



**For Immediate Release**      March 30, 2015

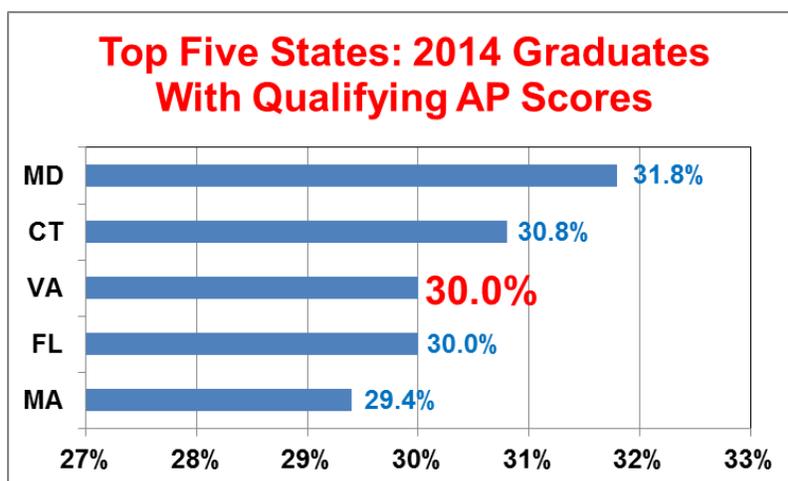
**Contact:**                      Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications (804) 371-2420  
   Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager (804) 225-2775

## **Virginia Again Third in Nation in AP Achievement** ***Thirty Percent of State's 2014 Graduates Earn Qualifying Scores***

Virginia again boasts the nation's third-highest percentage of public high school seniors qualifying for college credit on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, according to data released this month by the College Board.

According to the College Board, 30 percent of the commonwealth's 2014 graduating seniors earned a grade of three or higher on at least one AP examination, compared with 28.3 percent in 2013. Only two states — Maryland at 31.8 percent and Connecticut at 30.8 percent — had higher percentages of seniors earning qualifying scores.

Florida tied Virginia for third place in AP performance with 30 percent of its 2014 graduates also qualifying for college credit. Nationwide, 21.6 percent of 2014's graduating seniors achieved a score of three or higher on at least one AP test.



“We know that our teachers are challenging their students to reach higher when Virginia’s students outperform or are on a par with students in states like Massachusetts and Florida that provide statewide incentives to teachers and schools for increasing achievement on AP tests,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said.

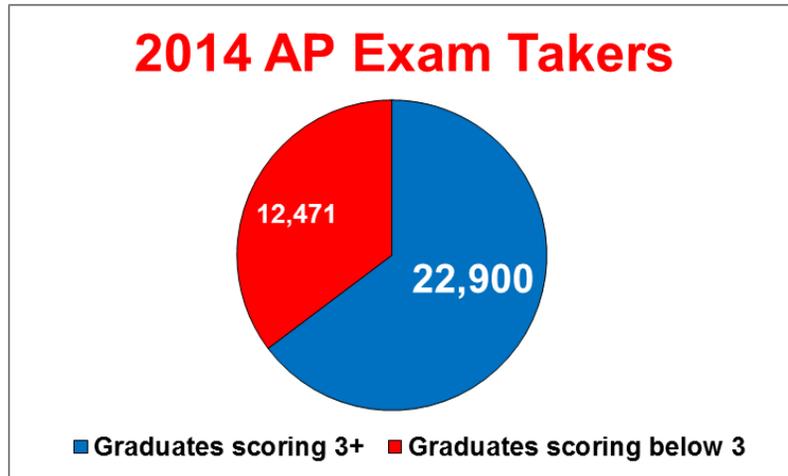
Four Virginia school divisions were recognized by the College Board as honor roll districts for raising achievement on AP examinations while increasing access to the courses. The divisions making the College Board's 2015 AP Honor Roll are as follows:

- Alexandria
- King George County
- Powhatan County
- Prince William County

(more)

The College Board also recognized Quantico Middle/High School on Marine Corps Base Quantico as an honor roll district.

Of the 35,371 class of 2014 graduates who took at least one AP test during their high school careers, 22,900 — or 65 percent — earned qualifying scores.



The number of Virginia public school graduates taking at least one AP examination has grown 82 percent since 2004, when only 19,457 took at least one test.

The number of African-American seniors graduating from high school having taken at least one AP examination has more than doubled in 10 years. In 2014, 4,860 black graduates participated in AP testing during high school, compared with 1,724 of 2004's African-American graduates. During the same period, the percentage of black graduates earning at least one qualifying AP score rose 6.9 points to 10.6 percent in 2014, compared with 3.7 percent in 2004.

The number of Hispanic Virginia graduates who took at least one AP examination has more than tripled since 2004. In 2014, 3,062 of Virginia's Hispanic graduates took at least one AP test, compared with only 940 of 2004's Hispanic graduates. During the same period, the percentage of Hispanic graduates earning at least one qualifying AP score rose 6.3 points to 28 percent in 2014, compared with 21.7 percent in 2004.

The commonwealth uses federal grant money to subsidize AP test fees for low-income students. Virginia also promotes AP participation through the Early College Scholars initiative, which allows students to earn transferable college credit while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma, and through the Virtual Virginia online program, which expands the number of AP courses available to students, especially in rural areas.

In addition, Virginia students earning a score of two or higher on certain AP examinations may substitute the tests for end-of-course SOL assessments in corresponding subject areas. And enrollment in AP courses is among the criteria for recognition of schools and school divisions under the Virginia Index of Performance awards program created by the Board of Education to encourage advanced learning and achievement.

The 10 most popular AP courses among Virginia's 2014 graduating seniors were, in descending order, US History, followed by English Language and Composition, U.S. Government and Politics, English Literature and Composition, Psychology, World History, Calculus AB, Statistics, Biology and Environmental Science.