



# SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ACT Cohort Updates 2024

### Graduating Class Cohort Trends and Updates

The ACT contains four multiple-choice tests: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. The ACT is designed to measure academic skills deemed most important for success in post-secondary education. This report provides the latest background information on ACT data usage and scoring, followed by recent trends in Shawnee Mission School District student participation and performance.

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### About the ACT

The ACT contains four multiple-choice tests: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Students may also take an optional writing test. The ACT is designed to measure academic skills deemed most important for success in post-secondary education. The score range for each of the four tests as well as a Composite score is 1-36. The Composite score is the average of the four test scores, rounded to the nearest whole number. The table below shows two examples of the Composite score calculation.

**Table 1: Composite Score Calculation Examples**

	Example 1	Example 2
English	20	20
Mathematics	22	22
Reading	21	20
Science	30	28
--Average--	23.25	22.50
Composite Score	23	23

### College Readiness Indicators<sup>1</sup>

The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are the minimum ACT scores needed for students to have a reasonable chance of success in a first-year credit-bearing college course. Each Benchmark is linked to success in a different college course or set of courses. The screenshot below shows the ACT subject area, the associated college courses, and the Benchmark identified. For example, students with an ACT English score of 18 or higher are 'on track' to earn an A or B in a typical freshman level college English Composition I course.

**Table 2: ACT College Readiness Benchmarks**

ACT test score	College courses	Benchmark
English	English Composition I	18
Mathematics	College Algebra	22
Reading	American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics	22
Science	Biology	23
STEM <sup>1</sup>	Calculus, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Engineering	26
ELA <sup>2</sup>	English Composition I, American History, Other History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics	20


<sup>1</sup> <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/pdfs/R1670-college-readiness-benchmarks-2017-11.pdf>

### **Qualified Admissions<sup>2</sup>**

Minimum ACT scores are among the criteria listed by the state universities in Kansas for determining freshman-year admissions. The screenshot below shows the qualified admissions criteria beginning with high school graduates from the class of 2021. In Kansas, the ACT Composite threshold is 21.

One notable change from prior years is that ACT scores are now **optional** for admissions to many colleges and universities, including institutions within and outside of Kansas. Prospective students need to review each school's admission criteria carefully. ACT or SAT scores *may* still be required under certain conditions.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Exhibit 1: Qualified Admissions Snapshot**



## Qualified Admissions

The six state universities in Kansas--Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, Pittsburg State University, The University of Kansas, and Wichita State University--use the standards below, set by the Kansas Board of Regents, to review applicants for undergraduate admission.

**ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOL**

Freshman applicants, aged 21 & younger, who graduate from an accredited high school, will be guaranteed admission to six state universities by meeting the Qualified Admissions requirements designated by each university, as follows:

**ESU, PSU, FHSU, & WSU:**

- Cumulative High School GPA 2.25+ or ACT 21+ (SAT 1060)\*

**K-State:**

- Cumulative High School GPA 3.25+ or ACT 21+ (SAT 1060)\*

**KU:**

- Cumulative High School GPA 3.25+  
**OR** Cumulative GPA 2.0+ and ACT 21+ (SAT 1060)\*

**ALL Institutions Require:**

- Cumulative GPA 2.0+ for College Credits earned in High School

**KANSAS SCHOLARS CURRICULUM IS RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED:** To best prepare for the rigor of college-level courses, the Kansas Scholars curriculum is recommended.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.kansasregents.org/academic\\_affairs/qualified\\_admissions](https://www.kansasregents.org/academic_affairs/qualified_admissions)

<sup>3</sup> <https://thecollegecurators.com/test-optional-colleges-for-2022-2023/>  
<https://money.com/test-optional-policies-changing-college-admissions/>  
<https://www.collegedata.com/resources/prepare-and-apply/what-is-a-test-optional-college>

### ***Kansas Funded ACT and Test-Taking Patterns***

In 2018-2019, the Kansas legislature passed a bill that allocated funds to offer the ACT to all high school juniors in Kansas. This testing opportunity is now offered around March 1 of each school year. This action resulted in a substantial increase in ACT participation statewide, beginning with the graduating class of 2020. The Shawnee Mission School District saw a 10% increase in student ACT participation. The change also marks a shift in how and whether students plan for the ACT.

Results from the Class of 2020, Class of 2021, and Class of 2022 are unique, not only because of the state-funded opportunity to participate in the ACT. They are also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, whose beginning can be noted by the closing of school facilities in March of 2020. Historically, at least half of all Shawnee Mission School District graduates who have an ACT score take the test more than once. Their last test is often taken in the summer or fall of the senior year. Students in the Class of 2021 were able to participate in the state-funded opportunity in the spring of 2020, but many students were unable to take an ACT after that with test centers canceling Saturday testing nation-wide. The tables below illustrate some recent trends in ACT participation. (1) Fewer students are taking the ACT more than once. And (2) when students do take the ACT more than once, their last test event occurs after the state-funded testing day.

