



Guide to Using Results

ACT[®] Engage[®]
Grades 6–9



Contact Information

For assistance, call ACT Engage Customer Service at 319.337.1893, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., central time, Monday through Friday, or email engage@act.org.

Resources

To access User Guides, Resources for Students and Parents, Research, and Case Studies, visit www.act.org/engage/downloads.html and www.act.org/engage/6-9_materials.html.

Guide to Interpreting and Using ACT Engage[®] Grades 6–9 Reports

By using ACT Engage Grades 10–12, students and school personnel can identify student strengths and areas for improvement in student motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation, all of which are related to student academic success. Scores on ACT Engage scales provide an avenue for identifying and intervening with students who may be at academic risk. Further, each ACT Engage scale yields results that can be used in specifying appropriate interventions for students and for identifying areas where school interventions may be needed.

Reports

ACT Engage provides several reports:

- a Student Report that includes a student’s scores and interpretative statements.
- an Advisor Report that includes the same information as the Student Report, as well as the Academic Success and Retention indices.
- a Roster Report that includes all ACT Engage scores and demographic information for students who took ACT Engage.
- School and District Aggregate Reports (discussed in more detail later).

Student Report

This report features a student’s summary profile of ACT Engage scores (expressed as both scale scores and percentile scores), prior grades, and information on how to understand the scores. Further, the Student Report provides interpretive feedback for each ACT Engage scale. The scores are sorted into three categories that help to emphasize the developmental aspect of the feedback:

- Capitalize on Your Strengths, which includes high scores (i.e., those at or above the 76th percentile)
- Continue to Develop Your Skills, which includes moderate scores (i.e., those between the 26th and the 75th percentiles)
- Make Plans for Improvement, which includes low scores (i.e., those less than or equal to the 25th percentile).

Finally, the Student Report provides a Recommended Plan of Action to help students get started with their developmental plans. See Figure 1 for a sample Student Report.

Figure 1 Student Report, front

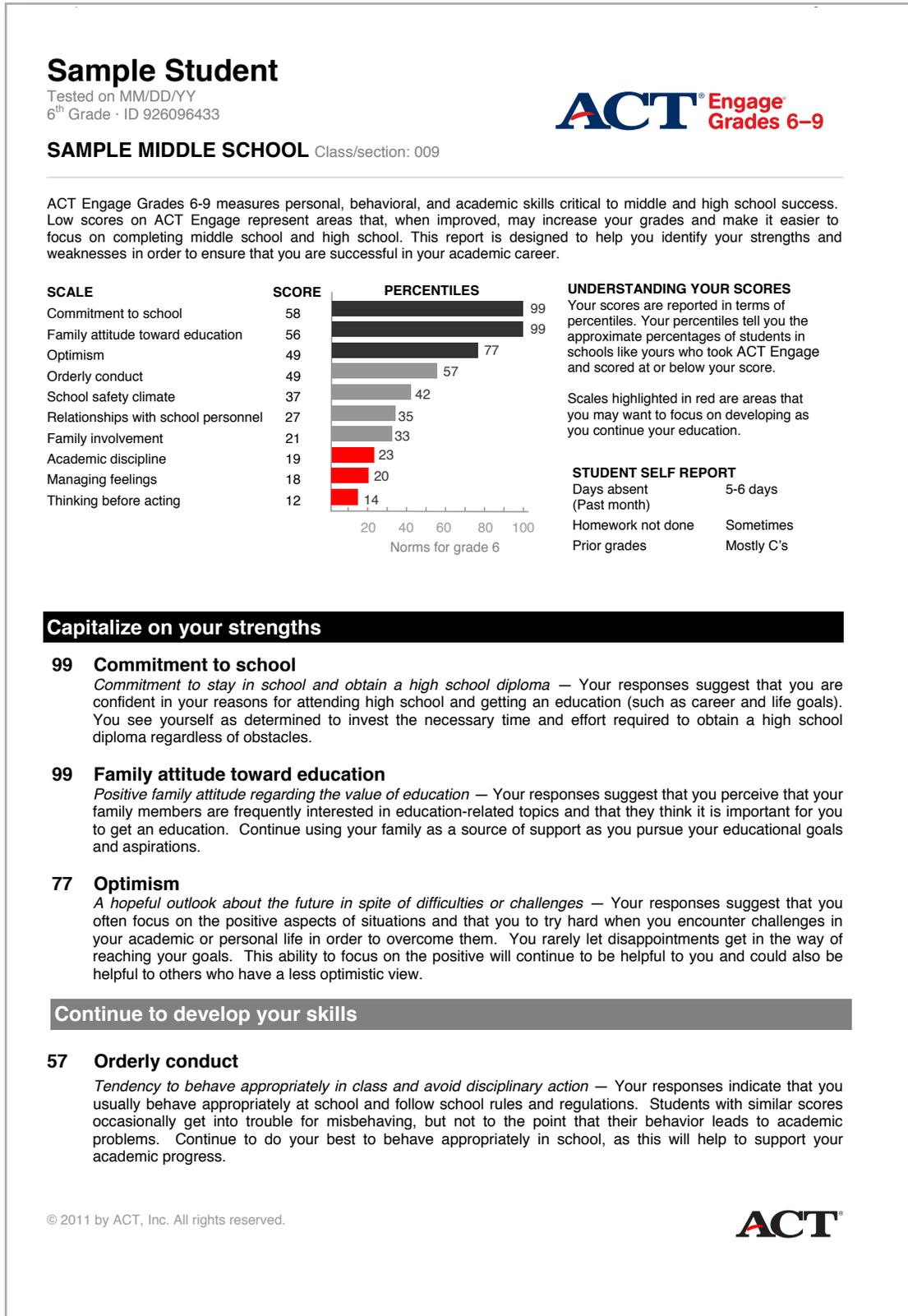


Figure 1 Student Report, back

Sample Student Page: 2

42 School safety climate
School qualities related to students' perception of security at school — Your responses suggest that you perceive your school environment as usually safe and providing an adequate foundation for pursuing your academic goals. Students with similar scores sometimes report some safety concerns at their schools, but these concerns do not usually interfere with students' academic progress.

35 Relationships with school personnel
The extent to which students relate to school personnel as part of their connection to school — Your responses suggest that you usually feel connected to school and the people at your school. Students with similar scores are usually involved in some school activities and usually get along well with teachers and school personnel. Continue to develop these relationships, as they can be a helpful resource in supporting your academic progress or providing assistance when you run into challenging situations.

33 Family involvement
Family involvement in a student's school life and activities — Your responses suggest that you perceive that your family members are usually involved in your school life, whether in academic or extra-curricular activities, and that they generally keep track of how you are doing in school. Continue using your family's involvement in your school life as a way to reinforce your educational goals and aspirations.

Make plans for improvement

23 Academic discipline
Degree to which a student is hardworking and conscientious as evidenced by the amount of effort invested into completing schoolwork — Your responses indicate that you frequently approach academic tasks with less enthusiasm and effort than other students. You may frequently rush through your homework without paying much attention to detail, turn in poor or incomplete work, or give up on difficult tasks or problems.

20 Managing feelings
Tendency to manage duration and intensity of negative feelings, (e.g., anger, sadness, embarrassment) and to find appropriate ways to express such feelings — Your responses indicate that you may struggle controlling your feelings and dealing effectively with stress. You may lose your temper easily or experience difficulty managing frustration, sadness, or embarrassment. This may have a negative impact on your ability to complete academic work, or possibly interfere with other important activities in your life.

14 Thinking before acting
Tendency to think about the consequences of one's actions before acting — Your responses suggest that you may behave impulsively at times and may not consider the consequences of your actions. As a result, you may do things quickly but inaccurately, or experience unintended consequences from your behavior (such as hurting someone's feelings after you have said something). Students with similar scores benefit from taking things more slowly and thinking through their behavior before acting or speaking.

Recommended plan of action

Your ACT Engage scores provide information that can help you develop your personal and academic-related skills, which in turn can help you perform well in school and attain your high school diploma. By focusing on building those skills for which you obtained relatively lower scores, you can derive maximum benefit from the learning and growth opportunities available to you.

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Advisor Report

The Advisor Report (See Figure 2) contains the same information as the Student Report, as well as the Academic Success and Retention indices. Each index is based on a probability score ranging from .01 to .99, with larger values representing increased likelihood of success (i.e., less risk of dropping out or of poor academic performance—GPA < 2.0).

Schools can use ACT Engage Success indices to proactively identify students who may have academic difficulty and/or drop out as they transition to college. Although cutoffs for identifying these students have been initially set at the lowest quartile (e.g., lower probabilities of retention and academic success), a school may choose to modify this cutoff depending on (a) the portion of students the school wishes to target and (b) resources available for intervening with such students.

These indices incorporate information from the different ACT Engage scales and self-reported behavioral and achievement information (e.g., coming to class without homework, current school grades) that are most predictive of student success into a single number that can facilitate identification of those students most at risk. You may find the following score ranges useful as broad guidelines for sorting students into various levels of risk:

Academic Success or Retention Index Percentile Score	Interpretation
Low (\leq 25 percentile)	A low percentile score suggests a higher probability of risk
Moderate (26–75 percentile)	A moderate percentile score suggests a moderate probability of risk
High (\geq 75 percentile)	A high percentile score suggests a lower probability of risk

Since baseline academic performance and retention rates vary across schools, these indices should not be interpreted as explicit predicted probabilities of retention or academic performance for an individual student; rather, these indices are approximate measures of how each student’s psychosocial factors lend themselves to persistence and academic performance through the first year of college.

The ACT Engage Advisor Report also provides checks for scoring issues in each student’s report. Checks are in place to flag response inconsistencies and lack of variability, as detailed below. To check for response inconsistencies, we use forward and reverse keyed items (e.g., answering “I like school” versus “I cannot stand school” should elicit responses from different parts of the score scale). Implementing both forward and reverse keyed items enables us to more accurately report when there are response inconsistencies. To check for lack of variability across items, we compare all of a student’s responses. When a student provides the same answer (or nearly the same answer) to many or all ACT Engage items, the lack of variability flag is triggered. When either scoring issue occurs, there will be an additional note, prior to the interpretive portion of the report, that indicates a student presented an unusual response pattern (e.g., the student was using the same response option regardless of content, was responding randomly). Therefore, scores based on these responses may not be accurate. Since this occurrence may be in itself a red flag concerning a student’s likely success, the student’s advisor may want to follow up with questions, such as:

- Were you distracted while taking ACT Engage?
- Were you motivated to complete ACT Engage?
- Did you understand the questions in ACT Engage?
- Do you understand the purposes of ACT Engage?
- Did you complete ACT Engage accurately and honestly?

