

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6 – N**  
**DATE: October 3-5, 2017**

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**SUBJECT**

**2017 South Dakota Condition of College and Career Readiness**

**PERTINENT HISTORY**

Each year, ACT releases a report of the achievement of ACT-tested students from that year’s graduating class relative to college and career readiness. Representatives from ACT provide an update to representatives from the Department of Education, Board of Regents Central staff, and the Governor’s Office. Data for the 2017 South Dakota High School Graduates were released on September 7, 2017.

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

[BOR Policy 2:3 – System Undergraduate Admissions](#)  
[Academic Affairs Guideline 7.6 – English and Mathematics Placement Guidelines](#)  
[Academic Affairs Guideline 8.4 – Baccalaureate General Education Curriculum Requirements](#)

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

The Board of Regents Admission policy defines the ACT composite score of 18 or above as an undergraduate admissions requirement, and BOR Policy 2:3.2-A(2) outlines ACT subtest scores that can be used as alternate criteria for minimum course requirements. Additionally, Academic Affairs Guideline 7.6 and 8.4 establish the common approach to student placement into English and Mathematics courses to ensure students are enrolled into courses most appropriate for their ability and educational background. ACT subtest scores are utilized as part of the placement process and influenced by ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.

**IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

The increase in the number of ACT test takers for the 2017 graduating class (80% of all graduates) is a positive sign for future enrollments as a higher percentage of South Dakota high school graduates are encouraged to pursue postsecondary opportunities following graduation. Although the number of students meeting College Readiness benchmarks on

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**INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

This item is for informational purposes only. Any action will be at the Board’s discretion.

each of the four indicators has remained consistent, the percentage continues to be above the national average for all ACT test takers.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – Special Data Analysis: 2017 South Dakota Condition of College and Career Readiness



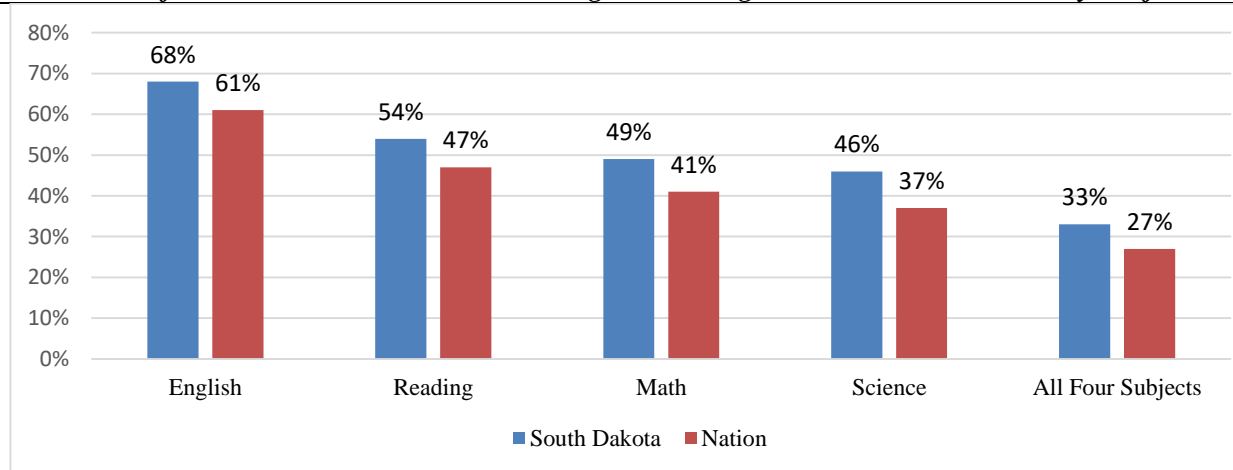
\*\*\* Special Data Analysis \*\*\*

## 2017 South Dakota Condition of College and Career Readiness

*Every year ACT releases a report that looks at the progress of the ACT-tested students from that year's graduating class relative to college and career readiness. The report provides a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness, as well as offering a glimpse at the emerging educational pipeline. This report provides a summary of the most recent report from ACT specific to South Dakota students.*

