

College and Career Readiness in Arizona

AN EXAMINATION OF RESULTS FROM ARIZONA'S
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED COLLEGE-READINESS
EXAMINATION PILOT AND COLLEGE KNOWING AND GOING



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ABOUT HELIOS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Helios Education Foundation is dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals in Arizona and Florida to achieve a postsecondary education. Our work is driven by our four fundamental beliefs in Community, Equity, Investment, and Partnership, and we invest in initiatives across the full education continuum.

Through our Florida Regional Student Success Initiative, Helios is helping underserved, minority, and first-generation students from the state's large population centers in Miami, Orlando, and Tampa achieve a postsecondary education.

In Arizona, where Latino students comprise the largest percentage of K–12 public school population, the Foundation is implementing its Arizona Latino Student Success initiative focused on preparing all students – especially students in high-poverty, underserved Latino communities for success.

ABOUT THE ARIZONA COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education (ACPE) consists of sixteen Commissioners, fourteen of whom are Governor appointed. The Commission's mission is to expand access and increase success in postsecondary education for Arizonans. The ACPE provides the single forum where all sectors of postsecondary education come together to identify opportunities and challenges in education. Core responsibilities of the ACPE are related to student financial assistance including the administration of state grants, scholarships, forgivable loans, and the Arizona Family College Savings (529) Program.

Dear Colleague,

In 2009, Helios Education Foundation began funding the administration of the ACT exam to all juniors in eight Arizona school districts. Over the years, this initiative has evolved into our College Knowing and Going Initiative which focuses on ensuring students are taking the necessary steps to pursue postsecondary education. Under this initiative, Helios partners with 18 school districts to provide college readiness activities.

In 2017, the Legislature authorized the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education to conduct a college readiness pilot program and appropriated \$250,000 for Arizona public school juniors to take the ACT or the SAT test in the spring of 2018. In addition to these state funds and College Knowing and Going resources from Helios Education Foundation, Governor Ducey provided funds to increase the number of juniors taking the tests. By combining the results of all of these separately funded test groups, the state was able to produce a statistically relevant outcomes-based report designed for policymakers to assess the value of a statewide administration of a college readiness examination.

We hope that policy makers and educational leaders will use the findings from this report to promote strategies and interventions designed to increase the postsecondary attainment for all Arizonans.

Sincerely,



Vince Roig
Founding Chairman
Helios Education Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vince Roig".



Paul J. Luna
President & CEO
Helios Education Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Luna".



INTRODUCTION

Helios Education Foundation (Helios) is dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals in Arizona and Florida to achieve a postsecondary education. Our work is driven by our four fundamental beliefs in Community, Equity, Investment and Partnerships, and we invest in initiatives across the full education continuum. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that every student graduates from high school ready for college and career and goes on to complete a high-quality postsecondary degree or certificate.

One project that exemplifies these principles has been the Nationally Recognized College-Readiness Examination Pilot Program (College Readiness Pilot) managed by the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education. This program was outlined by Representative Heather Carter in HB2545 and signed by Governor Ducey on May 12, 2017. Under this program the Arizona Legislature and the Governor's Office worked collaboratively to allocate funds so that students in both district and charter schools could take either the ACT or SAT in the Spring of 2018.¹ This effort resulted in nearly 17,000 students taking one of the two tests.

At the same time Helios has continued its long-time support of college readiness through its initiative, College Knowing and Going. Under this program students from 18 Arizona School Districts are provided the opportunity to take the ACT test at no cost to the student. This resulted in a little more than 27,000 additional students taking the ACT in the Spring of 2018.

Helios and the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education came together to discuss how we could partner to examine the ACT and SAT data. In order to present a richer description of college readiness in Arizona, this brief looks at the achievement of those students who took the ACT or SAT as part of either the College Readiness Pilot or the College Knowing and Going Initiative. Combined, more than 44,000 students took one of the two tests which represents over 55% of all public school juniors in Arizona. We present the data for this report in four main sections:

SECTION 1 – DISTRICTS, CHARTER SCHOOLS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

This section provides an overview of the districts and charters that participated in either the College Readiness Pilot or the College Knowing and Going Initiative. We provide a map that highlights, by location, where the districts and charters are located in Arizona, a table that provides key demographic characteristics by district/charter, and a set of graphics that show who took the ACT or SAT tests.

SECTION 2 – ACT READINESS INFORMATION

This section includes key summaries of outcomes for those districts/charters that took the ACT. In this section we use a common scheme for reporting the data. First, the main graphic will visually display results from the College Readiness Pilot. Second, we provide a smaller sub-graphic that includes results from both the College Readiness Pilot and College Knowing and Going.

SECTION 3 – SAT READINESS INFORMATION

This section includes key summaries of outcomes for those districts and charters that took the SAT. Here we are more limited in the data provided by the College Board but are still able to show how the students performed on each sub-section.

SECTION 4 – RECOMMENDATIONS

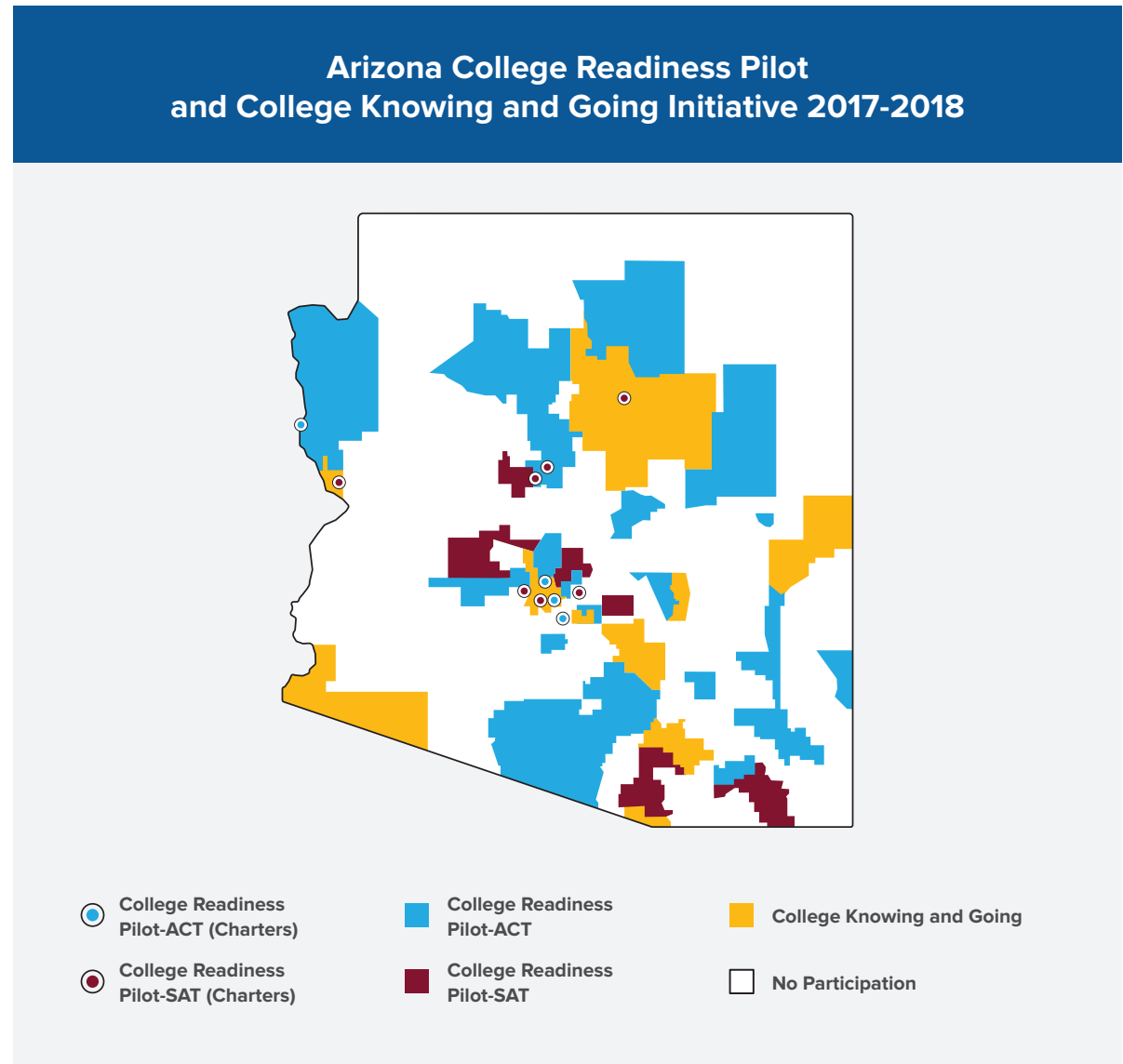
The final section provides a short summary of recommendations that policy makers should consider as the state of Arizona expands opportunities for either the ACT or SAT under the new menu of assessments.

¹Eligibility for districts and charters was on a first-come-first basis and the schools could not be participating in another program that was currently funding the tests. Originally, the Arizona Legislature appropriated \$235,000 for schools to provide free testing but those dollars were exhausted before all interested districts and charters could be awarded funding. As a result, the Governor's Office extended an additional \$600,000 in funding so that any of the interested districts or charters could participate.

SECTION 1 – DISTRICTS, CHARTER SCHOOLS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Which Districts Participated in the College Readiness Pilot or College Knowing and Going Initiative?

Overall, 37 Arizona School Districts and 13 Charters participated in the College Readiness Pilot, while 18 districts participated in the College Knowing and Going Initiative. The figure to the right shows the participating districts and charters. The blue shaded areas represent the district boundaries of the College Readiness Pilot districts that selected the ACT as their test for the pilot; blue dots represent the charter schools that selected the ACT as their test. In contrast, the red shaded areas represent the district boundaries for those districts that selected the SAT as their test; red dots represent the charters that selected the SAT. The bronze shaded areas represent the districts that were part of the College Knowing and Going Initiative and tested under the ACT. Unshaded districts were not part of the College Readiness Pilot or College Knowing and Going. A very small percentage of students took the ACT or SAT in these districts.



WHAT DO THE ACT COLLEGE READINESS PILOT AND COLLEGE KNOWING AND GOING DISTRICTS LOOK LIKE?

ACT-District/Charter School Demographics and Postsecondary Indicators

The following tables below provide a depiction of the characteristics of each district or charter school in terms of locale, size, racial/ethnic student makeup, poverty status, and most recent postsecondary success indicators (college-going and completion rates).

Overall, districts and charter schools participating in the Pilot were more likely to be located in town or rural regions compared to the 18 districts served by the College Knowing and Going Initiative. For example, 60% of Pilot districts/charter schools were located in town or rural regions compared to 33% of College Knowing and Going districts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

District and Charter School Demographics (College Readiness Pilot)-ACT

District/Charter School	Locale	Number of Test-Takers	Number of 11th Graders*	% Asian	% American Indian/Alaska Native	% Black	% Hispanic/Latino	% White	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	% College-Going Rate	% College Completion Rate
Arizona Agribusiness & Equine Center-Estrella (Charter)	City, Large	104	116	6%	0%	7%	38%	46%	0%	40%	86%	N/A
Baboquivari Unified School District	Rural, Remote	31	55	0%	95%	0%	3%	0%	0%	N/A	30%	N/A
Blue Ridge Unified School District	Town, Remote	153	183	1%	20%	0%	25%	49%	0%	53%	60%	20%
Canyon View Prep Academy (Charter)	Rural, Fringe	21	24	0%	0%	0%	24%	72%	0%	46%	52%	N/A
Colorado River Union High School District	Town, Remote	400	486	0%	1%	1%	39%	53%	0%	63%	56%	11%
Deer Valley Unified School District	Suburb, Large	2225	2751	4%	1%	3%	19%	69%	0%	27%	67%	33%
Duncan Unified School District	Rural, Remote	23	24	0%	0%	0%	20%	78%	0%	55%	45%	N/A
Dysart Unified School District	Suburb, Large	1790	2112	2%	1%	8%	38%	47%	0%	49%	50%	13%
Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (Charter)	City, Small	40	50	0%	0%	0%	13%	78%	0%	N/A	65%	38%
Gilbert Unified School District	Suburb, Large	2630	3109	4%	1%	3%	22%	66%	0%	27%	60%	31%
Heber-Overgaard Unified School District	Rural, Remote	23	34	0%	0%	0%	17%	76%	0%	55%	79%	23%
Holbrook Unified School District	Rural, Remote	138	188	0%	62%	1%	14%	18%	0%	100%	52%	7%
Humboldt Unified School District	Suburb, Small	328	435	1%	1%	1%	32%	61%	0%	52%	66%	13%
Joseph City Unified School District	Rural, Distant	26	26	0%	17%	0%	12%	63%	0%	42%	54%	3%
Kingman Unified School District	Town, Remote	348	504	1%	2%	1%	22%	69%	1%	75%	47%	9%
Mammoth-San Manuel Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	47	58	0%	0%	0%	71%	25%	0%	84%	42%	11%
Marana Unified School District	Suburb, Large	752	1012	2%	1%	2%	37%	54%	0%	45%	47%	21%
Maricopa Unified School District	Town, Distant	430	570	2%	6%	12%	43%	33%	0%	62%	51%	13%
Miami Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	50	88	0%	3%	0%	50%	44%	0%	72%	49%	11%
Mingus Union High School District	Town, Distant	244	291	0%	4%	0%	37%	56%	0%	55%	58%	18%
Northpoint Expeditionary Learning Academy (Charter)	City, Small	23	47	0%	0%	0%	15%	78%	0%	37%	69%	N/A
Paradise Honors High School (Charter)	Suburb, Large	99	148	3%	0%	7%	18%	70%	0%	31%	N/A	N/A
Payson Unified School District	Town, Remote	147	192	1%	3%	0%	21%	72%	0%	47%	45%	16%
Pima Unified School District	Town, Remote	60	68	0%	1%	0%	25%	69%	0%	52%	73%	13%
Phoenix Collegiate Academy High School (Charter)	City, Large	26	30	0%	0%	8%	88%	0%	0%	92%	63%	N/A
Queen Creek Unified School District	Suburb, Large	437	503	1%	1%	3%	24%	69%	0%	25%	54%	17%
Saddle Mountain Unified School District	Rural, Distant	131	139	0%	1%	4%	41%	51%	0%	11%	53%	9%
Saint David Unified School District	Rural, Distant	15	17	0%	0%	0%	9%	87%	0%	46%	47%	N/A
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Community Schools (Charter)	Rural, Fringe	38	39	0%	82%	0%	0%	0%	0%	36%	43%	N/A
Santa Cruz Valley Union High School District	Town, Fringe	87	131	0%	0%	8%	82%	7%	0%	78%	54%	7%
Scottsdale Unified School District	City, Midsize	1781	2124	5%	2%	4%	22%	64%	0%	29%	74%	50%
Snowflake Unified School District	Town, Remote	174	209	0%	6%	0%	12%	78%	0%	54%	60%	15%
Telesis Center for Learning Inc (Charter)	City, Small	16	23	0%	0%	0%	28%	65%	0%	37%	32%	N/A
Tri-City Prep High School (Charter)	Rural, Fringe	53	52	0%	0%	0%	16%	79%	0%	N/A	100%	33%
Tuba City Unified School District	Town, Remote	106	201	1%	97%	0%	1%	1%	0%	N/A	55%	11%
Willcox Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	98	127	0%	0%	0%	66%	32%	0%	43%	39%	10%
Williams Unified School District	Town, Distant	42	56	2%	5%	0%	38%	53%	0%	68%	61%	15%

