

MEMORANDUM

April 22, 2022

TO: Board Members

FROM: Millard L. House II
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **ACT RESULTS: CLASS OF 2021**

CONTACT: Allison Matney, Ed.D., 713-556-6700

The ACT results for the graduating Class of 2021 have been released by ACT, Inc. and are provided in this report along with historical ACT data. The ACT consists of four subject area tests and a composite score. The four subject area tests include: English, mathematics, reading, and science. In addition to subject scores, ACT has created College Readiness Benchmarks (CR), revised in 2013, that represent the minimum scores needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses. Scores on the ACT subject tests range from 1–36.

Key findings include:

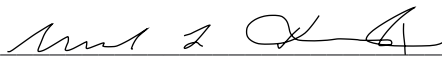
- From HISD's Class of 2021, 487 students took the ACT. Fewer HISD students took the ACT exam in 2021 than in any previous year since 2012.
- The average ACT composite score of 25.6 for the district reflects the highest score since 2018 and **exceeds both the state and national averages**. The district's average ACT scores in each subject area have increased since 2018 and **exceed state and national averages in all four subject areas**.
- HISD students from the major race/ethnicity groups exceeded state ACT composite averages. Students identified as Asian, White, and Two or More Races consistently scored higher on the ACT than African American or Hispanic students.
- Fifty-five percent of HISD students in the Class of 2021 met all four college readiness benchmarks, reflecting a decrease of four percentage points from the prior year. District percentages of students who met all four college readiness benchmarks have shown an increase since 2018 and **exceeded both state and national percentages**.
- ACT performance varied greatly among campuses. The average composite scores ranged from 18.5 to 30.5, and the percentage of students who met all four college-ready benchmarks ranged from 12.5 to 86.7 percent. Thirteen HISD high schools with at least five testers matched or exceeded the ACT composite national average of 20.3.

Administrative Response

The district continues to promote the various college entrance assessment options that are available to students, including the ACT national administrations. The district's goal is to provide students with information about the multiple pathways to demonstrate college and career readiness. While ACT participation has decreased, the average composite score on the ACT has increased, exceeding both state and national average scores. The district continues to commit to centrally funding and administering a School Day SAT, which provides an accessible and cost-free opportunity for all juniors in the district to take a college readiness assessment.

The student and educator resources for the SAT Suite of Assessments include a free K-12 assessment portal for educators that produces reports to inform instruction and targeted interventions for our students. HISD offers the full SAT Suite of Assessments to students grades 8-12. Free personalized Official SAT Practice (OSP) through Khan Academy remains at the forefront of the district's initiative to prepare students for PSAT and SAT exams. In 2018, the ACT offered test preparation for the first time. ACT Academy™ is a free online learning tool and test practice program designed to help students improve performance on the ACT test, though there is currently no district or teacher monitoring feature on ACT Academy™. Additionally, HISD College & Career Readiness Advisors continue to assist students in the college-going process by assisting students in registering for ACT and SAT national administrations. In 2021-2022 HISD will host a small school day ACT for accelerated Biology testers to meet state accountability requirements for a science score in high school.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Allison Matney in Research and Accountability at 713-556-6700.

 MLH

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports
Assistant Superintendents
School Support Officers
High School Principals
Shawn Bird, Ed.D.
Denise Watts, Ed.D.
Connie Smith, Ph.D.
David Johnston



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

ACT RESULTS: CLASS OF 2021



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ACT Results: Class of 2021

Executive Summary

Program Description

This report summarizes the Class of 2021 ACT participation and performance results. The ACT is a national college-admission exam, developed and administered by ACT, Inc. that assesses both the general education level of high school students and their readiness for college-level work.

Highlights

- From HISD's Class of 2021, 487 students took the ACT. Fewer HISD students took the ACT exam in 2021 than in any previous year since 2012.
- The average ACT composite score of 25.7 for the district reflects the highest score since 2018 and exceeds both the state and national averages. The district's average ACT scores in each subject area have increased since 2018 and exceed state and national averages in English, mathematics, reading, and science.
- Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district saw a large reduction in number of students who took the ACT exam in both 2020 and 2021. Any interpretation of results should be made with caution.
- HISD students from the major race/ethnicity groups exceeded state ACT composite averages. Although average ACT scores by subject increased over the past six years for all student groups, students identified as Asian, White, and Two or More Races consistently scored higher on the ACT than African American or Hispanic students did.
- Fifty-five percent of HISD students in the Class of 2021 who tested met all four college readiness benchmarks, which is the highest percentage since 2018 and exceeds both state and national percentages.
- While the district continued to show improvement over state and national percentages of students meeting college readiness benchmarks for all areas, various district student groups showed a marked difference in performance relative to these benchmarks. Within the district, students identified as Asian, White, or Two or More Races continued to outperform Hispanic and African American students.
- ACT performance varied greatly among campuses. The average composite scores ranged from 18.5 to 30.5, and the percentage of students who met all four college-ready benchmarks ranged from 12.5 to 86.7 percent. Thirteen HISD high schools with at least five testers matched or exceeded the ACT composite national average of 20.3.

Introduction

This report summarizes the Class of 2021 ACT participation and performance results. The ACT is a national college-admission exam, developed and administered by ACT, Inc. that assesses both the general education level of high school students and their readiness for college-level work. The report includes all test-takers who self-reported that they would be graduating in 2021, no matter when they took the assessment.

