

## News Release

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### Wisconsin ACT results hold steady

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

MADISON — Wisconsin’s 2015 graduates had steady overall results on the ACT with an average composite score of 22.2, which tied with Iowa for second place behind Minnesota (22.7) among states where 50 percent or more of students take the assessment.

Approximately 73 percent of the state’s 2015 public and private school graduates (46,738 students) took the ACT during high school. Their average composite score was the same as in 2014. Nationally, 59 percent of graduates, 1.9 million students, took the ACT. Their average composite score was 21.0, also the same as last year. The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36. With virtually all of Wisconsin’s public school 11th-graders having taken the ACT this past spring as part of statewide assessments, ACT participation will rise dramatically next year and scores are expected to decline. Those results for last year’s 11th-graders will be reported later in fall.

“Let’s celebrate the class of 2015,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “These college-bound students did a fine job on the ACT assessment, demonstrating their overall preparedness for the next steps in their education and careers. By setting a new course and administering the ACT to all high school juniors, we’re helping way more students consider further education after high school.”

Tying student test results to postsecondary outcomes, ACT has established college-readiness benchmark scores. Those scores for each subject area, such as 18 for English and 22 for mathematics, indicate a 75 percent chance of a student earning a “C” or better on credit-bearing coursework, reducing the likelihood that the student will need remedial coursework in college.

Wisconsin had 74 percent of ACT-taking students who earned the English benchmark score compared to 64 percent nationally. There was a 10-point advantage on the mathematics benchmark as well, 52 percent in Wisconsin, 42 percent nationally. The percentage of students earning the reading benchmark (22) went up two percentage points to 53 percent compared to 46 percent nationally. For science, which is benchmarked to college-level biology, 49 percent of state students earned a score of 23 compared to 38 percent who met that benchmark nationally. Fifty-one percent of Wisconsin 2015 high school graduates met three or more benchmarks; 35 percent

(more)

met all four benchmarks, up one point from last year. Nationally, 40 percent of students met three or more benchmarks; 28 percent met all four benchmarks. ACT research has shown those students meeting three or four ACT college readiness benchmarks are likely to be successful in postsecondary education.

Wisconsin’s ACT-taking population was comprised of 10,216 students who identified themselves as being from a traditionally underrepresented racial or ethnic group. These students represent 21.9 percent of ACT-takers. In 2005, just 8.3 percent of ACT-test takers were students of color. Black graduates had a composite

score of 16.3, up one-tenth of a point from last year. For Hispanic students, the average composite score was 19.4, up two-tenths of a point. Composite scores for American Indian students increased three-tenths of a point to 19.8. That test-taking population is very small (235 students), which means scores can fluctuate widely. Scores for other student groups largely held steady. Achievement gaps between students of color and their white peers persist.

“While overall student achievement on the ACT is quite strong, we have work to do to close achievement gaps and assure college and career readiness for all students,” Evers said. “My ‘Promoting Excellence for All’ initiative is providing classroom-tested resources that have demonstrated results in closing gaps. We see some progress, but need to accelerate the pace of achievement for all students.”

ACT has long had a recommended “core curriculum” of four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social studies. Wisconsin graduates for 2016-17 will be required to take three credits of mathematics and science to graduate, though most already meet this expectation. Statewide 72 percent of students reported a core curriculum, with course-taking patterns varying among racial and ethnic groups. In Wisconsin, students who report they will take the recommended core curriculum have ACT scores that average 2.2 points higher than students who report they will take fewer “core” classes by the time they graduate.

“Our students, their families, and teachers will rise to the higher expectations we set,” Evers said. “The research is clear, and business and industry tell us, that college-ready is career-ready. That is the goal for all of our graduates.”

ACT Benchmark*	Wisconsin	Nation
English (18)	74	64
Mathematics (22)	52	42
Reading (Social Sciences) (22)	53	46
Science (Biology) (23)	49	38
Three or More Benchmarks	51	40
One or More Benchmarks	79	69

\*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 credit-bearing college course.

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**NOTES:** Additional tables with information on ACT results for 2015 public and private school graduates follow. This news release is available electronically at [http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015\\_78.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_78.pdf). ACT results for public school students will be available by school and by district on the WISEdash Public Portal at <http://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov> on Wednesday.

