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State ACT scores remain steady, above national average

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota's average composite ACT score remains steady and above the national average, according to data released earlier today. The statewide composite score for the graduating class of 2016 – which includes scores for English, math, reading and science – was 21.9, versus the national average of 20.8.

About 76 percent of 2016 South Dakota graduates took the ACT, and the number of students in all minority groups who took the test stayed the same or increased from last year. This increase is encouraging, since South Dakota students are not required to take the ACT.

“By taking the ACT, students take a step in planning their future,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Melody Schopp. “After graduation, students may go on to a technical institute, university or directly into the workforce. Success in today’s world demands that whatever their path, students must be ready. The best way for them to prepare is by continuing to challenge themselves academically all the way through high school.”

The data shows that students who take rigorous courses, like trigonometry, calculus, chemistry, physics and four years of English in high school are more likely to meet ACT's benchmark scores. A benchmark score is 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 the corresponding credit-bearing college course.

ACT has long been an important indicator when considering students' readiness to take college-level courses. South Dakota's public universities now also look at performance on the state assessment at grade 11 as another indicator of a student's readiness.

For more information, visit ACT's website at www.act.org.

Average Composite ACT Scores – South Dakota vs. National

Year	South Dakota	National
2012	21.8	21.1
2013	21.9	20.9
2014	21.9	21.0
2015	21.9	21.0
2016	21.9	20.8