



For Immediate Release

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***Reading & Math Scores Increase as Virginia Public School
Students Outperform Peers Nationwide on 2009 SAT
Participation & Achievement on Advanced Placement Tests Continue to Rise***

Virginia public school graduates increased their achievement in reading and mathematics on the SAT in 2009 and outperformed their peers nationwide on all three subsections of the college-admissions test, according to results released today by the College Board.

Black and Hispanic Virginia public school graduates again achieved at a higher level on all three SAT subsections than their counterparts nationwide.

“Virginia students continue to demonstrate that they are among the best prepared in the nation for the challenges of postsecondary education,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “Average scores may fluctuate from year to year but our students are consistently among the highest performing in the nation.”

The College Board also reported that the number of Virginia public school students who took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) examination increased by nearly seven percent this year, and the number of AP examinations qualifying for college credit taken by public students jumped by 10 percent.

2009 SAT Results

Virginia public school students achieved one-point increases in both critical reading and mathematics on the 2009 SAT while achievement on the relatively new writing component of the test dropped by one point. Virginia public school students continued to achieve at higher levels than public school students nationwide.

- Virginia’s public school average score of 509 in reading is 13 points higher than the nationwide public-school average.
- The average mathematics score of 511 for Virginia public school students is one point higher than the national average for public school students.
- The average Virginia public school writing score of 495 is eight points higher than the average writing score of public school test takers nationwide.

In the last ten years, average scores of Virginia public school students on the SAT have increased by three points in reading and 14 points in mathematics. This compares with a national decline of six points in reading for public school students and a gain of two points in mathematics.

A total of 47,100, or 58 percent, of Virginia public school graduates took the SAT — a 6.8 percent decrease from the previous year. The College Board attributes the decline to an increase in the number of students taking the rival ACT. The SAT, however, remains the dominant college entrance examination in Virginia.

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2009 SAT Public School Mean Scores

Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Public School Students	509	496	511	510	495	487
Asian	528	516	576	573	527	517
Black	433	425	426	423	421	416
Hispanic	491	448	490	457	476	441
White	535	524	534	536	518	512

Black public school students in the commonwealth achieved the following average scores on the 2009 SAT:

- Reading: 433 — a one-point increase over 2008 and 8 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 426 — a one-point decrease and 3 points higher
- Writing: 421 — a two-point decrease and 5 points higher.

Hispanic public school students in the commonwealth achieved the following average scores:

- Reading: 491 — a six-point increase over 2008 and 43 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 490 — a five-point increase and 33 points higher
- Writing: 476 — a four point increase and 35 points higher.

Asian public school students in the commonwealth achieved the following average scores:

- Reading: 528 — a two-point increase over 2008 and 12 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 576 — a four-point increase and 3 points higher
- Writing: 527 — a four-point increase and 10 points higher.

White public school students in the commonwealth achieved the following average scores:

- Reading: 535 — a three-point increase over 2008 and 11 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 534 — a one-point increase and 2 points lower
- Writing: 518 — same as last year and 6 points higher.

Overall average achievement of Virginia high school seniors — including private and home-schooled students — remained steady in reading and mathematics and dropped a point in writing.

- Virginia’s all-student average of 511 in reading is ten points higher than the national all-student average.
- The commonwealth’s all-student average of 512 in mathematics is three points lower than the national average.
- Virginia’s all-student average writing score of 498 is five points higher than the national average.

2009 Advanced Placement Results

The number of Virginia public school students who took at least one AP test increased by 6.8 percent in 2009 and the number of tests taken increased by 6.9 percent. Of the 57,928 Virginia public school students who took AP tests, 62.8 percent earned a grade of 3 or higher, and the number of AP examinations earning grades of 3-5 increased by 10 percent.

“Every year there are more Virginia students equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in these challenging courses,” said Board of Education President Mark E. Emblidge.

The College Board’s February 2009 *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* ranked Virginia third in achievement on AP examinations. The College Board will use the AP data released today to update its state rankings early next year.

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The number of black AP test takers increased by 17 percent in 2009 to 6,221. Black public school students took 9,470 examinations — an 18.6 percent increase and the number of tests earning a grade of 3-5 increased by 19.5 percent.

The number of Hispanic AP test takers increased by 12 percent to 3,469. Hispanic public school students took 5,838 examinations — a 14.5 percent increase, and the number of tests earning a grade of 3-5 increased by 16.7 percent.

2009 AP Public School Participation & Achievement

Group	Test Takers		Exams Taken		Number of 3-5 Scores	
	Total	Change from last year	Total	Change from last year	Total	Change from last year
All Students	57,928	+6.8%	104,246	+6.9%	62,370	+10.0%
Asian	7,009	+6.9%	14,607	+5.4%	9,409	+12.1%
Black	6,221	+17.0%	9,470	+18.6%	3,042	+19.5%
Hispanic	3,469	+12.0%	5,838	+14.5%	3,103	+16.7%
White	36,312	+3.7	65,425	+4.0%	41,696	+7.5%

Since 2005, the number of black public school students in the commonwealth participating in AP testing has increased by 86.1 percent, and the number of Hispanic students taking AP tests has increased by 78.4 percent.

Increasing the number of high school students who successfully complete college-level courses is one of the Board of Education’s goals for promoting excellence in public education. Virginia encourages participation in AP courses through the Virtual Virginia online academy and the Early College Scholars Program.

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