The ACT consists of four subject area tests and a composite score. The four subject area tests include: English, mathematics, reading, and science. In addition to the subject scores, ACT has created College Readiness (CR) benchmarks, revised in 2013, that represent the minimum scores needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses. Scores on the ACT subject tests range from 1–36 and College Readiness Benchmarks are listed below:

- ACT English CR Benchmark Score: 18
- ACT Math CR Benchmark Score: 22
- ACT Reading CR Benchmark Score: 22
- ACT Science CR Benchmark Score: 23

Results

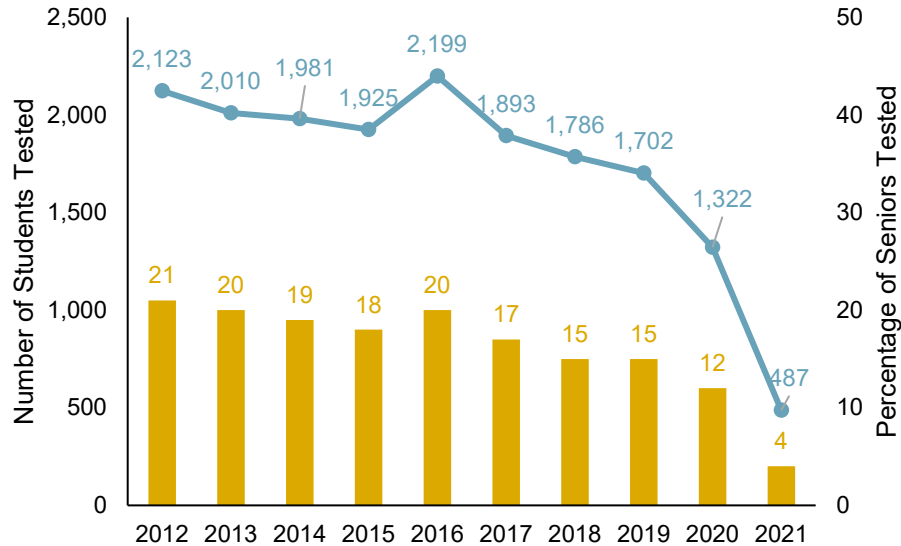
ACT provides summary reports, campus letters, and data files on ACT participation and performance of “College-Bound” seniors to districts and schools. These reports and data files provide an array of information self-reported by the students when they take the ACT exam. To be included on the file, all test-takers self-reported that they would be graduating in 2021. All race/ethnicity data were extracted from the district, state, and national profile reports.

The results below are the most recent testing instance per unique ID and may deviate from the file provided by the ACT. There was a large decrease of students who took the ACT compared to previous years, but there was an increase of students retesting within the school year.

ACT Participation

HISD students' participation in the ACT has decreased from 2012, with a slight rise in 2016 followed by a decrease (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. HISD ACT Test Participation, Classes of 2012–2021

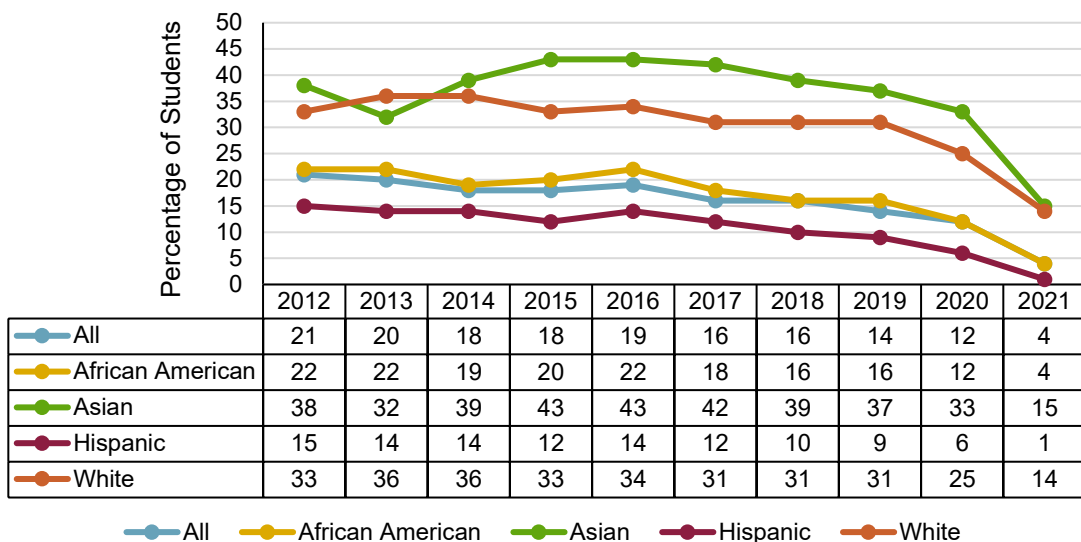


Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, 2010–2019; PEIMS Fall Snapshot, 2012–2021

The test participation count in the figure above reflects the total count released on the ACT Profile Report. The figures and tables below will reflect the total count of 489 from district data file.

Figure 2 shows the ACT HISD participation rate by student group. Participation rates for each group were determined by dividing the number of students within that group who took the ACT by the number of seniors within that group.

Figure 2. ACT Participation Rate by Student Group, Classes of 2012–2021



Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, 2012–2021; PEIMS Fall Snapshot, 2012–2021

