



For Immediate Release
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Virginia Students Increase Achievement on the ACT

The performance of Virginia public high school seniors on the ACT college-admissions examination improved this year as students achieved higher average scores in English, reading and science while performing at the same level as last year in mathematics. Virginia's composite ACT score increased and was significantly higher than the average for public school students nationwide. The composite score for Virginia public school graduates was 21.8, compared with 21.1 for public school graduates nationwide. This was the first year ACT produced public school-only reports.

Virginia Public School Average ACT Scores										
Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2008	21.3	20.6	21.7	21.0	22.0	21.4	21.3	20.8	21.7	21.1
2009	21.4	20.6	21.7	21.0	22.1	21.4	21.4	20.9	21.8	21.1

ACT results are reported on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest possible score. ACT describes increases in achievement in a state's average score of 0.1 point or greater as statistically significant.

In each of the four subjects, the percentage of Virginia public school students meeting ACT college- readiness benchmarks was five or more points higher than the percentage nationwide. The benchmarks identify students who are prepared for first-year college subjects, including English composition, algebra and biology.

Percentage of Public School Students Meeting College-Readiness Benchmarks										
Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Meeting all 4	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2005	69	68	40	41	50	51	24	26	19	21
2006	68	69	43	42	52	53	26	27	21	21
2007	70	69	44	43	53	53	29	28	23	23
2008	73	68	49	43	57	53	32	28	26	22
2009	73	67	48	42	58	53	33	28	27	23

The number of Virginia public high school students taking the ACT increased by 10 percent. During 2009, 15,111, or 19 percent, of Virginia graduating seniors took the ACT, compared with 13,769, or 17 percent, last year. While the number of Virginia students taking the ACT has increased significantly, the SAT remains the dominant college-admissions test in the commonwealth. SAT results for 2009 will be released by the College Board and the Virginia Department of Education later this month.

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