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NEWS RELEASE

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Record Number of New Mexico Students Take the ACT[®]

SANTA FE – Sixty-six percent of 2010 New Mexico high school graduates (12,679) took the ACT[®], a college admission and placement exam, according to the ACT's annual *Condition of College and Career Readiness* report for 2010, released today.

The New Mexico 2010 ACT[®] composite score of 20.1 increased +.1 from 2009 with increases in math (+.1) and science (+.2) while the National Composite score decreased by -.1. The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36.

The state's 2010 graduates who took this test seem to follow the national trend of slow but steady progress in preparation for college and career. Caucasian students in New Mexico outscore their national counterparts by +.2 percent and exceed the national composite of 20.1 by +2.4 percent. Nationally, Hispanic students represent 10 percent of the national ACT Hispanic test-takers. In New Mexico, Hispanic students represented 36 percent of the Act test takers, and those students match their national counterparts scoring at the same composite score of 18.6. Nationally, Native American students represent 1 percent of test-takers, compared to 10 percent of New Mexico ACT population.

Fees for the ACT can be waived for high need students according to an agreement with ACT.

"New Mexico continues to increase participation and to eliminate barriers in taking this college and career readiness test," said New Mexico Education Secretary Designate Dr. Susanna Murphy. "More students are taking core college preparatory courses in line with the state's high school redesign efforts, but we still need to encourage students to take more rigorous courses during high school."

Student test takers who took four years or more years of English and three or more years of math, social studies, or natural science generally scored two percentage points higher than students who chose to take minimum language, math and science courses during their high school years. Among New Mexico's test takers, 59 percent are ready for College English Composition, up 1 percent from 2009; 32 percent are ready for College Algebra, up 1 percent from 2009; 47 percent are ready for Social Studies, same as last year; and 22 percent are ready for College Biology, up 1 percent from 2009.

When students were asked about their plans for future careers, for 2,745 New Mexico students the most popular field was health sciences and allied health fields. Biological and physical sciences were chosen by 738 students, and 78 students said they planned to major in mathematics. Forty-seven percent of the students tested reported that their educational aspiration is a graduate or professional degree.

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test designed to measure the skills and knowledge taught in school and deemed important for first-year college students to possess. ACT scores are accepted at all major colleges and universities across the nation. ACT is a not-for-profit organization. For more information about ACT, visit www.act.org.###