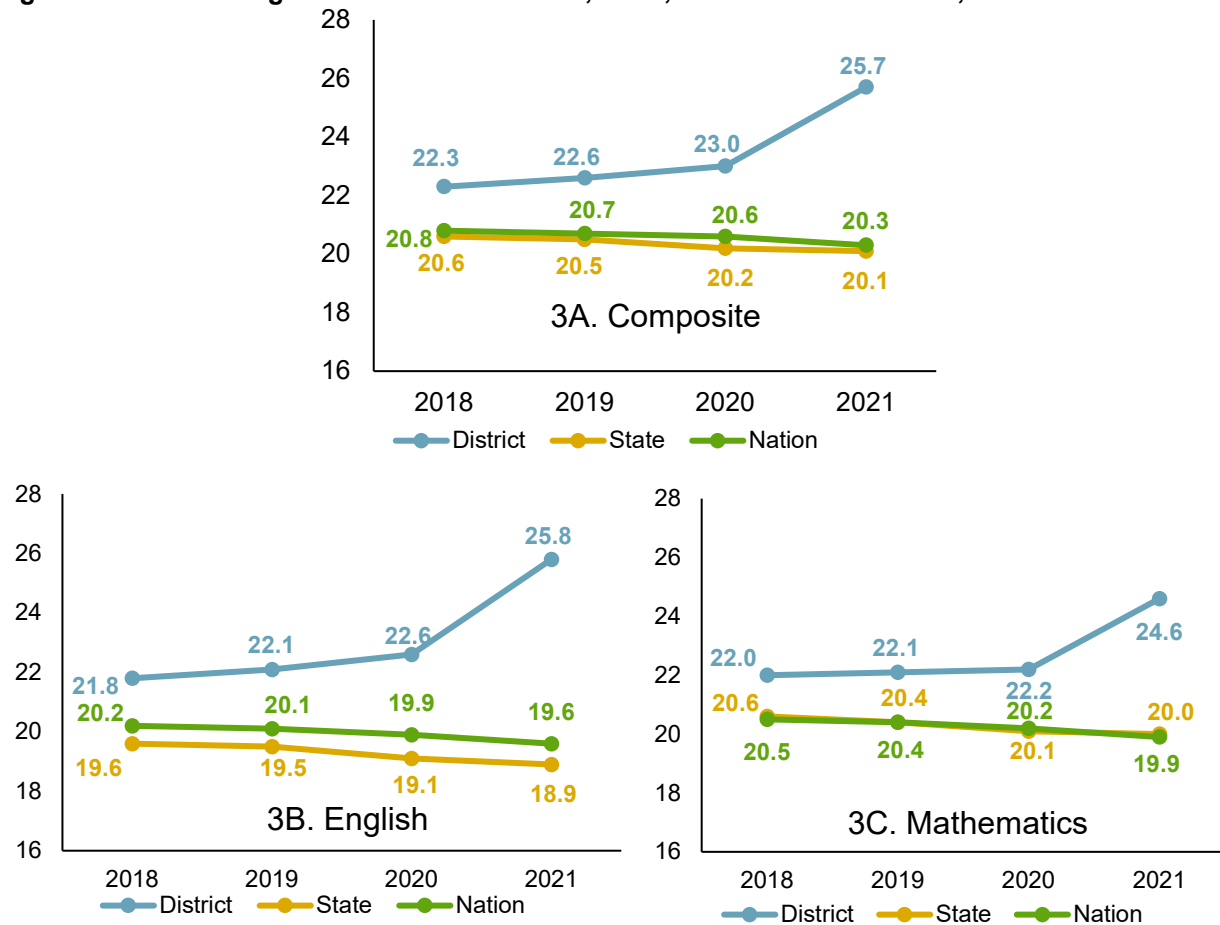
Figure 2 (p. 3) indicates the following:

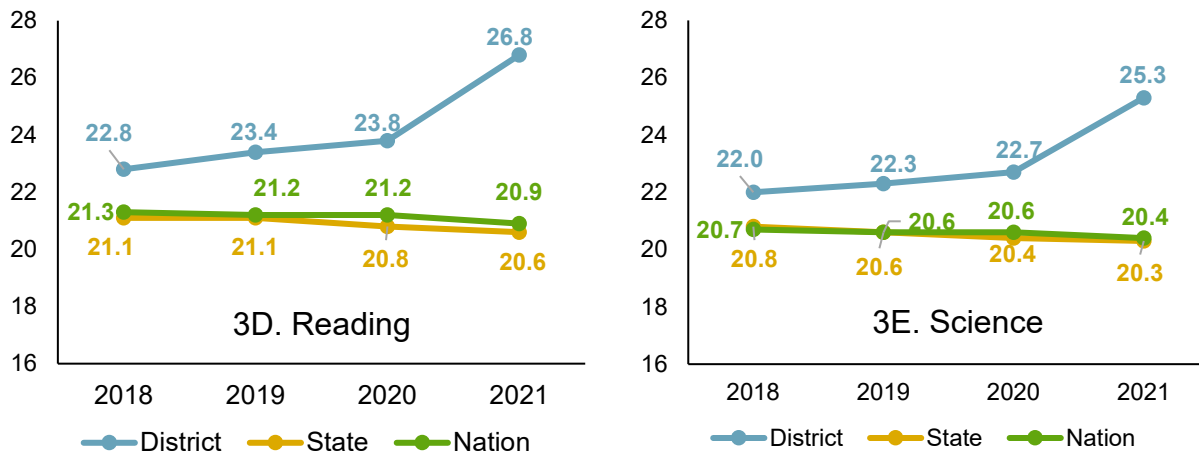
- The percentage of HISD seniors taking the ACT has dropped from 21 percent in 2012 to 4 percent in 2021.
- Asian students have experienced the greatest declines in the proportion of seniors who took the ACT, with a 23 percentage-point decrease in students taking the ACT in 2021 compared to 2012.
- Between 2012 and 2021, the proportion of seniors who took the ACT has declined for all student groups.

ACT Performance

The average ACT composite score of 25.7 for the district reflects the highest score since 2018 and exceeds both the state and the national averages (**Figure 3A**). The district's average ACT score in each subject area continued to increase since 2018 and exceeded state and national averages in English, mathematics, reading, and science (**Figures 3B–3E**, pp. 4–5).

Figures 3A–3E. Average ACT Scores of District, State, and National Students, Classes of 2018–2021