Figure 2 Advisor Report, front

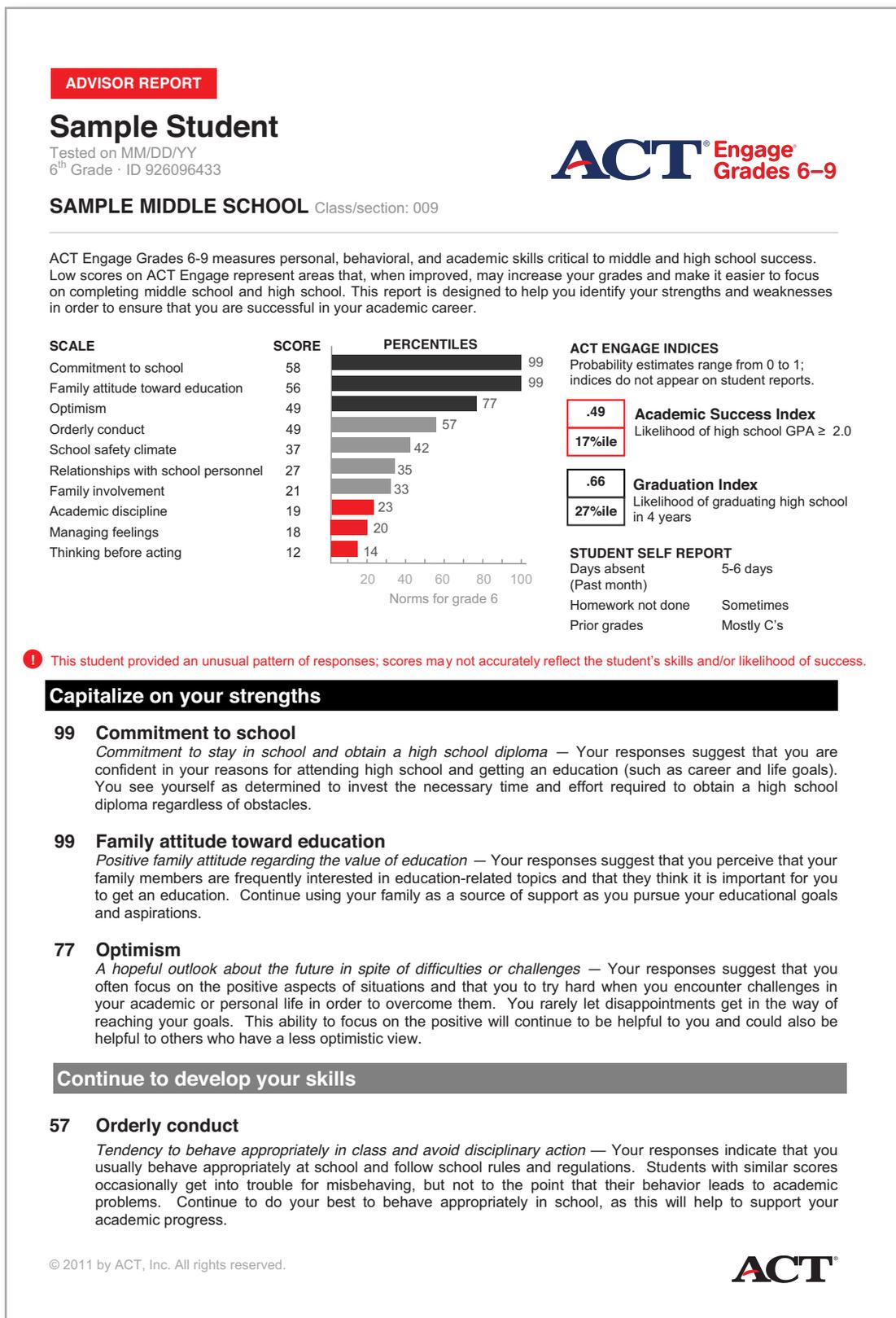


Figure 2 Advisor Report, back

Sample Student	Page: 2
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School qualities related to students' perception of security at school — Your responses suggest that you perceive your school environment as usually safe and providing an adequate foundation for pursuing your academic goals. Students with similar scores sometimes report some safety concerns at their schools, but these concerns do not usually interfere with students' academic progress.

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Make plans for improvement

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Degree to which a student is hardworking and conscientious as evidenced by the amount of effort invested into completing schoolwork — Your responses indicate that you frequently approach academic tasks with less enthusiasm and effort than other students. You may frequently rush through your homework without paying much attention to detail, turn in poor or incomplete work, or give up on difficult tasks or problems.

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Tendency to manage duration and intensity of negative feelings, (e.g., anger, sadness, embarrassment) and to find appropriate ways to express such feelings — Your responses indicate that you may struggle controlling your feelings and dealing effectively with stress. You may lose your temper easily or experience difficulty managing frustration, sadness, or embarrassment. This may have a negative impact on your ability to complete academic work, or possibly interfere with other important activities in your life.

14 Thinking before acting
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Recommended plan of action

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Roster Report

The Roster Report contains information from all ACT Engage assessments scored in any given batch. It includes students' names, IDs, demographics, ACT Engage scale and percentile scores, ACT Engage Academic Success and Graduation indices, and flags for scoring issues (e.g., missing data, response inconsistency). As a reference point, approximately 8.6% of students from ACT Engage field study were flagged for scoring issues. The Roster Report is in a Microsoft Excel format, which gives schools the flexibility of merging ACT Engage scores with other school data. See Figure 3 for a sample Roster Report.

Figure 3 Roster Report

Student ID	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Class/Section Name	Class/Section #	Grade Level	Date of Birth	Gender	Language	Race/Ethnicity
12345	Student 1	Sample 1		Sample	303	9th grade	3/4/1995	Female	English	
12346	Student 2	Sample 2	K	Sample	404	9th grade	6/1/1994	Female	English	
12347	Student 3	Sample 3	S	Sample	201	9th grade	1/24/1994	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12348	Student 4	Sample 4	D	Sample	414	9th grade	10/2/1994	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12349	Student 5	Sample 5	A	Sample	4	9th grade	5/20/1994	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12350	Student 6	Sample 6		Sample	102	9th grade	01/0/95	Female	English	White
12351	Student 7	Sample 7	L	Sample	100	9th grade	5/31/1995	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12352	Student 8	Sample 8		Sample	444	9th grade	10/3/1993	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12353	Student 9	Sample 9	N	Sample	201	9th grade	3/8/1995	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12354	Student 10	Sample 10	J	Sample	321	9th grade	1/28/1995	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12355	Student 11	Sample 11		Sample	121	9th grade	11/2/1994	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12356	Student 12	Sample 12	L	Sample	201	9th grade	3/31/1995	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12357	Student 13	Sample 13	D	Sample	201	9th grade	9/20/1993	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12358	Student 14	Sample 14	A	Sample	300	9th grade	5/17/1996	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12359	Student 15	Sample 15	R	Sample	303	9th grade	6/8/1995	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12360	Student 16	Sample 16	M	Sample	311	9th grade	9/22/1994	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12361	Student 17	Sample 17		Sample	110	9th grade	5/20/1994	Male	English	White
12362	Student 18	Sample 18	E	Sample	0	9th grade	6/21/1995	Female	English	
12363	Student 19	Sample 19	L	Sample	311	9th grade	8/18/1993	Male	English	
12364	Student 20	Sample 20	S	Sample	300	9th grade	1/27/1994	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12365	Student 21	Sample 21		Sample	100	9th grade	1/20/1995	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12366	Student 22	Sample 22	A	Sample	203	9th grade	6/27/1994	Female	English	American Indian/AK Native
12367	Student 23	Sample 23		Sample	212		8/22/1992	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12368	Student 24	Sample 24		Sample	101		1/16/1994	Male	English	White
12369	Student 25	Sample 25		Sample	13	9th grade	10/13/1994	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12370	Student 26	Sample 26	C	Sample	223	9th grade	3/21/1995	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12371	Student 27	Sample 27	G	Sample	310	9th grade	12/26/1994	Male	English	American Indian/AK Native
12372	Student 28	Sample 28	R	Sample	203	9th grade	8/13/1995	Female	English & Non-English	Black/African American

