

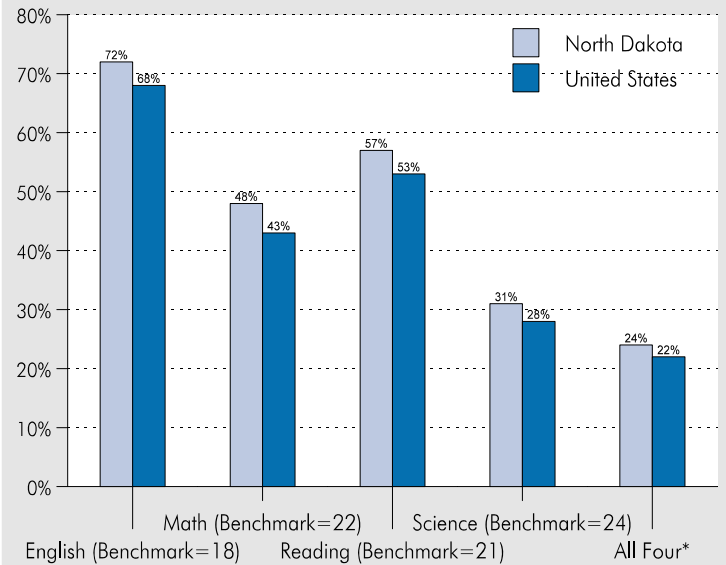
## ACT Scores for 2008 North Dakota High School Graduates

American College Testing (ACT) program scores are designed to predict a student's potential for success in college. According to ACT, Inc., 81 percent of 2008 North Dakota graduating seniors took the ACT assessment during their sophomore, junior, or senior year. If a student was tested more than once, only the most recent test record was used.

Of the 2008 North Dakota high school graduates who were tested, the average ACT composite score was 21.6 out of a possible 36. Nationally, the average composite score for 2008 graduates was 21.1 (based on the 43 percent of 2008 graduates nationwide who were tested) (Table 1).

ACT has developed benchmarks to measure what it takes to be successful in standard first-year college courses in the areas of English, math, reading, and science. 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 courses, which include English Composition, Algebra, Social Science, and Biology. According to these benchmarks, 72 percent of ACT-tested 2008 North Dakota high school graduates were ready for college English, 48 percent were ready for college math, 57 percent were ready for college reading, and 31 percent were ready for college science. The proportion of North Dakota students who met all four benchmarks was 24 percent (Figure 1). Visit <http://www.act.org> for more information on college readiness.

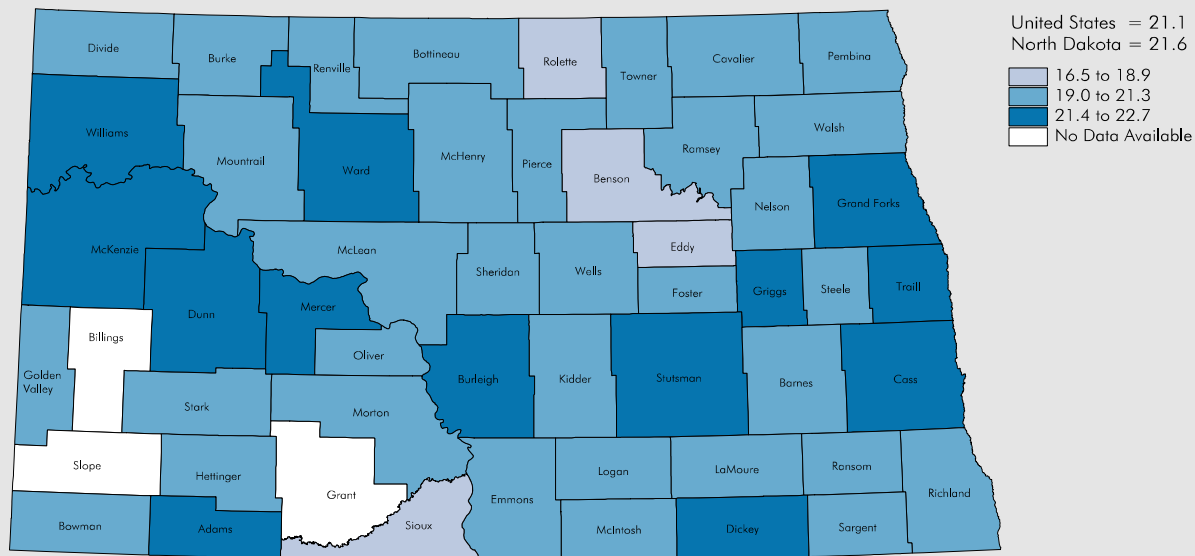
Figure 1. Percent of ACT-Tested Students Ready for College-Level Coursework: North Dakota and the United States, 2008