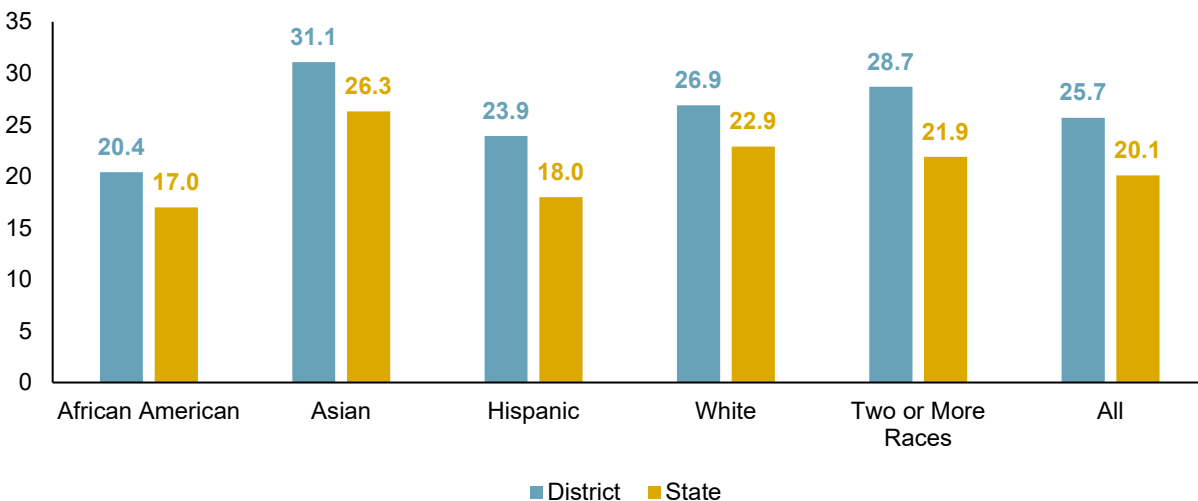




Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, Classes 2016–2019; The ACT Profile Report – National, Classes of 2016–2018; The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2019 National ACT

In 2021, HISD ACT test-takers from the major race/ethnicity groups exceeded the state’s average ACT composite score (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Average ACT Composite Score by Student Race/Ethnicity, District and State, Class of 2021

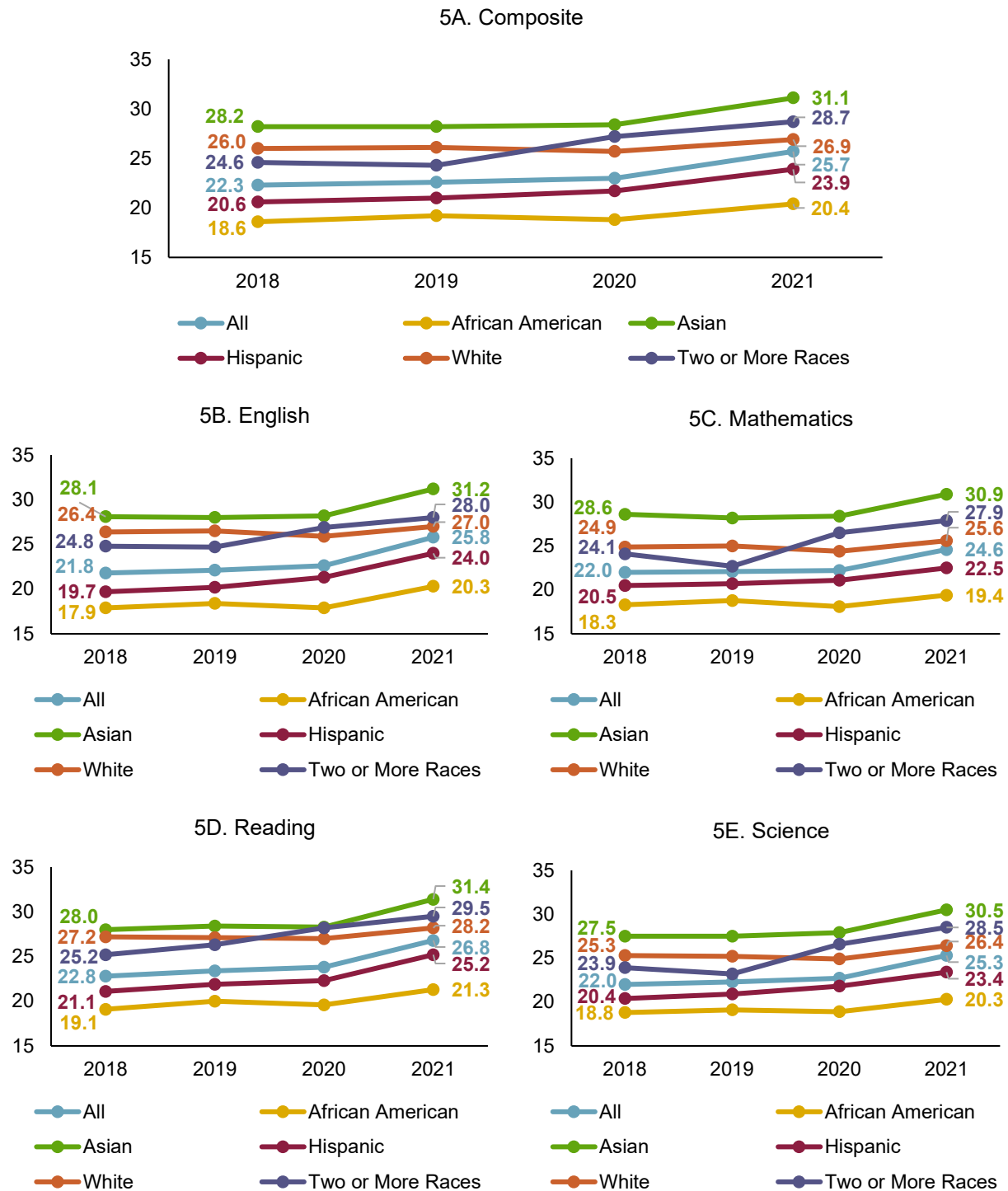


Source: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, Class of 2021

Note: National data was not available at the time of publication.

Although average ACT scores by subject increased over the past four years for most student groups, students identified as Asian, White, and Two or More Races consistently score higher on the ACT than African American or Hispanic students (**Figures 5A–5E**, p. 6). From 2016 to 2019, African American and Hispanic students increased in all four content areas as well as composite scores.

Figures 5A–5E. Average ACT Scores by Subject and Race/Ethnicity, Classes of 2018–2021



Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, Classes of 2018–2021

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

Fifty-five percent of students in the HISD Class of 2021 who took the ACT met all four College Readiness (CR) benchmarks, reflecting a decrease of four percentage points from the prior year (**Figure 6A**). District

percentages of students who met all four CR benchmarks have shown an increase from 2018 to 2021 and exceeded both state and national percentages. **Figures 6B** and **6D** show that the majority of HISD students met or exceeded the English and reading CR benchmarks (85 percent and 72 percent, respectively). A smaller proportion of HISD students met or exceeded the CR benchmarks for math (65 percent) and science (66 percent), displayed in **Figures 6C** and **6E**.

