



A PROFILE OF **2012** ACT-TESTED
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

College Choice Report

Part 3

Persistence and Transfer

ACT[®]

ACT is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development. Each year, we serve millions of people in high schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies, nationally and internationally. Though designed to meet a wide array of needs, all ACT programs and services have one guiding purpose—helping people achieve education and workplace success.

A copy of this report can be found at
www.act.org/collegechoice/12



ACT has measured the academic achievement of 11th- and 12th-grade students since 1959, their career aspirations since 1969, and their academic preparation in high school since 1985. Since 1992, and every three to five years thereafter, ACT conducts the **ACT National Curriculum Survey**[®], in which we survey thousands of high school and college educators to pinpoint the knowledge and skills needed for first-year college coursework.

ACT is the only organization with decades of empirical information showing what happens to high school graduates once they get to college or to work and how they can maximize success—based on their preparation from kindergarten through high school. This unique information is an invaluable resource as ACT works closely with states, school districts, and postsecondary institutions to transform them into better-aligned P–16 education systems.

This *College Choice Report* is part of a report series that focuses on the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012. Other reports in this series are *The Condition of College & Career Readiness*, which highlights the academic readiness of high school graduates to enter college or career training, and *The Reality of College Readiness*, which highlights the relationships among readiness, college enrollment, and retention.

College Choice Report—Part 3

Persistence and Transfer

The *College Choice Report* is an annual report series that follows an ACT-tested high school graduating class from high school through their second year of college. It focuses on an alternating set of student characteristics, preferences, and college search behaviors to assist enrollment managers, admissions personnel, and other college administrators with student recruitment, enrollment, and persistence.

This *College Choice Report* series follows the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012, focusing on the relationships between students' self-reported preferences for college type, location, and distance as well as students' enrollment, persistence, and transfer at colleges that match these preferences.

Part 1 of this series, *Preferences and Prospects* (released April 2013), provides the self-reported college preferences and ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) participation rates of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012.

Part 2, *Enrollment Patterns* (released July 2013), revisits this class during their first year of college to examine whether students' college enrollment choices matched their self-reported college preferences.

Part 3, *Persistence and Transfer* (released March 2014), revisits this class during their second year of college to report on student persistence within postsecondary education and to examine the relationships between their self-reported college preferences and their transfer patterns.

We have provided interactive charts and maps online to supplement these reports. They offer data comparisons aggregated by state and region and allow for customization of report content to better address specific information needs. To view this content, go to www.act.org/collegechoice/12.

Terminology in Part 3: Persistence and Transfer

Key terms in this report may be used in different ways by some college administrators. For clarification, we've provided definitions for these terms as used in this report.

Dropping out: When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 enrolled at a postsecondary institution during fall 2012 but did *not* subsequently enroll at that institution or *any* postsecondary education institution during fall 2013. 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.

Persisting: When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 enrolled at a postsecondary institution during fall 2012 and subsequently enrolled at that institution or *any* postsecondary education institution during fall 2013.

Transferring: When a student from the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 enrolled at a postsecondary institution during fall 2012 and subsequently enrolled at a *different* postsecondary education institution during fall 2013.

Enrollments during fall 2012 and fall 2013 are collected only for institutions that participated in The National Student Clearinghouse®. Data from The National Student Clearinghouse accounts for 95% of all enrollments in Title IV, degree-granting institutions in the nation.

How to Use This Report

This report builds on a foundation of knowledge about the academic readiness of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 as presented in *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2012* (www.act.org/readiness/2012). An important conclusion of the *Condition* report is that far too many high school graduates are not prepared for success in college and career as defined by their attainment of the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. We encourage you to read the *Condition* report to get a better context for interpreting the findings of this report.

Sources

Part 3 of this report focuses on the persistence and transfer behavior of ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 who subsequently enrolled in a US college. Initial college enrollment, persistence, and transfer for this report are determined by matching the test records of the ACT-tested graduating class with college enrollment records provided to The National Student Clearinghouse. For the ACT-tested graduating class of 2012, 70% of students were identified as having enrolled in college during fall 2012 and 59% were identified as having reenrolled in any college during fall 2013.

Information in this report—such as students' background characteristics, ACT scores, and college preferences—is collected when students register for and take the ACT. College characteristics are provided by The National Student Clearinghouse and are supplemented by information found in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

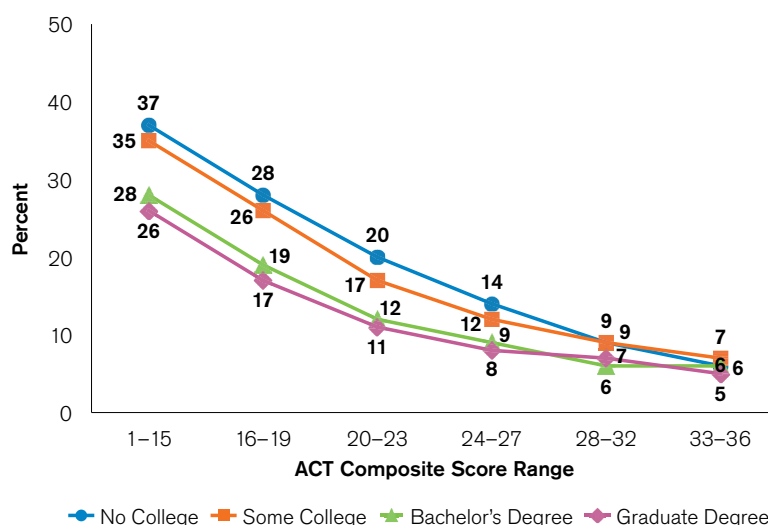
Dropout Before Year Two

Sixteen percent of college-enrolled ACT-tested students from the high school graduating class of 2012 dropped out of the higher education system before their second year of study. This dropout rate varies considerably by both student characteristics and college characteristics.

- Within each level of parent education, the percentage of students who dropped out of college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.
- Among students with lower ACT Composite scores, the share of students who dropped out of college decreases as their parents' education level increases. This gap in the dropout rate by parent education level diminishes substantially as students' ACT Composite score increases.
- Within each ACT Composite score range, a smaller share of students dropped out of college as their degree plans increase. This gap in the dropout rate by degree plans lessens only slightly as students' ACT Composite score increases.
- Regardless of their degree plans, the percentage of students who dropped out of college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.

Note: In this report, totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

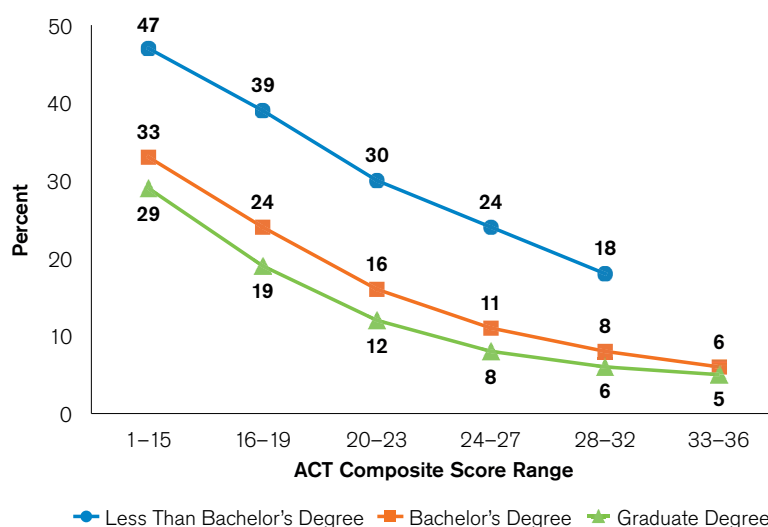
Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Parent Education Level and ACT Composite Score



Graph reads: 37% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 whose parents did not attend college dropped out of college before their second year.

Note: Based on 84% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom parent education level is available.

Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Degree Plans and ACT Composite Score

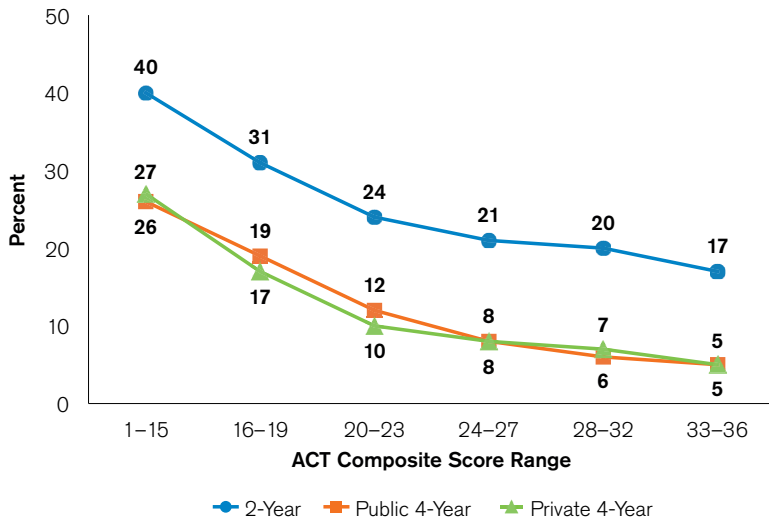


Graph reads: 47% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who planned to earn less than a bachelor's degree dropped out of college before their second year.

Note: Based on 91% of college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom degree plans are available.