For the 2017 South Dakota graduating class, a total of 6,700 students took the ACT. This represented 80% of all high school graduates in the state compared to only 60% nationally. South Dakota graduates earned an average ACT composite score of 21.8 compared to the national average of 21.0. Over the past five years, the average composite score for South Dakota graduates has remained relatively flat; while consistently remaining above the national average. Of the six states within the United States that tested 70-90% of graduates, South Dakota has the second-highest average composite score. In 2017, 33% of South Dakota graduates tested met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks<sup>1</sup> compared to 27% nationally (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Percent of 2017 ACT-Test Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject**



<sup>1</sup> The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are scores on the ACT subtest areas that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year colleges courses. Benchmark attainment corresponds with the following subscores: English (18), Reading (22), Math (22), Science (23)

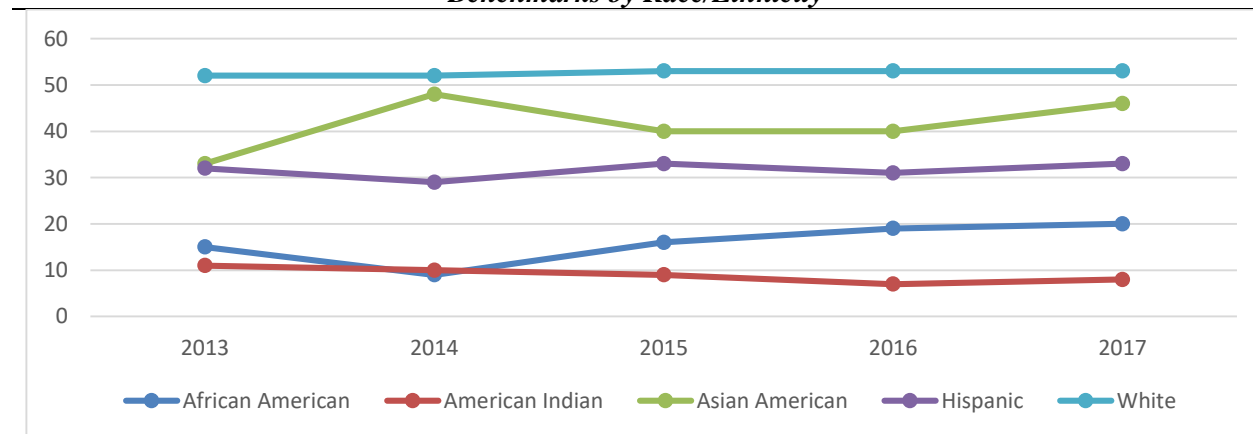
Over the past five years, the percentage of students reaching each of the benchmarks has remained relatively flat with a slight decrease in English and Math (Figure 2). In 2017, 55% of South Dakota graduates indicated an interest in STEM majors and/or careers.<sup>2</sup> In 2013 ACT introduced the STEM College Readiness Benchmark. The benchmark is an indicator of whether a student is well prepared for the types of first-year college courses required for a college STEM-related major. Students who meet the STEM benchmark have a 75% probability of earning a C or higher in first-year courses such as calculus, biology, chemistry, and physics. A student's STEM score is derived from the mathematics and science sub-scores. The STEM benchmark is 26 and is higher than the mathematics and science benchmarks individually to match the rigor of STEM-major related coursework. The 2017 graduating class had a STEM average off 22.0 down from 22.2 in 2013, and 23% of graduates met the ACT STEM College Readiness Benchmark which is an increase from 22% in 2013.

**Table 1**  
**Percent of 2013-2017 ACT-Tested Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks**

<i>Content Areas</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>
<i>English</i>	72%	72%	70%	70%	68%
<i>Reading</i>	52%	51%	54%	53%	54%
<i>Math</i>	53%	52%	51%	51%	49%
<i>Science</i>	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%
<b><i>All Four Subjects</i></b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>33%</b>

White students in South Dakota consistently score better on the ACT than non-white students with 53% meeting three or more College Readiness Benchmarks, though both Asian American and African American students have seen increases in the percentage of those tested meeting three or more benchmarks, up from 33% and 15% in 2013 to 46% and 20% in 2017, respectively. In recent years, the percentage of American Indian students meeting three or more benchmarks has decreased from 11% in 2013 to 8% in 2017.

