

Iowa ACT Scores #2 in the Nation

As kids are going back to school, it's good news to hear that once again, Iowa's graduating high school students' ranked number two in the nation in ACT scores.

We've already taken the step in getting our kids prepared for the future by passing the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Iowa Department of Education noted that those who reported taking core courses achieved an average composite ACT score of 23. Those that reported taking lighter course loads in core areas had an average composite score of 19.6.

This year's results also indicate that more students are taking at least three years each of math, science, and social studies, and four years of English in high school, which positively impacts test scores and provides students with the concepts and skills for success after high school.

Iowa students earned an average ACT composite score of 22.2. The national average was 21.0. A perfect score on the ACT is a 36. The 2010 high school class left better prepared for college than the 2009 class predecessors, and their ACT scores remained second-highest in the country, after the state of Minnesota. The number of students who took the ACT test increased to 22,943 this year, which is 60% of Iowa's 2010 graduating class.

Three years after the Legislature raised standards in schools to boost student achievement and ensure kids are prepared for jobs in today's global economy, the Iowa Board of Education gave unanimous approval at their July 29th meeting to combine Iowa's Core standards with a multi-state effort to develop a "Common Core" standard.

The Iowa Department of Education's review of the new national model of education standards shows they are aligned with 88% of Iowa's standards for math skills and concepts addressed in the Iowa Core. In literacy or English language arts, 84% of the skills and concepts addressed in the Iowa Core are also covered in the Common Core.

The Common Core State Standards were developed to be aligned with college and work expectations, to include rigorous content and skills, and to be internationally benchmarked. The Common Core State Standards initiative encompasses standards for English, language arts, and mathematics.

Iowa school districts are in the process of implementing the Iowa Core, which requires that students learn essential concepts and skills for literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as 21st century learning skills (including civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills).