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NCSS Has Record Number of ACT Test Takers

Newton County 2009 ACT Scores

Area	# Tested	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Alcovy High	138	18.1	18.5	19.1	19.5	18.9
Eastside High	167	20.1	20.1	20.8	19.9	20.4
Newton High	192	17.2	18.3	18.7	18.5	18.3
NCSS	499	18.4	19.0	19.5	19.3	19.2
Georgia	36,165	20.1	20.6	20.9	20.3	20.6
Nation	1,480,469	20.6	21.0	21.4	20.9	21.1

A record 499 Newton County School System (NCSS) students took the ACT College Entrance Exam in 2009—that's 24 more than last year's 475 total test takers. The district has seen a steady increase in the number of students taking the ACT each of the last five years. Only 327 NCSS students took the exam in 2005 compared to almost 500 in 2009.

Unlike the SAT, a reasoning test that measures critical thinking skills and assesses how well a student analyzes and solves problems, the ACT is a series of curriculum-based, multiple choice tests that cover content knowledge in four basic skill areas: English, math, reading, and science. There is also an optional writing test.

Although the state did not post any gains on the ACT in 2009, as a district, Newton County Schools posted gains in two categories—Reading and Science—as well as the composite. The district's average score of 19.1 on the Reading Test reflected an increase of two-tenths of one point; the district posted its largest gain on the Science Test, going from 18.4 points in 2008 to 19.5 points in 2009—an increase of 1.1 points. Newton County School System did see a slight decrease of two-tenths of one point on the English Test and half of one point on the Mathematics Test. The district' average scores did fall short of the state's average scores in 2009.

"We are proud of the progress that these students have made this year," said Dr. Linda Hayden, Associate Superintendent for Newton County Schools. "We thank our teachers for their commitment to

educational excellence so that students can grow and perform well academically. We will continue to look for more ways to improve each year.”

According to data received, 138 Alcovy High School students took the ACT in 2009—10 more than 2008. Their 19.5 score in Science was a 1.1-point increase over their 2008 score. With a 19.1 score, Alcovy students posted a gain of two-tenths of one point on the Reading Test in 2009. Although the school’s English and Math scores decreased slightly in 2009, Alcovy’s overall composite score of 18.9 still bested the 2008 composite score of 18.7.

“The administrators, teachers, and students of Alcovy High School will work steadfast to ensure that the instructional program improves during the 2009-2010 school year so that students will continue to experience gains on the ACT assessment,” said Dr. LaQuanda Brown, principal of Alcovy High School. “Teachers will continue to participate in professional learning opportunities that help to provide rigorous instruction and relevant assessments throughout the school year so that student performance in content-related assessments should improve significantly.”

At Eastside High School, 167 students took the ACT in 2009; 131 took the test in 2008. Eastside students matched or increased their average scores in every category but Science in 2009. The school’s 20.1 score on the English Test matched the state average and was only one-half of one point below the national average of 20.6. In 2009, Eastside posted average scores of over 20 on all but the Science portion of the ACT. The school’s composite score of 20.4 remained the same in 2009.

“We are proud of our students’ performance on the ACT, especially considering we had a significant increase in the number of test-takers from that of 2008,” said Dennis Roddenberry, principal of Eastside High School. “We are challenging our students to ‘raise the bar’ in 2010 and demonstrate improvement on all formal assessments taken by Eastside High School students.”

In 2009, 192 Newton High School students took the ACT college entrance exam, compared to 216 test-takers in 2008. Newton High School students equaled their 18.7 score on the Reading Test but posted slight decreases of two-tenths of one point on the Math Test; three-tenths of one point on the English Test; and four-tenths of one point on the Science Test. Newton High School’s composite score also decreased by two-tenths of one point in 2009 to 18.3.

“Even though there were slight decreases, Newton High continues to be focused on raising the level of student academic performance on all standardized assessments,” said Dr. Roderick Sams, principal of Newton High School. “We believe that our ACT results will improve as we continue to provide more rigorous instruction in a college preparatory environment.”

For more information, please contact the Newton County School System Department of Public Relations, at 770-784-2908.