Dropout Before Year Two

Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Initial College Type Attended and ACT Composite Score

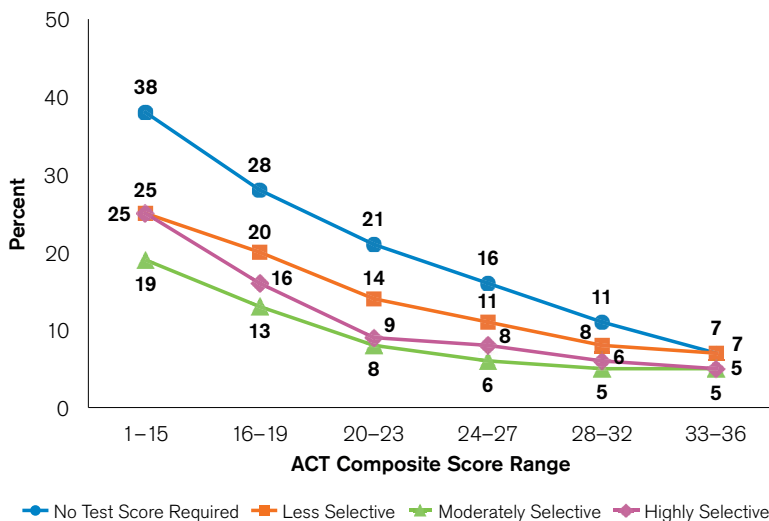


Graph reads: 40% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who initially attended a 2-year college dropped out of college before their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

- The percentage of students who dropped out of college decreases as ACT Composite score increases, and this negative relationship holds for each type of college attended.
- Compared to students who initially attended a 4-year college (public or private), a larger share of students who initially attended a 2-year college dropped out of college. This gap in the dropout rate between 2- and 4-year colleges is consistently large within every ACT Composite score range.

Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Selectivity of Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score



Graph reads: 38% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who initially attended a college in which a test score is not required for admission dropped out of college before their second year.

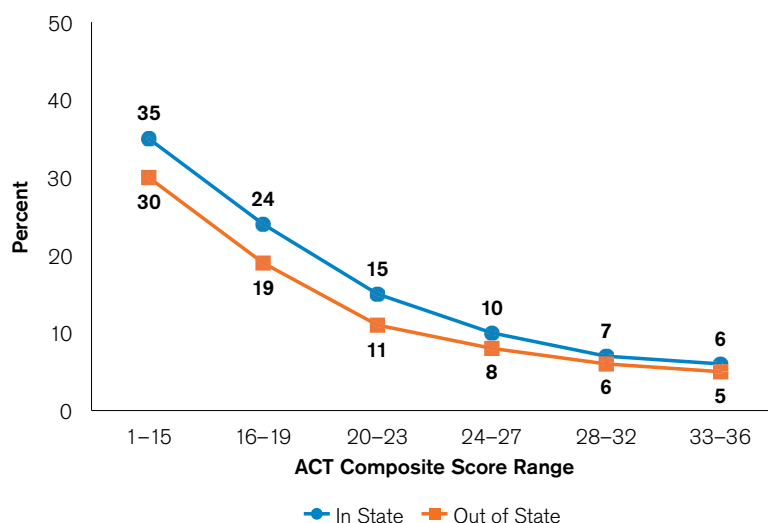
Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012. College selectivity is defined in this report by the midpoint of the college entrance exam score for first-time students, where "Less Selective" < 20, "Moderately Selective" = 20-27, and "Highly Selective" > 27.

- Within almost all ACT Composite score ranges, students who initially attended less-selective colleges typically dropped out of college at higher rates than students who initially attended more-selective colleges. Students who initially attended moderately selective colleges dropped out at the lowest rates. This gap in the dropout rate by college selectivity diminishes substantially as students' ACT Composite score increases.
- Within each college selectivity category, the share of students who dropped out of college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.

Dropout Before Year Two

- Regardless of college location (i.e., in-state versus out-of-state), the percentage of students who dropped out of college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.
- Within each ACT Composite score range, a larger share of in-state than out-of-state students dropped out of college. This gap in the dropout rate by college location lessens as students' ACT Composite score increases.

Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Location of Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score

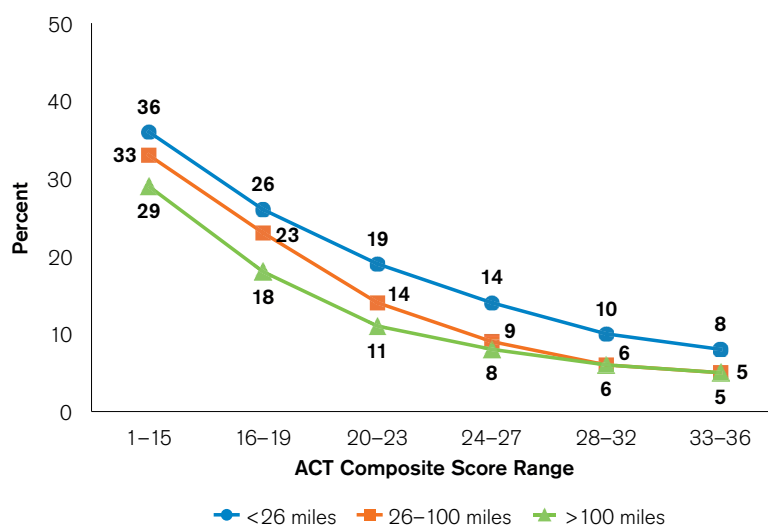


Graph reads: 35% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who initially attended an in-state college dropped out of college before their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

- Among those with lower ACT Composite scores, the percentage of students who dropped out of college decreases as the distance to their college increases. As ACT Composite score increases, the dropout gap diminishes and becomes nonexistent between students at colleges within 26-100 miles from home and those at colleges more than 100 miles from home.
- Within each college distance category, the share of students who dropped out of college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.

Percent of Students Who Dropped Out by Distance to Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score

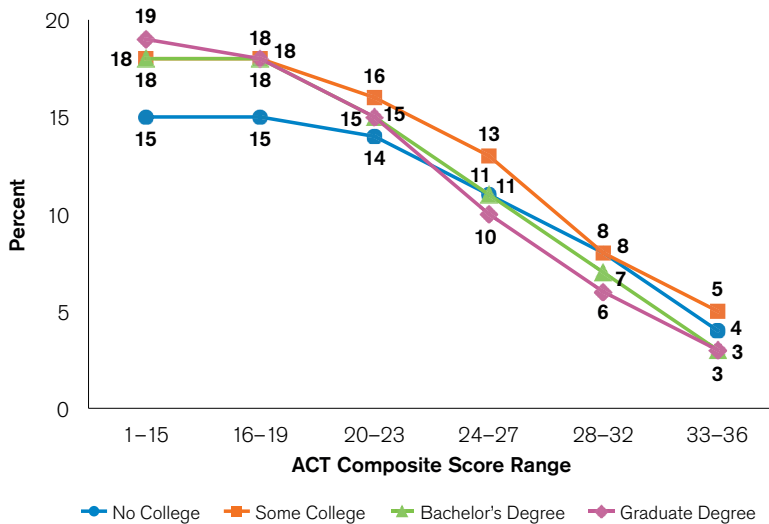


Graph reads: 36% of college-enrolled ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who initially attended college within 25 miles of their home dropped out of college before their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

College Transfer Among Persisting Students

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Parent Education Level and ACT Composite Score



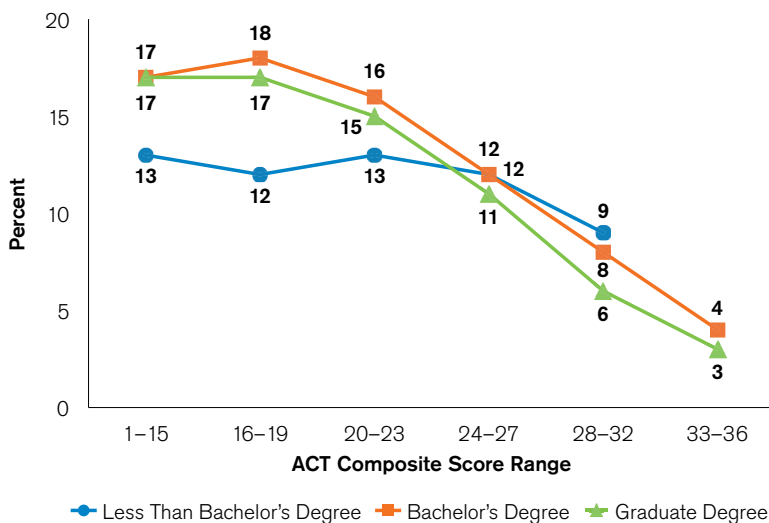
Graph reads: 15% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 whose parents did not attend college transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on 84% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom parent education level is available.

Thirteen percent of college-persisting ACT-tested students from the high school graduating class of 2012 transferred to another college for their second year of study. Students' likelihood of transferring differs by both student characteristics and college characteristics and by whether students attended a college that matched their preferences.

- Within each parent education level, the share of students who transferred to another college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.
- Among those students with lower ACT Composite scores, a smaller percentage of first-generation college students than their peers transferred to another college.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Degree Plans and ACT Composite Score



Graph reads: 13% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1-15 who planned to earn less than a bachelor's degree transferred to another college for their second year.

