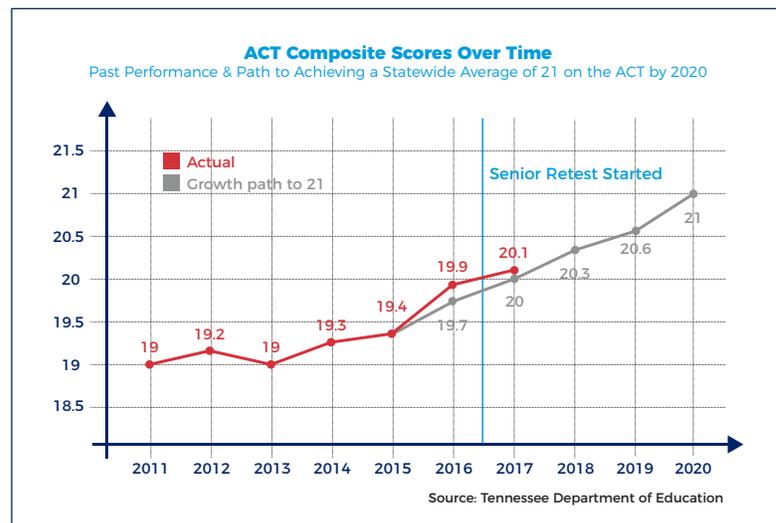


# SENIOR RETAKE DAY: OPEN NEW DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY

ACT Composite scores in Tennessee are on the rise. The Tennessee Department of Education set a goal to raise the average ACT Composite score for public school students to 21, the current national average, by 2020. **“As we work toward our goal of a statewide average, we see opportunities like the ACT Senior Retake Day moving our students one step closer,”** said Candice McQueen, Education Department Commissioner.

The growth path developed by the Tennessee Department of Education outlined yearly score increases necessary to achieving their goal. From 2011 to 2015 the average ACT Composite score for Tennessee public students grew from 19.0 to 19.4. With the implementation of senior retesting, Tennessee moved ahead of their path to reaching a statewide average of 21.

The ACT Senior Retake Day is a state-paid opportunity for seniors to raise their ACT score by taking the test for a second time during regular school hours. All public school seniors—regardless of whether or not they participated in the state’s junior test administration—may participate on the retake day. And, all seniors who were enrolled in Tennessee public schools as juniors are automatically registered for the retake.



In 2016, the TDOE changed methodology for reporting the state average to the mean score based on students’ highest recorded score when prior averages were based on students’ last scores.

## 17.4

Average ACT Composite Score of 2017 TN Graduates taking the ACT **only once**

## 21.5

Average ACT Composite Score of 2017 TN Graduates taking the ACT **two or more times**

“The opportunity given districts to retake is awesome—our students see the importance of the ACT and [the retake] allows students to better their score and learn from previous experience,” said Bobby Cox, Director of Schools, Warren County.

In *The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2017 – Tennessee Key Findings* report, ACT research estimated that an increase of 0.1 in state average ACT Composite score for the 2017 graduating class would result in:

- **159** more students enrolling in college
- **190** more students persisting to year two
- **156** fewer students needing remedial English
- **307** fewer students needing remedial math
- **214** more students persisting to year four
- **230** more students earning a postsecondary degree within six years

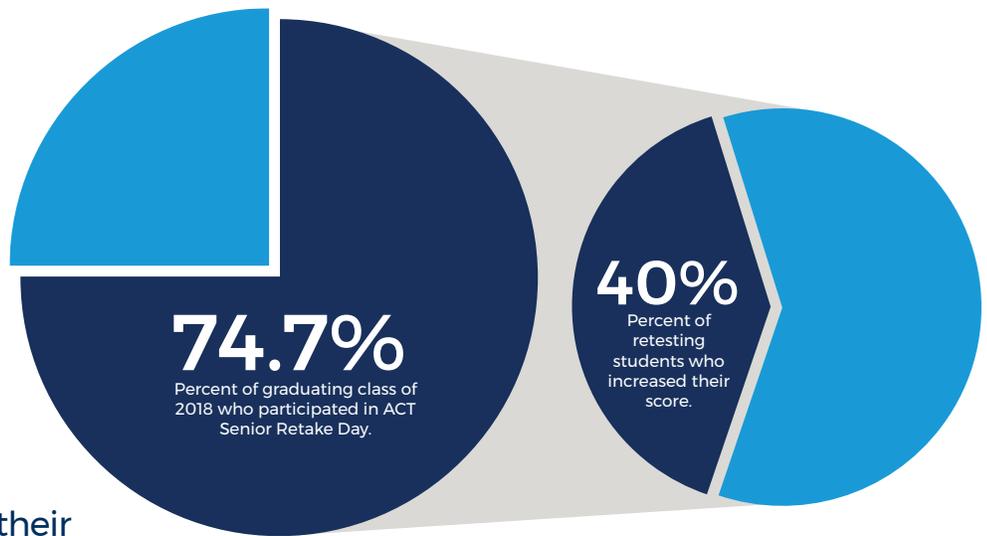
“Results are so much more than a number; they allow our students to open new doors of opportunity that can change the trajectory of their lives. Now more Tennessee students can access scholarship funding, gain admission to colleges and universities, and earn credit for their work from day one,” said McQueen.

In Tennessee, the ACT serves as a gateway to college and career, determining students’ eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and their need for postsecondary remedial or developmental coursework.

“I was not going to take it [the ACT] anymore, but I decided to give the senior retake a try. I went to tutoring before and after school, and worked

on some skills within my classes. I raised my score to a 30, and qualified for 20,000 more dollars of scholarship money,” said a senior at Jefferson County High School.

In October 2017, nearly 52,000 students in the graduating class of 2018 participated in the Senior Retake Day and almost 19,000 increased their overall score. **Moreover, 2,333 seniors raised their score to a 21 or higher, making them eligible to access \$37 million in HOPE Scholarship funds that provide up to \$16,000 per student.**



Additionally, scores earned from the 2017 ACT Senior Retake Day will save Tennessee students up to \$7.8 million by allowing them to enroll directly in credit-bearing postsecondary coursework, avoiding remedial classes that take additional time and money and may make it less likely they will graduate.

“We don’t always get a second chance when it comes to life’s major events. When it comes to retaking the ACT, however, this is a second chance that we can and should provide to *all* students,” said Jerre Maynor, Director of Student Readiness at the Tennessee Department of Education.