***Table 3: ACT Test-Taking by Last Test Event***

	<i>One ACT Score</i>		<i>Two ACT Scores</i>		<i>Three or More</i>	
	N	% of students with LAST score being state funded	N	% of students with LAST score being state funded	N	% of students with LAST score being state funded
2019	466	18%	405	1%	406	0%
2020*	612	75%	410	15%	405	6%
2021*	878	91%	343	29%	225	10%
2022*	883	91%	278	8%	168	2%
2023*	843	92%	288	22%	159	16%
2024*	660	92%	255	22%	280	9%

\* Cohorts that could participate in the state-funded ACT opportunity begin with the class of 2020.



With the Class of 2019, nearly two-thirds (64%) of all ACT participants completed the ACT more than once. Since then, fewer students are taking the test multiple times. With the class of 2023, the number of students taking the ACT more than once has reduced to 35%. This has somewhat rebounded to 45% with the class of 2024.

**Table 4: ACT Test-Taking Frequencies**

Graduation Cohort	N	Average Number of ACT Tests Taken	Std Dev of Frequency	Once ACT Score	More than One ACT Score
2019	1277	2.12	1.14	36%	64%
2020*	1429	1.98	1.09	43%	57%
2021*	1448	1.61	0.93	61%	39%
2022*	1348	1.60	0.89	60%	40%
2023*	1289	1.51	0.84	65%	35%
2024*	1195	1.85	1.24	55%	45%

\* Cohorts that could participate in the state-funded ACT opportunity begin with the class of 2020.

Not only has test taking frequency changed, the timing of each student's last ACT has changed as well. With the Class of 2019, more than half of all ACT participants completed their last ACT during their senior year (38.2% in September or October, 12.2% in December, and so on). With the class of 2023, less than a quarter of all ACT participants completed their last ACT during their senior year. In fact, 67% completed their last (and perhaps only) ACT in February or March of their junior year – nearly 6 months earlier than their Class of 2019 counterparts. Again, the pattern has partially rebounded to just over 30% with the class of 2024.

**Table 5: ACT Test-Taking Patterns by Month and Cohort**

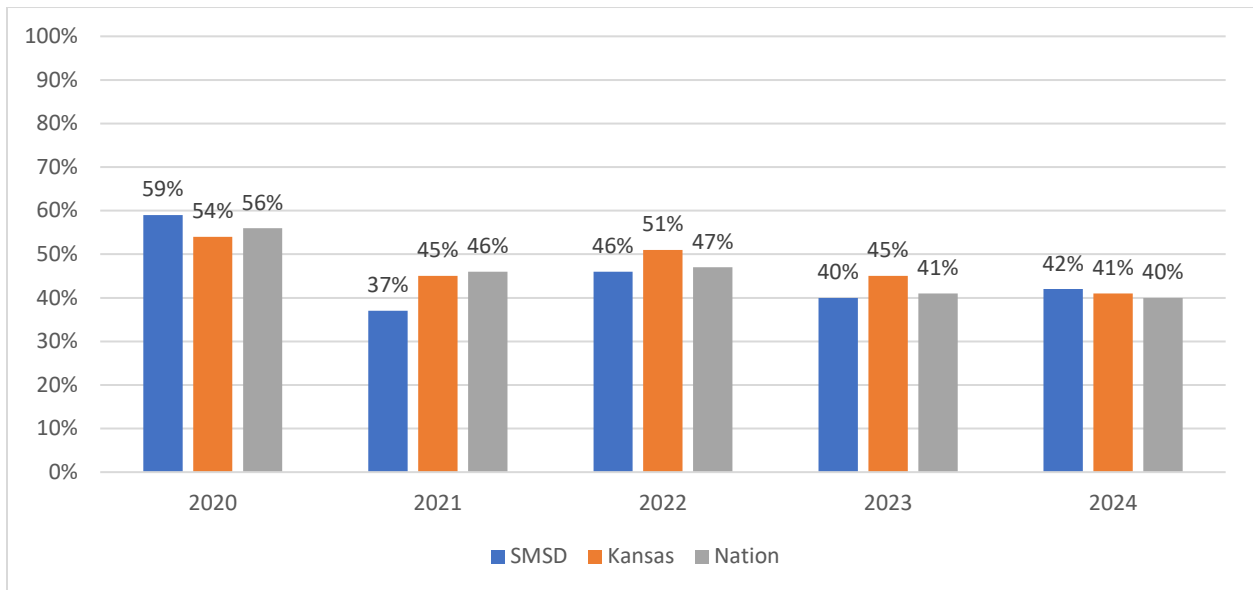
Class of ...	Grade 10	Grade 11					Grade 12				After Graduation
		Sept/Oct	Dec	Feb/Mar	April	June/July	Sept/Oct	Dec	Feb/Mar	April	
2019	0.0%	1.3%	1.0%	3.9%	8.4%	16.5%	38.2%	12.2%	7.5%	8.0%	2.0%
2020*	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	3.9%	38.9%	9.5%	30.7%	12.6%	2.7%	0.0%	1.0%
2021*	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	64.9%	0.0%	3.7%	16.9%	5.7%	5.2%	2.3%	0.8%
2022*	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	58.8%	4.7%	8.0%	18.5%	5.5%	1.8%	1.4%	0.7%
2023*	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	67.0%	1.6%	6.5%	15.5%	4.5%	1.8%	1.6%	0.6%
2024*	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	55.3%	1.8%	9.3%	20.6%	8.3%	2.4%	1.3%	0.3%

\* Cohorts that could participate in the state-funded ACT opportunity begin with the class of 2020.

