

About *The Condition of College Readiness*

Since 1959, ACT has collected and reported data on students' academic readiness for college. Because becoming ready for college is a process that occurs throughout elementary and secondary education, measuring academic performance over time in the context of college readiness provides meaningful and compelling information about the college readiness of students. A focus on the number and percentage of students meeting or exceeding the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks does just that.

Empirically derived—based on the performance of students in college—a College Readiness Benchmark is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding first-year credit-bearing college course. These college courses include English Composition, College Algebra, an introductory social science course (e.g., History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, and Economics), and Biology.

Using ACT® test scores and the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, this report provides a snapshot of the college readiness of the graduating seniors of the class of 2009 who took the ACT in high school.¹

¹The data presented herein are based on the *ACT Profile Report—National: Graduating Class 2009*, accessible through the ACT webpage at www.act.org/news/data.html. With the exception of the graphs on pages 3 and 16, data related to students who did not provide information, or who responded "Other" to questions about gender, race/ethnicity, high school curriculum, etc., are not presented explicitly.

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The Condition of College Readiness is organized into five sections:

Access & Preparation —the number of graduates exposed to college entrance testing and the percent of students pursuing a core curriculum.	1
Academic Performance —student test performance and the impact of rigorous coursework on achievement.	5
College Readiness —the percentage of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in each content area.	8
Educational/Career Aspirations & Economic Development —the extent to which student aspirations match workforce demands	16
Policies & Practices to Increase College Readiness —policies and practices states and schools can implement to improve the college readiness of students.	19

ACT encourages educators to focus on trends (e.g., 3, 5, 10 years), not year-to-year changes, which can represent normal—even expected—fluctuations. Trend lines offer more insight into what is happening in a school, district, state, or the nation than can data from any single year.