

2020 ACT Test Results Summary

Austin Independent School District

2019–2020

Purpose

This report describes ACT test results for Austin Independent School District (AISD) seniors in the 2019–2020 school year. The ACT is a national college admissions examination developed and administered by ACT, Inc. that consists of the following subject area tests: English, mathematics (math), reading, and scientific reasoning. The highest score possible on each section of the ACT is 36. Students generally take the ACT during their junior or senior year of high school, and many colleges and universities use the ACT to make admission decisions.

How many AISD students took the ACT?

The number of ACT test-takers continued to decrease in 2020 from an all-time high in 2016. However, AISD ACT test participation is still greater than 10 years ago (Figures 1 and 2). It is not clear whether the decrease in ACT test-takers was influenced by students choosing not to take the exam, by declining district enrollment, or by school changes brought about by the pandemic. In 2015–2016, when ACT test participation was highest, AISD had 84,191 students enrolled compared with 80,388 students enrolled in October 2020 (Austin ISD, 2020). Additionally, AISD provided opportunities to students on all high school campuses to take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) exam which also determines the appropriate level of college course work for aspiring college students.

Figure 1
ACT test participation in AISD has decreased since the 2015–2016 school year, but still remains higher than ten years ago.

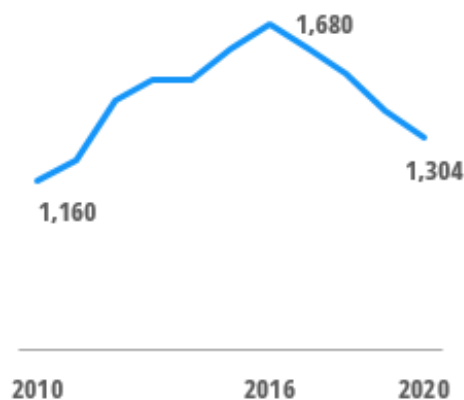
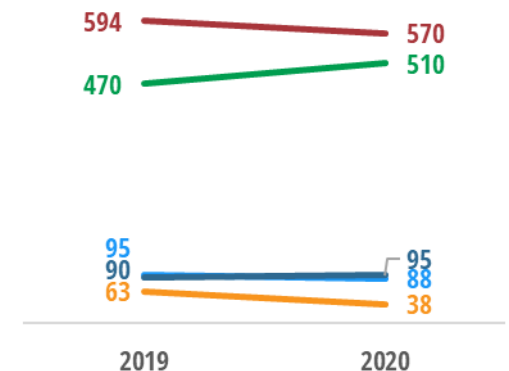


Figure 2
ACT test participation decreased for students who were Hispanic, Asian, or two or more races, and increased for students who were White, or African American in 2020.



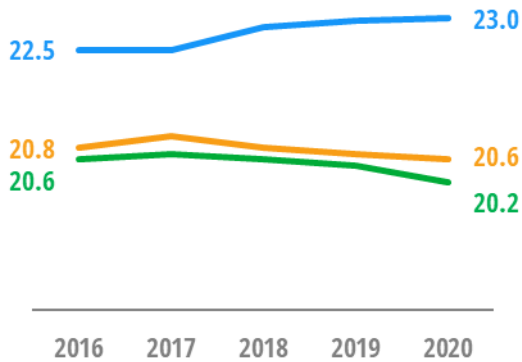
Source. ACT District Profile Report, 2020

How did AISD students perform on the ACT?

The district's average ACT composite score of 23.0 exceeded the state (20.2) and national (20.6) average composite scores. The district's ACT composite score increased slightly from 2019 to 2020. State and national average achievement levels decreased slightly from the prior year (ACT, 2020). The district average ACT subject area scores exceeded national averages in all subject areas for the past five years (Figures 3 and 4). While state composite scores were available publicly, state level subject averages were not available publicly in 2019–2020 and are therefore missing from Figure 4.