Aggregate Report

ACT Engage Grades 6–9 also provides two aggregate reports. The School Aggregate Report includes information about all ACT Engage assessments administered by a school during its window of administration and contains average scores showing how your sample of students scored on the ten ACT Engage scales, behavioral indicators, and Academic Success and Graduation indices. Schools can use this information to identify areas where school-wide resources or interventions may be needed.

The District Aggregate Report includes all ACT Engage assessments administered by a district during its window of administration; it is available only to those districts that administer ACT Engage in multiple schools. It contains information on how a district's students scored on the ten ACT Engage scales, behavioral indicators, and Academic Success and Graduation indices; districts can use this information to identify areas where district-wide resources or interventions may be needed.

For more information about Aggregate Reports, consult the *ACT Engage User's Guide* or the ACT Engage website, www.act.org/engage/downloads.html.

Examples of How to Use ACT Engage Grades 6–9 Results

ACT Engage Grades 6–9 can be used to identify and intervene with individual students who may be at risk for experiencing academic problems. The following sample student profiles illustrate how to use ACT Engage with individual students.

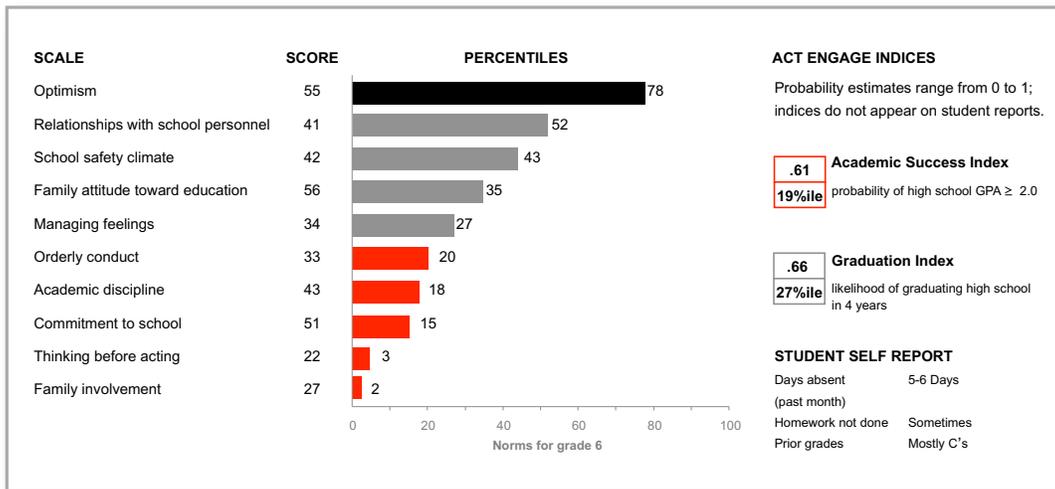
Sample Student Profiles

Student who may be at risk: Norah

Norah, a 6th grader at Hilltop Middle School, completed ACT Engage during the fall semester. Although her scores differed by scale, most of her scores were in the lowest quartile of those earned by students nationally. Further, her Academic Success Index, a strong predictor of academic risk, also was in the lowest quartile (19th percentile), and her Graduation Index was also bordering on the lower quartile (27%), suggesting that Norah may be at high risk of experiencing academic difficulties and struggling to complete her future education.

