

Measuring College Readiness

The Illinois Graduating Class of 2004



ACTTM

Overview

This report provides information about the performance of Illinois 2004 graduating seniors who took the ACT Assessment[®] as sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

Part I: Academic Achievement Over Time

Part II: Measuring College Readiness

Part III: Early Indicators of College Readiness

Part I

Academic Achievement Over Time

ACT Participation and Performance

- **Five-Year Trends**
- **All Illinois Students**
- **Racial/Ethnic Groups**



Figure 1.1: Illinois and National Average ACT Composite and Subject Area Scores, 5-Year Trends

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
English	State	20.9	21.1	19.4	19.6	19.7
	National	20.5	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4
Math	State	21.5	21.5	20.2	20.2	20.2
	National	20.7	20.7	20.6	20.6	20.7
Reading	State	21.7	21.8	20.3	20.4	20.5
	National	21.4	21.3	21.1	21.2	21.3
Science	State	21.4	21.6	20.0	20.1	20.2
	National	21.0	21.0	20.8	20.8	20.9
Composite	State	21.5	21.6	20.1	20.2	20.3
	National	21.0	21.0	20.8	20.8	20.9

The average ACT Composite score for Illinois decreased from 2000 to 2004. This compares to a decrease in the national average ACT Composite score for the same time period.

Figure 1.2: Number and Percentage of Illinois ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity, 5-Year Trends

	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Students	90,450	100	89,311	100	128,753	100	134,505	100	132,525	100
African Am./Black	10,038	11	9,871	11	13,143	10	13,897	10	14,479	11
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	184	0	202	0	616	0	589	0	651	0
Caucasian Am./White	61,625	68	61,167	68	77,306	60	80,446	60	77,371	58
Hispanic	6,703	7	6,597	7	10,226	8	11,531	9	12,243	9
Asian Am./Pacific Islander	4,633	5	4,650	5	5,164	4	5,310	4	5,369	4
Other/No Response	7,267	8	6,824	8	22,298	17	22,732	17	22,412	17

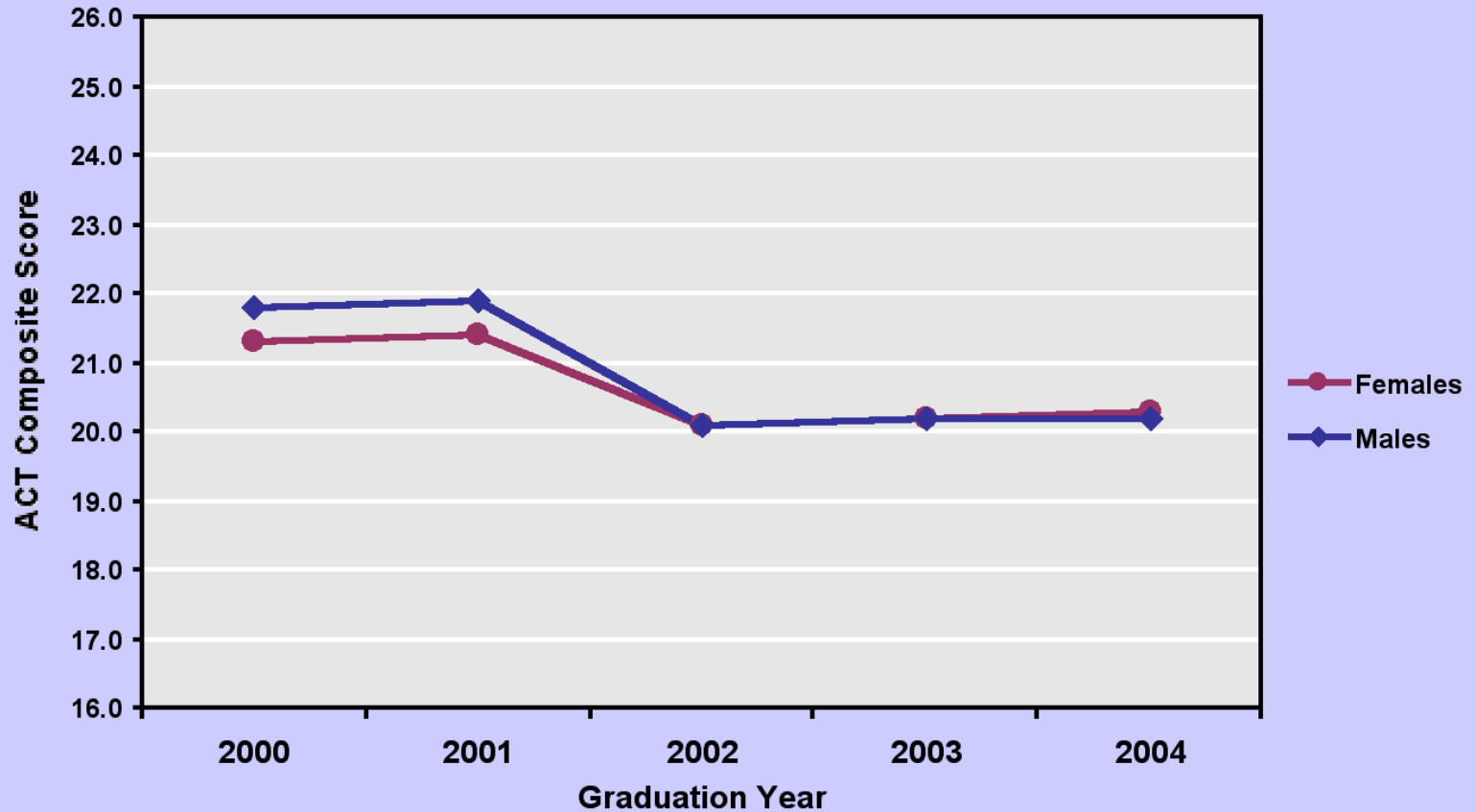
Between 2000 and 2004, the number of ACT-tested students in Illinois increased by 42075 students.

Figure 1.3: Illinois and National Average ACT Composite Scores by Race/Ethnicity, 5-Year Trends

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
All Students	State	21.5	21.6	20.1	20.2	20.3
	National	21.0	21.0	20.8	20.8	20.9
African Am./Black	State	17.3	17.3	16.5	16.8	16.8
	National	17.0	16.9	16.8	16.9	17.1
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	State	20.5	20.9	16.8	17.4	17.5
	National	19.0	18.8	18.6	18.7	18.8
Caucasian Am./White	State	22.4	22.6	21.5	21.6	21.6
	National	21.8	21.8	21.7	21.7	21.8
Hispanic	State	18.5	18.6	17.5	17.6	17.6
	National	18.9	18.8	18.4	18.5	18.5
Asian Am./Pacific Islander	State	22.5	22.7	22.1	22.1	22.3
	National	21.7	21.7	21.6	21.8	21.9
Other/No Response	State	21.4	21.6	18.2	18.5	18.8
	National	21.2	21.2	20.3	20.6	20.9

Between 2000 and 2004, Am. Indian/Alaskan Native students in Illinois had the greatest decrease in average ACT Composite score.

Figure 1.4: Illinois Average ACT Composite Scores by Gender, 5-Year Trends



Between 2000 and 2004, the difference in Illinois ACT Composite scores between males and females decreased.

