

ACT Guidance for Tennessee Districts and Schools

Revised April 27

The department is working closely with ACT, Inc. to ensure that all students in the 2021 cohort have two opportunities to take the ACT, same as prior cohorts. To this end, ACT is providing a range of options and testing flexibility to students, schools, and districts. We are grateful for the feedback we've received from many superintendents, district testing coordinators, principals, school coordinators, and the Assessment Advisory Committee. For any additional questions, please contact Philip.Jacobs@tn.gov. If you need support from ACT, contact Amy Peters directly at Amy.Peters@act.org.

House Bill 2818 and College Readiness Testing for 2020 Graduates

[House Bill 2818](#) waives the requirement that public school students are required to have a college readiness exam score in order to graduate in 2020. This means that any senior that does not currently have an ACT/SAT score is not required to have one to graduate this year. Per guidance from the State Board of Education, the college readiness exam score requirement is waived for 2020 early graduates as well.

Spring 2020 ACT Resolutions

The following secure materials should be returned to ACT as soon as it is safe to do so. Please follow local “safer-at-home” guidance before returning materials.

1. Test booklets
2. Completed answer docs
3. Unique accommodations materials

Non-secure materials may be shredded. Non-secure materials include:

1. Answer docs
2. Labels
3. Manuals

Funding December Vouchers

Funding from spring 2020 should be retained to purchase vouchers for summer and December 2020. Vouchers will be billed at the district contract rate of \$37/test.

Alternately, districts may prepay for December vouchers using **ACT's prepayment program**. This will allow 2020 funds to be spent in the current fiscal year. Instructions are on Livebinder under the School Closure Guidance tab.

Each school may request 25 electronic fee waivers for low income students. These may be used to offset the cost of vouchers for December testing.

ACT Administration Options for the 2021 Cohort

All students in the 2021 cohort will have two opportunities to take the ACT at no charge to them. The department will pay for one opportunity, and districts will pay for the other (through BEP funds from spring 2020).

There are multiple testing options and dates to accommodate a variety of situations. The following options are available to districts and schools to meet students' needs. Districts have the option of using any or all of these options:

1) Vouchers for June 13 or July 18 national test dates:

*These are serialized vouchers and may only be used on these dates. They will not work for national test dates after July 2020. Districts will be billed under their current contracts for **each voucher used** for ACT registration, even if the student does not show up for the test. There is no guarantee that these dates will be available, or that local test sites will participate. Approved accommodations will be linked.*

- a) Districts desiring to issue vouchers for June 13 should determine the number required, and contact Amy.Peters@act.org as soon as possible. (This deadline has expired)
- b) Districts desiring to issue vouchers for July 18 should determine the number required and contact Amy.Peters@act.org by **April 17**. (This deadline has expired)
- c) Districts will be billed under their current contracts for each voucher used for ACT registration, even if the student does not show up for the test.
- d) Students must register at www.actstudent.org with their voucher number by **May 8** to avoid a late registration fee for June. The deadline for July is **June 19**.

2) Closed school sessions for June 13 or July 18

This option will allow schools to test only their students regardless of the school's status as a national test center. These sessions are held at an unpublished national test center, like your local high school. Schools treat this session just as they would a school day administration.

- a) Schools are responsible for providing staffing.
- b) Students must still register through the website.
- c) There is no batch registration option.
- d) PearsonAccess^{next} registrations cannot be "rolled over".
- e) Districts desiring to use this option should contact Amy.Peters@act.org by **April 17**. (This deadline has expired)
- f) Districts will be billed under their current contracts for each student registration.

3) Fall testing for the 2021 cohort:

Fall testing will work exactly as it has in the past (Senior Retake). The department will continue to fund fall testing. The department will load students on behalf of schools.

- a) The department will load students on behalf of schools.
- b) Students can only test one time in the fall window. This is likely the first time most students take the ACT.
- c) School or district coordinators will complete Manage Participation.
- d) TAA coordinators will change the dates on accommodations.

Changes to ACT fall 2020 testing:

Because most spring 2020 dates were cancelled, the majority of Tennessee's students will take the ACT for the first time in the fall 2020 window. The original fall schedule left many districts with only one opportunity to offer the ACT. Many districts have fall break on either Oct. 6 or Oct. 20, and Nov. 3 is Election Day.

To address this issue, the department worked with ACT to move the November date to September, increasing the odds that all schools in Tennessee will be in session for at least two of the three available dates. The new fall 2020 administration options for schools are below. Schools may use any or all of these windows to offer the ACT to students in the 2021 cohort. Districts would be billed for this option using BEP funding intended for this cohort.

