# Relating ACT Aspire Scores to Performance in High School Courses 

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## SUMMARY

We examined the relationships of ACT Aspire test scores and high school course grades, AP test scores, and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test scores, demonstrating criterion-related as well as convergent and discriminant validity evidence. We found that ACT Aspire test scores are strong predictors of success in standard, career-focused, AP, and dual enrollment courses. Moreover, ACT Aspire scores demonstrate expected convergent and divergent relations across grade levels and with other standardized measures of college and career readiness.

## SO WHAT?

The results are similar across student subgroups and support five intended uses of ACT Aspire test scores:

1. To measure progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards
2. To determine if students are on target for college and career readiness
3. To provide instructionally actionable information to educators
4. To inform evaluation of school and program effectiveness
5. To inform readiness for advanced high school coursework

## NOW WHAT?

We documented evidence that Arkansas' ACT Aspire scores are related as expected with other variables, supporting Critical Element 3.4 for ESSA Peer Review. Additional research is needed to understand how ACT Aspire test scores and high school coursework and grades can be used together for advising and placement.

## Contents

Introduction ..... 1
Test-Criterion Relationships: Prediction of High School Course Grades ..... 2
Test-Criterion Relationships: Prediction of AP Exam Scores ..... 7
Convergent And Discriminant Evidence: ACT Aspire/PARCC Cross-Grade Correlations ..... 9
Summary ..... 12

# Relating ACT Aspire Scores to Performance in High School Courses and Other Measures of College and Career Readiness 

Jeff Allen, PhD, Justine Radunzel, PhD, and Jizhi Ling

## Introduction

In this report, we provide evidence to support Critical Element 3.4 of ESSA Peer Review: "The State has documented adequate validity evidence that the State's assessment scores are related as expected with other variables" (US Department of Education, 2018). The types of evidence presented in this report are given in Table 1. Evidence is included for each subject area and grade level required for ESSA, as well as the Composite score, which is used as an indicator of career readiness. Evidence is also included for student subgroups: English Language Learner (ELL), Special Education (SPED), free/reduced luncheligible (FRL), and three racial/ethnic subgroups-Black, Hispanic, and White. The evidence falls into two categories: test-criterion relationships and convergent and discriminant evidence.

We argue that intended interpretations for uses of ACT Aspire test scores imply that the test scores should be related to variables external to the test; thus, predictive (test-criterion) and convergent/discriminant relationships are important sources of validity evidence (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014). Uses of Aspire test scores include (ACT, 2019):

1. To measure progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards
2. To determine if students are on target for college and career readiness
3. To provide instructionally actionable information to educators
4. To inform evaluation of school and program effectiveness
5. To inform readiness for advanced high school coursework
6. To understand student and group performance relative to national norms

In this report, we document evidence supporting the first five uses. Evidence supporting the sixth use is documented in the ACT Aspire Summative Technical Manual (ACT, 2019).

Table 1. Types of Validity Evidence, by Subject Area and Grade Level

| Type of validity evidence | Subject area and grade levels |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | ELA | Math | Science | Composite |
|  |  |  |  | $8-10$ |
|  | $8-10$ | $8-10$ | $8-10$ | 8 |
|  | $8-10$ | 10 | 10 |  |
| Convergent and discriminant evidence |  |  |  |  |
| Aspire/Aspire cross-grade correlations | $3 / 4-9 / 10$ | $3 / 4-9 / 10$ | $3 / 4-9 / 10$ |  |
| Aspire/PARCC cross-grade correlations | $3 / 4-9 / 10$ | $3 / 4-8 / 9$ | $5 / 6,7 / 8$ |  |

## Test-Criterion Relationships: Prediction of High School Course Grades

Intended interpretations for each of the five uses covered in the report imply that Aspire test scores should be predictive of performance in high school courses - including standard, career-focused, Advanced Placement (AP), and dual enrollment courses. High school courses are geared towards helping students meet the state's academic standards and are also designed to help students prepare for college and careers. Thus, Aspire test scores, if measuring the state's academic standards and readiness for college and careers, should be predictive of high school course grades. By examining performance in courses that offer college-level curricula such as AP and dual enrollment, college readiness is directly addressed. Similarly, by examining career-focused courses, career readiness is directly addressed.

Students who are struggling in high school courses are candidates for extra academic support. Aspire test scores, if predictive of performance in high school courses, can help with early identification of students in need of support. This is a special case of providing instructionally actionable information to educators, and thus directly addresses Use \#3. If the evidence suggests Aspire measures the state's academic standards and college and career readiness, then this evidence of content alignment provides a stronger rationale for using Aspire test scores for evaluating school and program effectiveness. In addition, Use \#4 (To inform evaluation of school and program effectiveness) is indirectly addressed.

Aspire scores from grades 8-10 were linked to performance in high school courses, using data provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. Aspire scores from spring 2016 and spring 2017 were linked to performance in the following year's courses (e.g., academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018). Hierarchical logistic regression was used to relate test scores to dichotomous course success outcomes. The model accommodated school-specific intercepts, which is important because grading standards likely vary across schools.

Analyses were conducted for several different conditions, defined by:

- Course. The high school courses included 19 standard courses, nine career-focused courses, 10 AP courses, and 10 dual enrollment courses (Appendix Table A1). ${ }^{1}$ For English and social science (social studies) courses, the ACT Aspire ELA score was used as the predictor. For math and science courses, the ACT Aspire math and science scores were used, respectively. For career-focused courses, the ACT Aspire Composite score was used.
- Criterion level. Student grades were categorized as A, B, C, D, or F. For course grade data provided on a numeric scale (0-100), grades were coded as $A=90+B=80-89, C=70-79$, $D=60-69$, and $F=<60$ or withdrawal from course. Three dichotomous course grade outcomes were defined, representing different levels of success: A, B or higher, and C or higher. Pass/fail courses were included for the C or higher outcome, but not for the $A$ or $B$ or higher outcomes.
- Group. Student subgroups included total, ELL, SPED, FRL, Black, Hispanic, and White.

With 48 courses, three criterion levels, and seven groups, there were 1,008 total conditions. However, for some conditions, the sample size was too small to produce stable results (see Appendix Table A1 for sample sizes). We restricted the analysis to conditions with a sample size of at least 100, resulting in 813 conditions for analysis. For each of the 48 courses, descriptive statistics (test score mean and standard deviation, the course grade distribution) are provided in Appendix Table A2.

For each model, Aspire scores were standardized ( $\mathrm{M}=0, \mathrm{SD}=1$ ) with respect to the population of Arkansas examinees at the grade level prior to when the course was usually taken. For example, Biology was predominantly taken in 10th grade, and so the population was defined as all spring 9th-grade examinees. The regression coefficients (e.g., slopes) can be interpreted with respect to standard deviation increases in the test score. This makes it easier to compare predictive strength across different course/test score combinations.

To evaluate how well Aspire scores predict performance in high school courses, we used results from ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks research as points of reference (Table 2; Allen, 2013; Radunzel, Westrick, Bassiri, \& Li, 2017). The logistic regression slope values presented in Table 2 were calculated using the same methods (hierarchical logistic regression) as used for this study. The slopes represent the change in the log-odds of success, associated with a standard deviation ${ }^{2}$ increase in ACT test score. We refer to these slopes as ACT reference slopes.

Cohen's effect size benchmarks for correlations are $r=0.10,0.30$, and 0.50 for small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988). We translated Cohen's correlation benchmarks to logistic regression slope benchmarks using an established formula (Table 3; Allen \& Le, 2008). This provides us with more points of reference for describing how well Aspire scores predict high school course grades. For example, a logistic regression slope of 0.935 corresponds to a "large" effect size and would suggest that the test score is a strong predictor of course success. The logistic regression slopes can also be transformed to standardized odds ratios. ${ }^{3}$ For example, for a large effect size, the odds ratio is 2.55 , meaning that the odds of success increase by a factor of 2.55 for each standard deviation increase in the test score.

