



NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OUTSCORE PEERS ON ACT EXAM

Despite changes in the ACT college entrance exam, Nebraska's 2013 high school graduates scored higher than their peers nationally and also outscored other graduates in English, reading, mathematics and science scores that measure college readiness.

Nebraska's average ACT composite score of 21.5 is higher than the national average of 20.9. The highest possible ACT score is 36. For more information, go to www.act.org.

Because of changes, past ACT results should not be compared to the 2013 results, said Steve Kappler, ACT assistant vice president of career and college readiness. Kappler said one major change focused on including this year for the first time the scores of graduates requiring special accommodations. The scores of those graduates were included and reported when ACT considered them allowable through its process.

In Nebraska, 84 percent of the state's high school graduates took the ACT exam, compared to 78 percent last year. Of the 17, 745 test takers this year, 497 graduates required special accommodations but had reportable scores.

As a result of this change and others, ACT officials said the average ACT composite scores declined in some states but the decline should not be interpreted as a decline in student learning or college readiness. Kappler said ACT also adjusted the benchmarks used to measure college and career readiness and updated its standards by reformatting them.

The 2013 results create a new baseline on which comparison may be made in future years.

In Nebraska there was an additional change this year. For the first time, the ACT results included Nebraska 11th graders attending school districts that are participating in a state ACT pilot project where all 11th graders take the ACT. The three-year project began in 2012, and at that time, 3,807 students were enrolled at the eight participating districts. The following public school districts are participating in the pilot: Hastings, Alliance, Sidney, South Sioux City, Lincoln, Columbus, Gering and Scottsbluff.

Nebraska high school graduates also scored higher than graduates in other states in each subject used to determine college and career readiness:

- 71 percent of Nebraska graduates met the English goal, compared to 64 percent nationally.
- 48 percent of Nebraska test takers met the reading goal, compared to 44 percent nationally.

- 46 percent of Nebraska graduates met the mathematics benchmark, compared to 44 percent nationally.
- 41 percent of Nebraska graduates tested ready in science, compared to 36 percent nationally.

This year the reading benchmark score increased 1 point; the science benchmark dropped 1 point; and, the English and mathematics benchmarks remained the same.

Of the 13 states with 80 percent or more graduates taking the ACT, Nebraska scored at the top with an average 21.5 score. Nationally, 54 percent of the high school graduates were tested with an average score of 20.9.

Student scores by race and ethnicity:

| Graduate Groups - Nebraska | 2013 |
|--|-------------|
| All Students | 21.5 |
| Black/African American | 17.1 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 17.4 |
| White | 22.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 18.2 |
| Asian | 21.7 |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 19.5 |
| Two or more races | 20.4 |
| Prefer not to respond/No response | 20.0 |