Part II

Measuring College Readiness

Performance of Illinois Students

- English, mathematics, and science
- Course-taking patterns
- Effect of taking more rigorous courses
- Core vs. non-core



ACT Assessment College Readiness Benchmarks

Through collaborative research with postsecondary institutions nationwide, ACT has established the following college readiness benchmarks:

College English Composition: 18 on ACT English Test

College Algebra: 22 on ACT Mathematics Test

College Biology: 24 on ACT Science Test

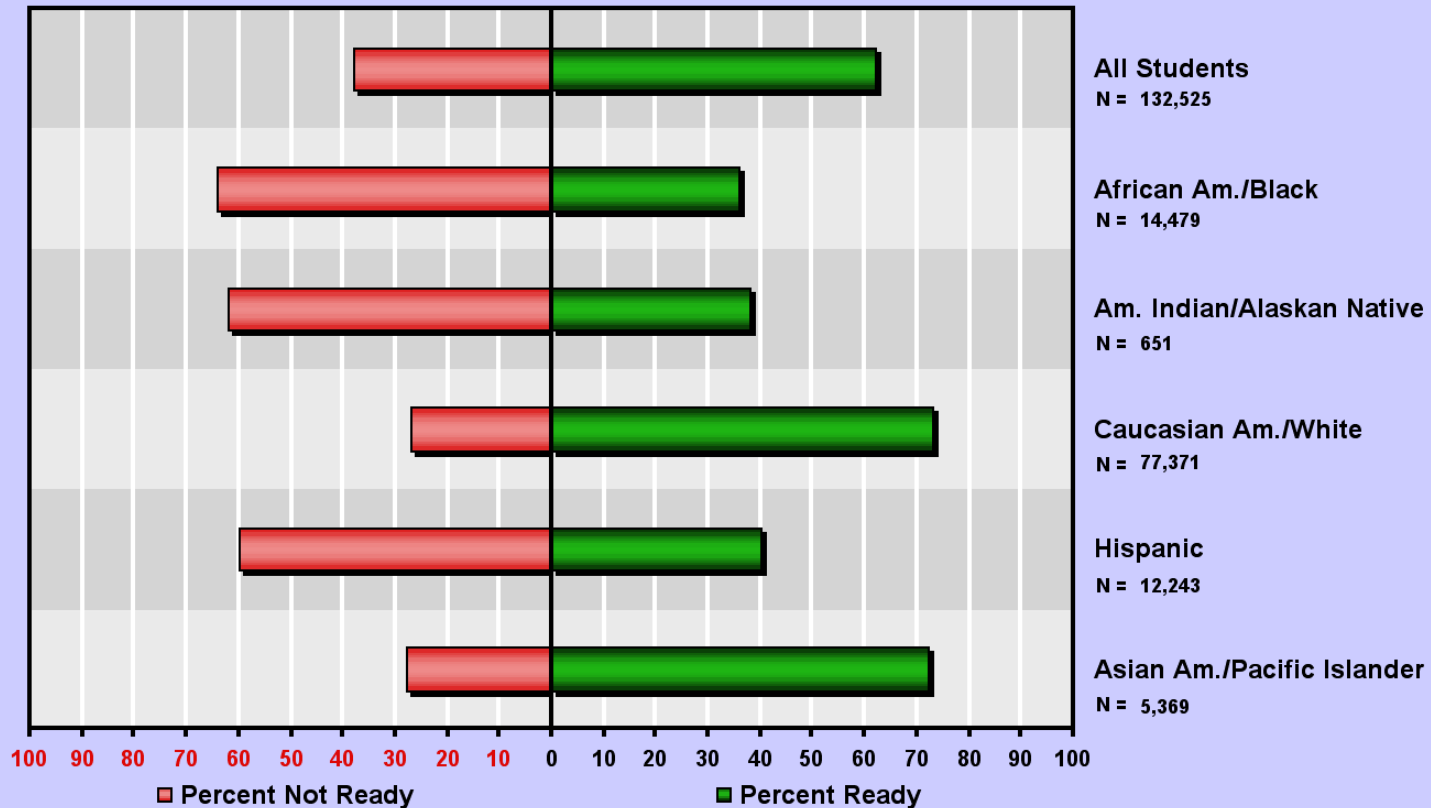
A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college course.

[Note: In the graphics that focus on college readiness by ACT Assessment benchmarks—Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, and 2.7—certain categories may contain no bar. A missing bar means no students tested in the state fell into that category.]

ENGLISH: Readiness for College English Composition

Figure 2.1: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College English Composition by Race/Ethnicity

ACT English Benchmark Score: 18

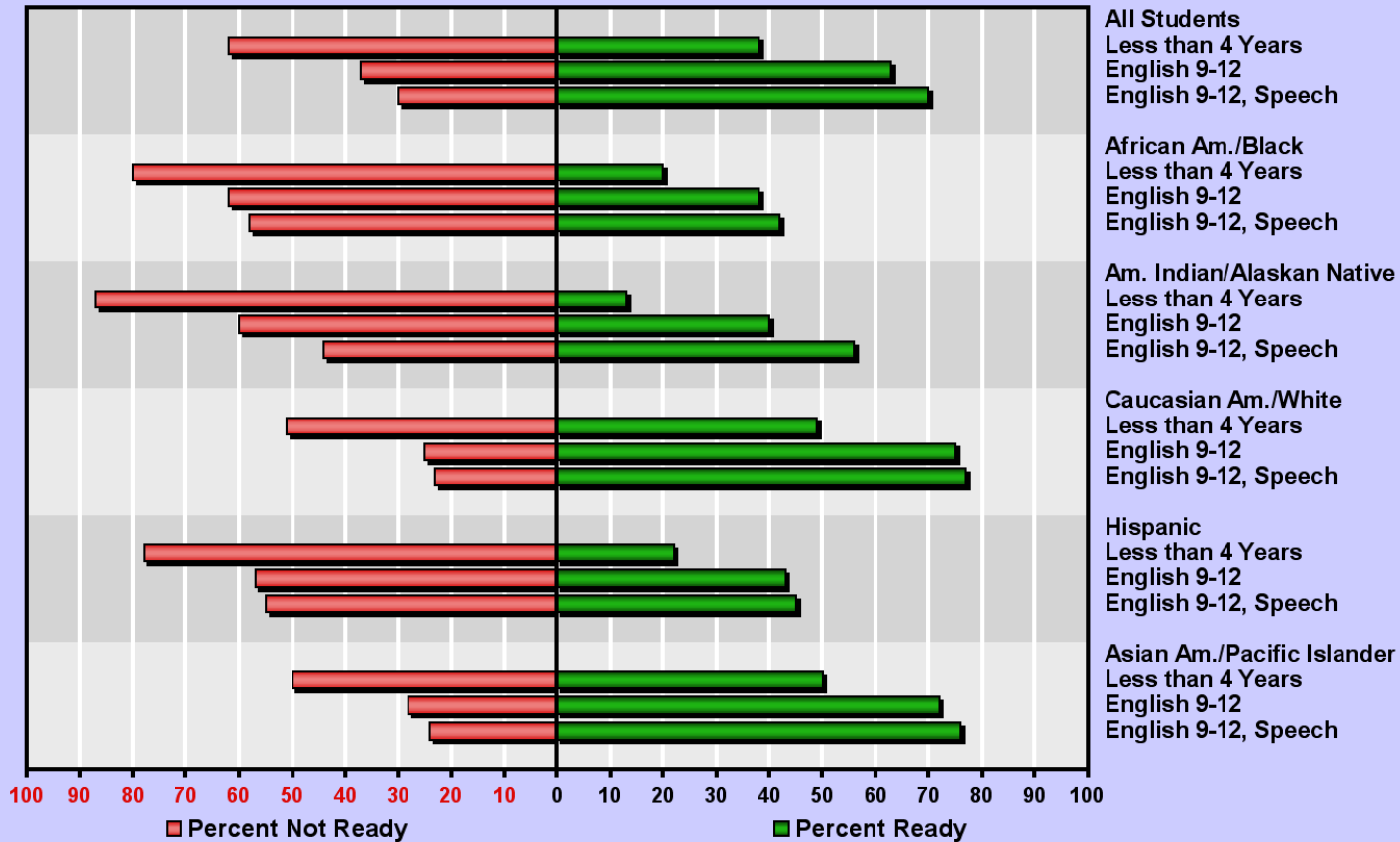


Of Illinois students, 62% are ready for success in their freshman credit-bearing College English Composition course.

