



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Ninety-eight Percent of Virginia Schools Meet SOL Standards *All Schools Fully Accredited in 117 School Divisions***

Ninety-eight percent of Virginia's public schools are fully accredited and meeting state standards for achievement in English, mathematics, history and science based on 2008-2009 assessment results, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced today. This is the highest percentage of schools reaching full accreditation since the commonwealth began accrediting schools based on student achievement ten years ago.

Students in 98 percent, or 1,826, of the commonwealth's 1,867 schools met or exceeded state objectives on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and other statewide assessments in the four core academic areas last year.

"Virginia's public schools have accomplished what many ten years ago thought was impossible," Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. "With the sustained support of governors, legislators and policy makers from both parties, teachers and other educators have met the challenge of higher standards and students are achieving at significantly higher levels in nearly every school in the commonwealth."

Ninety-eight 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 again as the performance of students on rigorous grade-level mathematics tests introduced four years ago continued to improve. Ninety-six percent, or 299, of Virginia's 312 middle schools are now fully accredited compared with 87 percent last year and 69 percent two years ago.

"All but a handful of schools are now meeting or exceeding state standards even though the rigor of the commonwealth's SOL accountability system has increased," Board of Education President Mark E. Emblidge said. "The board will maintain its focus on raising achievement in schools that have yet to earn and maintain full accreditation."

The number of schools accredited with warning fell to 17, compared with 54 last year. Forty-eight schools that were on academic warning last year achieved full accreditation.

Six schools earned full accreditation after undergoing reconstitution and being conditionally accredited for one or more years. These schools are: Caroline Middle, Caroline County; New Bridge Alternative Middle, Henrico County; Westwood Middle, Danville; Brighton Elementary and Craddock Middle, Portsmouth; and Addison Aerospace Magnet Middle in Roanoke.

*(more)*

Under Virginia's accountability program, a school that has been on academic warning for three consecutive years and fails to meet state standards for a fourth consecutive year can apply to the Board of Education for conditional accreditation — if the local school board agrees to reconstitute the school's leadership, staff, governance or student population. A reconstituted school can retain conditional accreditation for up to three years if it is making acceptable progress toward meeting state standards.

The ratings of four schools seeking conditional accreditation will be determined tomorrow by the Board of Education during its September meeting in Richmond. These schools are:

- Lafayette Winona Middle and Northside Middle in Norfolk, which are seeking conditional accreditation for the first time; and
- Lake Taylor Middle in Norfolk and Thomas C. Boushall Middle in Richmond, which are seeking conditional accreditation for a third consecutive year.

Ellen W. Chambliss Elementary in Sussex County was denied accreditation after not meeting state standards despite reconstitution and three years of conditional accreditation.

Two Petersburg schools — J.E.B. Stuart Elementary and Peabody Middle — were denied accreditation for a fourth consecutive year. A third Petersburg school — Vernon Johns Junior High — was denied accreditation for the third year in a row.

The status of A.P. Hill Elementary in Petersburg, which was the subject of a VDOE investigation of assessment irregularities, will be determined by the Board of Education tomorrow. The board will determine the status of William Fleming High School in Roanoke, which also was the subject of a VDOE inquiry of testing practices, at its October meeting

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

In 117 of the commonwealth's 132 school divisions, all schools are fully accredited, compared with 96 last year. Divisions with all schools fully accredited (other than new schools that automatically receive conditional accreditation) are:

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| • Accomack County     | • Charlotte County    | • Franklin             |
| • Alleghany County    | • Charlottesville     | • Franklin County      |
| • Amelia County       | • Chesapeake          | • Frederick County     |
| • Amherst County      | • Chesterfield County | • Fredericksburg       |
| • Appomattox County   | • Clarke County       | • Galax                |
| • Arlington County    | • Colonial Beach      | • Giles County         |
| • Augusta County      | • Colonial Heights    | • Gloucester County    |
| • Bath County         | • Covington           | • Goochland County     |
| • Bedford County      | • Craig County        | • Greene County        |
| • Bland County        | • Culpeper County     | • Greensville County   |
| • Botetourt County    | • Cumberland County   | • Halifax County       |
| • Bristol             | • Dickenson County    | • Hanover County       |
| • Buchanan County     | • Dinwiddie County    | • Harrisonburg         |
| • Buckingham County   | • Essex County        | • Henry County         |
| • Buena Vista         | • Fairfax County      | • Highland County      |
| • Campbell County     | • Falls Church        | • Hopewell             |
| • Caroline County     | • Fauquier County     | • Isle of Wight County |
| • Carroll County      | • Floyd County        | • King George County   |
| • Charles City County | • Fluvanna County     | • King William County  |
- (more)*

- King and Queen County
- Lancaster County
- Lee County
- Lexington
- Loudoun County
- Louisa County
- Lunenburg County
- Lynchburg
- Madison County
- Manassas
- Manassas Park
- Martinsville
- Mathews County
- Mecklenburg County
- Middlesex County
- Montgomery County
- Nelson County
- New Kent County
- Newport News
- Northumberland County
- Norton
- Nottoway County
- Orange County
- Page County
- Patrick County
- Pittsylvania County
- Poquoson
- Portsmouth
- Powhatan County
- Prince Edward County
- Prince George County
- Pulaski County
- Radford
- Rappahannock County
- Richmond County
- Roanoke County
- Rockbridge County
- Rockingham County
- Russell County
- Salem
- Scott County
- Shenandoah County
- Smyth County
- Southampton County
- Spotsylvania County
- Stafford County
- Staunton
- Suffolk
- Surry County
- Tazewell County
- Virginia Beach
- Warren County
- Washington County
- Waynesboro
- West Point
- Westmoreland County
- Williamsburg-James City County
- Winchester
- Wise County
- York County

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 2008 and the spring of 2009, 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.

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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