



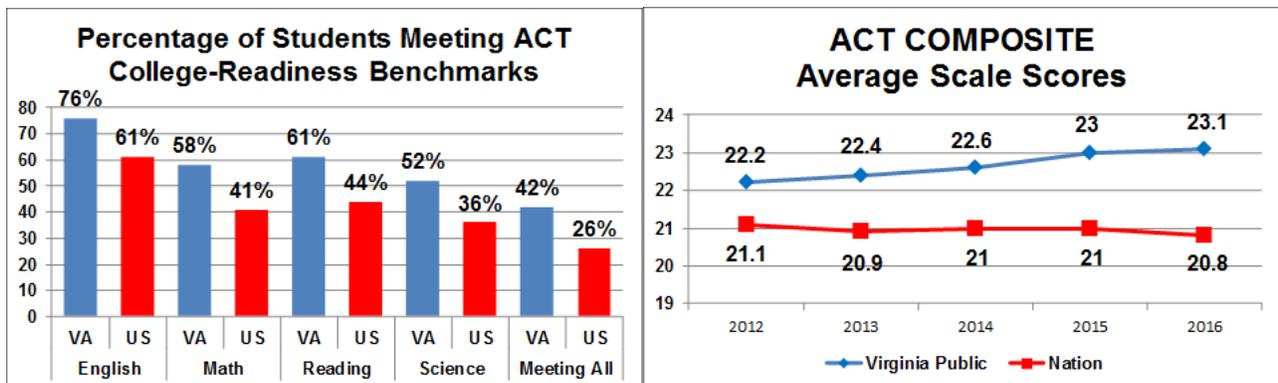
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Contact: Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420
Michelle Stoll, Communications Projects Coordinator (804) 225-2543

Virginia Students Again Outscore Nation on ACT *Commonwealth Achievement Increases, While Nation Declines*

Virginia students again outperformed their peers nationwide by significant margins on the ACT this year as the number of the commonwealth’s high school seniors taking the college-readiness examination continued to grow.

The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting the ACT’s college-readiness benchmark in each assessed content area in 2016 was 15 or more points higher than the percentages nationwide. The college-readiness benchmarks identify students whose ACT scores indicate that they are prepared for first-year college English composition, reading, algebra and biology.



Information based on 2016 test data

“Thanks to effective teachers focused on high state standards and supported by strong division leadership, Virginia graduates continue to surpass national college-readiness benchmarks,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples. “With increasing ACT participation among Virginia graduates, we are better able to use these measurements to predict how successful our young people will be for their first year of college.”

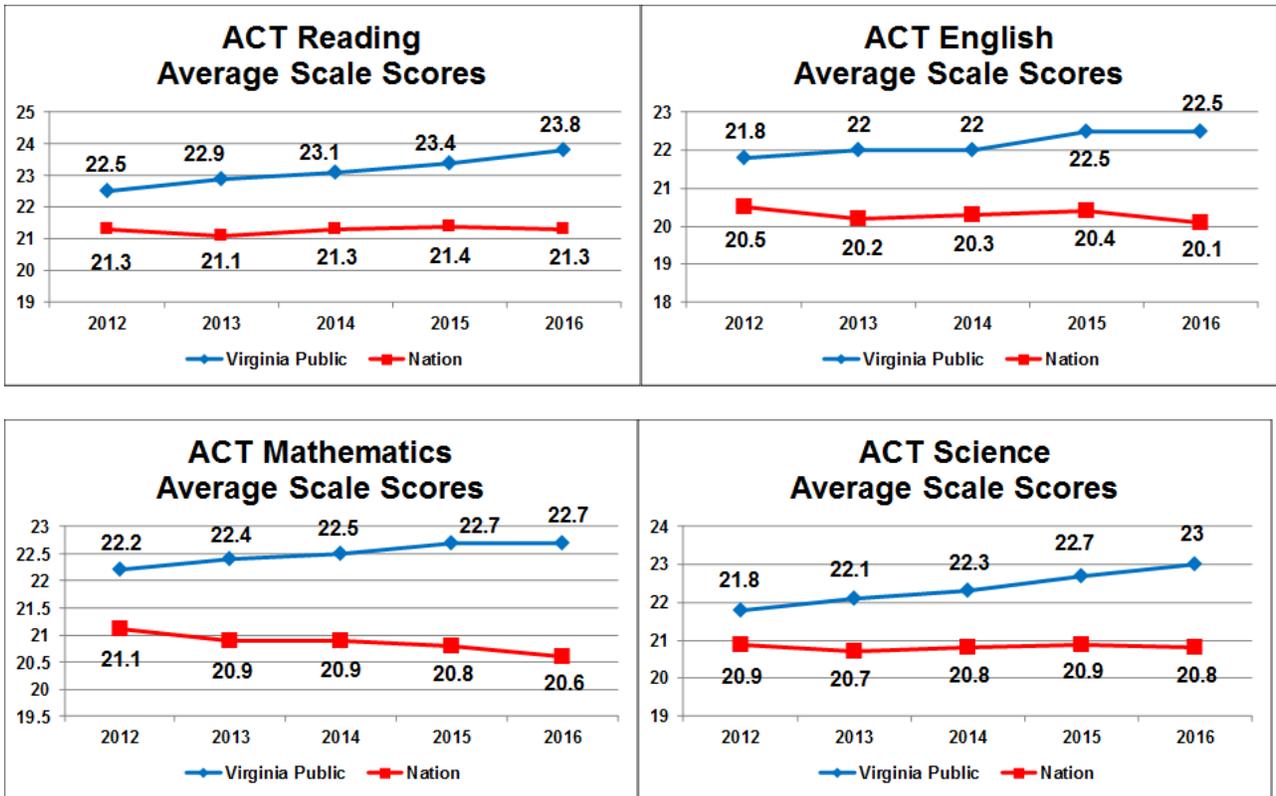
The commonwealth’s public school students achieved a composite score of 23.1 on the ACT, compared with 20.8 for graduates nationwide. Public school students accounted for 45 of the 55 Virginia graduates who achieved perfect scores on the test.

Virginia public school 2016 graduates achieved gains on the reading and science portions of the ACT, compared with the average scores in 2015. Performance of students nationwide was relatively flat.

"We are most appreciative of the efforts of local boards, school leaders and teachers to embrace the importance of preparing students to be college and career ready. Continued student gains on the ACT reflect the collective commitment of key state and local partners to prepare each graduate for success beyond high school," said State Board President, Billy K. Cannaday Jr.

(more)

ACT results are reported on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest score.



An estimated 31 percent of 2015 Virginia graduates — including private and homeschooled students — took the ACT, up from 30-percent the year before and 25 percent in 2012. The overall composite score for Virginia high school graduates — public, private and homeschooled — was 23.3.

A total of 21,824 Virginia 2016 public school graduates took the ACT, compared with 18,298 of the state's 2012 public school graduates, a 19 percent increase in participation.

While the number of Virginia students taking the ACT continues to grow, the SAT remains the dominant college-admissions test in the commonwealth. The College Board is expected to release its annual report on student achievement on the SAT in early September.

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