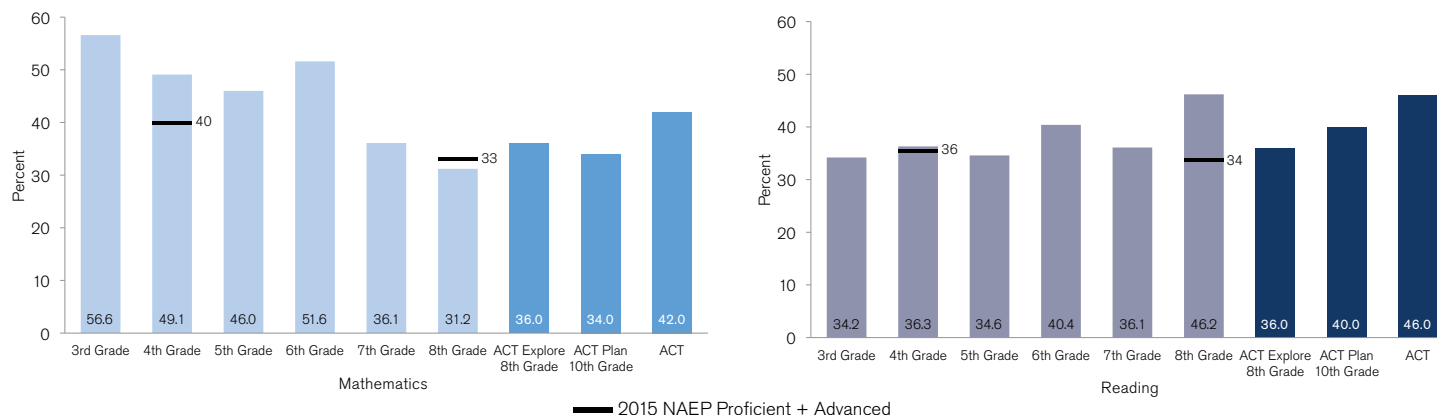


## A Look at Year Two of ACT Aspire®

TRACY G. WILKINSON, PHD, YOUNGWOO CHO, PHD, YING-JU HSU, MA, AND KURT BURKUM, PHD

### Percentage of Students Meeting or Surpassing the ACT Readiness Benchmark in Mathematics and Reading, 2015



Note: ACT Aspire data are based on more than 743,000 ACT Aspire-tested students in grades three through eight in spring 2015. About 89% of data were from two states and 11% from other states. ACT Aspire data from 2015 are not necessarily nationally representative. ACT Explore (sample of 1,065,332) and ACT Plan (sample of 1,335,510) data are based on students in grades eight and ten in 2014, respectively. ACT data are based on 1,924,436 ACT-tested students in 2015. NAEP fourth grade mathematics data are based on a nationally representative sample of 139,900 students in 2015; NAEP eighth grade mathematics data are based on a nationally representative sample of 136,900 students in 2015. NAEP fourth grade reading data are based on a nationally representative sample of 139,100 students in 2015; NAEP eighth grade reading data are based on a nationally representative sample of 136,500 students in 2015. NAEP Proficient + Advanced rates were determined by adding rates from the Proficient and Advanced categories. For more information on NAEP Proficient and Advanced rates, please see [www.nationsreportcard.gov/](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/).

For the 2014–2015 academic year, ACT Aspire® data indicate a relationship between ACT Readiness Benchmark attainment rates and grade in school in mathematics.<sup>1</sup> In mathematics, fewer students met or surpassed the ACT Aspire readiness standard in higher grades than in lower ones—56.6% of third graders met the Benchmark while 31.2% of eighth graders did so.

The relationship in reading for 2015 ACT Aspire data is less clear. In reading, about one-third of students met the ACT Readiness Benchmark in all grades, with more students meeting it in sixth grade (40.4%) and eighth grade (46.2%). These results for mathematics and reading are consistent with prior findings from ACT Aspire-tested students in 2014.

ACT Aspire data from 2015 are generally consistent with other recent data sources measuring similar constructs: ACT Explore® eighth grade College Readiness Benchmark rates (2014) and NAEP fourth and eighth grade Proficient and Advanced rates (2015). ACT Explore College Readiness Benchmarks are mapped from ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. NAEP rates come from nationally representative samples of students. Likewise, ACT Plan® tenth grade and ACT high school graduate College Readiness Benchmark rates are generally consistent with 2015 ACT Aspire data. ■

<sup>1</sup> See [www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/standards-benchmarks](http://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/standards-benchmarks) for more information about ACT Readiness Benchmarks.

- These findings are generally consistent with previous ACT Aspire data and NAEP data, and correspond with ACT assessment data and the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks that have been empirically validated based on actual college student academic performance.
- In most grades, less than half of ACT Aspire-tested third-through-eighth graders in 2015 met the ACT Readiness Benchmarks in mathematics or reading.

**Tracy G. Wilkinson** is a research scientist in Policy Research at ACT specializing in education policy research and educational outcomes of students with disabilities.

**YoungWoo Cho** is a principal psychometrician in Measurement Research at ACT supporting the psychometric aspects of developing and maintaining large-scale achievement tests.

**Ying-Ju Hsu** is a research assistant in Measurement Research at ACT and an ABD graduate student major in the Educational Measurement and Statistics program at the University of Iowa.

**Kurt Burkum** is senior director of Policy Research at ACT specializing in state and federal policy issues related to college readiness and transitions, particularly for underserved student populations.