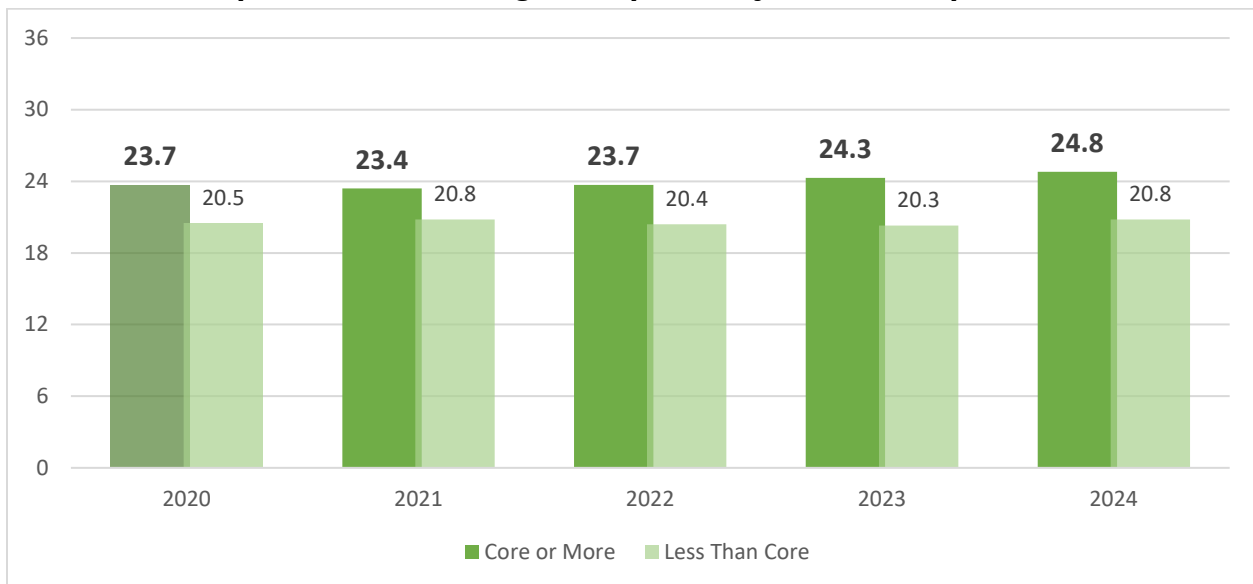
### ACT Scores and Course Consumption

Students completing the ACT also voluntarily provide additional information, which includes high school course consumption at that moment in time. ACT then provides statistics by whether students have completed courses associated with preparation for college. "Core or More" results correspond to students taking four or more years of English AND three or more years each of math, social studies, and natural science. These results highlight a strong correlation between course consumption and ACT performance. This also illustrates how a decline in scores coincides with more students taking the ACT before they have had a chance to complete (or begin) four years of English and at least three years of math, social studies, and science.

**Graph 1: Percent of Students Self-Reporting Completion of Core or More**



**Graph 2: SMSD Average Composite by Course Preparation**



### Cohort Reporting and Super Scoring

For more than twenty years, ACT has provided Profile reports to high schools, school districts, and states. Since students may take the ACT more than once, ACT has had to establish business rules that ensure that only one score is counted in the Profile report calculations. ACT has consistently used each student's last test event for the Profile report, which may not necessarily be a student's best score. Similarly, the cohort reports have relied on students self-reporting their profile characteristics. For example, students self-report their attending high school, graduation cohort year, and race/ethnicity. School officials do not have an opportunity to validate this data. Student self-reporting errors are common, but they are typically not significant for large group sizes. For example, Shawnee Mission School District students who report the wrong graduation year may affect a school's average score by as much as a tenth of a point. However, incorrect self-reporting in a small racial/ethnic group may affect the group's average by several points.

Many colleges and universities utilize a calculation known as super scoring. With super scoring, the Composite score is recalculated using the highest subject score from each of the student's ACT tests. The table below shows an example of how super scoring works. In the example, a student takes the ACT three times and earns a Composite score of 23 each time. However, after super scoring, the recalculated Composite score is 25. College admissions offices often encourage students to send all test score events because of this feature.