Figures 6A–6E. Percentage of College-Ready Students, Classes of 2018–2021, District, State, and National

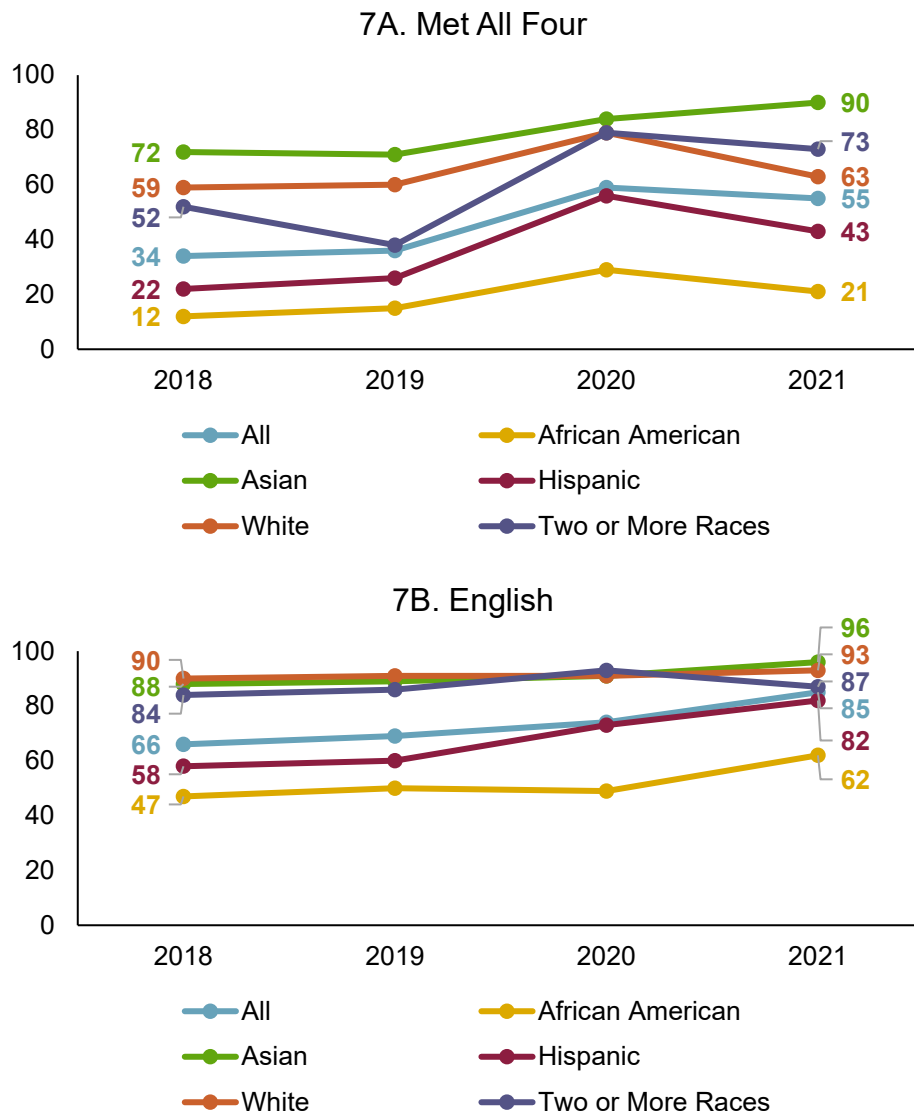


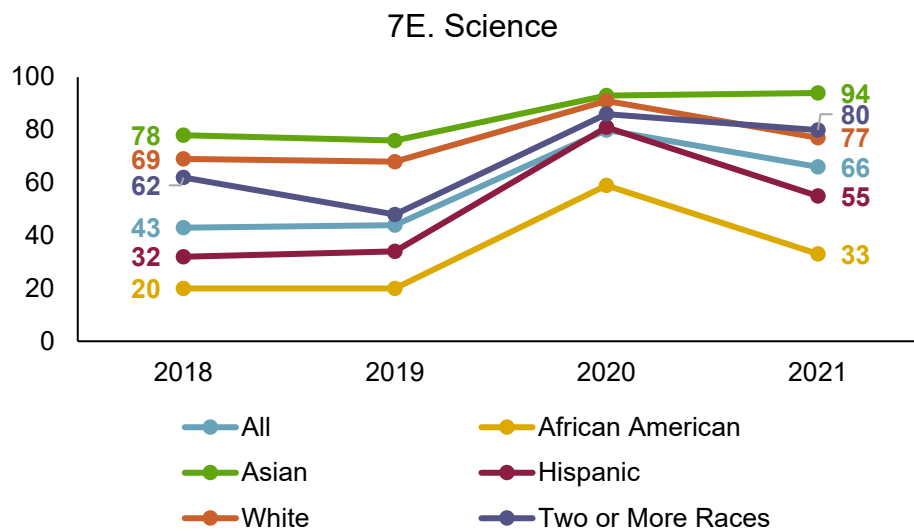
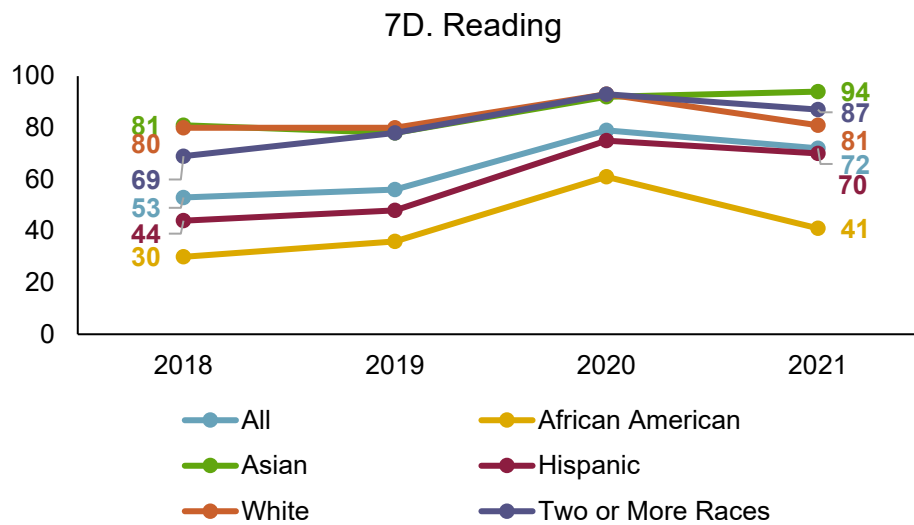
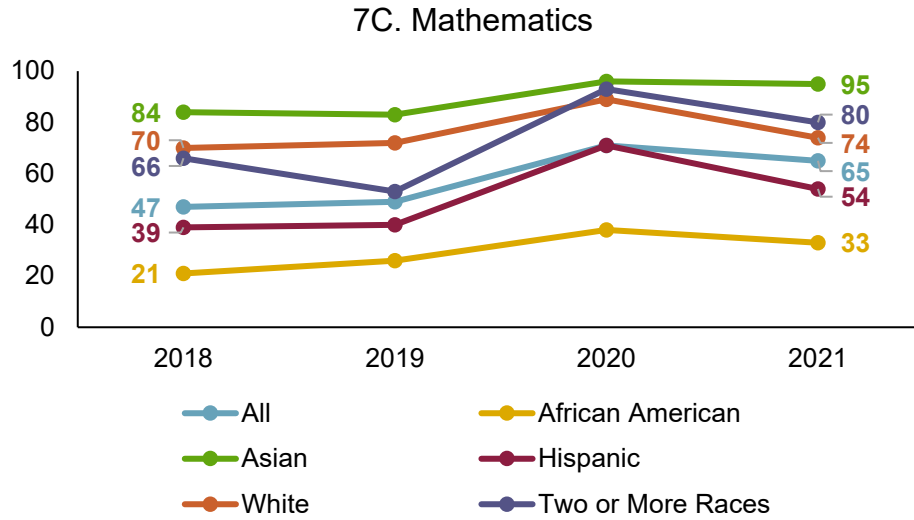
Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, Classes 2018–2021; The ACT Profile Report – National, Classes of 2018–2021; The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2021 National ACT

While the district continues to show improvement over state and national percentages of students meeting CR benchmarks for all areas, within the district the various student groups showed a marked difference in performance and meeting these benchmarks. Within the district, students identified as Asian, White, or Two or More Races continued to outperform Hispanic and African American students (**Figures 7A–7E**, pp. 8–

9). Ninety percent of students identified as Asian met all four CR benchmarks, but only 21 percent of African American students and 43 percent of Hispanic students achieved the same (**Figure 7A**). Ninety-six percent of Asian students, compared to 82 percent of Hispanic students and 62 percent of African American students, met the CR benchmark for English (**Figure 7B**). Ninety-five percent of Asian students met the CR benchmark for mathematics while 33 percent of African American students achieved the same (**Figure 7C, p. 9**). Ninety-four percent of Asian students met the CR benchmark for reading while 41 percent of African American students achieved the same (**Figure 7D, p. 9**). Ninety-four percent of Asian students met the CR benchmark for science while 33 percent of African American students achieved the same (**Figure 7E, p. 9**). Overall, all students showed growth in English, reading, math, and science over the past four years.