ENGLISH: Readiness for College English Composition

Figure 2.2: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College English Composition by High School English Course Sequence and Race/Ethnicity

ACT English Benchmark Score: 18

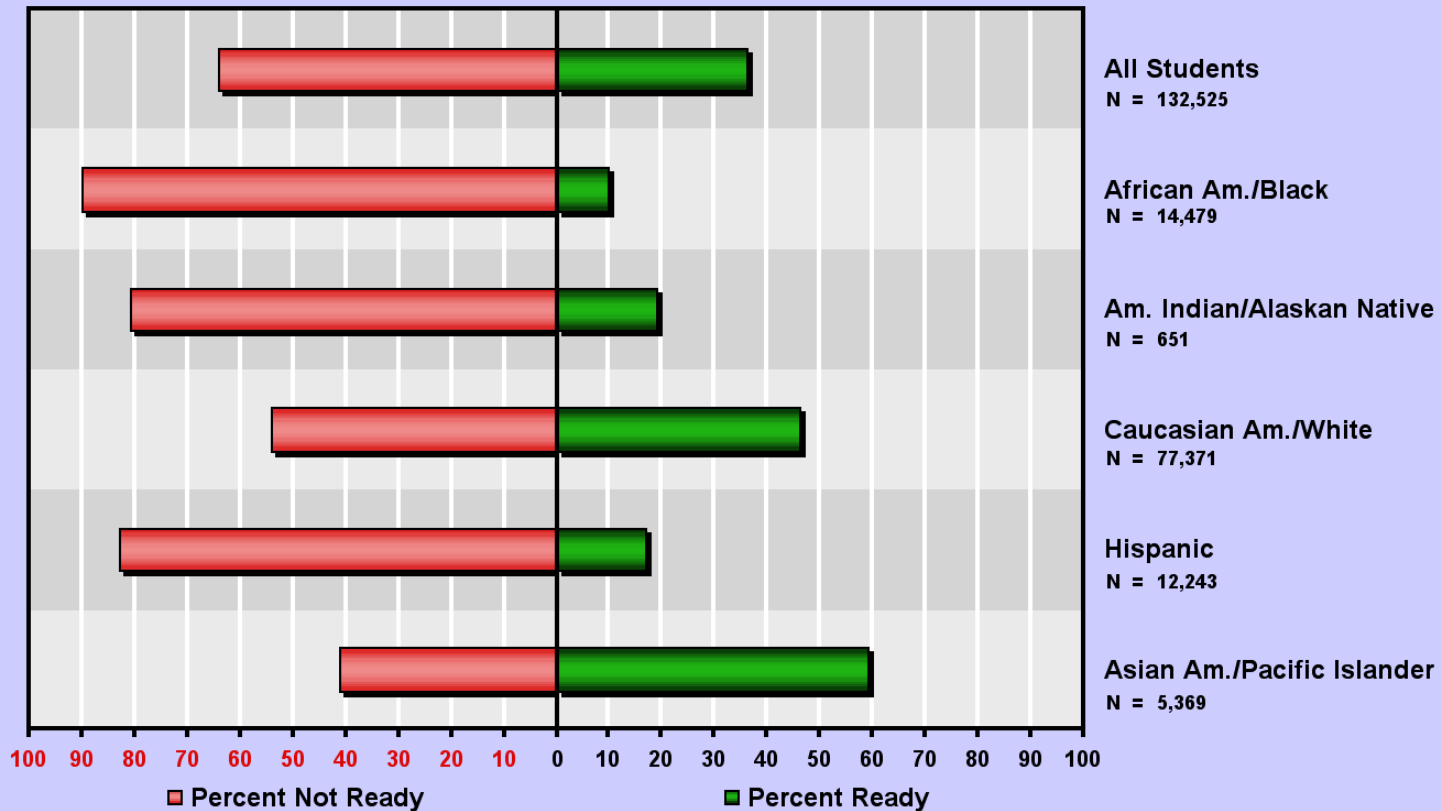


Illinois students taking 4 years of English and Speech are more likely to be ready for credit-bearing College English Composition coursework.

MATHEMATICS: Readiness for College Algebra

Figure 2.3: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College Algebra by Race/Ethnicity

ACT Mathematics Benchmark Score: 22

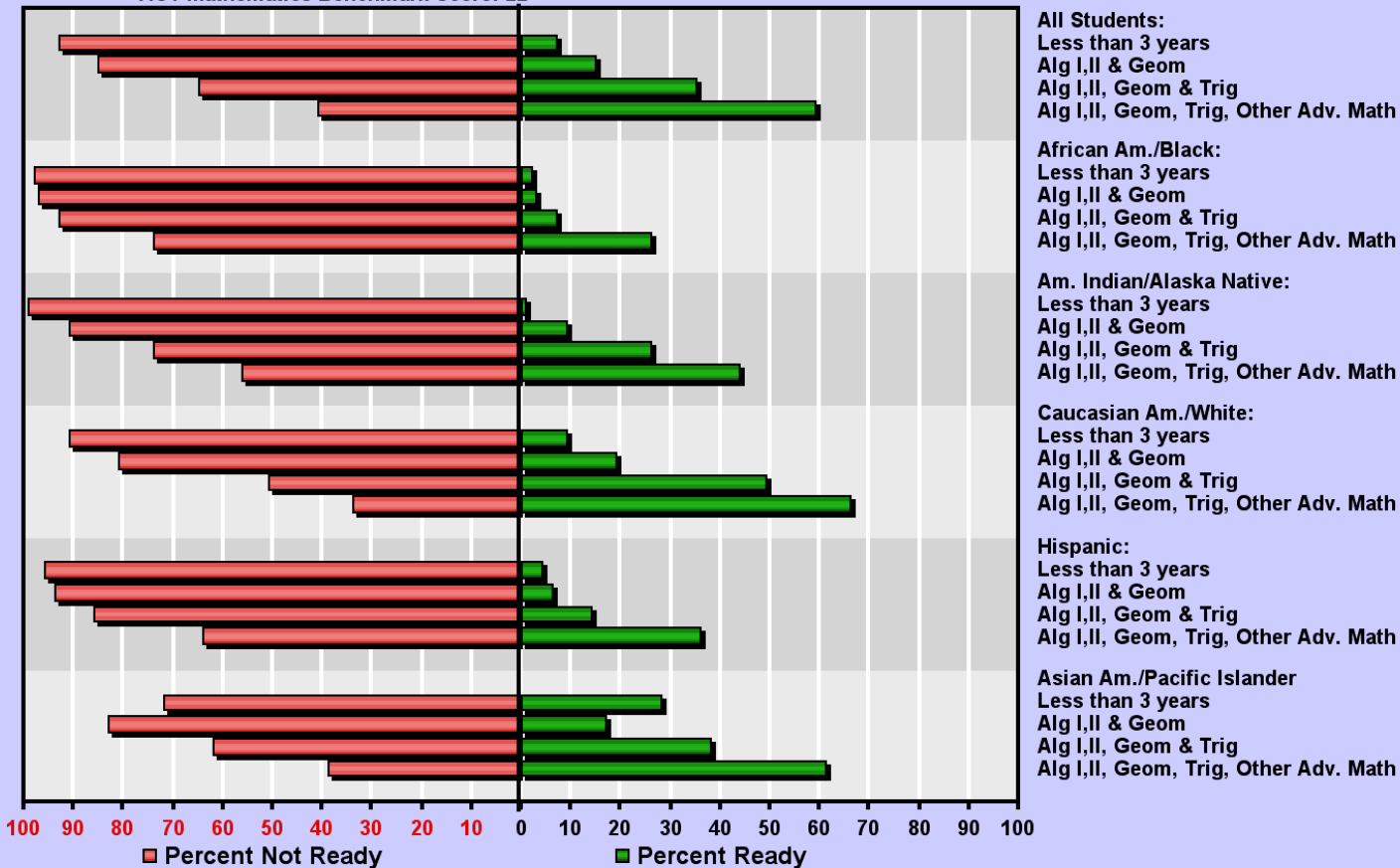


Of Illinois students, 36 % are ready for success in their freshman credit-bearing College Algebra course.

