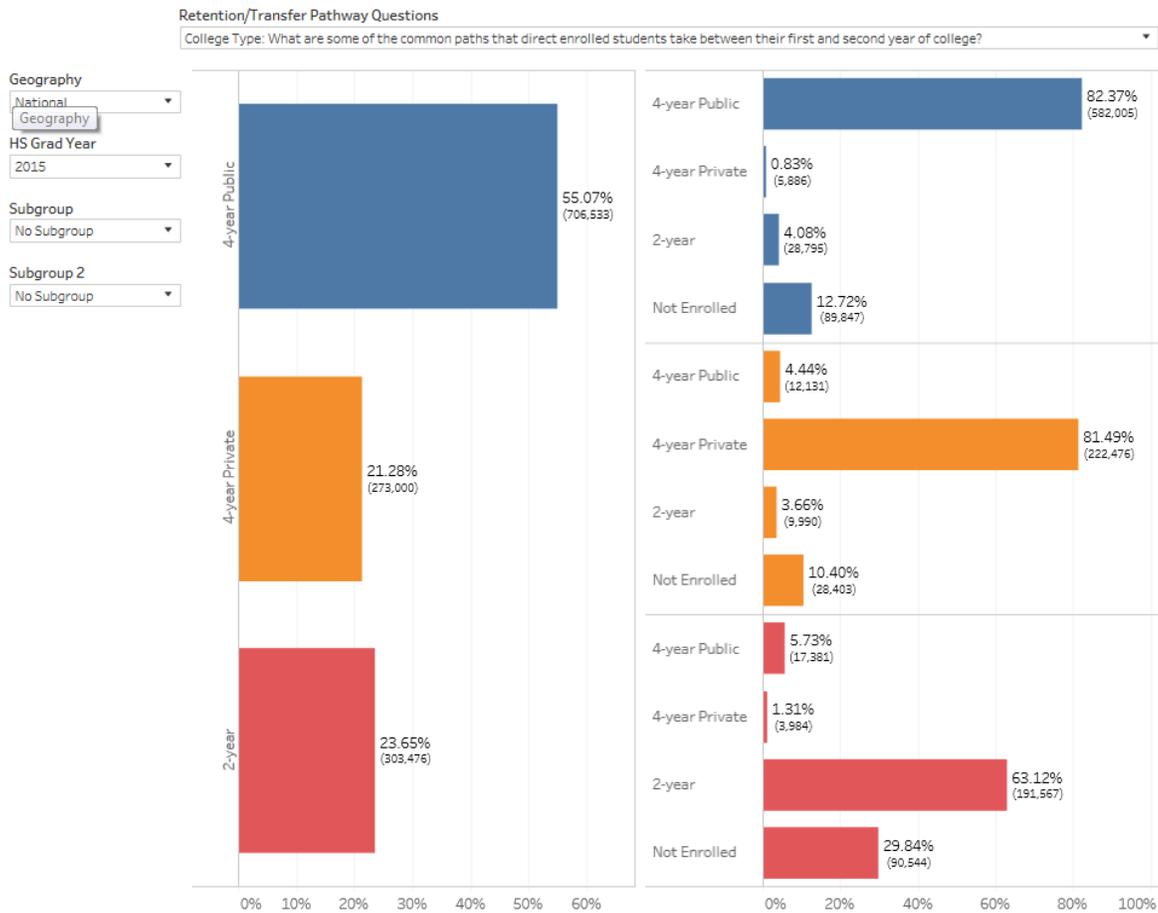
**Simple bar chart:** This type of chart provides the percentage of students that fall into a particular category on the horizontal axis. Percentages along the horizontal axis should sum to 100%. For example, the chart below shows that 52.65% of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2015 were female, whereas 46.55% were male and 0.80% did not provide their gender.



**Floating stacked bar chart:** This type of chart provides the percentage of students that fall into a particular category on the vertical axis. Percentages along the vertical axis should sum to 100%. For example, the chart below shows that, of those students who enrolled in college directly after high school, 57.20% of students in the ACT score range of 1-15 attended a 2-year college, whereas 10.77% of the students in that score range attended a 4-year private college and 32.03% attended a 4-year public college. The bars in this chart are color-coded by the category on the vertical axis to help you examine interesting patterns in the data by the categories on the horizontal axis. For example, the chart below shows that as the students' ACT score range increases, the rate at which students attend a 2-year college decreases (red bars) and the rate at which students attend a 4-year private college increases (orange bars).



