



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### NEWS RELEASE

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**\*\*NOTE: THIS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED UNTIL 3 A.M. EASTERN TIME ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2018 PER ACT. (Print reporters: stories may appear in Wednesday morning editions.) \*\***

**\*\*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 SEE SLIGHT INCREASE ON ACT**

(Frankfort, KY) - The percentage of Kentucky public high school graduates meeting the state's college readiness benchmarks on the ACT college-entrance exam in English, mathematics and reading saw an incremental increase, according to data released today by ACT.

"We are pleased with the increases in ACT scores for the Kentucky class of 2018. Even these modest increases are undoubtedly the result of lots of hard work on the part of students, educators, and parents," said Kentucky Education Commissioner Wayne Lewis. "The results also show, however, continued significant disparities between the performance of student groups by race/ethnicity. Eliminating such incredible disparities must become a top education priority for our state."

The state benchmarks represent the minimum scores that guarantee students entry into corresponding credit-bearing courses at Kentucky colleges and universities without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses. (ACT also has its own College Readiness Benchmarks, which are slightly higher than Kentucky's benchmarks, and represent the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in credit-bearing college courses.)

Nationally, overall achievement – both the average ACT Composite Score and the

percentage of students meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks – took a minor dip after a rise in 2017 and 2016.

**PERCENTAGES OF KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES MEETING  
COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE READINESS  
Standard and Extended Time Students Combined**

COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE	BENCHMARK	2016 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK	2017 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK	2018 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK
English	18	57%	56%	57%
Mathematics	19	41%	42%	44%
Reading	20	50%	51%	53%

Since Kentucky began administering the ACT, Kentucky public school graduates have registered slight ups and downs in scores from year to year with nearly every subject up overall since 2014.

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

	2015	2016	2017	2018
English	19.1	19.2	19.2	19.4
Mathematics	19.3	19.1	19.1	19.4
Reading	20.0	20.2	20.2	20.4
Science	19.8	19.6	19.8	19.8
Composite	19.7	19.7	19.7	19.9
Number taking test	45,162	46,285	46,840	46,988

Of particular importance is the comparison between the junior and senior class scores of the same school year. Since 2008, all of Kentucky’s public school juniors have participated in the ACT and the cost of the exam is paid for by state funds. Students who take the test again during their senior year do so voluntarily and at their own expense. According to ACT, students who take the exam multiple times are more likely to improve their test score over time. Additionally, when reporting group or state averages, ACT utilizes the individual’s highest score achieved if they have taken the test multiple times.

Lewis said because some students choose to take the test again in their senior year, it is important to examine Kentucky’s junior scores and the scores for the graduating class.

“Both sets of scores are important, but there is an important difference” Lewis said. “The scores for juniors give us a sense of students’ academic readiness for college at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade benchmark, while the class of 2018 scores are an indicator of the academic readiness of 2018 graduates, which includes both scores earned on their 11<sup>th</sup> grade administration of the test as well as higher scores earned by those students who retook the exam an additional time or two during their senior year.”

**PERCENTAGES OF KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES AND SENIORS MEETING COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE READINESS Standard and Extended Time Students Combined**

COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSE	BENCHMARK	2018 JUNIORS MEETING BENCHMARK	2018 GRADUATES MEETING BENCHMARK
English	18	51.2%	57%
Mathematics	19	38.9%	44%
Reading	20	47.1%	53%

Also of note, while composite scores for various groups of public school graduates are up from where they were in years past, the numbers illustrate that achievement gaps persist.

GROUP	2015 COMPOSITE	2016 COMPOSITE	2017 COMPOSITE	2018 COMPOSITE
All Students	19.7	19.7	19.7	19.9
African America	16.7	16.8	16.9	16.9
American Indian	17.0	17.3	16.8	16.7
White	20.3	20.3	20.3	20.5
Hispanic	18.4	18.3	18.7	18.5
Asian	22	22.6	22.1	22.9
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	18.8	16.6	18.6	17.5
Two or more races	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.9
Prefer not to respond/No response	18.0	17.8	18.0	18.5
Males	19.4	19.5	19.5	19.6
Females	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.3
No Gender Response	16.5	17.4	17.8	16.2

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