



# Partners in ACT Preparation Invitation to Participate™ Plan

## Project Overview

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### Description:

Students who score a 21 or above on the ACT are eligible for state-funded scholarships, as well as a host of other public and private scholarship opportunities. However, ACT prep courses are often too expensive for students who most need access, and they are often difficult for students to participate in during out-of-school time due to transportation, employment, and other issues. The Alignment Nashville High School Team has created PACT - Partners for ACT preparation - in an effort to align community resources to help students reach or exceed the goal of a 21 on the ACT. Community and business partners are invited to participate as PACT partners, guiding small groups of students in effective, proven, personalized ACT prep strategies to help them increase their score. The participating pilot high schools for 2015-16 will administer an assessment to all juniors in August/September 2015; this assessment will provide a personalized Pareto analysis roadmap to help each student prepare for the ACT in the spring 2016. School staff will determine which students would benefit most from small group work and will assign them to groups based on skill level, areas of need, etc. Community organizations, businesses, and others that respond to the Invitation to Participate will be asked to commit to the following: 1. Participate in a 1/2 day training session during fall 2015 (dates TBD) to prepare for working with the students 2. Meet for a minimum of 8 sessions during January - April 2016 with their assigned students (exact times to be determined by each school based on their schedule and other activities) 3. Use resources and materials provided through the PACT website (currently under development) to guide students through their ACT preparation efforts 4. Provide periodic updates on hours spent with students as well as feedback on the experience All PACT partners must have taken the ACT themselves at some point; a college degree is preferred but not required. PACT partners may indicate their preference of working with students on math, reading/English, and/or science; additional training will be provided during fall 2015 for PACT partners who wish to brush up on skills in any of these areas before working with students.

The primary outcomes supported by this Invitation to Participate™ (ITP™) will be to:

- Short term outcome
  - At least 50% of students receiving direct services through PACT increase their predicted ACT score by 2 points based on the mid-point assessment.
- Mid-term outcome
  - At least 75% of participating students and PACT partners complete 8 sessions (out of 12 available sessions).
- Long term outcome
  - Increase career readiness rate
  - Increase college readiness rate

## Services Needed from the Community

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The High School A-Team is seeking business and community partners to work with students in small-group settings to help them prepare for the ACT in spring 2016. The PACT mentors will be equipped with a personalized ACT prep roadmap for each student, based on a practice test, that will provide a "prescription" for specific content areas to target, using proven practices and resources.

PACT mentors will be asked to commit to the following:

1. Participate in a 1/2 -day training session during late fall 2015 (dates TBD - Nov/Dec) to prepare for working with the students
2. Meet for a minimum of 8 sessions during January - April 2016 with their assigned students (exact times to be determined by each school based on their schedule and other activities)
3. Use resources and materials provided through the PACT website to guide students through their ACT preparation efforts
4. Provide periodic updates on hours spent with students as well as feedback on the experience

PACT partners may indicate their preference of working with students on math, reading/English, and/or science.

## Project Explanation

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General Description:

### **WHAT is PACT?**

PACT - Partners in ACT Preparation - is a pilot initiative to increase the number of Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) high school juniors that score a 21 or higher on the ACT.

PACT will recruit, train and deploy business and community partners to work with students in small-group settings to help them prepare for the ACT in spring 2016. The PACT partners will be equipped with a personalized ACT prep roadmap for each student, based on a practice test, that will provide a "prescription" for specific content areas to target, using proven practices and resources. PACT was designed by the Alignment Nashville High School Team (A-Team) as a collaborative initiative to engage the community in increasing ACT scores across the district.

**The goal of PACT is to increase by 15% the number of MNPS juniors that score 21 or higher on the ACT (47% of juniors in April 2016).**

### **WHY is PACT important?**

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.

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 many resources available to help students increase their score, most of those resources 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 offered by community partners, but they don't have the capacity to serve all of the students who need assistance.

PACT is a systemic approach to ensuring all students have access to ACT prep resources. The 2015-16 year will be a pilot year, serving students at 6 schools; however, if the pilot reaches or exceeds its goal, then it will be scaled across the district.

Even though PACT is focused on increasing ACT scores, it will also impact instruction. Data from the practice tests will be used to inform instruction at the middle school and high school levels, ensuring students are better prepared. Also, the PACT partners will be working to help students improve their content knowledge, rather than focusing on test-taking strategies.

### **WHO will participate in PACT?**

Students that score between a 17-20 composite on the practice ACT test in fall 2015 at the pilot schools will receive direct services through this pilot. However, every junior will receive the personalized roadmap that can be used in his or her own preparations. In addition, teachers will receive aggregated data to pinpoint topic areas that need to be addressed in earlier years.

This initiative is a collaboration that is being led by the Alignment Nashville High School Team, which is chaired by Dr. Aimee Wyatt (Executive Lead Officer for High Schools, MNPS) and vice chaired by Cheryl Mayes (Nissan North America).

### **WHEN will PACT occur?**

All juniors at the participating pilot schools will take the practice ACT test in September 2015.

Mentors will be recruited and trained in the fall of 2015, and they will begin meeting with students in the target population in January 2016. Groups will meet once a week at least 8 times between January and April 2016 (ACT test date).

### **Needed Information from Community Service Providers:**

1. Why does your organization want to participate with PACT?
2. How many employees/members from your organization will volunteer as a PACT mentor?
3. Who will be the primary contact at your organization for PACT (for communication and reporting purposes)?
4. Can you commit to submitting brief, periodic reports about time spent with students (to track in-kind donations of time)?
5. Please check this box to acknowledge that you understand that all volunteers are subject to a background check (per MNPS policy).

### **Implementation Dates:**

#### **Community ITP meeting date**

September 9, 2015

**Respond online by**

October 31, 2015

**Team review date**

September 9, 2015

**Notification date of participant organizations**

September 9, 2015

**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)