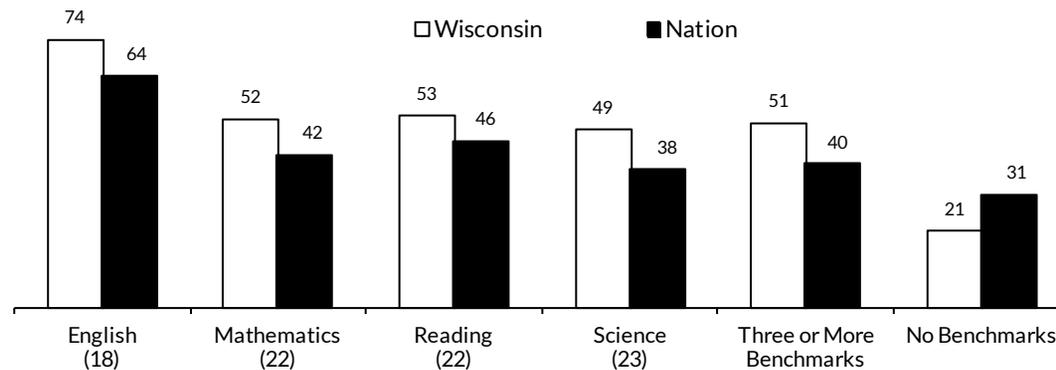
# 2015 ACT Results

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

Wisconsin	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
Black / African American	3,125	16.3	51	17.3	16.2	27	11	15	10	5
American Indian / Alaska Native	235	19.8	65	20.5	18.8	54	34	37	32	18
White	34,064	23.2	77	23.7	21.8	82	60	60	56	40
Hispanic / Latino	3,435	19.4	67	20.2	18.3	52	29	33	27	15
Asian	1,859	20.8	69	21.6	19.6	55	46	36	38	26
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	49	21.1	63	22.2	19.3	67	51	47	49	37
Two or more races	1,513	21.7	69	22.5	20.4	70	45	49	43	30
Prefer not to respond / No Response	2,458	21.6	52	24.0	20.7	--	--	--	--	--
<b>All Students</b>	<b>46,738</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>35</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 2015, 4.7 percent of Wisconsin students did not identify their intended high school curriculum, slightly more than the 4.4 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.

Percentage of 2015 Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks



### 2015 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	20.1	21.6	21.4	18.0	20.4
Mathematics	22.8	20.5	22.0	21.7	18.9	20.8
Reading	23.3	21.1	22.5	22.3	19.3	21.4
Science	23.0	21.0	22.3	21.8	19.0	20.9
Composite	23.0	20.8	22.2	21.9	18.9	21.0

### 2015 ACT Results with Accommodations

Wisconsin	Number	Composite Score
Standard Time	45,343	22.3
Extended Time	1,395	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,738</b>	<b>22.2</b>
Nation		
Standard Time	1,838,433	21.2
Extended Time	86,003	18.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,924,436</b>	<b>21.0</b>

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

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Black / African American	3,528	3,341	3,239	3,221	3,125
American Indian / Alaska Native	311	263	250	246	235
White	37,011	36,261	34,814	34,611	34,064
Hispanic / Latino	2,397	2,930	3,091	3,429	3,435
Asian	1,866	1,824	1,774	1,886	1,859
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	15	37	46	32	49
Two or more races	970	1,285	1,302	1,424	1,513
Prefer not to respond / No Response	1,595	1,647	2,058	2,021	2,458
<b>All Students</b>	<b>47,693</b>	<b>47,588</b>	<b>46,574</b>	<b>46,870</b>	<b>46,738</b>

	Wisconsin					Nation				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Black / African American	16.2	16.0	16.2	16.2	16.3	17.0	17.0	16.9	17.0	17.1
American Indian / Alaska Native	20.1	19.7	19.8	19.5	19.8	18.6	18.4	18.0	18.0	17.9
White	23.1	23.0	23.1	23.2	23.2	22.4	22.4	22.2	22.3	22.4
Hispanic / Latino	19.2	19.1	19.2	19.2	19.4	18.7	18.9	18.8	18.8	18.9
Asian	20.6	20.2	20.6	20.8	20.8	23.6	23.6	23.5	23.5	23.9
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	20.1	22.3	21.1	20.7	21.1	19.5	19.8	19.5	18.6	18.8
Two or more races	20.9	21.3	21.6	21.6	21.7	21.1	21.4	21.1	21.2	21.2
Prefer not to respond / No Response	21.8	22.4	22.1	21.8	21.6	20.7	21.3	20.7	20.7	20.6
<b>All Students</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>