**Figure 2**  
**Percent of 2013-2017 ACT-Tested Graduates Meeting Three or More ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity**



<sup>2</sup> ACT defines STEM as occupations and majors in four key areas: Science, Computer Science and Mathematics, Medical and Health, and Engineering and Technology

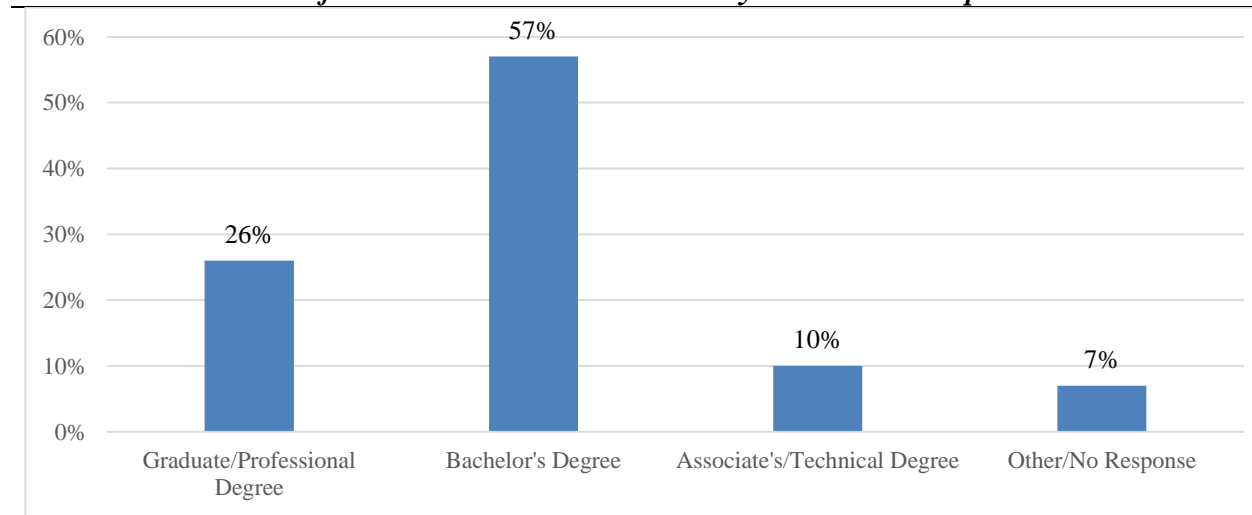
For South Dakota graduates, the top five schools to which scores were sent were South Dakota State University, University of South Dakota, Black Hills State University, Augustana University, and Northern State University. The top three out-of-state institutions receiving scores from South Dakota graduates were University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and North Dakota State University which received scores from 397, 300, and 257 students, respectively. Table 2 indicates how many students sent scores to Regental institutions and how they were ranked according to choice at time of testing.

**Table 2**  
**Students' Score Report Preference at Time of Testing, Regental Institutions**

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Total Number of Score Reports</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Choice</i>
<i>BHSU</i>	630	268	362
<i>DSU</i>	351	153	195
<i>NSU</i>	426	153	273
<i>SDSM&amp;T</i>	399	199	200
<i>SDSU</i>	2,102	990	1,112
<i>USD</i>	1,446	466	950

While 93% of ACT-Tested South Dakota graduates in 2017 aspire to postsecondary education (Figure 3), only 75% of those tested enrolled at a postsecondary institution. If that gap is closed, an additional 1,193 members of the 2016 ACT-tested graduates from South Dakota would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

**Figure 3**  
**Percent of 2017 ACT-Tested Graduates by Educational Aspiration**



The ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) is a program that provides an opportunity for students to connect with colleges and scholarship agencies while broadening their postsecondary options. EOS-enrolled students are typically selected by more than 16 college and universities. In South Dakota, 69% of student opted-in to EOS compared to 73% nationally. The ACT Get Your Name in the Game Initiative continues to help improve college access and increase opportunities for students from underserved<sup>3</sup> backgrounds while helping colleges build diverse and vibrant first year classes. The Get Your Name in the Game Initiative allows colleges to receive the names and scores of ACT-tested students from underserved populations at no cost to the institution. In 2017, Black Hills State University was the only Regental institution to take advantage of the Get Your Name in the Game Initiative and received the names and scores for 10,077 students at no cost. In the region, there are currently 18,415 scores available through the initiative with over 475,580 students nation-wide who have accessible scores.

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<sup>3</sup> ACT defines an underserved student as first-generation, low-income, and/or racial/ethnic minority