Table 2. ACT Reference Slopes (Logistic Regression Slopes of ACT Test Scores)

| Subject area | College course(s) | Criterion level |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | $\mathbf{A}$ | B or higher | C or higher |
|  |  | 0.977 | 0.904 | 0.673 |
| ELA | Social science | 1.246 | 1.229 | 1.083 |
| Math | College algebra | 1.369 | 1.119 | 0.865 |
| Science | Biology | 1.324 | 1.147 | 0.983 |

Table 3. Cohen's Effect Size Benchmarks

| Effect size <br> descriptor | $\boldsymbol{r}$ | Logistic regression measures |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Slope | Odds Ratio |
| Small | 0.10 | 0.160 | 1.17 |
| Medium | 0.30 | 0.504 | 1.66 |
| Large | 0.50 | 0.935 | 2.55 |

Logistic regression slopes that represent the three effect size benchmarks (small, medium, and large) are plotted in Figure 1, which shows how the probability of success changes with a change in test score. For example, when the effect size is "large," the probability of success increases from 0.50 to 0.72 with a standard-deviation increase in the test score (from a z-score of 0 to 1 ). When the effect size is "small," the probability of success increases from 0.50 to 0.54 with a standard-deviation increase in the test score.

Figure 1. Probabilities of Success Associated with Effect Size Benchmarks for Logistic Regression Slopes


Instead of presenting results for each condition, we used a meta-analytic approach to summarize results across the 813 conditions. We addressed the following Research Questions:

1. How well do Aspire test scores predict success in high school courses?
2. Does the predictive strength vary across content area?
3. Does the predictive strength vary across type of course (standard, career-focused, AP, or dual enrollment)?
4. Does the predictive strength vary across student subgroups?

To address Question 1, the mean slope across all courses was calculated for the total group (Table 4). The means represent the average logistic regression slopes across courses and were weighted by the course sample size. The mean slopes ranged from 1.172 for the C-or-higher criterion to 1.512 for the A criterion. The mean slopes exceeded the threshold for a "large" effect size (0.935). Thus, we conclude that, on average, Aspire test scores are strong predictors of success in high school courses.

Table 4. Total Group Predictive Strength of High School Course Grades (Logistic Regression Slopes)

| Subject area | Course Category | N | Criterion level |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | ---: | :--- | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | courses | A | B or higher | C or higher |
| All |  | 98 | 1.512 | 1.301 | 1.172 |
| ELA | English | 9 | 1.620 | 1.333 | 1.163 |
| ELA | Social Studies | 12 | 1.454 | 1.233 | 1.081 |
| Math | Math | 8 | 1.533 | 1.386 | 1.339 |
| Science | Natural Science | 10 | 1.487 | 1.267 | 1.127 |
| Composite | Career-focused | 9 | 1.406 | 1.311 | 1.214 |

To address Question 2, the mean slope was calculated for each course category (English, social studies, math, natural science, or career-focused; Table 4). ${ }^{4}$ Comparing the mean slopes in Table 4 to the respective ACT reference slopes (Table 2), we find that the mean Aspire slopes usually exceeded the reference slopes. For example, the mean slope for the Aspire ELA score predicting $B$ or higher grades in high school English courses is 1.333 , which is larger than the mean slope for the ELA score predicting $B$ or higher grades in college English Composition (0.904). For the $B$ and $C$ criterion levels for social studies, the mean Aspire slopes ( 1.233 and 1.081, respectively) are nearly identical to the respective ACT reference slopes ( 1.229 and 1.083, respectively). In all other cases, the mean Aspire slopes exceeded the ACT reference slopes (Table 2).

Moreover, each of the mean slopes exceeded the threshold for a "large" effect size. ANOVA was used to test for differences in mean slopes across course categories. Slopes did not vary across course category for the $A$ and $B$ or higher criteria. For the $C$ or higher criterion, the mean slope for math courses (1.339) was significantly larger than the mean slope for English (1.163), social studies (1.081), and natural science (1.127). However, the mean slopes for C or higher are still similar in magnitude, ranging from 1.081 to 1.339 across course categories. We conclude that the predictive strength is strong for each subject test, and that the predictive strength is similar across content areas.

For each content area, course success rates can also be examined by Aspire Readiness Levels (In Need of Support, Close, Ready, and Exceeding). B or higher success rates, averaged across core subject area courses, are presented in Figure 2. As expected, success rates increase significantly with readiness level. Students at the "in need of support" level are least likely to earn B or higher grades, with success rates ranging from $28 \%$ for math courses to $43 \%$ for social studies courses. Students at the "exceeding" level had very high success rates: $91 \%$ to $92 \%$ across subject areas.

Figure 2. B or Higher Success Rates, by ACT Aspire Readiness Level, Averaged Across Core Subject Area Courses


Cross-tabulations of Aspire Readiness Levels and course success enable calculations of accuracy rates and other measures of predictive strength. Table 5 shows the cross-tabulation of Aspire Readiness Level and $B$ or higher course outcomes, averaged across courses. The table gives the percentage of students with each combination of readiness level and outcome, as well as margin percentages. Classifications for "In Need of Support" are accurate for students in the lowest readiness level who are not successful in a course and for students in the other readiness levels who are successful in a course (see cells shaded in
blue). For math, the average accuracy rate for "In Need of Support" classifications is $71.1 \%$. This can be derived by summing the percentages in Table 5 that are shaded in blue for math $(31.4 \%+14.7 \%+$ $13.3 \%+11.7 \%$ ). Similarly, the average accuracy rates are $73.7 \%$ for English courses, $72.0 \%$ for science courses, $72.7 \%$ for social studies courses, and $75.2 \%$ for career-focused courses. This evidence supports using Aspire scores to help identify the students in greatest need of academic support, which can be considered a special case of Use \#3 (To provide instructionally actionable information to educators).

Table 5. Cross-Tabulation of ACT Aspire Readiness Level and B or Higher Course Outcome, Averaged Over Courses

| Course content area / ACT Aspire test score | Readiness level ${ }^{5}$ | Course outcome |  | Total |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | B or higher | C or lower |  |
| English/ELA | In Need of Support | 12.9\% | 25.4\% | 38.3\% |
|  | Close | 13.4\% | 7.2\% | 20.7\% |
|  | Ready | 15.9\% | 4.2\% | 20.1\% |
|  | Exceeding | 18.9\% | 2.0\% | 20.9\% |
|  | Total | 61.2\% | 38.8\% | 100.0\% |
| Math/Math | In Need of Support | 13.2\% | 31.4\% | 44.6\% |
|  | Close | 14.7\% | 10.7\% | 25.4\% |
|  | Ready | 13.3\% | 3.9\% | 17.2\% |
|  | Exceeding | 11.7\% | 1.1\% | 12.8\% |
|  | Total | 52.9\% | 47.1\% | 100.0\% |
| Science/Science | In Need of Support | 15.1\% | 29.1\% | 44.2\% |
|  | Close | 14.5\% | 7.9\% | 22.3\% |
|  | Ready | 16.4\% | 3.9\% | 20.3\% |
|  | Exceeding | 12.1\% | 1.1\% | 13.2\% |
|  | Total | 58.0\% | 42.0\% | 100.0\% |
| Social studies/ELA | In Need of Support | 16.3\% | 21.9\% | 38.2\% |
|  | Close | 14.8\% | 5.9\% | 20.7\% |
|  | Ready | 16.8\% | 3.4\% | 20.2\% |
|  | Exceeding | 19.3\% | 1.6\% | 20.9\% |
|  | Total | 67.2\% | 32.8\% | 100.0\% |
| Career-focused/ Composite | Bronze or below | 18.3\% | 13.1\% | 31.4\% |
|  | Silver | 29.3\% | 5.1\% | 34.4\% |
|  | Gold | 21.7\% | 1.2\% | 22.9\% |
|  | Platinum | 11.1\% | 0.2\% | 11.3\% |
|  | Total | 80.4\% | 19.6\% | 100.0\% |

Note: Classifications for "In Need of Support" are accurate for students in the lowest readiness level who are not successful in a course and for students in the other readiness levels who are successful in a course (see cells shaded in blue).

