



## NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email ([david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov))

OCTOBER 17, 2018

### NEBRASKA STUDENTS RANK HIGH COMPARED TO PEER STATES ON ACT

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

This was the first year nearly 100% of graduates took the ACT as part of a statewide assessment. Nebraska started offering the ACT for free to all juniors in 2017. Nebraska's average 2018 ACT composite score is 20.1. The national average is 20.8 but nationally only 55% of students take the ACT.

Of the 17 states with 100% percent or more graduates taking the ACT, only Kentucky, Ohio, Utah and Wisconsin scored better. This is significant. 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.

As expected the state average was lower than last year's score of 21.4. The drop was anticipated due to the increase in the number of students taking the ACT. The number of graduating seniors who took the ACT rose by more than 5,500 up from 18,993 in 2017 to 24,516 in 2018. The highest possible ACT score is 36.

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

- Nebraska scores fell evenly across all four ACT subject areas. Students scored an average of 19.4 in English compared to 20.9 in 2017 and 20.2 nationally. In reading Nebraska students scored an average of 20.4 compared to 21.9 in 2017 and 21.3 nationally. In math Nebraska students scored an average of 19.8 compared to 20.9 in 2017 and 20.5 nationally. And in science Nebraska students scored an average of 20.1 compared to 21.5 in 2017 and 20.7 nationally.

	NEBRASKA 2018	NEBRASKA 2017	NATIONAL 2018
ENGLISH	19.4	20.9	20.2
READING	20.4	21.9	21.3
MATH	19.8	20.9	20.5
SCIENCE	20.1	21.5	20.7

- Compared to the 17 states where 100% of graduates took the ACT, Nebraska had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest percent of students meeting the ACT English, math and science benchmarks and the 8<sup>th</sup> highest percent of students meeting the reading benchmark.
- 81% of students who took the ACT have postsecondary education plans.

- Nebraska's STEM score—a combined measure of math and science designed to predict readiness for success in STEM majors in college—is close to the national average (20.2 versus 20.9) and down from the 2017 state score of 21.5.
- Nebraska achievement gaps between Hispanic and African American students and their white and Asian American counterparts remain substantial. While 41 percent of Asian American students and 42 percent of white students showed strong readiness for college coursework, just 15 percent of Hispanic students and only 7 percent of African American students earned that same level of achievement.

The national and state ACT *Condition of College & Career Readiness 2018* reports can be viewed and downloaded on the ACT website at: <http://www.act.org/condition2018>

####

*David Jespersen*  
*Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education*  
402-471-4537  
[david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)  
@NDE\_News