

ACT Pilot Project (79-759)

**Annual Report to the Governor, Clerk of the Legislature and Chairperson of the Education Committee
September 1, 2014**

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 11th 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.

Category	Pilot Project	State
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. The first pilot classes of the participating districts completed the ACT testing in the spring of 2012 as juniors and graduated in the spring 2013. A second class completed the testing in the spring of 2013 and graduated in spring 2014. A third class completed the testing in the spring of 2014 and will graduate in spring 2015. CCPE will conduct two analyses:

The goal of study #1 is designed to determine the extent to which the scores on the ACT and the Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) are correlated, since all 11th graders in the 13 Pilot high schools are required to take both assessments in 2012, 2013 and 2014. A progress report on results of study #1 was delivered to NDE on March 18, 2014. The final report for 2014 assessment is scheduled to be delivered in November 2014, at which time NDE will review the findings and may update this report.

Study #2 is designed to determine if administering the ACT to all 11th 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. A progress report for study #2 was delivered to NDE on August 20, 2014. The final report of study #2 will include the college-going rates for students who graduated in 2014-15 and continue on to college in 2015-16. The final report is scheduled to be delivered in November 2016.