District Demographics (College Knowing and Going)-ACT

District	Locale	Number of Test-Takers	Number of 11th Graders*	% Asian	% American Indian/ Alaska Native	% Black	% Hispanic/ Latino	% White	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	% College-Going Rate	% College Completion Rate
Chandler Unified School District	Suburb, Large	3358	3829	8%	2%	5%	27%	55%	0%	31%	65%	32%
Flagstaff Unified School District	City, Small	659	778	1%	25%	1%	28%	43%	0%	52%	57%	24%
Florence Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	714	792	1%	2%	8%	36%	49%	1%	60%	51%	7%
Flowing Wells Unified School District	Suburb, Large	382	487	1%	1%	2%	52%	42%	0%	75%	46%	13%
Glendale Union High School District	City, Large	3060	4084	3%	2%	9%	56%	28%	0%	63%	54%	19%
Globe Unified School District	Town, Remote	123	129	1%	27%	0%	33%	36%	0%	63%	48%	9%
Higley Unified School District	Suburb, Large	837	964	4%	1%	4%	20%	66%	0%	21%	58%	22%
Lake Havasu Unified School District	City, Small	383	451	1%	1%	1%	24%	71%	1%	48%	56%	18%
Nogales Unified School District	Town, Remote	423	510	0%	0%	0%	99%	1%	0%	100%	57%	25%
Peoria Unified School District	Suburb, Large	2871	3314	3%	1%	5%	33%	54%	0%	43%	60%	25%
Phoenix Union High School District	City, Large	5316	7251	2%	2%	8%	81%	4%	0%	91%	45%	11%
Round Valley Unified School District	Rural, Remote	81	92	0%	4%	0%	23%	70%	0%	N/A	70%	11%
Sunnyside Unified School District	City, Large	795	1485	0%	3%	2%	90%	4%	0%	83%	41%	9%
Tolleson Union High School District	Suburb, Large	2357	2969	2%	1%	9%	78%	8%	0%	67%	47%	13%
Tucson Unified School District	City, Large	2545	3714	2%	4%	6%	64%	20%	0%	65%	51%	24%
Vail Unified School District	Town, Fringe	894	1004	2%	0%	4%	33%	55%	0%	24%	54%	27%
Winslow Unified School District	Town, Remote	147	161	0%	50%	1%	26%	18%	0%	99%	55%	8%
Yuma Union High School District	City, Small	2404	2828	1%	1%	1%	84%	12%	0%	83%	66%	14%

WHAT DO THE SAT COLLEGE READINESS PILOT DISTRICTS LOOK LIKE?

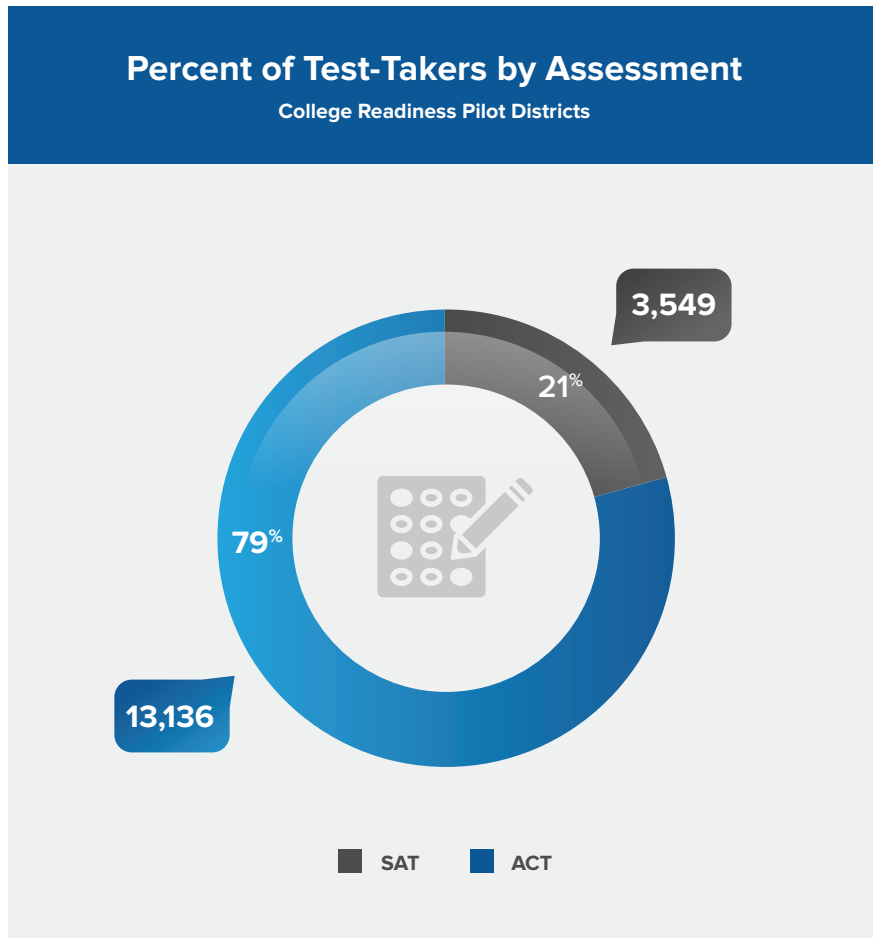
District and Charter School Demographics (College Readiness Pilot)-SAT

District/Charter Holder	Locale	Number of Test-Takers	Number of 11th Graders*	% Asian	% American Indian / Alaska Native	% Black	% Hispanic/ Latino	% White	% Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific	% Free/Reduced Lunch	% College-Going Rate	% College Completion Rate
Apache Junction Unified School District	Suburb, Large	112	306	0%	1%	1%	31%	64%	0%	78%	53%	19%
AAEC South Mountain Early College High School (Charter)	City, Large	132	169	0%	0%	8%	81%	10%	0%	69%	67%	33%
Bisbee Unified School District	Town, Distant	60	44	0%	0%	0%	67%	30%	0%	67%	35%	8%
Cave Creek Unified School District	City, Distant	401	463	2%	<1%	1%	9%	85%	<1%	10%	76%	47%
Girls Leadership Academy of Arizona (Charter)	City, Large	30	31	0%	0%	12%	76%	0%	0%	47%	N/A	N/A
Horizon Honors High School (Charter)	City, Large	96	126	7%	0%	4%	17%	65%	0%	N/A	74%	45%
Mohave Accelerated Learning Center (Charter)	Town, Remote	41	52	0%	0%	0%	30%	65%	0%	69%	50%	N/A
Paradise Valley Unified School District	City, Large	1920	2612	4%	1%	3%	31%	57%	<1%	35%	64%	38%
Prescott Unified School District	City, Small	87	350	1%	2%	1%	15%	78%	<1%	44%	71%	32%
Sahuarita Unified School District	Town, Distant	236	521	1%	1%	3%	52%	40%	<1%	35%	54%	19%
Santa Cruz Valley Unified District	Town, Remote	275	289	1%	0%	0%	96%	3%	0%	52%	46%	17%
Tombstone Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	40	68	0%	0%	6%	28%	58%	0%	85%	43%	8%
Wickenburg Unified School District	Rural, Fringe	119	74	0%	0%	2%	29%	66%	0%	48%	46%	24%

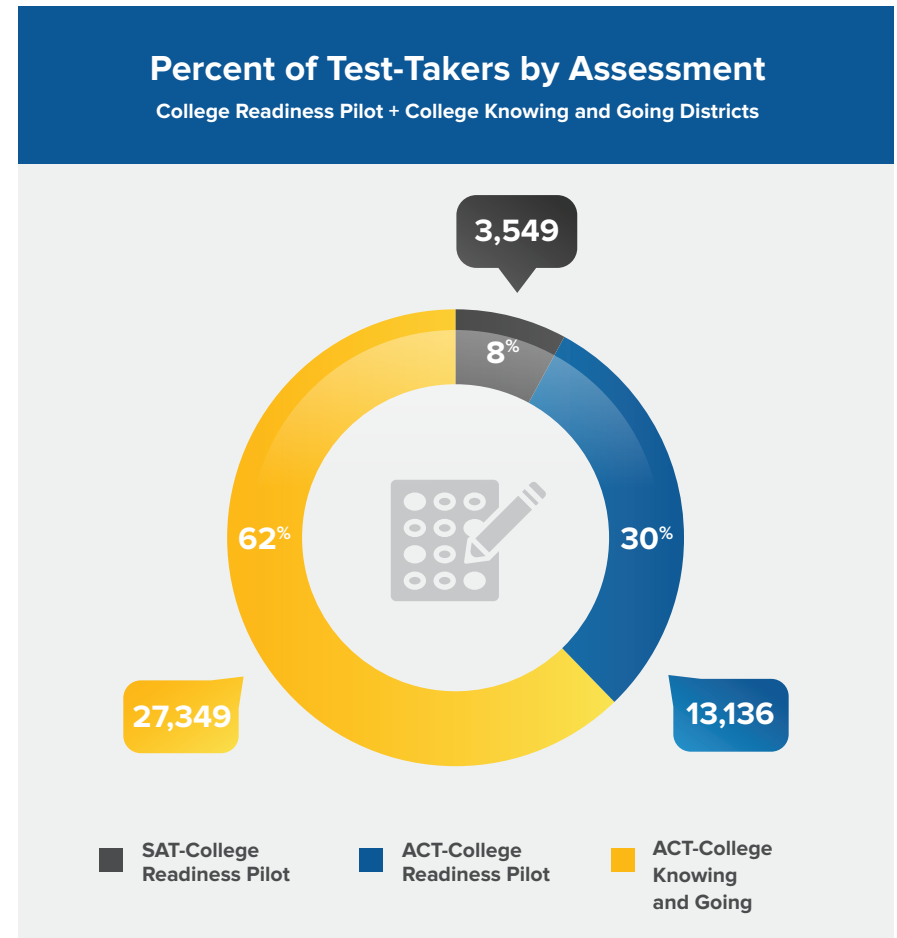
The table above provides a depiction of what each district or charter school looks like in terms of locale, size, racial/ethnic student makeup, poverty status, and most recent postsecondary success indicators (college-going and completion rates). Overall, districts and charter schools participating in the Pilot who administered the SAT were more likely to be located in city or suburban regions (54%) compared to Pilot districts and charter schools who administered the ACT (40%).

* Locale defined by National Center for Education and Statistics. Number of test takers calculated from 2017–2018 school year. Number of 11th graders, race/ethnicity, and free/reduced lunch data calculated based on Department of Education enrollment numbers (2016–2017). Number of 11th graders estimated based on Arizona Department of Education 10th grade enrollment headcount. College-going rates calculated based on Arizona Board of Regents data (2015–2016 high school graduates). College completion rates calculated based on Arizona Board of Regents data (2009–2010 high school graduates).

HOW MANY STUDENTS TOOK THE ACT OR SAT?

