

# 2006 Condition of Education

Over the past four years Governor Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly have provided more than \$3.8 billion in new dollars to Illinois schools. This historic support has expanded access to high-quality preschool for at-risk three and four year olds, and raised the foundation funding level for each Illinois student more than 5.8 percent each year. In addition, these resources have supported pilot programs in class size reduction, technology immersion and teacher induction and mentoring along with programs focused on teacher recruitment, principal mentoring, arts and foreign language learning, and agricultural education.

## Learning Outcomes

ACT results for Illinois' graduating class of 2006 reflect the largest increase in student test scores in the last five years, with the average composite score rising from 20.3 in 2005 to 20.5 in 2006. The increase of .20 is a tremendous achievement, particularly in a state with a population of Illinois, in which all students take the ACT.

This continues the positive upward trend in Illinois, where the average composite score was 20.1 in 2002. Composite average scores for all racial/ethnic groups increased in the 2006 results. Illinois is one of only two states where all students take the ACT exam.

The test results point to the importance of encouraging all Illinois high school students to take a rigorous high school curriculum that is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards. The 41 percent of Illinois' test takers who reported that they took core college prep curriculum, scored a composite 22.6 – the highest score since all Illinois public school 11th graders starting taking the test in 2001. The national composite is 22.0.

More than 137,000 student results from the class of 2006 are reflected in the report, including all Illinois public school students. The results released by ACT are for all Illinois 11th graders taking the exam during the 2004-2005 school year, as well as students who took the ACT at an ACT test site.

Although the ACT assessment is designed for students who plan to attend college, Illinois has given the test to all high school juniors since 2001. Colorado is the only other state that administers the ACT for all students. Other Illinois facts from the results include:

- The number of students taking the test is up from 135,967 to 137,399.
- The Reading composite score is 20.6.
- 33 Illinois students scored a perfect 36.
- African-American average composite score was 16.9 (up 0.1).
- Hispanic average composite score was 17.7 (up 0.2).
- The American Indian/Alaskan native average composite score was 17.6 (up 0.3).
- Health Science and Allied Health careers received the highest number of interested students with 15,113 expressing interest in this field.