

Performance of ACT's 2021 Graduating Class by State and English Learner Status

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When students register to take the ACT, they answer several questions about their high school experiences and college plans, including the question “Do you receive English language services at school now?” Responses include “Yes,” “No,” and “I prefer not to respond.” This information, while self-reported, can be helpful for educators interested in disaggregating the performance of their English learner (EL) and non-EL students. This data byte provides average ACT scores and the percentages of students meeting each ACT College Readiness Benchmark for ACT's 2021 graduating class by state (national data are also provided) and self-reported EL status (EL, non-EL, and missing/NR, which includes both missing responses and “I prefer not to respond”).

Two important factors should be considered when comparing the performance of ELs and non-ELs in Tables 1 and 2: missing data and the percentage of students tested. Nationally, 43% of students' responses were missing or NR, but a much larger percentage of responses were missing (41%) than NR (2%), indicating that most of the missing data was due to students not completing the item rather than not wanting to share this information. It should also be noted that students participating in State and District testing were much more likely to have missing data (66%) than students participating in National testing (2%), which means that missing data was a bigger issue for states with larger percentages of students participating in State and District testing. It is important to consider missing data when interpreting the performance of ELs and non-ELs in a given state, as the students who reported their EL status may not be representative of all ACT-tested ELs and non-ELs in the state.

The estimated overall percentage of high school graduates tested is also provided for the nation and for each state in order to provide additional context for interpreting state-level performance. States with higher percentages of ACT-tested students tend to have scores that are more representative of the performance of all students within the state, whereas states with lower percentages of ACT-tested students tend to include more college-bound, higher-achieving students and tend to have higher average performance while being less representative of the performance of all students within the state. The percentage of students tested is calculated based on projections provided by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Bransberger, Falkenstern, & Lane, 2020).

Additional information and data visualization tools for exploring the 2021 ACT-tested graduating class can be found at <https://act.org/content/act/en/research/services-and-resources/data-and-visualization/grad-class-database-2021.html#data-vis>.



Table 1. Average ACT Scores of 2021 ACT-Tested Graduates by EL Status and State

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
National	35%	EL	75,838	16.3	17.5	17.6	17.8	17.4
National		Non-EL	663,734	22.1	21.7	23.3	22.3	22.5
National		Missing/NR	555,777	16.9	18.2	18.6	18.6	18.2
National		All students	1,295,349	19.6	19.9	20.9	20.4	20.3
Alabama	100%	EL	4,885	15.3	16.1	16.3	16.5	16.2
Alabama		Non-EL	27,830	20.6	19.3	21.2	20.4	20.5
Alabama		Missing/NR	21,203	16.3	16.7	17.2	17.2	17.0
Alabama		All students	53,918	18.4	18.0	19.2	18.8	18.7
Alaska	16%	EL	80	14.6	17.1	16.7	17.2	16.5
Alaska		Non-EL	853	21.7	22.0	24.1	22.3	22.6
Alaska		Missing/NR	309	14.3	17.1	16.0	16.5	16.1
Alaska		All students	1,242	19.4	20.5	21.6	20.6	20.6
Arizona	35%	EL	1,009	16.6	18.3	18.1	18.1	17.9
Arizona		Non-EL	8,574	21.8	22.1	23.2	22.2	22.4
Arizona		Missing/NR	18,127	17.2	18.8	19.1	18.9	18.6
Arizona		All students	27,710	18.6	19.8	20.3	19.9	19.8
Arkansas	99%	EL	2,612	15.7	16.6	16.5	17.2	16.6
Arkansas		Non-EL	17,409	20.6	19.5	21.1	20.7	20.6
Arkansas		Missing/NR	12,950	16.4	17.0	17.3	17.7	17.2
Arkansas		All students	32,971	18.6	18.3	19.3	19.2	19.0
California	5%	EL	682	22.0	22.5	22.3	22.1	22.4
California		Non-EL	17,909	27.6	26.7	27.9	26.6	27.3
California		Missing/NR	3,915	20.8	21.1	21.7	21.1	21.3
California		All students	22,506	26.2	25.6	26.6	25.5	26.1

