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## Virginia Again Earns Top Special Education Rating

RICHMOND, Va. — For a fourth consecutive year, Virginia has earned the highest possible rating from the U.S. Department of Education for compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Virginia is one of 23 states and territories that received a “Meets Requirements” designation on the federal education department’s 2016 IDEA report card. Thirty-four states and territories were classified as needing assistance from the federal education agency, and three as needing intervention to improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

“This rating reflects the passion Virginia special educators have for helping students with disabilities achieve their full potential as students and as members of their communities,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “The details of the federal report also provide a list of areas where our school divisions may need additional guidance and support from the state.”

The annual federal IDEA report card scores states on compliance with the law, participation and performance of students with disabilities in state and national tests, and on success in improving the graduation rate of special education students.

Virginia earned the maximum number of possible points on all 10 compliance indicators — including indicators related to the disproportionate identification of minority students for special education services and disciplinary actions — and on five of the 14 performance-related indicators in achieving a total score of 87.5. The [2016 IDEA state report cards](#) are based on data from the 2013-2014 school year.

IDEA, which was reauthorized by Congress in 2004, requires states and school divisions to ensure that children with disabilities receive educational services that meet their educational needs and prepare them for further education, employment and productive lives. IDEA also requires states to establish targets in their annual State Performance plans for achieving the objectives of the law.

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