

NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM ISSUE PAPER:

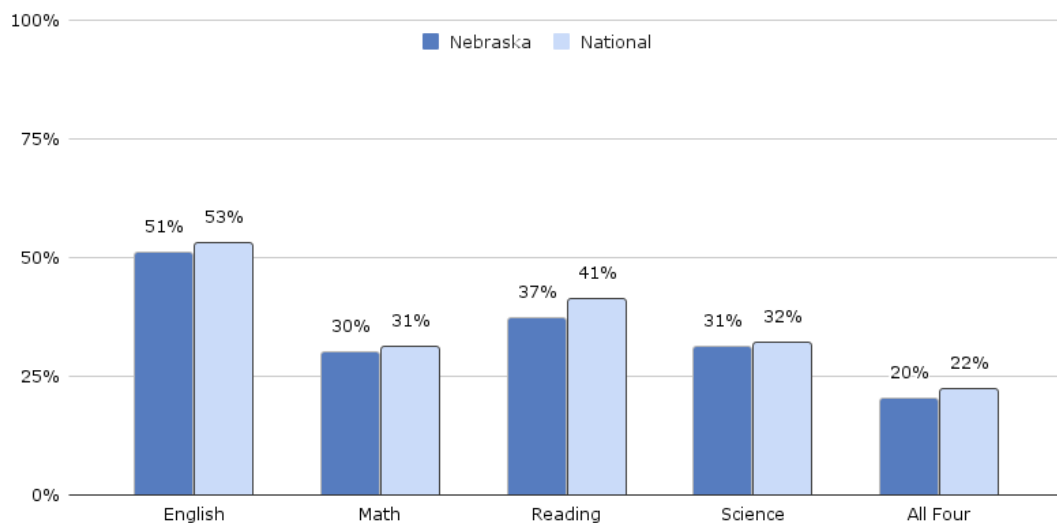
NEBRASKA ACT SCORES DROP WHILE TEACHER'S UNION SEEKS TO MAINTAIN ITS MONOPOLY.

BACKGROUND. A 2017 NE education law requires all NE public high school juniors to take the ACT (American College Testing) free as part of the state assessment test system. This year, 96% of NE public high schoolers took this test. The statistics should alert taxpayers that the enormous sums of local and state taxpayer dollars that fund our NE public schools, with a number of exceptions, are not resulting in superior academic levels of knowledge. Despite several attempts to retrieve the ACT test scores for every NE public school district, the NE Dept. of Education refused to release them or post them on its website until several requests submitted.

LOWER SCORES. The average NE 2023 ACT composite score was 19.2, a decrease from 19.4 in 2022 and 20.3 in 2021, ranking NE #33 in the U.S. The national average was 19.5. The highest possible ACT score is 36. NE students scored an average of 18.3 in English compared to 18.6 nationally. Examining reading, our students scored an average of 19.5 compared to 20.1 nationally. Looking at math, our high schoolers scored an average of 18.9 compared to 19.0 nationwide. In science, NE juniors scored an average of 19.4 compared to 19.6 nationwide.¹ In the benchmarks set for our students, only 50% reached the English benchmark, 36% the Math benchmark, 34th worst in the U.S., 29% the Reading benchmark, and 30% the Science benchmark. Neighboring Colorado, South Dakota, Iowa, and Missouri students all showed higher ACT scores. Compared to the class of 2019, the set of 2022 students showed about the same level of college preparedness across the board. The average scores of the class of 2022 have declined 4% in English, 4% in Math, 3% in Reading, and 2% in Science. These lower scores, despite student option to re-take the test multiple times.

THE BEST OF ALL. Of all NE high schools, Elkhorn South in Omaha had the highest average composite score, a 24.03. Close behind was Elkhorn North HS with a 22.76 score. Other winners were Eustis-Farnam HS with a 22.40 score and Johnson HS with a 22.28 score. Leigh HS scored 21.9, Ponca HS hit 21.8, Bennington HS scored 21.7, and Hyannis HS scored 21.6. 38% of White students and 37% of Asian students met 3 or more College Readiness Benchmarks,

PIQOSITY CORP. FIGURES 2023.



but only 8% of Black students and 12% of Latino graduates did so. Nebraska could close the achievement gap by raising the scores of less than 500 Black students and a little over 1,000 Hispanic students. Tested students receive grades by 3 metrics: English Language Arts (ELA), the average of the English, Reading, and Writing tests, Math, and Science. Of the 240 public high schools for which data became available, only 55 had a composite score of 20.0 or over.²

¹ NE Dept. of Education, 10-11-23.

² Piqosity Corp. 2023.

PRIVATE SCHOOL COMPARISON. The average NE private school ACT composite score in 2023 was 25. The one with the highest score was Brownell-Talbot, scoring 28. The average private elementary school rating was 25; the highest private elementary school rating again went to Brownell-Talbot at 28. Also scoring high were Cornerstone Christian School in Bellevue at 26, Concordia HS at 25, NE Lutheran HS at 24, and Lincoln Christian at 24.³



ANALYSIS. Our NE public high school graduates, with several notable exceptions, currently are not prepared for collegiate or career success. The solution is not to throw additional taxpayer \$\$ at the public school system but to enlarge the opportunities for parents, as the prime directors of offspring education, to option their children and teens into alternative educational systems, like private, parochial, or home schools, where they can excel academically in order to prepare for post-secondary education and future careers. Shame on the NE Dept. of Education for delaying to divulge the ACT test scores for individual NE school districts. Perhaps these bureaucrats were embarrassed to publicize the shameful ACT scores; they published the scores under a different heading on the dept. website. See the scores for your school district at <https://nep.education.ne.gov>. Using the information above, lobby your state senator to expand private, parochial, and home school opportunities for Nebraska youth. Such endeavors will prepare and cultivate future NE leaders. Also, join the fight to protect the Opportunity Scholarship law from repeal by the NE teacher's union, which aggressively seeks to maintain its near-monopoly over public education. Email netaxpayers@gmail.com for state senator contact information and to join our NE Taxpayers *Education Watch Project*.

Research, documentation, and analysis for this issue paper done by **Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom**. This material copyrighted by Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom, with express prior permission granted for its use by other groups in the *NE Conservative Coalition Network*. 11-23. C



³ Private School Review, 2023.