

Virginia Board of Education Retreat

The History & Context of
Virginia's Accountability System
October 22, 2014

Initial State Accountability

- Minimum Competency Graduation Tests (based on elementary content) in late 70's and early 80's
- Literacy Passport Exam
 - Minimal standards (basic elementary literacy & numeracy)
 - Intended to identify students with weaknesses before high school
 - 1/3 failed
 - Threatened value & credibility of diploma
 - “GED preferred”
- 70% of Va. citizens – NO school-aged children
 - Look for value in tax \$\$ spent



Early Reform Efforts

- Outcomes-based Education, including Virginia's "Common Core," introduced during Wilder administration in early 1990s
- Part of a national movement focusing on what students should know and be able to do when they leave high school

Virginia's Common Core

- Virginia's "Common Core" identified the following student outcomes:
 - environmental stewardship,
 - personal well-being and accomplishment,
 - interpersonal relationships,
 - lifelong learning,
 - cultural and creative endeavors,
 - work and economic well-being, and
 - local and global civic participation.
- A new statewide assessment system focusing on performance assessments that incorporated realistic tasks keyed to Common Core outcomes was planned.

Virginia's Common Core

- For more information about Virginia's Common Core go to <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may93/vol50/num08/Virginia's-Common-Core-Of-Learning-Takes-Shape.aspx>

Concerns about “Outcomes-Based” Education

- Public concern about lack of emphasis on academics and perceived focus on “values-based” education
- Competing political ideologies in play
 - Desire to “fix” problem and improve public school quality
 - Intent to “damage” public education reputation to promote privatization efforts

Directive to Abandon Common Core

- In September 1993 Governor Wilder directed the Board of Education and the Department of Education to abandon the “Common Core” and outcome -based education initiative.
- “Make no mistake: I do not now, nor have I ever, endorsed changing Virginia's education standards to encompass values-based education,” the governor said in a statement. “Knowledge and proficiency of basic skills must remain the basis for education in our commonwealth.” (“Outcome-based Education Dies” By John F. Harris, The Washington Post, September 16, 1993)

Governor Allen

- Sought focus on real improvements
- Determined to use existing Standards of Learning (SOL's) as vehicle for improvement
 - Standards already almost 20 years old but advisory only
 - Led to “hobby-teaching” – no statewide continuity
 - SOL revised in 1995
- Strong bi-partisan support for increased accountability (EX Gov Allen and Don Beyer)
 - “I can’t manage what I can’t measure



Four Goals of Initial Accountability Effort

1. Minimum Standards to create continuity of curriculum
2. Assessments to validate student & school performance
3. Communication to the public through report cards
4. Consequences based on outcomes
 - Accreditation had been based on input standards

Overview of the SOL Testing Program from 1998 to the Present

Board Resolution on SOL Tests

- Prior to the development of Request for Proposals for the Standards of Learning testing program, the Board adopted a resolution that defined:
 - the tests that would comprise the SOL program
 - and the characteristics of these tests
- The resolution specified that the SOL tests were to be primarily machine scored except for the writing tests where students would write a short paper

Excerpt from Resolution Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education on April 25, 1996

- **WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth's assessments must be reliable, valid, equitable, and generalizable to ensure the integrity of the test results reported for each student, school, and school division, as well as to instill public confidence by laying the foundation for accountability in the Commonwealth's system of public education; and
- **WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth's assessments must be designed with consideration for preserving instructional time and to cover a broad range of content in each of the disciplines (Mathematics, Science, English and History and the Social Sciences [History]) and Technology; and
- **WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth's assessments should reflect the Board of Education's continued commitment to fiscal responsibility; and

Excerpt from Resolution Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education on April 25, 1996

- **WHEREAS**, standardized and machine-scoreable assessments are a proven means of measuring student achievement in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and can be designed to assess application, analysis, and reasoning skills; and
- **WHEREAS**, non-traditional assessments, which may include direct observation, projects, exhibitions, demonstrations, and portfolios, are effective tools for teachers in evaluating classroom instruction and student learning, but have been found to be problematic and may be indefensible for statewide testing due to (i) the considerable expense in creating, administering, and scoring; (ii) the considerable classroom time involved in administering these assessments; and (iii) unproven methods for providing results that are reliable, valid, generalizable, and equitable in statewide testing for accountability; and

Excerpt from Resolution Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education on April 25, 1996

- **WHEREAS**, the Board reaffirms that the supervision of schools in each school division is vested in the local school board pursuant to Article VIII, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia, and the evaluation of classroom instruction and instructional programs is the responsibility of local boards.
- **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the following assessments (Virginia State Assessment Program) be implemented in the Commonwealth:

Excerpt from Resolution Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education on April 25, 1996

I. STATEWIDE SOL ASSESSMENTS

The Department of Education will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop, administer, score, and report results of statewide standardized assessments and will include the following components:

A. Program Summary

1. Purpose: To measure students' achievement in acquiring and directly applying the knowledge and academic skills defined in English, Mathematics, Science, History, and Technology Standards of Learning, and to measure students' skills to analyze, reason, synthesize information, make comparisons, and draw inferences.
2. Grade Levels: 3, 5, 8, 11.
3. Testing Format: Primarily machine-scoreable test items which provide a breadth of content coverage and ensure reliable and valid results.. A writing sample may be included.

