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ACT scores hit all-time high level in Texas

AUSTIN – The Texas ACT composite score reached an all-time high in 2009 as did the number of students tested.

Results released today show that Texas public and private school students in the Class of 2009 earned a score of 20.8 out of a possible 36. The composite score has increased every year since 2005 when Texans earned a composite score of 20.2.

Scores on three ACT subtests – English, mathematics and science – also reached record highs for Texas students.

“Over the past few years, Texas educators have worked hard to improve the postsecondary readiness of our students. In collaboration with Texas colleges and universities, educators have implemented early college high school programs; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs and articulated career and technical programs. They have added dual credit classes, expanded Advanced Placement offerings, and increased the rigor of high school classes. Today, we have solid evidence that this work is paying off,” said Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

“We will continue to pursue our goal of preparing every student for college and career success and the trend lines are positive and encouraging,” he said.

Although the Texas composite score trails the national score, which is 21.1, the Texas score increased while the national score remained unchanged.

A total of 82,640 members of the Class of 2009 in Texas took the ACT. That’s about a 10,000 student increase over the number of students in the Class of 2005 who took the college admissions exam. When underclassmen are included, 159,899 Texas students took the ACT in 2009.

Normally as the number of test takers go up, the average score declines but that didn’t happen this year.

Texas students have increased their scores on the English, math, science and the overall composite score every year since 2005. Reading scores increased between 2005 and 2008 and remain unchanged at 20.9 in 2009.

A chart showing the ACT scores over the past five years is attached.

Among student groups, African-American, American Indian, white, and Asian-American students in Texas outperformed their national counterparts this year. Additionally, overall composite scores for white and Asian American students in Texas have increased every year since 2005. Scores for African-American students in this state have increased each year since

2007. Scores for Texas Hispanic students increased between 2005 and 2008 and stayed the same in 2009.

Texas Hispanic students represent 17 percent of all the Hispanic students who take the ACT nationally.

A chart showing the average ACT composite scores for various student groups is attached.

ACT officials use results on their tests to determine whether students have a 50 percent chance or better of earning a grade of at least a B in core classes as a college freshman. The percent of Texas students meeting all four college readiness benchmarks has increased from 17 percent to 22 percent since 2005.

ACT projects that 63 percent of the Texas Class of 2009 are ready for freshman college English Composition, while 49 percent are ready for college social studies classes. Confirming what Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills results show, our students are less prepared for math and science classes. Forty-four percent of the students in the Class of 2009 are ready for college algebra and 26 percent are ready for college biology.

Scott said, "A growing number of our students are well prepared for university courses with an increase of 29 percent of those meeting college readiness standards in the past four years. The implementation of our new college readiness standards, updated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and the 4x4 high school graduation requirements will continue this trend.

ACT also reported that the following are the top 10 Texas universities, in descending order, being sent scores by ACT test takers: University of Texas-Austin; Texas A&M University – College Station; Texas Tech University; Texas State University; Baylor University; University of Texas at San Antonio; University of North Texas; University of Texas – Pan American; University of Houston – main campus; and Stephen F. Austin State University.

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