



Contact: Charlene Briner 651-582-1145

## **Minnesota Students Lead the Nation in ACT Scores**

*Continued gains in college readiness reflected in Class of 2011*

**Roseville, MN** – Minnesota students continued their strong performance on the ACT exam, according to a report released today. 36 percent of Minnesota ACT-tested 2011 high school graduates met or surpassed all four of ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks in English, math, reading, and science. This figure has been gradually growing over the past five years, up from 31 percent in 2007.

Additionally, Minnesota college readiness levels are significantly higher than the national averages in each subject area and overall. These results are even more encouraging given the larger percentage of Minnesota graduates who took the ACT—72 percent, compared to 49 percent of all graduates nationally.

Nevertheless, a sizable number—15 percent—of Minnesota's ACT-tested graduates met none of the four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, and another 13 percent met only one benchmark.

With the release of today's results, Commissioner Brenda Cassellius issued the following statement:

"I couldn't be more pleased with the strong performance of Minnesota's high school students on this year's ACT exam. Our students not continue to make gains in college readiness standards, but more students than ever are taking the exams.

Now we must turn our attention to making sure every student has opportunity and access to these assessments which measure their readiness for college and career. Given the fact that low-income students are given the opportunity to take the exams at no cost – not once, but twice during their high school career – it is unacceptable that we don't have 100 percent participation among our high school students.

Removing barriers, increasing opportunities to rigorous coursework and encouraging greater participation in the ACT are all part of making sure every Minnesota student graduates from high school well-prepared for college or career."

###