Figures 7A–7E. HISD Students Met Benchmark by Student Group, Classes of 2018–2021





Sources: The ACT Profile Report – District, Houston Independent School District, Classes of 2018–2021

ACT Performance by Campus

Table 1 (p. 11) shows the participation, average composite score, and the percentage of students meeting all four College Readiness Benchmarks by campus. Twelve campuses had enough students to report and showed an increase in the average composite score from 2019 to 2021. The highest increases in the average composite score were seen at Energy Institute High School (4.6 points) and Houston Academy for International Studies (3.7 points) although there was a large decrease in testers for 2021 from each school. In both 2019 and 2021, DeBakey and Carnegie High Schools had the highest average composite scores (30.5 and 30.4, respectively). Thirteen campuses matched or exceeded the ACT state composite average of 20.1, and the ACT national composite average of 20.3.

Ten campuses showed an increase in the percentage of students who met all four CR benchmarks. Of those, eight campuses had an increase of 10 percentage points or more from 2019 to 2021, although there was a large decrease in testers in 2021.

Table 2 (p. 12) shows the average ACT scores for each of the four content areas by campus. Twelve campuses increased their average English score, twelve campuses increased their average mathematics score, eleven campuses increased their average reading score, and twelve campuses increased their average science score from 2019 to 2021.

