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1. What is the College Explorer tool?

Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™) has developed a unique new College Explorer tool that enables fifth through ninth grade students to use their Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) scores to see which colleges and universities they're on track to enter long before they embark on the college application process.

The tool is intended to be a conversation-starter for students, parents, and educators who want insights into what college opportunities may be available to students based on academic performance. The tool can also serve as an opportunity to set academic goals focused on admittance at a preferred institution.

The College Explorer Tool links to MAP scores for students in grades 5-9 to colleges and universities based on the median ACT® scores of students who were admitted and enrolled in those institutions. Additionally, the tool provides a quantitative profile of each institution using data from the [U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard](#), which includes valuable information on cost of attendance and the average annual cost to families at different income levels. This crucial information shows students and families their projected costs for attending a given college through graduation, as well as graduates' typical earnings.

Schools and families can access the tool [here](#).

2. How do I use the College Explorer tool?

Using the filters, select the grade and the term that the student last took the MAP test. Then, using the math and reading sliders, select ranges that include the student's most recent scores. The map will then update to show the colleges and universities for which the median ACT score of admitted students is within the predicted range of RIT scores that you selected. For example, if the student scored 220 on the Reading test, select 215–225. By selecting a range instead of a single score, you will be able to see a wider selection of college options that are reasonable options given that score. You can adjust the range to see more or fewer colleges.

3. Why can't I use the College Explorer tool to search for a particular college I'm looking for?

The tool uses the relationship between MAP scores and predicted ACT scores to select the range of schools depicted on the map. If a college does not use the ACT test for admissions, or the median ACT score of admitted students is not published in the College Scorecard database, that school will not appear on the map.

4. May I embed the College Explorer tool on my school/district website or blog to make it more accessible to families and educators?

Yes; here is the embed code and a set of brief instructions.

Embed instructions:

1. Copy the below embed code
 - a. On Windows, press Control + C. On Mac, press Command + C.
2. In your content management system (CMS), open the HTML viewer. Not sure how to access your CMS? Whoever manages your website should be able to help.
3. Paste the embed code into your HTML viewer window and click 'OK' or 'Save.'
4. Visit the webpage and confirm the NWEA College Explorer tool is displayed.

NWEA College Explorer tool embed code:

```
<script type='text/javascript'
src='https://public.tableau.com/javascripts/api/viz_v1.js'></script><div
class='tableauPlaceholder' style='width: 1004px; height: 2469px;'><noscript><a href='#'><img
alt='Dashboard 1 '
src='https://public.tableau.com/static/images/NW/NWEAcollege
scorecard/Dashboard1/1_rss.png' style='border: none' /></a></noscript><object
class='tableauViz' width='1004' height='2469' style='display:none;'><param name='host_url'
value='https://public.tableau.com/' /> <param name='site_root' value='' /><param
name='name' value='NWEAcollegescorecard/Dashboard1' /><param name='tabs'
value='no' /><param name='toolbar' value='yes' /><param name='static_image'
value='https://public.tableau.com/static/images/NW/NWEAcolle
gescorecard/Dashboard1/1.png' /> <param name='animate_transition' value='yes'
/><param name='display_static_image' value='yes' /><param name='display_spinner'
value='yes' /><param name='display_overlay' value='yes' /><param name='display_count'
value='yes' /><param name='showVizHome' value='no' /><param name='showTabs' value='y'
/><param name='bootstrapWhenNotified' value='true' /></object></div>
```

5. Can I focus my College Explorer tool search on a single state?

Yes, you can focus your search to a state or even a city. After you select your filters, click on the map and you will see a search bar in the upper left corner. Select the city or state you are interested in, and your results will be limited to that region.

6. Why doesn't the College Explorer tool's RIT score range go higher or lower?

Once the user has selected a testing season (for example, "Grade 5 Spring"), the range of selectable reading and math RIT scores will update to reflect the range of RIT scores associated with being "On Track" to achieve an ACT score that meets/exceeds the median value for admitted college students in the tool. For example, if one selects "Grade 5 Fall" in the filter, the selectable range of RIT scores will not include values as low as 150 because there are no colleges identified within the tool for whom the median ACT score of admitted students corresponds to a 150 RIT. The upper and lower ranges reflect the lowest and highest MAP scores associated with hitting the median ACT score of admitted student in the colleges and universities included within the tool.

It should be emphasized that a RIT score lower than the values shown on the slider does not necessarily mean that a student is not on track for college. It simply means that the median ACT score of admitted students is higher. Colleges and universities accept students with a range of ACT/SAT scores, and admissions decisions consider many factors in addition to test scores.

7. Where does the College Explorer tool data come from?

The data in the College Explorer tool comes from multiple sources. The MAP College Readiness benchmarks come from a [study conducted by NWEA researchers](#) in which they predicted performance on the ACT achievement tests in English and mathematics using scores on the MAP assessments for reading and mathematics for students in grades 5 through 9. The study identified cut-scores on MAP that correspond to published college readiness benchmarks on the ACT and provided a set of tables to help teachers and parents gauge, in a timely manner, whether a student is on track in his or her preparation for college success.

The information about colleges comes from the [College Scorecard](#), a US Department of Education website designed to increase transparency of college data, including student completion, debt and repayment, earnings, and more.

8. What about other factors related to college readiness?

College readiness should not be defined by a single test score associated to a single cut score, and this tool is not intended to limit or contain a student's college goals. Rather, it should serve as a data-based review of what colleges a student is currently a good academic fit for, and an opportunity to understand what academic targets the student might need to strive for to enroll in his or her school of choice. The student also can see the important financial and completion rate data associated with the range of potential schools.