

## ACT Scores 1994-2014 Mississippi and the Nation

Change in ACT Scores and Percent of Grads Tested					
A 20-Year Look					
		Mississippi		Nation	
		Percent of Grads Tested	Composite Score	Percent of Grads Tested	Composite Score
<b>1994</b>		73	18.7	36	20.8
<b>2014</b>		100	19.0	57	21.0

*Source: ACT, Inc.*

Too few Mississippi graduates achieve ACT scores that indicate college and career readiness. However, when all factors are considered, it is evident that **Mississippi students are making progress** at a faster rate than the rest of the nation and against significant odds.

In 1994, according to data from ACT, Inc., 73 percent of Mississippi students participated in the ACT assessment. It is generally accepted that ACT test-takers are typically college-bound and are more likely to be academically inclined than those who do not take the ACT.

In 2014, ACT, Inc. reports that 100% of Mississippi students participated in the ACT. While this figure is likely slightly inflated, this is the data from the national ACT organization, and represents an apples-to-apples comparison with the rest of the nation and with Mississippi's reported percent of test-takers in 1994. Because the ACT uses the same methodology to calculate the percentage of test takers in every state, this is the best data available.

One would assume that adding in the bottom quartile of Mississippi students would lower the state's average ACT score. Instead, Mississippi's average ACT score improved slightly. That means that Mississippi students as a whole are making progress in achievement as measured by the ACT.

Also noteworthy is that Mississippi has a significantly larger portion of its students taking the ACT than does the rest of the nation. One would expect Mississippi's average score to be lower if all the state's students' scores are compared to the college-bound, top-performing 57% in the nation. It should also be noted that Mississippi has the highest poverty rate in the country. Research has shown consistently that poverty presents the single biggest obstacle to student achievement.