

The Condition of College and Career Readiness

This report looks at the progress of the 2016 ACT®-tested graduating class relative to college and career readiness.

This year's report shows that **64%** of students in the 2016 US graduating class took the ACT test, up from 59% in 2015 and 49% in 2011. The increased number of test takers over the past several years enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness, as well as offering a glimpse at the emerging educational pipeline.

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

- **Holistic view of readiness.** The 2014 ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness is only one of four critical domains in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Cross-cutting capabilities, behavioral skills, and the ability to navigate future pathways are also important factors to measure and address. Together, these elements define a clear picture of student readiness for postsecondary education.
- **Providing 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 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 2016

South Dakota Key Findings

Performance

- In South Dakota, the percent of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks remained consistent in three subject areas, yet above the national percentages:
 - ~ English, mathematics, and science remained the same.
 - ~ There was a 1% decrease in the number of students meeting the reading Benchmark.
 - ~ The number of students meeting all four Benchmarks also remained the same at 33%, and is still ahead of the national rate of 26%. Unfortunately, of the 450 American Indian students who took the ACT, only 4% of them met all four Benchmarks, which is less than half of the national rate of 9%.
- Relative to ACT Composite score and subject level scores, South Dakota saw the following:
 - ~ 6,552 students took the ACT, which is approximately 76% of the graduating class—same as last year.
 - ~ The number of students in the 2016 graduating class taking the ACT has decreased by 63 students, but this decrease was seen only for White students. All minority student groups increased or stayed the same (Hispanic students), with the highest increase in Asian students.
 - ~ The average state Composite score, 21.9, which is the same as last year, and is currently above the national average of 20.8.
 - ~ The proportion of American Indian students in the testing pool has increased from 6% to 7%, but the ACT Composite score among these students has decreased from 16.7 to 16.5. Given that American Indian students make up 11% of the total student population, knowing how the total number of students scored would provide a full data set and help to address academic needs across the population.
 - ~ Currently, Todd County gets a full data set by providing the ACT to all students through district testing.
 - ~ The average Composite score of African American graduates increased 0.3 point from last year.

STEM

- South Dakota graduates who took advanced science and math courses show higher levels of achievement:
 - ~ Students who took physics (43%) earned significantly higher average ACT science scores and were more likely to meet or surpass the ACT College Readiness Benchmark in science than those who did not.
 - ~ Students who took a fourth year of math in high school (46%), regardless of course, significantly outperformed those students who did not, in both ACT mathematics scores and in Benchmark attainment. South Dakota's goal of making every student proficient or advanced in math by 9th grade is reinforced by this data.
 - ~ Only 294 of students say they are taking calculus.
 - ~ 23% of students met the ACT STEM Benchmark of 26—3% higher than the national level of 20%.
 - ~ 8% more males than females met the ACT mathematics Benchmark and 7% more males than females met the ACT science Benchmark. This may have an impact on student readiness for STEM majors and fields.

Career Readiness

- This year, for the first time, ACT has provided an indicator of career readiness based on ACT composite scores. Table 3.4 in the state ACT Profile Report details how ACT-tested South Dakota graduates are progressing toward the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®).
- Progress toward career readiness is based on research linking ACT Composite scores to ACT NCRC levels. The ACT Composite cut score for each ACT NCRC level corresponds to a 50% chance of obtaining that level. If a student's ACT Composite score surpassed the cut score for an ACT NCRC level, they are categorized as making progress towards the next higher ACT NCRC level. Attainment of ACT NCRC levels indicates workplace employability skills that are critical to job success.
- In South Dakota, 82% of ACT tested graduates are considered making progress towards at least a gold ACT NCRC level. This compares to 68% nationally.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- Testing patterns
 - ~ Timing matters. Hispanic, African American, and American Indian students in South Dakota are more likely to take their first and only test as a senior, limiting their postsecondary access and opportunity.