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Colorado	16%	EL	179	21.4	21.3	22.3	21.8	21.8
Colorado		Non-EL	5,678	25.6	24.7	26.4	25.1	25.6
Colorado		Missing/NR	4,418	20.4	21.0	21.7	21.2	21.2
Colorado		All students	10,275	23.3	23.0	24.3	23.4	23.6
Connecticut	9%	EL	94	22.5	23.0	22.7	22.4	22.8
Connecticut		Non-EL	3,528	27.9	26.5	28.4	26.7	27.5
Connecticut		Missing/NR	463	26.0	24.6	26.3	24.8	25.6
Connecticut		All students	4,085	27.5	26.2	28.0	26.4	27.2
Delaware	5%	EL	28	21.6	21.3	22.1	22.6	22.0
Delaware		Non-EL	408	26.0	24.6	27.2	25.1	25.8
Delaware		Missing/NR	68	27.1	24.9	27.8	25.3	26.5
Delaware		All students	504	25.9	24.5	27.0	25.0	25.7
District of Columbia	19%	EL	18					
District of Columbia		Non-EL	578	29.4	26.9	30.0	27.5	28.6
District of Columbia		Missing/NR	254	18.1	19.4	19.8	19.7	19.4
District of Columbia		All students	850	25.8	24.5	26.8	25.0	25.6
Florida	34%	EL	6,158	14.5	16.0	16.0	15.8	15.7
Florida		Non-EL	54,490	21.2	20.4	22.5	21.1	21.4
Florida		Missing/NR	12,546	17.3	17.8	18.9	18.0	18.1
Florida		All students	73,194	19.9	19.6	21.4	20.1	20.4
Georgia	24%	EL	1,218	17.5	18.8	18.9	19.0	18.7
Georgia		Non-EL	24,608	22.8	22.3	24.0	22.9	23.1
Georgia		Missing/NR	3,376	19.2	19.7	20.8	20.1	20.1
Georgia		All students	29,202	22.1	21.9	23.4	22.4	22.6

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Hawaii	67%	EL	995	14.1	16.4	15.8	16.6	15.9
Hawaii		Non-EL	4,320	19.2	19.9	21.0	20.7	20.3
Hawaii		Missing/NR	4,654	15.1	16.8	16.9	17.2	16.6
Hawaii		All students	9,969	16.8	18.1	18.6	18.7	18.2
Idaho	16%	EL	217	18.6	20.2	20.7	20.3	20.1
Idaho		Non-EL	2,986	22.7	22.7	24.5	23.1	23.4
Idaho		Missing/NR	172	18.8	18.7	20.4	19.4	19.4
Idaho		All students	3,375	22.3	22.3	24.1	22.7	23.0
Illinois	19%	EL	951	22.1	21.7	22.5	22.0	22.2
Illinois		Non-EL	23,528	25.6	24.8	26.1	24.8	25.5
Illinois		Missing/NR	3,191	24.1	23.4	24.9	23.7	24.1
Illinois		All students	27,670	25.3	24.5	25.8	24.6	25.2
Indiana	14%	EL	487	18.0	19.6	19.4	19.4	19.2
Indiana		Non-EL	8,153	23.4	23.7	25.0	23.7	24.1
Indiana		Missing/NR	2,228	19.0	20.1	21.0	20.2	20.2
Indiana		All students	10,868	22.2	22.8	23.9	22.8	23.1
Iowa	47%	EL	711	17.8	19.1	19.5	19.7	19.1
Iowa		Non-EL	13,019	21.6	21.7	23.6	22.7	22.5
Iowa		Missing/NR	3,928	16.9	18.0	19.1	19.1	18.4
Iowa		All students	17,658	20.4	20.8	22.4	21.8	21.5
Kansas	79%	EL	2,020	16.4	17.9	18.0	18.4	17.8
Kansas		Non-EL	14,291	21.0	21.0	22.4	21.7	21.7
Kansas		Missing/NR	12,973	17.0	18.1	18.9	18.8	18.3
Kansas		All students	29,284	18.9	19.5	20.6	20.2	19.9

