



NEWS RELEASE

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NOVEMBER 15, 2019

NEBRASKA STUDENTS CONTINUE TO OUT-PERFORM PEER STATES ON ACT

Nebraska achievement levels remained steady and on pace with the national average on the ACT entrance exam that measures college readiness in English, reading, mathematics, and science.

For the second year, nearly 100% of Nebraska graduates took the ACT as part of the statewide assessment system. Nebraska's average 2019 ACT composite score is 20.0, down one tenth of a point from last year. The national average is 20.7 but only 52% of students take the ACT nationwide. The highest possible ACT score is 36.

Nebraska started offering the ACT for free to all juniors in 2017 and continues to score well compared to the 15 states with 100% of graduates taking the ACT. Only Utah and Wisconsin scored better, each with a composite score of 20.3. This is significant as states that test a high percentage of graduates tend to have lower averages as the scores include more students who are not on a college course-taking track.

After an expected drop in score from 2017 due to rigorous college and career readiness standards, this year's scores have leveled out while the number of graduating seniors who take the ACT continues to rise. There has been a 12% increase in participation within the past five years. This year, 24,744 graduates took the ACT, up more than 200 students from last year and up 6,397 students since 2015.

The following are among the other key findings from this year's Nebraska ACT data:

- Nebraska students scored an average of 19.4 in English compared to 19.4 in 2018 and 20.1 nationally. In reading, Nebraska students scored an average of 20.3 compared to 20.4 in 2018 and 21.2 nationally. In math, Nebraska students scored an average of 19.7 compared to 19.8 in 2018 and 20.4 nationally. And in science Nebraska students scored an average of 20.2 compared to 20.1 in 2018 and 20.6 nationally.
- Compared to the 15 states where 100% of graduates took the ACT, Nebraska had the 3rd highest percent of students meeting the science and reading benchmarks and the 4th highest percent of students meeting the ACT English and math benchmarks.
- Nebraska's STEM score—a combined measure of math and science designed to predict readiness for success in STEM majors in college—remained the same as the 2018 state score of 20.2.
- There has been an increase in the total number of students and the number of minority students taking the ACT. However, achievement gaps between Hispanic, African American, and Native American students and their white and Asian American counterparts remain substantial. While 38 percent of Asian American students and 42 percent of white students showed strong readiness for college coursework, just 14 percent of Hispanic students, 9 percent of African American students and 9 percent of Native American students

earned that same level of achievement.

The national and state ACT *Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019* reports can be viewed and downloaded on the ACT website at: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/reports/act-publications/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-2019.html>.

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