MATHEMATICS: Readiness for College Algebra

Figure 2.4: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College Algebra by High School Mathematics Course Sequence and Race/Ethnicity

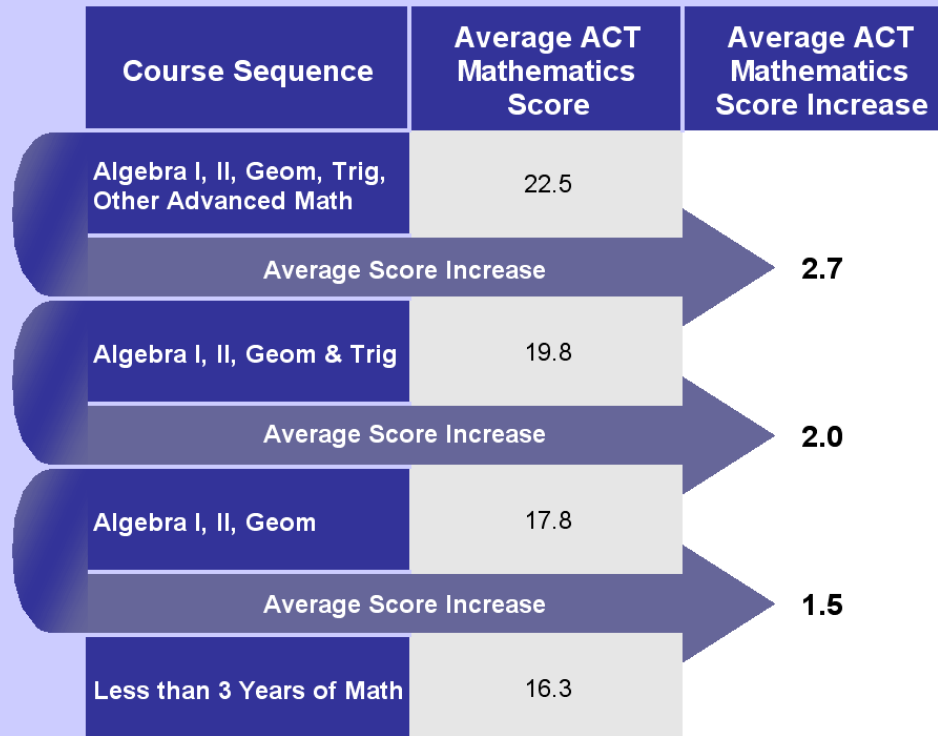
ACT Mathematics Benchmark Score: 22



Illinois students taking at least one course beyond Algebra I, II, and Geometry are more likely to be ready for credit-bearing College Algebra coursework.

MATHEMATICS: Readiness for College Algebra

Figure 2.5: Illinois Average ACT Mathematics Test Score Increase by High School Mathematics Course Sequence

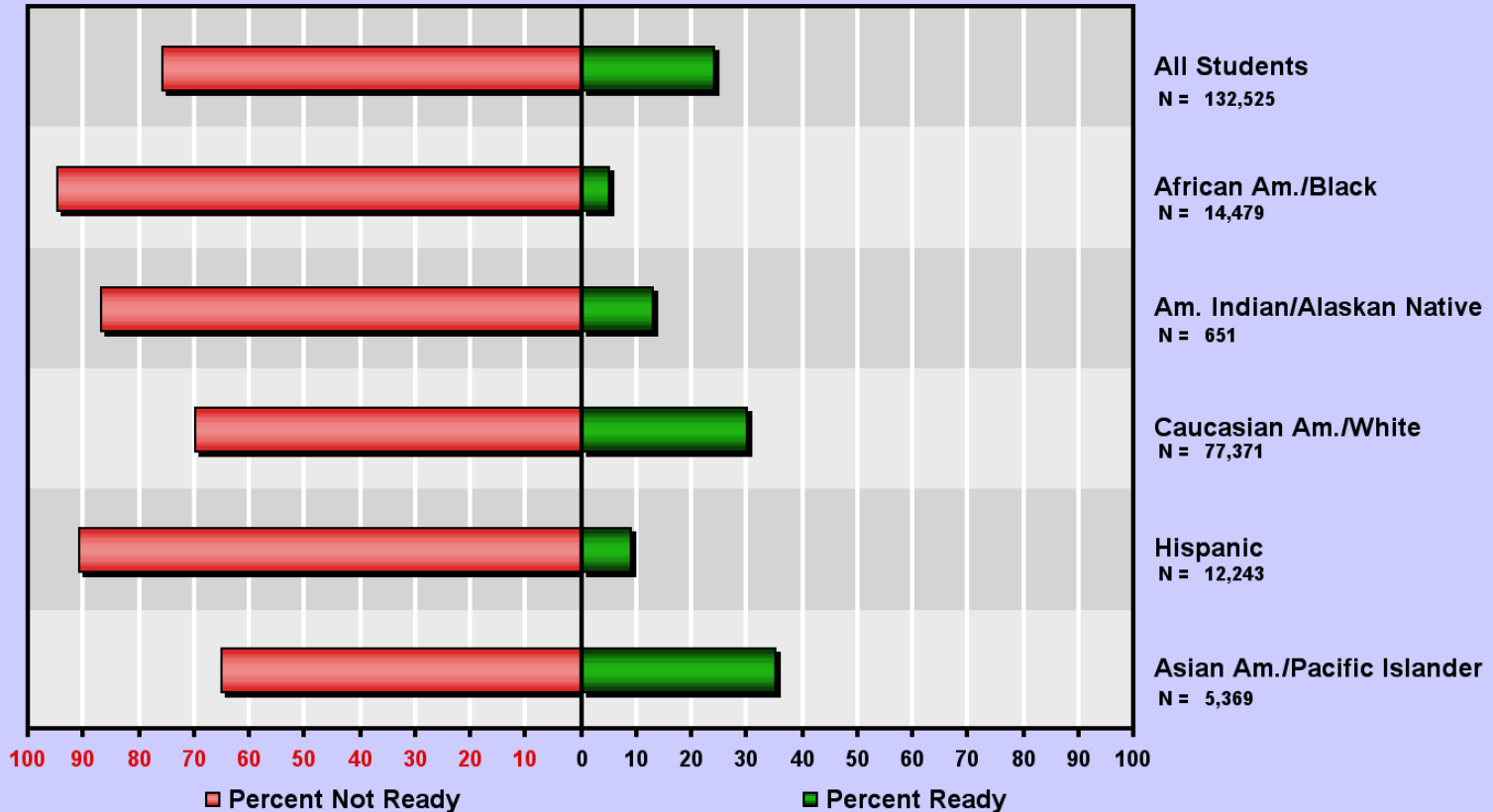


Illinois students taking at least one course beyond Algebra I, II, and Geometry on average score significantly higher on the ACT Mathematics Test than students taking Algebra I, II, and Geometry.

