

## Strategy One: Increase Percentage of Students Taking Core Coursework

Students who take the recommended core curriculum perform better on the ACT and enroll in college at a higher rate. Encourage all students to take a solid and rigorous academic curriculum.

### Five Year Trends—Average ACT Score by Level of Preparation

Grad Year	Number of Students Tested		Percent <sup>1</sup>		Composite	
	Core or More	Less than Core	Core or More	Less than Core	Core or More	Less than Core
2004	661,290	405,328	56	35	21.9	19.4
2005	658,430	406,763	56	34	21.9	19.5
2006	647,298	413,888	54	34	22	19.7
2007	659,603	444,906	51	34	22	19.8
2008	873,743	431,748	61	30	22	19.5

<sup>1</sup>Percent of all students tested. Numbers will not add up to 100 percent due to student non-response.

### Expectations

All students should be expected to be ready for college and work, not only those traditionally considered “college bound.” To be ready for college and work, every high school student should be prepared and encouraged to take and do well in rigorous Courses for Success. This includes one or more advanced mathematics course beyond Algebra II (e.g., Trigonometry) as well as Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

### What We Can Do

- ✓ **Coursework Review Worksheet**  
Use the worksheet as a guide in working with students to ensure they are taking a rigorous and solid core curriculum
- ✓ **Involve Parents**  
See that parents are involved with key educational and postsecondary planning
- ✓ **College Readiness Standards™**  
Use the College Readiness Standards from EXPLORE® and PLAN® to identify student’s academic strengths and weaknesses, and where intervention may be needed
- ✓ **Additional Resources**  
<http://act.org/path/secondary/>

For a complete listing of courses, visit [www.actstudent.org/college/courses](http://www.actstudent.org/college/courses)

## #2

**Ten Strategies to Impact ACT Scores****Strategy Two: Provide Test Preparation Experiences**

Students are more likely to perform at their best on a test if they are comfortable with the test format, understand appropriate test-taking strategies, and are aware of the test administration procedures.

**Clear Focus**

All test preparation efforts should have a clear focus or objective. With a clear idea of the purpose of test preparation activities, teachers and counselors will be effective in emphasizing appropriate topics.

**Pre-Test**

Psychological characteristics such as level of confidence, anxiety, and motivation can affect performance on the ACT. Familiarization with test procedures and question formats through practice on sample ACT tests, or on academic tests like EXPLORE and PLAN is likely to ease anxiety and increase confidence.

**Integration**

Integrate ACT practice test questions in your everyday subject exams on the topics you already cover with your students.

**Familiarization**

Familiarize students with general test-taking strategies such as using time effectively, understanding the directions for the ACT, reading each question carefully, responding to the questions, reviewing answers, marking the answer document, and preparing for the day of the test.

**What We Can Do**

- ✓ **Provide ACT Online Prep**  
Comprehensive content review for each of the ACT's four required tests. Includes a Writing Test that is scored instantly
- ✓ **Encourage Students to Use *Preparing for the ACT***  
A free booklet that includes a complete practice test and a written prompt with sample essays
- ✓ **Administer ACT Practice Tests**  
Retired ACT test forms may be purchased for students to use as practice tests
- ✓ **Administer EXPLORE and PLAN**  
A format similar to the ACT may help reduce anxiety
- ✓ **Web Resources**  
<http://act.org/path/secondary/testprep.html>