	Tested Once	Tested More than Once	Tested Senior Year Only
African American	34.0	66.0	23.4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	56.7	43.3	37.8
White	36.6	63.4	15.3
Hispanic	46.9	53.1	31.6

- ~ 37% of American Indian students waited to test in their senior year. More students need to test for the first time as juniors so they have better access to college opportunities at an earlier age. This will also allow them to select college-bound coursework for senior year and receive career counseling earlier. If they opt in to the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS), colleges will have an opportunity to reach out to them regarding admission and scholarship information. Consider funding the ACT for all juniors so their schools can offer district testing on a weekday.
- 12,065 electronic ACT test scores were sent to colleges by South Dakota students. Below are the top five colleges and universities to which South Dakota graduates sent their ACT scores:
 1. South Dakota State University
 2. University of South Dakota
 3. Black Hills State University
 4. Northern State University
 5. University of Minnesota
- The vast majority of students who take the ACT in South Dakota opt in to EOS, which allows colleges and scholarship agencies to purchase those students' names and reach out to them for recruitment and scholarship opportunities. The national EOS opt-in rate is 73.1%. In South Dakota, the following percents of ACT-tested subgroups opted in to EOS:
 - ~ African American—90.0%
 - ~ Asian—86.2%
 - ~ Hispanic—82.2%
 - ~ White—73.2%
 - ~ American Indian—75.0%
- In 2015, ACT launched the "Get Your Name in the Game" campaign. This program allows colleges to purchase the names of underrepresented students through EOS at no charge. This is part of ACT's commitment to help get more minority and first-generation students in the college pipeline. In 2015, 8,480 South Dakota students' names were purchased through this program. In 2016, that number grew to 77,601. This means South Dakota minority and first-generation student names were purchased multiple times from colleges around the country. The sooner these students take the ACT, the more time colleges have to do outreach and help students know that college may be possible.
 - ~ The following South Dakota colleges participated in this program: Mount Marty College, Northern State University, University of Sioux Falls, and University of South Dakota.

- 726 ACT fee waivers were provided to American Indian students. However, 40% of these waivers were never used. This is 8% higher than the national percentage for these students. Overall, 31% of the fee waivers in South Dakota were never used, compared to 25.5% nationally.

Pipeline

- Only 7% of ACT-tested South Dakota 2016 graduates expressed an interest in pursuing education as a major or career. Those students earned an average ACT Composite score of 21.1, lower than the state average of 21.9. Only 3% expressed an interest in Computer Science and Mathematics, while 6% expressed an interest in Engineering. In comparison, 22% expressed an interest in Health Sciences and Technologies.
- 58% of South Dakota ACT test takers say they want a bachelor's degree. Consider adding ACT Profile to your MyLife website to help students graduate career ready. ACT Profile is a free college search, major search, and career exploration program.
- Aspirations matter. Students in South Dakota who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education achieve higher ACT composite scores.
 - 640 graduates who aspire to a graduate degree earn an average Composite score of 24.5.
 - 3,796 graduates who aspire to a bachelor's degree earn an average Composite score of 21.5.
 - 438 graduates who aspire to an associate's degree earn an average Composite score of 18.6.

ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire® Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
9,408	823	433	—	339*	13,304

* PreACT refers to preorders for FY17.

These are the number of each of these assessments delivered in the state and not reflective of the 2016 ACT-tested graduating class.

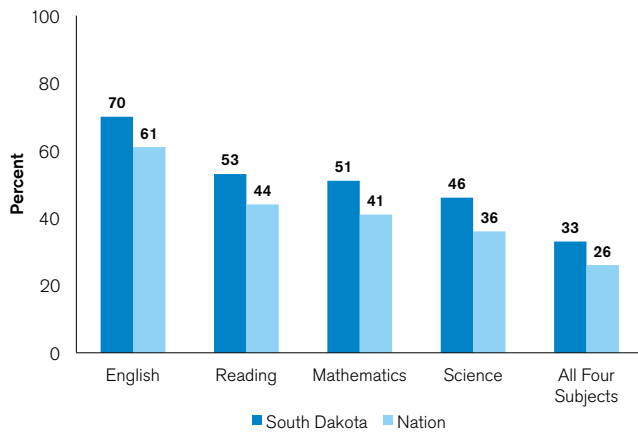
Special State Talking Points

- In 2016, ACT honored exemplars in 41 states as part of our College & Career Readiness Campaign. In South Dakota, these honorees include:
 - ~ Student—Sophia Lima, Roosevelt High School
 - ~ High School—Lincoln High School
 - ~ Two-Year School—Lake Area Technical Institute