SCIENCE: Readiness for College Biology

Figure 2.6: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College Biology by Race/Ethnicity

ACT Science Benchmark Score: 24

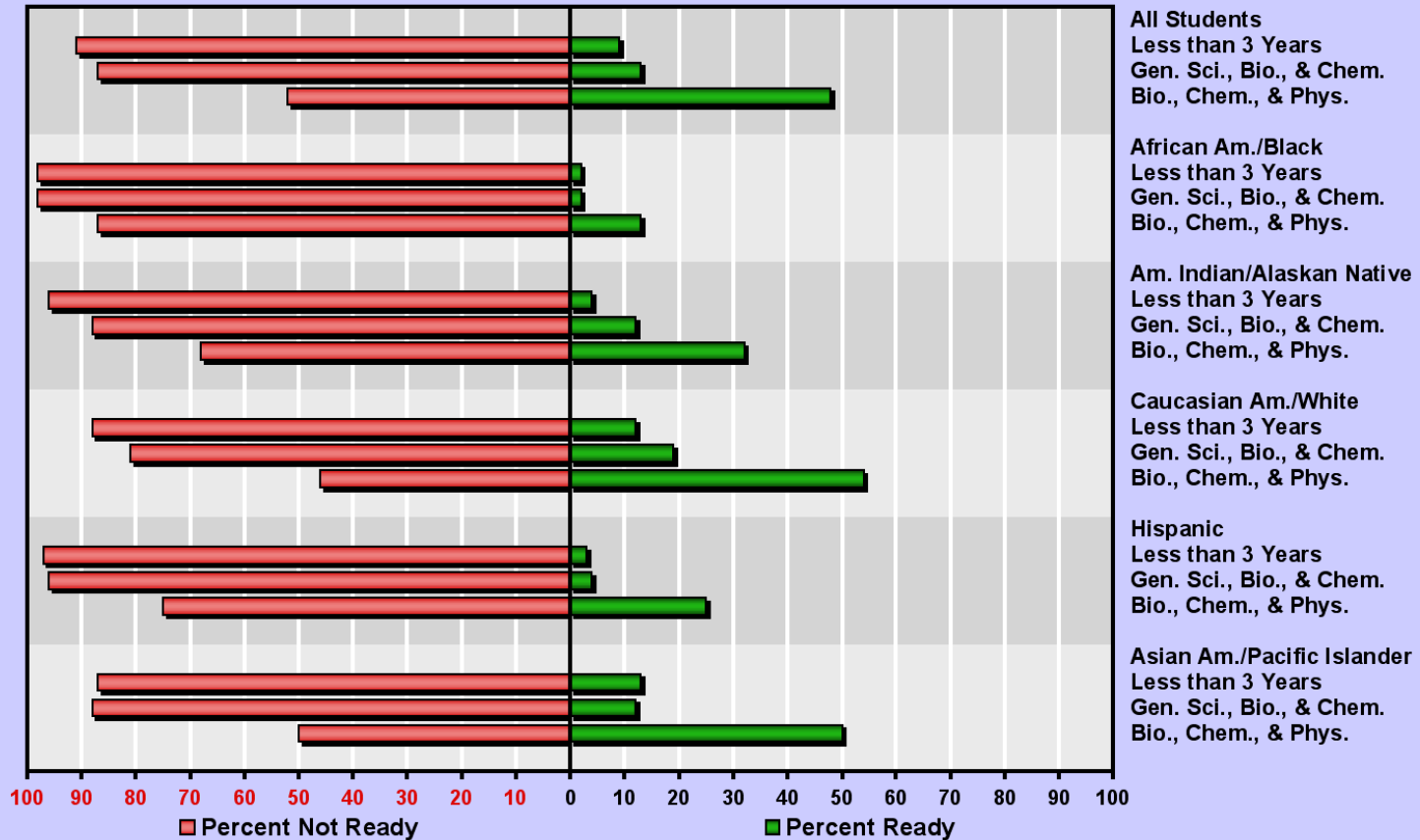


Of Illinois students, 24% are ready for success in their freshman credit-bearing College Biology course.

SCIENCE: Readiness for College Biology

Figure 2.7: Illinois Readiness for Credit-Bearing College Biology by High School Science Course Sequence and Race/Ethnicity

ACT Science Benchmark Score: 24



Illinois students taking at least 3 years of science are more likely to be ready for credit-bearing College Biology coursework.

SCIENCE: Readiness for College Biology

Figure 2.8: Illinois Average ACT Science Test Score Increase by High School Science Course Sequence

Course Sequence	Average ACT Science Score	Average ACT Science Score Increase
Biology, Chemistry, Physics	23.5	4.3
Average Score Increase		
General Science, Biology, Chemistry	19.2	1.2
Average Score Increase		
Less than 3 Years of Science	18.0	

Illinois students taking Biology, Chemistry, and Physics on average score significantly higher on the ACT Science Test than students taking less than 3 years of science.

ACT Scores and Coursework— Core vs. Non-Core

Historically ACT has reported student performance according to “Core” and “Non-Core” course patterns. ACT research shows that it is the rigor of high school courses—rather than simply the number of courses—that best prepares students for college success and is reflected in higher ACT scores.

For the purpose of longitudinal studies, Core and Non-Core results are included in this report, but for more in-depth information, please consult your *Illinois ACT High School Profile Report* and ACT’s Standards for Transition® at www.act.org/standard/index.html



ACT Scores and Coursework—Core vs. Non-Core

ACT Core

English: 4 years
Mathematics: At least 3 years

Social Studies: At least 3 years
Natural Sciences: At least 3 years

**For purposes of defining and reporting core,
ACT counts course credit as listed below:**

ENGLISH

- One year credit each for English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12.

MATHEMATICS

- One year credit each for Algebra 1, Algebra II, Geometry.
- One-half year credit each for Trigonometry, Calculus (not Pre-Calculus), other math courses beyond Algebra II (e.g., Computer Math/Computer Science).