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Kentucky	100%	EL	4,742	16.0	17.0	17.0	17.3	17.0
Kentucky		Non-EL	23,708	20.7	20.1	21.6	20.8	20.9
Kentucky		Missing/NR	22,001	17.2	17.8	18.3	18.1	18.0
Kentucky		All students	50,451	18.7	18.8	19.7	19.3	19.2
Louisiana	98%	EL	4,944	16.2	16.6	16.8	17.2	16.9
Louisiana		Non-EL	26,777	20.2	19.0	20.6	20.1	20.1
Louisiana		Missing/NR	18,380	15.5	16.3	16.7	16.9	16.4
Louisiana		All students	50,101	18.1	17.8	18.8	18.6	18.4
Maine	2%	EL	8					
Maine		Non-EL	252	26.1	24.7	27.4	25.3	26.0
Maine		Missing/NR	41	23.7	22.5	24.0	23.2	23.5
Maine		All students	301	25.7	24.4	26.8	25.0	25.6
Maryland	8%	EL	134	22.0	22.4	22.7	22.3	22.5
Maryland		Non-EL	4,749	25.9	24.6	26.7	25.0	25.7
Maryland		Missing/NR	587	24.9	23.7	25.8	24.2	24.8
Maryland		All students	5,470	25.7	24.5	26.5	24.9	25.5
Massachusetts	7%	EL	126	23.3	23.9	23.8	23.2	23.7
Massachusetts		Non-EL	4,909	28.1	27.3	28.9	27.2	28.0
Massachusetts		Missing/NR	641	24.8	24.4	25.9	24.7	25.1
Massachusetts		All students	5,676	27.6	26.9	28.4	26.8	27.6
Michigan	9%	EL	387	22.2	22.1	23.0	22.3	22.5
Michigan		Non-EL	8,202	25.5	24.8	26.0	24.9	25.4
Michigan		Missing/NR	748	22.8	22.5	23.8	22.7	23.1
Michigan		All students	9,337	25.1	24.5	25.7	24.6	25.1

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Minnesota	60%	EL	1,282	16.9	19.2	18.7	19.4	18.7
Minnesota		Non-EL	18,535	22.8	23.4	24.5	23.8	23.8
Minnesota		Missing/NR	22,107	18.3	20.1	20.6	20.5	20.0
Minnesota		All students	41,924	20.2	21.5	22.2	22.0	21.6
Mississippi	100%	EL	3,718	15.1	16.1	16.1	16.6	16.1
Mississippi		Non-EL	16,623	19.4	18.6	20.0	19.5	19.5
Mississippi		Missing/NR	14,876	16.0	16.9	17.2	17.5	17.0
Mississippi		All students	35,217	17.5	17.6	18.4	18.3	18.1
Missouri	63%	EL	2,746	17.1	18.2	18.6	18.7	18.3
Missouri		Non-EL	28,292	21.4	21.0	22.7	21.8	21.8
Missouri		Missing/NR	14,492	17.5	18.2	19.2	19.0	18.6
Missouri		All students	45,530	19.9	19.9	21.3	20.7	20.6
Montana	70%	EL	240	16.9	18.4	18.7	18.8	18.3
Montana		Non-EL	1,515	22.3	22.3	23.9	22.9	23.0
Montana		Missing/NR	5,158	18.4	19.4	20.4	20.1	19.7
Montana		All students	6,913	19.2	20.0	21.1	20.7	20.4
Nebraska	86%	EL	877	17.3	18.3	18.4	18.7	18.3
Nebraska		Non-EL	10,095	21.9	21.6	23.0	22.2	22.3
Nebraska		Missing/NR	10,655	16.5	17.8	18.7	18.5	18.0
Nebraska		All students	21,627	19.1	19.6	20.7	20.2	20.0
Nevada	100%	EL	2,411	16.1	17.3	17.4	17.8	17.3
Nevada		Non-EL	10,794	20.1	20.2	21.5	20.8	20.8
Nevada		Missing/NR	22,348	15.2	16.6	16.7	16.9	16.5
Nevada		All students	35,553	16.7	17.7	18.2	18.2	17.8

