



**Roger D. Breed, Ed.D., Commissioner**  
**Scott Swisher, Ed.D., Deputy Commissioner**

---

301 Centennial Mall South    Tel: (402) 471-2295  
PO Box 94987    Fax: (402) 471-0117  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987    Web: [www.education.ne.gov](http://www.education.ne.gov)

August 28, 2013

Clerk of the Legislature  
Nebraska State Capitol Building  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: ACT Pilot Project (Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-759) - Annual Report to the Governor, Clerk of the Legislature and Chairperson of the Education Committee

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the ACT Pilot Project is to determine if such test (1) would improve the college-going rate and career readiness of Nebraska students and (2) could be utilized as the assessment for one grade in high school as required under section 79-760.03.

### **Selection of Participants**

The pilot project began in the 2011-12 school year with the selection of districts that met three criteria:

- 1) Willing to participate and to make all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students available for testing for three years;
- 2) Fit the cross section demographics of state enrollment; and
- 3) Were located across the state.

Eight school districts with a total eleventh grade enrollment of 3,807 students were selected. The high schools in the eight districts are:

Alliance High School (Alliance Public Schools)  
Columbus High School (Columbus Public Schools)  
Gering High School (Gering Public Schools)  
Hastings Senior High School (Hastings Public Schools)  
Lincoln High School (Lincoln Public Schools)  
Lincoln Northeast High School (Lincoln Public Schools)  
Lincoln Southeast High School (Lincoln Public Schools)  
Lincoln East High School (Lincoln Public Schools)  
North Star High School (Lincoln Public Schools)

Southwest High School (Lincoln Public Schools)  
Scottsbluff Senior High (Scottsbluff Public Schools)  
Sidney High School (Sidney Public Schools)  
South Sioux Senior High Schools (South Sioux City Community Schools)

The demographic profile shows the percentages by category of the pilot schools compared to the state data at the time of selection of the pilot districts.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Pilot Project</b>	<b>State</b>
Low Income	47.4	43.8
Hispanic	19.8	16.4
Asian	3.5	2.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.3	1.4
Black or African American	4.8	6.7
White	65.5	70.2
Two or More Races	5.0	3.1

### **Progress to Date**

NDE has contracted with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) to conduct the research for the pilot project. A research proposal was submitted and approved by NDE Research Review Board in January 2013. CCPE will conduct two analyses:

Study #1 is designed to determine if there is a sufficient positive correlation between scores on the ACT and the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessment to require all 11<sup>th</sup> graders to take the ACT as a measure of college readiness, rather than the NeSA assessment.

Study #2 is designed to determine if administering the ACT to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders in Nebraska's public high schools would increase the college-going rates for Nebraska's public high school graduates, especially for those who, in the past, have been overlooked among the students with the potential for going to college.

The first pilot classes of the participating districts completed the ACT testing in the spring of 2012 as juniors and were projected to graduate in the spring 2013. A second class completed the testing in the spring of 2013 and is projected to graduate in spring 2014. The 2012-13 State of the Schools Report (SOSR) will be the first report card that will

Clerk of the Legislature  
August 28, 2013  
Page Three

include the pilot district participants in the state totals. According to the contract, the CCPE will make annual reports beginning in November of 2013 and concluding with a final project report in November of 2016.

Also, of note, includes a resetting of the benchmark by ACT for the 2013 test and beyond. The shift essentially establishes a new baseline for all ACT testers from 2013 and beyond. In addition, ACT is now actively marketing the option for any district that chooses to provide all juniors an opportunity to take the assessment within their districts.

Submitted,



Scott Swisher, Ed.D.  
Deputy Commissioner of Education

cc: Governor Dave Heineman  
Senator Kate Sullivan