SOCIAL STUDIES

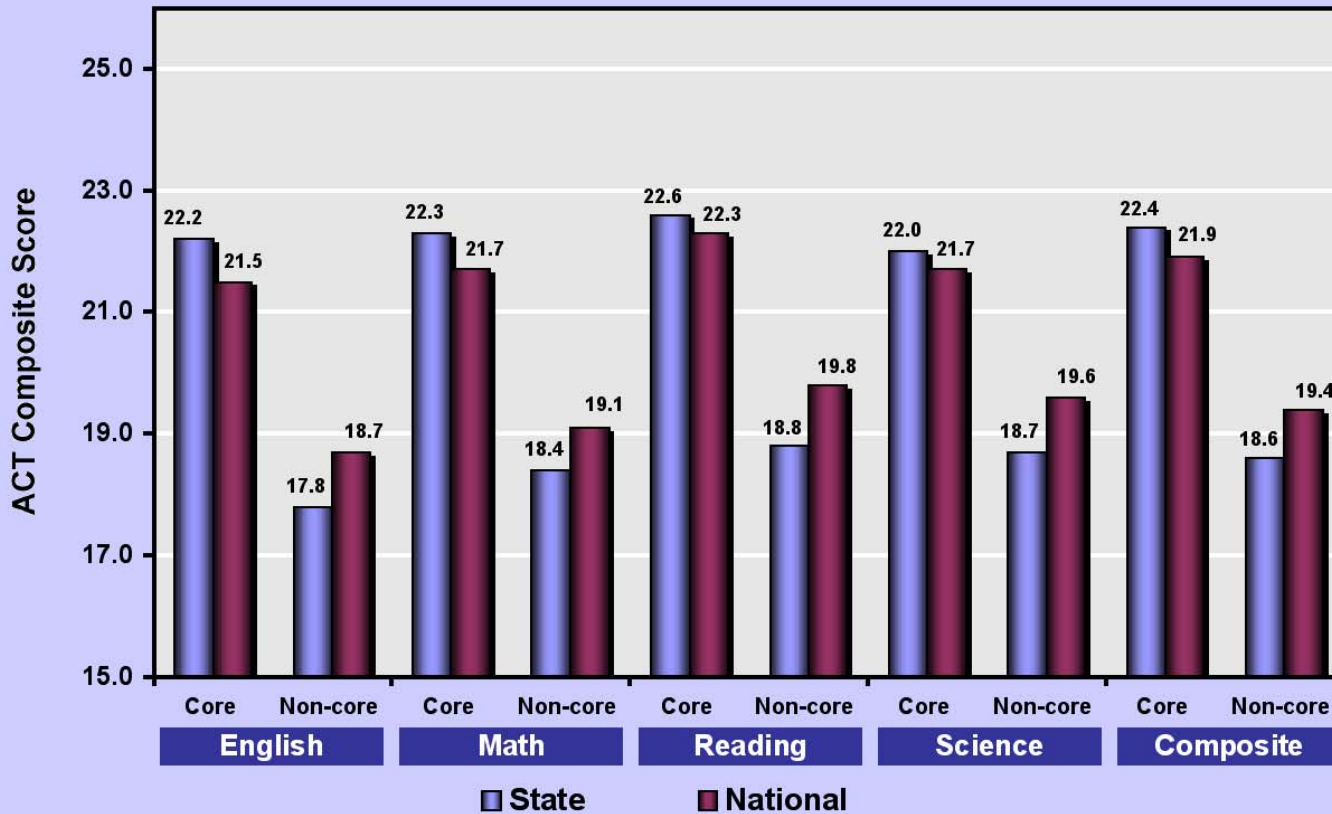
- One year credit each for American History, World History, American Government.
- One-half year credit each for Economics, Geography, Psychology, other History (European, State, etc.).

NATURAL SCIENCES

- One year credit each for General/Physical/Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

ACT Scores and Coursework—Core vs. Non-Core

Figure 2.9: Average ACT Scores by College-Preparatory Core Coursework, Illinois and National



The average ACT Composite score of Illinois students taking the college-preparatory core curriculum was higher than similar students nationally.

ACT Scores and Coursework—Core vs. Non-Core

Figure 2.10: Average Illinois ACT Composite Scores by College-Preparatory Core Coursework and Race/Ethnicity

	Number Tested	Percent Taking Core or More	Average ACT Composite Score	
			Core	Non-core
All Students	132,525	41	22.4	18.6
African Am./Black	14,479	33	18.1	16.1
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	651	29	20.6	16.3
Caucasian Am./White	77,371	47	23.4	19.8
Hispanic	12,243	33	19.4	16.6
Asian Am./Pacific Islander	5,369	54	23.5	20.3

Of non-Caucasian American students in Illinois, Asian Am./Pacific Islander students had the highest percentage taking the college-preparatory core curriculum.

Part III

Early Indicators of College Readiness

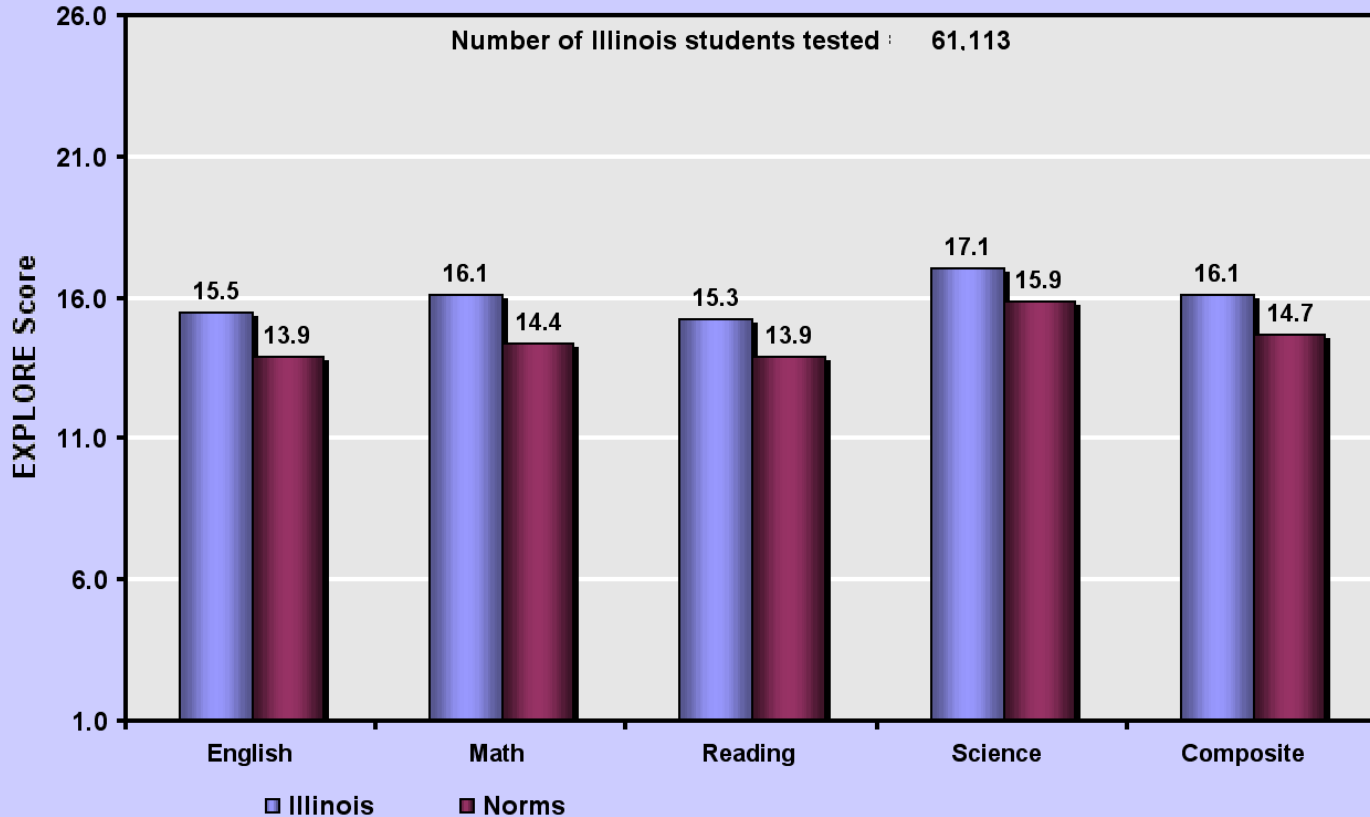
ACT's EPAS/Educational Planning and Assessment System[®] offers achievement-based assessments at three key points as students move from grade eight through the transition to postsecondary education:

- **EXPLORE[®] for eighth and ninth graders**
- **PLAN[®] for tenth graders**
- **ACT Assessment for eleventh and twelfth graders**

EPAS promotes decisions to take rigorous college preparatory courses, supports career planning, and identifies whether students are on target for college readiness. The following results pertain to all 8th- and 10th-grade students in Illinois who participated in EXPLORE and/or PLAN during the academic year 2003-04.