**Pathway chart:** This type of chart provides information about students across two points in time. The bars on the left provide the percentage of students who fall into a particular category at Time 1. The bars on the right provide the percentage of students from that Time 1 category who fall into a particular category at Time 2. The bars on the right are color-coded to correspond with the Time 1 category in order to help you discover patterns over time. For example, the left side of the chart below shows that 55.07% of students who enrolled in college directly after high school attended a 4-year public college, whereas 21.28% attended a 4-year private college and 23.65% attended a 2-year college. The corresponding bars on the right show the Time 2 status for students attending each one of those Time 1 college types. For example, of those students who attended a 4-year public college in Time 1, 82.37% were still enrolled in a 4-year public college in Time 2, whereas 0.83% had transferred to a 4-year private college, 4.06% had transferred to a 2-year college, and 12.72% were no longer enrolled in college.



## CHOOSING A TOPIC

To select from among the questions within a particular topic, first choose the topic name from among the tabs at the top of the interface. There are seven tabs to choose from, as exploration of some topics require more than one chart type. The tab names are:

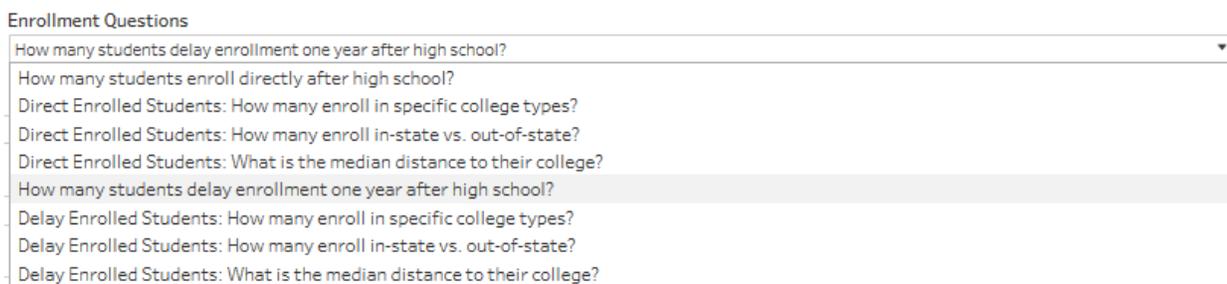
- Student Background
- College Preferences (Status)
- College Preferences (Pathways)
- Score Sending
- Enrollment
- Retention/Transfer (Status)
- Retention/Transfer (Pathways)



Those tab names followed by “Pathways” in parentheses contain questions that allow you to explore a change in students’ status over time. Those tab names followed by “Status” in parentheses allow you to explore students’ status a particular point in time. If nothing is indicated in parentheses after the tab name, the questions for that particular topic are status only.

## SELECTING A QUESTION

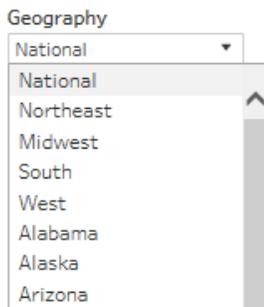
This dropdown menu will have a title like “Score Sending Questions” or “Enrollment Questions,” which reiterates which topic (i.e., tab) you have selected. To choose a question from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the question of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change.



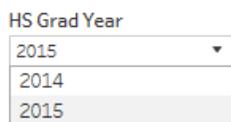
## REFINING THE INFORMATION

Each chart will be pre-populated with particular information by default. For example, the chart will present information for the “National” ACT-tested population by default unless some other student population is chosen. You can use the dropdown menus located to the left of the chart to refine the information presented in the chart.

Geography. This dropdown menu will allow you to limit the information provided to include only those students who reside within the particular geographic area chosen. Options to choose from include national, any of the four US geographic regions (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, South, West—see Glossary in the user guide for more information), and any of the fifty states or the District of Columbia. To choose a geography from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the geography of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change.