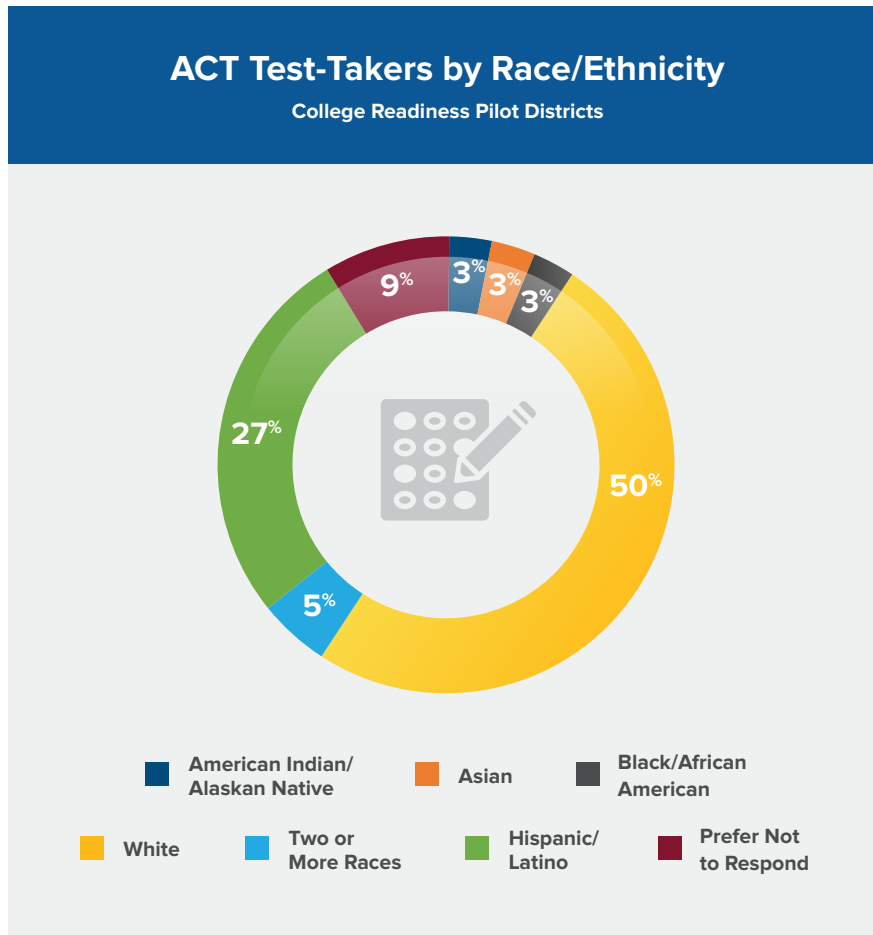


As part of the College Readiness Pilot initiative, a total of 16,685 students took either the SAT or ACT exam. While the College Readiness Pilot grant provided participating districts and charter schools with the option of administering the ACT or SAT to students, 37 out of the 50 districts or charters selected the ACT. Thus, ACT test-takers accounted for over $\frac{3}{4}$ of all students tested.

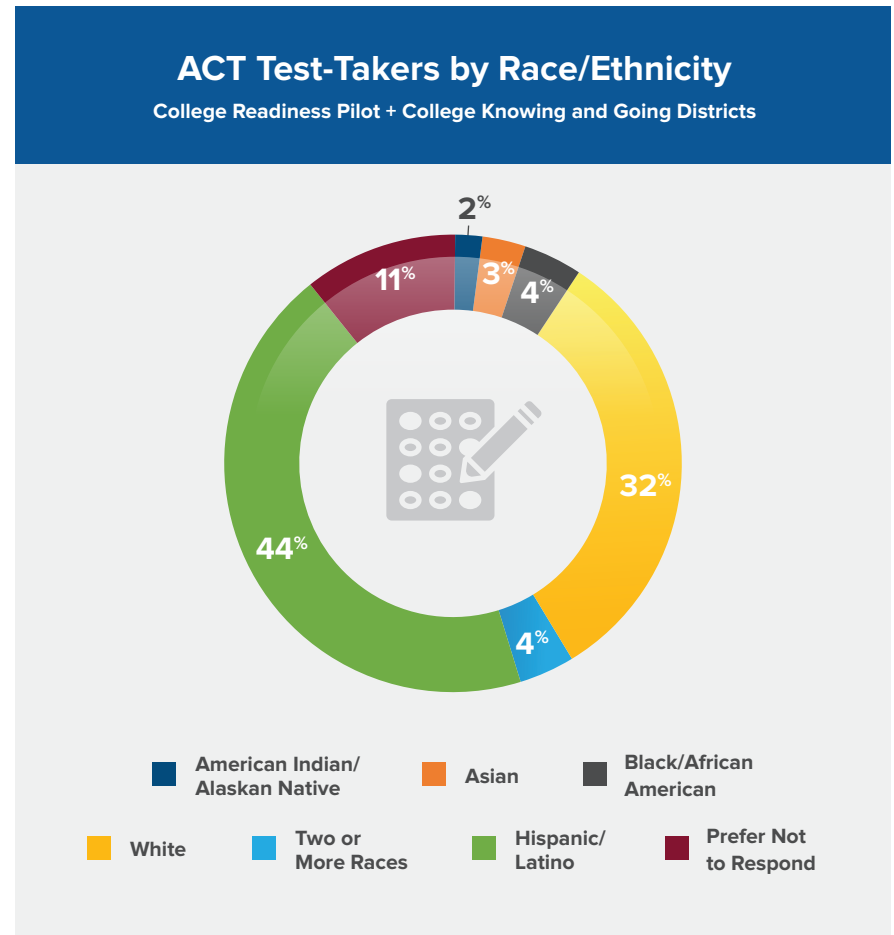


In addition to over 16,000 students who took the ACT or SAT as part of the Pilot initiative, the 27,349 students who took the ACT under the College Knowing and Going Initiative in 2017–2018 represented over half of all juniors in the state of Arizona. The largest proportion of students tested (62%) were ACT test-takers as part of the College Knowing and Going Initiative.

WHAT WAS THE RACE/ETHNICITY OF THE ACT COLLEGE READINESS PILOT DISTRICTS?



Half of students who took the ACT under the College Readiness Pilot identified as non-Hispanic White, with the second largest racial/ethnic group identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

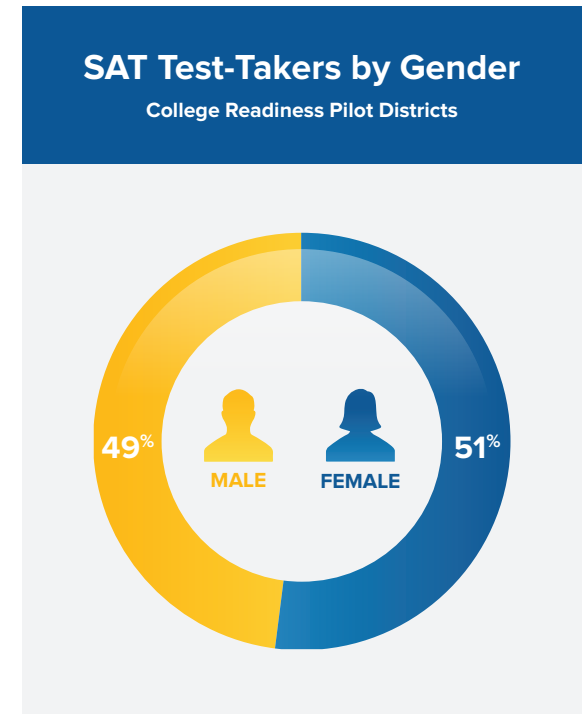
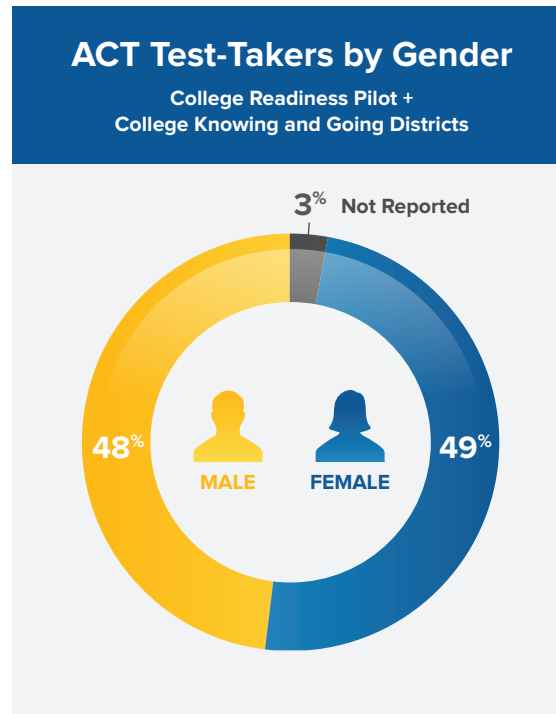
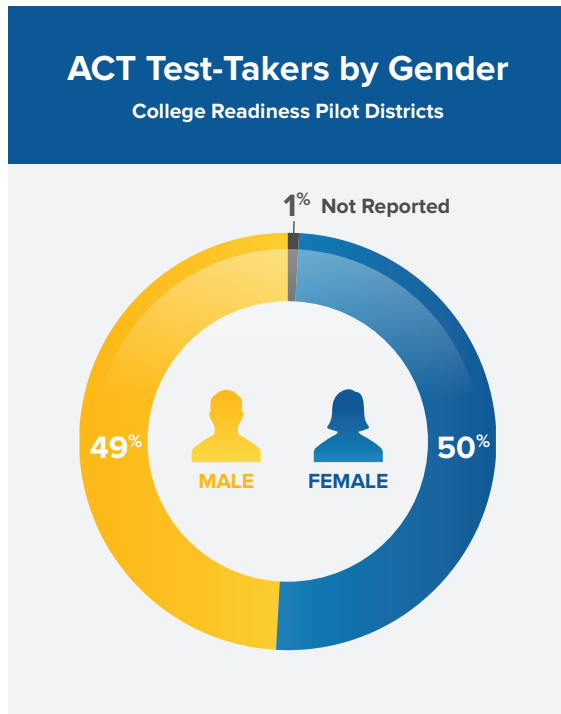


When examining test-takers across both initiatives, the proportion of students identifying as Hispanic increased to 44%. Over half of students (at least 57%) in the 55 districts/charter schools identified as a racial or ethnic minority.

Note: <1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE GENDER OF THE ACT TEST TAKERS?

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE GENDER OF THE SAT TEST TAKERS?

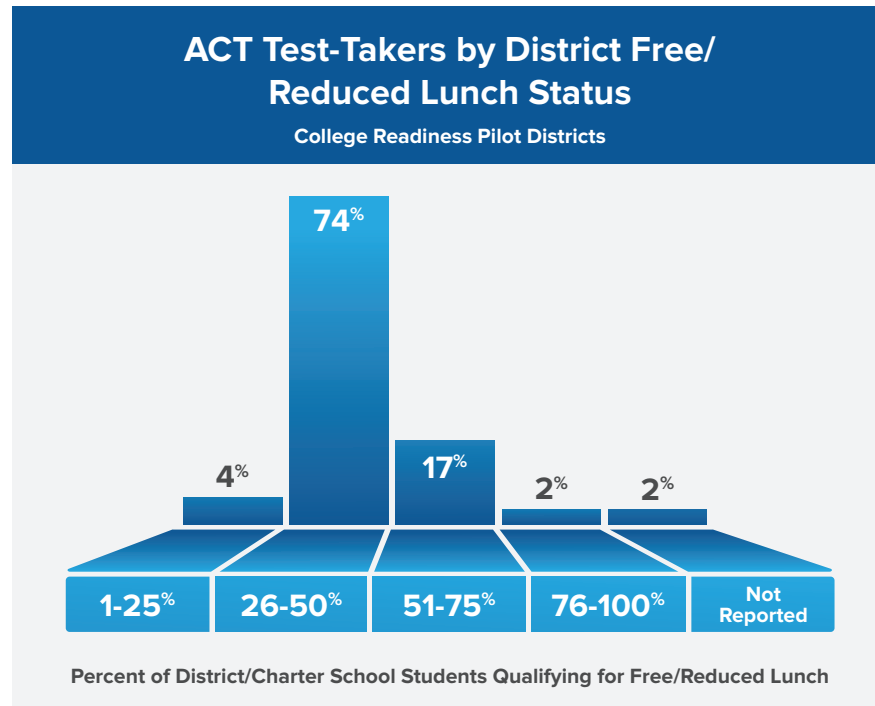


Females made up a slightly larger proportion of ACT test-takers among districts participating in the College Readiness Pilot. A similar trend was observed when the College Knowing and Going Districts were included.

Similar to the College Readiness Pilot districts and charter schools administering the ACT, females made up a slightly larger proportion of SAT test-takers.*

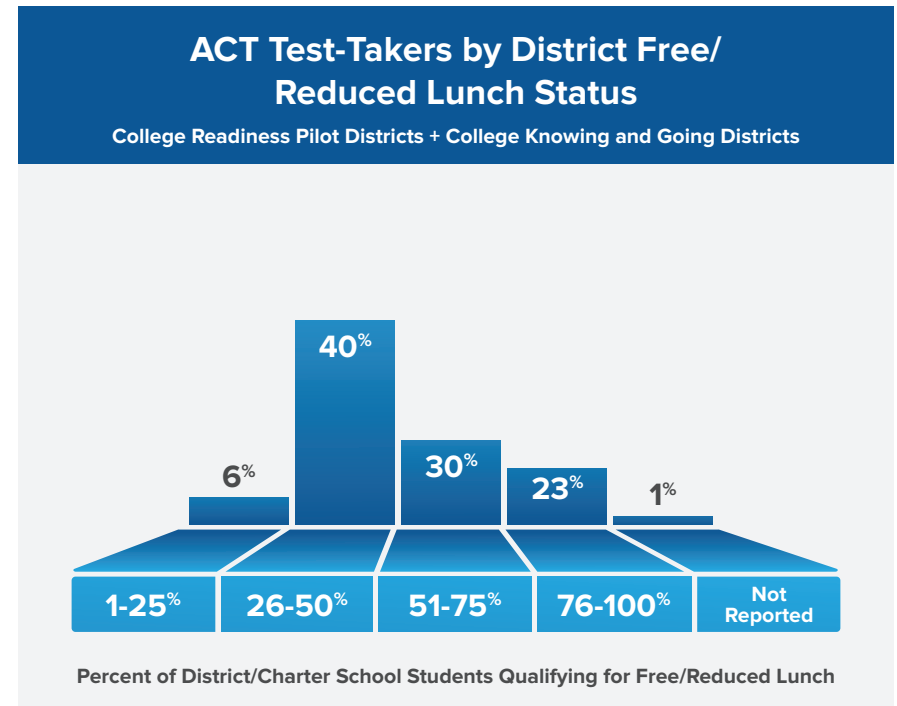
* College Board provided data on gender by district in the form of percentages with a total number of test-takers. Using these proportions and the total number of students we recalculated the percentage of students taking the test for gender for the entire population.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREE/REDUCED LUNCH AND TEST TAKERS?



