

Gov. Heineman, Commissioner Breed Recognize Nine High School Seniors for Top ACT & SAT Scores

(Omaha, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today recognized nine Nebraska high school seniors for their academic achievement in earning top scores of 36 on the ACT or a 2400 on the SAT college admissions exams.

The Governor was joined by Roger Breed, Nebraska's Commissioner of Education, in honoring seniors earning the highest possible composite scores on the exams. The students recognized today are graduating this spring and took their exam prior to the start of this school year.

"I want to congratulate each of these students on all the hard work that put them at the top of their class," Gov. Heineman said. "This achievement is evidence of a true commitment to learning. These are just a few of the outstanding young people in our state who have distinguished themselves in the classroom, and I'm confident they will build upon their academic accomplishments in the years ahead."

The eight Nebraska students earning a top ACT score were among 514 students nationwide to receive a perfect score. In Nebraska, 1 in every 3,300 2008 graduates scored a 36. They include: Thomas Belatti and Logan White, both of Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha; Alexander Estes of Westside High School in Omaha; Daniel Holtmeyer of Bellevue West Sr. High School; Benjamin Kotopka of Pius X High School in Lincoln; Cara Nickolaus of Lincoln Northeast High School; Luke Weitkemper of Mount Michael Benedictine High School in Elkhorn; and Marcus Winter of Elmwood-Murdock Jr.-Sr. High School in Murdock. On average, roughly one-tenth of one percent of test takers score a 36.

In addition, William Scheideler of Lincoln East High School received a top score on his SAT. Of the more than 1.5 million students who took the SAT in 2008, only 294 scored a 2400. Roughly 1 in every 5,100 students achieves a 2400 on the SAT.

Breed said, "On behalf of the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education, I congratulate each of you on your outstanding academic achievement. I know your teachers, schools and families are proud of your accomplishments. You are among Nebraska's best, and I am confident that you will be highly successful."

The ACT consists of four tests that are scored on a scale of one to 36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The average composite score for Nebraska high school graduates in 2008 was 22.1.

Jon Erickson, Vice President of ACT Educational Services, said, "ACT is thrilled to recognize these outstanding seniors. Colleges consider a variety of experiences when a student applies for admission. A top ACT score of 36 qualifies these students to attend the most selective colleges and universities in the nation. The score indicates the student should have the widest possible range of future educational options from which to choose."

Developed by The College Board, the SAT measures the critical thinking, mathematical reasoning and writing skills needed to do college-level work. The exam reflects what students learn in school and helps demonstrate how students are able to apply that knowledge.

College Board President Gaston Caperton said, "We are delighted to recognize Will Scheideler's exceptional achievement. He has shown that he is certainly ready for the challenges of college coursework. We congratulate Will, and his parents, on his accomplishment and are certain that this is just the beginning of many more wonderful successes he will experience. Will's teachers and counselors also deserve recognition for their part in his success and the success of all the other students they nurture each day."