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2014-2015 Accreditation Ratings Reflect Higher Standards for Students and Schools

All Schools Fully Accredited in 22 Divisions

The percentage of schools meeting state accreditation standards declined for a second consecutive year as a consequence of the growing impact of more rigorous reading, writing, science and mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL) tests introduced since 2011, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced today.

Sixty-eight percent, or 1,246, of Virginia’s 1,827 public schools are rated as Fully Accredited for 2014-2015 compared with 77 percent for 2013-2014, and 93 percent for 2012-2013. The number of schools Accredited with Warning rose to 545, an increase from last year’s total of 393. The drop in accreditation came despite statewide improvements in mathematics performance and hundreds of schools that also saw incremental gains in reading, writing and science.

“In every school division I have visited, I have been impressed by the determination of teachers, principals, superintendents and other educators to meet the higher expectations we now have for our students and schools,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “The challenge now is to move beyond the temporary disappointment of an accreditation rating and work together — school divisions shoulder to shoulder with the department — to share best practices and implement the instructional strategies that will move our students toward college and career readiness.”

2014-2015 State Accreditation Ratings						
Grade Span	Fully Accredited	Accredited with Warning	Provisionally Accredited	Conditional (New Schools)	Accreditation Denied	To Be Determined
Elementary	796	346		7	5	5
Middle	192	106		1	4	4
High	232	71	2	1		5
Combined	26	22		1	1	
Total	1,246	545	2	10	10	14

Virginia students began taking more challenging mathematics assessments in 2011-2012, and more challenging reading, writing and science tests the following year. The tests require students to apply content knowledge and critical-thinking skills to solve open-ended problems. Three-year averaging of performance in each subject area in the calculation of ratings provides less mitigation with each subsequent accreditation cycle as school ratings increasingly reflect achievement on the new tests.

“The SOL tests students began taking 16 years ago established a uniform floor across the state. Now the floor is being raised so all students — regardless of where they live, who they are, or their family’s income — will have a foundation for success in an increasingly competitive economy,” Board of Education President Christian N. Braunlich said. “These new tests represent higher expectations for our students and schools and meeting them will be a multiyear process.”

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“Virginia’s students are among the highest performing in the nation on the national reading, mathematics and science tests,” Secretary of Education Anne Holton said. “I am confident that the teachers, principals, superintendents and other educators who have brought our schools and students this far are up to this new challenge and, moving forward, we will see more and more schools regain full accreditation.”

Ten schools in six divisions are denied state accreditation for 2014-2015 because of persistently low student achievement:

- Alexandria — Jefferson-Houston Elementary for a third consecutive year
- Henrico County — L. Douglas Wilder Middle, which had been Accredited with Warning for three consecutive years
- Norfolk — Campostella Elementary, which had been Accredited with Warning for three consecutive years; William H. Ruffner Middle for a third consecutive year; Lake Taylor Middle, which had been Accredited with Warning for three consecutive years; and Lindenwood Elementary for a second consecutive year
- Northampton County — Kiptopeke Elementary, which had Conditional Accreditation for the last three years
- Petersburg — Peabody Middle for a ninth consecutive year and A.P. Hill Elementary for a second consecutive year
- Richmond — Fred D. Thompson Middle, which had been Accredited with Warning for three consecutive years

Schools denied accreditation are subject to corrective actions prescribed by the state Board of Education and affirmed through a memorandum of understanding with the local school board.

“We recognize the significant challenges confronting educators in these schools but cannot continue to accept these results as inevitable,” Staples said. “Our expectation is that student performance can and must show improvement and the partnership between VDOE and the local divisions is one means to accomplish this goal.”

The status of 14 schools will be determined by the Board of Education in October. 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 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. Schools seeking conditional accreditation are, by division, as follows:

- Dinwiddie County — Dinwiddie County Middle
- Hampton — Jane H. Bryan Elementary
- Lynchburg — Sandusky Middle
- Newport News — Newsome Park Elementary, Sedgefield Elementary and Willis A. Jenkins Elementary
- Norfolk — Booker T. Washington High and Tidewater Park Elementary
- Petersburg — Vernon Johns Junior High
- Portsmouth — I.C. Norcom High
- Richmond — Armstrong High, George Wythe High and Thomas C. Boushall Middle
- Virginia Beach — Bayside Middle

Two Richmond high schools — Huguenot High and John Marshall High — are Provisionally Accredited for 2014-2015. These schools met all requirements in English, mathematics, science and history and came within two points of the graduation and completion benchmark required for full accreditation for high schools.

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Ten newly opened schools are automatically rated as Conditionally Accredited for 2014-2015.

All schools are fully accredited in 22 of the commonwealth's 132 school divisions, compared with 36 divisions last year. The divisions with all schools fully accredited (other than new schools that automatically receive conditional accreditation) are as follows:

- Bland County
- Colonial Heights
- Craig County
- Falls Church
- Fluvanna County
- Fredericksburg
- Galax
- Goochland County
- King William County
- Lexington
- Manassas Park
- New Kent County
- Poquoson
- Powhatan County
- Rappahannock County
- Richmond County
- Roanoke County
- Salem
- West Point
- Williamsburg-James City County
- Wise County
- York County

For a school to earn full accreditation, at least 75 percent of students must pass reading and writing SOL tests, and at least 70 percent must pass state assessments in mathematics, science and history. High schools must also meet a benchmark for graduation and completion.