EXPLORE

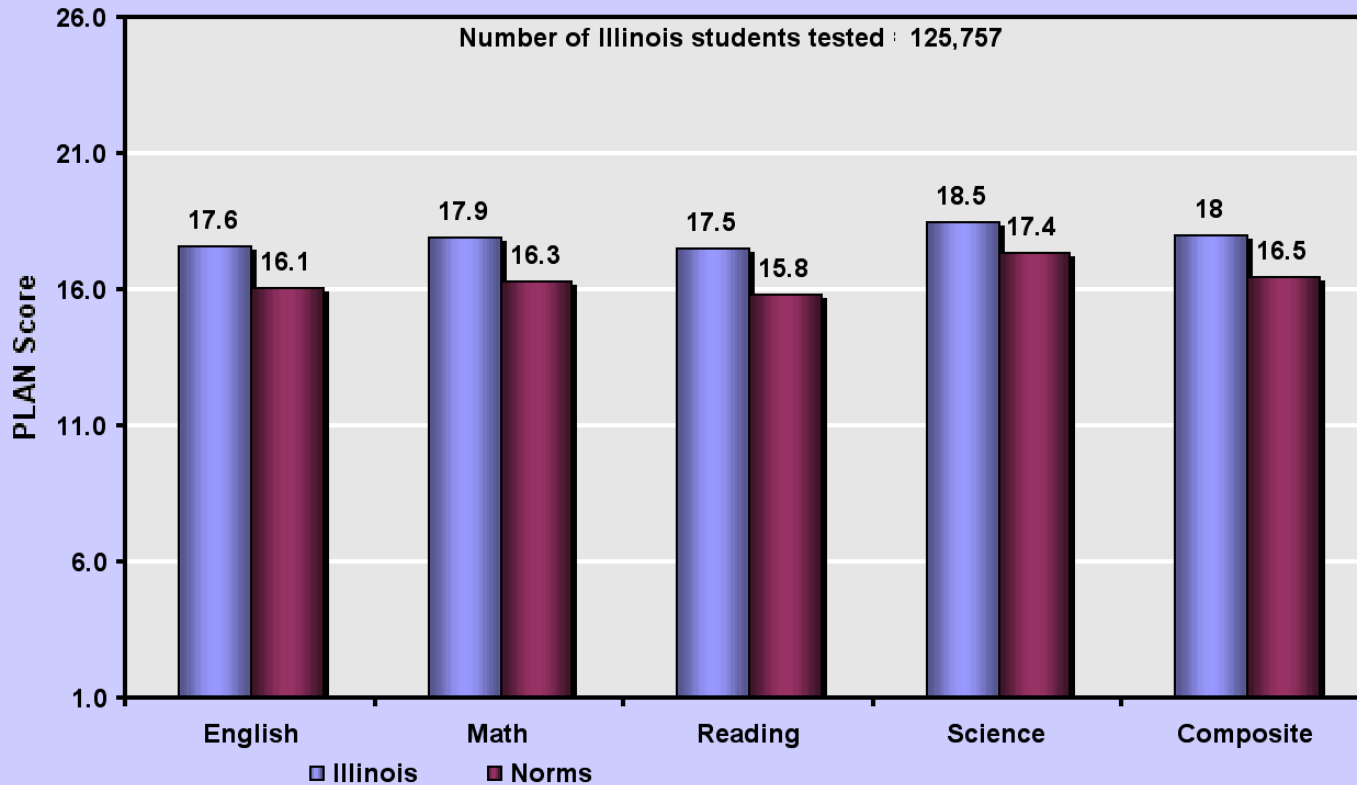
Figure 3.1: Average EXPLORE Scores of 2003 - 2004 Illinois 8th-Grade Students, Compared to National Norms



The average EXPLORE Composite score of Illinois 8th graders was higher than 8th graders nationally.

PLAN

Figure 3.2: Average PLAN Scores of 2003 - 2004 Illinois 10th-Grade Students, Compared to National Norms



The average PLAN Composite score of Illinois 10th graders was higher than 10th graders nationally.

EXPLORE and PLAN

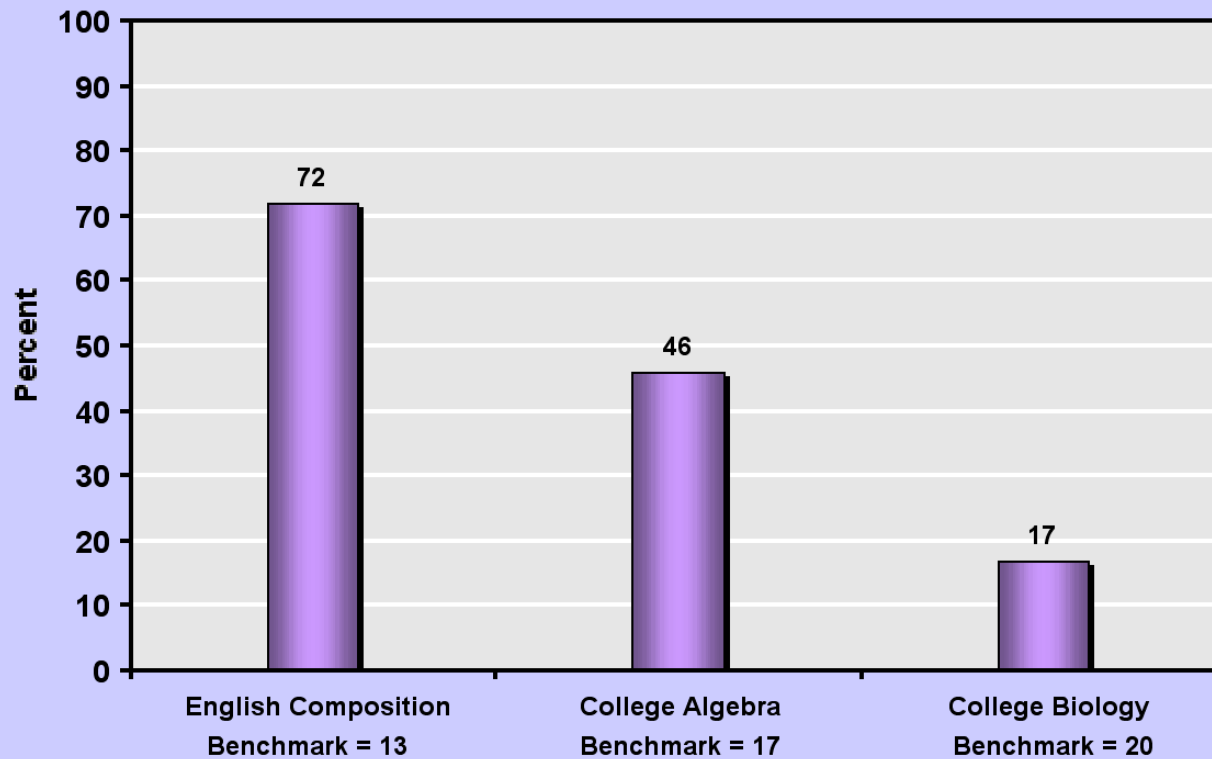
College Readiness Benchmarks

The EXPLORE and PLAN college readiness benchmarks are based on the ACT Assessment college readiness benchmarks. They reflect students' expected growth from EXPLORE to PLAN to the ACT Assessment and assume sustained academic effort throughout high school.

