

Wiggins encourages all students to take ACT

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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15-YEAR GOTHENBURG HIGH ACT RESULTS

Year	No. students	Core/less*	English	Math	Reading	Science	GHS composite	State
1995-96	40	15/25	18.6	19	19.3	20.8	19.6	21.4
1996-97	50	35/15	21	22.9	22.5	22.5	22.3	21.7
1997-98	39	22/17	19.8	20.5	19.6	21.3	20.5	21.9
1998-99	26	24/2	22.3	22.9	22	22.3	22.3	21.7
1999-2000	58	43/14	19.3	20.1	20.1	21.1	20.3	21.7
5-year avg.	44.6		20.2	20.9	20.6	21.6	21	21.66
2000-01	37	30/7	21.1	21.5	21.6	22.4	21.8	21.6
2001-02	46	40/6	21.9	22	22.9	23.2	22.5	21.7
2002-03	44	38/6	20.3	20.7	20.1	20.7	20.7	21.7
2003-04	45	42/3	20.5	20.7	20.1	20.7	20.7	21.7
2004-05	44	35/9	21.9	22.5	22.9	23.1	22.7	21.9
5-year avg.	43.2		21.2	21.5	21.7	22.2	21.7	21.7
2005-06	48	33/12	21.2	22.2	22.2	21.9	22	21.9
2006-07	40	30/10	19.6	19.9	20.4	21.3	20.5	22.1
2007-08	45	38/7	21.9	21.2	21.9	21.6	21.6	22.1
2008-09	45	38/8	21.9	20.9	22.4	22	22	22.1
2009-10	42	40/2	21	21.1	21	21.1	21.1	21.1
State avg.	43		21.2	21.1	21.4	21.4	21.1	21.1
ACT	44		21.2	21.1	21.4	21.4	21.1	21.1

*Denotes the number of students who take the suggested number of core academic classes in English, math, reading and science compared to those who did not.

Skills needed to compete in today's workforce.

A high school diploma isn't enough for upward mobility in today's workforce.

That's why Gothenburg High School guidance counselor Jerry Wiggins thinks all students can benefit from taking the ACT—a national college admissions exam.

"It's how you develop a skill set," Wiggins said.

And it doesn't have to be a four-year college.

In fact, Wiggins has noticed a trend in recent years where many graduates have gone to two-year colleges.

"A lot of it is economics," Wiggins said about lower tuition rates compared to four-year colleges.

He noted that the ACT is not an intelligence test but only a measure of a student's ability to complete college courses.

"It's a college readiness exam," Wiggins explained.

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By scoring high enough on the ACT, he said students can qualify for tuition waivers and scholarships.

Merit-based scholarships are based on high ACT scores in addition to class rank and grade-point average, Wiggins said.

GHS students who took the ACT in 2011 scored a shade above the national average.

The local composite score was 21.4 compared to 21.1 nationally.

“Overall, it’s a pretty strong score,” Wiggins said.

On average, throughout the state, the score was 22.1 as it has been for the past six years.

Wiggins said he examines long-term trends for ACT takers so he can see strengths and weaknesses students may have in the areas tested that include English, math, reading and science.

Each year, the ACT is offered in the area in September, October, December, February, April and June for \$34.

Most students take the test several times since their best score is what they can use on college applications. Wiggins said ACT officials have decided that the exam can be taken only up to 12 times.

At GHS, preparation for the ACT is taught twice a year two weeks prior to the test for juniors and seniors. This year, officials are adding a preparatory class in October for ACT takers.

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Some colleges, such as Mid-Plains Community College, offer one-day workshops.

Wiggins noted that ACT also offers on-line programs with sample test questions.

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