Figure 3

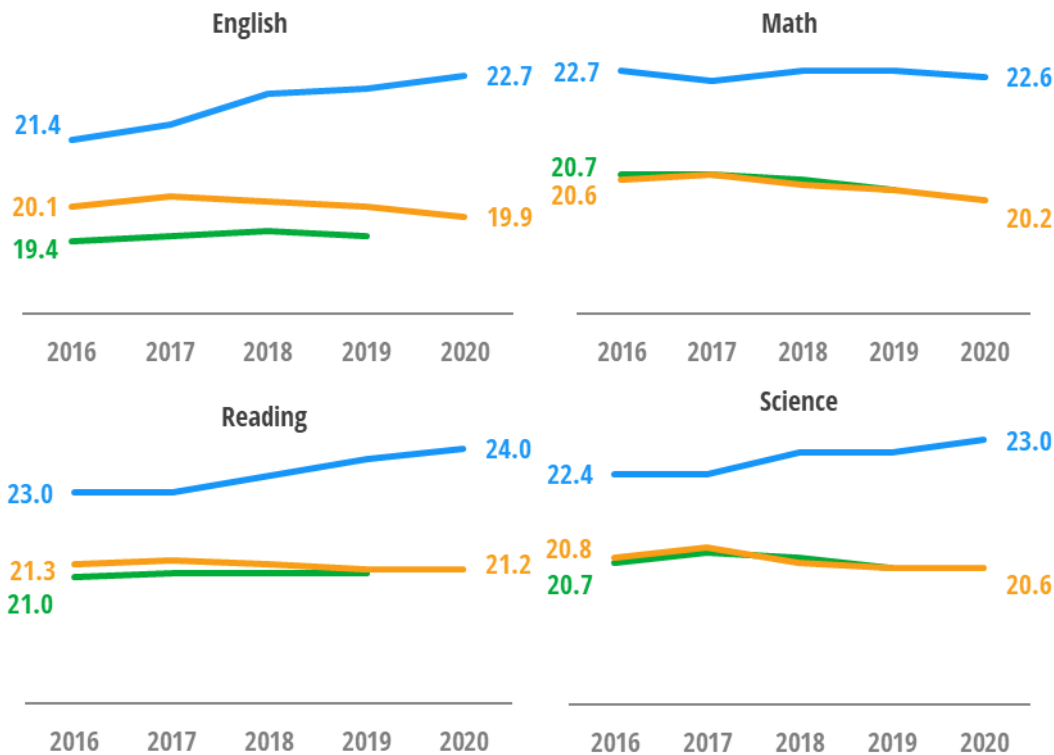
The district's average ACT composite score exceeded state and national averages. While the district average score increased, the state and national average achievement levels decreased from the prior year.



Source. AISD student assessment records and ACT state and national reports

Figure 4

The district's average ACT score in each subject area exceeded state and national averages in each subject for the fifth consecutive year.



Source. AISD student assessment records and ACT national report

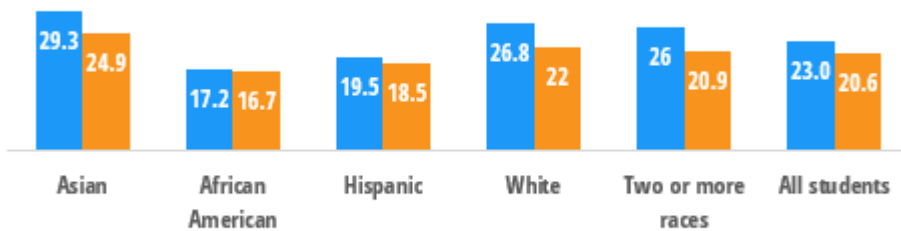
Note. State level ACT subject test averages for 2019-2020 were not available publicly.

