ACT TEST SCORES ARE RISING.

THE FACTS

In 1998, the national average composite score on the ACT college entrance examination remained the same as in 1997, continuing a trend in recent years of the score increasing or staying level. These results occur at a time when record numbers of students are taking the exam — a factor which would normally cause scores to drop. ACT concludes that the additional students taking the exam must be at least as well prepared as those students tested previously.

Caution: College entrance exams, such as the ACT and SAT, are only designed to be predictors of college success. Therefore, they should not be unduly relied on as sole indicators of how well American schools and students are doing. Further, since students choose to take these tests, the results are not based on a representative sample.

NEXT STEPS

Although most minority students made modest gains in performance on one or more of the ACT tests (English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning), a gap persists between the scores of White and Asian students and their Black and Hispanic counterparts. States and school districts need to ensure that all students are adequately prepared to pursue postsecondary education or to enter the world of work.
REALITY CHECK

Many people believe the public schools are failing. Public schools must become better, but there have been major improvements in public education since the early 1980’s which are being ignored. In the current atmosphere, the negative is being emphasized and the positive pushed aside. These one-page policy briefs are meant to show the improvements that have occurred in public education while urging persistent efforts to bring a better education to more students.

Did you know?

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