Note: \*Students meeting all four ACT benchmark scores. Benchmark scores are out of a possible 36. Source: ACT, <http://www.act.org>

Figure 2. Average ACT Composite Scores for 2008 North Dakota High School Graduates by County

Notes: The highest possible ACT score is 36. County data reflect public high school students only. County data reflect the location in which the student attended school. Source: ACT, Department of Program Evaluation and Institutional Research Services, Research Division, and <http://www.act.org>.



**Table 1. ACT-Tested 2008 High School Graduates Meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks Scores**

Note: "--" indicates that data are not available. County data reflect public high school graduates only.

Source: ACT, Department of Program Evaluation and Institutional Research Services, Research Division, and <http://www.act.org>.

United States and North Dakota Counties	Average 2008 ACT Composite Scores (Highest possible score=36)	Percent of 2008 High School Graduates ACT-Tested	Percent of ACT-Tested 2008 Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks				
			English (Benchmark=18)	Math (Benchmark=22)	Reading (Benchmark=21)	Science (Benchmark=24)	Meeting All Four ACT Benchmarks
United States	21.1	43%	68%	43%	53%	28%	22%
North Dakota	21.6	81%	72%	48%	57%	31%	24%
Adams	22.3	85%	87%	26%	74%	44%	26%
Barnes	21.0	66%	69%	35%	48%	30%	16%
Benson	18.2	81%	49%	27%	28%	10%	10%
Billings	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bottineau	21.1	86%	73%	43%	62%	29%	24%
Bowman	20.6	93%	69%	51%	49%	22%	20%
Burke	20.8	100%	56%	39%	61%	28%	22%
Burleigh	21.8	79%	74%	49%	58%	31%	23%
Cass	22.6	76%	79%	56%	64%	40%	32%
Cavalier	20.7	88%	70%	42%	52%	23%	20%
Dickey	21.6	82%	71%	39%	71%	32%	29%
Divide	21.3	91%	79%	62%	55%	31%	17%
Dunn	22.0	78%	76%	48%	56%	40%	36%
Eddy	18.9	83%	50%	20%	37%	3%	3%
Emmons	20.6	96%	72%	33%	48%	15%	11%
Foster	20.9	100%	60%	55%	53%	19%	17%
Golden Valley	19.7	100%	62%	24%	38%	14%	0%
Grand Forks	22.7	75%	80%	61%	66%	38%	31%
Grant	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Griggs	22.1	41%	75%	67%	58%	50%	25%
Hettinger	20.7	89%	70%	51%	47%	17%	15%
Kidder	20.9	91%	66%	38%	48%	31%	21%
LaMoure	21.1	100%	68%	52%	60%	24%	19%
Logan	20.1	100%	63%	33%	40%	13%	10%
McHenry	21.1	80%	65%	55%	45%	33%	28%
McIntosh	20.3	91%	62%	35%	55%	21%	21%
McKenzie	21.7	87%	73%	50%	60%	28%	25%
McLean	21.1	83%	63%	51%	55%	33%	21%
Mercer	22.2	79%	76%	60%	62%	33%	31%
Morton	21.1	82%	72%	45%	51%	29%	22%
Mountrail	19.4	65%	51%	34%	43%	15%	13%
Nelson	20.7	96%	65%	39%	47%	28%	18%
Oliver	19.6	67%	56%	31%	38%	13%	6%
Pembina	21.3	63%	75%	44%	48%	30%	23%
Pierce	20.4	94%	56%	58%	42%	27%	17%
Ramsey	21.2	70%	68%	52%	58%	24%	23%
Ransom	20.8	89%	65%	46%	54%	24%	22%
Renville	21.2	79%	67%	58%	67%	33%	30%
Richland	20.7	82%	64%	40%	47%	27%	19%
Rolette	17.7	69%	34%	16%	25%	13%	6%
Sargent	20.2	75%	56%	35%	44%	22%	13%
Sheridan	21.1	80%	75%	25%	63%	38%	13%
Sioux	16.5	76%	40%	12%	28%	8%	4%
Slope	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Stark	21.1	72%	67%	42%	51%	24%	21%
Steele	20.0	77%	48%	33%	41%	22%	19%
Stutsman	21.6	82%	67%	46%	58%	29%	25%
Towner	19.9	100%	61%	43%	50%	25%	11%
Traill	22.0	72%	80%	51%	64%	36%	25%
Walsh	21.1	75%	72%	46%	55%	26%	15%
Ward	22.1	73%	77%	53%	62%	36%	27%
Wells	20.9	92%	70%	47%	57%	23%	13%
Williams	21.6	76%	71%	46%	60%	29%	23%