2020 ACT Test Results

In each race/ethnicity category, AISD students had greater average composite scores on the ACT compared with their peers at the national level (Figure 5). Within AISD, students identified as Asian, two or more races, and White outscored all students on average. Over the past 5 years, the AISD average ACT composite score and subject area scores in English, reading, and science increased in most instances (Figure 6). While ACT scores increased overall, achievement gaps remained as students who were Asian, two or more races, and White consistently scored higher than did Hispanic and African American students.

Figure 5

The average ACT composite score for students categorized as Asian, Hispanic, White, and Two or More Races in AISD exceeded those at national levels.

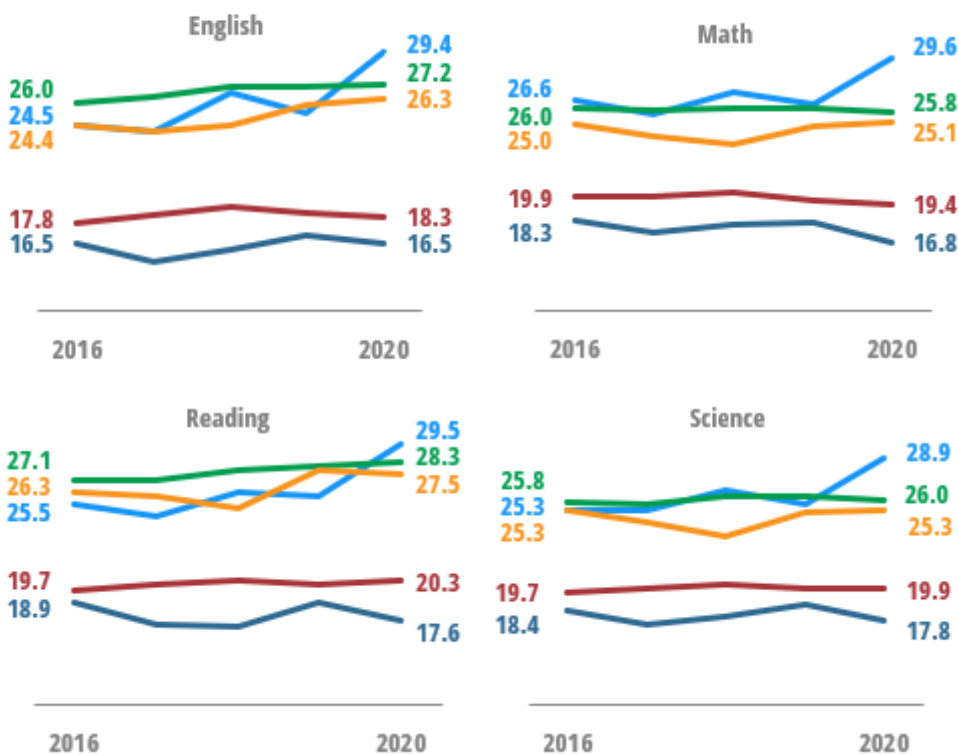


Source. AISD student records and ACT state and national reports

Note. State-level ACT composite score averages disaggregated by race/ethnicity were not publicly available for 2019–2020.

Figure 6

While average ACT scores increased over the past 5 years in most instances, students who were Asian, two or more races, or White continued to score higher on the ACT than students categorized as African American or Hispanic.



Source. AISD student records, 2020

About the Report

The ACT is a standardized test used for college admissions in the United States. It is administered by ACT, a nonprofit organization. The ACT test covers four academic skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and scientific reasoning. It also offers an optional direct writing test. The ACT has a maximum score of 36 in each subject area.

ACT's college readiness benchmark scores reflect a minimum score needed on a subject-area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses. The college readiness benchmark scores were empirically derived based on the actual performance of students in college.

This report summarizes the performance of AISD's 2020 graduates who took the ACT as sophomores, juniors, or seniors. The district's 2020 ACT data represents a different cohort of students than reported in prior years. ACT encourages educators to focus on trends (3, 5, 10 years), not year-to-year changes, as trend lines may provide insight into what is happening in the district, state, or nation.

