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Louisiana ACT Five-Year Improvement Trend Outpaces National Average

Louisiana's five-year ACT (American College Test) composite score improvement trend continues to outpace the national trend. Since 2003, Louisiana's average composite score has risen 0.5 points, while the national average has risen by 0.4 points.

Louisiana students received an average composite score on the ACT this year of 20.1, holding steady at the same average posted in 2006. The national average came in at 21.2, up one tenth of a point from 21.1 last year. ACT, Inc., headquartered in Iowa City, Iowa, released its 2007 national and state-level data this morning. Most Louisiana colleges and universities use the ACT to gauge college readiness and to qualify students for admission.

"There's good news in the report for Louisiana," said Karen Pennell, ACT Assistant Vice President and Regional Manager. "Not only did Louisiana's five-year improvement trend remain stronger than the average, but math and reading scores are at an all-time high." The state's average math and reading scores both improved by one tenth of a point over the previous year, to 19.5 and 20.2 respectively.

"While the trend over the last 5 years has been very promising, we need to make more progress," said State Superintendent Paul G. Pastorek. "In order to do so, we must take steps to redesign our high schools. We cannot keep doing what we have been doing and expect to see ACT scores rise. High school redesign offers the promise of making the kind of progress we want from our students. The BESE and I are working hard to finalize our policy to redesign high schools and to begin to implement changes in the classroom."

"It's very encouraging to learn that our scores have held their ground this year," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "While we were pleased with the significant improvement shown in last year's report, we weren't sure how much confidence to place in those results because so many Katrina-displaced students were absent from the normal mix. However, there were more than 900 additional test takers this year, and the composite average did not dip.

That helps validate last year’s improvement. We still have work to do, particularly in math, but the trend continues to be positive.”

Between 2003-2007, Louisiana’s composite average improved by 0.5 points, from 19.6 to 20.1. That’s slightly higher than the U.S. average which improved 0.4 points from 20.8 to 21.2 for the same time period. The following table shows how Louisiana’s average composite ACT score improvement has trended compared to the U.S. average.

	Louisiana	US
2003	19.6	20.8
2004	19.8	20.9
2005	19.8	20.9
2006	20.1	21.1
2007	20.1	21.2

Here are Louisiana’s 2007 ACT sub-scores compared to the U.S. average:

	Louisiana	US
English	20.3	20.7
Math	19.5	21.0
Reading	20.2	21.5
Science	19.9	21.0

For more information ACT, or to view ACT’s national report, go to www.ACT.org.