Scores: Scores will be reported at student, school, school division, and state levels.

SOL Tests Administered in 1998 in Grades 3, 5, and 8

	Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Science	History & Social Science	Computer Technology
Grade 3	Grade 3 Mathematics Test	Grade 3 English Test (Included Reading and Writing Components)		Grade 3 Science Test	Grade 3 History Test	
Grade 5	Grade 5 Mathematics Test	Grade 5 Reading Test	Grade 5 Writing Test	Grade 5 Science Test	Grade 5 History Test Test (Virginia Studies)	Grade 5 Computer Technology Test
Grade 8	Grade 8 Mathematics Test	Grade 8 Reading Test	Grade 8 Writing Test	Grade 8 Science Test	Grade 8 History Test (US History and Civics & Economics)	Grade 8 Computer Technology Test

SOL Tests Administered in Elementary Schools in 2013-2014

	Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Science	History & Social Science
Grade 3	Grade 3 Mathematics Test	Grade 3 Reading Test		Grade 3 Science Test	Grade 3 History Test
Grade 4	Grade 4 Mathematics Test	Grade 4 Reading Test			Grade 4 or Grade 5 Virginia Studies Test
Grade 5	Grade 5 Mathematics Test	Grade 5 Reading Test	Grade 5 Writing Test	Grade 5 Science Test	

Shaded cells - indicate tests required by ESEA

Tests eliminated by legislation in the 2014 General Assembly are shown in strikethrough format.

SOL Tests Administered in Middle Schools in 2013-2014

	Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Science	History & Social Science
Grade 6	Grade 6 Mathematics Test	Grade 6 Reading Test			U.S. History to 1865 Test
Grade 7	Grade 7 Mathematics Test	Grade 7 Reading Test			U.S. History 1865 to Present Test Grade 7 or 8 Civics & Economics Test
Grade 8	Grade 8 Mathematics Test	Grade 8 Reading Test	Grade 8 Writing Test	Grade 8 Science Test	

Shaded cells - indicate tests required by ESEA

Tests eliminated by legislation in the 2014 General Assembly are shown in strikethrough format.

End-of-Course SOL Tests Administered in 1998

Mathematics	English		Science	History & Social Science
	Reading	Writing		
Algebra I Test	EOC Reading Test	EOC Writing Test	Earth Science Test	Virginia & U.S. History Test
Geometry Test			Biology Test	World History I and World Geography Test
Algebra II Test			Chemistry Test	World History II and World Geography Test

End-of-Course SOL Tests Administered in 2013-2104

Mathematics	English		Science	History & Social Science
	Reading	Writing		
Algebra I Test	EOC Reading Test	EOC Writing Test	Earth Science Test	World Geography Test
Geometry Test			Biology Test	Virginia & U.S. History Test
Algebra II Test			Chemistry Test	World History to 1500 Test
				World History 1500 to Present Test

Shaded cells - indicate tests required by ESEA

Initial Implementation

- 98.2% of schools “failed” to meet accreditation standards
 - Did public believe this to be accurate? NO
 - Led to reforms & adjustments
 - Better curriculum alignment
 - Focus on test formats
 - Greater emphasis on test outcomes
 - Changes to assessment/accountability system such as high school expedited re-takes
- Begins Debate
 - Accountability becomes “Balancing Act” between incentives and punitive measures
 - Where do you “draw the line” on performance?



Board of Education Actions Regarding Tests Included in Accreditation Ratings

Implementation of “Content Specific History Tests”

- School divisions had requested that the cumulative grade 8 history test which covered content typically taught in grades 6, 7, and 8 be replaced with three separate tests:
 - US History to 1877
 - US History: 1877 to the Present, and
 - Civics and Economics
- First administration of new “content specific” history tests was in spring 2004

Results of Content Specific History Tests

- Initial pass rates for new content specific history tests were lower than expected
- School divisions were concerned about impact on accreditation
- Requested that Board of Education consider action regarding inclusion of new tests in accreditation ratings

2000 Standards of Accreditation

- **8 VAC 20-131-280.C.2.(a)**

Gave the Board authority to prescribe the SOL tests used in evaluating the performance of schools.

- **8 VAC 20-131-340. Academic reviews, special provisions and sanctions.**

B. The Board may enact special provisions related to the administration and use of any SOL test or tests in a content area as applied to this chapter for any period during which the SOL content in that area is being revised and phased in.

