



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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****NOTE: ACT DOES NOT PROVIDE DISTRICT- OR SCHOOL-LEVEL SCORES TO THE KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AS PART OF ITS GRADUATING CLASS SCORE RELEASE.****

KENTUCKY GRADUATES GAIN ON STUDENTS NATIONWIDE ON ACT

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky public high school graduates turned in another strong performance on the ACT college-entrance exam, making significant gains over the past five years. While Kentucky public school graduates still trail those nationwide, the performance gap is narrowing.

From 2010 to 2014, Kentucky public school students registered from a half-point to more than a full-point gain in every subject and nearly a one-point improvement in the overall composite score – up to 19.9 on a 36-point scale. At the same time, student performance nationally stayed nearly unchanged. The national composite is 21.1, up only one-tenth of a point from 2010.

“This is validation that we are on the right track and that Senate Bill 1 is accomplishing what was intended,” said Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. “Our teachers have embraced more rigorous standards and our students are rising to the challenge. Both should be proud of what they have accomplished.”

KENTUCKY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES’ AVERAGE ACT SCORES Standard-Time Students Only

	2010	2011	2012	2013	KY 2014	KY 5-year gain	US 5-year gain
English	18.3	18.7	19.0	19.2	19.4	+1.1	--
Mathematics	18.8	18.8	19.1	19.2	19.3	+0.5	--
Reading	19.2	19.6	19.8	19.8	20.2	+1.0	+0.1
Science	19.2	19.3	19.5	19.7	20.0	+0.8	--
Composite	19.0	19.2	19.5	19.6	19.9	+0.9	+0.1
Number taking test	41,277	42,196	41,851	41,858	41,258		

For the past two years, ACT has included scores for students receiving time-extended accommodations in its summary reporting, which resulted in slightly lower overall scores.

(more)

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**KENTUCKY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES' AVERAGE ACT SCORES
Standard- and Extended-Time Students Combined**

	2013	2014
English	18.7	19.0
Mathematics	18.9	19.1
Reading	19.5	19.9
Science	19.4	19.7
Composite	19.3	19.5

“In just one year we have eliminated the losses seen with a change of test-taker population in reporting,” Holliday said. “Even taking into account the addition of students with ACT-approved accommodations, which is about seven percent of our students, Kentucky students have shown notable gains.”

Composite scores for almost all ethnic groups of public school graduates showed improvement. African American and Hispanic students recorded slightly greater gains than did white students, but achievement gaps still persist. Holliday said it is imperative that all students have an opportunity to graduate college/career-ready and that the state will continue its work with schools and districts on strategies to close achievement gaps.

**2013 AND 2014 KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES' ACT COMPOSITE SCORES
BY ETHNIC GROUP AND GENDER
Standard- and Extended-Time Students Combined**

GROUP	2013 COMPOSITE	2014 COMPOSITE
All Students	19.3	19.5
African American	16.3	16.7
American Indian	16.7	16.7
White	19.8	20.1
Hispanic	18.0	18.5
Asian	21.4	22.8
Hawaiian/Oth. Pacific Islander	18.5	18.2
Two or more races	19.4	19.7
Other/No Response	18.1	17.9
Males	18.9	19.2
Females	19.6	19.9
No Gender Response	15.6	15.6

The percentage of public high school graduates meeting or exceeding the state’s college readiness benchmarks also is up in recent years. The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) benchmarks are the minimum scores that guarantee entry into corresponding credit-bearing college courses at Kentucky colleges and universities without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses. ACT scores also are used, along with high school grade point averages, to determine the amount of money high school graduates are eligible to receive through the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship program.

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**PERCENTAGES OF KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES MEETING
CPE STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE READINESS
Standard- and Extended-Time Students Combined**

COLLEGE- LEVEL COURSE	BENCHMARK	2013 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK	2014 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK
English	18	55%	56.4%
Mathematics	19	40%	41.3%
Reading	20	46%	48.0%

“Our data show that students who enter college prepared to take credit-bearing courses graduate at twice the rate of students who enter underprepared,” said Council on Postsecondary Education President Robert King. “The steady improvement in ACT scores is most welcome news. It will help those students and Kentucky's economic future.”

Once again, there is a strong correlation between student performance on the ACT and the rigor of the courses a student takes in high school. While Kentucky's minimum high school graduation requirements of four years of English and three years each of mathematics (including Algebra 1, Algebra 2 and geometry); science and social studies aligns with ACT's recommended core curriculum, the rigor of the courses varies widely. Generally speaking, the more rigorous the courses the student takes, the better the student performs on the ACT.

To compile information for the release of 2014 graduating class data, ACT, Inc. used students' scores from the last time they took the test. Since the ACT is administered to all Kentucky public high school juniors, some of those students may not have taken the ACT again as 12th graders.

Statewide data for the junior class who took the ACT in March 2014 will be released in the School Report Card later this fall.

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