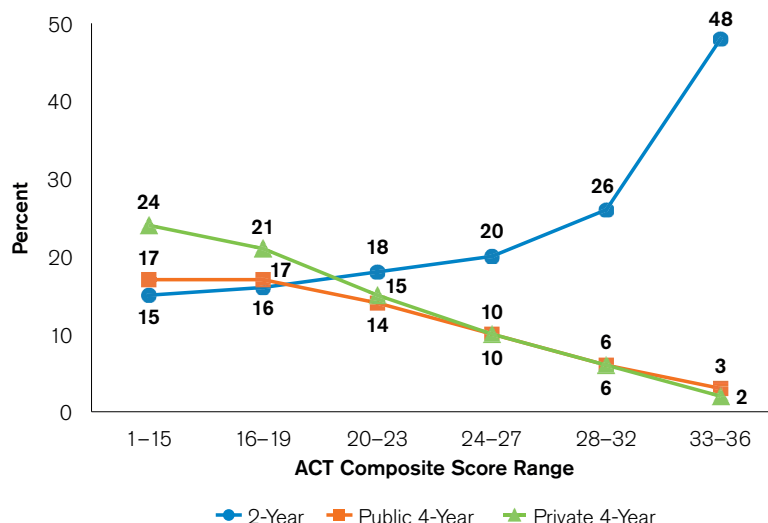
Note: Based on 91% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom degree plans are available.

- Among those students with lower ACT Composite scores, a smaller share of students who planned to earn less than a bachelor's degree than those with other degree plans transferred to another college. This gap in the transfer rate by degree plans reverses as students' ACT Composite score increases.
- Within each degree plan category, the percentage of students who transferred to another college generally decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.

College Transfer Among Persisting Students

- Among students who initially attended a 4-year college (public or private), the share of students who transferred to another college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases. There is a noticeable gap in the transfer rate among lower-achieving students who initially attended a 4-year public and 4-year private college, but this gap closes as ACT Composite score increases.
- Among students who initially attended a 2-year college, the percentage of students who transferred to another college increases with their ACT Composite score. Nearly half of all students in the ACT Composite score range of 33–36 transferred out of a 2-year college.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Initial College Type Attended and ACT Composite Score

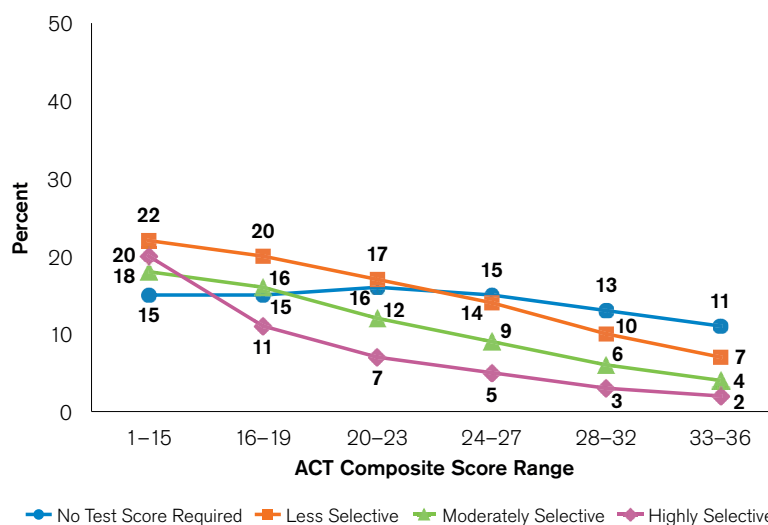


Graph reads: 15% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who initially attended a 2-year college transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

- Within each college selectivity category, the share of students who transferred to another college generally decreases as their ACT Composite score increases. This downward trend is not as pronounced for students who initially attended colleges that do not require test scores for admission.
- Among students who initially attended colleges that require test scores for admission, students who attended less-selective colleges typically transferred to another college at higher rates than students who attended more-selective colleges. This gap in the transfer rate by college selectivity lessens somewhat as students' ACT Composite score increases.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Selectivity of Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score

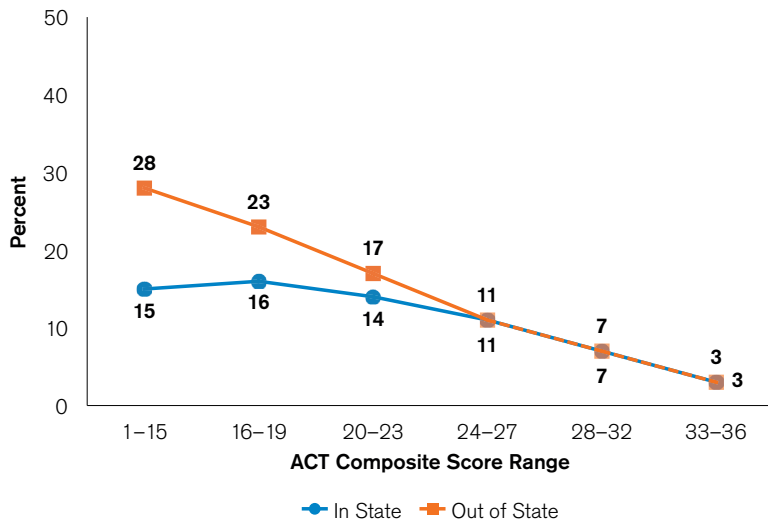


Graph reads: 15% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who initially attended a college in which a test score is not required for admission transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

College Transfer Among Persisting Students

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Location of Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score

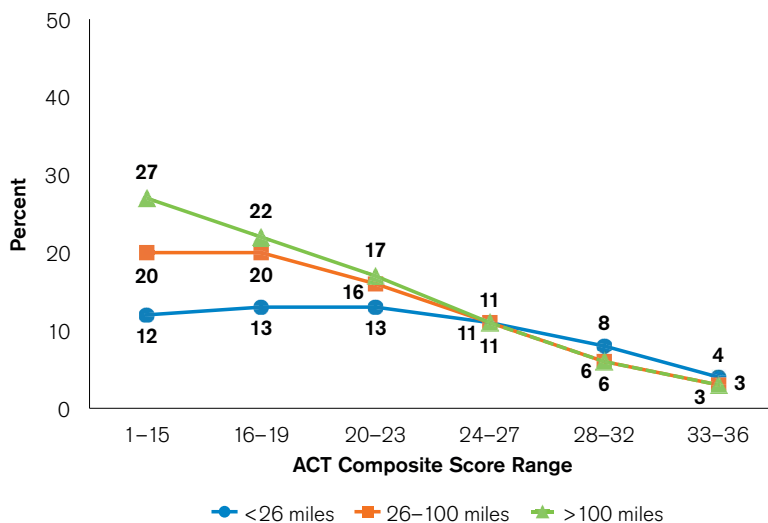


Graph reads: 15% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who initially attended an in-state college transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

- Among students with lower ACT Composite scores, a larger share of out-of-state students than in-state students transferred to another college. This gap in the transfer rate by the location of the college attended closes as ACT Composite score increases.
- For both in-state and out-of-state students, the share of students who transferred to another college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by Distance to Initial College Attended and ACT Composite Score



Graph reads: 12% of college-persisting ACT-tested students with an ACT Composite score in the range of 1–15 who initially attended college within 25 miles of their home transferred to another college for their second year.

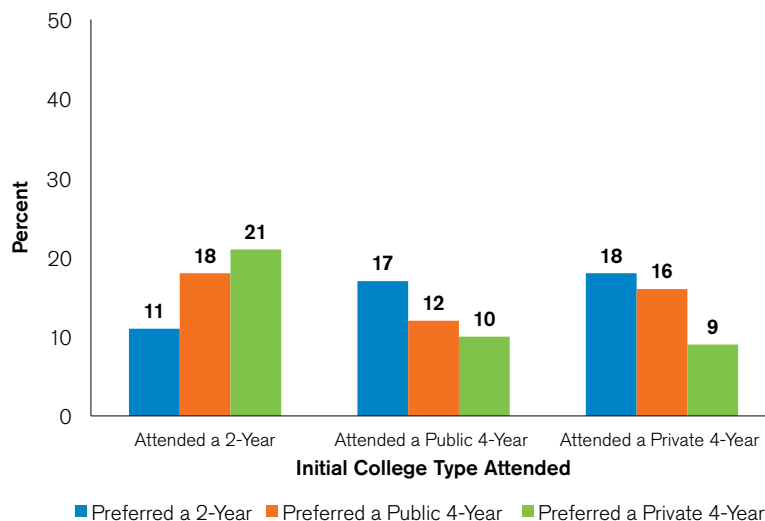
Note: Based on college-enrolled ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012.

- The share of students who transferred to another college decreases as their ACT Composite score increases, and this negative relationship is evident regardless of the distance to students' colleges.
- Among those with lower ACT Composite scores, the percentage of students who transferred to another college increases with the distance to their college. As ACT Composite score increases, this gap in the transfer rate by distance to college diminishes substantially.