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
New Hampshire	4%	EL	26	24.4	24.5	25.0	23.3	24.4
New Hampshire		Non-EL	583	26.8	26.1	27.7	26.3	26.8
New Hampshire		Missing/NR	61	24.4	25.5	26.2	25.3	25.5
New Hampshire		All students	670	26.5	25.9	27.4	26.1	26.6
New Jersey	12%	EL	394	20.5	21.4	21.1	21.0	21.2
New Jersey		Non-EL	10,136	26.5	25.7	26.8	25.5	26.3
New Jersey		Missing/NR	2,831	21.4	21.4	22.2	21.1	21.6
New Jersey		All students	13,361	25.3	24.7	25.7	24.4	25.1
New Mexico	23%	EL	483	15.4	17.2	17.2	17.5	17.0
New Mexico		Non-EL	3,851	20.5	20.7	22.4	21.5	21.4
New Mexico		Missing/NR	410	17.3	18.3	19.4	19.1	18.7
New Mexico		All students	4,744	19.7	20.1	21.6	20.9	20.7
New York	9%	EL	404	22.3	22.9	23.0	22.7	22.9
New York		Non-EL	15,588	26.4	26.0	27.4	26.2	26.6
New York		Missing/NR	2,446	24.6	24.4	25.5	24.6	24.9
New York		All students	18,438	26.1	25.7	27.0	25.9	26.3
North Carolina	92%	EL	1,352	16.1	17.7	17.7	17.8	17.5
North Carolina		Non-EL	12,772	22.5	22.5	24.1	22.7	23.1
North Carolina		Missing/NR	90,713	16.6	18.5	18.8	18.8	18.3
North Carolina		All students	104,837	17.3	19.0	19.4	19.3	18.9
North Dakota	100%	EL	593	15.9	18.0	17.4	18.1	17.5
North Dakota		Non-EL	3,440	19.4	20.6	21.1	21.0	20.6
North Dakota		Missing/NR	3,383	17.4	19.0	19.3	19.5	18.9
North Dakota		All students	7,416	18.2	19.7	20.0	20.1	19.6

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Ohio	85%	EL	8,296	15.9	17.7	17.6	18.0	17.4
Ohio		Non-EL	45,802	21.1	21.4	22.6	21.9	21.9
Ohio		Missing/NR	60,665	16.9	18.4	18.7	18.6	18.2
Ohio		All students	114,763	18.5	19.5	20.2	19.8	19.6
Oklahoma	58%	EL	1,713	16.1	16.8	17.7	17.7	17.2
Oklahoma		Non-EL	18,515	20.4	19.5	21.9	20.7	20.7
Oklahoma		Missing/NR	6,692	16.4	16.8	18.1	17.7	17.4
Oklahoma		All students	26,920	19.1	18.7	20.7	19.8	19.7
Oregon	20%	EL	344	15.8	17.8	17.2	17.9	17.3
Oregon		Non-EL	3,882	21.9	22.0	23.6	22.7	22.7
Oregon		Missing/NR	4,180	17.7	18.8	19.4	19.4	19.0
Oregon		All students	8,406	19.6	20.3	21.3	20.8	20.6
Pennsylvania	7%	EL	373	20.8	21.6	21.4	21.2	21.4
Pennsylvania		Non-EL	8,264	25.6	24.9	26.5	25.1	25.7
Pennsylvania		Missing/NR	1,061	20.5	20.6	21.8	20.7	21.0
Pennsylvania		All students	9,698	24.8	24.3	25.8	24.5	25.0
Rhode Island	4%	EL	9					
Rhode Island		Non-EL	390	25.9	25.0	27.0	25.3	25.9
Rhode Island		Missing/NR	52	24.9	23.3	26.7	24.5	25.0
Rhode Island		All students	451	25.7	24.8	27.0	25.2	25.8
South Carolina	50%	EL	1,797	14.3	16.4	16.0	16.5	15.9
South Carolina		Non-EL	11,513	20.2	20.2	21.9	21.0	20.9
South Carolina		Missing/NR	13,041	15.4	17.2	17.3	17.4	16.9
South Carolina		All students	26,351	17.4	18.4	19.2	18.9	18.6