**Table 6: ACT Super-Scoring Example**

	ACT Test 1	ACT Test 2	ACT Test 3	Super Score (Highest)
English	22	21	19	22
Mathematics	19	20	23	23
Reading	25	26	23	26
Science	25	26	27	27
--Average--	22.75	23.25	23.00	24.50
Composite Score	23	23	23	25

### ACT Enhancements 2025

Beginning in April 2025, ACT will phase in the following list of enhancements. Each of these enhancements is intended to expand ACT's online testing opportunities, advance their quality assessment practices, provide more time per test item while also reducing total testing time, and provide more choices to students.

- More time per item: By reducing the total number of items, students will have more time to respond to each individual item. Average expected duration will increase to approximately 10 seconds per item.
- Eliminate 5<sup>th</sup> section from national testing: Historically, students taking the ACT on a national test date had to participate in a 5<sup>th</sup> section, which consisted of field test items. This section will be removed, and field test items embedded into their respective sections.
- Total testing time reduced: The total time required to complete the components required to receive a composite score will be reduced from 175 minutes (or more) to 125 minutes.
- Optional Science: Beginning in 2025, the science section will be optional.
  - o Consequently, only the English, Math, and Reading sections will generate a Composite score. Like Writing, the Science section will no longer influence the Composite score regardless of whether the student chooses to take Science.
  - o Students requiring a STEM score must complete Science (STEM is the average of the Math and Science sections of the ACT)



ACT Current State			ACT Enhanced State		
English	75 items	45 min	English	50 items (10 Field Test)	35 min
Math	60 items	60 min	Math	45 items (4 Field Test)	50 min
Reading	40 items	35 min	Reading	36 items (9 Field Test)	40 min
Science	40 items	35 min	Science	40 items (6 Field Test)	40 min
5 <sup>th</sup> Test* (Field Test)	12-28 items	20 min	5 <sup>th</sup> Test	Eliminated for all	
Writing	1 item	40 min	Writing	1 item	40 min
	National	195 min	Scores Received	Composite	125 min
	-with Writing	235 min		-with Science <u>or</u> Writing	165 min
	State & District	175 min		-with Science <u>and</u> Writing	205 min
	-with Writing	215 min			

ACT Enhancement Goals

Provide more time per item

Reduce Overall Length

Modernize

Maintain Score Scale and Reporting

\* State & District students do not receive 5<sup>th</sup> test

Total items include the field test (below in parenthesis)  
Study results may result in adjustment to times

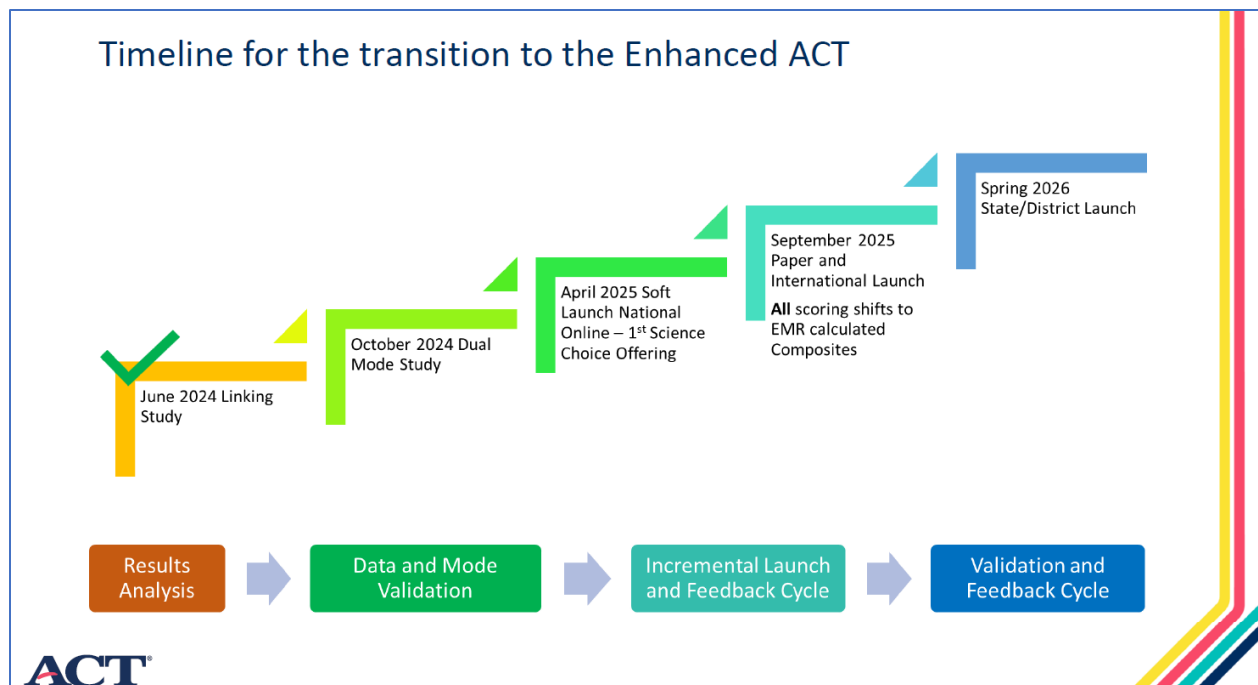
## Key Enhancements: Estimated Time Per Item