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## North Dakota's Composite ACT Score, Though Unchanged, Continues to Rank Above the Nation

Of the North Dakota high school graduates who were ACT-tested, the average composite ACT score in 2008 was 21.6 out of a possible 36. This score is unchanged from 2007. Nationally, the composite score for ACT-tested 2008 graduates was 21.1, a score down slightly from 21.2 in 2007.

This month's "Population Bulletin," a monthly publication from the North Dakota State Data Center at North Dakota State University, focuses on American College Testing (ACT) program scores released by ACT, Inc., which are designed to predict a student's potential for success in college. According to ACT, 81 percent of 2008 North Dakota graduating seniors took the ACT assessment during their sophomore, junior, or senior year. If a student was tested more than once, only the most recent test record was used.

The ACT program has developed benchmarks in the areas of English, math, reading, and science to measure what it takes to be successful in standard first-year college courses. 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 courses, which include English Composition, Algebra, Social Science, and Biology. According to these benchmarks, 72 percent of ACT-tested 2008 North Dakota high school graduates were ready for college English, 48 percent were ready for college math, 57 percent were ready for college reading, and 31 percent were ready for college science. The proportion of North Dakota students who met all four benchmarks was 24 percent, less than one in four - a proportion that has remained relatively unchanged over the past several years.

"These are troubling statistics, especially in the competitive global market in which our youth find themselves," said Richard Rathge, Director of the State Data Center. "We need to find ways to assist our youth in academically preparing themselves for college, especially given the fact that nearly 70 percent of high school graduates in the state attend college, among the highest in the nation," said Rathge.

North Dakota students who added an additional year of math (such as Trigonometry or Calculus) to their core requirement of Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry increased their likelihood of college-readiness from 28 percent to 68 percent. Similarly, in the sciences, North Dakota students who added Physics to their general core of General/Physical/Earth Sciences, Biology, and Chemistry increased their likelihood of college-readiness from 26 percent to 50 percent.

Analysis of North Dakota ACT scores reveals a disparity in college readiness by gender and race, as well as by county. Of the ACT-tested 2008 North Dakota male high school graduates, 26 percent met all four subject-area benchmarks compared to 22 percent of female students. An even greater disparity exists among racial groups. One-fourth of white students met all four benchmarks compared to 45 percent of Asian students, 11 percent of Hispanic students, and 3 percent of American Indian students. The number of black students reporting ACT scores in North Dakota was too small to provide reliable college-readiness results. In terms of geography, 12 counties had at least one in four ACT-tested graduates meeting all four benchmarks; five counties had fewer than 1 in 10.

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<p><b>North Dakota State Data Center</b> North Dakota State University PO Box 6050, Dept. 8000 Fargo, North Dakota 58108-6050 Ph: (701) 231-7980 Fax: (701) 231-9730</p>	<p>For more information, contact:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>Dr. Richard Rathge, Director (701) 231-8621 richard.rathge@ndsu.edu</p> </td> <td> <p>Karen Olson, Information Specialist (701) 231-1060 k.olson@ndsu.edu</p> </td> <td> <p>View publication online at: <a href="http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm">www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm</a></p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Dr. Richard Rathge, Director (701) 231-8621 richard.rathge@ndsu.edu</p>	<p>Karen Olson, Information Specialist (701) 231-1060 k.olson@ndsu.edu</p>	<p>View publication online at: <a href="http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm">www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm</a></p>
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