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## **Ninety-five Percent of Virginia Schools Meet SOL Standards *Math Achievement Boosts Middle School Accreditation to 87 percent***

Ninety-five percent of Virginia's public schools are fully accredited and meeting state standards for student achievement in English, mathematics, history and science based on 2007-2008 assessment results, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced today. This is the highest percentage of schools reaching full accreditation since the commonwealth began statewide testing ten years ago.

"Nearly all Virginia children now attend schools that are exceeding the commonwealth's minimum expectations for student achievement," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Billy K. Cannaday Jr. "That so many schools are now moving beyond minimum standards for competence and proficiency and towards academic excellence is a credit to the educators, elected leaders, policy makers and parents whose sustained support for reform has been essential in raising student achievement."

Students in 1,765 of the commonwealth's 1,860 schools met or exceeded state achievement objectives on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and other statewide assessments in the four core academic areas last year. Ninety-six percent of Virginia's elementary schools and 98 percent of the commonwealth's high schools are now fully accredited.

The percentage of middle schools achieving full accreditation increased as the performance of students on rigorous grade-level mathematics tests introduced three years ago continued to improve. Eighty-seven percent, or 270, of Virginia's 312 middle schools are now fully accredited compared with 69 percent last year. This includes 36 now fully accredited middle schools that previously were warned only in mathematics. Mathematics achievement increased in 283 middle schools during 2007-2008.

Chief Deputy Superintendent Patricia I. Wright, who succeeds Dr. Cannaday on October 1 as the commonwealth's chief school officer, credits the increase in mathematics achievement to collaborative efforts by school divisions and VDOE staff to share successful strategies and best practices with classroom teachers.

"By equipping middle school students with the problem-solving and computational skills required for success on these challenging tests, teachers are laying a foundation for student achievement in algebra, geometry and other rigorous courses in mathematics," Dr. Wright said. "Ultimately, the hard work taking place in Virginia's middle schools today will result in more young men and women prepared for postsecondary education and 21st-century careers in mathematics, science and technical fields."

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Ninety-six of the commonwealth's 132 school divisions have no schools on the state's academic warning list, compared with 69 last year. Divisions with all schools fully accredited (other than new schools that automatically receive conditional accreditation) are:

- Accomack County
- Albemarle County
- Alleghany County
- Amelia County
- Appomattox County
- Arlington County
- Augusta County
- Bath County
- Bland County
- Botetourt County
- Bristol
- Buchanan County
- Buckingham County
- Buena Vista City
- Campbell County
- Charles City County
- Charlotte County
- Charlottesville
- Chesapeake
- Chesterfield County
- Clarke County
- Colonial Beach
- Colonial Heights
- Craig County
- Culpeper County
- Cumberland County
- Dickenson County
- Dinwiddie County
- Essex County
- Falls Church
- Fauquier County
- Floyd County
- Fluvanna County
- Franklin County
- Frederick County
- Fredericksburg
- Galax
- Giles County
- Gloucester County
- Goochland County
- Greene County
- Greenville County
- Halifax County
- Hanover County
- Harrisonburg
- Henry County
- King George County
- King William County
- King and Queen County
- Lancaster County
- Lee County
- Lexington
- Louisa County
- Lunenburg County
- Madison County
- Manassas Park
- Martinsville
- Mathews County
- Mecklenburg County
- Middlesex County
- Montgomery County
- Nelson County
- New Kent County
- Northumberland County
- Norton
- Nottoway County
- Orange County
- Page County
- Pittsylvania County
- Poquoson
- Powhatan County
- Prince Edward County
- Pulaski County
- Radford
- Rappahannock County
- Richmond County
- Roanoke County
- Rockingham County
- Russell County
- Salem
- Scott County
- Shenandoah County
- Smyth County
- Stafford County
- Staunton City
- Suffolk
- Surry County
- Tazewell County
- Washington County
- Waynesboro City
- West Point
- Westmoreland County
- Williamsburg-James City County
- Winchester
- Wise County
- York County

Twenty-three newly opened schools are automatically rated as conditionally accredited for 2008-2009.

The number of schools accredited with warning decreased to 54, compared with 102 last year. Eighty-three schools that were on academic warning last year achieved full accreditation, including 22 elementary schools, 52 middle schools, two high schools and seven combined schools.

The Board of Education granted conditional accreditation to thirteen schools that have not met accreditation standards for four or more years. Schools that are granted conditional accreditation have three years to raise student achievement to state standards and must apply annually for this rating.

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“These schools are working closely with VDOE’s Office of School Improvement and are taking dramatic and meaningful actions to improve instruction and raise student achievement to state standards,” said Board of Education President Mark Emblidge.

Three schools were granted conditional accreditation for the first time and will be monitored by a state-appointed monitor as they implement reconstitution plans. These schools — and the areas of continued deficiency — are:

- Westwood Middle, Danville, for mathematics
- Brighton Elementary, Portsmouth, for English
- William Ruffner Middle, Roanoke, for English, mathematics and history

Nine schools have been granted conditional accreditation for a second consecutive year. VDOE will appoint an auditor to monitor the implementation of the reconstitution plan approved last year for each of these schools:

- Caroline Middle, Caroline County, for mathematics
- Hampton Harbor Academy, Hampton, for alternative accreditation plan
- New Bridge, Henrico County, for alternative accreditation plan
- Lake Taylor Middle, Norfolk, for mathematics
- Cradock Middle, Portsmouth, for mathematics
- Chandler Middle, Richmond, for English and mathematics
- Thomas C. Boushall Middle, Richmond, for English, mathematics, history and science
- Lucy Addison Middle, Roanoke, for history
- Sussex Central Middle, Sussex County, for mathematics

One school, Ellen W. Chambliss Elementary in Sussex County, has been granted conditional accreditation for a third year after again failing to meet state standards for achievement in English. A VDOE-appointed auditor will also monitor the implementation of this school’s reconstitution plan.

Five schools in Petersburg have been denied accreditation for 2008-2009 because of continued low student achievement. These schools — and areas of deficiency — include:

- A.P. Hill Elementary for English, mathematics and science
- J.E.B. Stuart Elementary for English, mathematics, history and science
- Peabody Middle for English, mathematics, history and science
- Petersburg High for mathematics and science
- Vernon Johns Middle for English, mathematics and history

Vernon Johns Middle, was denied accreditation for a second consecutive year; the other Petersburg schools listed are entering their third year without state accreditation. The 2006 memorandum of understanding between Petersburg Public Schools and the Board of Education set a goal of full accreditation for at least five of the division’s schools by 2008. With five of Petersburg’s seven schools denied accreditation, the state board today requested that the Petersburg Public Schools move forward with a plan to provide an independently managed middle school program in 2009-2010 for all students in the city who wish to attend.

The [accreditation ratings](#) announced today are based on the achievement of students on SOL assessments and approved substitute tests in English, mathematics, history and science administered during the summer and fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008, or on overall achievement during the three most recent academic years. The results of tests administered in each subject area are combined to produce overall school passing percentages in English, mathematics, history and science.

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In middle schools and high schools, a pass rate of at least 70 percent in all four subject areas is required for full accreditation. In elementary schools, a combined pass rate of at least 75 percent on English tests in grades 3-5 is required for full accreditation. Elementary schools also must achieve pass rates of at least 70 percent in mathematics, grade-5 science and grade-5 history, and pass rates of at least 50 percent in grade-3 science and grade-3 history.

Accreditation ratings may reflect adjustments made for schools that successfully remediate students who failed reading or mathematics tests during the previous year. Adjustments also may be made for students with limited-English proficiency and for students who have recently transferred into a Virginia public school.

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