



NEWS RELEASE

Utah State Board of Education

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Utah ACT Scores Rise for Class of 2021 as National Results Fall

SALT LAKE CITY – The number of Utah students taking the ACT college entrance exam fell by 11 percent as schools closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but average composite scores rose from 20.2 in 2020 to 20.6 this year. Nationally, 22 percent fewer students took the ACT while average composite scores dropped from 20.6 to 20.3, according to [data released today by ACT](#).

Utah students bucked the national trend in individual components of ACT seeing average scores rise in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science while individual test scores fell nationally, ACT noted. Utah scores for all racial and ethnic groups except for students who identify as Pacific Islanders also rose. Scores for students who are Pacific Islanders slipped from 17.0 in 2020 to 16.7 in 2021.

Many factors could have contributed to 2021 results. All Utah public school take the ACT, but only students who took the 11th grade ACT test in the first testing window of 2020 were able to take the test at school due to the statewide soft closure of school buildings. Utah students who were set to take the 11th grade ACT test during either of the other two in-school testing windows were given vouchers and had to arrange to take the test on one of the ACT national testing dates available through 2020. ACT data showed that a disproportionate number of students who identify as other than white or Asian and

students who are economically disadvantaged were more likely to be part of the 11 percent who did not take the test. On the other side of the equation, ACT also notes that students who take the ACT multiple times are more likely to improve their scores and the number of Utah students who took the ACT multiple times in 2020 dropped by 36 percent.

“The past two school years have been challenging for everyone,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “The great news of our ACT results is a reflection on the students, teachers, and parents who made this happen through their commitment to education. This year we need to continue focusing on ensuring that all students who are age eligible take the ACT which will help them expand their choices and opportunities for the future.”

Utah’s ACT results compared to national results

	Composite	English	Math	Reading	Science
Utah 2021	20.6	19.7	20.1	21.3	20.8
Nation 2021	20.3	19.6	19.9	20.9	20.4
Utah 2020	20.2	19.3	19.7	21.0	20.3
Nation 2020	20.6	19.9	20.2	21.2	20.6

Percentage of students who met college readiness benchmarks:

	English	Math	Reading	Science	All Four
Utah 2021	59	38	46	37	26
Nation 2021	56	36	44	35	25
Utah 2020	56	34	44	34	23
Nation 2020	58	37	45	36	26

Utah 2021 disaggregated ACT scores compared to 2020 results:

	2021	2020
All Students	20.6	20.2
American Indian	16.5	15.8
Asian	21.9	21.4
Black/African American	16.5	16.4
Hispanic/Latino	17.6	17.2
Pacific Islander	16.7	17.0
White	21.5	21.3
Two or more races	21.2	20.8

More information about Utah scores is on the [ACT site](#).

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