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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2011, 9:30 a.m. CT

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Gov. Heineman Recognizes 17 High School Seniors for Top ACT & SAT Scores

(Lincoln, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today will recognize 17 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 during two events. The ceremonies are being held today at Lincoln Southeast High School and Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha.

The Governor was joined by Dr. Roger Breed, Nebraska's Commissioner of Education, in honoring seniors earning the highest possible composite scores on the exams and will graduate this spring. Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy is visiting three students unable to attend today's events.

"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 scored on a scale of one to 36. In 2010, nearly 1.6 million graduates took the ACT. On average, fewer than one-tenth of one percent of students who take the ACT receive a top composite score of 36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The average composite score for Nebraska high school graduates in 2010 was 22.1.

As of May 2011, for the high school graduating class of 2011, 16 Nebraska students earned a top ACT score. They include: Anna Sorensen of Creighton Community High School of Creighton; Paul Davey, Seth Davis, Michael Lebens, and Jeffmin Lin, all of Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha; Natalie Wozniak

of Kearney High School; Anh Nguyen of Lincoln High School; Sophia Wennstedt of Lincoln Southeast High School; Jacob Heidelk and John Jasa of Lincoln Southwest High School; Eric Wolatz of Millard North High School; Gabriel Connealy of Whitman who attends Mullen High School in Mullen; Zachary Foster and Garin Newcomb of Papillion-LaVista South High School in Papillion; J. Price Comstock of Roncalli Catholic High School in Omaha; Yuechen Zhao of Westside High School in Omaha.

Albert Zhou of Lincoln Southwest High School received a 2400 on the SAT.

Of the nearly 1.6 million students worldwide who took the SAT in the class of 2010, only 382 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 1746.

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 SAT is a reliable measure of college readiness. It tests the academic skills and knowledge acquired in high school and how well students apply can knowledge, which is a critical factor in college course work. Each year, the SAT is administered by approximately 6,000 test centers located in more than 170 countries.

College Board President Gaston Caperton said, "On behalf of the College Board, I am thrilled to recognize the exceptional work of these fine students. They have not only mastered their high school coursework, but have also demonstrated a commitment to preparation that will serve them well throughout their lives. Furthermore, I want to congratulate the parents, teachers and counselors who played a key role in each student's success. Our future is brighter thanks to your efforts."