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Gov. Heineman Recognizes Ten High School Seniors for Top ACT & SAT Scores

(Omaha, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today recognized a total of 10 Nebraska high school seniors for their academic achievement in earning top scores of 36 on the ACT or 2400 on the SAT college admissions exams. The ceremonies were held at Westside High School in Omaha and Lincoln East High School in Lincoln.

The Governor was joined by Roger Breed, Nebraska's Commissioner of Education, in honoring seniors earning the highest possible composite scores on the exams. All the students recognized today are graduating this spring.

"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 ACT consists of four tests that are scored on a scale of one to 36. In 2009, nearly 1.5 million graduates have taken ACT. That number is expected to increase when the 2010 testing cycle is complete. On average, less than one-tenth of one percent of test takers scores a 36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The average composite score for Nebraska high school graduates in 2009 was 22.1.

As of May 2010, for the high school graduating class of 2010, nine Nebraska students earned a top ACT score. They include: Zachary Christensen of Elkhorn High School in Elkhorn; Jahan Claes of Lincoln East High School in Lincoln; Matthew Deveney of Omaha North High Magnet School; Thomas Gilgenast of Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha; Anna Heffron of Skutt Catholic High School in Omaha; Griffin Hovorka of Elmwood Murdock High School in Murdock; Grace Lyden of Westside High School in Omaha; Dominic Ryan of Lincoln East High School in Lincoln; and Zion Schell of Lincoln High School in Lincoln.

In addition to a perfect score on the ACT, Dominic Ryan of Lincoln East High School in Lincoln also received the highest possible score of 2400 on the SAT. Elisabeth Thoreson-Green of Westside High School in Omaha received a 2400 on the SAT.

Of the more than 1.5 million students worldwide who took the SAT in the Class of 2010, only 297 received a score of 2400. The average SAT score among 2010 College Bound Seniors was 1509, while Nebraska SAT takers in the class of 2010 had an average mean score of 1753.

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."

Jon Erickson, Senior Vice President of ACT Educational Services, said, "ACT congratulates these outstanding Nebraska seniors for their exceptional scores and academic readiness. We also wish to recognize the important role played by the teachers, parents and schools that helped each student succeed."

Created and designed by educators, the SAT tests students' reading, writing and mathematics skills — the same skills they're learning in high school and that are essential to college success. It also shows how well students can apply their skills, which is critically important to colleges when evaluating undergraduate candidates. Each year, the SAT is administered to more than two million students in more than 6,000 test centers that are located in more than 170 countries.

College Board President Gaston Caperton said, "We are delighted to recognize Dominic and Elisabeth for their extraordinary achievement. Both of these students have demonstrated not only a mastery of their high school coursework, but also their excellent preparation for the academic challenges they'll face at any of our nation's finest colleges and universities. I also congratulate the parents, teachers and counselors of these exceptional students for helping to nurture and encourage their success."