College Transfer Among Persisting Students

- Among students who initially attended a 2-year college or a 4-year private college, students who preferred that particular college type transferred to another college at a lower rate than students who did not prefer that college type.
- Among students who initially attended a 4-year public college, students who preferred a 4-year public college transferred to another college at a lower rate than students who preferred a 2-year college. Students who preferred a 4-year private college, however, had the lowest transfer rate among students at a 4-year public college.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by the Match Between Initial College Type Attended and Students' College Type Preference

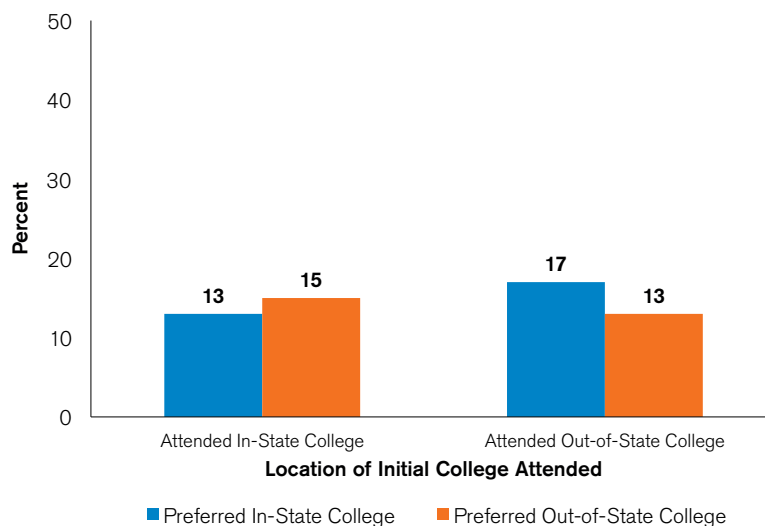


Graph reads: 11% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred a 2-year college and attended a 2-year college transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on 88% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college type preference is available.

- Among in-state students, those who preferred to attend college in state had a lower transfer rate than students who preferred to attend college out of state.
- Among those students who initially attended college out of state, students who preferred an out-of-state college had a lower transfer rate than those who preferred an in-state college.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by the Match Between Location of Initial College Attended and Students' College Location Preference

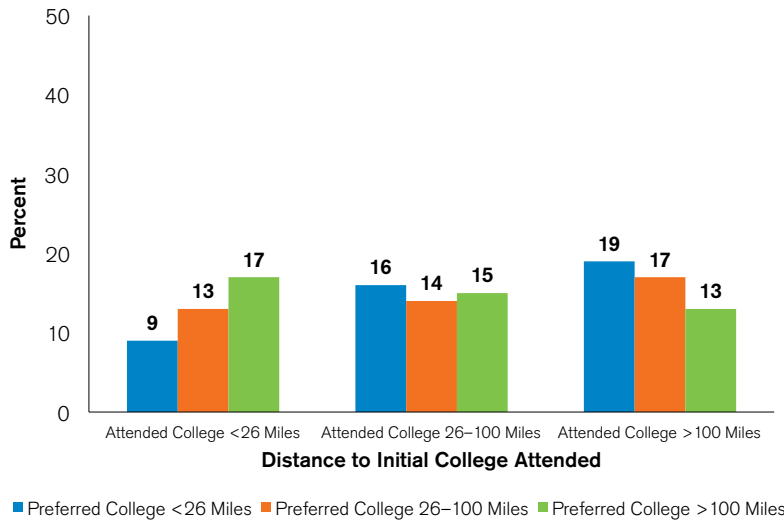


Graph reads: 13% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred an in-state college and attended an in-state college transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on 86% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

College Transfer Among Persisting Students

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by the Match Between Distance to Initial College Attended and Students' College Distance Preference

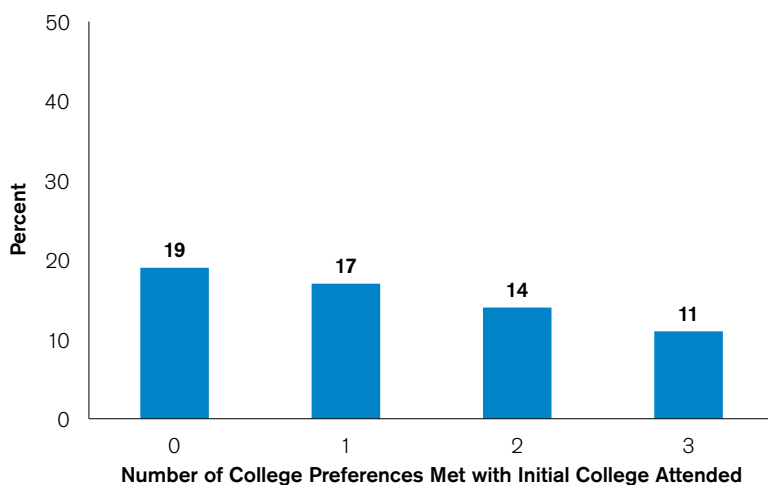


Graph reads: 9% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred a college within 25 miles of their home and attended college within 25 miles of their home transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on 60% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college distance preference is available.

- Regardless of the distance to the college initially attended, students who preferred to attend college within that distance category transferred to another college at a lower rate than students who preferred to attend a college at some other distance from their home.

Percent of Persisting Students Who Transferred by the Number of College Preferences Met with Their Initial College Attended



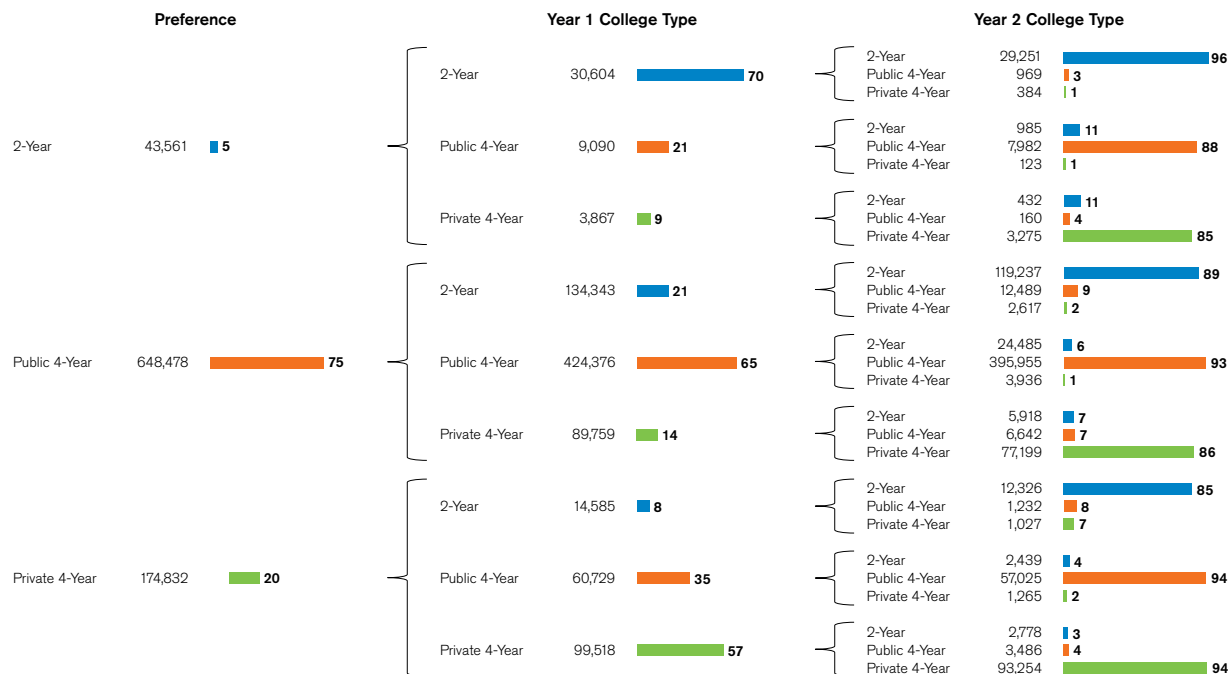
Graph reads: 19% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who initially attended a college that did not match any of their college preferences (i.e., college type, college location, and college distance) transferred to another college for their second year.

Note: Based on 59% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom all three college preferences (i.e., college type, college location, and college distance) are available.

- The percentage of students who transferred to another college decreases as the number of their preferences met with their initial college increases.
- Roughly 1 out of 10 students who attended a college that matched all three of their self-reported college preferences (i.e., college type, college location, and college distance) transferred to another college. In comparison, about 1 out of 5 students who attended a college that did not match any of their college preferences transferred to another college.

Student Flow by College Type Preference

Student Flow in Year 1 and 2 of College by College Type Preference



Graph reads: 96% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred a 2-year college and attended a 2-year college in their first year attended a 2-year college in their second year.

Note: Based on 88% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college type preference is available.

The above diagram shows the flow of students in the first two years of college by their college type preference and the type of college or colleges they attended. This view is limited to college-persisting ACT-tested students who provided a college type preference at the time of ACT registration.

