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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Tony Wood, Commissioner

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2014 Graduates Score Higher on ACT

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas high school graduates performed better on the ACT in 2014, with scores advancing in multiple areas. These scores are reflective of the last ACT exam taken by 2014 seniors.

Arkansas' composite ACT score increased from 20.2 in 2013 to 20.4 in 2014. The state's scores in English (20.1), reading (20.8) and science (20.3) progressed as well, with math scores holding steady at 19.9. English and science scores improved two tenths, and reading experienced a gain of three tenths.

"Although there is still work to do to ensure every student graduates ready for college and careers, Arkansas is committed to providing more rigorous standards for students and quality professional development for teachers," Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Tony Wood said. "We are pleased with the increase in this year's ACT scores and will continue to identify areas for improvement."

Arkansas' increase can be attributed to greater attention on rigorous standards, resulting in students performing better on national assessments. Students also are taking more Advanced Placement courses, which prepare them for tougher assessments. With the increase in students taking AP courses, more teachers received professional development for AP courses.

"A score of 19 on the ACT in the areas of math and English is one of several indicators of college readiness," said Shane Broadway, Arkansas Department of Higher Education director, "and we're happy to see that more Arkansas students are meeting that goal. We know that students who are able to skip remedial courses and jump right into college-level coursework are more likely to graduate, which is better for them as individuals and our workforce as a whole."

The 2014 scores showed improvement from 2010. Arkansas' scores in English and math remained the same, with reading, science and the composite scores advancing. (Reading was 20.6 in 2010, science was 20.2 and the composite was 20.3.)

In addition to better scores, 946 additional graduates took the test in 2014. A total of 26,821 Arkansas graduates took the exam, with approximately 93 percent of the graduating class completing the ACT at least once.

With competition increasing for scholarships, more students are taking the ACT. In many cases,

students take the assessment multiple times throughout high school to increase their chances for college entrance and scholarships.

For more information about the results and to see how Arkansas compares to other states and the nation, go to www.act.org/readiness/2014.

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