

Arkadelphia Schools score high on ACT scores

SPECIAL TO THE SIFTINGS

Four years ago, Arkadelphia High School was the first school in the state to offer ACT testing to all 11th grade students at no charge to families. The ACT assesses students' levels of college readiness in four academic areas: English, mathematics, reading and science. It is generally used as a college entrance exam and often determines what courses a student will take upon entering college.

The purpose of assessing all juniors is to use the information to better prepare students for post-secondary studies or a career during their senior year of high school.

Not only are more students taking the ACT at Arkadelphia High School, but also scores are at an all-time high and surpassed the state average. The average composite ACT score for Arkadelphia High School students in 2009 is 20.9, compared to 20.6 for the state average. In 2005, Arkadelphia students lagged behind the state average of 20.3 with an average composite score of 19.4 on the ACT.

Also, a higher percentage of 2009 Arkadelphia High School students are fully prepared for college. Twenty-five percent of AHS students met the college readiness benchmark in all four academic areas assessed by the ACT; only 18 percent of the state's students met all benchmarks.

The Arkadelphia Public School District is committed to raising ACT scores and participates in the Arkadelphia College Preparatory Academy. The pilot program started in April 2009 with 40 ninth grade students from Arkadelphia

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High School. This year the academy is expanding to serve 88 ninth and 10th grade students from Arkadelphia and surrounding school districts. The mission of the academy is to enhance educational opportunities for students and prepare them for college or a career.

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