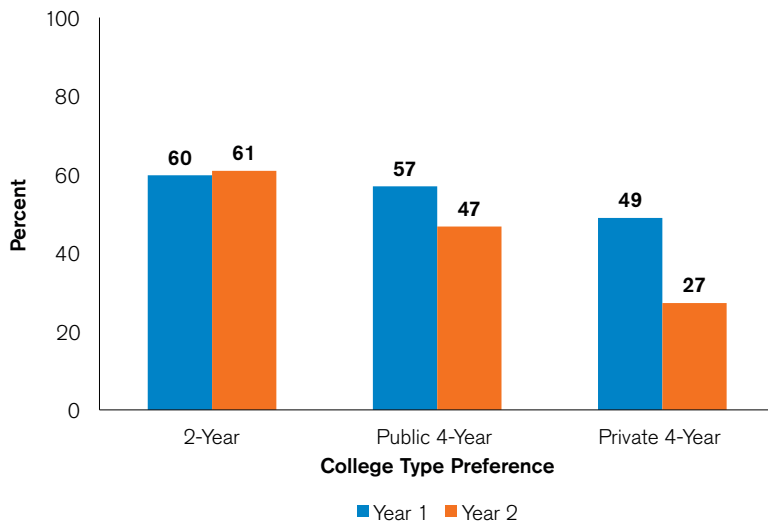
- Of those ACT-tested students who persisted to the second year, 5% preferred a 2-year college, 75% preferred a 4-year public college, and 20% preferred a 4-year private college.
- Within each college preference type, the majority of students attended a college that matched their preference in the first year (70%, 65%, and 57% for students with a 2-year, 4-year public, and 4-year private college preference, respectively).
- In their second year, the vast majority of persisting students attended the same college type as they did in their first year, regardless of their college type preference.
- Among students who initially attended a 2-year college in their first year, students who preferred a 2-year college were more likely to attend this college

type in their second year than those who did not prefer this type of college (96%, 89%, and 85% for students who preferred a 2-year, 4-year public, and 4-year private college, respectively).

- Among students who initially attended a 4-year private college in their first year, students who preferred a 4-year private college were more likely to attend this college type in their second year than those who did not have this college type preference (94%, 86%, and 85% for students who preferred a 4-year private, 4-year public, and 2-year college, respectively).
- Among students who initially attended a 4-year public college in their first year, students who preferred a 4-year public college were more likely to attend this college type in their second year than those who preferred a 2-year college, and they were slightly less likely to attend this college type in their second year than those who preferred a 4-year private college (93%, 88%, and 94% for students who preferred a 4-year public, 2-year, and 4-year private college, respectively).

Student Flow by College Type Preference

Percent of Transferring Students Who Attended a College That Matched Their College Type Preference by Year of College

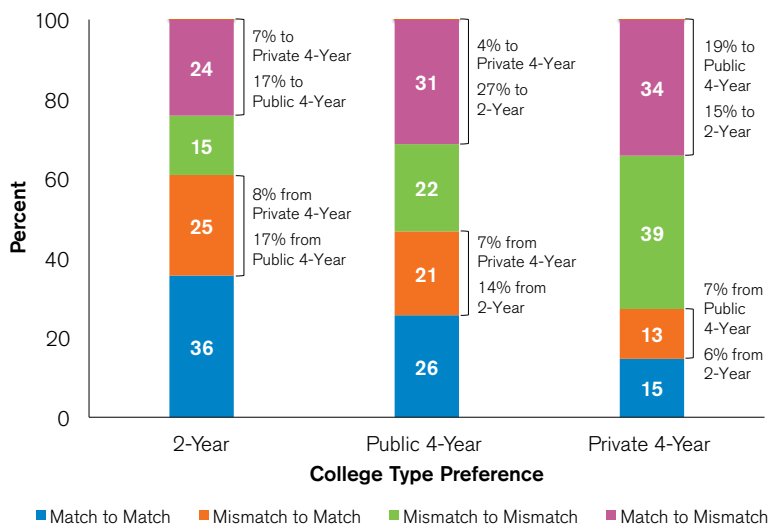


Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred a 2-year college, 60% attended a 2-year college in their first year and 61% attended a 2-year college in their second year.

Note: Based on 89% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college type preference is available.

- Among transfer students who preferred a 2-year college, similar percentages of students attended a 2-year college in the first year and in the second year. This means that roughly one of these students transferred from another college type to a 2-year college for every one of these students that transferred from a 2-year college to another college type.
- Among transfer students who preferred either a 4-year public or a 4-year private college, smaller percentages of students attended these college types in the second year than in the first year. This means that more of these students transferred out of these college types than transferred into these college types in their second year.

Percent of Transferring Students Who Transfer to and Away from College Type Preference



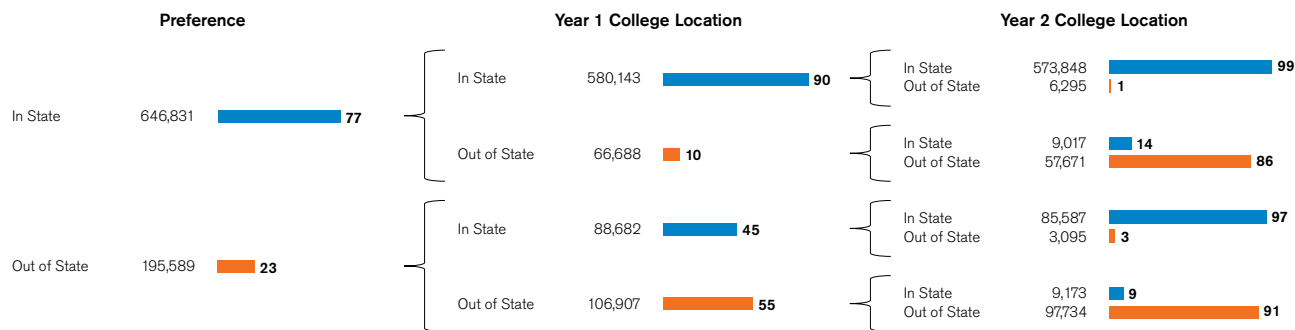
Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred a 2-year college, 25% transferred from a 4-year college (17% from a 4-year public college and 8% from a 4-year private college) in their first year to a 2-year college in their second year.

Note: Based on 89% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college type preference is available.

- Compared to transfer students who preferred a 4-year college, those who preferred a 2-year college were more likely to both initially attend and transfer to another college that matched their college type preference (see the blue-colored bars), and they were also more likely than their peers to transfer from a college that did not match their college type preference to a college that matched their preference (see the orange-colored bars).
- These differences are also evident between transfer students who preferred a 4-year public college and those who preferred a 4-year private college.

Student Flow by College Location Preference

Student Flow in Year 1 and 2 of College by College Location Preference



Graph reads: 99% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred an in-state college and attended an in-state college their first year attended an in-state college their second year.

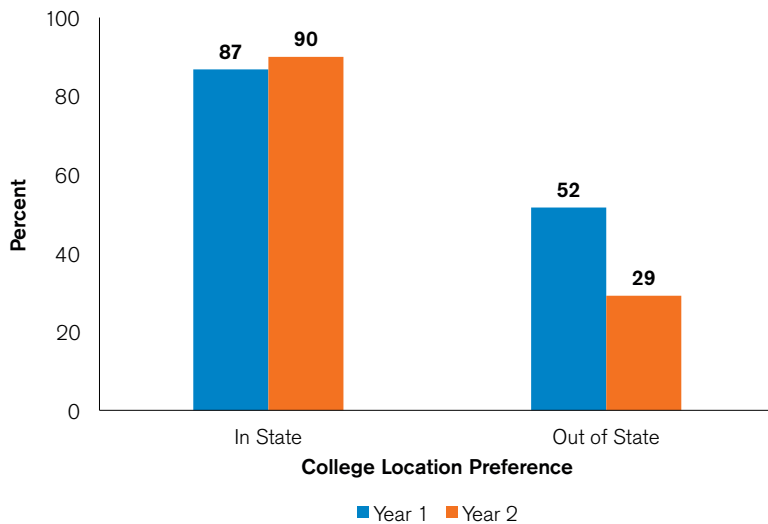
Note: Based on 86% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

The above diagram shows the flow of students in the first two years of college by their college location preference and the location of the college or colleges they attended. This view is limited to college-persisting ACT-tested students who provided a college location preference at the time of ACT registration.

- Of those ACT-tested students who persisted to the second year, 77% preferred an in-state college, whereas 23% preferred an out-of-state college.
- Within each college location type, the majority of students attended a college that matched their preference in the first year. Students who preferred to attend college in state were far more likely to attend a college that matched their preference than students who preferred to attend college out of state (90% and 55% for students who preferred to attend college in state and out of state, respectively).
- In their second year, the vast majority of persisting students attended college in the same location as they did in their first year, regardless of their college location preference.
- Among students who initially attended college in state their first year, students who preferred to attend college in state were more likely to persist at a college in this location than those who preferred to attend college out of state (99% and 97% for students who preferred to attend college in state and out of state, respectively).
- Among students who initially attended college out of state their first year, students who preferred to attend college out of state were more likely to persist at a college in this location than those who preferred to attend college in state (91% and 86% for students who preferred to attend college out of state and in state, respectively).

Student Flow by College Location Preference

Percent of Transferring Students Who Attended a College That Matched Their College Location Preference by Year of College

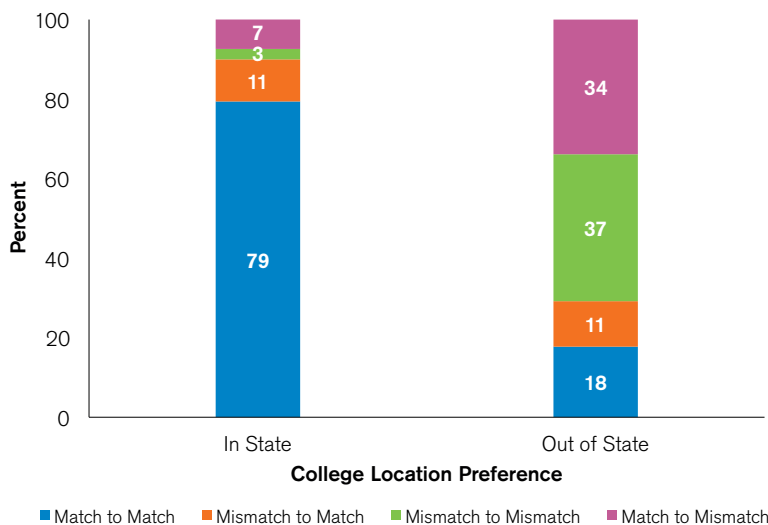


Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred an in-state college, 87% attended an in-state college their first year and 90% attended an in-state college their second year.