The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program serves as a proxy for the concentration of low-income students within a school. High-poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75.0% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Mid-high poverty schools as those where 50.1 to 75.0% of students are eligible for Free/Reduced lunch. Mid-low poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.1 to 50.0% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch, and low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25.0% or less of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Approximately 1/5 of students who took the ACT under the College Readiness Pilot attended a district or charter school with a mid-high to high percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (i.e., over half of the entire student population meeting free/reduced lunch criteria).



When taking into consideration students who took the ACT under both initiatives combined, a substantially greater proportion of low-income students across the state were served. More specifically, over half of all students who took the ACT under both initiatives attended a district or charter school with a mid-high to high percentage of students qualifying for school lunch subsidies. Furthermore, nearly ¼ of test-takers attended a high-poverty district or charter school (i.e., over 75% of all students from low-income families).

SECTION 2: ACT COLLEGE READINESS

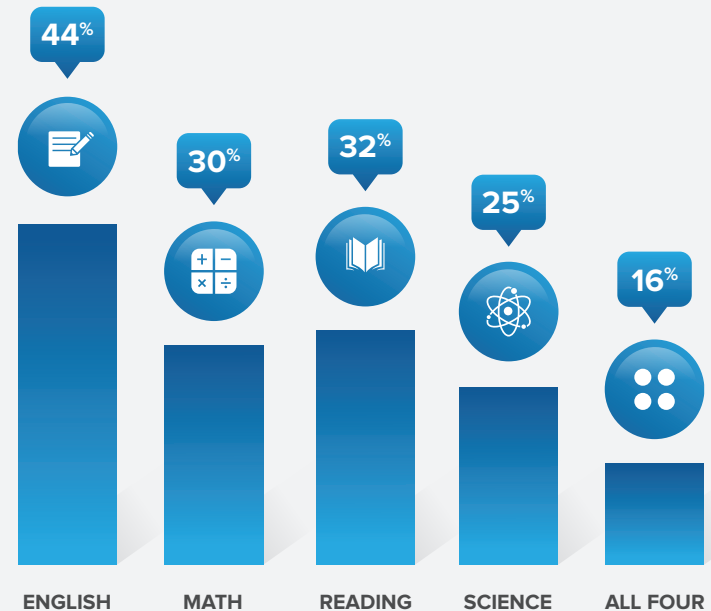
How Did Students Perform on the ACT?

The ACT consists of four multiple choice tests in English, mathematics, reading and science with an optional writing test. For each of the four tests ACT has set a benchmark to indicate readiness. For English the benchmark is set at 18 or higher; mathematics and reading at 22 or higher; and science at 23 or higher. ACT then provides a composite score for each student. While the composite score on its own does not signify a student is fully college and career ready, a composite score of a 23 or higher is a good indication. Each student's composite score can range from 1 to 36. While there are a number of important points that we can show around ACT readiness, this section provides information on the following:

- Percent of Students Meeting Benchmarks
- Percent of Students Meeting Benchmarks by Race and Ethnicity
- Percent of Students Meeting Benchmarks by Gender
- Percent of Students Meeting Benchmarks by District Free and Reduced Lunch Status
- Average Composite Score by Level of Preparation and Race/Ethnicity
- Postsecondary Aspirations
- College Going Rates
- College Completion Rates

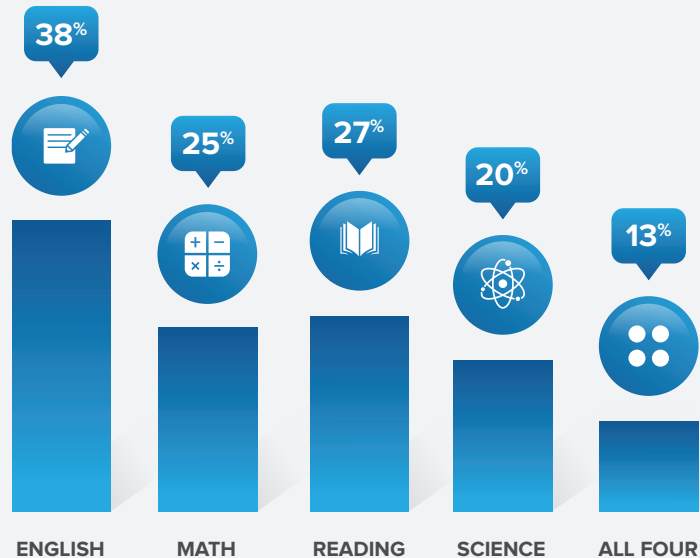
Percent of Students Meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks

College Readiness Pilot Districts



Percent of Students Meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks

College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



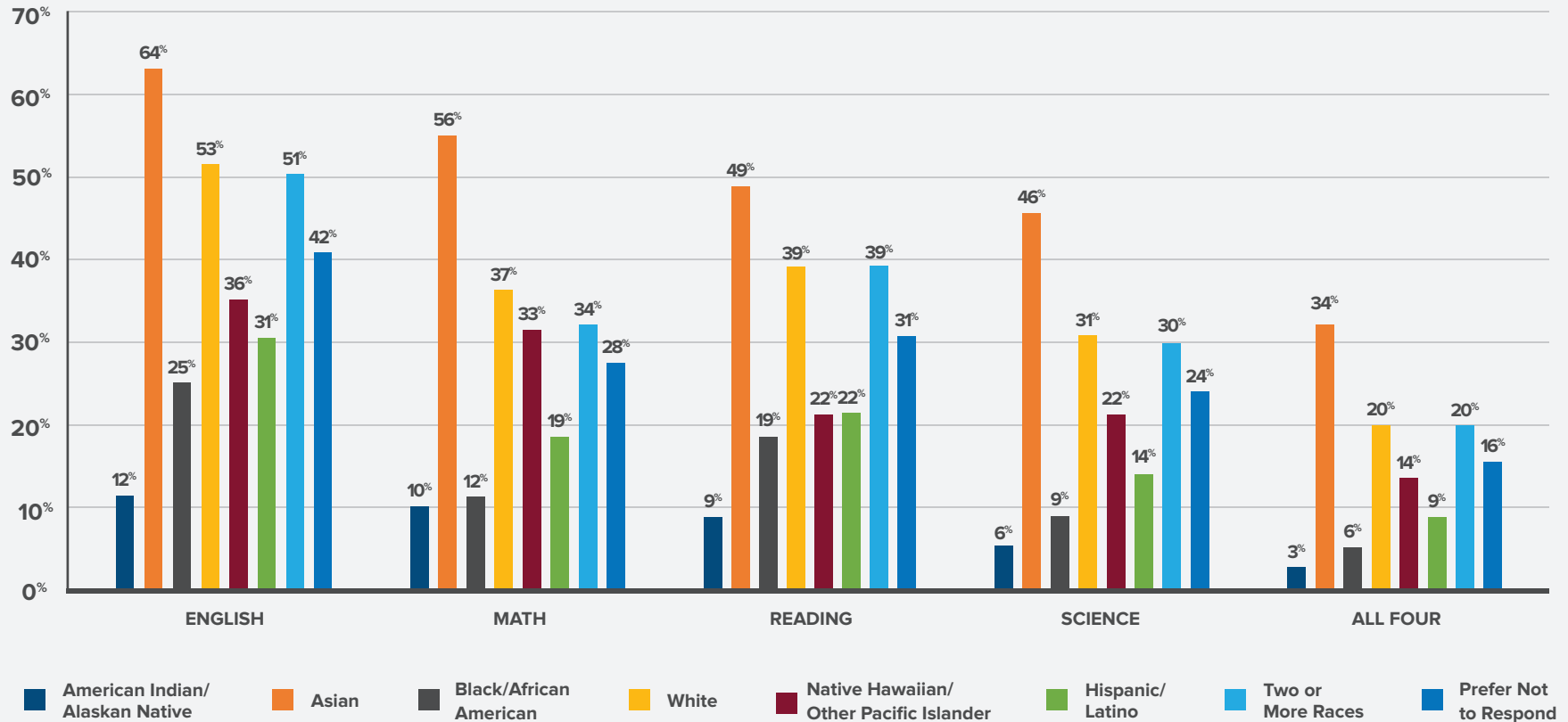
According to ACT results, many Arizona public high school juniors are not prepared to succeed in college. For example, only 16% of students taking the ACT under the College Readiness Pilot met all four college readiness benchmarks. When including the 18 districts participating in the College Knowing and Going Initiative, the percent of students deemed college-ready by the ACT dropped to 13%.

While a considerable proportion of students did not meet college readiness benchmarks in English, math, reading, and science, students struggled most on the math and science portions of the ACT exam.



Percent of Test-Takers Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity

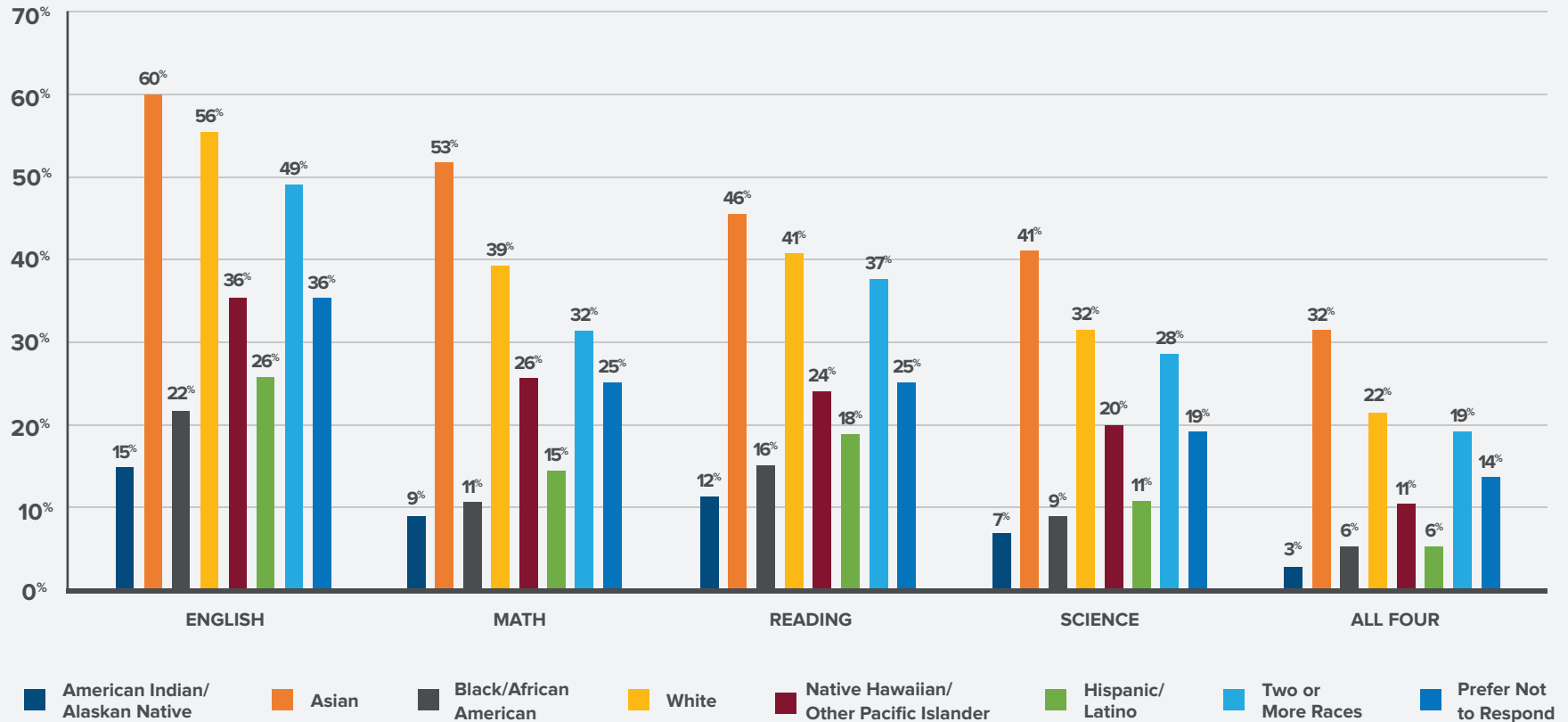
College Readiness Pilot Districts



Achievement gaps between White students and many of their minority peers were evident when examining ACT performance by demographic subgroups. For example, approximately 1/5 of White students from College Readiness Pilot districts/charter schools were college-ready according to the ACT (i.e., met all four college readiness benchmarks). This compared to only 9% of Hispanic/Latino students, 6% of Black/African American students, and 3% of American Indian/Alaska Native students.