High School Graduation Year. This dropdown menu will allow you to select the particular ACT-tested cohort for whom you want information. Currently you can choose from among the graduation classes of 2014-2019. Note that second year college enrollment data (e.g., retention and transfer) are not available for the 2018 or 2019 graduating class. To choose a cohort from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the cohort of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change.



**Subgroup:** This dropdown menu will allow you to refine the information in the chart so that it focuses on a particular subgroup of students. These subgroups include students within a particular ACT Composite score band, number of ACT Benchmarks met, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, parent education level, degree expectation level, grade level at first testing, and planned major. Pathway charts allow for the selection of up to two subgroups. All other charts allow for the selection of one subgroup. To choose a subgroup from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the subgroup of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change.

Subgroup

No Subgroup ▼

No Subgroup

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ACT Score: 1-15

ACT Score: 16-19

ACT Score: 20-23

ACT Score: 24-27

ACT Score: 28-32

ACT Score: 33-36

...

ACT Benchmarks: Met 3 or 4

ACT Benchmarks: Met 0, 1, or 2

...

Gender: Female

Gender: Male

**Student Characteristic.** This dropdown menu—which is located at the bottom-left of the chart—allows you to select the particular student characteristic categories that are represented along the horizontal axis of the chart. This dropdown menu is not available for pathway charts. Interpretation of the information in the chart by the student characteristic chosen on the horizontal axis depends on the chart type. See “Chart Types and Interpretation” in the user guide for more information about interpretation. To choose a student characteristic from the menu, click on the downward arrow on the right side of the box, and click on the student characteristic of interest. Information in the chart will update to reflect your change.

Student Characteristic

ACT Composite Score... ▼

ACT Composite Score Range

Number of ACT Benchmarks Met

Gender

Race/Ethnicity

Family Income

Parents' Education

Degree Expectations

Grade Level at First Testing

Planned Major Category

## STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN EXAMPLE QUESTION

In this example, you work for a 4-year public college in Illinois and you are interested in knowing more about the college transfer rates of African American females who graduated from high school in Illinois compared to the transfer rates of females of other races/ethnicities from the state.

Step 1: Select Topic Tab Since you are interested in college transfer rates, select the “Retention/Transfer (Status)” tab.

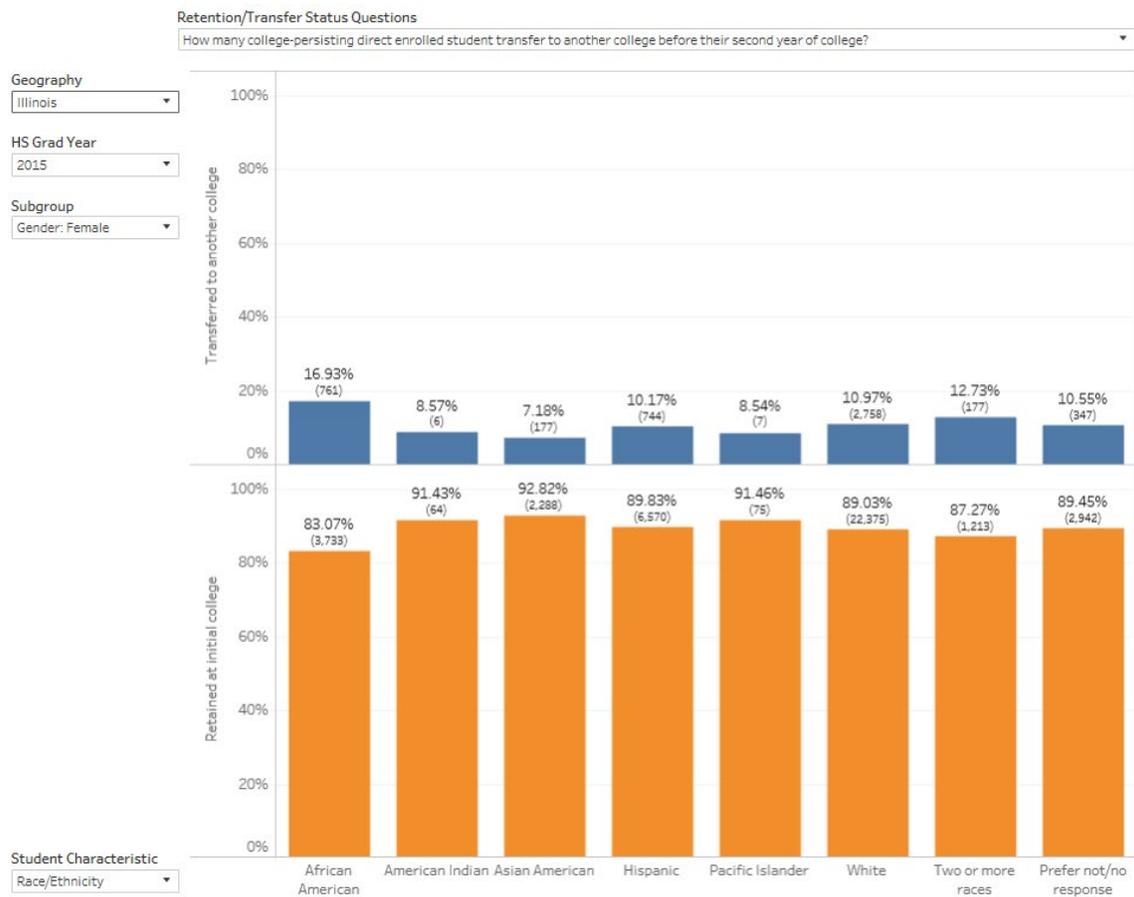
Step 2: Select Question Since you are interested in college transfer rates, choose the question “How many college-persisting direct enrolled students transfer to another college for their second year of college?” from the dropdown menu.

