TANTASQUA REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

ACHIEVEMENT (ACT)

TEST REPORT

OCTOBER, 2007

ACT History & Overview

ACT is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides more than a hundred assessment, research, information, and program management services in the broad areas of education and workforce development.

The concept for the American College Testing Program emerged in the 1950s, and the organization itself was founded in 1959. Prior to 1959, there was just one national college-entrance testing program, a program that focused on identifying the most academically able students for admission to the nation's selective universities. The remainder of college students were admitted either on the basis of scores earned on entrance exams offered by individual states or colleges or on the basis of family ties.

In the late 1950s, large numbers of students were approaching college age and wanted to attend college. Financial aid to students was increasing, and most colleges desired increasing enrollments. It was in this environment that ACT's founders established The American College Testing Program, Inc., now known as ACT. ACT's first testing program, the ACT Assessment, was designed to serve two purposes:

- ✓ To help students make better decisions about which colleges to attend and which programs to study.
- ✓ To provide information helpful to colleges both in the process of admitting students and in ensuring their success after enrollment.

ACT Test Summary

The ACT test assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work.

- The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science.
- The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

Test Sections

I. English

The English test is a 75-question, 45-minute test, covering:

Standard Written English	**Rhetorical Skills**
Punctuation	Strategy
Grammar and usage	Organization
Sentence structure	Style

Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar aren't tested.

The test consists of five prose passages, each one followed by multiple-choice test questions. Different passage types are included to provide variety.

Some questions refer to underlined portions of the passage and offer several alternatives to the portion underlined. One must decide which choice is most appropriate in the context of the passage.

Some questions ask about an underlined portion, a section of the passage, or the passage as a whole. One must decide which choice best answers the question posed.

Many questions include "No Change" to the passage as one of the choices.

The questions are numbered consecutively. Each question number corresponds to an underlined portion in the passage or to a box located in the passage.

II. Math

The ACT Mathematics Test is a 60-question, 60-minute test designed to measure the mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken by the end of 11th grade.

The test presents multiple-choice questions that require you to use reasoning skills to solve practical problems in mathematics.

One needs knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills to answer the problems, but he/she is not required to know complex formulas and perform extensive computation.

Calculators may be used on the Mathematics Test.

III. Reading

The Reading Test is a 40-question, 35-minute test that measures your reading comprehension. A test taker is asked to read several texts and answer questions showing his/her understanding of:

- what is directly stated
- statements with implied meanings

Specifically, questions call upon one to use referring and reasoning skills to:

- determine main ideas
- locate and interpret significant details
- understand sequences of events

- make comparisons
- comprehend cause-effect relationships
- determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements
- draw generalizations
- analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method

The test comprises four prose passages that are representative of the level and kinds of reading required in college freshman courses; passages on topics in social studies, natural sciences, fiction, and the humanities are included.

Each passage is accompanied by a set of multiple-choice test questions. These questions do not test the rote recall of facts from outside the passage, isolated vocabulary items, or rules of formal logic. Instead, the test focuses on the complementary and supportive skills that readers must use in studying written materials across a range of subject areas.

IV. Science

The Science Test is a 40-question, 35-minute test that measures the skills required in the natural sciences: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving.

The test assumes that students are in the process of taking the core science course of study (three years or more) that will prepare them for college-level work and have completed a course in Earth science and/or physical science and a course in biology.

The test presents seven sets of scientific information, each followed by a number of multiple-choice test questions. The scientific information is presented in one of three different formats:

1. Data representation (graphs, tables, and other schematic forms)
2. Research summaries (descriptions of several related experiments)
3. Conflicting viewpoints (expressions of several related hypotheses or views that are inconsistent with one another)

The questions require you to:

1. Recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information
2. Examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed
3. Generalize from given information and draw conclusions, gain new information, or male predictions

Calculators may not be used on the Science Test.

V. Writing

The Writing Test is a 30-minute essay test measuring one's writing skills, with particular emphasis on those writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

The test consists of one writing prompt that will define an issue and describe two points of view on that issue. The test taker is asked to respond to a question about his/her position on the issue described in the writing prompt. In doing so, one may adopt one or the other of the perspectives described in the prompt, or he/she may present a different point of view on the issue. One's score will not be affected by the point of view taken on the issue.