Percent of Test-Takers Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity

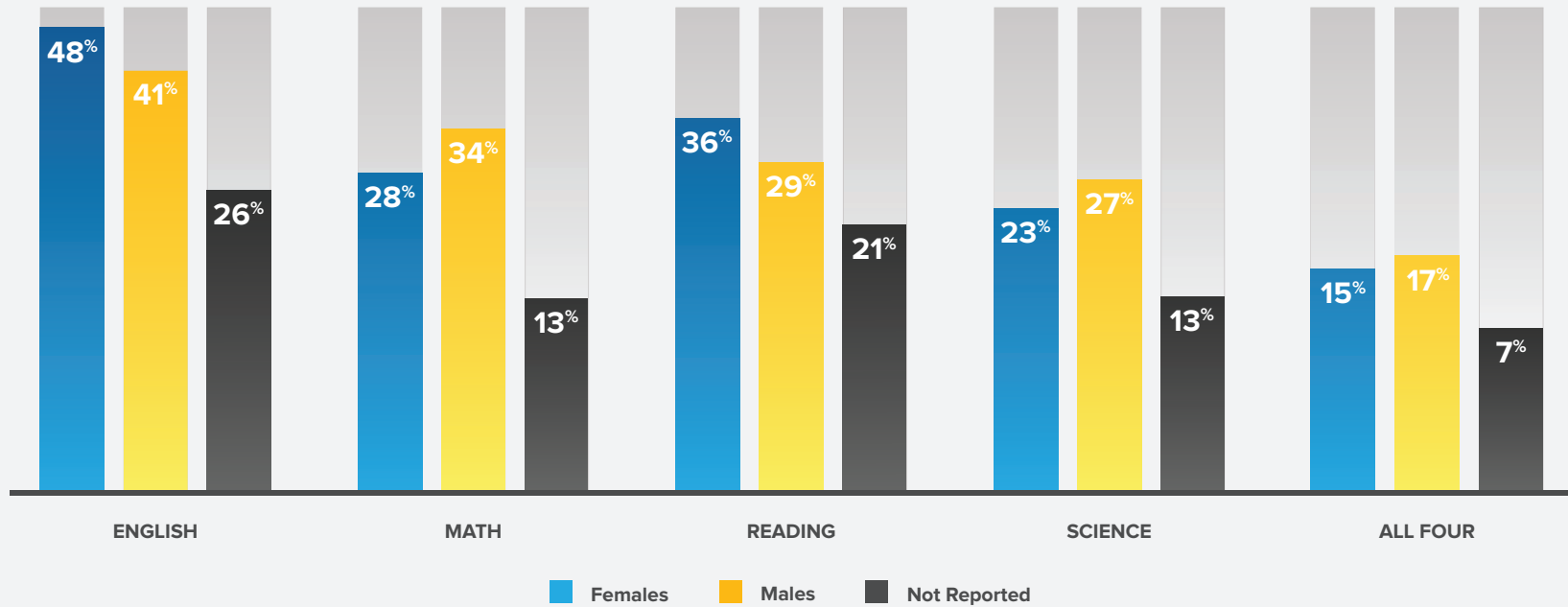
College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



When students from College Going and Knowing districts were added, the disparity between college-ready White students and their college-ready minority counterparts became even more pronounced.

Percent of Test-Takers Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Gender

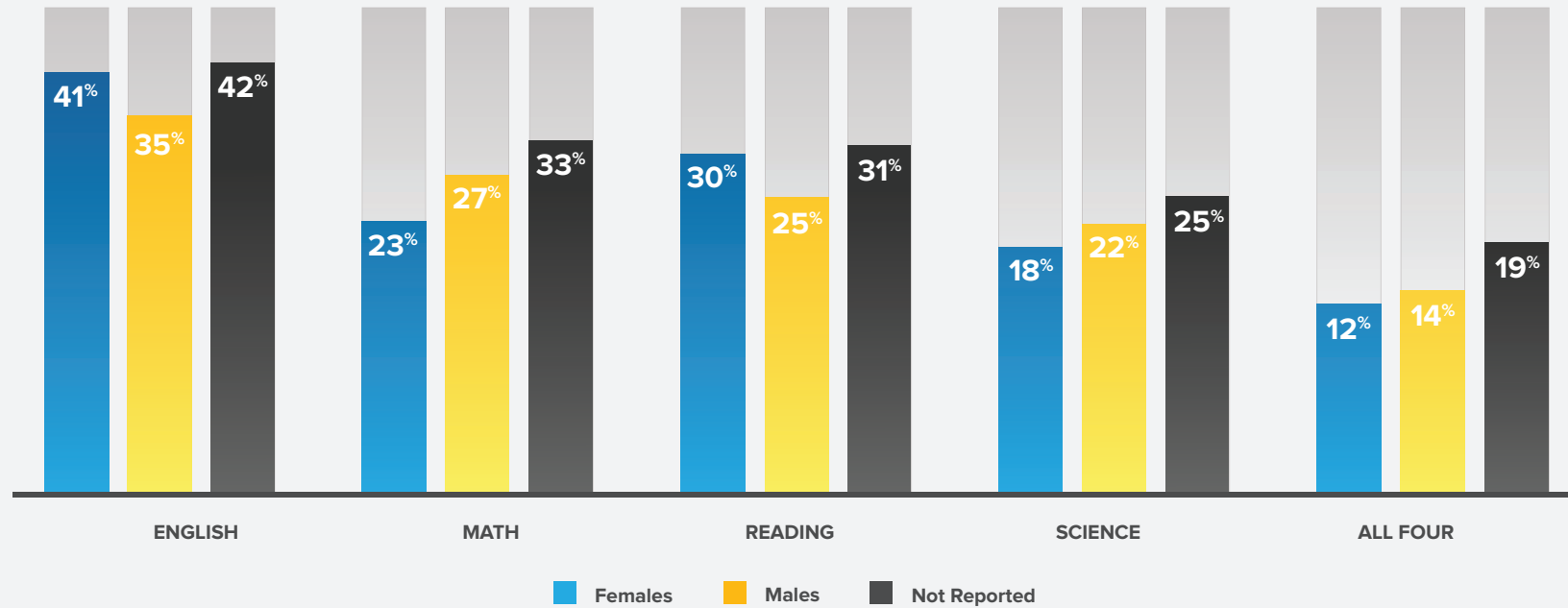
College Readiness Pilot Districts



Overall, males were slightly more likely than female students to be college-ready (i.e., to meet all four ACT college readiness benchmarks). While females were more likely to surpass their male counterparts in English and reading, males were more likely to meet benchmarks in math and science.

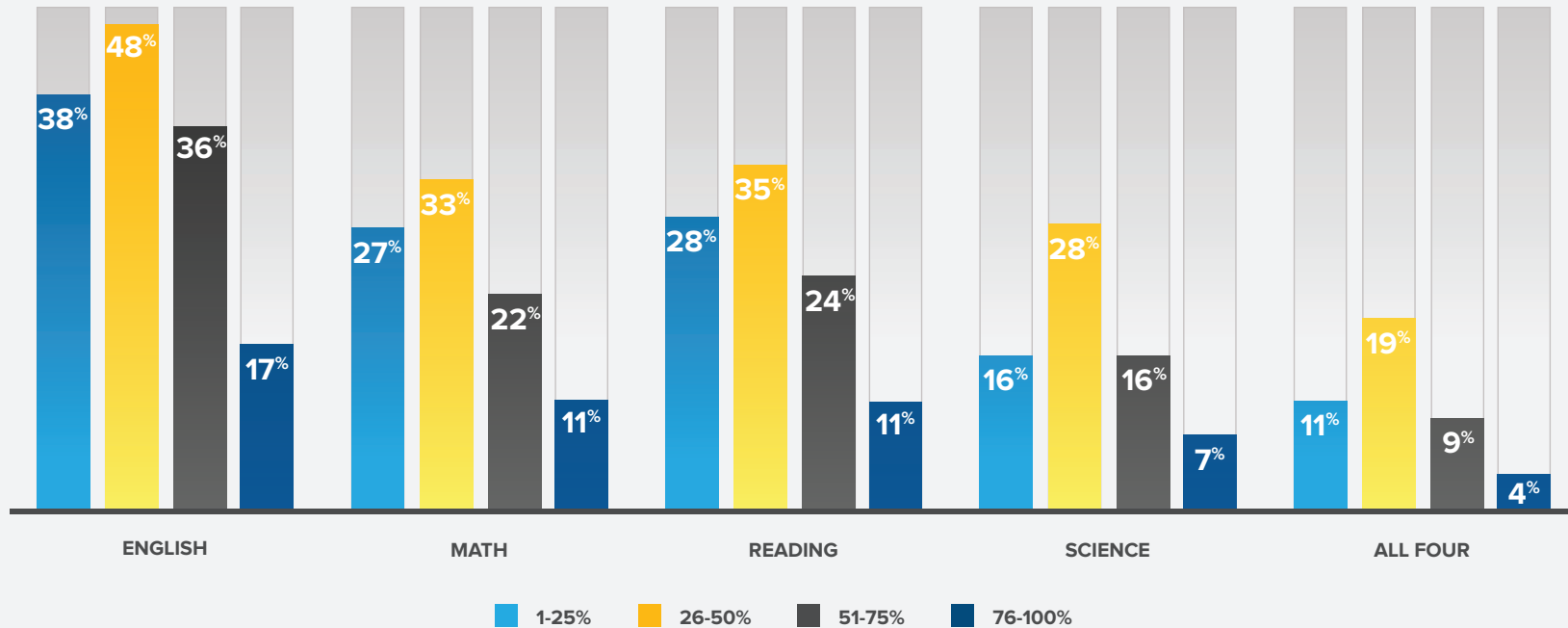
Percent of Test-Takers Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Gender

College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



Percent of Test-Takers Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by District Free/Reduced Lunch Status

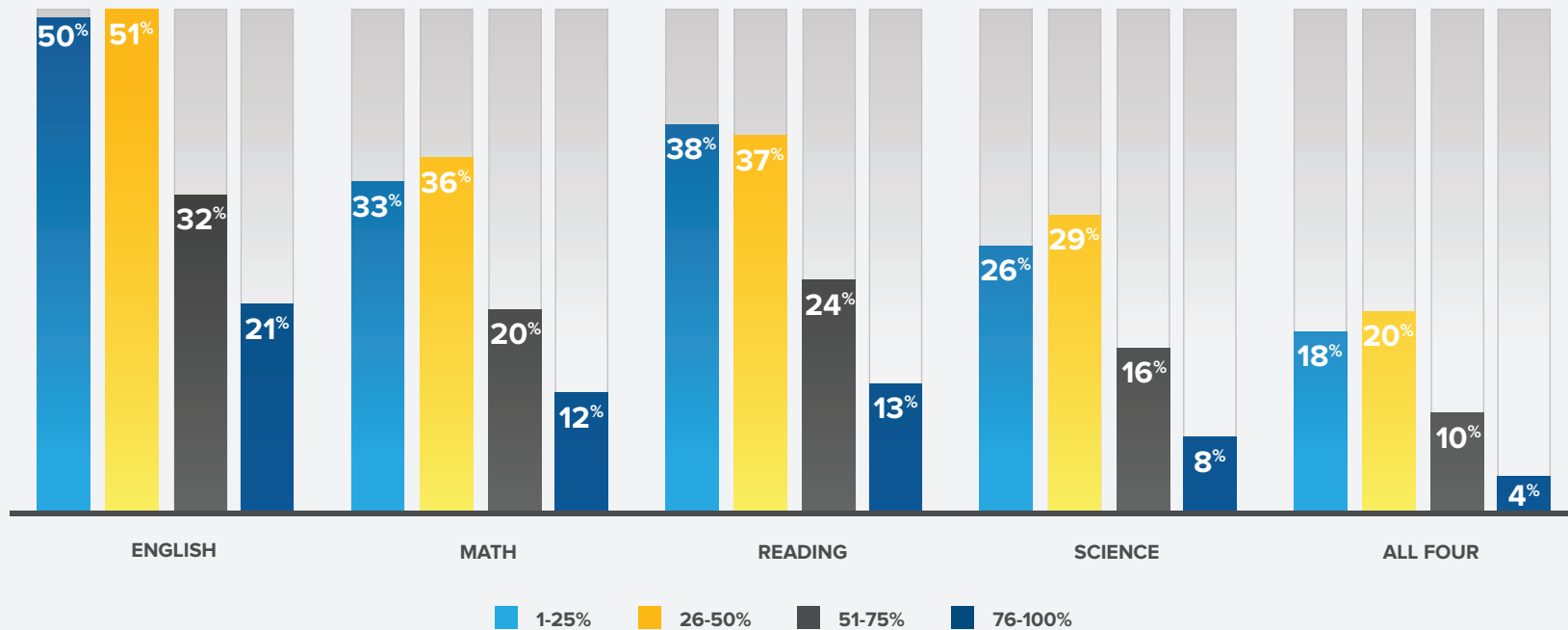
College Readiness Pilot Districts



Overall, students from a higher socioeconomic background fared better on the ACT than those from low-income families. More specifically, students taking the ACT under the College Readiness Pilot were more likely to be college-ready if they attended a district or charter school with a lower proportion of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. As demonstrated in the chart above, 31% of students in mid-low to low-poverty districts (i.e., 50% or less of all students qualifying for free/reduced lunch) met all four benchmarks, compared to only 13% of students from mid-high to high-poverty districts.

Percent of Test-Takers Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by District Free/Reduced Lunch Status

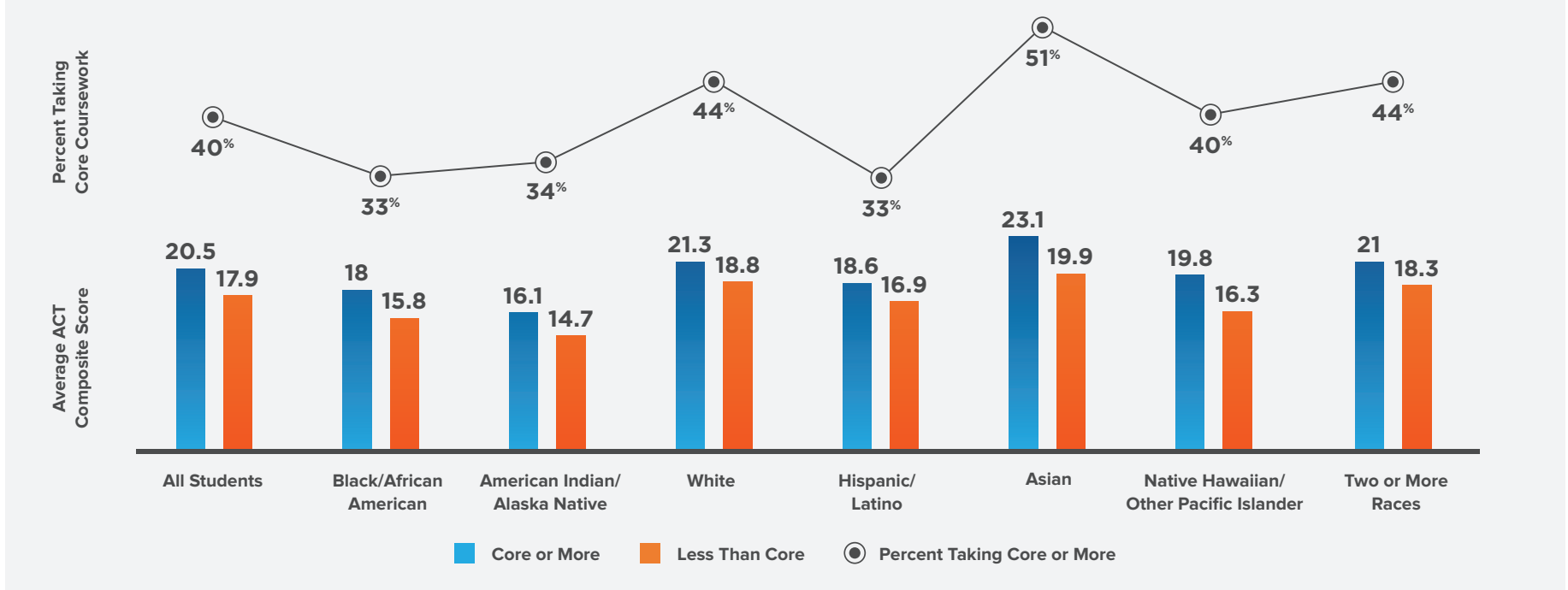
College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



The college-readiness discrepancy between students attending higher and lower income districts widened when students from College Knowing and Going districts were added.