Note: Based on 88% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

- Among transfer students who preferred to attend college in state, a larger percentage of students attended an in-state college in their second year than in their first year. This means that more of these students transferred back to their state of residence than transferred out of their state for their second year.
- Among transfer students who preferred to attend college out of state, a substantially smaller percentage of students attended an out-of-state college their second year than in their first year. This means that far more of these students transferred back to their state of residence than transferred to another out-of-state college for their second year.

Percent of Transferring Students Who Transfer to and Away from College Location Preference



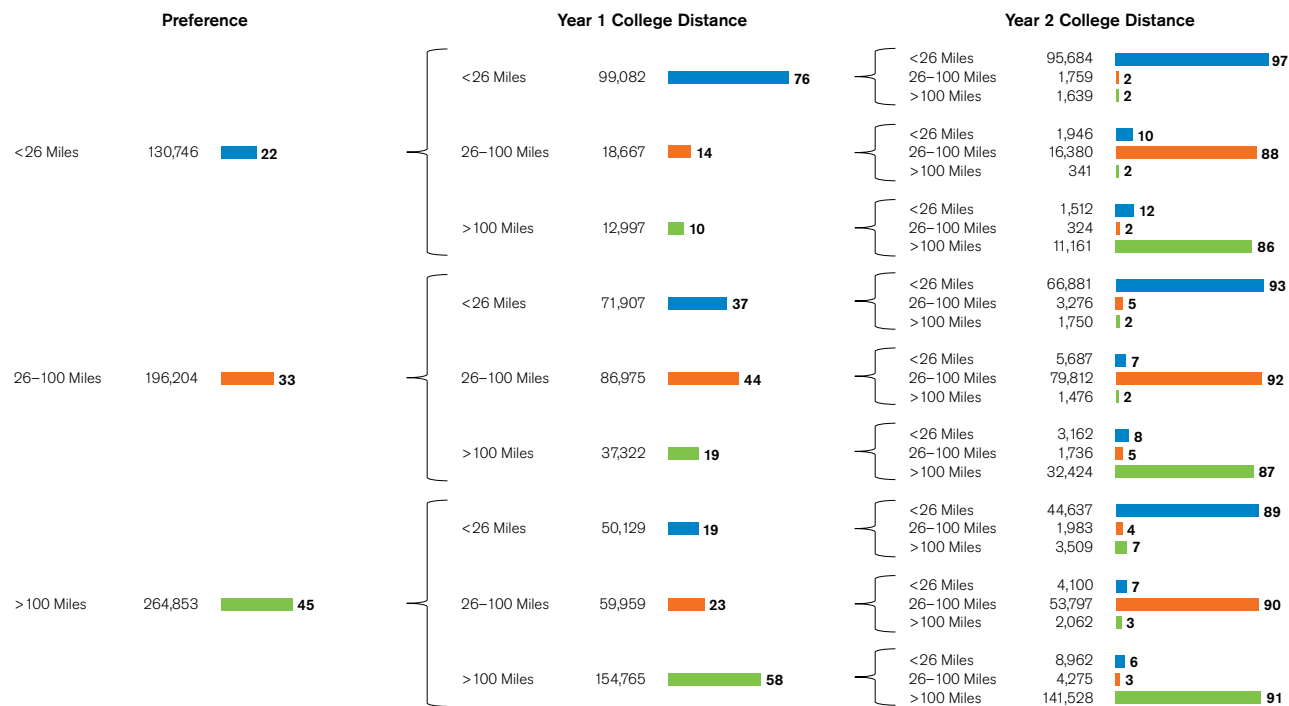
Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred an in-state college, 11% transferred from an out-of-state college their first year to an in-state college their second year.

Note: Based on 88% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

- Compared to transfer students who preferred to attend college out of state, those who preferred to attend college in state were far more likely to both initially attend and transfer to another college in their second year that matched their in-state preference (see the blue-colored bars).
- In contrast, transfer students who preferred to attend college out of state were more likely than their peers to transfer to an institution that no longer matched their out-of-state preference (see the purple-colored bars), and they were more likely to have never attended a college that matched their out-of-state preference (see the green-colored bars).

Student Flow by College Distance Preference

Student Flow in Year 1 and 2 of College by College Distance Preference



Graph reads: 97% of college-persisting ACT-tested students who preferred a college within 25 miles of their home and attended a college within 25 miles of their home in their first year attended a college within 25 miles of their home in their second year.

Note: Based on 60% of college-persisting ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college distance preference is available.

The above diagram shows the flow of students in the first two years of college by their college distance preference and the distance to the college or colleges they attended. This view is limited to college-persisting ACT-tested students who provided a college distance preference at the time of ACT registration.

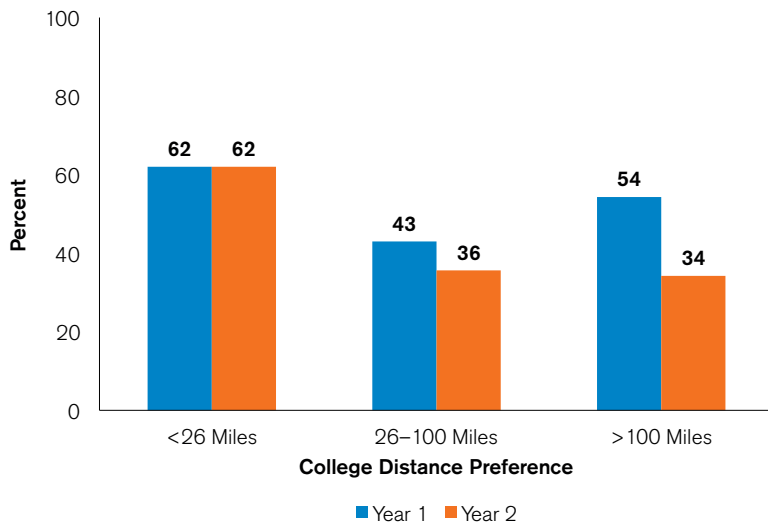
- Of those ACT-tested students who persisted to the second year, 22% preferred to attend college within 25 miles of their home, 33% preferred to attend college 26–100 miles from their home, and 45% preferred to attend college more than 100 miles from their home.
- Among students who preferred to attend college within 25 miles of their home and those who preferred to attend college more than 100 miles from their home, the majority of students attended a college that matched their preference in the first year (76% and 58%, respectively).
- Although the majority of students who preferred to attend college 26–100 miles from their home did not

match their college type preference, students who matched this distance preference represented the largest share of these students across the three college distance categories (44%, compared to 37% and 19%).

- Students who attended a college their first year that matched their distance preference were more likely to persist at a college at this distance range than those who did not attend a college their first year that matched their distance preference.
- For example, among students who initially attended a college their first year that was within 25 miles of their home, those students who preferred to attend college at this distance were more likely to persist at a college at this distance than those who did not have this college distance preference (97%, 93%, and 89% for students who preferred to attend college within 25 miles, 26–100 miles, and more than 100 miles from their home, respectively).

Student Flow by College Distance Preference

Percent of Transferring Students Who Attended a College That Matched Their College Distance Preference by Year of College

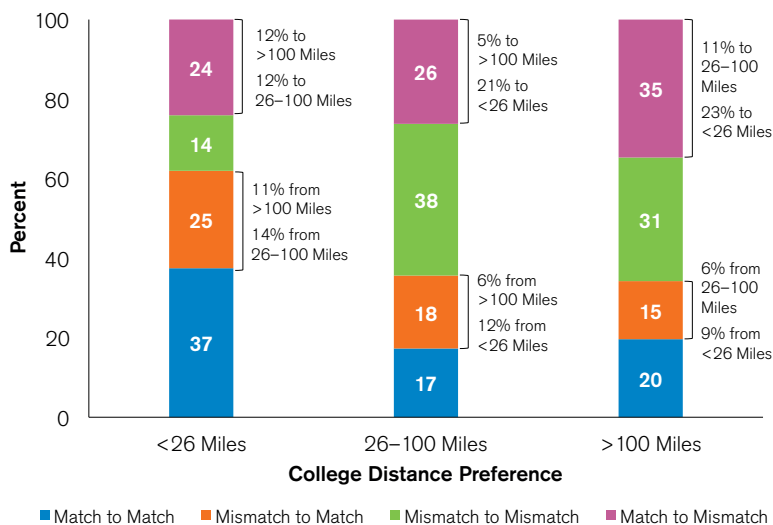


Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred a college within 25 miles of their home, 62% attended a college within 25 miles of their home in their first year and 62% attended a college within 25 miles of their home in their second year.

Note: Based on 62% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college distance preference is available.