Subject	Current (seconds/item)	Enhanced (seconds/item)	Est. Increase in seconds/item
English	36	42	6 (17%)
Math	60	67	7 (11%)
Reading	53	67	14 (27%)
Science	53	60	7.5 (15%)

Important Note: The enhanced ACT blueprint remains a linear assessment and is not a computer adaptive test. A student's max score potential is not routed into "tracks" based on their performance on initial section questions.







The latest updates and details can be found on the ACT website:

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-changes/enhancements.html>

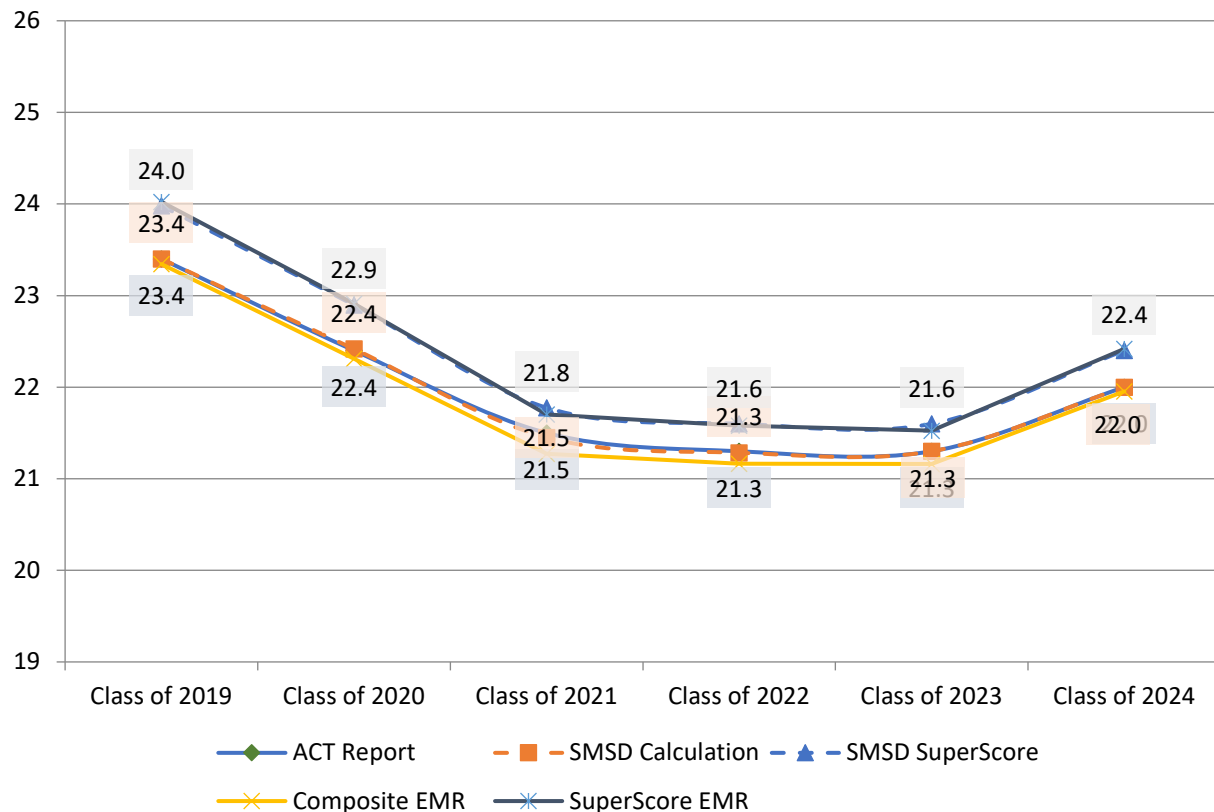
The following table contains a comparison of ACT Composite scores from five different calculations:

- (1) The ACT Profile reports provided by ACT.
- (2) The SMSD Assessment Office calculation, using each student's last ACT test event.
- (3) The SMSD Assessment Office calculation after super scoring each student.
- (4) The SMSD Assessment Office calculation, using each student's last ACT test event, but only using English, Math, and Reading to calculate the Composite score (Composite EMR).
- (5) The SMSD Assessment Office calculation after super scoring each student, but only using English, Math, and Reading to calculate the Composite score (SuperScore EMR).

The SMSD Assessment Office calculation using each student's last ACT test event is nearly identical to the ACT Profile calculations. Removal of Science from the Composite calculations are also nearly identical. Differences that do not appear in the graph include minor variances in the number of students in the data sets and average scores that vary by less than one tenth of one point.