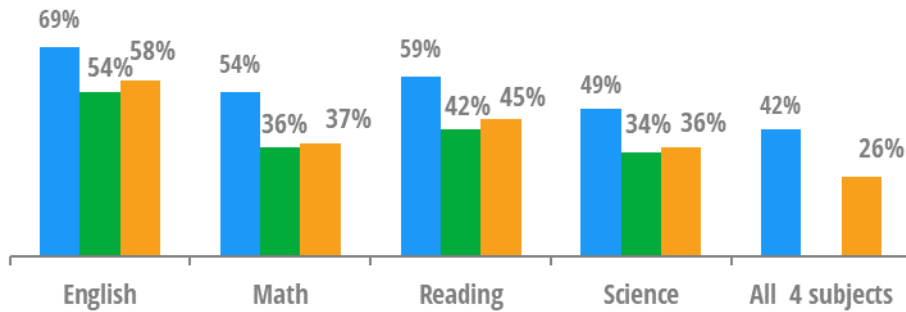


How many AISD students met college readiness benchmarks on the ACT?

AISD had greater percentages of students who were college ready, compared with percentages at the state and national levels, in English, math, reading, and science and across all four subjects (Figure 7). Across five years, the percentage of AISD students who were college ready increased in English, reading, and across all four subjects (Figure 8).

Figure 7

Greater percentages of AISD test-takers met college readiness benchmarks on the ACT than did students at the state and national levels.

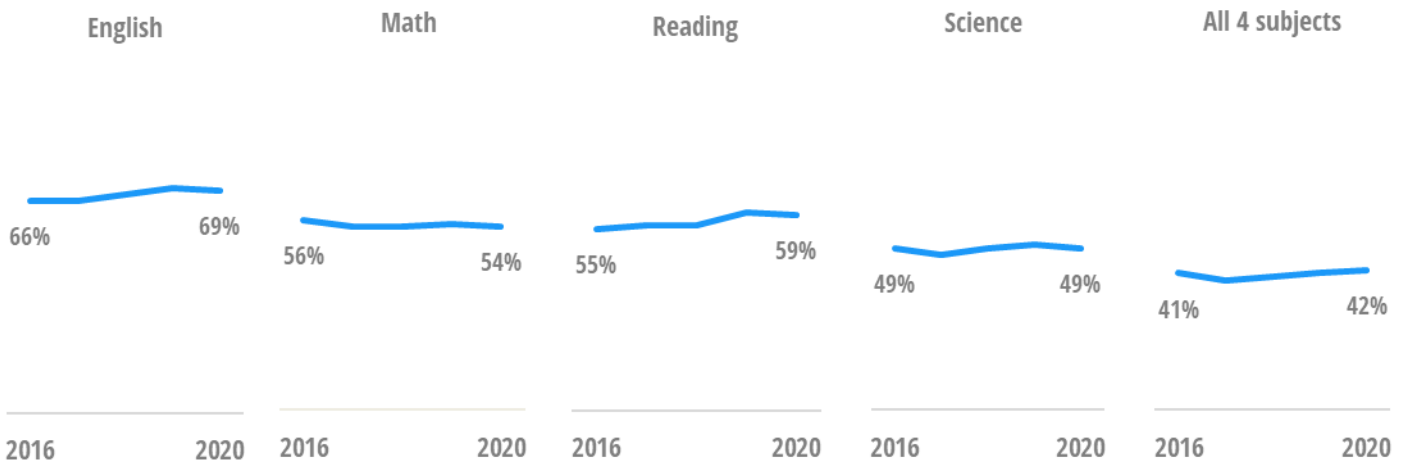


Source. AISD student records and ACT state and national reports

Note. State-level ACT composite score averages were not publicly available for 2019–2020.

Figure 8

Over the past 5 five years, the percentage of AISD students who met college readiness benchmarks on the ACT increased in English and reading.



Source. AISD student records, 2020

