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## **2011-2012 Math SOL Results Begin New Trend Line** *Gains in Algebra & Geometry Since End-of-First-Semester 2011-2012 Testing*

Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said today that the performance of students on rigorous new state mathematics assessments introduced during the 2011-2012 school year provides a “solid foundation” for future achievement.

“Virginia teachers and students worked hard throughout the school year — and for many, into the summer — to meet the Board of Education’s challenging new mathematics standards,” Wright said. “While we have a long climb before we reach the achievement levels we hope to see on the new mathematics tests, the results released today represent a good start and provide a solid foundation for further progress in 2012-2013.”

Statewide, full-year 2011-2012 pass rates on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II were 10 to 14 points higher than the results for students tested last fall and winter at the end of the first semester in high schools and middle schools following four-by-four block schedules.

Test	First Semester 2011-2012	All Tests 2011-2012
Algebra I	63%	75%
Geometry	60%	74%
Algebra II	59%	69%
Grade 8		60%
Grade 7		58%
Grade 6		74%
Grade 5		67%
Grade 4		70%
Grade 3		64%

The Board of Education revised and strengthened Virginia's mathematics standards in 2009 to ensure that Virginia public school students are prepared for the challenges of the first year of college or meaningful entry-level employment when they graduate from high school. Last year's SOL mathematics tests were the first to reflect the increased rigor of the new standards.

“Raising standards was the right thing to do and in the long-term interest of Virginia students and our economy,” Governor Robert F. McDonnell said. “I commend all of our teachers and students for their excellent efforts in adapting to and embracing these challenging new standards. This is a necessary step in ensuring that Virginia students are ready to excel in our globally competitive economy. Higher standards mean greater accomplishments and I know Virginia's students, teachers and parents are ready for this challenge. It is a challenge we must meet if we're going to succeed in the economy of the decades ahead.”

(more)

“As school divisions align curriculum and instruction with the new standards and focus on strengthening students’ problem-solving skills, I am confident that we will see higher achievement in mathematics and more graduates who are truly college and career ready,” Board of Education President David M. Foster said.

Foster pointed to the success of students on end-of-course tests in dozens of divisions as evidence that, while challenging, the new, more rigorous mathematics standards established by the board are achievable.

- Algebra I — Students in 80 of Virginia’s 132 school divisions and 452 schools achieved pass rates of 70 percent or higher; students in 37 divisions and 348 schools achieved pass rates of 80 percent or higher; and students in two divisions and 78 middle schools and 3 high schools achieved 100 percent pass rates.
- Geometry — Students in 68 divisions and 387 schools achieved pass rates of 70 percent or higher; students in 29 divisions and 304 schools achieved pass rates of 80 percent or higher; and students in 148 middle schools and two high schools achieved 100 percent pass rates.
- Algebra II — Students in 55 divisions and 172 schools achieved pass rates of 70 percent or higher; students in 20 divisions and 95 schools achieved pass rates of 80 percent or higher; and students in eight middle schools and one high school achieved 100 percent pass rates.

The online mathematics SOL tests taken by most students included new technology-enhanced items designed to mirror common classroom experiences. The items also require students to apply mathematical knowledge in solving multistep problems. Technology-enhanced items made up about 15 percent of each online middle and high school test.

Statewide, 87 percent of the students who passed the new Algebra I SOL Test were successful on their first attempt, as were 86 percent who passed the Geometry test, and 88 percent who passed the Algebra II test. Twelve percent of students passing in Algebra I and Geometry succeeded on their second attempt, as did 13 percent of students who passed in Algebra II.

Most students who were unsuccessful on a new mathematics end-of-course test in 2011-2012 took the assessment two or three times. These students will have additional opportunities to prepare for retesting during 2012-2013.

Students had the most difficulty on the grade-3, grade-7 and grade-8 tests. The third-grade test no longer assesses K-2 content. The seventh-grade assessment includes additional content and concepts formerly taught and tested in grade 8. The increased rigor of the eighth-grade standards is designed to prepare students who were not ready for Algebra I in middle school to tackle the course during their freshman year.

VDOE today also released 2011-2012 SOL results in English, science and history/social science. Achievement levels in these subjects were relatively stable with a noteworthy three-point gain in grade-3 reading pass rate, from 83 in 2010-2011, to 86 percent in 2011-2012. Legislation proposed by Governor McDonnell and passed by the 2012 General Assembly requires schools to provide intervention services for third graders who demonstrate reading deficiencies in reading.

Wright said that VDOE will continue to provide training and resources related to the mathematics standards and tests — and the new English and science standards and assessments that will be fully implemented during the 2012-2013 school year. The state superintendent also pledged that the department would follow up on the results of an unprecedented June survey of 11,000 Virginia teachers by creating new channels for the direct communication of SOL-related information and resources in all content areas from VDOE to the classroom.

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Accreditation ratings and student subgroup performance will be reported next month, along with data on progress in raising achievement in the commonwealth's lowest-performing schools, as described in Virginia's approved No Child Left Behind flexibility waiver. Three-year averaging will mitigate the impact of the 2011-2012 mathematics tests on accreditation ratings and other accountability determinations.

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