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South Dakota ACT scores remain steady, above national average

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota’s ACT scores continue to be above the national average, even while an estimated 78 percent of the 2014 graduating class participated in the exam.

The students earned an average composite score of 21.9, versus 21.0 for the nation. The state composite score in 2013 also was 21.9, compared to 20.9 nationally.

“We are pleased that such a high percentage of our students choose to take the ACT and perform well. Sometimes when you have that many students participating, it can bring your average down,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Melody Schopp. “The high number of test-takers also indicates students’ desire to attend some sort of postsecondary schooling, which is critical in today’s workforce. But we also know that of the students who enter our public universities in South Dakota, about one in four will need to do some remedial coursework.”

The South Dakota Department of Education and South Dakota Board of Regents have partnered to create an opportunity for students who need to brush up on critical English and math skills *before* leaving high school. The online coursework is targeted to the student’s specific needs, and if completed successfully, allows him or her to enter into credit-bearing college courses without having to enroll in remedial courses, for which the student receives no credit and pays full price.

According to Schopp, this opportunity is just one of several aimed at ensuring students are fully prepared for their postsecondary experience. High quality standards in English and math provide the foundation for a solid educational experience at all grade levels. A rigorous course of study, as laid out in the requirements for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, further supports students who are fully prepared for coursework at the postsecondary level.

The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest possible score. Students are tested in the areas of English, mathematics, reading and science. The test is commonly used by postsecondary institutions as a benchmark for college entrance and readiness.

Average Composite ACT Scores – South Dakota vs. National

Year	South Dakota	National
2010	21.8	21.0
2011	21.8	21.1
2012	21.8	21.1
2013	21.9	20.9
2014	21.9	21.0