- Among transfer students who preferred to attend college within 25 miles of their home, similar percentages of students attended a college within this distance from home in their first year and in their second year.
- Among transfer students who preferred to attend college at farther distances from home, smaller percentages of students attended college in these distance categories in the second year than in the first year. This means that more of these students transferred out of than transferred into a college within these distance categories.

Percent of Transferring Students Who Transfer to and Away from College Distance Preference



Graph reads: Of those college-transferring ACT-tested students who preferred a college within 25 miles of their home, 25% transferred from a college located farther (14% from 26-100 miles from their home and 11% from more than 100 miles from their home) in their first year to a college within 25 miles of their home in their second year.

Note: Based on 62% of college-transferring ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

- Compared to transfer students who preferred to attend college at farther distances from home, those who preferred to attend college closer to their home were more likely than their peers to transfer from a college that did not match their distance preference to a college that matched their preference (see the orange-colored bars).
- These students were also less likely than their peers to transfer to an institution that no longer matched their distance preference (see the purple-colored bars).

A Profile of Delayed-Entry Students

Six percent of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012 attended college after delaying for one year.

- Delayed-entry students were more likely than direct-entry students to be first-generation college students, to be a member of a historically underrepresented racial/ethnic group (i.e., African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students), and to have a lower family income.
- Delayed-entry students also had lower ACT Composite scores and were less likely to plan on earning at least a bachelor's degree.

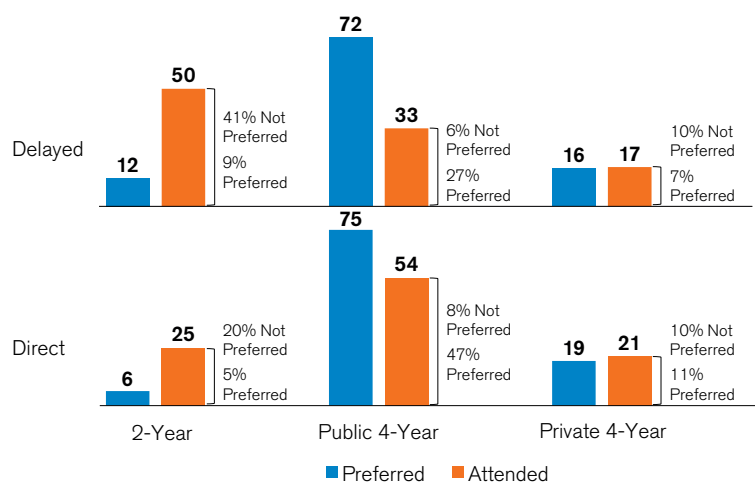
- Whereas only 6% of direct-entry students preferred a 2-year college, 12% of delayed-entry students preferred this college type.
- Although the college type preferences of delayed- and direct-entry students are generally similar, the college type destinations of these students differ substantially.
- When comparing the bracketed information to the percentage of students who preferred each college type, we find that delayed-entry students were less likely than their direct-entry peers to attend a college that matched their college type preference.

Profile of Direct-Entry and Delayed-Entry Students

	Direct	Delayed
Number	1,172,602	104,825
Percent of 2012 ACT-Tested High School Graduating Class	70	6
ACT Composite Score	22.2	20.0
Percent First Generation College Students	15	22
Percent Underrepresented Minority	25	34
Percent with Family Income <\$60K	36	46
Percent Who Plan to Earn a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	88	81

Note: Based on ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012. "Underrepresented Minority" comprised African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students.

Distribution of Direct-Entry and Delayed-Entry Students by College Type Preferred and College Type Attended

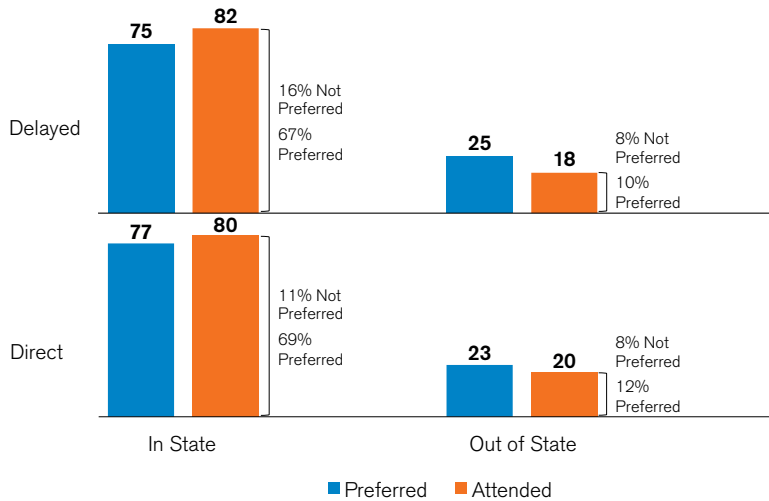


Graph reads: Whereas 12% of delayed-entry ACT-tested students preferred a 2-year college, 50% of these students attended a 2-year college their first year.

Note: Based on 88% of direct-entry and 86% of delayed-entry ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college type preference is available.

A Profile of Delayed-Entry Students

Distribution of Direct-Entry and Delayed-Entry Students by College Location Preferred and College Location Attended

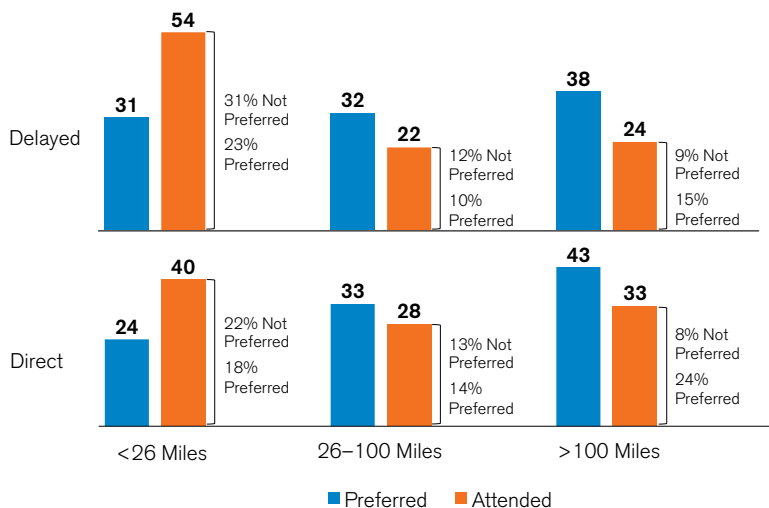


Graph reads: Whereas 75% of delayed-entry ACT-tested students preferred an in-state college, 82% of these students attended an in-state college in their first year.

Note: Based on 86% of direct-entry and 83% of delayed-entry ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college location preference is available.

- College location preferences and attendance patterns are similar for direct-entry and delayed-entry students.
- When comparing the bracketed information to the percentage of students who preferred each college location, we find that delayed-entry and direct-entry students have about the same chances of attending a college that matched their in-state preference, but delayed-entry students were less likely than their direct-entry peers to attend a college that matched their out-of-state preference.

Distribution of Direct-Entry and Delayed-Entry Students by College Distance Preferred and College Distance Attended



Graph reads: Whereas 31% of delayed-entry ACT-tested students preferred a college within 25 miles of their home, 54% of these students attended a college within 25 miles of their home in their first year.

Note: Based on 61% of direct-entry and 60% of delayed-entry ACT-tested high school graduates from the class of 2012 for whom college distance preference is available.

- Delayed-entry students were more likely than their peers to prefer a college within 25 miles of their home and were less likely to prefer a college located more than 100 miles from their home.
- More than half of all delayed-entry students attended a college within 25 miles of their home, and this enrollment rate at nearby colleges is substantially larger than that of direct-entry students.
- When comparing the bracketed information to the percentage of students who preferred each college distance, we find that delayed-entry students were less likely than their direct-entry peers to attend a college that matched their preference to attend college more than 25 miles from home.

Key Findings

Key Finding 1: Two Years Later, College Preferences Still Matter

In *Part 1* of this report, we found that students' self-reported preferences regarding the type (i.e., 2-year, public 4-year, or private 4-year), location (i.e., in state or out of state), and distance to their college differed systematically by their academic achievement levels and educational plans and by a number of student characteristics such as their parents' education level, family income, and race/ethnicity.

In *Part 2* of this report, we found that most students attended colleges that matched their self-reported preferences and that students who preferred a 2-year college, an in-state college, or a college located within 25 miles of their home were more likely than their peers with other preferences to attend a college that matched their preferences. We also found that students' likelihood of attending a college that matched their preferences differed in meaningful ways by their academic achievement level, educational plans, and background characteristics.

In *Part 3* of this report, we found that, in general, students who attended colleges that matched their college type, location, or distance preference were less likely to transfer than those students who did not match their self-reported preference. (The one exception to this finding is that students who initially preferred a private 4-year college had the lowest transfer rate among students attending public 4-year colleges.) Further, as the fit between students' preferences and the initial college attended (as indicated by the number of matched preferences) improved, students were less likely to transfer to another college. Among students who transferred to another college, those students who preferred a 2-year college, an in-state college, or a college that was located within 25 miles of their home were more likely than their peers with other preferences to transfer to another college that matched their preferences.

Key Finding 2: Academic Achievement Level Consistently Predicts College Preferences, Enrollment, Persistence, and Transfer

ACT research has consistently found that student academic achievement (as measured by ACT Composite

score) is an important indicator of student behavior during the college choice process.

