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## Virginia Students Make New Gains on SAT *Performance in Math & Writing Improves, Reading Steady*

Virginia public school graduates in 2015 continued to buck a multiyear, nationwide trend of lower achievement on the SAT college-admissions test by posting gains in mathematics and writing while maintaining their performance level in reading.

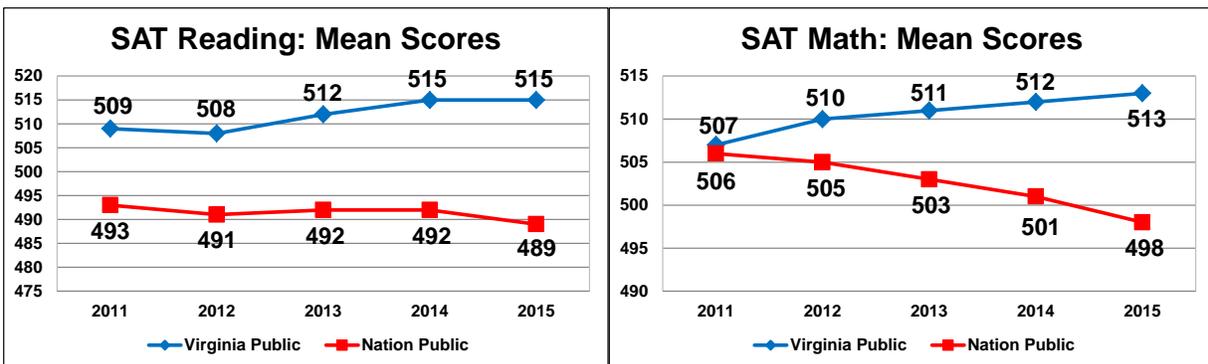
The College Board, which publishes the SAT, reported today that the average scores for public school graduates in the commonwealth rose by one point in mathematics, by two points in writing and held steady in reading. Nationwide, achievement declined in all three subjects on the SAT.

Sixty-eight percent of Virginia’s 2015 public school graduates took the SAT, which is, by far, the predominant admissions test in Virginia, and therefore is a key indicator of the effectiveness of schools in preparing students for the first year of college.

“More important than a one-year change is the long-term trend,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “The performance of Virginia students on the SAT during the last five years provides additional evidence that the efforts of teachers and other educators to help students meet Virginia’s high expectations are producing real gains in learning and achievement.”

The commonwealth’s public school graduates outscored their nationwide peers on all three subsections of the college-admissions test:

- Virginia’s public school mean score in reading of 515 was 26 points higher.
- Virginia’s public school mean score in mathematics of 513 was 15 points higher.
- Virginia’s public school mean score in writing of 495 was 20 points higher.



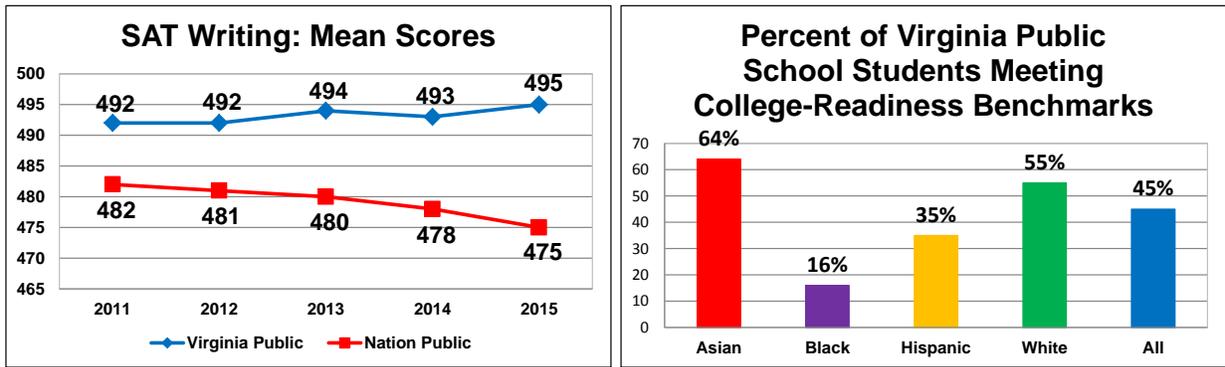
“These latest SAT results mirror what we saw last month with the ACT and provide further confirmation that the higher expectations for learning and achievement adopted by the Board of Education are resulting in better-prepared graduates,” Board of Education President Billy K. Cannaday Jr. said. “I congratulate all of the teachers and other educators for their success in helping students advance toward college and career readiness.”

(more)

Of the 2015 Virginia public school graduates who took the SAT, 45 percent achieved the College Board’s benchmark for college readiness. The benchmark score of 1550 (critical reading, mathematics and writing sections combined) indicates a 65-percent likelihood of achieving a B-grade-point average or higher during the first year of college. Nationwide, 41.9 percent of SAT takers met the readiness standard.

Sixteen percent of black and 35 percent of Hispanic Virginia public school seniors achieved the college-readiness benchmark, compared with 64 percent of Asian and 55 percent of white graduates.

"These chronic and persistent achievement gaps mean we must all redouble our efforts to ensure that we are preparing all of our students to succeed, especially those who most need a lift up through education," Secretary of Education Anne Holton said.



The achievement gaps between student subgroups are also reflected in their mean scores.

2015 SAT Virginia Public School Mean Scores						
Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Public School Students	515	489	513	498	495	475
Asian	550	527	585	573	540	525
Black	443	426	434	422	423	412
Hispanic	492	442	489	450	473	432
White	538	524	534	529	516	506

The “2015 SAT Virginia All-Student Mean Scores” table includes the performance of private, parochial and home-schooled students.

2015 SAT Virginia All-Student Mean Scores						
Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Students	518	495	516	511	499	484
Asian	545	525	589	598	538	531
Black	445	431	435	428	425	418
Hispanic	496	449	492	456	478	439
White	542	529	535	534	521	513

The College Board also reported today that 2015 Virginia public school graduates took 140,693 Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, an increase of 1.8 percent. Of those tests, 60.8 percent earned a grade of 3 or higher, the generally accepted benchmark for college credit.