

Administration Guidelines for the State ACT Program 2017-18 School Year

Overview

There are two significant changes to the state ACT program for the 2017-18 school year.

1. Fall testing for seniors will take place in school, during the school day, rather than on a Saturday.
2. State-funded vouchers for national testing dates are discontinued.

These changes are designed to better serve the students of Tennessee and to allow students an opportunity to take a college entrance exam in the familiar surroundings of their own school, on a school day, at no cost to them. Districts are encouraged to emphasize the importance of testing in school—and on schedule—to ensure that all students fulfill the graduation requirement and that districts meet the participation rate requirement for accountability.

State ACT Testing Calendar

Test Date	Test Options	Test Form	Students Eligible
October 3, 2017	Paper Testing	Only October 3	Senior Retake (or first)
October 3-17, 2017	Accommodations	Only October 3	
October 17, 2017	Paper Testing	Only October 17	
March 20, 2018	Paper Testing	Only March 20	Juniors and Seniors (if seniors missed all other opportunities to test)
March 20-April 3, 2018	Accommodations	Only March 20	
March 20-29, 2018	Online	N/A	
April 3, 2018	Paper Testing	Only April 3	
April 24, 2018	Paper Testing	Only April 24	

State-funded Vouchers for National Testing Dates Discontinued

Since we have increased the state testing program to allow more students to test for free at their school on the dates above, **we will no longer offer state-funded vouchers for students to take the ACT on national test dates instead of state dates.** However, districts, at their own discretion, may pay for students to take the ACT on national dates. Additionally, qualifying economically disadvantaged students are still eligible for two fee waivers from ACT, Inc. to test on national dates. More information regarding ACT's fee waiver program is on page 3.

Testing Juniors

All students earning a regular diploma should take the ACT at school in the **spring of their junior year.** Schools have the flexibility to test juniors on any of the available state, in-school testing dates. For example, schools that have limited space to offer a secure testing environment may test students on different dates. **However, test coordinators must select the correct forms for the date on which testing occurs.**

If a junior missed all opportunities to test, the student may take the ACT for the first time as a senior in the fall (on the fall test dates generally called “senior retake”). Juniors may also take the ACT on a national test date for additional opportunities to improve their scores—the state will not provide funding for students to test on a national date. The department will continue to receive all ACT score reports for students who take the test in-state (even on national dates) and will count a student’s highest composite score for accountability.

Testing Seniors

Seniors have the opportunity to take the ACT in the fall. The purpose of fall testing is to offer **seniors the opportunity to retake the ACT**. If a senior missed taking the ACT for the first time in the spring of his/her junior year, the student can take the test in the fall for the first time as well. While districts will be responsible for the administration of the exam, the state will cover exam fees.

Seniors who missed all prior opportunities to test at school may also take the ACT for the first time in the spring with juniors on an in-school, state testing date. Additionally, districts may choose to pay for students to test on a national testing date. Otherwise, students who wish to test on a national date must do so at their own expense or seek a fee waiver from ACT. The department will continue to receive all ACT score reports for students who take the test in-state (even on national dates) and will count a student’s highest composite score for accountability.

Test Logistics

Student Pre-ID Files

- **Fall testing:** The department will submit a pre-ID file to ACT based upon eleventh grade school enrollment at the end of the 2017 school year. Districts and schools are responsible for editing this information in Pearson AccessNext to ensure accuracy.
- **Spring testing:** The department will submit a pre-ID file to ACT based upon eleventh grade school enrollment at the end of the fall semester. Districts and schools are responsible for editing this information in Pearson AccessNext to ensure accuracy.

Test Accommodations

Accommodations entered in the Test Accommodations and Accessibility (TAA) portal for students in spring testing will carry over to the fall, though the **testing date must be updated in TAA**.

Test Format

The ACT can be administered via paper and pencil during any administration. The ACT can also be administered online during a certain window in the spring. It is not necessary for all schools within a district to use the same format. In other words, districts with multiple high schools may have some schools test on paper and some schools test online. Similarly, it is not necessary for all students within a school to use the same format. Some students may test on paper while some may test online.

Online Testing

The online testing window is **March 20–29, 2018**. Testing can only occur Tuesday–Thursday within this window. There are no make-up dates for online testing outside of the window.

All technical specifications required by ACT must be met, and **all** technical support for online testing will be provided by ACT.

ACT Fee Waiver Program

Students (juniors or seniors), regardless of previous ACT participation, who meet ACT's guidelines for "economically disadvantaged" may request up to two fee waivers from ACT to take the test on a national test date free of charge. School coordinators must order fee waiver forms from ACT. Fee waiver forms are then sent to schools for student access.

ACT fee waivers may only be used on a national testing date. Use of an ACT fee waiver is not meant to substitute for participation in state testing. Instead, it is meant as a supplement for those students who want additional opportunities to improve their score. Complete ACT fee waiver guidelines are available [here](#).

ACT in Accountability

In considering the opportunities for students to complete the ACT, please be advised of the following in terms of administration opportunities.

- **Junior Year Participation:** For juniors not enrolled in Algebra II or English III, ACT data (reading and math subject tests) from the junior test day administration can be substituted for the HS Math and HS English achievement. In addition, beginning in 2016-17, junior year test day data will be used to calculate ACT TVAAS data at the school and district levels. More detailed information about this update will be shared in advance of the release of ACT TVAAS data later this fall and in an updated version of the TVAAS technical documentation.
- **Senior Year Participation:** For determining Ready Graduate, ACT participation rate, and grade 9-12 success rates, the prior year graduating cohort will be used in school and district accountability. The highest ACT composite score earned by a graduate through June of his or her senior year will be considered for use in accountability.

Full details regarding ACT use in accountability will be included in updated Accountability Protocol document to be released in late summer 2017 for the 2017-18 school year.

Contact Information:

Questions regarding ACT administration? Contact Philip.Jacobs@tn.gov.

Questions regarding ACT preparation? Contact Jerre.Maynor@tn.gov.

Questions regarding ACT and accountability? Contact TNed.Accountability@tn.gov.

General ACT questions? Contact ACT.Questions@tn.gov.