Sept. 22 – Standard Test Date Paper

Sept. 22 – 25 & 28 – Oct. 2 Accommodations Test Window Paper **(All schools should schedule this date unless closed. This will allow at least one make up window for all districts.)**

Oct. 6 – Standard Test Date Paper

Oct. 6 – 9 & 12 Accommodations Test Window Paper

Oct. 20 – Emergency Standard Test Date Paper

Oct. 20 – 23 & 26 Emergency Accommodations Test Window Paper

All schools should select either Sept. 22 or Oct. 6 as the initial test date. Oct. 20 may only be used as a makeup or emergency test date.

Beginning **Aug. 3**, school or district coordinators may select dates for testing and shipping, and TAA coordinators may transfer accommodations from the spring to the fall. Schools will need to plan a day prior to testing to complete non-test items. These cannot be reused from spring 2020. Student score and high school score reports for Sept. 22 will follow the Oct. 6 schedule. Fall testing will continue to be **paper only**. The department will ensure that student rosters are moved from spring to fall.

4) December vouchers:

ACT has approved vouchers for the Dec. 12 national test date.

- a) Schools can request closed sessions.
- b) Districts will be billed the district rate, \$37/test.
- c) Districts are billed when a student registers.
- d) Funds from spring 2020 should be used to purchase vouchers. Either earmark funds, or use ACT's prepayment option.

ACT Frequently Asked Questions

Are the summer vouchers good for either date when the student registers?	Summer vouchers will be good for either June or July. They will not be good for dates beyond that.
If we choose to use vouchers, will students register through the ACT website on their own?	Yes, but schools are encouraged to assist students if they need it.
If we choose testing our own students, will it be necessary to have students come together before the test date to fill out the demographic data as we normally do for the state ACT spring testing?	No. It will be handled just like a regular national day administration.
Will teachers be paid by either the state or by ACT for either option for administering the test during the summer?	No. Districts will be responsible for staffing. Neither ACT nor TDOE will compensate anyone for a closed session.
Should the fall test take place, will this coincide with senior testing or be a separate test date?	This is senior retake, but for the majority of students it will be the first time. So, the fall in-school testing is where most students will test for the first time.
Since we are a national test site, does that have any bearing on the closed school session?	It might. You could conceivably have two sessions running concurrently, depending on registration. The closed session is populated by a non-published test code. Schools provide this code to students that are eligible. Your regular test code will be published and other students are free to use it. You may also request that your public session be cancelled.
If we provide vouchers to students for summer testing, will we be able to get a list of the students that do register using a voucher?	Schools need to keep track of who registers. They will receive a score report after the student completes the test to confirm.
Is there a way to get a list of national test sites in Tennessee?	Yes- The list is available here .
What about ACT fee waivers for low-income students?	ACT will provide up to 25 electronic fee waivers to each school at no cost. ACT fee waivers may be used to register for any national test date. To request them, call or email ACT Customer Care. 877.789.2925, option 3. Email: act-services@act.org ACT fee waivers may be used to offset the cost of vouchers.
Are we only charged for the vouchers students use to register with online for summer testing? If so, if we order more than the used registration vouchers, are we charged for any of these?	Districts will be billed for each voucher used for a test registration, regardless of whether the student shows up to test. This is a risk you should evaluate before handing out vouchers.
Can we use a hybrid approach as long as we track student participation?	Districts may choose from all of the available options to meet the needs of your students.
Are vouchers delivered pdf or Excel?	PDF. Districts are responsible for assigning a code for each student.
If we choose to use June 13 as a closed school session would all of our juniors who attend need vouchers?	Yes. Students must register with vouchers.

Is there any type of cap for vouchers on summer?	The cap is what you put on it. Our advice is to wait until the fall and test students then. We are working with ACT to have a second opportunity Nov-Dec.
Do we need to ask for vouchers if we want to test in the fall?	If you do not need vouchers for summer testing, do not ask for vouchers.
Can we use June 13 as a regular test and then use July 18 as a makeup test date? If so, we would order the full number of vouchers for June 13 and then just order the number of makeup vouchers needed for July 18?	You can use both dates. Vouchers are good for either date. Be aware of double billing.
Since seniors won't be required to take ACT for grad status this year, will they affect participation rate for accountability? Will they be able to test with a voucher in June or July since they will have been graduated?	Yes. That is a local decision. For accountability, the June date is the last one that the Accountability team uses to make calculations. That is not a concern this year. If you want to share vouchers to be equitable, you may do that, but that is funding that will come from BEP. Again, this is a local decision. Please see the Assessment and Accountability FAQ for more information.
I have a senior that needs ACT, but cannot take the exam in the summer due to scheduling conflict. Can they take it in the fall?	Unfortunately, students that graduate in the spring are no longer public-school students; therefore, they are not eligible for fall testing dates administered by the state.
Will juniors have to take the ACT as a graduation requirement?	Presumably, yes (the 2021 cohort). The legislature has not altered any requirements for any cohort other than the current cohort.
So BEP funds for ACT spring 2020 are only good through July. What happens to the funds not used on June or July vouchers? District "gives back" funds?	Verify with your local school/district finance personnel. Historically, that money will need to be earmarked to roll over into the next school year. Alternately, ACT prepayment program may be used.
What if 2021 cohort students transfer in from other schools? We would need to find out from the student or previous school what had been used by the individual student in terms of testing options available.	It depends on how many students are transferring. Determine how it will affect your budget and make sure that the student has an opportunity to test.