To determine how to best help Norah leverage her strengths and work on her weaknesses, educators at Hilltop Middle School first focused on understanding her ACT Engage profile, shown here in Figure 4. An explanation of her scores follows:

Figure 4 Norah’s Student Profile



Capitalize on Strengths and Continue to Develop Skills. There were several areas in which Norah scored at a moderate or high level, suggesting that these areas are less likely to require intervention at this time.

- She scored relatively high (78th percentile) on the Optimism scale. Her tendency to focus on the positive aspects of situations could be leveraged to help her pursue her academic work and develop her other skills.
- *Family Attitude Toward Education* (35th percentile), *Managing Feelings* (27th percentile), *School Safety Climate* (43rd percentile), and *Relationships with School Personnel* (52nd percentile) are areas that could be developed later on, after more critical areas (i.e., lower scores) have been addressed.

Make Plans for Improvement. These are the areas that would benefit the most from focused intervention and that may put Norah most at risk for experiencing academic difficulties.

- Norah scored quite low (3rd percentile) on *Thinking Before Acting*. This suggests that she may behave impulsively and may not consider the consequences of her actions. She likely does things quickly but inaccurately and may experience unintended consequences of her behavior. Norah is likely to benefit from taking things more slowly and thinking through her behavior before acting or speaking.
- She also scored low (18th percentile) on *Academic Discipline*. This indicates that she often approaches academic tasks with less effort than other students. She may rush through her homework without paying attention to detail, turn in poor or incomplete work, or give up on difficult tasks or problems.
- Norah scored low (15th percentile) on *Commitment to School*. This puts her at risk for dropping out of high school later in her educational career. It also indicates that she is unsure of whether she is prepared to invest the time and effort necessary to complete high school. She may find it useful to think about her career and life goals and to consider how a high school diploma will help her attain those goals.
- She also scored in a very low percentile (2nd percentile) on *Family Involvement*. This suggests a need not only for an intervention with Norah, but with her family so that they become more involved in Norah’s academic life. Norah may also benefit from finding other sources of support for her educational goals and aspirations.
- Another area requiring attention is *Orderly Conduct*. Norah scored in the 20th percentile, indicating that she may experience difficulties at school because of her behavior. She may get into trouble in class or ignore school rules and regulations. It is likely that some of the academic problems she may be experiencing are the result of these behaviors.

Recommended Plan of Action. Based on these results, the school created interventions for Norah and her family. Since she had several areas recommended for improvement, it was necessary for the school to prioritize interventions and plan them accordingly. An “Rx for Success” can be created for each student to list and prioritize intervention plans, so that students are not overwhelmed by too many interventions at the same time. Norah’s prioritized intervention plan follows below and is shown in Figure 5.

1. Norah scored low on *Academic Discipline*. Since academic success is closely linked to this scale, it was considered a top priority. To improve, Norah and her counselor met several times to discuss goal setting, time management, organization, and prioritization skills. They also discussed and practiced several learning strategies. She was given a challenge to turn in her homework every day for a week to practice short-term goal setting. Once she meets this goal consistently, staff will help her set a new goal to further challenge and refine her skills.
2. *Commitment to School* was considered her second-highest priority and was also addressed in the meetings with the counselor. Topics specific to commitment that were discussed included connections between schoolwork and college majors/careers and increasing Norah’s exposure to the benefits of increased education (e.g., earning potential, job security, improved quality of life).
3. Norah needed help developing skills regarding *Orderly Conduct*. Disruptions in class prevent learning both for Norah and for those around her. To intervene in this area, she was enrolled in a plan involving incentives for good behavior over the course of the day, week, and month. She also had one-on-one discussions with her instructors regarding her behavior to help her understand how it affects her learning and that of her classmates.
4. Although a lower priority on her list, *Thinking Before Acting* also needed some attention. To develop this area, Norah participated in activities that involved role playing and working through situations from start to finish, focusing on “what-if” scenarios. These activities were intended to strengthen her decision-making skills and make her aware of the consequences of her actions/decisions.
5. To strengthen *Family Involvement*, faculty worked with Norah and her family to help them understand their role in supporting Norah’s academics. A series of conferences was scheduled to discuss ways in which Norah’s family can become more involved in her academic life, from signing off on her homework on a nightly basis to attending school and extracurricular events with Norah. Although clearly important, this is the area in which the school has the least control, so it was given last priority on her intervention list.