In *Part 1* of this report, we found that higher-achieving students were more likely than their lower-achieving peers to take the ACT before 12th grade, to send their test scores to a greater number of colleges, and to send their test scores to at least one college that selected them through the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS). We also learned that students with higher academic achievement levels were more likely than their peers to prefer 4-year colleges (in general), private 4-year colleges (in particular), out-of-state colleges, and colleges located farther from their homes.

In *Part 2* of this report, we found that students with higher academic achievement levels were more likely than their lower-achieving peers to attend a college that *matched* their preference to attend 4-year colleges (in general), private 4-year colleges (in particular), out-of-state colleges, and colleges located farther from their homes. They were also more likely than their lower-achieving peers to attend a college that selected them through EOS. They also were more likely to attend a college that was *not* a part of their initial college choice set at the time of ACT registration.

In *Part 3*, we found that academic achievement is a key determinant of both student dropout and transfer. Specifically, students with lower achievement scores were more likely than their higher-achieving peers to drop out of college before their second year of study. Of students who persisted in college (i.e., did not drop out), lower-achieving students were more likely than their higher-achieving peers to transfer to another college for their second year of study. One notable exception is that higher-achieving students who initially attended a 2-year college were more likely than their lower-achieving peers to transfer to another college before their second year.

Key Finding 3: Some Colleges Face Dropout and Transfer Challenges Unrelated to Student Achievement

Even after accounting for differences in students' dropout rates by their academic achievement (as measured by ACT Composite score), we found that students who attended 2-year colleges, less-selective colleges, in-state colleges, and colleges located closer

Key Findings

to home were more likely to drop out of college than their peers at 4-year colleges, more-selective colleges, out-of-state colleges, and colleges located farther away. In most cases, these differences in students' dropout rates by college characteristics were larger for students with lower academic achievement levels than for those with higher academic achievement levels.

After accounting for differences in students' transfer rates by their academic achievement level, we found that students who initially attended 2-year colleges and less-selective colleges were more likely to transfer to another college for their second year of study than their peers at 4-year colleges and more-selective colleges. Lower-achieving students who initially attended college out of state or farther from home were also more likely to transfer to another college than their lower-achieving peers who attended college in state or closer to home. These differences in transfer rates by the location of and distance to the college are negligible for higher-achieving students, however.

Key Finding 4: Student Characteristics Other Than Academic Achievement Can Help to Identify Students Who Are at Risk of Dropping Out or Transferring

We found that both dropout rates and transfer rates differed systematically by such student characteristics as their parents' education levels and their degree aspirations, even after accounting for differences in students' academic achievement levels (as measured by their ACT Composite score). Gaps in dropout rates and transfer rates among students with different parent education levels and degree aspirations appear to be widest among students who entered college with lower achievement levels. For example, among students with ACT Composite scores in the ranges of 1–15 and 16–19, there is an 11 percentage-point difference in the dropout rate between first-generation college students and those whose parents earned a graduate degree, and there is a 20 percentage-point difference in the dropout rate between students who planned to earn an associate's degree or undergraduate certificate and those who planned to earn a graduate degree. Among these same students, similar (although smaller) gaps in transfer rates are evident.

Key Finding 5: Delayed-Entry Students Are Less Likely to Attend Colleges that Match Their Preferences

Compared to students who entered college directly from high school, we found that students who delayed their college entry by one year were more likely to be first-generation college students (i.e., neither parent attended college), to be a member of a historically underrepresented racial/ethnic group (i.e., African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students), and to have a lower family income. They also had lower ACT Composite scores and were less likely to plan on earning a bachelor's or graduate degree in college.

Despite these differences in the profiles of direct-entry and delayed-entry students, their self-reported preferences for the type (i.e., 2-year, public 4-year, or private 4-year) and location (i.e., in state or out of state) of the college they wanted to attend were quite similar. Delayed-entry and direct-entry students differed with respect to the self-reported preference for the distance to the college they wanted to attend, with delayed-entry students being more likely to prefer a college within 25 miles of their home and being less likely to prefer a college located more than 100 miles from their home.

Although the self-reported preferences of direct-entry and delayed-entry students were generally comparable, the attendance patterns of these two student groups were starkly different with regard to the college type attended and the distance to the college attended. In particular, half of all delayed-entry students attended a 2-year college, and more than half attended a college within 25 miles of their home. In contrast, more than half of all direct-entry students attended a public 4-year college and attended a college more than 25 miles from their home.

Taken together, these findings mean that delayed-entry students were less likely than direct-entry students to attend a college that matched their college preferences. Specifically, delayed-entry students were less likely than their direct-entry peers to attend a college that matched *any* of their college type preferences, their out-of-state preference, and their preference to attend college farther from home.

Recommendations

- All institutions that require or recommend test scores for admission should consider requiring or recommending official scores at the point of enrollment and, when possible, at the point of admission. Open admission institutions, including community colleges, should still consider requiring or recommending ACT score reports for students enrolling directly from high school. The official ACT score report sent to colleges contains several data elements that can be used to identify students who want academic and personal help and students who may be at risk of dropping out or transferring because of issues related to fit. These data elements include student enrollment and educational preferences (preferred institution type, preferred institution size, preferred distance from home to campus, preferred state for enrollment, and highest degree expected), and student characteristics such as parent/guardian level of education. In addition, four behavioral index scores provided in the score report (i.e., Mobility Index, Institution Type Index, Selectivity Index, and Institution Size Index) provide important information about student enrollment intentions, which can be used with enrollment preferences to assess student-institutional fit.
- College administrators who track yield rates by students' backgrounds, preferences, and achievement levels should extend that type of tracking to examine differences in student persistence by these same characteristics. Using additional student characteristic information in tandem with measures of achievement (e.g., ACT scores, high school grades) can help administrators to better identify entering students for additional academic and student support services that are intended to help students adjust to the academic and co-curricular environments of the college. As student characteristics and preferences diverge from those of students with good college-preference match, it may be beneficial to identify and provide special attention or guidance as those students may be more likely to transfer or drop out.
- High school students who fit the profile of delayed-entry students should be targeted with specific information that may help them navigate the college selection and admissions process. The timeliness of this information is important so that students have ample time to understand their options and make postsecondary plans.

ACT Enrollment Planners Conference



ACT's national enrollment management conference draws more than 750 presenters and attendees from across the country every July.

Conference topics include the latest issues in enrollment management using social media; effective uses of technology in enrollment management; and innovative marketing, recruitment, and retention strategies.

Take advantage of the ACT Enrollment Planners Conference to complement your admissions staff retreat—as many other institutions have done. Sessions and speakers provide great insight into admissions staff/office issues and strategies. Increase the impact of your staff retreat with ideas, strategies, and market trend analyses presented by enrollment and admissions officers from around the country.

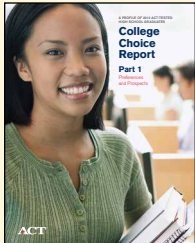
For more information, go to www.act.org/epc.

ACT Research

As a nonprofit educational research organization, ACT is committed to producing research that focuses on key issues in education and workforce development. Our goal is to serve as a data resource. We strive to provide policymakers with the information they need to inform education and workforce development policy and to give educators the tools they need to lead more students toward college and career success. What follows are some of ACT's recent and most groundbreaking research studies.

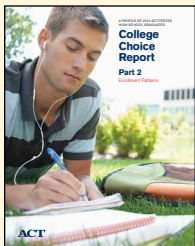
College Choice Report 2012

Part 1: Preferences and Prospects



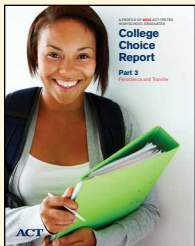
Contains the self-reported college preferences and EOS participation rates of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012.

Part 2: Enrollment Patterns



Examines college enrollment trends of the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2012, focusing on student mobility, how college choices match preferences, and student enrollment rates.

Part 3: Persistence and Transfer



Reports on student persistence within postsecondary education and examines the relationships between students' reported college preferences and their transfer patterns.

The Reality of College Readiness

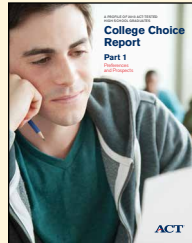


Identifies the enrollment and migration status of ACT-tested high school graduates, including data for two- and four-year colleges and percentages of students meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.

www.act.org/readinessreality/13/

College Choice Report 2013

Part 1: Preferences and Prospects



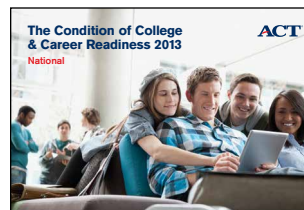
Focuses on students' choice and certainty of planned major, interest-major fit, best-fitting major, and selection of major.

Part 2: Enrollment Patterns



Focuses on the college enrollment, consistency of college major choice, persistence within majors, and changes in interest-major fit. (To be released July 2014.)

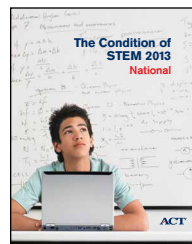
The Condition of College & Career Readiness



Highlights the college and career readiness of the ACT-tested high school class of 2013. This report is updated annually.

www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/

The Condition of STEM



Examines the condition of STEM education in our country. ACT has a continued commitment to STEM through the inclusion of subject-level science tests and determination of academic readiness in math and science within our products.

www.act.org/stemcondition/13/

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A copy of this report can be found at
www.act.org/collegechoice/12

