



Partners in ACT Preparation Pilot Report

THE NEED

Less than 32% of Nashville's students scored a 21 or higher on the ACT in 2014, excluding them from millions of scholarship dollars.

21 is a magic number for high school students in Tennessee; students that score a 21 or higher on the ACT become eligible for many scholarships, including the state-sponsored HOPE Scholarship. Students that do not score a 21 or higher are required to take remedial courses if they do enroll in college; remedial courses don't count toward a degree, meaning those students often end up paying more in tuition and fees because those courses often delay them from graduating on time. They are also less likely to graduate - full-time students seeking bachelor's degrees that take remedial courses in their first year are 74 percent more likely to drop out of college. Those who do graduate take 11 months longer than non-remedial students, requiring additional living expenses and delaying earnings.¹

Yet not nearly enough MNPS students are reaching this magic number; in 2013-14, less than 32% of juniors scored a 21 or higher. While there are resources and programs available to help students increase their score, many are too costly or otherwise inaccessible to students that need it most (due to transportation, employment, family responsibilities, etc.). There are also many high-quality ACT prep programs currently offered by community partners, but they don't have the capacity to serve all of the students who need assistance.

PACT – Partners in ACT Preparation - is a systemic approach to ensuring all students have access to ACT prep resources. Lessons learned during the 2015-16 year, serving students at 4 schools, will be used to scale PACT across the district.

THE TACTIC

The Alignment Nashville High School Team piloted PACT - Partners in ACT Preparation – during the 2015-16 school year at 4 pilot schools: Hillsboro, Hunters Lane, Maplewood, and Overton. The pilot schools were identified by MNPS district personnel based on principal buy-in and willingness to participate.

All juniors at the 4 pilot high schools took a retired ACT test in October 2015; results from this practice test were analyzed by partner Analyze Ed (<http://www.analyze-ed.com/>), which provided each student with a personalized Pareto analysis roadmap with specific instructions and resources to help the student increase his or her composite score by up to 3 points.

Analyze Ed's data and experience indicated that most students would increase by 3 points at most; therefore, the A-Team recommended that the pilot schools focus the most intensive interventions on students who scored between 17-21 on the practice test. It is important to note, however, that ALL

¹ <https://edreformnow.org/release-americans-spending-at-least-1-5-billion-in-college-remediation-courses-middle-class-pays-the-most/>

students received the personalized assessment that they could then use on their own, with other ACT prep providers, or otherwise.

The A-Team used the Invitation to Participate™ (ITP™) process to recruit community and business partners to serve as PACT Partners at the 4 pilot schools. PACT Partners were asked to commit to the following:

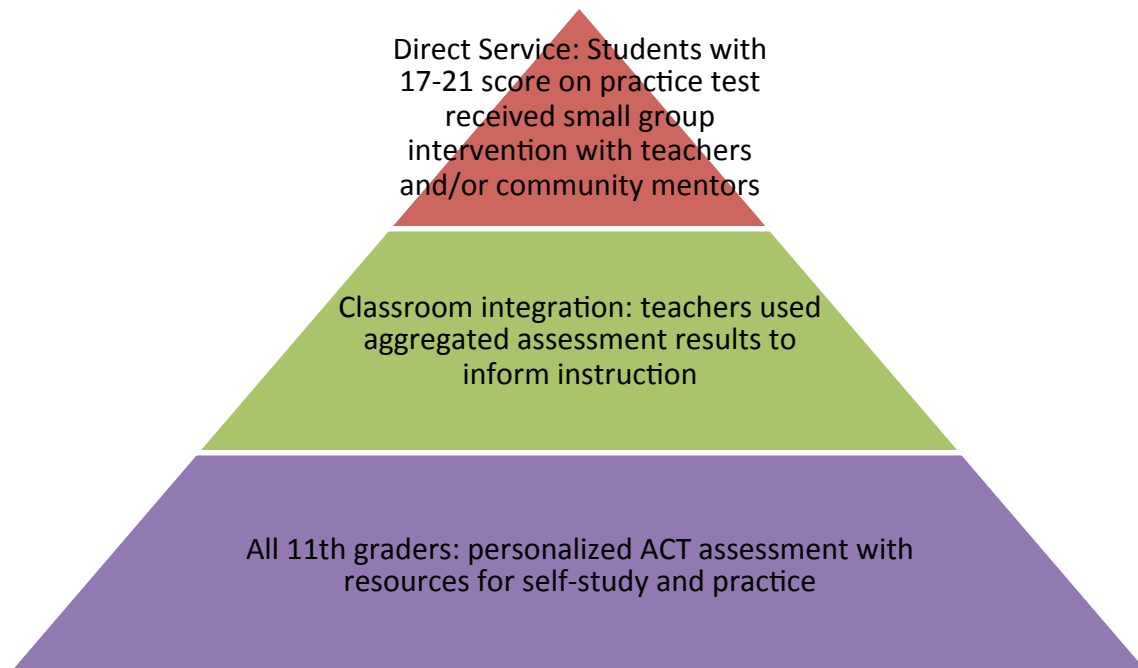
1. Participate in a 2-hour training session in December 2015 to prepare for working with students
 2. Meet for a minimum of 8 sessions during January - April 2016 with their assigned students
 3. Use resources and materials provided by Analyze Ed to guide students through their ACT preparation efforts
 4. Provide periodic updates on hours spent with students as well as feedback on the experience
- Individual pilot schools also recruited PACT Partners from their existing PENCIL Partners and Academy Partners.