Accreditation ratings also may reflect credit earned by 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.

[Accreditation ratings for 2014-2015](#) and updated [online report cards for all schools and school divisions](#) are available on the VDOE website.

Under a flexibility waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education, supports and interventions under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act — also known since 2001 as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) — are focused on the lowest-performing Title I schools. These schools are identified as either Priority or Focus schools. Like state accreditation ratings, the federal designations are based on achievement on SOL tests during 2013-2014.

Priority schools — comprising the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools — must engage a state-approved turnaround partner to help design and implement school-reform models that meet state and federal requirements. The 36 schools identified as Priority schools for 2014-2015 are as follows:

- Accomack County — Metompkin Elementary
- Albemarle County — Benjamin F. Yancey Elementary
- Alexandria — Jefferson-Houston Elementary
- Buckingham County — Buckingham County Elementary and Buckingham County Primary
- Danville — J.M. Langston Focus Alternative School
- Franklin — Joseph P. King Jr. Middle and S.P. Morton Elementary
- Hampton — Jane H. Bryan Elementary
- Henrico County — L. Douglas Wilder Middle
- Lynchburg — Dearington Elementary/Innovation and Perrymont Elementary
- Martinsville — Albert Harris Elementary
- Newport News — Horace H. Epes Elementary, Newsome Park Elementary, Sedgefield Elementary and Willis A. Jenkins Elementary
- Norfolk — Campostella Elementary, Chesterfield Academy Elementary, Jacox Elementary, James Monroe Elementary, Lake Taylor Middle and Lindenwood Elementary

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- Petersburg — Peabody Middle
- Richmond — Binford Middle, Blackwell Elementary, Elkhardt Middle, Fred D. Thompson Middle, G.H. Reid Elementary, Ginter Park Elementary, Henderson Middle, John Marshall High, Martin Luther King Jr. Middle, Oak Grove/Bellemeade Elementary, Richmond Alternative and Woodville Elementary

Focus schools (comprising 10 percent of Title I schools selected on the basis of achievement gaps) must employ state-approved, school-improvement coaches. Focus schools retain their designation for a minimum of two years — unless they are subsequently identified as Priority schools or no longer receive federal Title I funding. The 72 Focus schools for 2014-2015 are as follows:

- Albemarle County — Agnor-Hurt Elementary, Mary Carr Greer Elementary, Paul H. Cale Elementary, Scottsville Elementary, Stony Point Elementary and Woodbrook Elementary
- Alexandria — Patrick Henry Elementary and William Ramsay Elementary
- Alleghany County — Mountain View Elementary
- Amherst County — Madison Heights Elementary
- Augusta County — Beverley Manor Elementary, North River Elementary and Riverheads Elementary
- Bedford County — Moneta Elementary
- Bristol — Washington-Lee Elementary
- Buena Vista — Enderly Heights Elementary and F.W. Kling Jr. Elementary
- Charlottesville — Clark Elementary
- Chesapeake — Norfolk Highlands Primary
- Chesterfield County — Marguerite F. Christian Elementary
- Clarke County — Boyce Elementary and D.G. Cooley Elementary
- Cumberland County — Cumberland Elementary
- Fairfax County — Annandale Terrace Elementary, Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences, Herndon Elementary, Hutchison Elementary, Sleepy Hollow Elementary and Woodley Hills Elementary
- Frederick County — Apple Pie Ridge Elementary, Indian Hollow Elementary, Orchard View Elementary, Redbud Run Elementary and Stonewall Elementary
- Grayson County — Baywood Elementary
- Halifax County — Cluster Springs Elementary and Sydnor Jennings Elementary
- Hampton — John B. Cary Elementary
- Harrisonburg — Smithland Elementary
- Henrico County — Charles M. Johnson Elementary, Dumbarton Elementary and Lakeside Elementary
- Lexington — Harrington Waddell Elementary
- Lunenburg County — Kenbridge Elementary
- Lynchburg — Heritage Elementary and Paul Munro Elementary
- Manassas — Baldwin Elementary and Jennie Dean Elementary
- Mecklenburg County — Clarksville Elementary and LaCrosse Elementary
- Newport News — Carver Elementary, L.F. Palmer Elementary, Lee Hall Elementary and Magruder Elementary
- Norfolk — Richard Bowling Elementary, Tanners Creek Elementary and William H. Ruffner Middle
- Patrick County — Stuart Elementary
- Prince Edward County — Prince Edward Middle
- Prince William County — Belmont Elementary
- Radford — Belle Heth Elementary and McHarg Elementary
- Richmond — Lucille M. Brown Middle and Overby-Sheppard Elementary

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- Rockbridge County — Natural Bridge Elementary
- Shenandoah County — W.W. Robinson Elementary
- Spotsylvania County — Spotswood Elementary
- Staunton — Bessie Weller Elementary
- Suffolk — Elephant's Fork Elementary
- Sussex County — Sussex Central Elementary
- Virginia Beach — College Park Elementary
- Waynesboro — Wenonah Elementary

Additional information on the progress of Virginia schools and divisions toward meeting the goals of the commonwealth's NCLB flexibility waiver is available on the [Federal Accountability](#) page of the VDOE website.

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