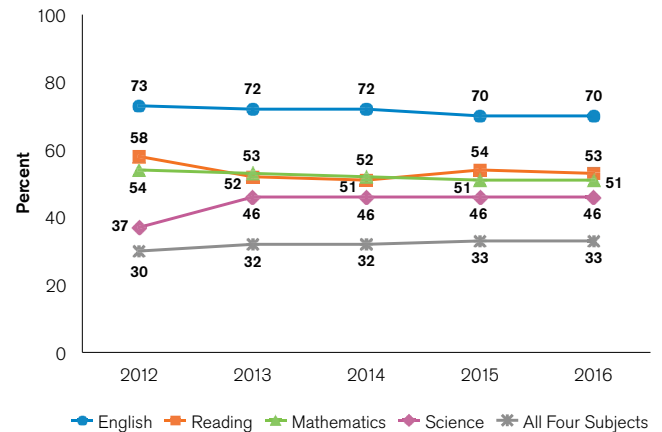
Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

South Dakota

Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks*



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

* ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in reading and science were revised in 2013.

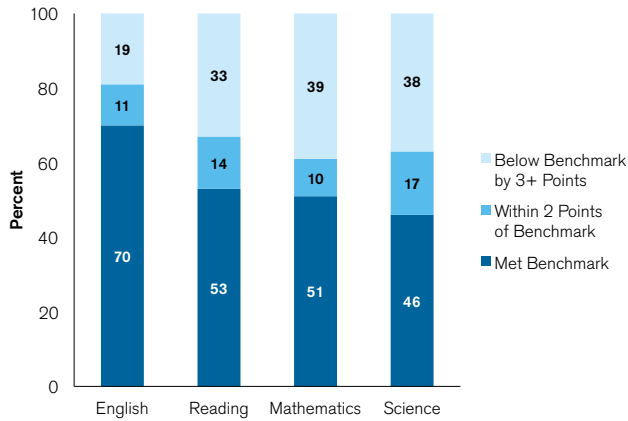
Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in South Dakota decreased by 4.7%.

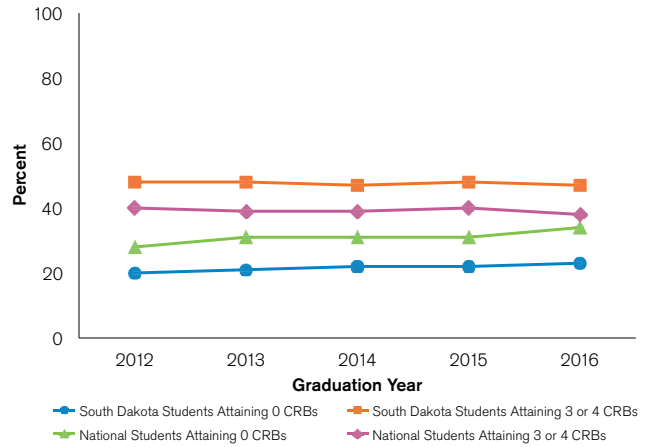
Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	South Dakota	81%	78%	78%	76%	76%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	South Dakota	6,878	6,723	6,724	6,615	6,552
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	South Dakota	21	20.9	21	21	20.9
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	South Dakota	22.1	22.1	22.3	22.4	22.4
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	South Dakota	21.8	21.8	21.8	21.7	21.7
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	South Dakota	22	22.1	22.1	22.1	22.2
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	South Dakota	21.8	21.9	21.9	21.9	21.9
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