ACT averages that result from super scoring are as much as 0.5 points higher than the calculations that utilize the last ACT score. The gap is smaller in more recent years because fewer students took the ACT more than once. And again, calculating the composite score by excluding Science also has no discernable impact on super scoring calculations.

**Graph 3: ACT Average Composite Score – Last Score vs Super Score**



**Table 7: ACT Average Scores for the District, State, Nation, and Schools**

Group	Class of ...	% Of Grad Class (# of Students)	English	Math	Reading	Science Reasoning	Composite
Shawnee Mission School District	2020	~80% (1,447)	21.9	21.6	23.3	22.2	22.4
	2021	~80% (1,444)	20.8	20.8	22.3	21.5	21.5
	2022	1,354	20.7 (20.9)	20.5 (20.8)	22.1 (22.6)	21.4 (21.8)	21.3 (21.5)
	2023	74% (1,290)	20.6 (20.9)	20.5 (20.8)	22.3 (22.8)	21.3 (21.7)	21.3 (21.5)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>65% (1,101)</b>	<b>21.5 (21.9)</b>	<b>21.0 (21.4)</b>	<b>23.3 (24.0)</b>	<b>21.8 (22.3)</b>	<b>22.0 (22.4)</b>
Kansas	2020	82% (29,040)	19.5	20.0	21.0	20.4	20.4
	2021	79% (29,284)	18.9	19.5	20.6	20.2	19.9
	2022	73% (26,885)	18.9	19.4	20.6	20.1	19.9
	2023	74% (27,470)	18.3	18.9	20.1	19.7	19.4
	<b>2024</b>	<b>(27,064)</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>19.3</b>
Nation	2020	(1.7 million)	19.9	20.2	21.2	20.6	20.6
	2021	(1.3 million)	19.6	19.9	20.9	20.4	20.3
	2022	36% (1.3 million)	19.0	19.3	20.4	19.9	19.8
	2023	(1.4 million)	18.6	19.0	20.1	19.6	19.5
	<b>2024</b>	<b>(1.4 million)</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>19.4</b>
SM East	2020	89% (370)	25.2	23.8	26.1	24.3	25.0
	2021	394	23.8	22.9	24.8	23.4	23.9
	2022	365	23.4 (23.5)	22.7 (22.9)	24.3 (24.9)	23.2 (23.7)	23.5 (23.8)
	2023	93% (381)	22.7 (23.1)	21.9 (22.3)	24.1 (24.8)	22.7 (23.2)	22.9 (23.3)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>95% (323)</b>	<b>23.5 (24.0)</b>	<b>22.6 (23.0)</b>	<b>24.9 (25.7)</b>	<b>23.3 (24.0)</b>	<b>23.7 (24.1)</b>
SM North	2020	79% (254)	18.8	19.6	21.1	20.1	20.1
	2021	212	18.3	19.0	20.3	19.7	19.4
	2022	177	18.7 (18.8)	18.8 (18.9)	20.3 (20.8)	19.7 (20.0)	19.5 (19.6)
	2023	43% (148)	19.0 (19.3)	18.8 (19.2)	21.6 (22.2)	20.4 (20.8)	20.1 (20.9)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>44% (146)</b>	<b>18.5 (18.8)</b>	<b>18.5 (18.7)</b>	<b>20.7 (21.0)</b>	<b>19.3 (19.6)</b>	<b>19.4 (19.6)</b>
SM Northwest	2020	78% (285)	20.9	21.0	22.2	21.5	21.6
	2021	251	20.7	21.1	22.6	22.0	21.7
	2022	255	20.9 (21.1)	20.8 (21.0)	22.3 (22.7)	21.5 (21.8)	21.5 (21.7)
	2023	65% (229)	21.0 (21.2)	21.0 (21.2)	22.5 (23.0)	21.8 (22.1)	21.7 (21.9)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>62% (224)</b>	<b>20.3 (20.8)</b>	<b>20.8 (21.1)</b>	<b>22.8 (23.5)</b>	<b>21.2 (21.8)</b>	<b>21.4 (21.8)</b>
SM South	2020	79% (275)	22.4	22.3	23.7	22.8	22.9
	2021	251	22.0	21.6	22.9	22.2	22.3
	2022	259	21.3 (21.9)	20.6 (21.0)	22.3 (23.0)	21.4 (22.0)	21.5 (22.0)
	2023	83% (259)	21.4 (21.7)	20.7 (21.0)	22.6 (23.1)	21.3 (21.7)	21.6 (21.9)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>67% (229)</b>	<b>22.6 (23.0)</b>	<b>21.3 (21.6)</b>	<b>23.6 (24.3)</b>	<b>22.5 (22.9)</b>	<b>22.6 (23.0)</b>
SM West	2020	71% (249)	21.0	20.7	22.5	21.7	21.6
	2021	319	18.1	18.9	19.9	19.5	19.2
	2022	293	18.0 (18.1)	18.8 (18.9)	20.1 (20.2)	20.1 (20.2)	19.3 (19.4)
	2023	76% (257)	18.1 (18.2)	19.1 (19.3)	20.2 (20.5)	19.9 (20.1)	19.5 (19.6)
	<b>2024</b>	<b>47% (168)</b>	<b>20.6 (21.0)</b>	<b>20.1 (20.7)</b>	<b>22.9 (23.6)</b>	<b>21.1 (21.6)</b>	<b>21.3 (21.7)</b>

