

## News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2014-83 B

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

Contact: Tom McCarthy, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

### ACT participation, composite score up

*Wisconsin overall results are second in the nation for ACT-taking states*

MADISON — With 73 percent of public and private high school graduates taking the ACT college admission exam, the state’s 2014 average composite score increased one-tenth of a point to 22.2, making Wisconsin second in the nation on the ACT assessment.

“Our 2014 graduates did a fine job on the ACT,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “Their efforts, along with support from their teachers and parents, have resulted in statewide ACT scores that are second in the nation among ACT-taking states.”

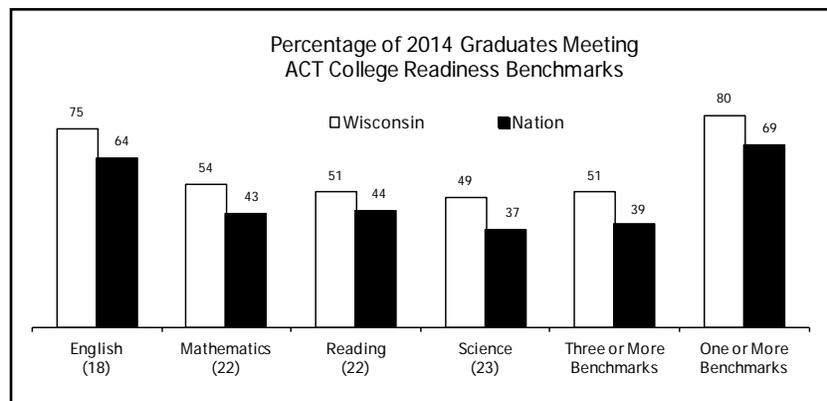
Wisconsin had 46,870 graduates take the ACT during high school. Their composite score was 22.2 compared to 22.1 last year. The students represent 73 percent of public and private high school graduates, a participation rate that is up two percentage points from last year. Nationally, 1.8 million graduates took the ACT, 57 percent of the nation’s graduates. The national composite score was 21.0, up from 20.9 the prior year. Minnesota had the top ACT composite score among ACT-taking states, those with 50 percent or more of graduates taking the ACT. Minnesota’s composite score was 22.9, down a tenth of a point from last year.

Using years of collected data, ACT has researched the subject area test scores, or benchmarks, that indicate college readiness. For example, the benchmark score for English is 18. Students with that score or higher have a

75 percent chance of earning a grade of “C” or better in a college-level English course, reducing the likelihood students will need to take remedial classes before starting their college studies.

Wisconsin far outpaced the nation in meeting benchmark scores in each subject area. In English,

75 percent of state public and private school graduates earned the English benchmark score (18), compared to 64 percent nationally. In mathematics, 54 percent of state students earned the benchmark score of 22, compared to



(more)

43 percent nationally. For reading, the benchmark score went from 21 to 22 last year and 51 percent of Wisconsin students had reading scores that met the benchmark, compared to 44 percent of students in the nation. In science, 49 percent of state graduates earned the benchmark score of 23. Nationally, 37 percent of graduates were considered college-ready in science. The science benchmark score went from 24 to 23 in 2013. Overall, 51 percent of state graduates earned three or more ACT benchmark scores, compared to 39 percent of students nationally.

“Business and industry leaders have told us that to be college ready is to be career ready,” said Evers. “We want our students to pursue rigorous coursework so they are prepared for the next steps after high school graduation, whether that is further study at a two- or four-year college or university or training with apprenticeship programs, military service, or the workforce.”

According to ACT, a college-ready curriculum, or “core curriculum,” consists of four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies. Overall, Wisconsin had 73 percent of students who reported they took a core curriculum, the same percentage as the nation. State students who took “core” had ACT subject scores that averaged 2.4 points higher than scores for students who did not report taking a rigorous college preparatory curriculum. Nationally, there was an average 3.0 point difference in scores on subject area tests between students who studied a core curriculum and those who did not. Wisconsin students’ course-taking plans showed wide disparities based on racial and ethnic groups and is reflected in 2014 ACT subject and college-readiness benchmark scores.

“While overall student performance on the ACT was quite strong, we have work to do to close achievement gaps,” Evers said. “The work of my Achievement Gap Task Force, a group of talented educators and leaders from across the state, will provide proven, research-based strategies and resources that any school and school leader can implement immediately to make a difference in the lives of students in Wisconsin classrooms.”

Wisconsin’s graduation requirements will change from two credits each in math and science to three credits for public school students who finish high school in the 2016-17 school year. “Most of our students already meet the new math and science credit requirement. I fought for this policy change to increase the rigor behind Wisconsin’s high school diploma and to ensure our students take coursework that will prepare them for college and careers,” Evers said.

Participation among most student groups has been going up over the years. Hispanic students in Wisconsin had an 11 percent increase in ACT-taking over one year. Composite scores for Hispanic students were steady from the prior year at 19.2 and up from five years ago (18.7). In spring, Wisconsin will be among 19 states that administer the ACT to all students during high school as part of a statewide testing program. The state’s 11th-grade public school students will take the ACT plus writing exam in March.

