



**For Immediate Release:** January 31, 2012

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## **Virginia Science Standards Earn an “A-” from Fordham Institute** *Science SOLs Praised as Thorough and Rigorous and a Model for Other States*

Virginia’s academic standards in science are among the best in the nation, according to a report released today by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. The influential research and policy institute gives Virginia an “A-” for the content and rigor of the 2010 Science Standards of Learning (SOL) and praises the standards as “among the few that we would cheerfully recommend as models for other states.”

The standards present seven strands in grades K-6 (scientific investigation, reasoning and logic; force, motion and energy; matter; life processes; interrelationships in earth/space systems; earth patterns, cycles and change; and earth resources) comprising key concepts and skills that students must learn and possess by the end of each grade.

In grades 7-12, the strands are presented by course — life science, physical science, earth science, biology, chemistry and physics. Learning objectives include the development of an understanding of the interrelationship of science, technology, engineering and mathematics — subjects known collectively as STEM.

“The Board of Education revised the commonwealth’s science standards two years ago to provide students with a solid foundation in the STEM studies essential for success in high-demand, high-wage and high-skill 21st-century careers,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright.

“The content material in the Virginia standards is well written and well organized by a group of authors whose knowledge of science is clearly substantial,” the Fordham Institute said. The report goes on to describe the supplemental Science SOL Curriculum Framework as “beautifully written” and especially useful for beginning teachers.

The Fordham Institute noted that while Virginia’s science standards are strong, “the life sciences are the best of the bunch.” The institute’s reviewers further commented that “the high school materials could likely be used for an Advanced Placement course but are certainly appropriate for the regular course offering, given the excellent background established in middle school.”

Virginia is one of only five states to receive a grade of A- or higher. A majority of states earned D’s or F’s in the report and 75 percent received a grade of C or lower. For additional details, see [The State of State Science Standards 2012](#) or [Science Virginia](#) for commonwealth-specific information.

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