Virginia Board of Education: July 21, 2004 Meeting

- The Board received on first review a proposal to enact the special provision in Section 8 VAC 20-131-340.B and its authority given in 8 VAC 20-131-280.C.2.a and include the scores of the new, content specific history tests in calculating accreditation ratings for 2004-2005 only if they helped the school.
- The Board voted to waive first review and approve the proposal. The scores from the new content specific history tests were included in the 2005 accreditation ratings only if they helped.

2006 General Assembly

- **HB 813 Standards of Learning assessments; Board of Education may enact special provisions relating thereto.**
- **Standards of Quality; Standard 3, Standards of Learning and administration and use of SOL tests.** Provides that the Board of Education may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any SOL test or tests in a content area as applied to accreditation ratings for any period during which the SOL content or assessments in that area are being revised and phased in. **Prior to statewide administration of such tests, the Board of Education must provide notice to local school boards regarding such special provisions.**

Results of 2006 General Assembly Action

- Action restricted Board's authority to make decisions about the inclusion of tests in accreditation ratings
- Board must now make decisions about the inclusion of new tests in accreditation BEFORE the tests are administered for the first time.

Accountability Debate Continues Today

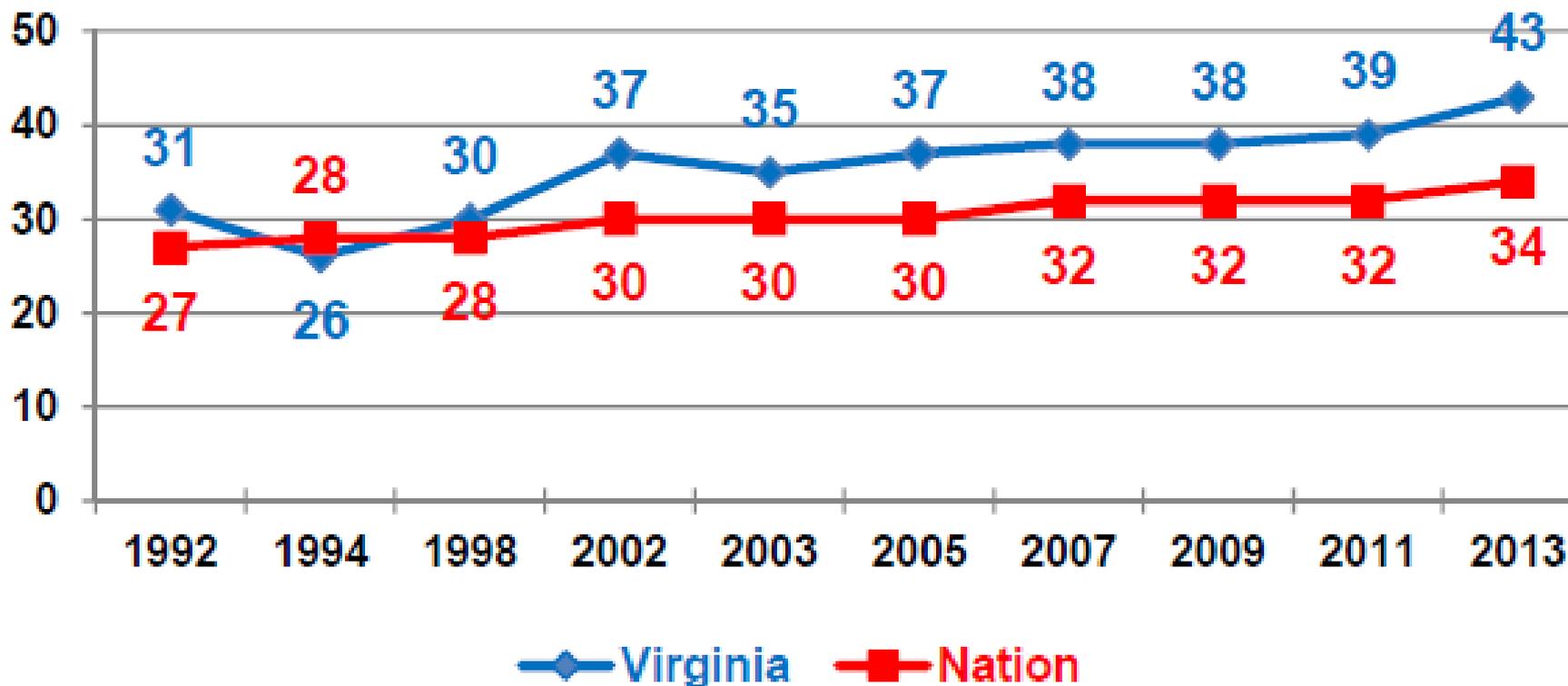
- Recent Commonwealth Poll
 - 70% say too much testing
 - 60% say accountability has improved education in Va
- Virginia currently ranks well against multiple national standards
- “While we are sensitive to the concerns for too many tests, it is also clear that the accountability system has improved educational results in the Commonwealth”

