



# 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.\*\***

## MORE KENTUCKY GRADUATES MEET STATE BENCHMARKS ON ACT

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – More Kentucky public high school graduates are meeting the state’s college-readiness benchmarks on the ACT college-entrance exam, according to data released today by the Kentucky Department of Education.

“The numbers show that our high school graduates are better prepared for college than ever before,” Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. “That’s a direct result of Senate Bill 1 and the reforms – including more rigorous standards and accountability – that we’ve implemented since 2009. Clearly, our teachers and students have risen to the challenge.”

The percentage of students meeting Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) benchmarks is up in every subject over the past three years. The benchmarks represent the minimum scores that guarantee students entry into corresponding credit-bearing college courses at Kentucky college and universities without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses.

### 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	2015 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK
English	18	55%	56.4%	57.2%
Mathematics	19	40%	41.3%	44.5%
Reading	20	46%	48.0%	49.5%

“It is estimated that students and parents have been able to save more than \$1,000 per student by avoiding non-credit bearing remedial course tuition at the college level,” Holliday said. “On top of that, high school graduates who reach college readiness levels are more likely to return to college for a second year, take more credit-bearing courses, and have a higher GPA.”

(more)

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In recent years, Kentucky graduates have realized significantly greater gains on the ACT than their counterparts nationwide. From 2011 to 2015, Kentucky public school graduates made gains in every subject and more than a three-quarter point improvement in the overall composite score – up to 20.0 on a 36-point scale. At the same time, student performance in the U.S. stagnated, with the national composite of 21.2, up only one-tenth of a point from 2011.

**KENTUCKY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES’ AVERAGE ACT SCORES  
Standard Time Students Only Reported for 5-year Trend**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	KY 5-year gain	US 5-year gain
English	18.7	19.0	19.2	19.4	<b>19.6</b>	<b>+9</b>	--
Mathematics	18.8	19.1	19.2	19.3	<b>19.6</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>-.1</b>
Reading	19.6	19.8	19.8	20.2	<b>20.3</b>	<b>+7</b>	<b>+2</b>
Science	19.3	19.5	19.7	20.0	<b>20.1</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+2</b>
Composite	19.2	19.5	19.6	19.9	<b>20.0</b>	<b>+8</b>	<b>+1</b>

For the past three years, ACT has included scores for students receiving extended-time accommodations in its summary reporting. These students typically register lower test scores than students who do not receive additional time to take the test. Eight percent of Kentucky test-takers receive ACT-approved accommodations as compared with four percent of students nationally.

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

	2013	2014	2015
English	18.7	19.0	<b>19.1</b>
Mathematics	18.9	19.1	<b>19.3</b>
Reading	19.5	19.9	<b>20.0</b>
Science	19.4	19.7	<b>19.8</b>
Composite	19.3	19.5	<b>19.7</b>
Number taking test	45,052	44,558	<b>45,162</b>

Composite scores for various groups of public school graduates are up from where they were several years ago, but the numbers illustrate that achievement gaps persist. Holliday said it is imperative that all students have an opportunity to graduate college/career-ready. The state is putting an emphasis on strategies to close achievement gaps and working with schools and districts to do so, he said.

(more)

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**2013 - 15 KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES' ACT COMPOSITE SCORES  
BY ETHNIC GROUP AND GENDER  
Standard- and Extended-Time Students Combined**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>2013 COMPOSITE</b>	<b>2014 COMPOSITE</b>	<b>2015 COMPOSITE</b>
<b>All Students</b>	19.3	19.5	19.7
<b>African American</b>	16.3	16.7	16.7
<b>American Indian</b>	16.7	16.7	17.0
<b>White</b>	19.8	20.1	20.3
<b>Hispanic</b>	18.0	18.5	18.4
<b>Asian</b>	21.4	22.8	22.0
<b>Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	18.5	18.2	18.8
<b>Two or more races</b>	19.4	19.7	19.8
<b>Other/No Response</b>	18.1	17.9	18.0
<b>Males</b>	18.9	19.2	19.4
<b>Females</b>	19.6	19.9	20.0
<b>No Gender Response</b>	15.6	15.6	16.5

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 2015 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 2015 will be released in the School Report Card later this fall.

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