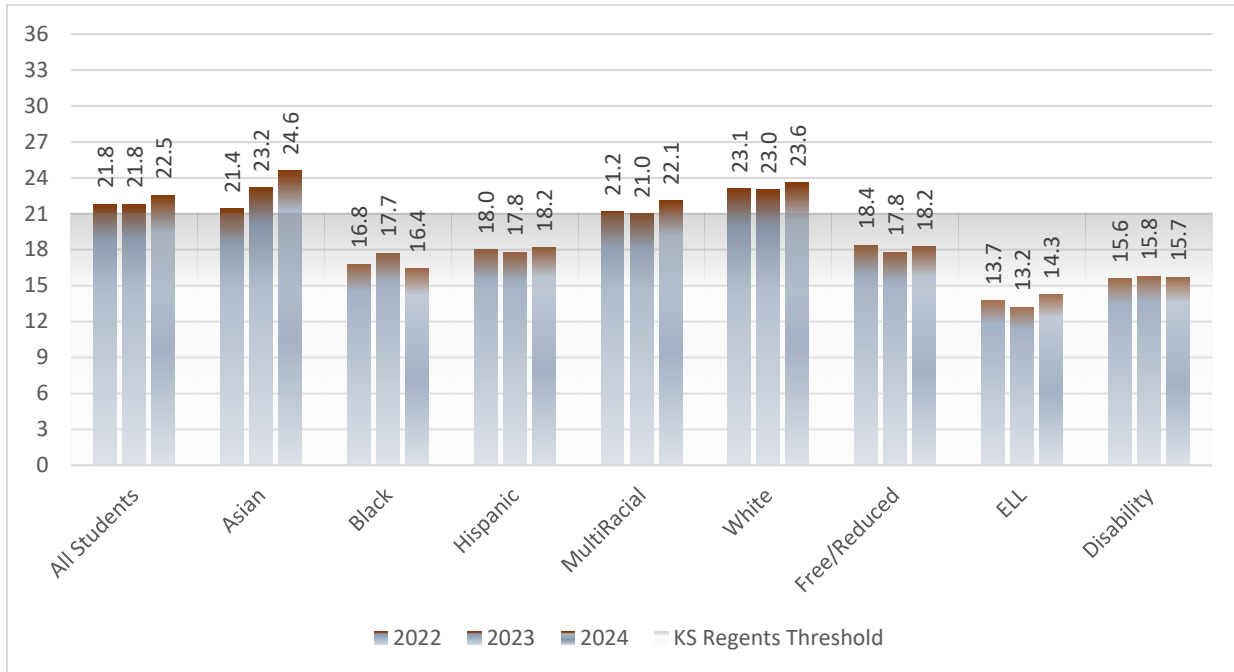
- The ACT score is on a scale of 1-36. The percentage of graduates tested is approximate.

- When a student takes the ACT more than once, ACT uses the most recent score in entity averages. Scores in parentheses are average scores after super scoring.

- Averages are based on cohort graduation years. Students self-report their graduation year and their home high school each time they register for an exam.

