

Rather than being satisfied with a well-earned lofty status, Union City High School students are reaching and attaining even higher heights.

Seniors at UCHS already surpassed last year's graduating class in ACT composite scores, currently posting a 22.63, which is an improvement on the 2017-18 class record of 22.4 that ranked seventh in all of Tennessee and first among rural West Tennessee school districts.

"I'm so excited about the great work going on at K through 12 in Union City Schools," UC Director of Schools Wes Kennedy said. "I'm super pumped for (UCHS principal) Jacob Cross and his faculty for an incredible job.

"It all starts at our elementary school and then funnels through our middle school. The expectations, the work ethic, the desire to succeed from both our faculty and our students is both obvious and unmatched."

Currently, a record number 17 seniors have made 30 or better on the ACT – edging past last year's total by one. Four seniors and a junior recently joined the 30+ Club, giving the school 19 students in all (17 seniors, two juniors) in that distinguished category.

Each member of that group has been honored with their name on a plaque near the school entrance, a spotlight reserved for that accomplishment.

Three UCHS students have made a 35, one point from a perfect score.

An amazing 59.8 percent (64-of-107 students) of this year's senior class have made 21 or higher on the ACT, qualifying them for the HOPE Scholarship. And 40 seniors raised their respective scores on the test by at least one point.

"This is a phenomenal class of seniors," Cross said on Tuesday. "We challenged this group to exceed last year's graduating class's ACT average. It was a tall task, but they have risen to the challenge.

"Believe it or not, preparing for the ACT starts in the elementary school, with reading strategies and foundational math skills. These types of achievements are a testament to the outstanding work of our teachers, PreK through 12 and the dedication and determination of our students."

Cross was also a popular man Tuesday as he handed out \$100 bills to nine students who either made 21 on the ACT or raised their score three points or more from the last time they took the test. Students who made 21 or better also qualified for the HOPE Scholarship.

Those UCHS students who are now members of the illustrious 30+ Club include seniors Austin Atwill, Jaycee Brown, Wade Clendenin, Oliver Cloyd, Chloe Cook, James Gregory, Abigail Hightower, Will Hogan, Conner Hurt, Eli Jordan, Jaxon Moran, Miles Odle, Bradley Schlager, Will Suiter, Conner Terrell, Claire Thomason and Jacob Virgin and juniors Sam Theobald and Hudson Calfee.

New members of the 30+ Club include seniors Oliver Cloyd, Chloe Cook, Conner Hurt and Jaxon Moran and junior Hudson Calfee.

The nine students who are \$100 richer and are now qualified for HOPE Scholarship money include Brady Coleman, Endia Dowell, Ashton Hailey, Alex Jefferson, Preston Little, Dylan Moore, Kaitlyn Moore, Karoline Parker and Mercedes Winters.

“I’m proud of what they have accomplished, but we still have work to do,” Cross added. “There are several students a point or two away from hitting 21, and qualifying for the HOPE scholarship. There are also several who still have their sights set on a 30.

“These students are determined, and I expect to see our average go even higher.”