Student Achievement: Virginia & the Nation

Virginia & NAEP

Percent Proficient or Above

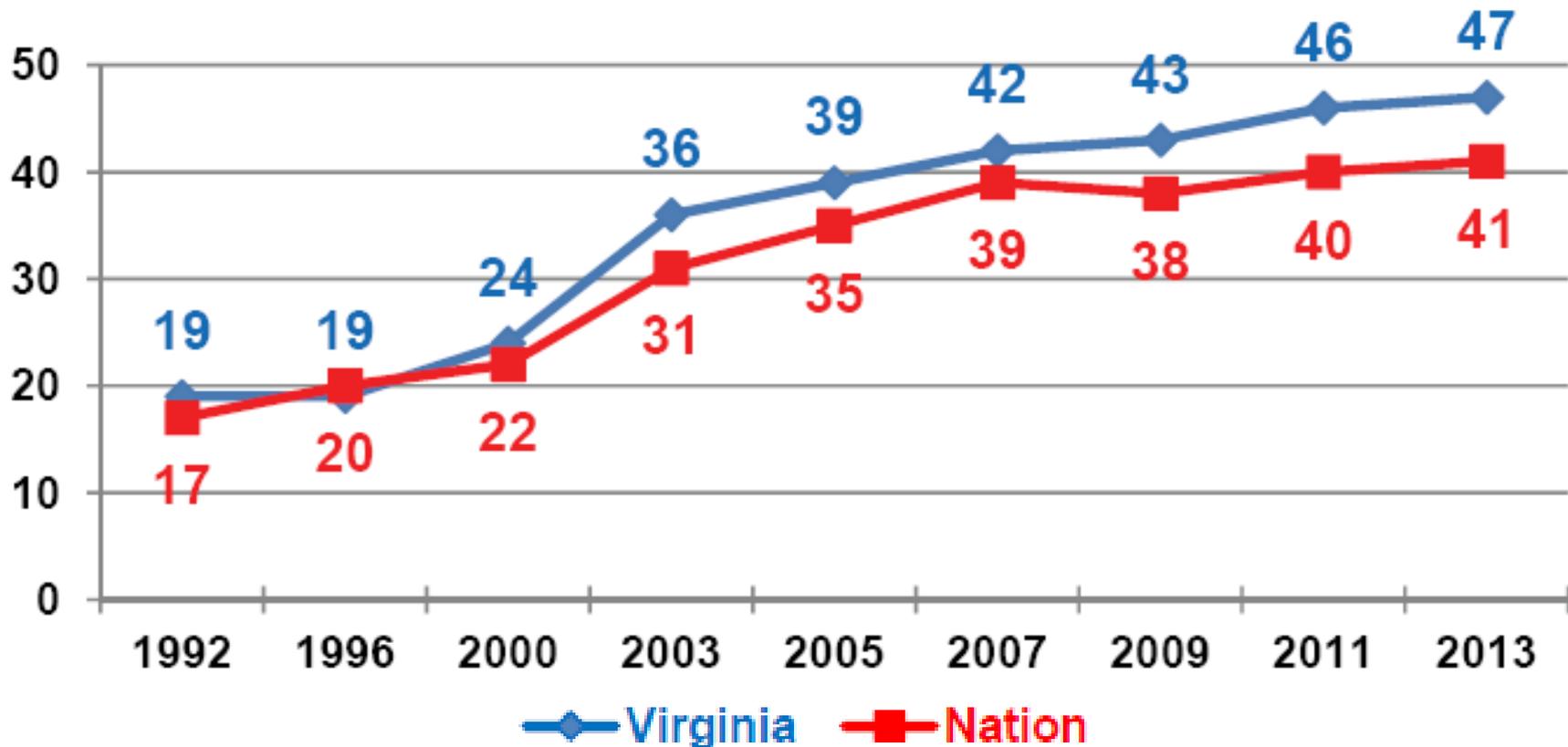