To address Question 3, the mean slopes were examined for each course type (Table 6). For all course types and criterion levels, the mean slopes exceed the threshold for a "large" effect size (0.935). ANOVA was used to test for differences in mean slopes across course types. For the A and B criterion levels, we found that the mean slopes were greater for AP courses relative to the other course types. We conclude that Aspire test scores are strong predictors of grades across all course types and that Aspire test scores are especially useful for predicting how well students will perform in AP courses.

Table 6. Total Group Predictive Strength, by Course Type

| Course Type | N | Criterion level |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | A | B or higher | C or higher |
| All |  | 1.512 | 1.301 | 1.172 |
| Standard | 19 | 1.499 | 1.287 | 1.159 |
| Career-focused | 9 | 1.406 | 1.311 | 1.214 |
| AP | 10 | 2.071 | 1.596 | 1.365 |
| Dual enrollment | 10 | 1.276 | 1.103 | 0.980 |

To address Question 4, the mean slopes were examined for each student subgroup (Table 7). For each student subgroup, weights were applied to make the subgroup's distribution of test scores similar to the total group's distribution. ${ }^{6}$ For most student subgroups, the mean slopes exceeded the threshold for a "large" effect size (0.935). The one exception occurred for the C or higher criterion for the SPED subgroup, where the mean slope approached a "large" effect size ( 0.896 ). Thus, we conclude that Aspire test scores are strong predictors of success in high school courses for student subgroups.

Table 7. Average Predictive Strength (Logistic Regression Slopes), by Subgroup

| Group | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{N} \\ \text { courses } \end{gathered}$ | Criterion level |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | A | B or higher | C or higher |
| Total | 48 | 1.512 | 1.301 | 1.172 |
| ELL | 29 | 1.196 | 1.051 | 0.940 |
| SPED | 26 | 1.130 | 0.980 | 0.896 |
| FRL | 48 | 1.412 | 1.212 | 1.078 |
| Black | 36 | 1.479 | 1.305 | 1.208 |
| Hispanic | 36 | 1.385 | 1.196 | 1.067 |
| White | 48 | 1.515 | 1.302 | 1.172 |

Using ANOVA, we found significant variation across student subgroups in the predictive strength of Aspire test scores. Mean slopes were largest for the total, Black, and White subgroups; slopes were smallest for the SPED and ELL subgroups. We conclude that the predictive strength of Aspire scores varies by student subgroup but that Aspire test scores are strong predictors of success in high school courses for all student subgroups.

## Test-Criterion Relationships: Prediction of AP Exam Scores

If Aspire test scores are predictive of AP exam scores, there is additional evidence that Aspire measures college readiness. And such evidence would directly support another use of Aspire scores: to identify students who are ready for the additional challenges associated with advanced high school coursework (Use \#5).

Aspire scores from grades $8-10$ were linked to performance on AP exams, again using data provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. Hierarchical logistic regression was used to relate Aspire scores to success on the AP exam, defined as earning a 3 ("qualified for doing the work of an introductory-level college course") or higher.

Analyses were conducted for different conditions defined by AP course and group. There were 10 AP courses, and the same student groups as used for the course grade analysis. Appendix Table A4 shows the sample size for each course/group combination. For AP exams for English and social studies courses, the Aspire ELA score was used as the predictor. For AP exams in math and science, the Aspire math and science scores were used, respectively. For each of the 10 courses, descriptive statistics (test score mean and standard deviation, the distribution of AP exam scores) are provided in Appendix Table A5.

With 10 courses and seven groups, there are 70 possible conditions. We restricted the analysis to conditions with a sample size of at least 100, resulting in 45 conditions for analysis. Similar to the course grade analysis, Aspire scores were standardized ( $M=0, S D=1$ ) with respect to the population of Arkansas examinees at the grade level prior to when the course was usually taken.

The analysis addressed the following Research Questions:
5. How well do Aspire test scores predict success on AP exams?
6. Does the predictive strength vary across content area?
7. Does the predictive strength vary across subgroups?

To address Question 5, the mean slope across all AP exams was calculated for the total group (Table 8). The means represent the average logistic regression slopes across AP exams and were weighted by sample size. The mean slope is 3.010 , far exceeding the threshold for a "large" effect size (0.935) and all ACT reference slopes (Table 2). We conclude that Aspire test scores are very strong predictors of success on AP exams.

Because Aspire scores are such strong predictors of success on AP exams, Aspire scores can be used to identify students who are ready to succeed in AP courses and exams. Figure 3 shows the estimated probability of success on the AP English Language \& Composition Exam, by grade 10 Aspire ELA score. Students with scores of 438 and higher have more than a 0.50 probability of succeeding on the AP exam.

Figure 3. Probability of Success on AP English Language \& Composition Exam


Grade 10 Aspire ELA Score

To address Question 6, the mean slope was calculated for each course category (Table 8). The mean slope was largest for Aspire ELA score predicting success on AP English exams (3.518), followed by Aspire science score predicting success on AP science exams (2.886). ANOVA was used to test for differences in mean slopes across course category. Slopes were significantly higher for English relative to the other course categories. We conclude that Aspire test scores are very strong predictors of success on AP exams across all content areas and that the predictive relationship is strongest for English courses.

Table 8. Total Group Predictive Strength (Logistic Regression Slopes) of AP Exam Success by Subject Area

| Subject <br> area | Course Category | N <br> courses | Mean slope |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: |
| All | All | 10 | 3.010 |
| ELA | English | 2 | 3.518 |
| ELA | Social Studies | 3 | 2.404 |
| Math | Math | 2 | 2.640 |
| Science | Natural Science | 3 | 2.886 |

To address Question 7, the mean slopes were examined for each subgroup (Table 9). Results are not available for the SPED subgroup because no AP exams met the sample size requirement. ${ }^{7}$ For all subgroups, the mean slopes far exceeded the threshold for a "large" effect size and all ACT reference slopes (Table 2). Using ANOVA, we did not find significant differences in predictive strength across the included subgroups. We conclude that, across all student subgroups, Aspire test scores are very strong predictors of success on AP exams.

Table 9. Average Predictive Strength (Logistic Regression Slopes) for AP Exam Success by Group

| Group | N <br> courses | Mean slope |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Total | 10 | 3.010 |
| ELL | 2 | 3.343 |
| SPED | 0 | -- |
| FRL | 10 | 3.012 |
| Black | 6 | 3.329 |
| Hispanic | 7 | 2.885 |
| White | 10 | 2.952 |

Note: Results are not available for the SPED subgroup due to small sample size

## Convergent and Discriminant Evidence: ACT Aspire/PARCC CrossGrade Correlations

Students (and groups of students) may have academic needs that vary by subject area. For example, some students need more help in math, relative to ELA. For each use of Aspire scores, it's important for the assessment to distinguish areas of academic need. This implies that Aspire test scores should exhibit convergent and discriminant relationships with other test scores.

If Aspire test scores are highly correlated across grade levels, we have greater confidence that the constructs measured by the test are very similar across grade levels. Moreover, if the cross-grade
correlations demonstrate expected patterns of convergence and divergence, we have greater confidence in using Aspire scores to identify academic needs.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test scores are established measures of the Common Core State Standards. If Aspire test scores are correlated with PARCC test scores, the evidence further supports using Aspire test scores to measure progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards (Use \#1).

We first examined cross-grade correlations of Aspire scores, linking scores in adjacent grades (e.g., 3-4, 45, etc.). Test scores from 2016 through 2018 are used. For each group, the sample size varies by grade level and subject (Appendix Table A6). To examine convergence, we examined same-subject correlations for ELA, math, and science. To evaluate whether the relationships varied by student subgroup, we examined whether a subgroup's correlation was different than the total group's correlation by 0.10 ("small" effect, using Cohen's correlation benchmarks) or more, which we consider a substantial difference.

