

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

Timothy M. Kaine  
Governor

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Contact: Gordon Hickey  
Phone: (804) 225-4260  
Cell Phone: (804) 291-8977  
Internet: [www.governor.virginia.gov](http://www.governor.virginia.gov)

Charles Pyle/DOE  
(804) 371-2420  
[www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)

**GOVERNOR KAINE PRAISES VIRGINIA RECORD ON AP  
SCORES, APPLAUDS TOP NATIONAL RANKING FOR  
THIRD SUCCESSIVE YEAR**

*~Commonwealth Students Rank Third in Nation in Scores on Rigorous  
Advanced Placement Exams~*

**RICHMOND** – Governor Timothy M. Kaine praised Virginia’s high school seniors today on ranking third in the nation for the percentage of students earning a score of three or higher on the rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. The findings—announced this morning by the College Board in its fifth annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation—placed the Commonwealth third nationally in AP achievement for the second straight year. Virginia ranked fourth in the nation in the College Board’s 2007 report.

“AP exams provide a means of measuring achievement with a common yardstick and making state-to-state comparisons,” Governor Kaine said. “These results show that we have great high schools in the Commonwealth — and that we have policies, incentives and best practices in place to reward excellence while challenging schools and students to reach even higher.”

Of Virginia’s 2008 public school graduates, 21.3 percent earned a grade of three or better on at least one AP examination, compared with 20.4 in the class of 2007 and 16.5 percent in the class of 2003. Only two states, Maryland and New York, had higher percentages of seniors earning grades of three or better. The national average for the class of 2008 was 15.2 percent.

“The fact that more students are taking AP courses and succeeding on the exams shows that Virginia’s schools are looking beyond minimum standards and focusing on excellence as a goal for all students,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright.

Other highlights of the College Board’s report:

- Of the students in the class of 2008 who took at least one AP test, 17,200 earned a grade of three or higher, a 7.4 percent increase over the class of 2007, which included 16,011 graduates who performed as well on AP tests. The number of seniors earning a three or higher has increased by 42.9 percent since 2003, when 12,040 graduates scored as high.
- The number of seniors who took at least one AP exam during high school increased by 7.1 percent compared with the class of 2007 and by 46.3 percent compared with participation by the class of 2003.
- Virginia students outperformed their peers nationwide in all tested subject areas.

The College Board report also recognized Virginia for closing the “equity gap” for Hispanic students in AP achievement. Hispanic students, who made up 5.6 percent of the class of 2008, accounted for 6.1 percent of graduates earning a score of three or higher on at least one AP examination.

African-American students also represented 6.1 percent of the high school seniors earning scores of three or higher, up from 5.6 percent for the class of 2007. Black students made up 24.2 of last year’s graduating seniors.

“It is encouraging that in the last five years Hispanic participation in AP testing has increased by 77 percent and African-American participation by 78 percent, but we must do more to identify minority students with the potential to succeed in these challenging courses,” Board of Education President Mark E. Emblidge said.

Enrollment in AP and other college-level courses is among the criteria for recognition under the Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) incentive program created by the Board of Education to advance Governor Kaine’s “competence to excellence” agenda to encourage advanced learning and achievement in the Commonwealth’s public schools. The incentive program includes four levels of awards for schools and school divisions.

Virginia also promotes AP participation through the Early College Scholars initiative and the Virtual Virginia distance-learning program. Early College Scholars participants commit to earning a semester of college credit through AP and other college-level courses while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma. Virtual Virginia provides AP courses online and ensures that students in all of the Commonwealth’s high schools have access to a variety of AP courses. Students may also substitute AP examinations for end-of-course Standards of Learning tests.

*Editors’ Note: Data related to the class of 2007 in this year’s Advanced Placement Report to the Nation varies from what was reported previously due to the use by the College Board of revised data from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.*