Campus	Number Tested			Average Composite			Percent Met All Four College Readiness Benchmarks		
	2019	2021	Change	2019	2021	Change	2019	2021	Change
DeBakey HS	73	30	-43	30.9	30.5	-0.4	90.4	86.7	-3.7
Carnegie HS	109	66	-43	29.9	30.4	0.5	89.0	87.9	-1.1
HS Perf. Vis. Arts	49	33	-16	28.3	28.6	0.3	73.5	72.7	-0.8
Bellaire HS	213	97	-116	26.0	27.4	1.4	56.8	71.1	14.3
Energy Institute HS	157	6	-151	19.9	24.5	4.6	19.1	66.7	47.6
YWCPA	10	8	-2	22.3	24.5	2.2	20.0	37.5	17.5
Lamar HS	244	112	-132	22.7	24.1	1.4	36.5	39.3	2.8
Westside HS	176	30	-146	23.0	23.5	0.5	38.6	46.7	8.1
Tx Conn. Acad	63	32	-31	21.9	22.8	0.9	27.0	37.5	10.5
Hou Acad. Intl.	117	7	-110	19.0	22.7	3.7	8.5	28.6	20.1
Waltrip HS	19	6	-13	18.8	21.3	2.5	10.5	33.3	22.8
Heights HS	46	16	-30	22.1	20.9	-1.2	28.3	25.0	-3.3
N. Houston ECHS	21	6	-15	21.4	20.3	-1.1	28.6	16.7	-11.9
South ECHS	5	7	2	17.6	19.3	1.7	0.0	28.6	28.6
Westbury HS	13	8	-5	16.5	18.5	2.0	0.0	12.5	12.5
Eastwood Acad	7	3	-4	21.4	*	*	28.6	*	*
East ECHS	28	1	-27	22.4	*	*	42.9	*	*
Wisdom HS	13	2	-11	20.0	*	*	7.7	*	*
Leland YMCPA	13	2	-11	21.6	*	*	23.1	*	*
Challenge ECHS	11	3	-8	25.8	*	*	72.7	*	*
Scarborough HS	12	2	-10	17.6	*	*	0.0	*	*
Sterling HS	9	3	-6	16.2	*	*	0.0	*	*
Jones HS	4	1	-3	*	*	*	*	*	*
Sharpstown Intl	38	1	-37	20.7	*	*	23.7	*	*
North Forest HS	7	1	-6	15.9	*	*	14.3	*	*
Washington HS	16	3	-13	16.7	*	*	0.0	*	*
Yates HS	21	1	-20	18.3	*	*	9.5	*	*
Chavez HS	33	2	-31	20.5	*	*	24.2	*	*
Austin HS	12	0	-12	21.2	--	--	16.7	--	--
Milby HS	12	0	-12	19.0	--	--	8.3	--	--
Houston MSTC HS	33	0	-33	17.0	--	--	3.0	--	--
Madison HS	22	0	-22	16.3	--	--	0.0	--	--
HS for Law and Justice	19	0	-19	19.5	--	--	10.5	--	--
Sharpstown HS	10	0	-10	19.1	--	--	10.0	--	--
Mount Carmel Acad	8	0	-8	18.8	--	--	12.5	--	--
Long Acad	7	0	-7	18.7	--	--	14.3	--	--
Furr HS	13	0	-13	16.8	--	--	0.0	--	--
E-STEM Central HS	5	0	-5	16.2	--	--	0.0	--	--
Wheatley HS	22	0	-22	15.4	--	--	0.0	--	--
Kashmere HS	3	0	-3	*	--	--	*	--	--
Mid Coll - Fraga	1	0	-1	*	--	--	*	--	--
Northside HS	4	0	-4	*	--	--	*	--	--
Worthing HS	3	0	-3	*	--	--	*	--	--
Liberty HS	0	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Mid Coll - Gulfton	0	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Sources: ACT datafile, 2019 and 2021