We then examined correlations of Aspire and PARCC test scores for PARCC tests taken in spring 2015 and Aspire tests taken in spring 2016. ${ }^{8}$ To examine convergence, PARCC ELA tests taken in grades 3-9 are paired with Aspire ELA scores for grades 4-10, PARCC math tests taken in grades 3-8 are paired with Aspire math tests taken in grades 4-9, and PARCC science tests taken in grades 5 and 7 are paired with Aspire science tests taken in grades 6 and 8 . For each group, the sample size varies by grade level and subject (Appendix Table A7).

Lastly, we explored convergence/divergence by comparing math/ELA correlations to ELA/ELA and math/math correlations. Aspire ELA scores are paired with Aspire math scores from adjacent grades (e.g., grade 3 ELA with grade 4 math). Similarly, PARCC ELA tests taken in grades 3-9 are paired with Aspire math tests taken in grades 4-10. If ELA/math correlations are smaller than ELA/ELA and math/math correlations by 0.10 or more, we conclude that there is evidence of divergent relationships.

We addressed the following Research Questions:
8. Are Aspire scores highly correlated across grade levels?
9. Do Aspire cross-grade correlations vary across subgroups?
10. Are Aspire and PARCC scores for ELA, math, and science highly correlated?
11. Do Aspire/PARCC correlations vary across subgroups?
12. Do Aspire and Aspire/PARCC correlations show patterns of convergence and divergence?

For the total group and each subgroup, Aspire cross-grade correlations are presented in Table 10. The correlations were disattenuated ${ }^{9}$ and then averaged across grade levels. For each subgroup, weights were applied to make the subgroup's distribution of lower-grade scores similar to the total group's distribution.

To address Question 8, we computed the average total group cross-grade correlations. The results indicated a correlation of 0.933 for ELA, 0.938 for math, and 0.912 for science (Table 10). Because the correlations are disattenuated, we would expect them to approach 1.000 for tests that measure identical constructs at the same point in time. The Aspire cross-grade correlations are expected to be less than 1.000 because the measured construct is not identical across grade levels and because the measures
occur one year apart, with variation in student growth. Because the correlations are near perfect (all $r s>$ .90 ), we conclude that Aspire scores are highly correlated across grade levels and that the measured construct is very similar across grade levels.

Table 10. ACT Aspire Cross-Grade Correlations (Disattenuated), Averaged Across Grade Levels

|  | Subject |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Group | ELA | Math | Science |
| Total | 0.933 | 0.938 | 0.912 |
| ELL | 0.917 | 0.886 | 0.895 |
| SPED | 0.937 | 0.941 | 0.910 |
| FRL | 0.926 | 0.923 | 0.902 |
| Black | 0.928 | 0.930 | 0.910 |
| Hispanic | 0.930 | 0.903 | 0.906 |
| White | 0.929 | 0.931 | 0.898 |

To address Question 9, we computed the Aspire correlations across subgroups (Table 10). For ELA and science, there is very little variation across subgroups. For math, the correlations for ELL (0.886) and Hispanic ( 0.903 ) were slightly lower than the total group correlation (0.938). All of the subgroup correlations were within 0.100 of the total group's correlation. We conclude that the ELA and science correlations do not vary across subgroups and that the math correlations are slightly lower for ELL and Hispanic students.

Aspire/PARCC cross-grade correlations are presented in Table 11 for the total group and each subgroup. The correlations were again disattenuated ${ }^{10}$ and weighted and then averaged across grade levels.

To address Question 10, we computed the average total group Aspire/PARCC correlations. The results indicated a correlation of 0.891 for ELA, 0.856 for math, and 0.845 for science (Table 11). As expected, the Aspire/PARCC correlations were lower than the cross-grade Aspire correlations, due to differences in test design and content coverage. Because the correlations are still very large, we conclude that Aspire and PARCC scores are highly correlated, and that the two assessments measure related constructs.

Table 11. ACT Aspire/PARCC Cross-Grade Correlations (Disattenuated), Averaged Across Grade Levels

|  | Subject |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Group | ELA | Math | Science |
| Total | 0.891 | 0.856 | 0.845 |
| ELL | 0.863 | 0.820 | 0.808 |
| SPED | 0.881 | 0.836 | 0.765 |
| FRL | 0.883 | 0.837 | 0.823 |
| Black | 0.872 | 0.816 | 0.813 |
| Hispanic | 0.889 | 0.831 | 0.829 |
| White | 0.890 | 0.859 | 0.837 |

To address Question 11, we computed the Aspire/PARCC correlations across subgroups (Table 11). For ELA, there was very little variation across subgroups, with correlations ranging from 0.863 (ELL) to 0.891 (Total group). For math, there was slightly more variation with correlations ranging from 0.816 (Black) to 0.859 (White). For science, the correlation for the SPED subgroup was 0.765 , which is less than the Total
group correlation (0.845). All of the subgroup correlations are within 0.100 of the total group's correlation. We conclude that Aspire and PARCC scores are highly correlated for all subgroups with some minor variation in correlations across subgroups.

To address Question 12, we computed ELA/math cross-grade correlations for the total group. The average correlation between the Aspire ELA score and the Aspire math score was 0.817 (results not tabled). Because this correlation is smaller than the Aspire math ( 0.938 ) and ELA ( 0.933 ) correlations by more than 0.100 , there is evidence of convergent-divergent relationships. Similarly, the average correlation of PARCC ELA score with Aspire math score was 0.770 . Because this correlation is smaller than the Aspire/PARCC math $(0.856)$ and ELA ( 0.891 ), there is further evidence of convergent-divergent relationships.

## Summary

In this paper, we have documented evidence that Arkansas' Aspire scores are related as expected with other variables, supporting Critical Element 3.4 for ESSA Peer Review. We argue that the evidence supports five primary uses of Aspire scores; table 12 lists how each use is supported by each piece of evidence. The number of check marks indicates whether the use is directly or indirectly supported: $\sqrt{ }=$ indirect support (shaded blue), $\sqrt{ } \sqrt{ }=$ direct support (shaded orange).

Table 12. Summarizing Uses of ACT Aspire Test Scores and Supporting Evidence

| Use of ACT Aspire | Test-criterion relationships |  | Convergent/ divergent relationships |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | HS course grades | AP exams | ACT Aspire | ACT Aspire/ PARCC |
| 1. To measure progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards | $\checkmark$ |  | $\checkmark$ | $\checkmark$ |
| 2. To determine if students are on target for college and career readiness | $\checkmark$ | $\checkmark \sqrt{ }$ | $\checkmark$ | $\checkmark$ |
| 3. To provide instructionally actionable information to educators | $\checkmark \sqrt{ }$ |  | $\checkmark$ | $\checkmark$ |
| 4. To inform evaluation of school and program effectiveness | $\checkmark$ |  | $\checkmark$ | $\checkmark$ |
| 5. To inform readiness for advanced high school coursework | $\checkmark \checkmark$ | $\sqrt{ } \sqrt{ }$ |  |  |

Note: $\sqrt{ }$ indicates indirect support for the use of Aspire, $\sqrt{ }$ indicates direct support for the use of Aspire

Specific findings that support these uses of Aspire scores include:

- On average, Aspire test scores are strong predictors of success in high school courses across all content areas, including standard, AP, and dual enrollment courses.
- Aspire scores are strong predictors of success for all student subgroups examined.
- Students at the "In Need of Support" achievement level have the lowest probability of success in high school courses. Accuracy rates for "In Need of Support" classifications range from 71\% to $75 \%$ across content areas.
- Aspire test scores are very strong predictors of success on AP exams, and this finding holds for all student subgroups examined.
- Aspire scores are highly correlated across grade levels, suggesting that the measured constructs are very similar across grade levels.
- ELA and science correlations do not vary across student subgroups, and math correlations are all within 0.10 of the total group correlation.
- Aspire and PARCC scores are highly correlated across grade levels, suggesting that the two assessments measure related constructs.
- Aspire and PARCC scores are highly correlated for all student subgroups, with only minor variation in correlations across student subgroups.
- Correlations of Aspire and PARCC scores show expected convergent/divergent patterns. ELA/math correlations are notably lower than ELA/ELA and math/math correlations.


## Notes

1. Course categorizations were provided by the Arkansas Department of Education.
2. The ACT high school graduating class of 2018 is used as the population basis for standard deviations.
3. Odds Ratio $=\exp ($ slope $)$
4. For each course, the total group logistic regression slope estimates are presented in Appendix Table A3.
5. For career-focused courses, career readiness levels based on the Progress Toward Career Readiness Indicator (Allen, 2018) are used instead of ACT Readiness Levels.
6. The weights are designed to correct for artificial differences across groups in mean slopes that can be attributed to the distribution of test scores.
7. If the sample size requirement is relaxed for the SPED group, the mean slope for the SPED group is 2.406 across three AP exams.
8. Arkansas administered the PARCC assessments in spring 2015, followed by Aspire beginning in spring 2016.
9. The disattenuated correlation of variables x and y is calculated as the simple correlation of x and y , divided by the square root of the product of the reliability of $x$ and reliability of $y$.
10. To calculate disattenuated correlations, the reliability estimates for the PARCC ELA and math tests were obtained from the PARCC 2015 technical report obtained at https://parcc-assessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/PARCC-2015-Tech-Report.pdf. For PARCC science, reliabilities of 0.90 were assumed for this report, which is slightly lower than the typical reliabilities reported for ELA and math.

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## Appendix

Table A1. High School Courses and Sample Size, by Group

| High school course | Subgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | ELL | SPED | FRL | Black | Hispanic | White |
| English 9 | 61,575 | 4,180 | 3,320 | 35,427 | 12,019 | 7,419 | 39,229 |
| Oral Communication | 40,886 | 3,326 | 3,705 | 22,585 | 6,817 | 5,431 | 26,512 |
| English 10 | 59,460 | 3,645 | 3,050 | 32,528 | 11,593 | 6,775 | 38,341 |
| English 11 | 39,232 | 2,729 | 2,712 | 22,878 | 8,450 | 4,573 | 24,533 |
| Algebra I | 46,635 | 3,934 | 2,437 | 29,280 | 9,820 | 6,263 | 28,481 |
| Geometry | 58,471 | 3,829 | 2,344 | 31,984 | 11,068 | 6,922 | 37,691 |
| Algebra II | 51,459 | 2,683 | 1,411 | 26,101 | 9,846 | 5,760 | 33,385 |
| Pre-Calculus | 9,220 | 120 | 30 | 3,294 | 1,306 | 580 | 6,733 |
| Physical Science | 60,569 | 4,617 | 5,706 | 37,143 | 12,445 | 7,347 | 38,123 |
| Biology | 62,629 | 4,283 | 5,052 | 35,359 | 12,385 | 7,462 | 39,850 |
| Chemistry | 40,715 | 2,179 | 1,094 | 19,680 | 7,582 | 4,722 | 26,464 |
| Environmental Science | 10,399 | 867 | 2,497 | 7,234 | 2,388 | 1,087 | 6,511 |
| Physics | 4,859 | 289 | 154 | 2,018 | 607 | 656 | 3,262 |
| Civics | 58,940 | 4,176 | 5,192 | 34,808 | 12,150 | 7,073 | 37,027 |
| Economics | 55,474 | 4,016 | 4,756 | 32,987 | 11,573 | 6,720 | 34,683 |
| World History | 50,440 | 3,573 | 4,782 | 30,410 | 10,937 | 5,826 | 31,547 |
| Psychology | 8,127 | 395 | 455 | 4,439 | 1,417 | 893 | 5,463 |
| Sociology | 6,364 | 332 | 422 | 3,728 | 1,373 | 677 | 4,055 |
| US History | 45,650 | 3,467 | 4,357 | 26,616 | 9,268 | 5,857 | 28,555 |
| CF: Computerized Business Applications | 22,688 | 1,089 | 2,305 | 14,564 | 5,507 | 2,098 | 14,291 |
| CF: Family and Consumer Sciences | 19,315 | 1,361 | 2,517 | 12,704 | 4,596 | 2,224 | 11,684 |
| CF: Survey of Agriculture Systems | 12,707 | 494 | 1,764 | 7,909 | 1,056 | 906 | 10,395 |
| CF: Technology Design and Applications | 3,471 | 216 | 358 | 2,286 | 1,169 | 402 | 1,799 |
| CF: Agricultural Mechanics | 5,001 | 175 | 691 | 2,888 | 293 | 306 | 4,284 |
| CF: Child Development | 8,722 | 509 | 1,081 | 5,737 | 2,675 | 913 | 4,833 |
| CF: Financial Literacy | 5,481 | 333 | 620 | 3,154 | 1,221 | 565 | 3,424 |
| CF: Food and Nutrition | 8,829 | 627 | 1,135 | 5,441 | 2,257 | 1,001 | 5,143 |
| CF: Marketing | 1,310 | 95 | 65 | 616 | 233 | 184 | 820 |
| AP English Language and Composition | 14,874 | 289 | 64 | 5,441 | 2,423 | 1,206 | 10,414 |
| AP English Literature and Composition | 2,200 | 95 | 9 | 1,077 | 142 | 401 | 1,492 |
| AP Calculus AB | 1,011 | 7 | 2 | 166 | 99 | 72 | 663 |
| AP Statistics | 912 | 16 | 3 | 234 | 95 | 76 | 638 |
| AP Biology | 3,197 | 75 | 5 | 1,121 | 424 | 298 | 2,219 |
| AP Chemistry | 1,144 | 16 | 1 | 281 | 108 | 99 | 792 |
| AP Physics | 1,815 | 46 | 9 | 495 | 138 | 213 | 1,248 |
| AP Human Geography | 1,566 | 59 | 17 | 363 | 99 | 216 | 1,065 |
| AP World History | 9,052 | 426 | 54 | 3,242 | 1,364 | 1,189 | 5,880 |
| AP Psychology | 1,662 | 67 | 7 | 447 | 142 | 236 | 1,088 |


| High school course | Subgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | ELL |  |  |  |  |  |  | SPED | FRL | Black | Hispanic | White |
| DE: English Comp I | 737 | 3 | 4 | 300 | 56 | 59 | 591 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: English Comp II | 348 | 3 | 3 | 157 | 14 | 36 | 279 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: Oral Communication | 1,739 | 31 | 76 | 800 | 102 | 99 | 1,484 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: College Algebra | 1,088 | 6 | 2 | 274 | 69 | 67 | 894 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: Pre-Calculus/Trig | 515 | 5 | 2 | 134 | 22 | 27 | 437 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: Biology | 568 | 70 | 45 | 310 | 48 | 143 | 357 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: Anatomy and Physiology | 330 | 3 | 7 | 148 | 54 | 18 | 245 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: World History | 735 | 3 | 35 | 305 | 27 | 42 | 641 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: Psychology | 232 | 1 | 4 | 116 | 12 | 13 | 199 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DE: US History | 1,084 | 3 | 35 | 382 | 57 | 41 | 930 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Note: AP = Advanced Placement, DE = Dual Enrollment, CF = Career Focused (according to Arkansas's common course code list)

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Success in High School Courses

| High school course | Primary grade level | Subject area | Test Score |  | Course grade distribution |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Mean | SD | A | B | C | D | F |
| English 9 | 9 | ELA | 425.7 | 6.3 | 0.292 | 0.320 | 0.220 | 0.113 | 0.054 |
| Oral Communication | 9 | ELA | 425.8 | 6.9 | 0.435 | 0.293 | 0.152 | 0.077 | 0.044 |
| English 10 | 10 | ELA | 426.2 | 6.8 | 0.292 | 0.328 | 0.223 | 0.107 | 0.051 |
| English 11 | 11 | ELA | 425.6 | 6.4 | 0.218 | 0.332 | 0.262 | 0.131 | 0.056 |
| Algebra I | 9 | Math | 422.4 | 6.5 | 0.200 | 0.285 | 0.254 | 0.165 | 0.097 |
| Geometry | 10 | Math | 424.8 | 7.4 | 0.260 | 0.287 | 0.229 | 0.146 | 0.077 |
| Algebra II | 11 | Math | 426.6 | 7.4 | 0.292 | 0.300 | 0.224 | 0.128 | 0.057 |
| Pre-Calculus | 11 | Math | 433.7 | 6.7 | 0.473 | 0.318 | 0.142 | 0.049 | 0.019 |
| Physical Science | 9 | Science | 423.4 | 7.7 | 0.255 | 0.323 | 0.239 | 0.125 | 0.058 |
| Biology | 10 | Science | 425.0 | 8.1 | 0.257 | 0.318 | 0.241 | 0.126 | 0.058 |
| Chemistry | 11 | Science | 428.6 | 8.1 | 0.278 | 0.336 | 0.236 | 0.108 | 0.043 |
| Environmental Science | 11 | Science | 420.6 | 7.2 | 0.179 | 0.332 | 0.288 | 0.142 | 0.060 |
| Physics | 11 | Science | 429.9 | 7.9 | 0.322 | 0.344 | 0.209 | 0.088 | 0.037 |
| Civics | 9 | ELA | 425.1 | 6.6 | 0.360 | 0.315 | 0.198 | 0.091 | 0.037 |
| Economics | 9 | ELA | 425.2 | 6.7 | 0.373 | 0.308 | 0.188 | 0.089 | 0.042 |
| World History | 10 | ELA | 424.7 | 6.8 | 0.300 | 0.319 | 0.223 | 0.107 | 0.050 |
| Psychology | 11 | ELA | 427.5 | 6.7 | 0.443 | 0.283 | 0.159 | 0.069 | 0.046 |
| Sociology | 11 | ELA | 426.9 | 7.0 | 0.464 | 0.272 | 0.143 | 0.072 | 0.049 |
| US History | 11 | ELA | 425.6 | 6.8 | 0.315 | 0.336 | 0.213 | 0.094 | 0.042 |
| CF: Computerized Business Applications | 9 | Composite | 424.0 | 7.2 | 0.427 | 0.276 | 0.157 | 0.079 | 0.062 |
| CF: Family and Consumer Sciences | 9 | Composite | 423.3 | 6.9 | 0.471 | 0.292 | 0.145 | 0.056 | 0.037 |
| CF: Survey of Agriculture Systems | 9 | Composite | 423.2 | 6.9 | 0.525 | 0.282 | 0.124 | 0.045 | 0.025 |
| CF: Technology Design and Applications | 9 | Composite | 423.5 | 7.2 | 0.400 | 0.263 | 0.160 | 0.097 | 0.080 |
| CF: Agricultural Mechanics | 10 | Composite | 423.5 | 7.1 | 0.619 | 0.273 | 0.076 | 0.022 | 0.009 |
| CF: Child Development | 10 | Composite | 423.5 | 6.9 | 0.455 | 0.286 | 0.155 | 0.067 | 0.037 |
| CF: Financial Literacy | 11 | Composite | 424.8 | 7.5 | 0.400 | 0.282 | 0.175 | 0.091 | 0.052 |
| CF: Food and Nutrition | 11 | Composite | 424.0 | 7.2 | 0.486 | 0.306 | 0.133 | 0.053 | 0.023 |
| CF: Marketing | 11 | Composite | 426.8 | 7.1 | 0.450 | 0.291 | 0.165 | 0.066 | 0.029 |
| AP English Language and Composition | 11 | ELA | 432.8 | 5.0 | 0.360 | 0.411 | 0.165 | 0.050 | 0.014 |
| AP English Literature and Composition | 11 | ELA | 433.2 | 4.6 | 0.385 | 0.375 | 0.171 | 0.051 | 0.019 |
| AP Calculus Ab | 11 | Math | 439.5 | 5.2 | 0.486 | 0.309 | 0.151 | 0.043 | 0.012 |
| AP Statistics | 11 | Math | 436.0 | 6.5 | 0.464 | 0.330 | 0.139 | 0.050 | 0.016 |
| AP Biology | 11 | Science | 434.3 | 6.8 | 0.381 | 0.356 | 0.184 | 0.053 | 0.026 |
| AP Chemistry | 11 | Science | 437.6 | 6.2 | 0.462 | 0.340 | 0.142 | 0.045 | 0.010 |


| High school course | Primary grade level | Subject area | Test Score |  | Course grade distribution |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Mean | SD | A | B | C | D | F |
| AP Physics | 11 | Science | 436.4 | 6.4 | 0.354 | 0.358 | 0.215 | 0.058 | 0.015 |
| AP Human Geography | 9 | ELA | 432.9 | 5.0 | 0.426 | 0.311 | 0.161 | 0.075 | 0.027 |
| AP World History | 10 | ELA | 431.8 | 5.3 | 0.309 | 0.377 | 0.202 | 0.083 | 0.029 |
| AP Psychology | 11 | ELA | 433.7 | 5.1 | 0.418 | 0.343 | 0.148 | 0.058 | 0.034 |
| DE: English Comp I | 11 | ELA | 433.6 | 4.0 | 0.449 | 0.364 | 0.138 | 0.033 | 0.016 |
| DE: English Comp II | 11 | ELA | 433.7 | 4.3 | 0.489 | 0.336 | 0.121 | 0.029 | 0.026 |
| DE: Oral Communication | 11 | ELA | 429.7 | 6.5 | 0.503 | 0.311 | 0.122 | 0.042 | 0.022 |
| DE: College Algebra | 11 | Math | 434.6 | 5.4 | 0.464 | 0.352 | 0.139 | 0.032 | 0.013 |
| DE: Pre-Calculus/Trig | 11 | Math | 436.6 | 5.2 | 0.441 | 0.317 | 0.173 | 0.052 | 0.017 |
| DE: Biology | 10 | Science | 425.9 | 8.3 | 0.197 | 0.324 | 0.292 | 0.127 | 0.060 |
| DE: Anatomy and Physiology | 11 | Science | 428.9 | 7.9 | 0.376 | 0.355 | 0.173 | 0.073 | 0.024 |
| DE: World History | 10 | ELA | 429.2 | 6.2 | 0.297 | 0.331 | 0.241 | 0.116 | 0.016 |
| DE: Psychology | 11 | ELA | 431.2 | 5.9 | 0.470 | 0.250 | 0.155 | 0.073 | 0.052 |
| DE: US History | 11 | ELA | 431.9 | 5.5 | 0.553 | 0.310 | 0.101 | 0.026 | 0.010 |

Note: AP = Advanced Placement, DE = Dual Enrollment, CF = Career Focused (according to Arkansas's common course code list)

Table A3. Total Group Logistic Regression Slope Estimates for Success in High School Courses

| High school course | Primary grade level | Subject area | Logistic regression slope estimates |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | A |  | B or higher |  | C or higher |  |
|  |  |  | EST | SE | EST | SE | EST | SE |
| English 9 | 9 | ELA | 1.767 | 0.017 | 1.475 | 0.014 | 1.283 | 0.016 |
| Oral Communication | 9 | ELA | 1.308 | 0.016 | 1.103 | 0.015 | 1.003 | 0.018 |
| English 10 | 10 | ELA | 1.666 | 0.017 | 1.397 | 0.014 | 1.236 | 0.016 |
| English 11 | 11 | ELA | 1.407 | 0.022 | 1.159 | 0.017 | 0.994 | 0.019 |
| Algebra I | 9 | Math | 1.556 | 0.020 | 1.438 | 0.017 | 1.362 | 0.019 |
| Geometry | 10 | Math | 1.636 | 0.017 | 1.519 | 0.015 | 1.477 | 0.017 |
| Algebra II | 11 | Math | 1.412 | 0.016 | 1.240 | 0.015 | 1.220 | 0.018 |
| Pre-Calculus | 11 | Math | 1.410 | 0.042 | 1.130 | 0.044 | 1.048 | 0.061 |
| Physical Science | 9 | Science | 1.618 | 0.016 | 1.371 | 0.013 | 1.197 | 0.015 |
| Biology | 10 | Science | 1.450 | 0.015 | 1.285 | 0.013 | 1.161 | 0.015 |
| Chemistry | 11 | Science | 1.460 | 0.020 | 1.192 | 0.016 | 1.073 | 0.019 |
| Environmental Science | 11 | Science | 0.960 | 0.039 | 0.820 | 0.031 | 0.729 | 0.037 |
| Physics | 11 | Science | 1.310 | 0.056 | 1.181 | 0.049 | 1.024 | 0.058 |
| Civics | 9 | ELA | 1.451 | 0.015 | 1.237 | 0.013 | 1.097 | 0.016 |
| Economics | 9 | ELA | 1.387 | 0.015 | 1.191 | 0.013 | 1.035 | 0.016 |
| World History | 10 | ELA | 1.496 | 0.017 | 1.237 | 0.014 | 1.082 | 0.017 |
| Psychology | 11 | ELA | 1.292 | 0.040 | 1.188 | 0.038 | 1.068 | 0.045 |
| Sociology | 11 | ELA | 1.294 | 0.043 | 1.178 | 0.043 | 1.004 | 0.049 |
| US History | 11 | ELA | 1.405 | 0.018 | 1.162 | 0.015 | 1.009 | 0.018 |
| CF: Computerized Business Applications | 9 | Composite | 1.567 | 0.024 | 1.461 | 0.024 | 1.283 | 0.029 |
| CF: Family and Consumer Sciences | 9 | Composite | 1.370 | 0.024 | 1.243 | 0.026 | 1.150 | 0.035 |
| CF: Survey of Agriculture Systems | 9 | Composite | 1.238 | 0.029 | 1.180 | 0.035 | 1.180 | 0.035 |
| CF: Technology Design and Applications | 9 | Composite | 1.557 | 0.063 | 1.442 | 0.062 | 1.397 | 0.073 |
| CF: Agricultural Mechanics | 10 | Composite | 0.987 | 0.047 | 0.921 | 0.069 | 1.020 | 0.109 |
| CF: Child Development | 10 | Composite | 1.435 | 0.038 | 1.380 | 0.043 | 1.297 | 0.056 |
| CF: Financial Literacy | 11 | Composite | 1.479 | 0.049 | 1.408 | 0.050 | 1.182 | 0.058 |
| CF: Food and Nutrition | 11 | Composite | 1.387 | 0.037 | 1.276 | 0.044 | 1.191 | 0.061 |
| CF: Marketing | 11 | Composite | 1.604 | 0.112 | 1.495 | 0.119 | 1.280 | 0.146 |
| AP English Language and Composition | 11 | ELA | 2.248 | 0.047 | 1.605 | 0.041 | 1.319 | 0.056 |
| AP English Literature and Composition | 11 | ELA | 2.196 | 0.123 | 1.640 | 0.112 | 1.243 | 0.145 |
| AP Calculus Ab | 11 | Math | 1.813 | 0.170 | 1.387 | 0.158 | 1.292 | 0.226 |
| AP Statistics | 11 | Math | 1.507 | 0.143 | 1.218 | 0.154 | 1.344 | 0.218 |
| AP Biology | 11 | Science | 1.868 | 0.090 | 1.453 | 0.079 | 1.181 | 0.103 |
| AP Chemistry | 11 | Science | 1.498 | 0.144 | 1.190 | 0.141 | 1.102 | 0.209 |
| AP Physics | 11 | Science | 1.866 | 0.123 | 1.395 | 0.097 | 1.284 | 0.133 |


| High school course | Primary grade level | Subject area | Logistic regression slope estimates |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | A |  | B or higher |  | C or higher |  |
|  |  |  | EST | SE | EST | SE | EST | SE |
| AP Human Geography | 9 | ELA | 2.076 | 0.126 | 1.867 | 0.122 | 1.605 | 0.147 |
| AP World History | 10 | ELA | 2.005 | 0.057 | 1.693 | 0.048 | 1.502 | 0.057 |
| AP Psychology | 11 | ELA | 2.163 | 0.140 | 1.795 | 0.134 | 1.646 | 0.163 |
| DE: English Comp I | 11 | ELA | 1.250 | 0.177 | 0.992 | 0.193 | 0.394 | 0.309 |
| DE: English Comp II | 11 | ELA | 1.189 | 0.223 | 0.749 | 0.249 | 0.569 | 0.389 |
| DE: Oral Communication | 11 | ELA | 1.205 | 0.081 | 1.069 | 0.085 | 0.994 | 0.114 |
| DE: College Algebra | 11 | Math | 1.418 | 0.124 | 1.158 | 0.136 | 1.103 | 0.219 |
| DE: Pre-Calculus/Trig | 11 | Math | 1.753 | 0.206 | 1.387 | 0.197 | 1.173 | 0.284 |
| DE: Biology | 10 | Science | 1.641 | 0.185 | 1.209 | 0.129 | 1.104 | 0.142 |
| DE: Anatomy and Physiology | 11 | Science | 1.166 | 0.198 | 1.179 | 0.203 | 1.164 | 0.252 |
| DE: World History | 10 | ELA | 1.560 | 0.169 | 1.466 | 0.134 | 1.332 | 0.151 |
| DE: Psychology | 11 | ELA | 0.961 | 0.230 | 0.932 | 0.227 | 0.633 | 0.260 |
| DE: US History | 11 | ELA | 0.784 | 0.109 | 0.868 | 0.126 | 0.984 | 0.193 |

Note: AP = Advanced Placement, DE = Dual Enrollment, CF = Career Focused (according to Arkansas's common course code list)

Table A4. AP Exams and Sample Size, by Group

| AP course/exam | Subgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :---: |
|  | Total | ELL | SPED | FRL | Black | Hispanic | White |  |
| AP English Lang \& Comp | 13,373 | 237 | 44 | 4,666 | 2,001 | 1,057 | 9,560 |  |
| AP English Lit \& Comp | 1,923 | 75 | 0 | 918 | 124 | 322 | 1,333 |  |
| AP Calculus AB | 802 | 0 | 0 | 133 | 87 | 57 | 515 |  |
| AP Statistics | 813 | 0 | 0 | 197 | 70 | 64 | 586 |  |
| AP Biology | 2,841 | 59 | 0 | 954 | 347 | 244 | 2,023 |  |
| AP Chemistry | 1,025 | 0 | 0 | 246 | 89 | 94 | 718 |  |
| AP Physics | 1,657 | 0 | 0 | 454 | 144 | 184 | 1,139 |  |
| AP Human Geography | 1,347 | 44 | 11 | 283 | 73 | 171 | 944 |  |
| AP World History | 7,873 | 340 | 33 | 2,704 | 1,077 | 1,001 | 5,264 |  |
| AP Psychology | 1,459 | 45 | 0 | 351 | 117 | 194 | 975 |  |

