


## GHS seniors score higher on ACT than peers

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
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The graphic is a small table with the title 'ACT SCORE COMPARISON' and '2013 SENIORS'. It compares the scores of District 209, the State, and the U.S. average.

Category	Score
District 209	21.7
State	21.5
U.S.	20.9

### 2013 national score lower than state, local results

Gothenburg High School seniors, who took the ACT in 2013, scored higher than the state and nation.

The 39 seniors received a composite score of 21.7 which is .2 points higher than Nebraska's overall score of 21.5.

Nationally, the composite was 20.9.

Local scores are still a ways from a perfect ACT score of 36 but one GHS graduate, Karina Kelly, came close in 2008 when she was one point away.

How important is a good score on the ACT test?

“Very, important when it comes to merit aid,” Wiggins said. “ Otherwise, a simple score would suffice.”

Merit aid includes grants, scholarships and discounts a college awards to an admitted student without regard to financial need.

Such aid may be based on academic or athletic achievements, special talents such as acting or where the student lives or other demographic characteristics.

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By scoring high enough on the ACT, he said students can qualify for tuition waivers and scholarships.

Merit-based scholarships are based on high ACT scores in addition to class rank and grade-point average, Wiggins said.

According to the Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska's 2013 high school graduates also outscored graduates in other states in English, reading, mathematics and science scores that measure college readiness.

Because of changes, past ACT results should not be compared to the 2013 results, said Steve Kappler, ACT assistant vice president of career and college readiness.

Kappler said one major change this year focused on including the scores of graduates requiring special accommodations. The scores of those graduates were included and reported when ACT considered them allowable through its process.

In Nebraska, 84% of the state's high school graduates took the ACT exam, compared to 78% last year.

Out of 58 Gothenburg high school seniors, 67% took the ACT.

Test takers this year numbered 17,745 in Nebraska of which 497 graduates required special accommodations but had reportable scores.

As a result of this change and others, ACT officials said the average composite scores declined in some states but it shouldn't be interpreted as a drop in student learning or college readiness.

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In the past couple of years, Wiggins said staff has bumped up efforts to boost ACT scores.

ACT prep work has been integrated into higher-level classes and curriculum.

Wiggins said all students, not only those who plan to attend a four-year college, are encouraged to take the test.

For the second time in a row, more May graduates indicated that they planned to attend a two-year rather than a four-year college.

He added that most students take the test several times since their best score is what they use on college applications.

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