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
South Dakota	55%	EL	429	17.6	18.9	19.6	19.7	19.0
South Dakota		Non-EL	4,665	21.0	21.7	22.9	22.3	22.1
South Dakota		Missing/NR	373	17.2	18.7	19.4	19.2	18.8
South Dakota		All students	5,467	20.5	21.2	22.4	21.9	21.6
Tennessee	100%	EL	3,831	16.2	17.0	17.1	17.3	17.0
Tennessee		Non-EL	34,395	21.8	20.4	22.3	21.3	21.6
Tennessee		Missing/NR	35,069	16.0	16.7	17.4	17.2	17.0
Tennessee		All students	73,295	18.7	18.5	19.7	19.1	19.1
Texas	23%	EL	4,208	15.9	17.8	17.4	18.0	17.4
Texas		Non-EL	47,612	21.7	21.9	23.3	22.4	22.4
Texas		Missing/NR	37,128	15.7	17.8	17.6	18.0	17.4
Texas		All students	88,948	18.9	20.0	20.6	20.3	20.1
Utah	86%	EL	2,770	17.3	18.6	18.8	19.0	18.6
Utah		Non-EL	19,753	21.6	21.5	23.1	22.2	22.2
Utah		Missing/NR	17,201	18.0	18.7	19.7	19.4	19.1
Utah		All students	39,724	19.7	20.1	21.3	20.8	20.6
Vermont	4%	EL	10					
Vermont		Non-EL	158	25.6	24.4	27.4	25.3	25.8
Vermont		Missing/NR	62	21.2	21.2	23.8	22.6	22.3
Vermont		All students	230	24.2	23.4	26.2	24.5	24.7
Virginia	9%	EL	150	20.8	21.9	21.4	21.7	21.6
Virginia		Non-EL	7,621	25.6	24.6	26.6	25.2	25.7
Virginia		Missing/NR	525	24.8	23.8	26.0	24.4	24.9
Virginia		All students	8,296	25.5	24.5	26.5	25.1	25.5

State	Percent tested	EL status	Count	Average scores				
				English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
Washington	7%	EL	225	16.3	18.1	18.4	17.9	17.8
Washington		Non-EL	3,876	25.4	25.1	26.7	25.3	25.8
Washington		Missing/NR	1,293	16.4	18.1	18.5	18.6	18.0
Washington		All students	5,394	22.9	23.1	24.4	23.4	23.6
West Virginia	30%	EL	528	18.1	18.0	19.4	19.1	18.8
West Virginia		Non-EL	4,557	21.0	19.9	22.2	21.1	21.1
West Virginia		Missing/NR	347	19.3	19.1	20.8	19.8	19.9
West Virginia		All students	5,432	20.6	19.6	21.8	20.8	20.8
Wisconsin	96%	EL	3,656	16.6	18.2	17.9	18.7	18.0
Wisconsin		Non-EL	20,975	21.2	21.6	22.3	22.2	21.9
Wisconsin		Missing/NR	39,188	17.9	19.1	19.4	19.6	19.1
Wisconsin		All students	63,819	18.9	19.9	20.3	20.4	20.0
Wyoming	91%	EL	288	16.9	18.5	18.7	18.7	18.3
Wyoming		Non-EL	2,773	20.1	20.4	22.0	21.2	21.1
Wyoming		Missing/NR	2,247	17.1	18.3	19.2	19.0	18.5
Wyoming		All students	5,308	18.6	19.4	20.7	20.2	19.8

Note. Results are not reported for any groups containing fewer than 20 students to protect students' privacy. NR refers to the response option "I prefer not to respond."