



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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Arkansas' ACT Aspire Results Show Growth; ACT Results for Grade 11 Hold Steady

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas students demonstrated growth in multiple areas on the 2018 ACT Aspire. The 2018 preliminary results reflect the third statewide administration of the assessment in grades 3 through 10.

Overall, the percent of students at or above ready in English remained steady or trended upward in all grades except for grades 6, 9 and 10. Reading results at or above ready trended upward in all grades except for grades 6, 9 and 10. For 2018, overall writing scores were not reported; however, writing scores were incorporated in the overall English Language Arts scores.

Arkansas' percent of students at or above ready in math trended upward in grades 3 and 8 through 10 and downward in grades 4 through 7. Science scores at or above ready remained steady or trended upward in grades 3, 8 and 9 and downward in grades 4 through 7 and grade 10.

“The increase in overall growth reflects the hard work and dedication of Arkansas’ students and teachers,” Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key said. “The results reflect educators’ commitment to teaching strong, rigorous education standards and the positive effects of the R.I.S.E. Arkansas and Computer Science initiatives. The results show we still have work to do to improve education in Arkansas, but I am confident that as we move toward implementation of Arkansas’ Every Student Succeeds Act plan this fall, we will lead the nation in student-focused education.”

ACT Aspire Benchmark Changes

While there were no changes in the benchmarks, or cut scores, for individual subject areas (English, Reading, Science and Mathematics), ACT set new ACT Aspire readiness benchmarks for the English Language Arts score (reflective of the English, Reading and Writing combined scores) and STEM score (which represents a combined Science and Math score). Because ACT Aspire scores are predictive of performance on the ACT, ACT updated the ELA and STEM cut scores to more accurately reflect the increased performance expectations of the ACT and college readiness.

It is important to note that 2018 ACT Aspire ELA and STEM scores cannot accurately be compared to those for previous years because of the change in this year’s cut scores. A better comparison of 2018 ELA and STEM scores to previous years is to compare the average scale scores.

Average ELA scale scores for grades 3 through 10 exhibited an increasing trend with the exception of grade 5, which declined slightly from 2017. Average STEM scale scores for grades 3 through 7 vary, with some grades demonstrating little change and some grades demonstrating decreases.

At the national level, the percentage of students meeting the updated benchmarks is far less than in previous years.

ACT Grade 11 Results

In addition to the release of the 2018 ACT Aspire results for grades 3 through 10, 2018 ACT grade 11 results were released as well. These results, which held steady, also reflect the third statewide administration of the ACT for grade 11.

A total of 31,227 students were tested, which is consistent over the last three years. The 2017-2018 average composite score is 18.7, compared to 18.8 in 2016-2017. A total of 14 percent of students met all four readiness benchmarks (Reading, English, Math and Science), which is unchanged from 2016-2017.

More Information

To learn more about the 2018 ACT Aspire (Pre-Appeals) data sets release, visit ADE's My School Info website at <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov>. My School Info is the department's online reporting portal that reports school and district data such as enrollment, testing and financial information. A tutorial video regarding how to access ACT Aspire data is available at <https://youtu.be/csRfwjw1Cc8>.

The correction window for districts to suggest possible corrections to the preliminary data opens July 31 and closes August 13. Final ACT Aspire data will be released on the My School Info website in September.

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