Average ACT Composite Score by Level of Preparation and Percent of Students Taking Core or More Coursework, by Race/Ethnicity

College Readiness Pilot Districts

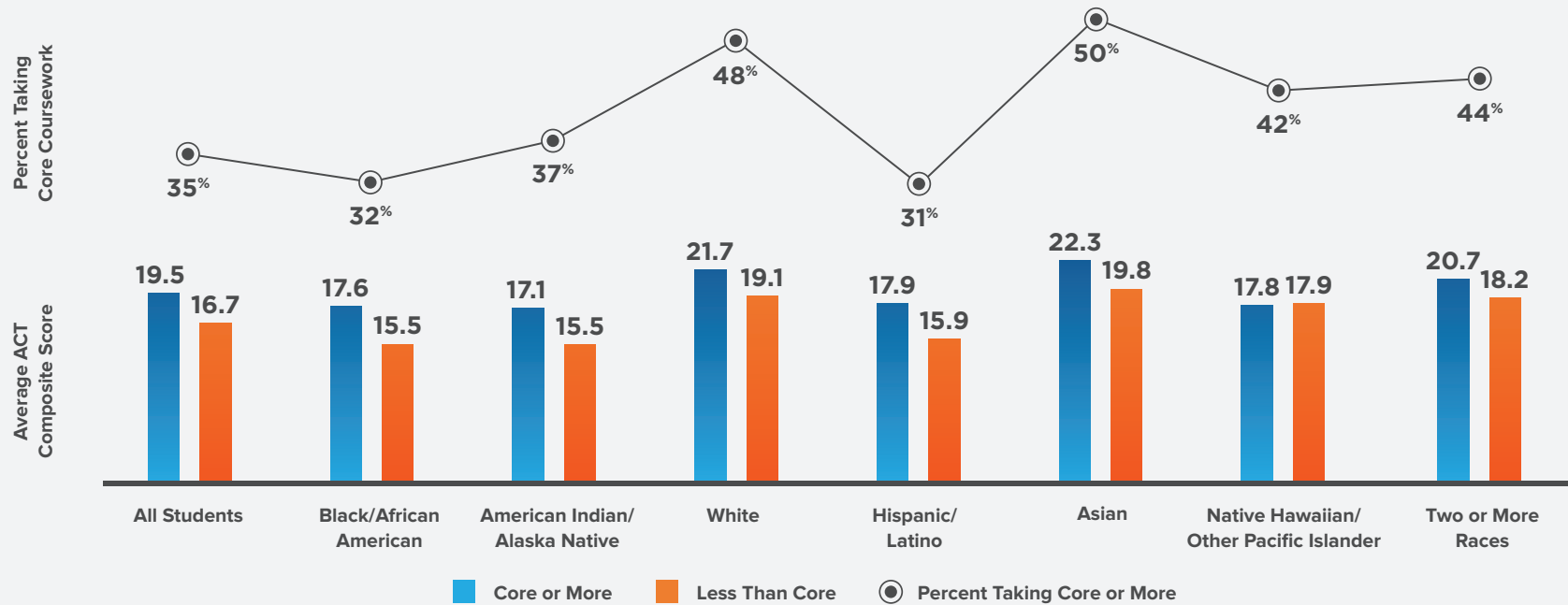


Overall, students who took courses defined as core or more scored higher on the ACT compared to those who did not take core coursework. Furthermore, disparities in core course enrollment were evident between White students and many of their minority peers. In the chart above, the gray line represents the percent of students by race/ethnicity who took “core or more” coursework. Blue bars show the average ACT composite score for students within each racial/ethnic group who took core or more coursework, while orange bars indicate the average ACT composite score for students within each racial/ethnic group who took less than core coursework.

What is core? As defined by ACT, “core or more” coursework equates to students taking four or more years of English and three or more years each of math, social studies, and natural science before graduation. In this section, students who are identified as “core or more” are on track to meeting those standards for graduation.

Average ACT Composite Score by Level of Preparation and Percent of Students Taking Core or More Coursework, by Race/Ethnicity

College Knowing and Going Districts

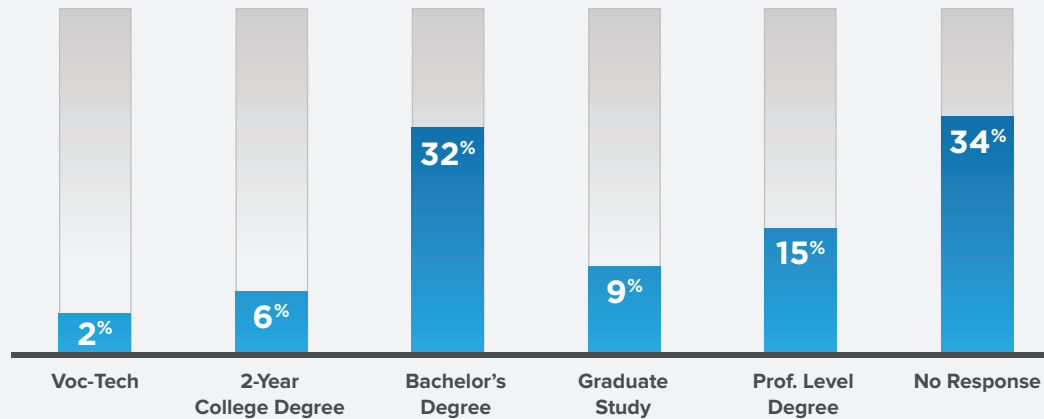


To prepare for college coursework, a strong foundational knowledge in core academic subjects is crucial. On average, students taking a college preparatory curriculum achieved a higher composite score on the ACT compared to students taking less than core coursework. This trend was evident regardless of student racial or ethnic background, ranging from an average composite score increase of 1.4 points among American Indian/Alaska Native students taking core or more coursework to a 3.5 increase among Asian students.

Like Pilot districts/charter schools, White students in College Knowing and Going districts were more likely than many of their minority counterparts to report enrollment in college preparatory, or core or more coursework. Also similarly, College Knowing and Going test-takers who enrolled in college preparatory coursework were more likely to achieve a higher ACT composite score, regardless of racial or ethnic background.

Postsecondary Aspirations

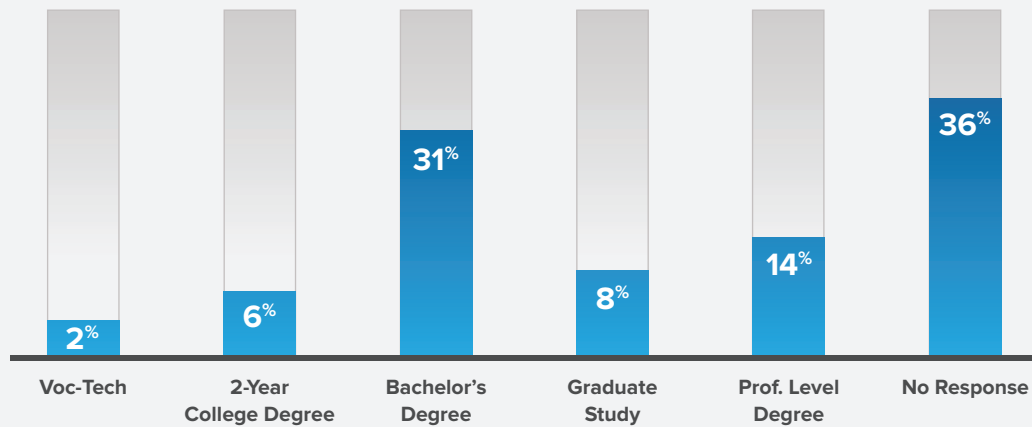
College Readiness Pilot Districts



When prompted to indicate their highest anticipated level of postsecondary education, over 1/3 of students taking the ACT in Pilot districts/charter schools did not articulate a plan. Of those who did, aspirations were high: Fifty-six percent reported a plan to achieve a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Postsecondary Aspirations

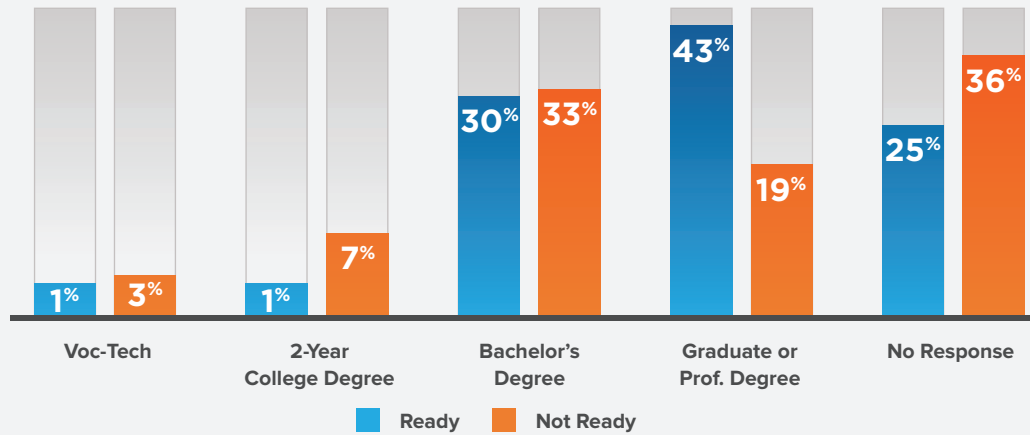
College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



Among all 55 districts (Pilot and College Knowing and Going), postsecondary aspirations dropped slightly with 36% indicating no postsecondary plan and 53% aspiring to a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Postsecondary Aspirations by College Readiness

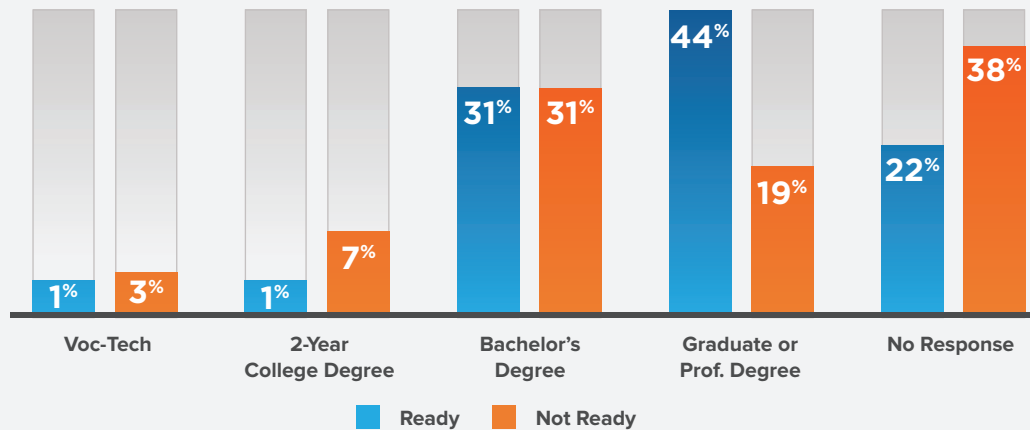
College Readiness Pilot Districts



College-ready Pilot students were more likely than their non-college-ready peers to report postsecondary aspirations and reported higher aspirations, overall. Still, $\frac{1}{4}$ of college-ready students did not identify any postsecondary plan. While non-college-ready Pilot students were more likely to aspire to a vocational education license or credential, 2-year college degree, or Bachelor's degree, college-ready students were significantly more likely to aspire to a graduate or professional degree.