Table A5. Descriptive Statistics for Analysis of Success on AP Exams

| AP exam | Primary <br> grade level | Subject area | Test Score |  | Exam score distribution |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Mean | SD | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| AP English Lang \& Comp | 11 | ELA | 433.0 | 4.9 | 0.032 | 0.083 | 0.203 | 0.364 | 0.318 |
| AP English Lit \& Comp | 11 | ELA | 433.5 | 4.6 | 0.010 | 0.048 | 0.182 | 0.517 | 0.243 |
| AP Calculus Ab | 11 | Math | 439.5 | 5.2 | 0.168 | 0.166 | 0.227 | 0.281 | 0.158 |
| AP Statistics | 11 | Math | 436.2 | 6.3 | 0.080 | 0.141 | 0.199 | 0.193 | 0.386 |
| AP Biology | 11 | Science | 434.7 | 6.6 | 0.016 | 0.092 | 0.284 | 0.396 | 0.211 |
| AP Chemistry | 11 | Science | 437.8 | 6.1 | 0.038 | 0.102 | 0.168 | 0.320 | 0.372 |
| AP Physics | 11 | Science | 436.6 | 6.3 | 0.012 | 0.046 | 0.141 | 0.300 | 0.501 |
| AP Human Geography | 9 | ELA | 433.3 | 4.8 | 0.114 | 0.203 | 0.232 | 0.159 | 0.292 |
| AP World History | 10 | ELA | 432.2 | 5.1 | 0.032 | 0.107 | 0.205 | 0.363 | 0.293 |
| AP Psychology | 11 | ELA | 434.2 | 4.7 | 0.119 | 0.222 | 0.219 | 0.167 | 0.273 |

Table A6. ACT Aspire Cross-Grade Correlation Sample Size, by Group

| Subjects | Grade level pair | Subgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Total | ELL | SPED | FRL | Black | Hispanic | White |
| ELA | 3/4 | 70,577 | 6,908 | 7,773 | 47,508 | 14,517 | 9,475 | 42,788 |
|  | 4/5 | 68,328 | 6,531 | 7,913 | 45,179 | 13,510 | 9,261 | 41,928 |
|  | 5/6 | 66,176 | 6,180 | 7,773 | 42,983 | 12,914 | 8,673 | 41,108 |
|  | 6/7 | 66,160 | 5,830 | 7,368 | 42,042 | 12,978 | 8,377 | 41,380 |
|  | 7/8 | 66,236 | 5,511 | 6,890 | 40,818 | 12,992 | 8,344 | 41,587 |
|  | 8/9 | 66,104 | 5,200 | 6,500 | 39,645 | 13,118 | 8,129 | 41,759 |
|  | 9/10 | 65,014 | 4,694 | 5,897 | 37,564 | 12,951 | 7,602 | 41,462 |
| Math | 3/4 | 70,713 | 6,983 | 7,792 | 47,616 | 14,540 | 9,528 | 42,820 |
|  | 4/5 | 68,427 | 6,584 | 7,925 | 45,269 | 13,529 | 9,302 | 41,940 |
|  | 5/6 | 66,300 | 6,239 | 7,785 | 43,081 | 12,934 | 8,722 | 41,136 |
|  | 6/7 | 66,296 | 5,882 | 7,396 | 42,155 | 13,012 | 8,418 | 41,420 |
|  | 7/8 | 66,360 | 5,576 | 6,906 | 40,922 | 13,013 | 8,402 | 41,616 |
|  | 8/9 | 66,244 | 5,255 | 6,526 | 39,755 | 13,155 | 8,175 | 41,806 |
|  | 9/10 | 65,217 | 4,776 | 5,920 | 37,720 | 12,984 | 7,687 | 41,527 |
| Science | 3/4 | 70,708 | 6,979 | 7,793 | 47,617 | 14,543 | 9,529 | 42,812 |
|  | 4/5 | 68,420 | 6,583 | 7,920 | 45,259 | 13,525 | 9,302 | 41,937 |
|  | 5/6 | 66,283 | 6,239 | 7,782 | 43,067 | 12,929 | 8,722 | 41,128 |
|  | 6/7 | 66,293 | 5,879 | 7,402 | 42,147 | 13,008 | 8,416 | 41,424 |
|  | 7/8 | 66,331 | 5,567 | 6,899 | 40,899 | 13,013 | 8,395 | 41,598 |
|  | 8/9 | 66,231 | 5,253 | 6,515 | 39,741 | 13,150 | 8,177 | 41,797 |
|  | 9/10 | 65,186 | 4,768 | 5,918 | 37,703 | 12,982 | 7,681 | 41,506 |
| ELA/Math | 3/4 | 70,596 | 6,912 | 7,776 | 47,526 | 14,525 | 9,476 | 42,794 |
|  | 4/5 | 68,352 | 6,531 | 7,921 | 45,201 | 13,522 | 9,262 | 41,935 |
|  | 5/6 | 66,209 | 6,180 | 7,778 | 43,013 | 12,933 | 8,676 | 41,118 |
|  | 6/7 | 66,186 | 5,833 | 7,370 | 42,064 | 12,992 | 8,380 | 41,388 |
|  | 7/8 | 66,270 | 5,518 | 6,902 | 40,853 | 13,006 | 8,350 | 41,596 |
|  | 8/9 | 66,153 | 5,200 | 6,512 | 39,677 | 13,131 | 8,128 | 41,794 |
|  | 9/10 | 65,074 | 4,696 | 5,904 | 37,619 | 12,973 | 7,603 | 41,495 |

Table A7. ACT Aspire/PARCC Correlation Sample Size, by Group

| Subjects | Grade level pair | Subgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Total | ELL | SPED | FRL | Black | Hispanic | White |
| ELA | 3/4 | 32,557 | 3,080 | 3,812 | 20,800 | 6,281 | 4,269 | 19,940 |
|  | 4/5 | 32,891 | 2,927 | 3,691 | 20,638 | 6,407 | 4,081 | 20,315 |
|  | 5/6 | 32,691 | 2,731 | 3,380 | 20,444 | 6,361 | 4,035 | 20,296 |
|  | 6/7 | 32,810 | 2,582 | 3,288 | 19,851 | 6,353 | 3,974 | 20,439 |
|  | 7/8 | 33,295 | 2,434 | 3,148 | 19,654 | 6,566 | 3,879 | 20,918 |
|  | 8/9 | 32,725 | 2,080 | 2,832 | 18,848 | 6,400 | 3,522 | 20,636 |
|  | 9/10 | 31,708 | 1,799 | 2,635 | 17,503 | 6,079 | 3,399 | 20,104 |
| Math | 3/4 | 32,995 | 3,157 | 3,929 | 21,141 | 6,385 | 4,341 | 20,159 |
|  | 4/5 | 33,137 | 2,977 | 3,822 | 20,817 | 6,465 | 4,122 | 20,440 |
|  | 5/6 | 33,103 | 2,814 | 3,548 | 20,758 | 6,451 | 4,103 | 20,503 |
|  | 6/7 | 32,950 | 2,628 | 3,335 | 19,958 | 6,384 | 4,012 | 20,490 |
|  | 7/8 | 33,201 | 2,496 | 3,193 | 19,692 | 6,544 | 3,917 | 20,840 |
|  | 8/9 | 26,816 | 2,021 | 2,864 | 16,814 | 5,614 | 3,141 | 16,355 |
| Science | 5/6 | 33,219 | 2,817 | 3,557 | 20,834 | 6,474 | 4,105 | 20,580 |
|  | 7/8 | 33,554 | 2,514 | 3,209 | 19,831 | 6,638 | 3,946 | 21,014 |
| ELA/Math | 3/4 | 32,947 | 3,097 | 3,930 | 21,093 | 6,387 | 4,297 | 20,168 |
|  | 4/5 | 33,110 | 2,938 | 3,824 | 20,793 | 6,467 | 4,097 | 20,444 |
|  | 5/6 | 33,059 | 2,755 | 3,551 | 20,714 | 6,455 | 4,063 | 20,511 |
|  | 6/7 | 32,923 | 2,587 | 3,343 | 19,932 | 6,389 | 3,981 | 20,499 |
|  | 7/8 | 33,374 | 2,442 | 3,194 | 19,709 | 6,598 | 3,890 | 20,954 |
|  | 8/9 | 32,904 | 2,099 | 2,905 | 18,977 | 6,443 | 3,550 | 20,728 |
|  | 9/10 | 31,906 | 1,830 | 2,695 | 17,635 | 6,134 | 3,424 | 20,200 |


#### Abstract

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