

ACT SCORES

DEFINITION: Average American College Test (ACT) composite score of 12th graders.

SIGNIFICANCE

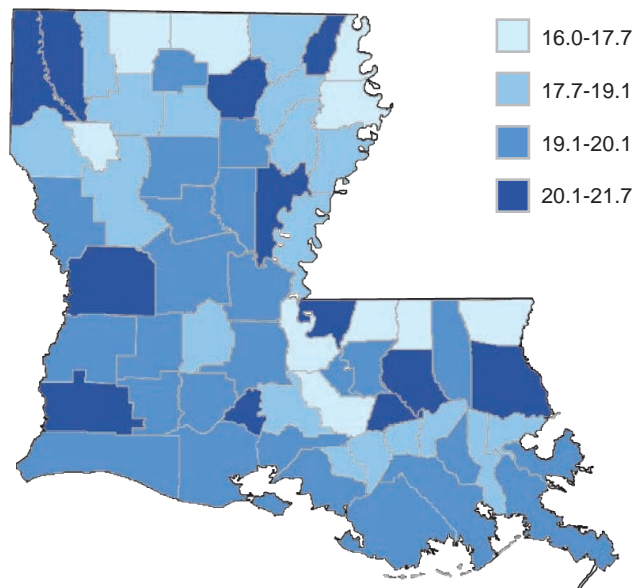
The ACT, which tests students in English, Reading, Math, and Science, is used by most colleges in Louisiana as a factor in making admissions decisions. Many students also take the ACT in order to become eligible for the TOPS (Tuition Opportunity Program for Students) scholarship, which provides students with full scholarships to Louisiana's public universities.¹ Because the ACT is typically taken by those students planning to attend post-secondary education, trends in ACT scores do not necessarily reflect trends in overall student achievement. These scores do, however, provide some insight about the college-readiness of the population of students who take the ACT.

Data reported here reflect composite scores, which represent an average of scores from each of the four subject tests. Scores range from 1 to 36. In order to be eligible for a TOPS Opportunity scholarship, students must achieve a score of at least a 20 on the ACT. Students who are applying for a TOPS Tech award must receive at least a 17. For both programs, students must also complete all courses in the TOPS core curriculum and attain a minimum grade point average of 2.5.²

In 2008, 88% of Louisiana 12th grade students took the ACT, ranking Louisiana 5th in the nation in terms of the percentage of students taking the ACT. At 20.3, Louisiana's average ACT score was below both the national average (21.1) and the Southern regional average (20.7).³

Students who complete a college preparatory core curriculum tend to score better on the ACT than students who do not complete a college preparatory curriculum. In 2008, Louisiana students who took a core curriculum received an average score of 20.3—2.2 points higher than the average score of students who had not completed a core curriculum (18.1).⁴

On the whole, Louisiana saw ACT scores increase between 2000 and 2008. Scores rose in 56 parishes and declined in just eight parishes



ACT SCORES FOR GRADUATION SENIORS (NUMBER) — SY 2008

during this time period. In 2008, East Carroll and Madison parishes had the lowest average ACT scores of all of the parishes, with an average score of 16.0. St. Tammany Parish, with an average score of 21.7, was the only parish whose average score surpassed the national average.

DATA SOURCE

Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Planning, Analysis and Information Resources

DATA NOTE

If a student took the test multiple times, only their last test was used to calculate the parish or statewide average. Parish-level ACT scores only reflect the scores of public schools within that parish's primary district. Scores from students in charter schools, city-run districts, the Recovery School District, and nonpublic schools are not included in parish-level data, but are included in the statewide average.

¹ Louisiana Department of Education, *2007-2008 Louisiana State Education Progress Report*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Department of Education, 2009), 44, retrieved from www.doe.state.la.us/ on 8/1/2009.

² Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, "2008-2009 TOPS Questions and Answers for High School Students and Counselors," Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, 2008, retrieved from www.osfa.state.la.us on 8/1/2009.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

AVERAGE ACT SCORE

	Graduating class of 2000	Graduating class of 2008	Change 2000-2008
LOUISIANA	19.6	20.3	0.7
Acadia	18.4	19.3	0.9
Allen	18.7	19.8	1.1
Ascension	19.8	20.7	0.9
Assumption	18.9	19.1	0.2
Avoyelles	19.2	19.6	0.4
Beauregard	19.6	19.8	0.2
Bienville	18	18.3	0.3
Bossier	19.7	20.5	0.8
Caddo	19.9	20.6	0.7
Calcasieu	19.7	20.2	0.5
Caldwell	18.6	19.2	0.6
Cameron	18.8	19.4	0.6
Catahoula	18.8	20.8	2
Claiborne	18.2	17.4	-0.8
Concordia	18.2	18.3	0.1
De Soto	18.1	18.5	0.4
East Baton Rouge	19.6	19.5	-0.1
East Carroll	15.7	16.0	0.3
East Feliciana	17	16.7	-0.3
Evangeline	18.5	18.9	0.4
Franklin	18.2	18.7	0.5
Grant	19.4	19.6	0.2
Iberia	18.6	19.5	0.9
Iberville	17.3	17.5	0.2
Jackson	18.5	18.7	0.2
Jefferson	18.6	18.8	0.2
Jefferson Davis	19.5	20.1	0.6
La Salle	19	19.7	0.7
Lafayette	20.7	21.0	0.3
Lafourche	19.5	19.9	0.4
Lincoln	20	19.5	-0.5
Livingston	19.8	20.7	0.9
Madison	16.6	16.0	-0.6
Morehouse	18	18.4	0.4
Natchitoches	18.6	19.0	0.4
Orleans	17.3	19.0	1.7
Ouachita	20.1	20.7	0.6
Plaquemines	19.2	19.8	0.6
Pointe Coupee	17.2	17.6	0.4
Rapides	19.7	20.1	0.4
Red River	17.3	17.5	0.2
Richland	17.5	18.2	0.7
Sabine	18.7	19.5	0.8
St. Bernard	19.6	19.9	0.3
St. Charles	20	20.1	0.1
St. Helena	14.8	16.7	1.9
St. James	18.1	19.1	1
St. John the Baptist	17.3	18.1	0.8
St. Landry	18.8	19.2	0.4
St. Martin	18.4	18.9	0.5
St. Mary	19.5	19.9	0.4
St. Tammany	21.3	21.7	0.4
Tangipahoa	18.5	19.7	1.2
Tensas	16.3	18.0	1.7
Terrebonne	19.2	19.8	0.6
Union	17.8	17.7	-0.1
Vermilion	19.6	20.0	0.4
Vernon	19	20.3	1.3
Washington	18	17.5	-0.5
Webster	18.9	19.0	0.1
West Baton Rouge	18.6	19.4	0.8
West Carroll	20.6	20.5	-0.1
West Feliciana	19.8	20.5	0.7
Winn	18.8	19.5	0.7