<p>If we test in the summer or issue vouchers, can we still test at the school in the fall?</p>	<p>Yes, for students who need it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing vouchers and/or participating in summer closed sessions takes the place of spring 2020 testing. • Fall testing is available to everyone and all schools should participate. • Students that did not test in the spring, and will not test in the summer, will test at school in the fall AND be eligible for a December voucher. • Students that tested in the spring are ONLY eligible to test at school in the fall.
<p>Why does the department strongly caution against reliance on summer testing?</p>	<p>The following are risks that districts face when utilizing summer testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity: All students may not be able to participate. • Preparation: Students have not been in school since mid-March. • Uncertainty: There is no guarantee that sites will open. • Finance: Districts are billed at registration, even if the student fails to test. • Accountability: Record keeping will be difficult. Students will be on different schedules.
<p>Do we need vouchers for a closed session?</p>	<p>Yes. Vouchers must still be used to register students for closed sessions. Schools will be issued a non-published site code.</p>
<p>What happens if a summer date is cancelled?</p>	<p>Student registration will be rolled to next available test date. However, if a student can't attend the subsequent date, the registration is lost and the district is billed.</p>
<p>Are districts billed for vouchers?</p>	<p>Districts are billed for student registrations using a voucher. There is no charge for vouchers not used for registration.</p>
<p>Why do I get conflicting information when I call ACT</p>	<p>Tennessee's ACT program is unique among all states, and not all customer service reps are familiar with our program. Send ALL questions through Amy Peters: Amy.peters@act.org</p>

Higher Education Admissions and Scholarships

The department has reached out to Tennessee higher education officials to adjust admission and scholarship deadlines. We will update this document when we receive more information.

ACT Remote Learning Supports

Many districts are looking for ways to support students remotely. [ACT Academy](#) is a free online resource available to schools, parents, and students. ACT Academy provides personalized practice and can be used by students at all grade levels, including kindergarten. There is a searchable resource library with video lessons provided by *GeoGebra*, *NASA*, *prepmagic*, and many others.

Once teachers are registered, students may easily join a virtual classroom under their teacher's name. Teachers can then make assignments, track progress, and provide feedback. ACT Academy also contains ACT practice tests with feedback on areas of strength and weakness, and customized lessons based on practice test results. Links to information on navigating the site are on page 3. Please share this information with your school administrators and teachers.

ACT Academy Training Links

- How to create a [Teacher Account](#)
- How to create a [Parent Account](#)
- How to create an [ACT](#) Student Account
- How to create a [preACT](#) Student Account
- [Deep Dive](#) into ACT Academy

Recommendations for Testing the 2021 Cohort

- 1) Districts provide vouchers to students that want or need them to test in June or July. This will allow interested students to have a college readiness score prior to the school year. Ideally, this will be a relatively low number of students. **Districts will be billed for each ACT registration using a voucher, whether the student attends the test or not.** We encourage you to keep accurate records of students that receive vouchers, as that will impact their participation in later administrations.
- 2) The bulk of students can take the test during the fall windows. This means using the “Senior Retake” as the first testing opportunity for most students, though any student that received a voucher, or tested on March 17 can also test. **All students should be allowed to take the ACT in the fall of 2020.**
- 3) For students that still need a second opportunity to take the ACT, we are working with ACT to establish a test opportunity for seniors only. It is possible that spring 2021 dates will change to accommodate this. The ACT Decision Chart below, covers the different testing eligibility outcomes based on the time students first tested in 2020.

ACT Decision Chart		
Student tested on March 17, 2020	Student tested with a voucher in the summer of 2020	Student tested for the first time in the fall of 2020
Then ↓	Then ↓	N/A
May participate in fall 2020 testing	May participate in fall 2020 testing	
And ↓	And ↓	Then ↓
May not participate in additional state-funded testing opportunities.	May not participate in additional state-funded testing opportunities.	Eligible to participate in an additional state-funded test opportunity.