Grade-4 Reading



Virginia & NAEP

Percent Proficient or Above

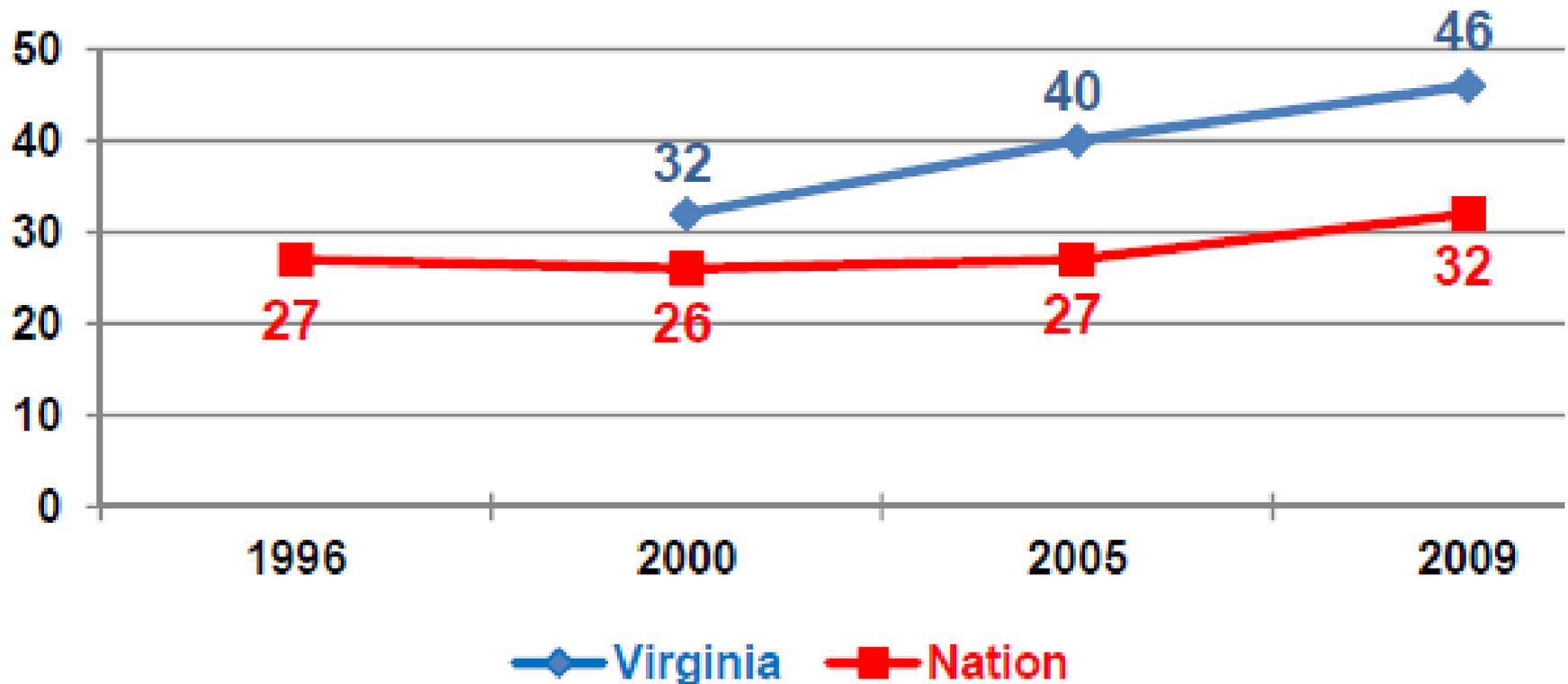
Grade-4 Mathematics



Virginia & NAEP