###

**NOTES:** Additional tables with information on ACT results for 2014 public and private school graduates follow. This news release is available electronically at [http://news.dpi.wi.gov/files/eis/pdf/dpinr2014\\_83.pdf](http://news.dpi.wi.gov/files/eis/pdf/dpinr2014_83.pdf). ACT results for public school students are available by school and by district on the WISEdash Public Portal at <http://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov>.

# 2014 ACT Results

Composite Scores, School Program, and College Readiness Benchmarks by Racial and Ethnic Groups

	ACT Test-Takers	Composite Score	Composite Scores			Percentage Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores				
			Percentage Taking Core	Core or More	Less than Core	English (18)	Mathematics (22)	Reading (22)	Science (23)	All Four Benchmarks
<b>Wisconsin</b>										
Black / African American	3,221	16.2	52	17.2	15.5	26	10	13	9	4
American Indian / Alaska Native	246	19.5	64	20.4	18.2	57	27	38	26	12
White	34,611	23.2	77	23.6	21.8	83	62	58	56	39
Hispanic / Latino	3,429	19.2	65	20.2	18.0	52	30	31	25	15
Asian	1,886	20.8	67	21.7	19.2	56	50	34	37	24
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	32	20.7	75	21.8	17.3	69	53	28	31	22
Two or more races	1,424	21.6	71	22.4	20.3	70	47	50	42	29
Prefer not to respond / No Response	2,021	21.8	56	24.1	20.5	--	--	--	--	--
<b>All Students</b>	<b>46,870</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Nation</b>										
Black / African American	241,678	17.0	68	17.6	15.7	34	14	17	10	5
American Indian / Alaska Native	14,263	18.0	62	19.0	16.5	40	20	25	17	10
White	1,038,435	22.3	76	23.1	20.2	76	52	54	46	34
Hispanic / Latino	281,216	18.8	71	19.5	17.3	47	29	29	21	14
Asian	80,370	23.5	79	24.2	21.6	74	69	54	53	42
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	5,676	18.6	65	20.0	16.6	46	30	28	22	15
Two or more races	70,013	21.2	74	22.0	19.2	67	42	47	37	26
Prefer not to respond / No Response	114,136	20.7	56	22.6	18.5	--	--	--	--	--
<b>All Students</b>	<b>1,845,787</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>

**NOTES:** An ACT core curriculum is four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics (starting with Algebra I), science, and social studies. In 2014, just over 4 percent of Wisconsin students did not identify their intended high school curriculum, slightly more than the 3.9 percent of students nationally did not provide their high school course-taking plans during ACT registration. A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher grade in a corresponding college-level course. The reading benchmark is for college-level social sciences and the science benchmark is for college-level biology. Benchmark scores for reading and science were changed in 2013.

### 2014 ACT Composite Scores by School Program

	Wisconsin			Nation		
	Core Program	Less than Core	All Students	Core Program	Less than Core	All Students
English	22.5	19.7	21.6	21.4	17.9	20.3
Mathematics	22.8	20.4	22.0	21.7	18.9	20.9
Reading	23.1	20.8	22.4	22.2	19.2	21.3
Science	23.0	20.8	22.3	21.6	18.9	20.8
Composite	23.0	20.6	22.2	21.8	18.9	21.0

### 2014 ACT Results with Accommodations

Wisconsin	Number	Composite Score
Standard Time	45,632	22.3
Extended Time	1,238	18.7
Total	46,870	22.2
Nation		
Standard Time	1,769,033	21.1
Extended Time	76,754	17.8
Total	1,845,787	21.0

### Wisconsin ACT Participation by Federal Race and Ethnicity Reporting Categories

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Black / African American	3,351	3,528	3,341	3,239	3,221
American Indian / Alaska Native	331	311	263	250	246
White	37,765	37,011	36,261	34,814	34,611
Hispanic / Latino	1,892	2,397	2,930	3,091	3,429
Asian	1,734	1,866	1,824	1,774	1,886
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	--	15	37	46	32
Two or more races	907	970	1,285	1,302	1,424
Prefer not to respond / No Response	1,775	1,595	1,647	2,058	2,021
<b>All Students</b>	<b>47,755</b>	<b>47,693</b>	<b>47,588</b>	<b>46,574</b>	<b>46,870</b>

### ACT Composite Scores by Race and Ethnicity - 2010 to 2014

	Wisconsin					Nation				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2104	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Black / African American	16.0	16.2	16.0	16.2	16.2	16.9	17.0	17.0	16.9	17.0
American Indian / Alaska Native	20.2	20.1	19.7	19.8	19.5	19.0	18.6	18.4	18.0	18.0
White	23.0	23.1	23.0	23.1	23.2	22.3	22.4	22.4	22.2	22.3
Hispanic / Latino	18.7	19.2	19.1	19.2	19.2	18.6	18.7	18.9	18.8	18.8
Asian	20.3	20.6	20.2	20.6	20.8	23.4	23.6	23.6	23.5	23.5
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	--	20.1	22.3	21.1	20.7	--	19.5	19.8	19.5	18.6
Two or more races	20.9	20.9	21.3	21.6	21.6	21.0	21.1	21.4	21.1	21.2
Prefer not to respond / No Response	21.3	21.8	22.4	22.1	21.8	20.5	20.7	21.3	20.7	20.7
<b>All Students</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>21.0</b>

**NOTE:** Race and ethnicity categories changed in 2011 to reflect updated U.S. Department of Education reporting requirements.