Postsecondary Aspirations by College Readiness

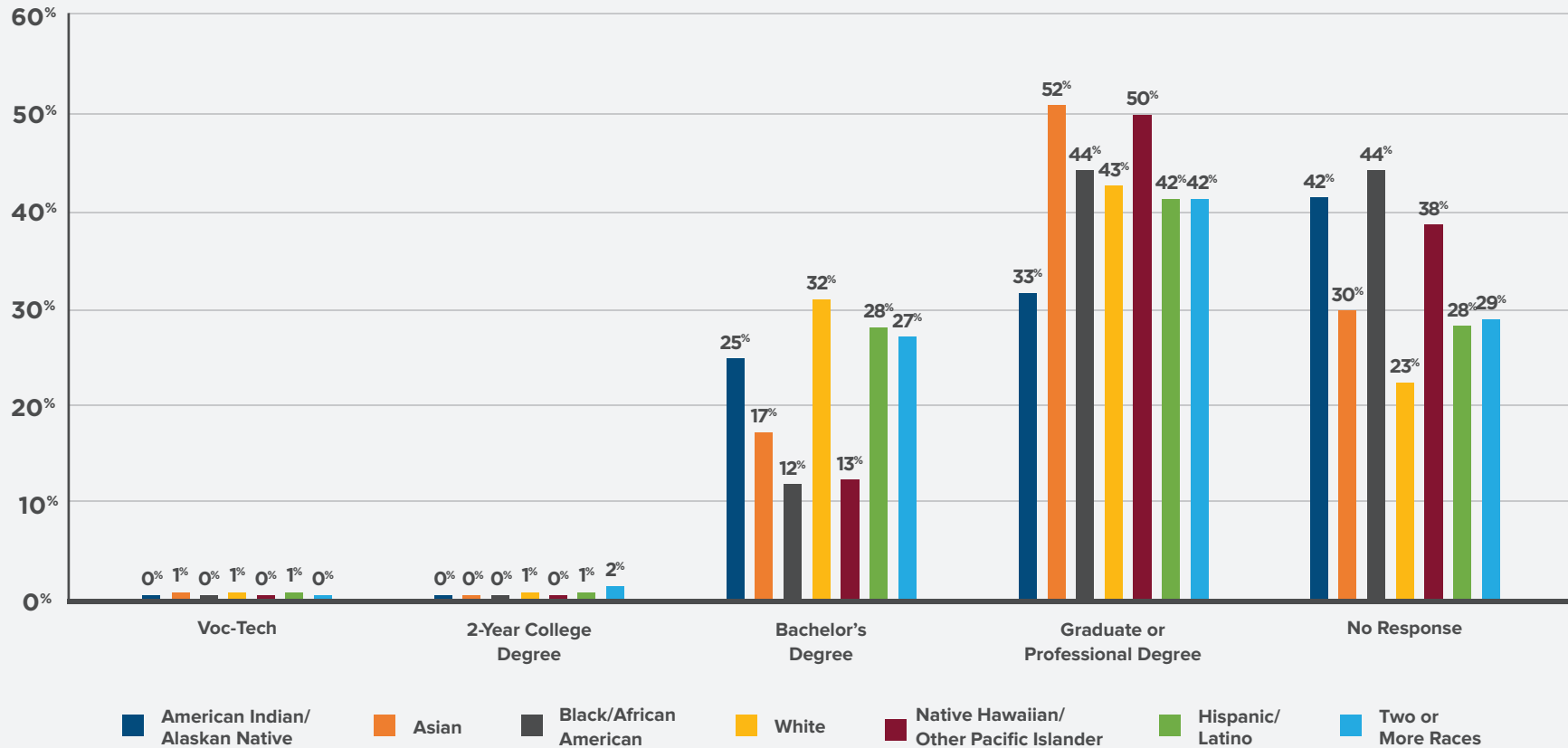
College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



Among all 55 districts, a slightly higher percentage of college-ready students reported a plan to receive a postsecondary education compared to Pilot participants only (78% versus 75%, respectively). While an equal proportion of college-ready and non-college-ready students wished to achieve a Bachelor's degree, the discrepancy between non-college-ready and college-ready students who wished to achieve a graduate or professional degree was even more evident.

Postsecondary Aspirations of College-Ready Test-Takers

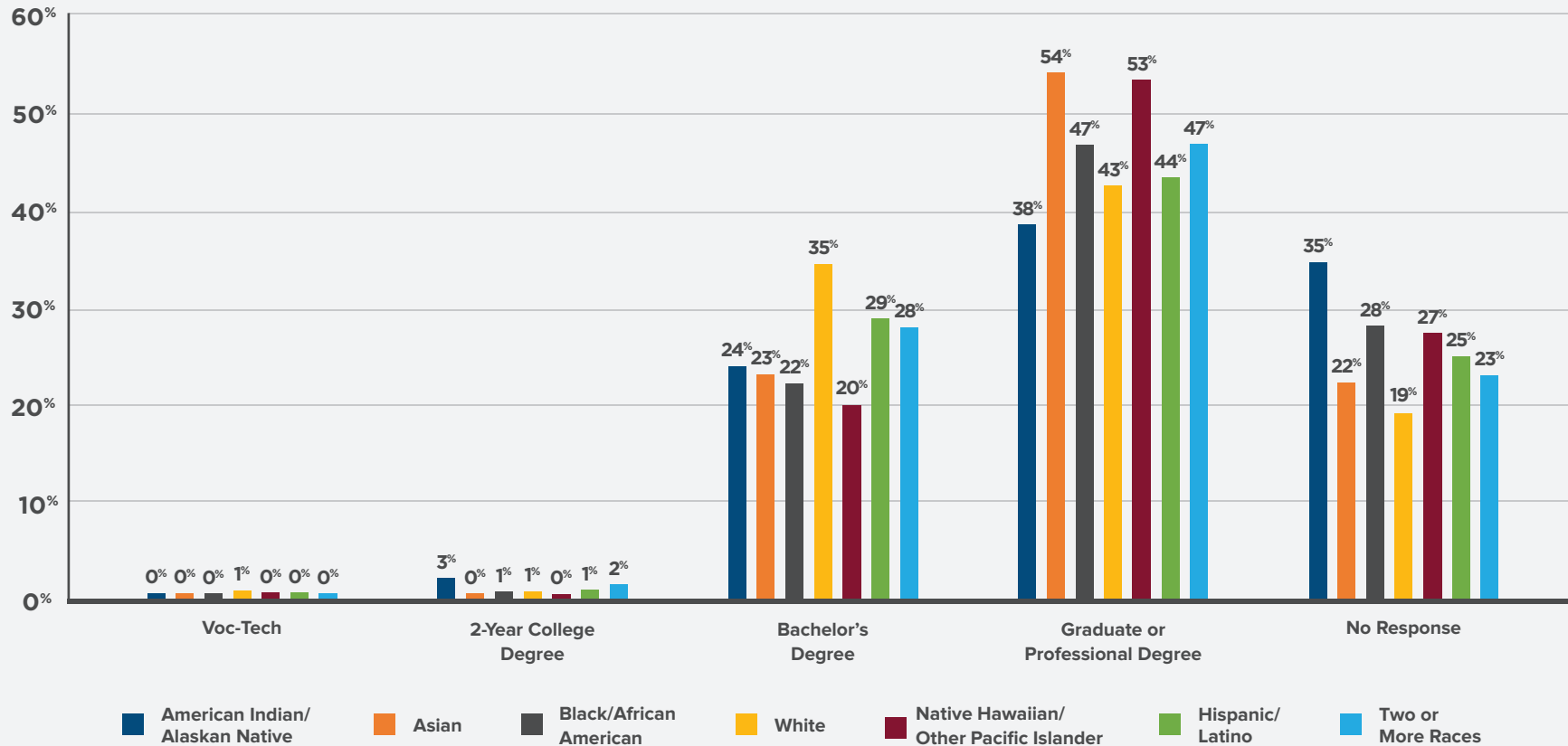
College Readiness Pilot Districts



Many minority students who are college-ready according to the ACT may not be going on to college. For example, a substantial proportion of college-ready American Indian/Alaska Native (42%) and Black (44%) Pilot students did not articulate a postsecondary plan (compared to 23% of their non-Hispanic White peers). Among college-ready students who did articulate a postsecondary plan, many racial/ethnic groups had very high aspirations, sometimes exceeding or approximating that of their non-Hispanic White peers. For example, 44% of college-ready Black students and 42% of college-ready Latino students aspired to achieve a graduate or professional degree (compared to 43% of non-Hispanic Whites).

Postsecondary Aspirations of College-Ready Test-Takers

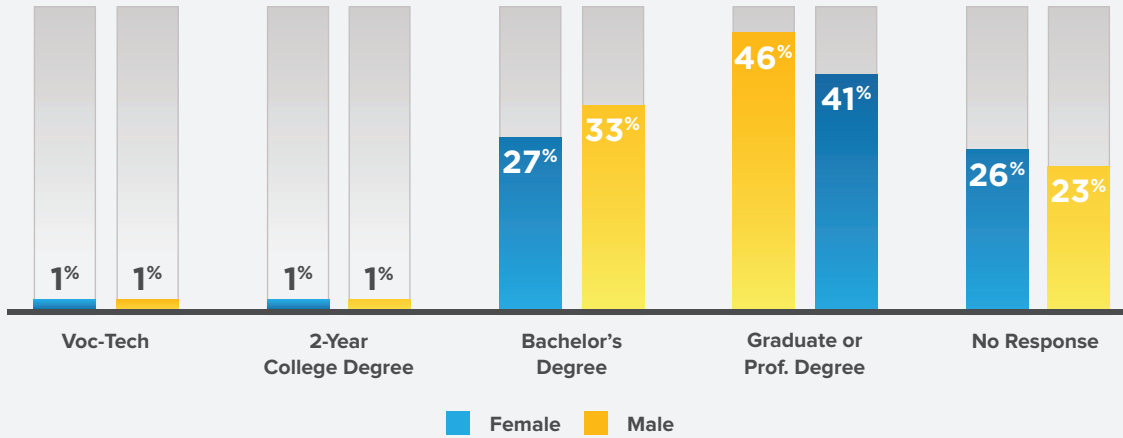
College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts



Statewide across all 55 districts, the percentage of college-ready students reporting postsecondary aspirations was even higher. Furthermore, when College Knowing and Going districts were added, the gap in postsecondary aspirations narrowed somewhat between American Indian and Black students and their White peers.

Postsecondary Aspirations of College-Ready Test-Takers

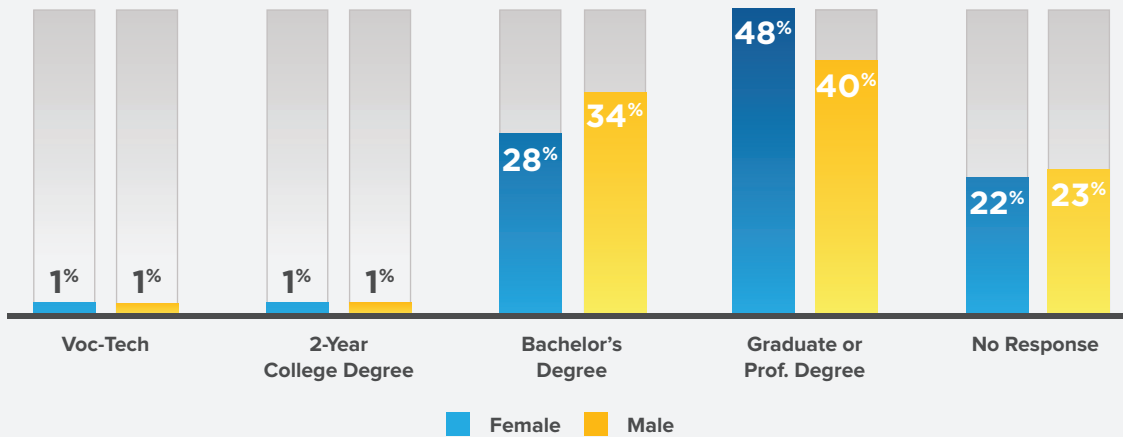
College Readiness Pilot Districts

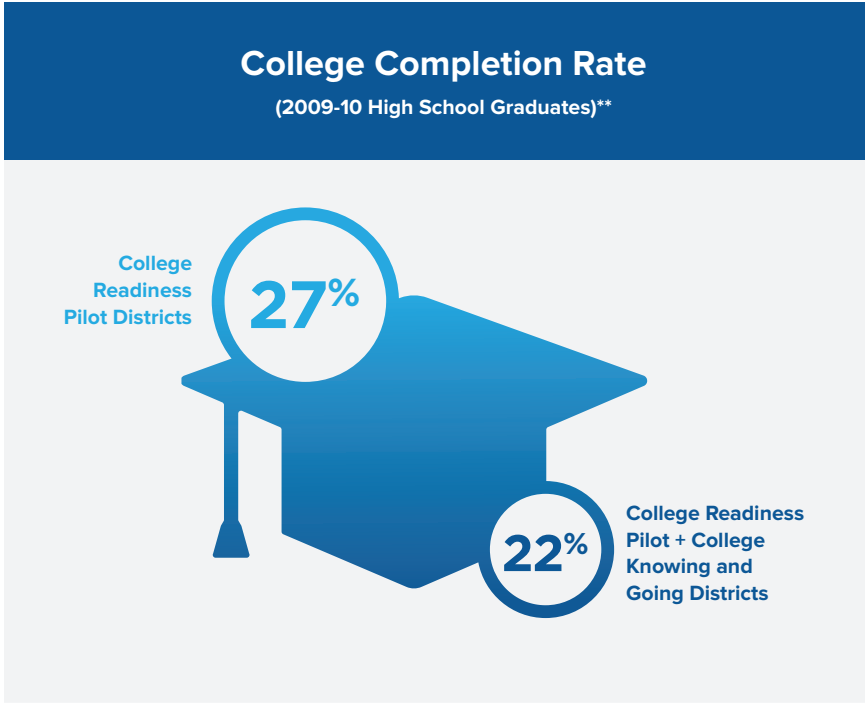
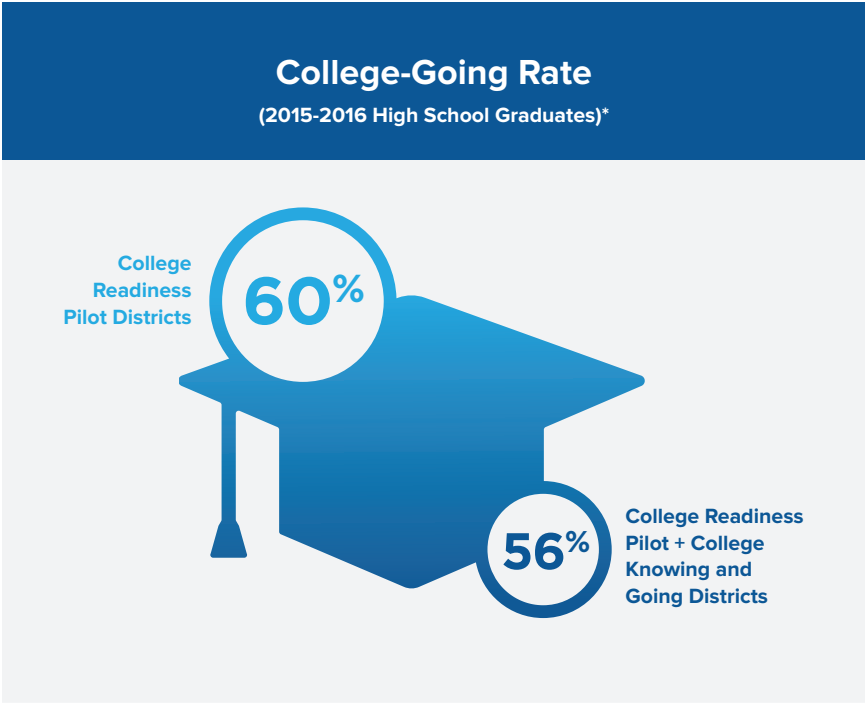


In the College Readiness Pilot districts and charters, college-ready males were slightly less likely than females to indicate a postsecondary plan. Among those who did articulate a plan, females were more likely to aspire to a graduate or professional degree. A similar trend was seen when districts from the College Knowing and Going Initiative were added.

