



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STUDENT RESULTS STEADY ON EXPLORE AND PLAN TESTS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Overall student performance on EXPLORE and PLAN tests remained relatively unchanged in 2013, according to data released today by the Kentucky Department of Education. The assessments, precursors to the ACT college entrance exam given to all public high school juniors in the state, test knowledge in English, mathematics, reading and science.

“We saw some minor shifts up and down in the results but they still compare favorably with the rest of the nation,” Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. “In fact, in a couple of subjects, our students outperform students elsewhere.” He pointed out that more Kentucky students took the tests this year and that can result in somewhat lower scores.

The EXPLORE test is given to all 8th-grade public school students. It provides an early indicator of readiness for college, provides important information for building a high school academic plan and helps students identify careers in which they might be interested.

EXPLORE Scores from Fall 2006-13 Administrations

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES ¹								NATION Norms set in 2010*
	KENTUCKY								
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
English	13.6	13.7	13.8	14.0	13.9	14.3	14.6	14.6	14.7
Mathematics	14.2	14.4	14.6	14.9	15.2	15.3	15.4	15.3	15.5
Reading	13.8	13.7	13.9	14.2	14.2	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.6
Science	15.8	15.8	16.0	16.1	16.3	16.3	16.7	16.6	16.6
Composite	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.9	15.0	15.2	15.4	15.4	15.5
Number tested	49,510	48,099	48,649	48,347	48,250	49,310	49,486	50,251	

¹On a scale of 1 to 25

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The PLAN test is given to all 10th-grade public school students in Kentucky each September. It serves as the midpoint check of academic progress in high school. It is designed to improve students' preparation for education, training and work after high school while students still have time to adjust their high school courses.

PLAN Scores from Fall 2006-13 Administrations

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES ²								
	KENTUCKY								NATION
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Norms set in 2010*
English	15.6	15.3	15.9	15.8	15.7	16.1	16.6	16.5	16.2
Mathematics	16.3	16.2	16.4	16.5	16.8	16.8	17.1	16.9	17.6
Reading	16.0	16.1	16.0	16.2	16.4	16.6	16.8	16.7	16.7
Science	17.4	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.6	17.9	18.1	18.1	17.8
Composite	16.4	16.3	16.6	16.7	16.7	17.0	17.3	17.2	17.2
Number tested	49,910	50,046	50,531	49,589	49,827	48,955	48,576	49,622	

²On a scale from 1 to 32

**ACT, Inc., the parent company for both EXPLORE and PLAN, conducted a research study in the fall of 2010 to provide a new set of national norms for both assessments. This is a common statistical practice for these types of assessments. These new norms serve as national averages for comparison purposes.*

“When compared nationally, our biggest deficits are in math performance,” Holliday said. “These results confirm what we already know from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) tests – that is we have some real work to do to better prepare our students in mathematics.”

Holliday said it will take three to five years for Kentucky to see the impact of new Kentucky Core Academic Standards on grade 8-12 assessments since teachers need training on the most effective ways to teach the standards and students need support to fill in learning gaps and meet the more rigorous college/career-ready standards.

Since 2006, when Kentucky first started giving EXPLORE and PLAN, students have made solid gains in every subject and more students are meeting benchmarks for high school- and college-readiness.

College Readiness Benchmarks, scores in English, mathematics, science and reading that predict whether students are on track to take beginning credit-bearing college courses and be successful after they graduate from high school, are set by ACT.

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While ACT changed the benchmarks in reading and science in August 2013, Kentucky is continuing to report against the prior benchmarks in order to maintain trend data. So, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) reports on EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT will not match ACT-generated reports and they cannot be compared.

The Kentucky benchmark scores for EXPLORE are:

- 13 or higher on the English Test
- 17 or higher on the Mathematics Test
- 15 or higher on the Reading Test (ACT benchmark now 16)
- 20 or higher on the Science Test (ACT benchmark now 18)

Percentage of Kentucky 8th-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Kentucky Benchmarks in EXPLORE

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE
2006	54%	26%	35%	11%
2007	55%	27%	33%	10%
2008	56%	29%	35%	10%
2009	59%	36%	42%	14%
2010	59%	32%	39%	14%
2011	61%	31%	42%	14%
2012	67%	34%	42%	19%
2013	65%	35%	44%	15%
National	68%	36%	46%	16%

The Kentucky benchmark scores for PLAN are:

- 15 or higher on the English Test
- 19 or higher on the Mathematics Test
- 17 or higher on the Reading Test (ACT benchmark now 18)
- 21 or higher on the Science Test (ACT benchmark now 20)

Percentage of Kentucky 10th-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Kentucky Benchmarks in PLAN

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE
2006	58%	23%	41%	15%
2007	55%	21%	40%	15%
2008	61%	22%	39%	16%
2009	59%	23%	40%	15%
2010	60%	25%	43%	16%
2011	63%	25%	44%	21%
2012	68%	26%	44%	21%
2013	67%	26%	48%	19%
National	64%	36%	48%	20%

(more)

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State law (KRS 158.6459) mandates that a student whose scores on EXPLORE or PLAN indicate that either additional assistance or advanced work is required in English, reading, or mathematics must have the appropriate strategies incorporated into his or her Individual Learning Plan.

Both assessments help schools pinpoint areas of weakness for individual students and schoolwide curriculum and make changes to improve learning. Schools analyze their individual results to inform decision-making.

Administration of the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments, which are provided by ACT, Inc., was mandated by Senate Bill 130 (codified in KRS 158.6453) in the 2006 session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Senate Bill 1, passed in the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, requires a high school readiness examination in 8th grade and a college readiness examination in 10th grade. EXPLORE and PLAN, respectively, are used for these purposes, and data from the assessments is included in the state's Unbridled Learning: College/Career-Ready for All accountability system.

Holliday said the PLAN and EXPLORE tests are being discontinued by the vendor and will be replaced within the next year by "more up-to-date assessments that are aligned to the Kentucky Core Academic Standards."

See complete details on district and school EXPLORE and PLAN data by visiting the Kentucky Department of Education's Open House at <http://openhouse.education.ky.gov/> and accessing Supplemental Data and then Assessments. The EXPLORE and PLAN data will be included in the online [School/District Report Card](#), along with all the rest of the 2013-14 data, in the fall.

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