Figure 5 Norah's Intervention Plan

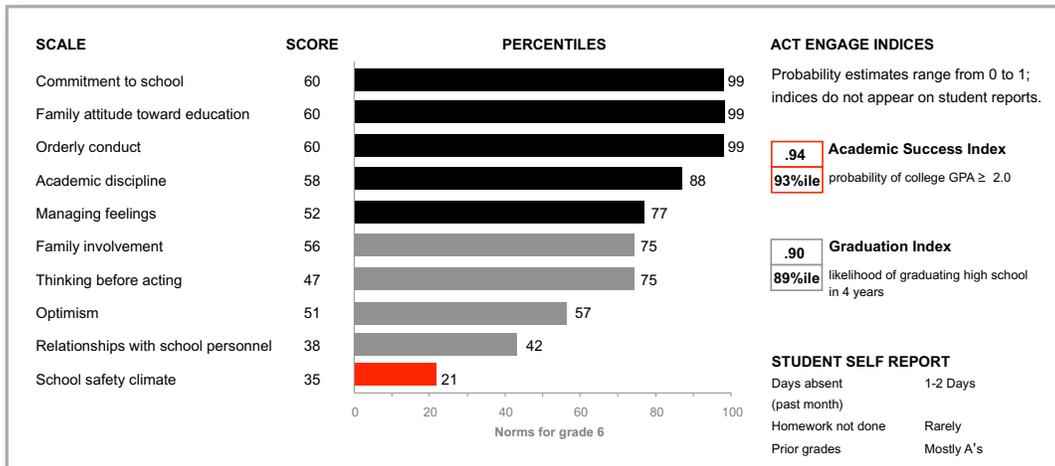
Rx for Success	
PRIORITY	TO DO
	Meeting with Mr. Smith (counselor)
	Complete homework every day for one week
	One-on-one discussion with instructor (RE: conduct)
	Demonstrate zero class disruptions for one week
	Attend role-playing workshop to learn to think before acting
	Conference with parents

On-track student: Juan

Juan, a 6th grader at Pleasant Valley Middle School, completed ACT Engage a month after transferring to the school. Although his scores suggest that some areas may benefit from improvement, Juan generally scored in the upper quartile when compared to other students nationally. His Academic Success and Graduation indices also were in the upper quartile (93rd and 89th percentiles, respectively), suggesting that Juan is at low risk of experiencing difficulties completing high school successfully. Although Juan seems to be a well-adjusted student who is on track on his academic and psychosocial development, he may benefit from further development in some areas.

To determine how to best help Juan leverage his strengths and develop his skills, Pleasant Valley Middle School used his ACT Engage profile, shown here in Figure 6. An explanation of his scores follows:

Figure 6 Juan's Student Profile



Capitalize on Strengths. These are areas in which Juan showed strength and that could be leveraged to increase his chances for success.

- Juan scored relatively high (88th percentile) on the *Academic Discipline* scale. He consistently puts forth effort in completing academic tasks. He sees himself as a hardworking and detail-oriented student who can usually work through difficult tasks and strives to turn in high-quality work.
- Juan also evidenced strength in his *Commitment to School*, scoring in the 99th percentile. He is confident in his reasons for attending high school and continuing his education to meet life and career goals. He sees himself as determined to invest the time and effort needed to graduate from high school, regardless of obstacles.
- *Family Attitude Toward Education* (99th percentile) and Family Involvement (75th percentile) also are relative strengths. Juan perceives his family as being interested in education, valuing his academic success, and being involved in his school life. He reported that his family keeps close track of his academic progress and that they support his educational aspirations.
- Juan also scored in the upper quartile on *Managing Feelings* (77th percentile), *Orderly Conduct* (99th percentile), and *Thinking Before Acting* (75th percentile), indicating that he is good at controlling impulses and considers consequences of his behaviors prior to exhibiting them. He also is adept at preventing feelings and potentially negative behaviors from affecting his academic work or other important activities in his life.

Continue to Develop Skills. Juan scored in the middle range on a few scales. These may not require immediate intervention, but should be developed as resources allow. These skills should also be monitored to ensure that they do not pose challenges at a later time.

- Juan scored in the middle range on *Optimism* (57th percentile). This suggests that he usually takes a balanced approach when thinking about situations, tries to overcome challenges in his academic or personal life, and is not too easily discouraged by disappointments.
- Juan scored at the 42nd percentile in the *Relationships with School Personnel* scale. This suggests that he generally feels connected to school and the people in it.