Postsecondary Aspirations of College-Ready Test-Takers

College Readiness Pilot + College Knowing and Going Districts





Student achievement, academic preparedness, and postsecondary aspirations are key in predicting and understanding student postsecondary success, often measured in terms of enrollment in a postsecondary program and degree completion.

According to the most recent statewide data published by the Arizona Board of Regents, 53% of all students in Arizona who graduated high school in 2015–2016 enrolled in a postsecondary institution, and 21% of students graduating high school in 2009–10 completed a 4-year degree within 150% of the time (six years).

On average, districts and charter schools who administered the ACT under the Pilot grant fared better than the state as a whole. Among this subgroup, 60% of students from the most recent cohort enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Twenty-seven percent went on to complete a Bachelor’s degree within six years. While postsecondary enrollment and completion rates decline when all 55 districts (Pilot and College Knowing and Going) are taken into consideration, college-going and completion rates still exceed that of the state overall.

* College-going rates calculated as number of high school graduates divided by number of students enrolling in a 2 or 4-year postsecondary institution.

** College completion rate calculated as number of students completing a 4-year institution within 150% of the time (within 6 years of enrollment).

SECTION 3: SAT COLLEGE READINESS

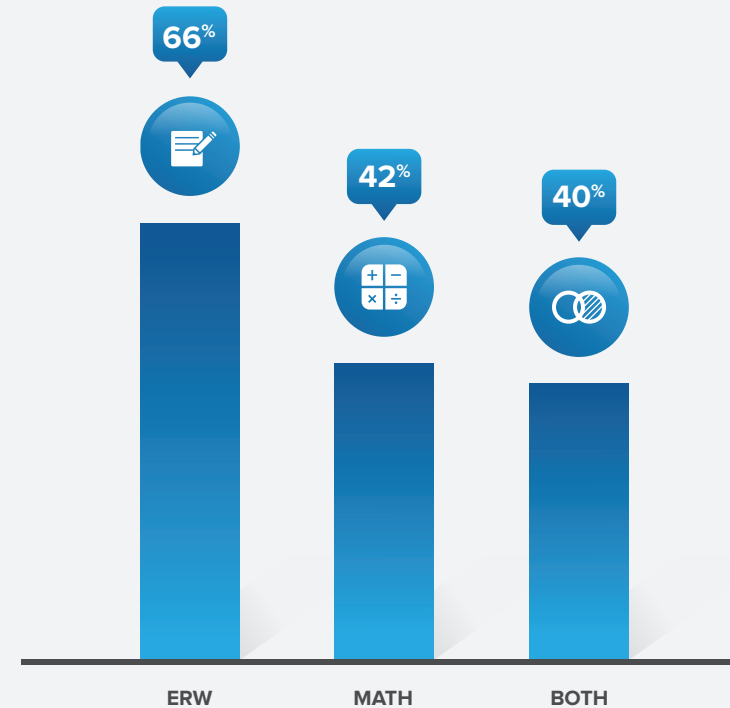
How Did Students Perform on the SAT?

The SAT test by College Board is comprised of 4 sections: Reading, Writing and Language, Mathematics, and an optional Writing section. College Board combines the Reading and Writing and Language (Evidence Based Reading and Writing) sections for a score of between 200 and 800. The other half of the test is comprised of Mathematics which also has a score of between 200 and 800. Those two scores are then combined for a score of 400 to 1600. College Board provided limited data for analysis on this report. In this section we identify (by district/charter – de-identified) the proportion of students meeting the benchmarks. We also identify the proportions meeting the benchmarks (aggregated) by using the number of test-takers for each district/charter along with their associated proportions meeting the benchmark. In addition, we identify the approximate proportion of students who met the Evidence Based Reading and Writing benchmark, the Mathematics benchmark, and both Benchmarks. We also present data on the proportion of students in the SAT districts or charter who attended college after graduation along with district/charter average college completion rates.

	Percent Meeting ERW Benchmark	Percent Meeting Math Benchmark	Percent Meeting Both Benchmarks
District/charter 1	52%	23%	20%
District/charter 2	68%	26%	25%
District/charter 3	32%	20%	8%
District/charter 4	70%	52%	50%
District/charter 5	33%	7%	7%
District/charter 6	83%	58%	58%
District/charter 7	61%	24%	24%
District/charter 8	70%	47%	45%
District/charter 9	82%	67%	64%
District/charter 10	72%	38%	35%
District/charter 11	34%	15%	12%
District/charter 12	78%	30%	30%
District/charter 13	37%	26%	24%

Percent of Students Meeting SAT College-Readiness Benchmark

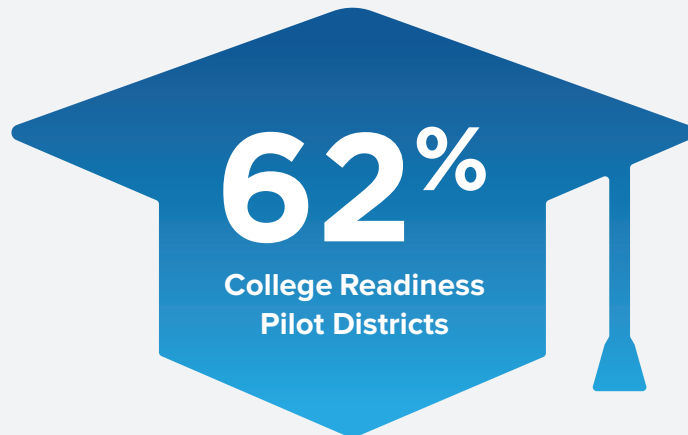
College Readiness Pilot Districts



Among the approximately 3,500 students who took the SAT under the Pilot, 40% met both the Evidence-Based English and Writing (ERW) and Math benchmarks. Overall, a higher percentage of students met the ERW benchmark compared to the Math benchmark.

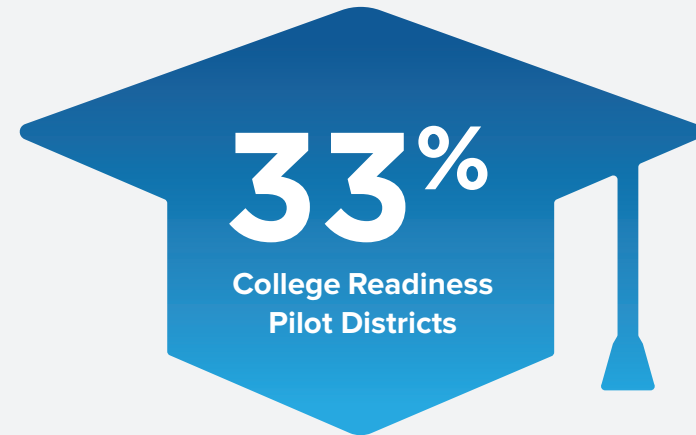
College-Going Rate

(2015-2016 High School Graduates)*



College Completion Rate

(2009-2010 High School Graduates)**



Student achievement, academic preparedness, and postsecondary aspirations are key in predicting and understanding student postsecondary success, often measured in terms of enrollment in a postsecondary program and degree completion.

According to the most recent statewide data published by the Arizona Board of Regents, 53% of all students in Arizona who graduated high school in 2015–2016 enrolled in a postsecondary institution, and 21% of students graduating high school in 2009–10 completed a 4–year degree within 150% of the time (six years).

On average, participating districts and charter schools who administered the SAT under the Pilot grant fared better than the state as a whole. Among this subgroup, 62% of students from the most recent cohort enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Thirty-three percent went on to complete a Bachelor’s degree within six years.

* College-going rates calculated as number of high school graduates divided by number of students enrolling in a 2 or 4-year postsecondary institution.

** College completion rate calculated as number of students completing a 4-year institution within 150% of the time (within 6 years of enrollment).

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the importance of national tests under Arizona’s new policy of menu of assessments, we offer a set of recommendations that have implications for local districts and schools as well as the states. These recommendations are based on the findings from this study, prior research, surveys carried out by the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education, and related literature that contributed to the development of this brief.

1. IDENTIFY POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS TAKE THEIR ASSESSMENT.

Districts and schools must take all necessary steps to ensure that all students take their assessments. Our analysis showed, in some instances, higher rates of attrition.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Think equity. If all students are not taking their assessment, who is being left out and why? Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), districts and schools will be responsible for testing 95% of their students for whichever assessment they choose as part of their accountability program. To ensure that schools are meeting the necessary requirements under ESSA, districts and schools must take steps to meet the 95% threshold. Communication and transparency are critical to success.

In both the Pilot and College Knowing and Going, students were afforded a free opportunity to take either the ACT or SAT.

Unfortunately, due to high levels of attrition, many students who would have benefited from these assessments didn’t end up taking them. As the state moves to a menu of assessments in 2020, it will be imperative that all students complete the assessment chosen by their district or school.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES

Under ESSA, states have been given much more flexibility in how to measure student achievement and growth. For example, in Arizona the state now allows districts and schools to choose their assessment from an approved menu of assessments. But to meet the 95% testing rule set by the federal government, states may require more testing dates. States should work with vendors to create more re-testing dates for students who miss the main date because of absence. From survey data and our analysis, district and school participants will require more opportunities for retesting or makeup testing.

2. BOLSTER INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION AROUND THE TESTS SO THAT PARENTS, STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS KNOW ITS PURPOSE AND CAN BE MORE PREPARED ON TEST DAY

Students and their families need clear information around the purpose and goals of them taking the ACT or SAT. Increased communication and more transparent information earlier in the process can improve

understanding for all stakeholders involved.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Examine your current practices and communications around the ACT/SAT. Consider the extent to which parents, students and teachers understand the purpose of the tests. Prepare simple and engaging materials for parents in appropriate languages and level of language describing the value of these tests and ensure they are distributed to parents in multiple venues. Identify current gaps and then communicate early and frequently with all stakeholders. To fill gaps in communication, create a dedicated website, with appropriate language for parents, that outlines all of the information on the ACT/SAT and its purpose. A number of districts and schools around the country do this already. Seek out examples that will work for your district, community, or school the best. Lastly, districts and schools must take steps to identify testing dates and make-up dates early so that parents and students can be most prepared.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES

As more states allow for expanded use of ACT or SAT as part of their state testing, it will be important for states to provide clear messaging on what these tests mean. States should examine their current practices for communication and create systems that involve all stakeholders. At the same time, states should also look to expand professional development opportunities for districts and schools in how to carry out the

tests. This would include the development of specific guidance on the administration of the test so that all schools can have properly trained staff administering the tests.

3. FOCUS EFFORTS TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO CORE ACADEMIC CLASSES.

To increase college and career readiness, students need to have access to a core academic curriculum. Our examination, as well as numerous other studies, show a relationship between exposure to a core academic curriculum and higher college and career readiness scores.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Integration of the Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP) process into all aspects of the high school experience will assist students in planning their course work, identifying career aspirations, and choosing extended learning opportunities in or order to achieve their personal goals. Moreover, these plans will magnify the benefit of taking a college readiness examination for students and can be integrated into the preparation for the examination. Taking the examination in the Junior year will allow the student to make adjustments providing a smooth transition into postsecondary education and work.

Re-examine course taking in your district and/or school to see what courses students are actually taking to graduate. Look for gaps based upon gender, race/ethnicity and free and reduced lunch

status. Decide as a district how to build the core academic curriculum that will create a college and career going atmosphere. Identify early planning strategies and challenge all students to take rigorous academic courses as well as career and technical education courses.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES

Like districts and schools, states should re-examine the courses students are taking and look for gaps based on demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity and free/reduced lunch status). Based on these gaps, coordinate opportunities for more rigorous course taking statewide instead of allowing for district by district policies. Identify ways to reward districts that have higher proportions of students who graduate taking more academic core courses.

4. CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEST PREPARATION FOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

Students need more opportunities to prepare for the ACT or SAT through practice questions, practice exams and test preparation. Additionally, teachers need increased access to resources (e.g., question banks) to help prepare students for these challenging tests.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Examine current strategies internally to see how students and teachers are preparing for the ACT or SAT. Coordinate efforts with ACT and SAT

to make sure that students and teachers have both the time and access to test prep and study materials. Develop district and school wide policies to examine data on student outcomes. Identify deficiencies and work to improve those areas of the curriculum.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STATES

Develop policies and practices for districts and schools that make test preparation more equitable for all students. Coordinate practices with vendors that incentivize them to provide adequate access for students most in need. Work with vendors to increase the number of practice questions for each subject area.



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