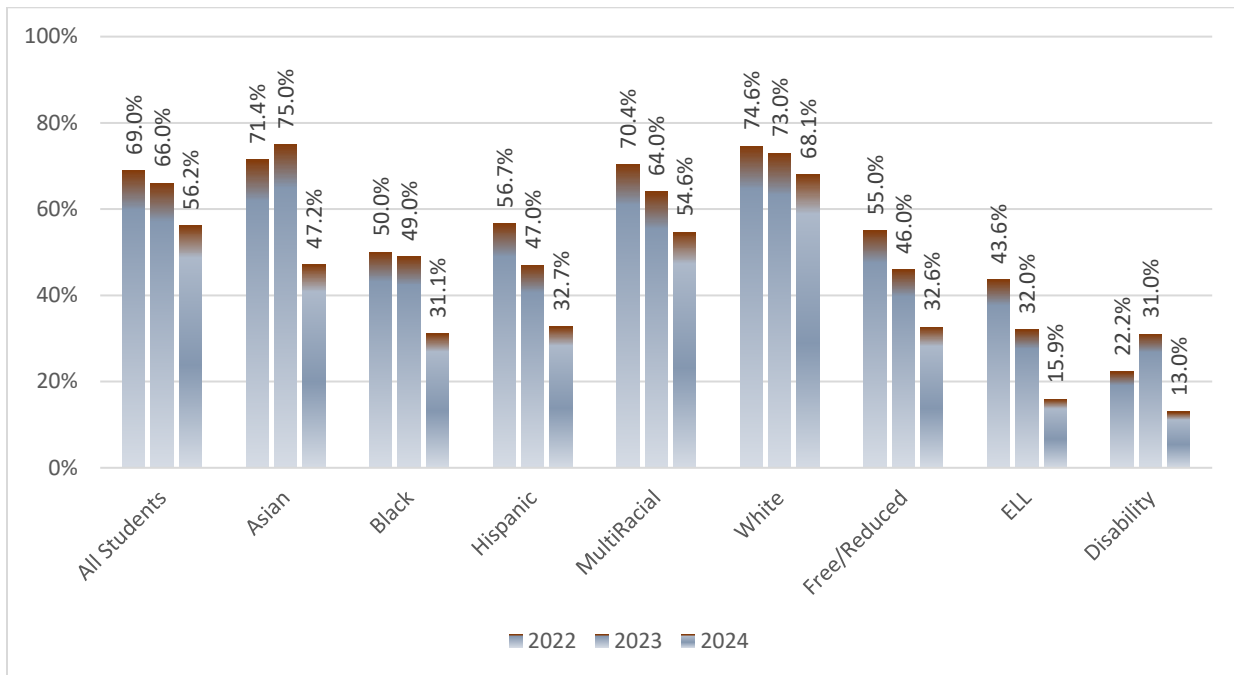


**Graph 4: ACT Average Composite by Student Group (Super Scores)**



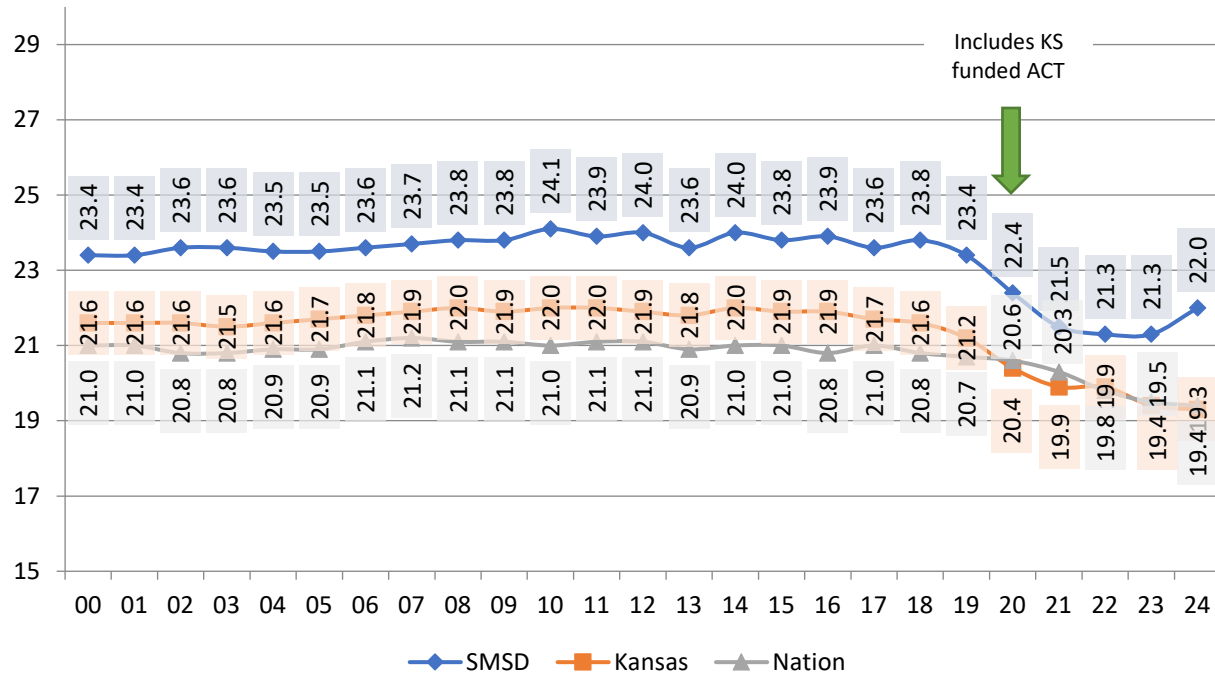
- Student group identifiers are from snapshots of active 12<sup>th</sup> grade students taken on April 20 of each school year. Averages in this chart may be slightly different from the previous table because it is based on enrolled students. Results shown in the prior table are based on student self-reported graduation year and may also include students who were not enrolled in April.

**Graph 5: ACT Participation by Student Group**



- Student group identifiers are from snapshots of active 12<sup>th</sup> grade students taken on April 20 of each school year. Participation rates are approximate.

**Graph 6: ACT Composite Score – Longitudinal Trends**



**Graph 7: ACT Composite Score – Longitudinal Trends (Magnified)**

