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**Virginia Students Outperform Peers Nationwide on SAT
& Increase Achievement in Critical Reading, Mathematics & Writing**
Students also Make Gains in Performance on Advanced Placement Tests

Virginia’s 2010 public school graduates increased their achievement and outperformed their peers nationwide on all three sections of the SAT college-admissions test, according to results released today by the College Board.

The commonwealth’s 2010 public school graduates achieved two-point increases in both critical reading and mathematics, and a one-point increase on the writing component of the test.

In the last ten years, average scores of Virginia public school students on the SAT have increased by five points in reading and 15 points in mathematics. This compares with a national decline of four points in reading and a gain of one point in mathematics.

“Virginia students are extending trend lines of higher and higher achievement on both national college admissions tests,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “Today’s SAT results — taken with the ACT scores announced last month — show that the commonwealth’s public schools continue to move forward under the Standards of Learning.”

Virginia public school students achieved at higher levels than public school students nationwide on all three SAT subsections:

- The average reading score of 511 for Virginia public school students is 13 points higher than the national average.
- The average mathematics score of 513 for Virginia public school students is two points higher.
- The average writing score of 496 for Virginia public school students is eight points higher.

2010 SAT Virginia Public School Mean Scores

Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Public School Students	511	498	513	511	496	488
Black	436	427	429	427	423	416
Hispanic	493	451	492	462	477	443
Asian	535	522	578	577	533	523
White	536	525	535	536	518	513

“In celebrating these results, I also look forward to future achievement on the SAT as Virginia schools implement the newly revised English and Mathematics Standards of Learning,” Board of Education President Eleanor B. Saslaw said. “The board worked closely with the College Board and other national organizations advocating increased secondary rigor to ensure that the revised English and mathematics standards include the content and skills considered essential to college and career readiness.”

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“The performance of our 2010 graduates on the SAT is further proof of the wisdom of Virginia’s decision to continue building on its statewide system of support and accountability founded on the Standards of Learning,” Dr. Wright said. “Virginia can absorb what is best from the national standards movement without undermining or interrupting progress and achievement.”

While the number of Virginia students taking the rival ACT is increasing, the SAT is the dominant college entrance examination in Virginia. A total of 48,594, or 60 percent, of 2010 public school graduates in the state took the SAT — a 3.2 percent increase from the previous year.

Black and Hispanic Virginia public school graduates increased their achievement and outperformed the peers nationwide on all three SAT subsections.

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

- Reading: 436 — a three-point increase over 2009 and 9 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 429 — a three-point increase and two points higher.
- Writing: 423 — a two-point increase and seven points higher.

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

- Reading: 493 — a two-point increase over 2009 and 42 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 492 — a two-point increase and 30 points higher
- Writing: 477 — a one-point increase and 34 points higher.

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

- Reading: 535 — a seven-point increase over 2009 and 13 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 578 — a two-point increase and one point higher
- Writing: 533 — a six-point increase and 10 points higher.

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

- Reading: 536 — a one-point increase over 2009 and 11 points higher than their peers nationwide
- Mathematics: 535 — a one-point increase and one point lower
- Writing: 518 — same as last year and five points higher.

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

- Virginia’s all-student average of 512 in reading is 11 points higher than the national all-student average of 501.
- The commonwealth’s all-student average of 512 in mathematics is four points lower than the national average.
- Virginia’s all-student average writing score of 497 is five points higher than the national average.

The College Board also reported that the number of Virginia public school students who took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) examination during their high school career increased by 6.6 percent this year, and the number of tests taken increased by 7.8 percent.

2010 AP Virginia Public School Participation & Achievement

Group	Test Takers		Exams Taken		Number of 3-5 Scores	
	Total	Increase from last year	Total	Increase from last year	Total	Increase from last year
All Students	61,749	6.6%	112,347	7.8%	66,822	7.1%
Black	6,883	10.6%	10,572	11.6%	3,324	9.3%
Hispanic	3,929	13.3%	6,529	11.8%	3,507	13.0%
Asian	7,679	9.6%	16,542	13.2%	10,391	10.4%
White	37,791	4.1%	68,429	4.6%	43,781	5.0%

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The number of AP examinations taken by 2010 public school graduates that qualified for college credit increased by 7.1 percent. Of the 112,347 AP tests taken by Virginia public school students, 66,822, or 59.5 percent, earned a grade of 3 or higher.

The number of black AP test takers increased by 10.6 percent to 6,883. Black 2010 public school graduates in Virginia took 10,572 examinations — an 11.6 percent increase — and the number of tests earning a grade of 3-5 increased by 9.3 percent.

The number of Hispanic AP test takers increased by 13.3 percent to 3,929. Hispanic 2010 public school graduates took 6,529 examinations — an 11.8 percent increase — and the number of tests earning a grade of 3-5 increased by 13 percent.

Since 2006, the number of black public school students in the commonwealth participating in AP testing has increased by 74.4 percent, and the number of Hispanic students taking AP tests has increased by 70.2 percent.

The College Board's February 2010 *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* ranked Virginia third in the nation 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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