Make Plans for Improvement. Based on his ACT Engage profile, there is one area that may benefit from focused intervention.

- Juan’s *School Safety Climate* score fell in the low range (21st percentile). This suggests that he may perceive his school environment as unsafe, possibly due to bullying, violence, or other concerns. Students scoring low in this area may find it difficult to pursue academic goals if they feel their safety is threatened.

Recommended Plan of Action. These results indicate that Juan has many strengths and the potential for high academic achievement in high school and beyond. However, it is important to address the areas that need development or improvement. It is also necessary not to overlook his strengths, but to work on cultivating them and teaching him to use them further to his advantage. The “Rx for Success” can be used to prioritize his areas of focus. Juan’s prioritized intervention plan follows and is shown in Figure 7.

1. The highest priority on Juan’s plan is improving his sense of *School Safety Climate*. It may be difficult for him to realize his full potential if he is distracted by safety concerns. A conference was scheduled between Juan and his counselor to discuss his concerns regarding safety. Juan indicated that there was one group of boys in particular who were threatening him and making him feel unsafe. A plan was devised so that Juan knew who to talk to when he felt threatened and how to react to threats from the other students. The students who were bullying Juan were also brought in for a separate conference. The school assigned responsibilities to faculty members to monitor this bullying to ensure that it did not continue.
2. Other skills were considered of lower priority. Among them were *Relationships with School Personnel* and *Optimism*. As Juan is a transfer student and relatively new to the school, he was assigned a faculty mentor to work with him on a science project. This allowed him to get to know the faculty member as a person and to make a connection with someone employed at the school. For developing his sense of optimism, he was enrolled in a workshop that helps students to practice viewing situations from a balanced perspective. Topics emphasized include focusing on strengths as a way to address challenges, avoiding putting themselves down, and overcoming pessimism. Students practiced these skills through role playing and interacting with each other.

Figure 7 Juan’s Intervention Plan

Rx for Success	
PRIORITY	TO DO
	Meeting with Counselor (re: safety)
	Attend optimism workshop
	Work on a science project with a faculty mentor
	Attend fall orientation session
	Attend a college fair
	Shadow an employee in an occupation of choice

Implementing ACT Engage at Your School

In the classroom, teachers and students can take advantage of ACT Engage results in a variety of ways, including discussion of ACT Engage scales and their implications for academic success, one-on-one or group feedback using students' scores, and discussion of action steps that can be taken by students to develop their skills further. Toward this end, we developed a crosswalk (see Table 1) as a quick reference for institutions to map each ACT Engage scale with school resources. The crosswalk template allows teachers or administrators to map each scale with the range in which each student scored. This crosswalk can help determine which areas should be the main focus and links those areas with available resources. We encourage schools to use this crosswalk as a template for their available programs and services.

Table 1 Student Crosswalk of School Resources

Scales	Percentile	Resources
Academic Discipline	High Medium Low	
Commitment to College	High Medium Low	
Family Attitude Toward Education	High Medium Low	
Family Involvement	High Medium Low	
Managing Feelings	High Medium Low	
Optimism	High Medium Low	
Orderly Conduct	High Medium Low	
Relationships with School Personnel	High Medium Low	
School Safety Climate	High Medium Low	
Thinking Before Acting	High Medium Low	

Your school can create a typical school crosswalk of resources that teachers and students can use to create the student crosswalk in Table 1. Figure 8 is an example school crosswalk of ACT Engage scales with programs often found at middle schools. You may want to modify this crosswalk for your school and provide it to your teachers to assist them in determining which resources are appropriate for individual students.

ACT Engage Grades 6–9 Scales

Figure 8 School Crosswalk

Support Services at Pleasant Valley Middle School	Academic Discipline	Commitment to School	Family Attitude Toward Education	Family Involvement	Managing Feelings	Optimism	Orderly Conduct	Relationships with School Personnel	School Safety Climate	Thinking Before Acting
School Counselor					✓		✓			
Study Group	✓									
Family Counseling			✓	✓						
Optimism Workshop					✓					
Orientation programs for new students		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
Job shadowing		✓								
Disability Access Center (referral)										
Learning Styles Workshop	✓									✓
Study Skills Workshop	✓	✓								
Student clubs and organizations		✓					✓			

✓ = Required

As can be seen, ACT Engage Grades 6–9 provides a wealth of information that can be used by schools and districts in a variety of ways, individually or at the school level, to facilitate student psychosocial development and academic success.

ACT[®]