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## AACPS TO OFFER FREE ACT EXAMS TO ALL HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS BEGINNING THIS SPRING

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In a move designed to open collegiate doors to significantly more students than ever before and support more students in the college admissions process, Anne Arundel County Public Schools will pay for all high school juniors to take the ACT college entrance exam beginning this spring.

The ACT is designed to assess the degree to which a student is prepared for college-level work. It has four main sections – English, Reading, Math, and Science – as well as an optional writing component. Approximately 5,600 AACPS juniors will be given all but the writing component during the April administration of the ACT. The test will be administered during the school day.

“This is a quantum leap forward for us in terms of enhancing not only the ability of our students to be prepared for the rigors of college, but the ways we assess their progress toward this goal,” Superintendent George Arlotto said. “The ACT is a highly respected, widely accepted measure of college readiness, and we are thrilled to be able to provide it for all of our 11<sup>th</sup>-graders.”

The ACT is the most frequently administered college admissions assessment, with more than 1.9 million students in the United States taking it last school year. The test is accepted for admissions by all four-year universities in the United States and more than 225 universities around the world. It is also accepted by Anne Arundel Community College.

More than 1,000 AACPS students took the ACT last year. Administration of the ACT this year is expected to cost AACPS approximately \$200,000. The funds will come from existing allocations, and not require any additional appropriation from the County.

As part of the shift, AACPS will offset some of the cost by no longer paying to administer the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the precursor to the SAT, to students in grades 9 through 11. All county high schools will, however, be sites for PSAT administration on October 15, 2016. Students will be responsible for the \$15 fee to take the PSAT.

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