



For Immediate Release:
Contact:

September 15, 2010
Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420
Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager, (804) 225-2775

98 Percent of Virginia Schools Meet SOL Standards ***New Benchmarks & Standards to Raise the Bar for Students & Schools***

Ninety-eight percent of Virginia's public schools are fully accredited and meeting current state standards for achievement in English, mathematics, history and science based on 2009-2010 assessment results, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced today.

“Because of the extraordinary and sustained efforts of thousands of Virginia teachers, principals and other educators, almost all of our schools have achieved a goal that many thought was unrealistic when Standards of Learning (SOL) testing began in 1998,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. “I encourage all of our teachers, administrators and other educators to keep this success in mind this year as they provide the instruction and guidance students will need to meet even more rigorous expectations for achievement in English, mathematics and history as well as new accreditation provisions related to graduation.”

2010-2011 SOL Accreditation Ratings

Grade Span	Fully Accredited	Accredited with Warning	Conditional (New Schools)	Accreditation Denied	Totals
Elementary	1,159	10	9	3	1,181
Middle	303	3	3	1	310
High	308	1	2	0	311
Combined	44	1	3	0	48
Total	1,814 (98%)	15 (<1%)	17 (<1%)	4 (<1%)	1,850 (100%)

Beginning with accreditation ratings announced in September 2011, high schools will have to meet an annual objective for raising graduation rates to earn full accreditation. In September 2012, a pass rate of at least 75 percent in English reading will be required for all grade spans, and the required pass rates for elementary schools in science and history/social science will each rise to 70 percent — the same benchmark middle schools and high schools must meet. The higher pass rates had been scheduled to take effect in 2011 but were delayed one year by the General Assembly.

In addition, students will take more rigorous SOL mathematics tests beginning in 2011-2012 and more rigorous tests in English reading the following year.

“Taken together, these steps will represent a substantial increase in the rigor of Virginia’s accountability program,” Board of Education President Eleanor B. Saslaw said. “The accreditation ratings we will announce a year from now will mark a new beginning as schools advance toward goals aligned with the latest national expectations for college and career readiness.”

The 2010-2011 ratings announced today represent the second consecutive year in which all but two percent of the commonwealth’s public schools are fully accredited. Students in 98 percent, or 1,815, of the commonwealth’s 1,850 schools met or exceeded state objectives on SOL tests and other statewide assessments in the four core academic areas.

(more)

Ninety-eight percent of Virginia's elementary and middle schools and 99 percent of the commonwealth's high schools are now fully accredited.

One school — Vernon Johns Junior High in Petersburg — earned full accreditation after being denied accreditation for three consecutive years.

Three schools earned full accreditation after undergoing reconstitution and being conditionally accredited for one or more years. These schools are: Lake Taylor Middle and Northside Middle in Norfolk and Thomas C. Boushall Middle in Richmond.

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.

In 119 of the commonwealth's 132 school divisions, all schools are fully accredited, compared with 117 last year. Divisions with all schools fully accredited (other than new schools that automatically receive conditional accreditation) are:

- Accomack County
- Alleghany County
- Amelia County
- Amherst County
- Appomattox County
- Arlington County
- Augusta County
- Bath County
- Bedford County
- Bland County
- Botetourt County
- Bristol
- Brunswick County
- Buchanan County
- Buckingham County
- Buena Vista
- Campbell County
- Caroline County
- Carroll County
- Charles City County
- Charlotte County
- Charlottesville
- Chesapeake
- Chesterfield County
- Clarke County
- Colonial Beach
- Colonial Heights
- Covington
- Craig County
- Culpeper County
- Cumberland County
- Dickenson County
- Dinwiddie County
- Essex County
- Falls Church
- Fauquier County
- Floyd County
- Fluvanna County
- Franklin
- Franklin County
- Frederick County
- Fredericksburg
- Galax
- Giles County
- Gloucester County
- Goochland County
- Grayson County
- Greene County
- Greensville County
- Halifax County
- Hanover County
- Harrisonburg
- Henry County
- Highland County
- Hopewell
- Isle of Wight County
- King George County
- King William County
- 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
- Patrick County
- Pittsylvania County
- Poquoson
- Powhatan County
- Prince Edward County
- Prince George County
- Prince William County
- Pulaski County
- Radford
- Rappahannock County
- Richmond
- Richmond County

(more)

- 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
- Wythe County
- York County

Nineteen schools failed to earn full accreditation compared with 25 last year. The number of schools accredited with warning fell to 15, compared with 17 last year and 54 two years ago. Four schools were denied accreditation this year:

- J.E.B. Stuart Elementary and Peabody Middle in Petersburg were denied accreditation for a fifth consecutive year.
- Ellen W. Chambliss Elementary in Sussex County was denied accreditation for a second consecutive year.
- Lafayette Winona Middle in Norfolk was denied accreditation after not meeting state standards after one year of conditional accreditation.

“VDOE’s school improvement and instructional specialists will continue to work with schools that have been warned or denied accreditation to implement effective reforms and raise student achievement to state standards,” said Wright. “These schools are receiving significant resources and will be held accountable for results. Every child in Virginia has a right to attend a school that meets state standards.”

Seventeen newly opened schools are automatically rated as conditionally accredited for 2010-2011.

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 2009 and the spring of 2010, 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.

###