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South Dakota ACT scores remain above national average

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota’s average ACT composite score remains above the national average. South Dakota’s average ACT score for 2020 was 21.7, which is up slightly from 21.6 in 2019. That compares to the national average of 20.6, which is down slightly from 20.7 in 2019. The composite score reflects sub-scores for English, math, reading and science. ACT is a commonly recognized college entrance exam.

“South Dakota students and teachers should be very proud of their accomplishments,” said Secretary of Education Ben Jones. “The class of 2020 scored not only better than the national average, and better than every neighboring state, but was also first among states in which more than 50 percent of graduates took the ACT.”

In South Dakota, 70 percent of 2020 graduates took the ACT, compared to 49 percent nationally. Additionally, 31 percent of South Dakota students met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores, compared to 26 percent nationally.

“The class of 2020’s hard work and excellence will pay off for us all as they explore their postsecondary and career opportunities,” said Secretary Jones. “Driving the scores higher were public school American Indian students and Hispanic, Asian, and Black students in public and non-public schools. Each group’s scores increased by half a point or better and they are the reason why South Dakota fared so well.”

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

Average Composite ACT Scores – South Dakota vs. National (public and non-public)

Year	South Dakota	National
2016	21.9	20.8
2017	21.8	21.0
2018	21.9	20.8
2019	21.6	20.7
2020	21.7	20.6