College Course	College Readiness Benchmarks		
	EXPLORE	PLAN	ACT
College English Composition	13	15	18
College Algebra	17	19	22
College Biology	20	21	24

EXPLORE

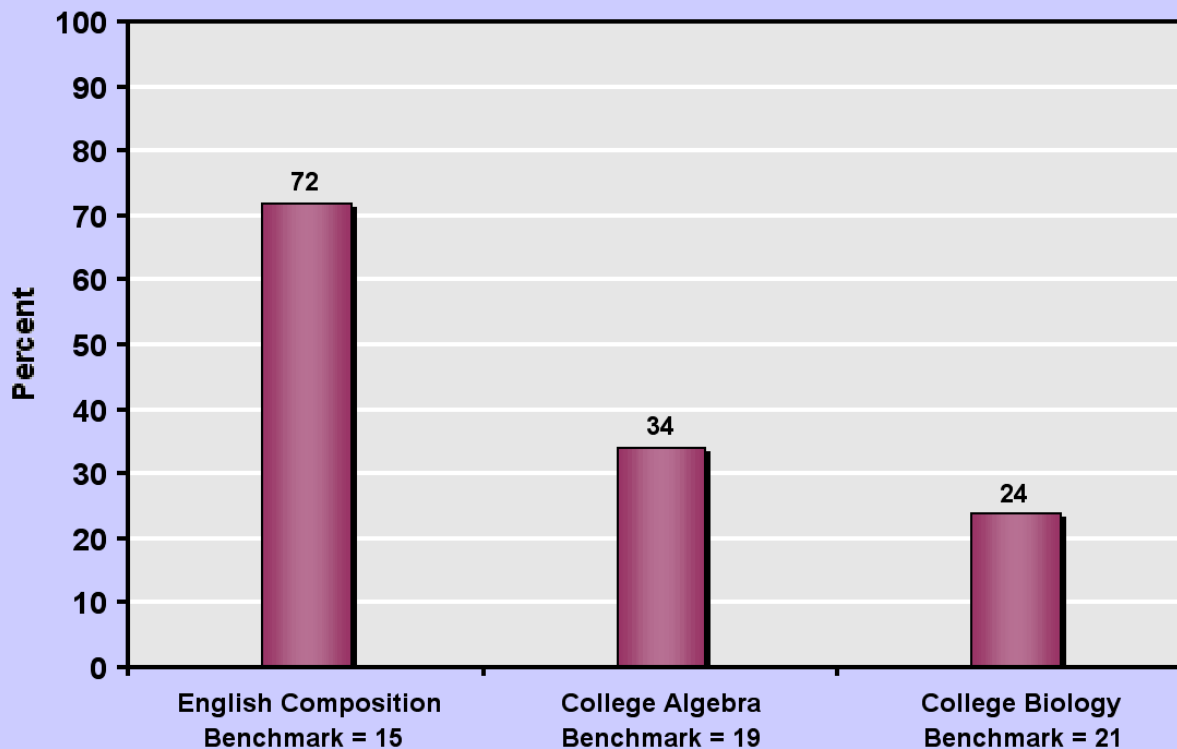
Figure 3.3: Percentages of 2003 - 2004 Illinois EXPLORE-Tested Students Likely to be Ready for College-Level Work by High School Graduation



50% or more of Illinois EXPLORE-tested 8th graders are likely to be ready for college-level work in English Composition by high school graduation.

PLAN

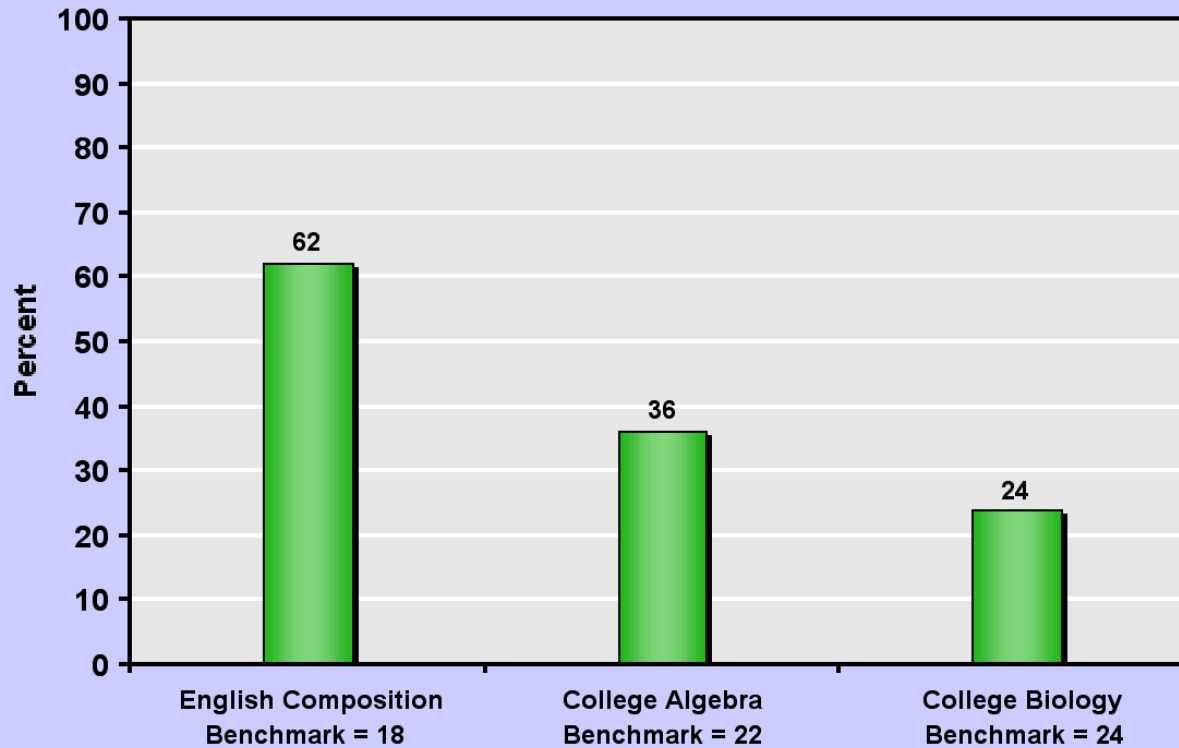
Figure 3.4: Percentages of 2003 - 2004 Illinois PLAN-Tested Students Likely to be Ready for College-Level Work by High School Graduation



50% or more of Illinois PLAN-tested 10th graders are likely to be ready for college-level work in English Composition by high school graduation.

ACT Assessment

Figure 3.5: Percentages of 2003 - 2004 Illinois ACT-Tested Graduates Likely to Be Ready for College-Level Work by High School Graduation



50% or more of Illinois ACT-tested graduates are likely to be ready for college-level work in English Composition by high school graduation.

Appendix

- **Using ACT Assessment Results**
- **Using EXPLORE and PLAN**
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Using ACT Assessment Results

In interpreting and using the results of this ACT summary report, keep in mind that how representative your ACT-tested graduates are of your total population of graduating seniors depends on the number and percentage of graduates who took the ACT Assessment.

For more detailed information, see the *2004 Illinois ACT High School Profile Report*.

Using EXPLORE and PLAN

ACT research shows that students who attend schools that use EXPLORE and PLAN for educational planning and guidance are more likely to attain higher scores on PLAN and the ACT Assessment than students who attend schools that do not use EXPLORE and PLAN.

The students whose results are reported in Part 3 of this report may or may not be comparable to the subset of Illinois students who took EXPLORE in 8th grade and then took PLAN in 10th grade and the ACT Assessment in 11th or 12th grade.

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