

August 20, 2010

Newton County School System Announces 2010 ACT Scores

Area	# Tested	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Alcovy High	183	17.8	18.7	19.1	19.4	18.9
Eastside High	155	20.6 (above state and nation)	20.3	20.9 (equal to state)	20.9 (above state and equal to nation)	20.8 (above state)
Newton High	243	16.8	17.6	17.8	18.3	17.8
Challenge Charter Academy	1	14.0	16.0	13.0	13.0	14.0
NCSS	582	18.1	18.7	19.0	19.3	18.9
Georgia	39,436	20.1	20.7	20.9	20.5	20.7
Nation	1,568,835	20.5	21.0	21.3	20.9	21.0

A record 582 Newton County School System (NCSS) students took the ACT College Entrance Exam in 2010—that's 83 more than last year's 499 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 333 students took the exam in 2006.

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. The exam is scored on a scale from 0 to 36. There is also an optional writing test.

The state posted slight gains on the ACT this year while NCSS students did not. The system's overall composite score of 18.9 was down three-tenths of one point from last year's 19.2

composite score. Data show the individual test scores dropped as follows: English down three-tenths; Math down three-tenths; and Reading down one-half of one point. The system's Science score remained the same. All scores, including the composite, were below the state average in 2010.

"There's good news and not-so-good news in our 2010 ACT results," said NCSS Superintendent Gary Mathews. "The good news is 83 more students took the ACT in 2010 when compared to 2009. The not-so-good news is, we experienced declines in English, reading, math, and composite scores, while science remained the same as we trail both the state and nation. From my perspective, I want to have conversations with our high school principals, teachers, and others to gain their insights into these results. For if we keep on doing the same things, we'll keep on getting the same results. The 5-year trend for the system (19.6, 19.3, 19.1, 19.2, and 18.9) is not the direction we can continue if we're to serve our students well. As with CRCT and GHSCT, we have work to do."

According to data received, 183 Alcovy High School students took the ACT in 2010—45 more than 2009. Although all scores including the composite were below the state average, Alcovy students did post a two-tenths point gain in math in 2010. The school's reading and composite scores also remained the same in 2010 while English and science went down three-tenths of a point and one-tenth of a point respectively.

"Alcovy High School students continue to increase in numbers in regards to students who are taking the ACT' as from 2009 to 2010 the number of students increased by 45," said Dr. LaQuanda Brown, principal of Alcovy High School. "This is great news for the AHS community because it indicates that students are receiving more exposure to a variety of assessments as well as they are researching, investigating, and participating in several different forums as a way to be exposed to secondary institutions of learning. As the Principal of Alcovy High School, I will continue to work with administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, and students in an effort to ensure that students continue to focus on academic excellence."

At Eastside High School, students increased their scores in every category, including the composite in 2010. In addition, the school's five-tenths point increase in English boosted Eastside score above both the state and the nation. Eastside's science score rose by one full point and topped the state and equaled the nation in 2010. Reading scores increased by one-tenth of a point and equaled the state and the four-tenths of a point increase in the composite score raised the school above the state and just two-tenths of a point below the national average.

"I am extremely proud of our Eastside students," said Dennis Roddenberry, principal of Eastside High School. "Their performance on the 2010 ACT provided concrete evidence that the students have made gains in several areas over the previous year's results. In comparison to the data from 2009, we were fortunate to see percentage gains in every category. Our results equaled or surpassed the state of Georgia average in all but one area. We are happy with the results, but

are aware that we have much work to do. Our goal is to demonstrate student mastery in all categories assessed.”

“Of our three high schools, we would be remiss not to recognize the ACT performance of Eastside,” said Superintendent Mathews. “Scores at Eastside, in 2010, were up in English, math, reading, science, and the composite. Eastside’s overall or composite score is above the state and barely below the nation. Improvement at Eastside, as well as at Alcovy and Newton, is the name of the game.”

Although the number of test takers at Newton High increased by 51 in 2010, scores on the ACT dropped in all categories including the composite. Data indicate scores in English, Math, Reading, Science, and the composite dropped by four-tenths, seven-tenths, nine-tenths, three-tenths, and one-half a point respectively. All scores were below the state average in 2010.

“At Newton High, we continue to be encouraged by the increases in the number of students taking the ACT,” said NHS principal, Dr. Roderick Sams. “More students are taking seriously the post-secondary opportunities available to them, and taking the ACT plays a significant role in that process. By continuing to promote a more rigorous curriculum, the students at Newton High will not only see their scores on exams such as the ACT improve but they will be better prepared for the college or university of their choice.”

For the first time since it opened, Challenge Charter Academy was included in the district’s ACT results as one student took the test in 2010.

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