Each school developed its own set of strategies for preparing students for the April 2016 ACT:

- Hillsboro: Engaged PACT Partners to provide individual study sessions with students
- Hunters Lane: Assigned students who scored 17-21 on the practice test to an ACT Prep class (coded as a Critical Thinking course)
- Maplewood: Engaged PACT Partners in small-group sessions with selected students. Shared assessment results with in-house ACT provider, Martha O'Bryan Center, to aid in their ACT prep efforts.
- Overton: Engaged PACT Partners in small-group sessions with selected students. Assigned 41 students (based on practice test score) to one of two courses; one course was all ACT prep and the other mixed in ACT prep through personal finance.

The pyramid chart below depicts the tiers of intervention provided through PACT:

- Tier 1 – universal – all 11th graders received a personalized ACT assessment with resources
- Tier 2 – targeted – teachers integrated assessment results into instruction
- Tier 3 – direct service - students that scored between 17-21 on practice test received direct intervention support (in various forms)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The High School A-Team utilized the Invitation to Participate™ (ITP) process to recruit PACT Partners for this pilot year. The A-Team received 5 responses to this ITP:

Beech Creek Ministries

HCA

In Full Motion

Nashville Learning Center

Urban League of Middle Tennessee

The PENCIL Foundation, which has representation on the High School A-Team, supported the PACT Partner recruitment effort in the following ways:

- Social media posts
- Posting on schoolvolunteers.org
- Highlight in the December 2015 PENCIL email newsletter

Three additional partners were recruited thanks to the PENCIL efforts – Deloitte, Nashville Electric Service, and TVA.

Finally, additional PACT Partners were recruited by the pilot schools.

OUTCOMES

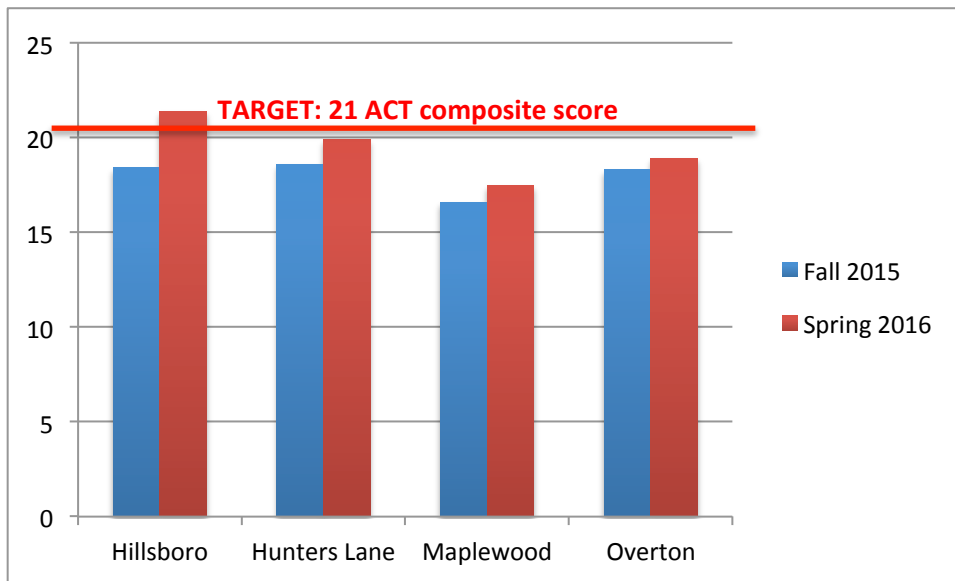
50% (67 of 134) of participating students at pilot schools scored a 21 or higher on the ACT after participating in PACT, which is a potential financial impact of

\$1,273,000

\$16,000 four-year HOPE Scholarship x 67 students = \$1,072,000

\$3,000 average cost savings due to avoiding remedial courses² x 67 students = \$201,000

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2016/04/06/remedial-classes-have-become-a-hidden-cost-of-college/>