Understanding Scores

How ACT figures the multiple-choice tests and composite scores

1. First, a count is taken of the number of questions on each test answered correctly. Points are not deducted for incorrect answers.

2. Then, raw scores (number of correct answers) are converted to scale scores. Scale scores have the same meaning for all the different versions of the ACT Assessment offered on different test dates.

3. One's Composite Score and each Test Score (English, Math, Reading, Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). The Composite Score is the average of one's four Test Scores, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Retesting Guidelines & Considerations

There are no limitations to how many times one can take the ACT.

A test taker should definitely consider retesting if:

- He/she had any problems during the test, such as misunderstanding the directions or not feeling well.
- He/she is not satisfied that his/her scores accurately represent his/her abilities.
- He/she sees a discrepancy between ACT scores and high school grades.
- He/she has completed coursework or an intensive review in subject areas included in the ACT since last being tested.

ACT research shows that of the students who took the ACT more than once:

- 55% increased their composite score
- 23% decreased their composite score
- 22% did not change their composite score

2007-08 ACT Exam Schedule

Test Date	Registration Deadline	*(Late Fee Required)*
September 15, 2007*	August 16, 2007	August 17–24, 2007
October 27, 2007	September 21, 2007	September 22–October 5, 2007
December 8, 2007	November 2, 2007	November 3–15, 2007
February 9, 2008**	January 4, 2008	January 5–18, 2008
April 12, 2008	March 7, 2008	March 8–21, 2008
June 14, 2008	May 9, 2008	May 10–23, 2008

2007-08 ACT Fee Schedule

$30.00 for the ACT (No Writing)
$44.50 for the ACT Plus Writing

Five-Year Trends – Average ACT Scores

From this table you can determine:

- ❖ Changes in the number and percentage of participants
- ❖ Score changes in subject areas and the ACT composite
- ❖ How TRSHS graduates compare with state averages

	Total Tested		English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
Grad Year	Local	State	Local	State	Local	State	Local	State	Local	State	Local	State
2003	33	6,886	21.9	22.0	21.8	22.3	24.2	22.9	21.7	21.5	22.5	22.3
2004	17	7,748	23.8	22.1	25.8	22.3	25.4	22.9	23.8	21.7	24.9	22.4
2005	8	8,168	23.6	22.5	26.9	22.8	23.8	23.4	23.3	22.0	24.5	22.8
2006	22	8,865	25.0	22.9	24.5	23.3	25.7	23.4	22.5	22.0	24.6	23.0
2007	**26**	**10,510**	**24.4**	**23.5**	**25.4**	**23.6**	**25.1**	**23.9**	**24.8**	**22.6**	**25.0**	**23.5**

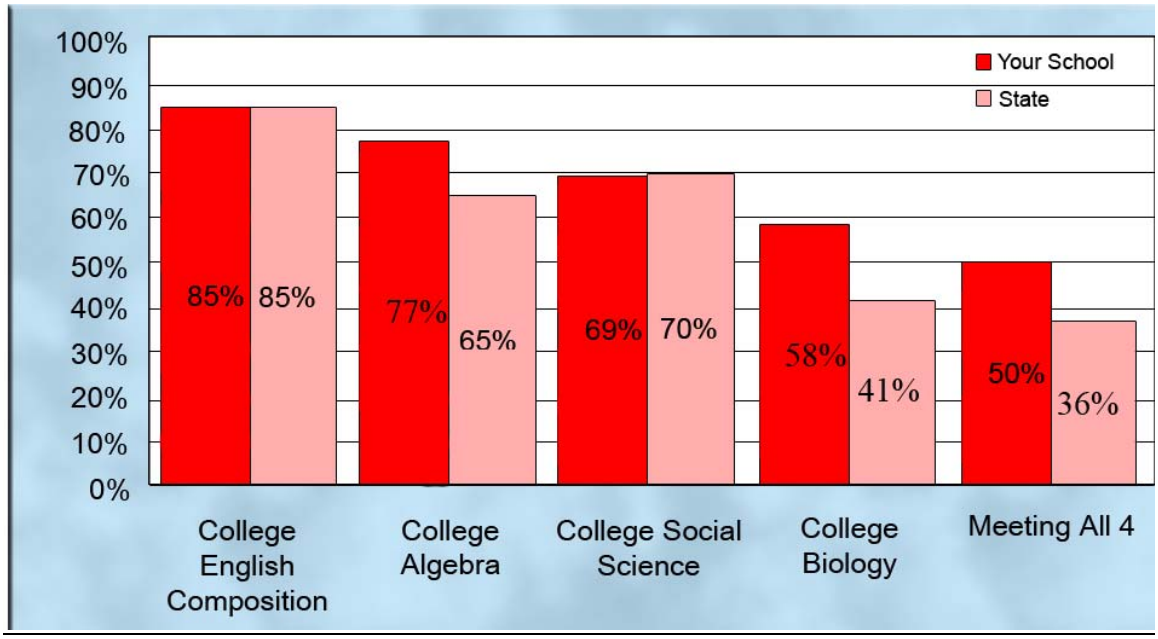
Summary/Action Plan:

- ✓ Participation rates increased in recent years.
- ✓ While the state mean in all four subject areas continues to increase, TRSHS continues to exceed the state mean in each subject area.
- ✓ Compared to 2006 results, the 2007 results of TRSHS students tested in math and science increased.
- ✓ Compared to 2006 results, the 2007 results of TRSHS students tested in English and reading decreased slightly.
- ✓ The composite score for TRSHS increased in three of the past five years and exceeded the state composite in each year of the reported five-year period.
- ✓ The sample set is statistically insignificant in that it does not meet the Central Limit Theorem which prescribes population size criteria necessary to make a sample set accurate.
- ✓ The typical ACT test taker is one who feels he/she has not done well on the SATs and may seek the ACT as a substitute indicator of college readiness.
- ✓ The ACT is not widely taken by students in the northeast and is not as actively used as the SAT by post-secondary institutions in this region of the country through the admissions process.
- ✓ The increased number of TRSHS test takers in 2006 and 2007 may be attributed to the fact that Tantasqua is an ACT test center and has been since 1996.

Percent of ACT-Tested Students Ready for College

While students will pursue a variety of paths after high school, all students should be prepared for college and work. Through collaborative research with postsecondary institutions nationwide, ACT has established the following as college readiness benchmark scores for designated college courses:
English Composition: 18 on ACT English Test
Algebra: 22 on ACT Math Test
Social Science: 21 on ACT Reading Test
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 courses.



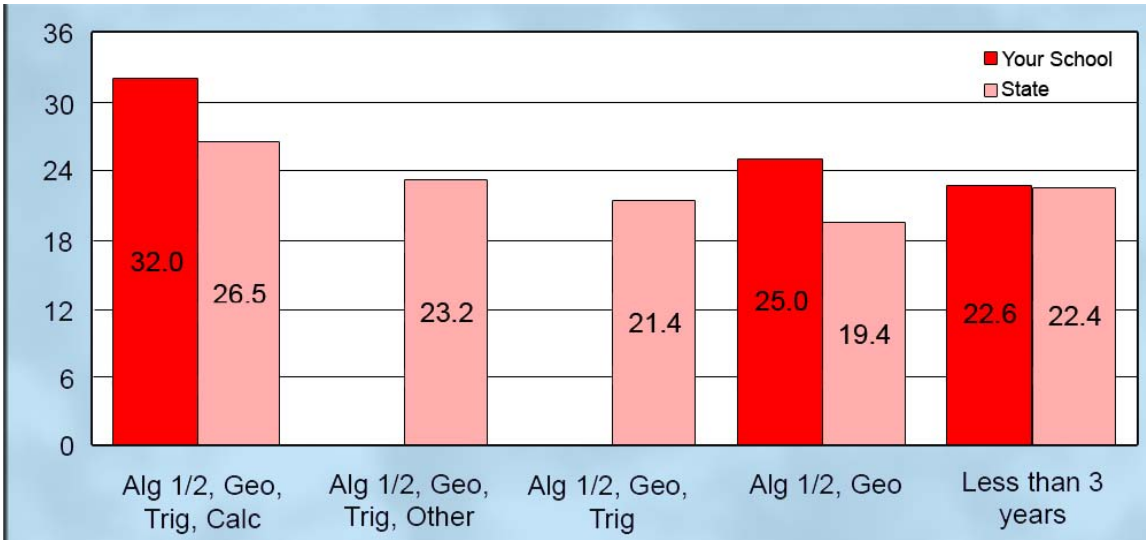
Summary/Action Plan:

