

Edited news release

**CONTACT**

Jen Rae Hein, Gov's Office, 402-429-4701

Betty VanDeventer, Dept. of Ed, 402-471-4537

Kevin Houchin, ACT, 319-383-1859

Christine Silvis, College Board, 651-341-7556

## **Gov. Heineman, Commissioner Breed Recognize 15 High School Seniors for Top ACT and SAT Scores**

On May 8, Gov. Dave Heineman and Commissioner Roger Breed recognized fifteen 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 exam during two events. The ceremonies were held at Central High School in Omaha and Lincoln Southwest High School.

“I want to congratulate each of these students on their perfect ACT and SAT score,” Gov. Heineman said. “This is an incredible accomplishment. These students represent 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 Governor and Commissioner Breed were joined by a representative of the ACT and a representative of the SAT in honoring seniors earning the highest possible composite scores on the exams.

As of May, for the high school graduating class of 2013, 15 Nebraska seniors earned a top score on the ACT and SAT. The top scoring students of the ACT test are: Preston Fegley of Grand Island Senior High School; Patrick Fisher of Creighton Preparatory School; Maranda Frey of Lincoln Southwest High School; Thomas Fryklind of Archbishop Bergan High School; Vaishnavi Ganesan of Elkhorn South High School; Alexander Gangwish of Bellevue West High School; Paul Kujawa of Mount Michael Benedictine High School; Mackenzie Mikkelsen of Westside High School; Nick Nagengast of Bloomfield High School; Andrew Peterson of Lincoln Southeast High School; Thomas Rasmussen of Lincoln East High School; Bonnie Smith of Northwest High School; Marika Svolos of Central High School; and Peter Xu of Millard North High School.

Marika Svolos of Central High School and Nathaniel Wei of Lincoln East High School received a top score on the SAT.

Dr. Breed said, “College and career readiness is a goal Nebraska has set for all high school graduates. You are a role model. Each of you has reached the top of that goal by receiving the highest possible score on your college entrance exam. On behalf of the State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education, I congratulate you on your outstanding academic achievement. I know your teachers, schools and families are proud of your accomplishments as well.”

Jon Erickson, President of ACT Education Division, said, “The scores achieved by these outstanding Nebraska seniors are significant and rare. We at ACT offer our congratulations to the students, and we honor the important role played by the teachers, parents, and schools to help these students achieve a top score.”

The ACT consists of four tests scored on a scale of one to 36. In 2011, more than 1.66 million graduates from the class of 2012 took the ACT; 52% of the entire graduating class nationwide. On average, less than one-tenth of one percent of all students who take the ACT earns 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 2012 was 22.

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.

Of the more than 1.66 million students in the class of 2012 who took the SAT, only 360 received the highest possible score (2400), representing just 0.022% of the total group of test takers. The mean score for the total group of SAT test takers in the class of 2012 was 1498; Nebraska SAT test takers in the class of 2012 had a mean score of 1723.

“On behalf of the members and employees of the College Board, I would like to congratulate Nathaniel, Peter and Marika on this extraordinary achievement,” said College Board President David Coleman. “These young people have demonstrated that rigorous work does, indeed, result in excellence. I would also like to recognize the families, teachers, and counselors who together created a strong foundation from which Nathaniel, Peter and Marika could achieve academic excellence.”