HILLSBORO

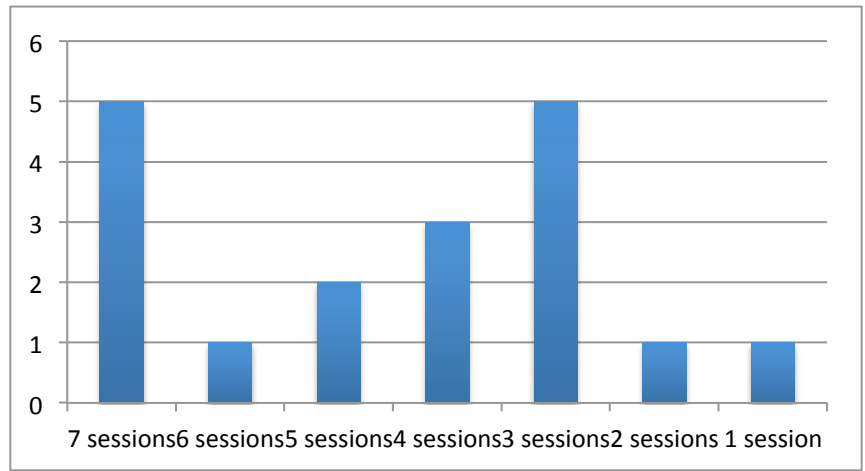
- 52 students tested Spring 2016; **average ACT score for participating students increased from 18.4 to 21.4**
- 33/52 of participating students (63.5%) scored 21 or higher on the ACT Spring 2016
- 45/52 of participating students (86.5%) scored higher on the ACT Spring 2016 than the practice ACT administered Spring 2015 or Fall 2016
 - 18/52 of participating students (34.6%) scored 1-2 points higher on the ACT Spring 2016
 - 14/52 of participating students (27%) scored 3-4 points higher on the ACT Spring 2016
 - 13/52 of participating students (25%) scored 5+ points higher on the ACT Spring 2016

HUNTERS LANE

- 52 students participated in a PACT class, taught by a Hunters Lane HS teacher. No community partners were involved in this class.
 - 73% (35) of the participating students increased their score
 - 13% (6) scored lower
 - 15% (7) scored the same
- AVERAGE ACT score for pilot students increased from 18.6 to 19.9
- 18 scored a 21 or higher on the ACT (compared to 8 on the practice test), which means that 10 students became eligible for the Hope scholarship after participating in PACT.

MAPLEWOOD

- 19 students participated in pullout sessions, once a week for 7 weeks, with community partners.
- AVERAGE ACT score for pilot students increased from 16.6 to 17.5.
- Two students scored 21 or higher on the April 2016 ACT, compared to only 1 student on the October 2015 practice ACT.
- Maplewood chose to include students with scores lower than 17, which affected the overall averages for PACT participants.



VERTON

SCHOOL-WIDE RESULTS:

- Overall ACT score went from a 12.97 on the practice test to a 17.74 on the actual test
- Increased number of students scoring 17 or higher: from 20% on practice test to 56% on actual test

DIRECT SERVICE RESULTS:

- 41 students in participated in the pilot courses. One course was all ACT prep and the other mixed in ACT prep through personal finance.
- Class 1 (Critical Thinking): 22 students (19 had a score from the practice test)
 - 11/19 saw an increase (avg increase was 2.5), 6 saw a decrease (avg decrease was 3. We had a -8 and a 5), and 1 was neutral (Composite Scores)
 - 7/19 scored 21 or higher
 - Highest positive gain was a +5
- Class 2 (Personal Finance): 19 students (18 had a score from the practice test)
 - 10/18 saw an increase (avg increase was 2.9), 3 saw a decrease (avg decrease was 5. We had a -8, a -5 and a -3), and 4 were neutral (Composite Scores)
 - 7/18 scored 21 or higher
 - Highest positive gain was a +5

WHAT'S NEXT

The High School A-Team is currently creating a plan to support high schools that would like to replicate some or all aspects of this pilot during the 2016-17 school year. The following schools have indicated interest:

- Hillsboro
- Cane Ridge
- East
- Whites Creek
- Big Picture
- Hunters Lane
- Hillwood
- Cohn
- Stratford
- McGavock
- Middle College
- Maplewood

The potential financial impact if this initiative is taken to scale is upwards of

\$2.3 million

just in HOPE scholarship dollars for MNPS students.

High School Alignment Team (2015-16)

CHAIR: Aimee Wyatt

Metro Nashville Public Schools

VICE CHAIR: Cheryl Mayes

Nissan North America

Angie Adams

PENCIL Foundation

Samantha Andrews

Frist Center for the Visual Arts

Lisa Bonelli

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Sonya Brooks

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Allison Cantway

YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee

Nicole Cobb

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Megan Cusson-Lark

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Chae Denning

Big Picture High School

Thom Druffel

Holiday Inn Vanderbilt

Tiffany Farmer

Adventure Science Center

Beverley Flatt

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Donna Gilley

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Lee Gray

Oasis College Connection

Starr Herrman

Nashville Ford NGL Hub

Kay Higgs

STARS Nashville

Susan Kessler

Hunters Lane High School

Bob Kucher

PENCIL Foundation

DeeGee Lester

The Parthenon

Sonya Mansfield

Maplewood High School

Susan Murphy

East Literature Magnet School

Kelly Noser

Noser Consulting and Evaluation

Caitlin Nossett

HCA Foundation

Meghan Oliver

Nashville State Community College

Jill Petty

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Dulce Quintero

YWCA

Stephen Sheaffer

Overton High School

Ellen Zinkiewicz

Nashville Career Advancement Center/NCAC