Notes: *Fewer than 5 students tested; --No students tested

Table 2. Average ACT Scores by Campus and Subject, Classes of 2019 and 2021

Campus	English			Mathematics			Reading			Science						
	2019	2021	Change	2019	2021	Change	2019	2021	Change	2019	2021	Change				
South ECHS	14.6	27.1	<div></div>	12.5	18.6	27.7	<div></div>	9.1	18.6	30.1	<div></div>	11.5	19.2	29.6	<div></div>	10.4
Energy Institute HS	19.0	26.8	<div></div>	7.8	19.8	22.8	<div></div>	3.0	20.2	27.3	<div></div>	7.1	20.3	23.0	<div></div>	2.7
Hou Acad. Intl.	18.3	26.6	<div></div>	8.3	19.1	27.9	<div></div>	8.8	20.2	26.9	<div></div>	6.7	17.9	27.6	<div></div>	9.7
Lamar HS	22.6	26.5	<div></div>	3.9	21.5	25.0	<div></div>	3.5	23.8	27.5	<div></div>	3.7	22.3	25.9	<div></div>	3.6
Bellaire HS	26.3	26.5	<div></div>	0.2	25.2	25.3	<div></div>	0.1	27.0	26.8	<div></div>	-0.2	25.0	25.9	<div></div>	0.9
Carnegie HS	30.0	26.0	<div></div>	-4.0	29.4	25.3	<div></div>	-4.1	31.1	27.7	<div></div>	-3.4	28.5	25.4	<div></div>	-3.1
YWCPA	22.6	25.8	<div></div>	3.2	20.0	25.3	<div></div>	5.3	26.2	27.0	<div></div>	0.8	20.5	25.5	<div></div>	5.0
TX Conn. Acad	21.5	25.7	<div></div>	4.2	20.2	23.8	<div></div>	3.6	24.3	26.5	<div></div>	2.2	21.3	24.8	<div></div>	3.5
DeBakey HS	31.1	25.5	<div></div>	-5.6	31.1	24.5	<div></div>	-6.6	31.0	26.1	<div></div>	-4.9	29.9	24.6	<div></div>	-5.3
Westside HS	22.4	24.8	<div></div>	2.4	22.8	24.1	<div></div>	1.3	23.5	26.1	<div></div>	2.6	23.0	25.0	<div></div>	2.0
Heights HS	21.9	24.3	<div></div>	2.4	20.8	22.3	<div></div>	1.5	23.4	26.7	<div></div>	3.3	21.7	24.4	<div></div>	2.7
HS Perf. Vis. Arts	29.7	24.1	<div></div>	-5.6	25.8	22.4	<div></div>	-3.4	30.0	23.9	<div></div>	-6.1	27.3	23.2	<div></div>	-4.1
Waltrip HS	17.7	24.0	<div></div>	6.3	19.0	24.5	<div></div>	5.5	18.3	25.7	<div></div>	7.4	19.6	24.5	<div></div>	4.9
N. Houston ECHS	21.0	23.2	<div></div>	2.2	21.1	26.7	<div></div>	5.6	21.3	24.5	<div></div>	3.2	21.7	25.0	<div></div>	3.3
Westbury HS	14.2	21.6	<div></div>	7.4	15.4	20.8	<div></div>	5.4	17.6	24.5	<div></div>	6.9	18.7	23.5	<div></div>	4.8
Challenge ECHS	25.4	*	<div></div>	*	24.5	*	<div></div>	*	27.3	*	<div></div>	*	25.8	*	<div></div>	*
Chavez HS	19.7	*	<div></div>	*	19.8	*	<div></div>	*	21.8	*	<div></div>	*	20.2	*	<div></div>	*
East ECHS	21.5	*	<div></div>	*	22.6	*	<div></div>	*	22.5	*	<div></div>	*	22.4	*	<div></div>	*
Eastwood Acad	19.1	*	<div></div>	*	22.3	*	<div></div>	*	19.9	*	<div></div>	*	23.1	*	<div></div>	*
Leland YMCPA	21.0	*	<div></div>	*	21.7	*	<div></div>	*	21.6	*	<div></div>	*	21.0	*	<div></div>	*
North Forest HS	13.0	*	<div></div>	*	17.3	*	<div></div>	*	16.4	*	<div></div>	*	16.1	*	<div></div>	*
Scarborough HS	15.2	*	<div></div>	*	18.9	*	<div></div>	*	17.3	*	<div></div>	*	17.9	*	<div></div>	*
Sharpstown Intl	19.2	*	<div></div>	*	21.2	*	<div></div>	*	20.6	*	<div></div>	*	21.3	*	<div></div>	*
Sterling HS	15.3	*	<div></div>	*	16.2	*	<div></div>	*	16.0	*	<div></div>	*	16.9	*	<div></div>	*
Washington HS	15.8	*	<div></div>	*	16.8	*	<div></div>	*	16.9	*	<div></div>	*	16.4	*	<div></div>	*
Wisdom HS	18.9	*	<div></div>	*	20.0	*	<div></div>	*	20.5	*	<div></div>	*	19.8	*	<div></div>	*
Yates HS	17.7	*	<div></div>	*	17.9	*	<div></div>	*	19.3	*	<div></div>	*	17.9	*	<div></div>	*
Jones HS	*	*	<div></div>	*	*	*	<div></div>	*	*	*	<div></div>	*	*	*	<div></div>	*
Austin HS	19.1	--	<div></div>	--	21.7	--	<div></div>	--	20.9	--	<div></div>	--	21.8	--	<div></div>	--
E-STEM Central HS	14.0	--	<div></div>	--	16.4	--	<div></div>	--	17.0	--	<div></div>	--	16.2	--	<div></div>	--
Furr HS	15.5	--	<div></div>	--	16.7	--	<div></div>	--	16.8	--	<div></div>	--	17.0	--	<div></div>	--
Houston MSTC HS	15.8	--	<div></div>	--	16.6	--	<div></div>	--	17.6	--	<div></div>	--	17.5	--	<div></div>	--
HS for Law and Justice	18.6	--	<div></div>	--	17.8	--	<div></div>	--	21.5	--	<div></div>	--	19.6	--	<div></div>	--
Long Acad	17.6	--	<div></div>	--	20.3	--	<div></div>	--	17.6	--	<div></div>	--	19.1	--	<div></div>	--
Madison HS	14.7	--	<div></div>	--	16.3	--	<div></div>	--	16.6	--	<div></div>	--	17.1	--	<div></div>	--
Milby HS	17.9	--	<div></div>	--	18.2	--	<div></div>	--	21.2	--	<div></div>	--	18.3	--	<div></div>	--
Mount Carmel Acad	18.3	--	<div></div>	--	19.3	--	<div></div>	--	18.3	--	<div></div>	--	19.1	--	<div></div>	--
Sharpstown HS	17.6	--	<div></div>	--	19.8	--	<div></div>	--	18.5	--	<div></div>	--	19.7	--	<div></div>	--
Wheatley HS	13.9	--	<div></div>	--	15.4	--	<div></div>	--	15.7	--	<div></div>	--	16.1	--	<div></div>	--
E-STEM West HS	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--
Kashmere HS	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--
Mid Coll - Fraga	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--
Northside HS	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--
Worthing HS	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--	*	--	<div></div>	--
Liberty HS	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--
Mid Coll - Gulfon	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--
Rogerhs T H	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--	--	--	<div></div>	--

Sources: ACT datafile, 2019 and 2021

Notes: *Fewer than 5 students tested; --No students tested

Conclusion

Between 2012 and 2021, the number of HISD students who have taken the ACT has declined, with a greater decline starting in 2020 because of COVID-19. While participation rates are decreasing, performance on the ACT by students in HISD has improved and exceeds state and national averages for composite averages, as well as for all four content areas tested by the ACT exam. The composite average for the district increased from 22.3 in 2018 to 25.7 in 2021 while the state and national averages have slightly decreased. Similar trends hold true for each of the four subject areas, with most state and national averages showing decreases.

Student groups also showed similar increases over both the state and national averages for each race/ethnicity. African American graduating seniors in HISD scored 3.4 points higher than African American graduating seniors statewide, and Hispanic graduating seniors in HISD scored 5.9 points higher than Hispanic graduating seniors statewide. Still, students who are Asian, White, and Two or More Races tend to score higher than African American and Hispanic students.

The percentage of students meeting college-ready benchmarks in all four content areas for the district has increased from 34 percent in 2018 to 55 percent in 2021. In fact, the percentage of district students meeting the college-ready benchmarks is higher than those statewide and nationwide in each of the four subject areas.

When looking across the district at individual campuses, performance varies markedly, with average composite scores ranging from 18.5 to 30.5, and with the percentage of students who met all four college-ready benchmarks ranging from 12.5 to 86.7 percent. While 13 campuses matched or exceeded the ACT composite state average of 20.3, 2 campuses did not.

Given the low ACT participation rate for HISD students, furthered by the impact of COVID-19, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding district and campus performance from these results. The relatively high average scores and percentages of students meeting CR benchmarks at some campuses, however, indicates pockets of success. There is still work to be done to help all our students become college-ready high school graduates.