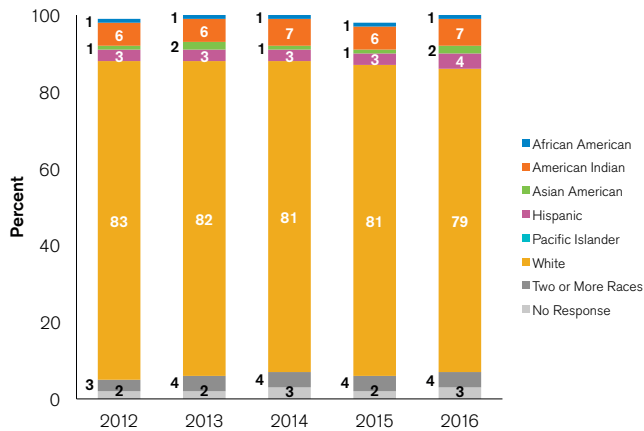
Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



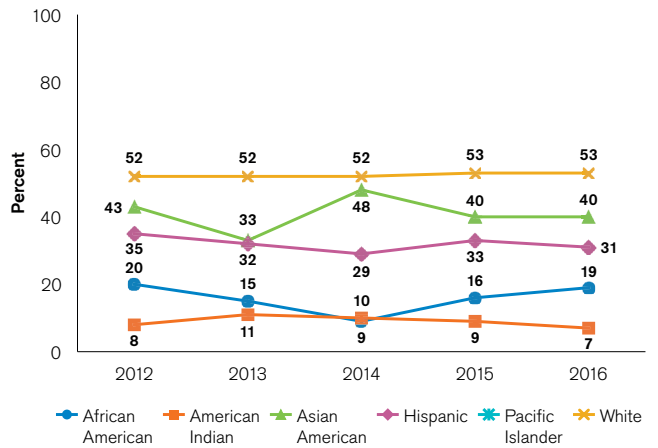
Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained



Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity



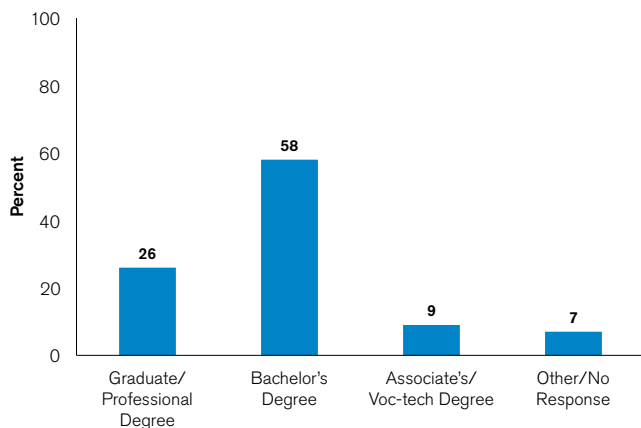
Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

Note: Groups having fewer than 10 students in a year are not represented.

Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



There is good news in that 93% of South Dakota's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 95% of South Dakota's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 75% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 1,280 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from South Dakota would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

What You Need to Know

At ACT, we are inspired every day to make a positive difference. Here are a few ways we are making an impact each day in the lives of students, teachers, education, policy makers, and workforce leaders.

The ACT[®]

- Enhancements to ACT Score Reports starting in September 2016
- Introduction of ACT Kaplan Online Prep Live in September 2016
- New Score Reports

Pre ACT[™]

- Affordable cost—\$12 per student tested for schools, districts, and states
- Flexible administration—Schools, districts, and/or states may administer on any date between September 1, 2016 and June 1, 2017
- Structured test environment—Similar to what the student will experience when taking the ACT test

Online Prep Live

ACT[®] KAPLAN

- A virtual classroom experience that delivers all the benefits of ACT Online Prep, plus an interactive teaching experience
- Live learning experiences available at no cost to students who register for the ACT using a fee waiver
- Recorded sessions available on demand to provide maximum flexibility to students