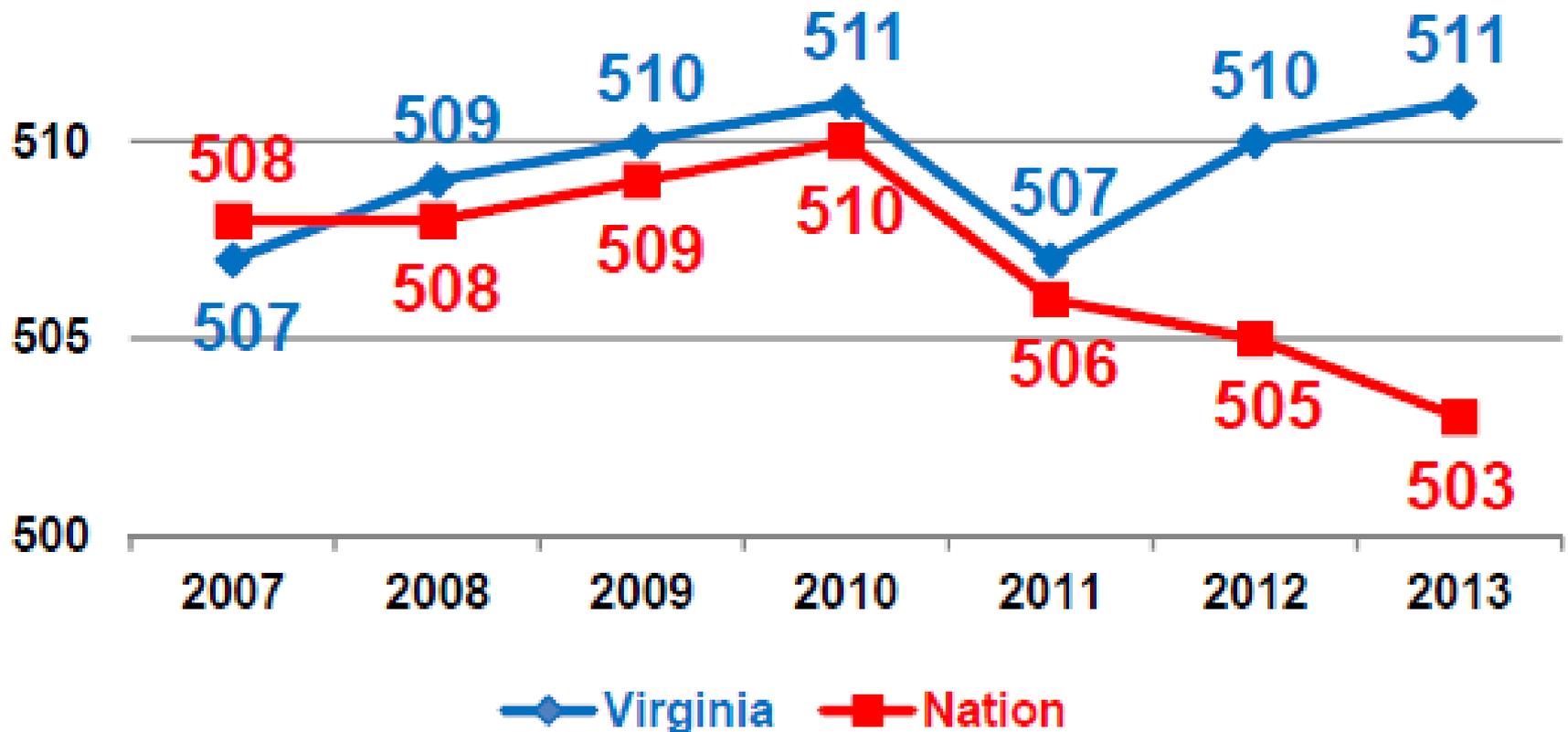
Percent Proficient or Above

Grade-4 Science



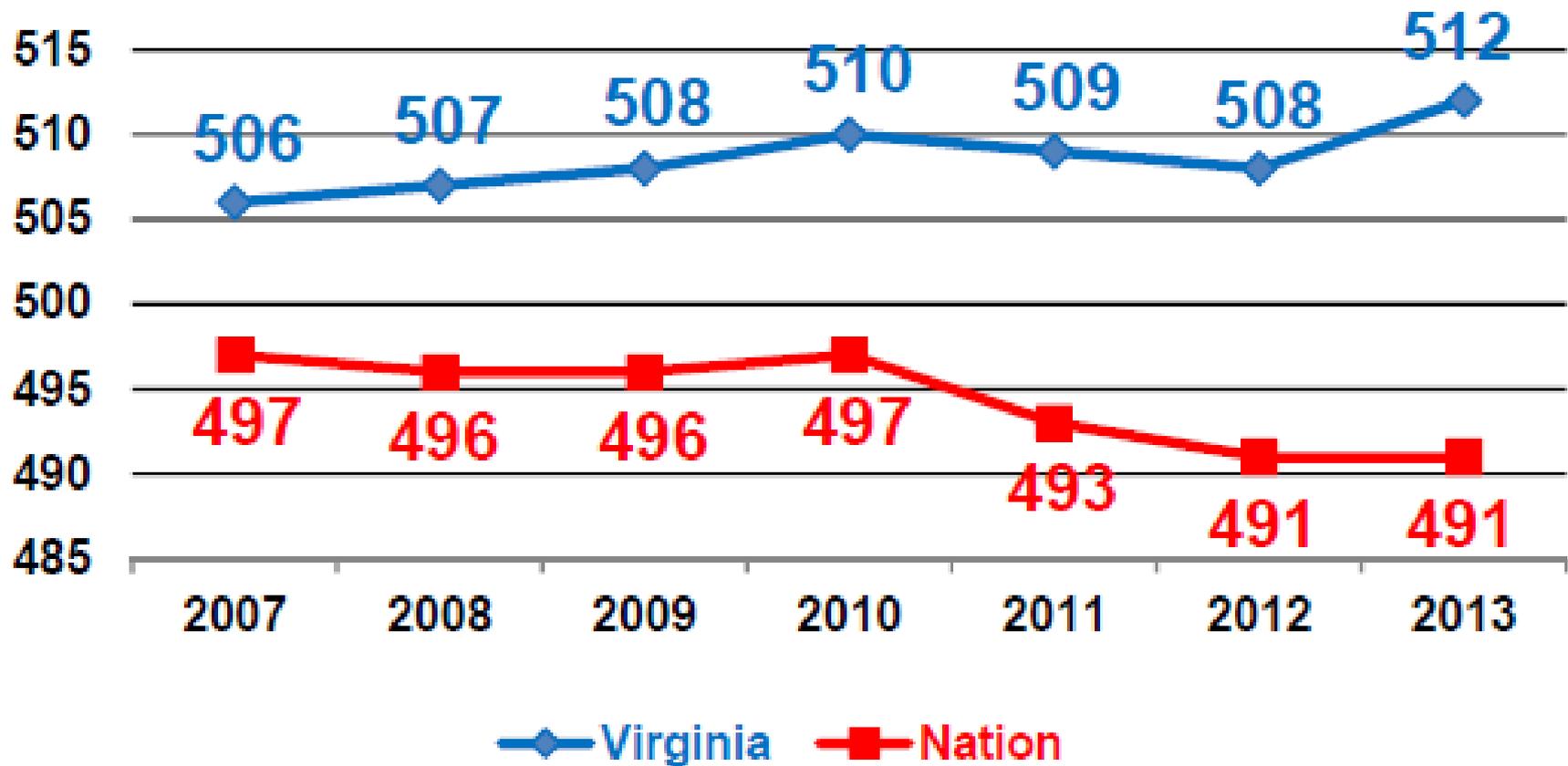
SAT:

Mathematics Mean Scaled Scores



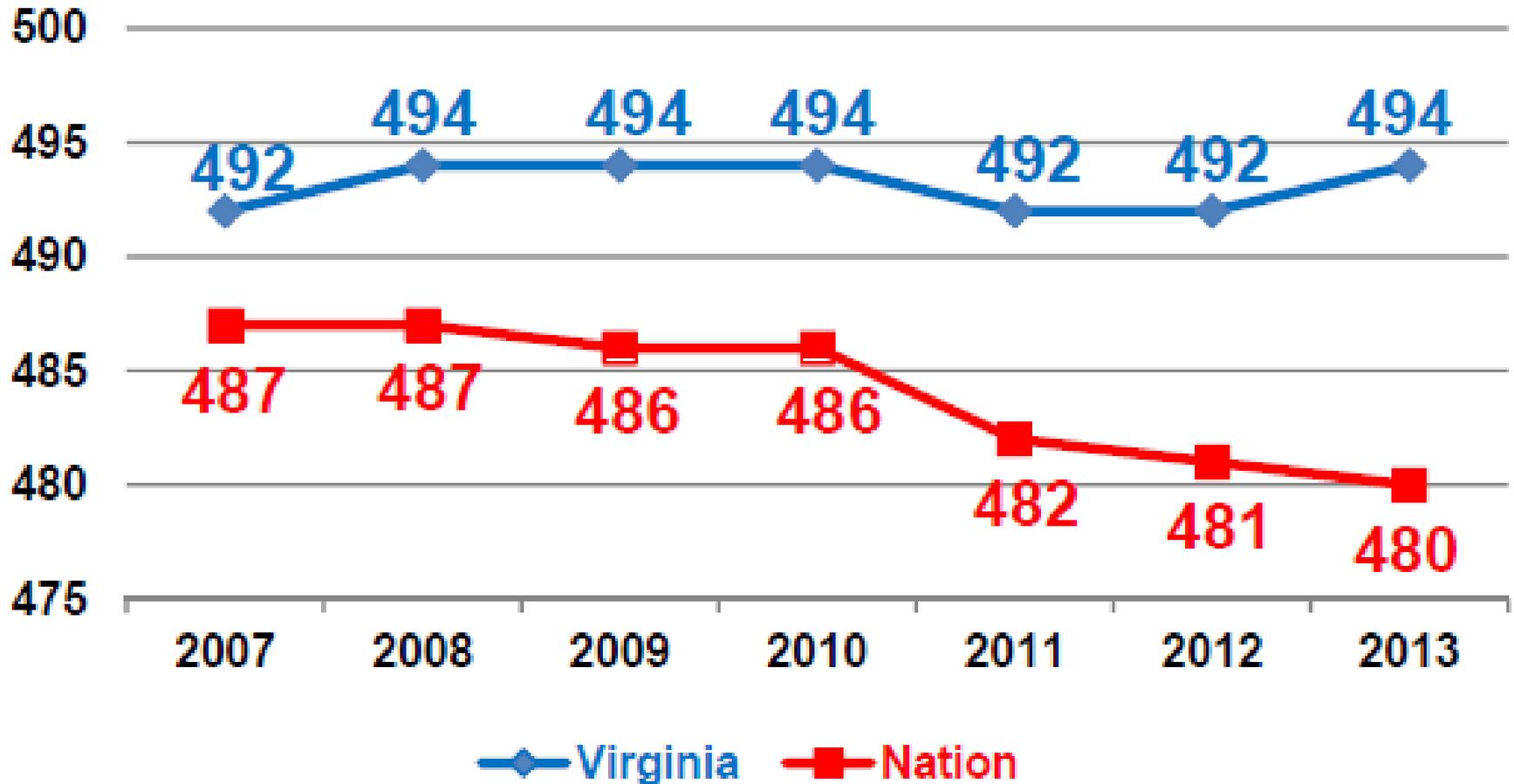
SAT:

Reading Mean Scaled Scores



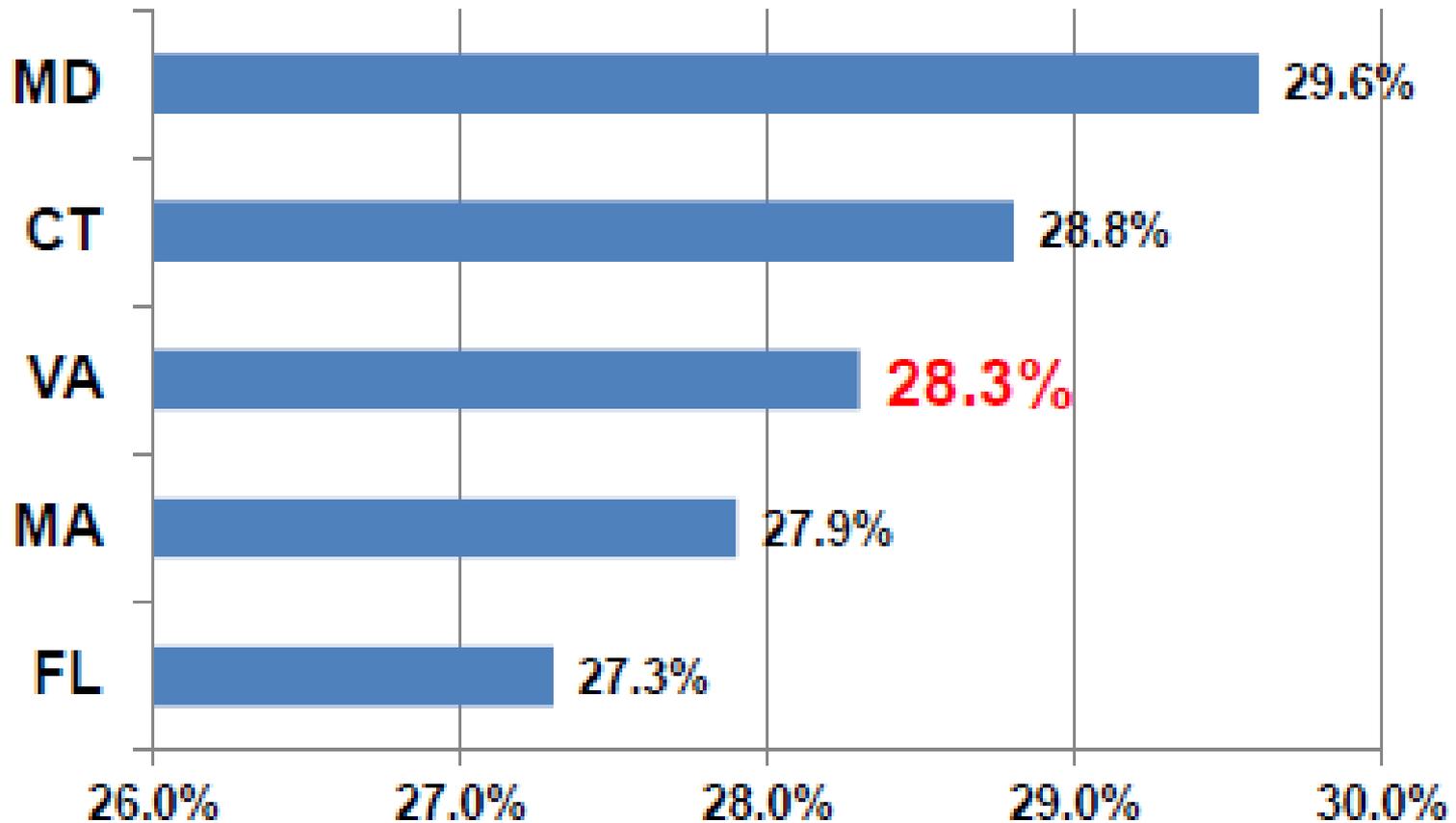
SAT:

Writing Mean Scaled Scores



Advanced Placement

2013 Graduates with Qualifying Scores



2013 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study

Mathematics

Grade-8 Mathematics NAEP-TIMSS Comparisons		
<i>Statistically Higher than Virginia</i>	<i>Statistically the Same as Virginia</i>	<i>Statistically Lower than Virginia</i>
Republic of Korea Singapore Chinese Taipei Hong Kong SAR Japan Russian Federation Quebec, Canada	Israel	Finland Ontario, Canada United States England Alberta, Canada Hungary Australia 32 Others

2013 NAEP-TIMSS Linking Study

Science

Grade-8 Science NAEP-TIMSS Comparisons		
<i>Statistically Higher than Virginia</i>	<i>Statistically the Same as Virginia</i>	<i>Statistically Lower than Virginia</i>
Singapore Chinese Taipei Republic of Korea Japan	Finland Alberta, Canada Slovenia Russian Federation Hong Kong SAR England	United States Hungary Ontario, Canada Quebec, Canada Australia Israel Lithuania 30 Others

Consideration & Opportunities for “Accountability 2.0”

- How can the next phase drive improvement as well as identification?
- How can it account for “moving toward”, “meeting” and “exceeding” standards?
- How can it identify areas in which schools are struggling?
- How can it drive “equity” for schools with high % of children in poverty?
- What is the appropriate “failure point” for consequences?
- What is the appropriate “pace of changes” to the standards & tests?
- What is the course of action if Virginia reforms do not align with federal accountability?