- ✓ The TRSHS students tested in 2007 met or exceeded the college readiness benchmark scores for the following college courses: English composition; college algebra; and college biology.
- ✓ The TRSHS students tested in 2007 did not meet the college readiness benchmark for college social science by 1%.

ACT research has shown that it is the rigor of coursework rather than simply the number of core courses that has the greatest impact on ACT performance and college readiness.

The following sections report the value added by increasingly rigorous coursework in mathematics and the sciences.

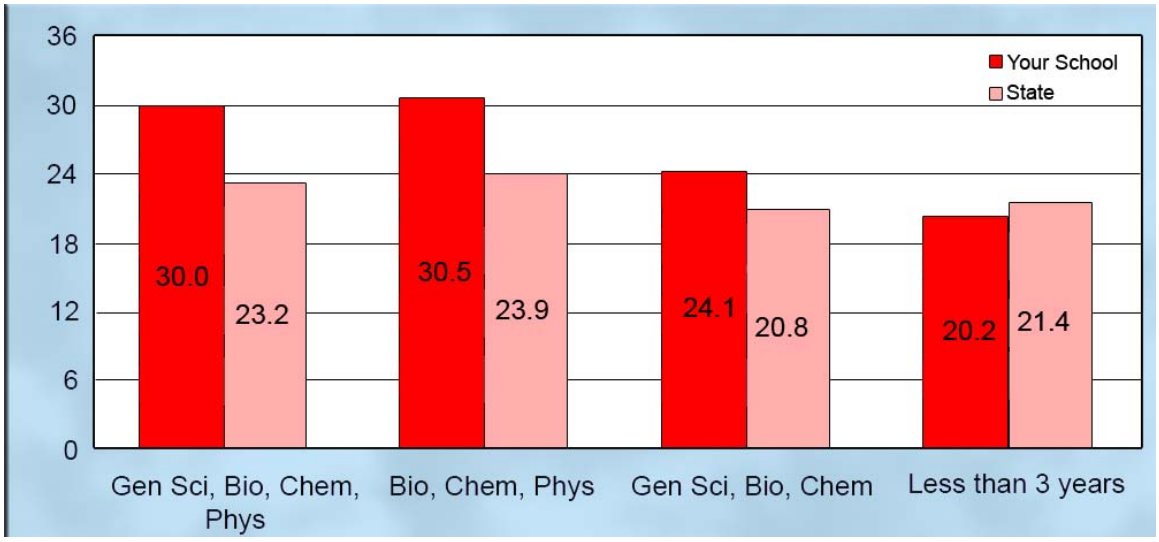
Average ACT Math Scores by Course Sequence



Summary/Action Plan:

- ✓ Students who take a minimum of Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry typically achieve higher ACT math scores than students who take fewer than three years of math.
- ✓ Students who take advanced math courses substantially increase their ACT math score.
- ✓ TRSHS students who took a combination of courses culminating with Calculus outperformed the state mean by 5.5%.
- ✓ TRSHS students who took Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry outperformed the state mean by 5.6%.
- ✓ TRSHS who took fewer than three years of math within the specified range of courses still exceeded the state mean.

Average ACT Science Scores by Course Sequence



Summary/Action Plan

- ✓ Globally, students who take biology and chemistry in combination with physics typically achieve higher ACT science scores than students who take fewer than three years of science courses.
- ✓ TRSHS students who took a combination of general science, biology, chemistry, and physics outperformed the state mean by 6.8%.
- ✓ TRSHS students who took biology, chemistry, and physics outperformed the state mean by 6.6%.
- ✓ TRSHS students who took general science, biology, and chemistry outperformed the state mean by 3.3%.
- ✓ TRSHS who took fewer than three years of science within the specified domain of courses fell short of the state mean by 1.2%.