Step 3: Select Geography Since you are interested in the college transfer rates of students who graduated from high schools in Illinois, choose “Illinois” from the dropdown menu.

Step 4: Select Subgroup Since you are interested in the college transfer rates of females, select “Female” from the dropdown menu.

Step 5: Select Student Characteristic Since you are interested in the college transfer rates of students from different races/ethnicities, select “Race/Ethnicity” from the dropdown menu.

After following all five steps, the interface should display the information found in the chart below. As seen in the chart, among females from Illinois who entered college directly after high school, African Americans have the highest rate of transfer to another college (at 16.93%).



**Additional Score Report:** At the time that students register for the ACT they can select up to four colleges to which they would like their score report sent. Score reports sent outside of the registration process are known as additional score reports. Additional score reports can be sent either in addition to or in lieu of score reports based on college selections made during the ACT registration process. Additional score reports do not reflect the students' rank ordering of the colleges that receive the score report.

**Dropout:** When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class enrolled at a postsecondary institution during the fall after high school but did not subsequently enroll at that institution or any postsecondary education institution by the following fall. This is a point-in-time definition of "dropout" and should not imply that the student will not reenroll at some point in the future. Student enrollment is defined by the colleges that submit these records to the National Student Clearinghouse.

**Persistence:** When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class enrolled at a postsecondary institution during the fall after high school and subsequently enrolled at that institution or any postsecondary education institution during the following fall. This definition of persistence is not specific to the postsecondary institution at which the student began his or her college career. Student enrollment is defined by the colleges that submit these records to the National Student Clearinghouse.

**Planned Major:** At the time of ACT registration, students can select a specific planned major from a list of 294 alternatives. These alternatives can be grouped into 18 planned major areas, which are included in the database. A full list of the 294 ACT planned majors (and the 18 major areas to which they are assigned) can be found on page 5 of the *ACT Student Information Booklet*.<sup>3</sup>

**Region:** The geographic regions provided in the database are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as comprising the following states:

- Northeast: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT
- Midwest: IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, ND, SD, WI
- South: AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV
- West: AL, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY

**Retention:** When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class enrolled at a postsecondary institution during the fall after high school and subsequently enrolled at the same postsecondary education institution during the following fall. Student enrollment is defined by the colleges that submit these records to the National Student Clearinghouse.

**Transfer:** When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class enrolled at a postsecondary institution during the fall after high school and subsequently enrolled at a different postsecondary education institution by the following fall. Student enrollment is defined by the colleges that submit these records to the National Student Clearinghouse.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT-StudentInfoBooklet.pdf>