ACT[®] Aspire[®]

- New Performance Level Descriptors coming in August 2016
- More than 5 million ACT Aspire online assessments administered to US students since January 2016, a major milestone for the program and up by more than 130% compared to the previous year
- New Score Reports

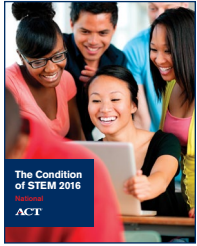
ACT[®] Engage[®]

- Helps schools face the challenge of preparing students for success after high school. Read the latest white paper, *Identifying Skills to Succeed in School, at Work, and in the "Real World."*
- New Score Reports

ACT[®] WorkKeys[®]

- Updated versions of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC) assessments and credential coming in summer 2017
- Fully updated ACT WorkKeys curriculum and test prep available in summer 2017 to support the updated ACT NCRC assessments
- Will include a new test delivery platform that will introduce features and functionality important to ACT WorkKeys customers

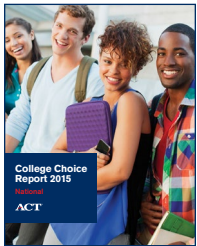
Key ACT Research



The Condition of STEM 2016— Releasing November 2016

This report provides national and state data about the 2016 graduating class in

the context of STEM-related fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) to determine student interest levels in specific STEM fields and, more importantly, readiness in math and science of those interested in STEM careers.



College Choice Report 2015

This report follows the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2015, focusing on specific testing behaviors that

may expand college opportunities available to students. This is an important topic for enrollment managers and admissions officers to consider, as students' participation in these testing behaviors have implications for colleges' chances to recruit, advise, and place these prospective students.

Recommendations

1. Create an assessment model that measures a variety of skill domains and competencies required for college and career success.

Historically, college and career readiness assessments have focused only on academic skills. ACT research has clearly established areas of competency important for college and career readiness success. While our research shows that ACT solutions independently measure key components of college AND career readiness, we and others have begun to realize that no single solution can measure the full breadth of this readiness, nor should it. Simply put, the ACT alone is not enough to measure the full breadth of career readiness. A more holistic assessment model, incorporating multiple domains and specific skills associated with career clusters or occupations, will typically be most appropriate for describing and evaluating student readiness for college and career.

2. Optimize opportunities to influence awareness and engagement of underserved learners.

Initiatives designed to aid underserved learners are only as effective as they are visible. We must inform advocates and ALL underserved learners about the available and effective programs designed for this purpose. For example, in the 2015–2016 academic year, approximately 730,000 students registered to take the ACT using fee waivers valued at more than \$36 million. Yet, not all eligible students took advantage of this offer. Similarly, institutions must use data to inform intervention strategies if they are going to help underserved students be prepared for postsecondary success.

3. Take the guesswork out of STEM.

It is critically important to align STEM initiatives to capitalize on performance, measured interest, and expressed interest. Essential to this effort is expanding and nurturing interest in STEM, which will impact the emerging pipeline of STEM majors, teachers, and workers. This requires capturing a wider range of students and employing concrete measures to inform intervention and programming. To do so, states and districts must look for partnering opportunities from K–12 to postsecondary education to the workplace.

4. Focus on the implementation of fewer, higher, clearer, standards in K–12 classrooms to raise the bar for all students.

No matter the adopted standards, proper implementation must focus on the most critical component for increasing readiness—effective, high-quality teaching. This requires investment in postsecondary teaching programs, professional development, and state-level collaboration among K–12 and higher education.

5. Don't over test students.

When states, schools, and districts build an assessment strategy that recognizes the limits and promise of test scores, they will reduce the likelihood of over testing. Used ethically and appropriately, assessments can inform decisions at individual and institutional levels. Misunderstood, misused, or abused, assessments cause confusion, can be perceived as punitive, or result in ill-conceived strategies. To quote ACT founder E.F. Lindquist, "Assessment is valuable to the extent it bridges teaching and learning."