Start preparing your students for college and career early and often.
A Module brought to you by:

Through a grant from the Ohio Board of Regents
Providing Information for:

- Principals
- Teachers
- Curriculum Directors
- School Boards
- Parents
Why EXPLORE?
EXPLORE® program is designed to help eighth and ninth graders explore a broad range of options for their future. It prepares students not only for their high school coursework but for their post–high school choices as well.
The most recent results for the 2008 ACT-tested high school graduating class are alarming: only one in five ACT-tested 2008 high school graduates are prepared for entry-level college courses in English Composition, College Algebra, social science, and Biology, while one in four are not prepared for college-level coursework in any of the four subject areas (ACT, 2008).
In the current educational environment, there is a critical defining point for students in the college and career readiness process—one so important that, if students are not on target for college and career readiness by the time they reach this point, the impact may be nearly irreversible.

We must therefore also focus on getting more students on target for college and career readiness by the end of eighth grade, so that they are prepared to maximize the benefits of high school.
Despite the fact that students may pass eighth-grade exit tests, too many are arriving at high school so far behind academically that, under current conditions, they cannot become ready for college and career regardless of the rigor of the high school curriculum, the quality of high school instruction, or the amount of effort they put into their coursework.

Sad but TRUE…
Lack of readiness to benefit from high school affects not just the academic development of students but also how instructional time is spent in the classroom.

Teachers of entering high school students responding to an ACT survey in spring 2006 said that they spent from about one-fourth to about one-third of their time in the classroom re-teaching skills that should have been learned prior to high school (ACT, 2007b).
“Eighth-grade academic achievement is the best predictor of college and career readiness by high school graduation.

Improvement in eighth-grade academic achievement and being on target for college and career readiness in eighth grade are more beneficial than any high school-level academic enhancement.”

- ACT, 2008. The Forgotten Middle: Ensuring that All Students Are on Target for College and Career Readiness Before High School.
What is in EXPLORE?
EXPLORE includes four multiple-choice tests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
<th>How Long It Takes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The EXPLORE Student Score Report gives information about knowledge, skills, interests, and plans. You can use this information to assist students to plan high school coursework and begin thinking about college and work.

Your report tells you how your students did on the EXPLORE tests and how your students’ scores compare to those of other students across the nation.

It contains information about student educational and career plans, interests, high school coursework plans, and the amount of help students need.
What Do EXPLORE Scores Mean?

- **Scores are between 1** (the lowest score you can receive) and **25** (the highest score you can receive) even though there are more than 25 questions on the EXPLORE.

- A Composite Score is the average of test scores in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science (rounded to a whole number).
What does Stark Education Partnership EXPLORE research show?
– Source: ACT, Inc.
### Student Post Secondary Plans and National Composite Score Quartiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational plans category</th>
<th>Number of students responding</th>
<th>Percent of all students</th>
<th>Percent planning college core coursework*</th>
<th>Mean Composite score</th>
<th>Percent in national Composite score quartiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not plan to finish high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>67 0 33 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>No training planned after high school</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>28 22 30 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job training in the military services</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28 9 41 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apprentice / job training</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>44 11 11 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career / technical school</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>34 18 32 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-year / junior college</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>11 14 43 32</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-year college / university</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>14 8 33 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional study</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>13 9 33 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>16 13 39 32</td>
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<td>Other plans</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>27 14 39 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>28 8 27 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Source: ACT EXPLORE Reports
Seven findings from pre/post surveys supported the effectiveness of EXPLORE as a college readiness intervention.

Finding One: In general, curriculum directors saw positive changes in teacher familiarity about the purpose and use of the EXPLORE Test.

Finding Two: There was growth in the percentage of students who considered it “very likely” that they would eventually get a college degree.

Finding Three: Students felt that they gained in knowledge about what coursework was necessary to succeed in college or the workplace.

Finding Four: A large percentage of parents in all three districts believe that their students will go on to college. This percentage increased from the fall to the spring administrations of the survey.

Finding Five: Cost was the primary reason why some parents thought it was not possible for their student to go on to college.

Finding Six: The majority of middle school faculty believed before and after EXPLORE that grades 6-8 is the time to start thinking about college.

Finding Seven: Faculty gained knowledge about high school success skills and EXPLORE’s College Readiness Standards.
That ACT, Inc. believes the impact of what does *not* happen in middle school may be irreversible as students go on to college is alarming.

The alarm is heightened by ACT’s research that only two in 10 eighth graders are actually “on target to be ready for college-level work by the time they graduate from high school.”
The EXPLORE test can be a valuable middle school intervention to help prepare students for college and career readiness.

-Rochford, O’Neill, Gelb, “Ready to Go: Using the EXPLORE Test to Increase 8th Grade Readiness for Success”, August 2010
How to sign up for EXPLORE

Contact ACT

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Thanks for your participation!