



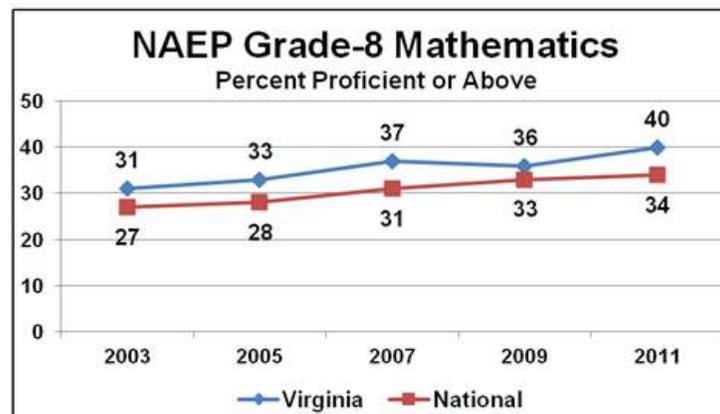
**For Immediate Release:**  
**Contact:**

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## **Virginia Students Post Math Gains on Nation's Report Card *Percentage of Grade-8 Students "Proficient and Above" Jumps 4 Points***

Results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that Virginia public school students continue to rank among the nation's highest achievers in reading and mathematics and outperform their peers nationwide, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) announced today.

Eighth-grade students in Virginia made noteworthy gains in mathematics. The percentage of grade-8 students who met or exceeded the rigorous NAEP standard for proficiency increased by a statistically significant four points to 40 percent in 2011, compared with 36 percent in 2009 when the national tests were last administered.



The percentage of eighth graders achieving at the advanced level in mathematics rose three points, to 11 percent, which also represents a statistically significant improvement in performance since 2009.

The average mathematics score for Virginia students in grade 8 increased by three points to 289, compared with the national public-school average of 283. Since 2005, the average score of Virginia eighth graders has increased a statistically significant five points.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright attributed the gains to revisions in the commonwealth's Standards of Learning (SOL) program.

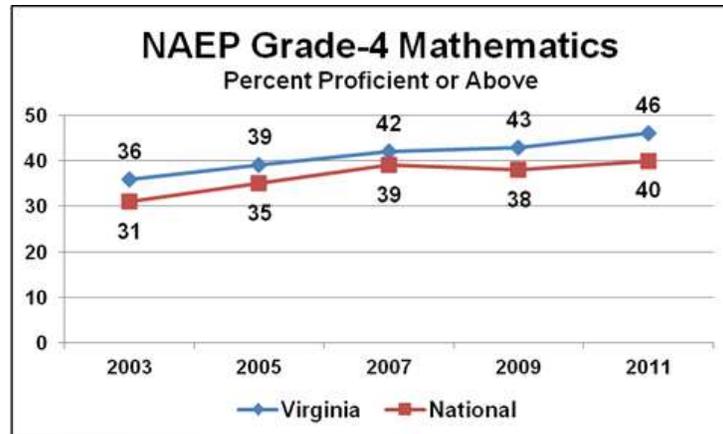
"Middle school mathematics teachers across the state have been working hard — with support from division specialists and VDOE — to implement a series of Board of Education decisions to increase the rigor of mathematics instruction," Wright said. "The 2011 NAEP results confirm the gains we have already seen on middle school and Algebra I SOL tests."

"The 2011 NAEP results should encourage teachers this year as they implement the challenging mathematics standards adopted by the board in 2009," Board of Education President Eleanor B. Saslaw said. The mathematics SOL tests students take in spring 2012 will be based on the new standards.

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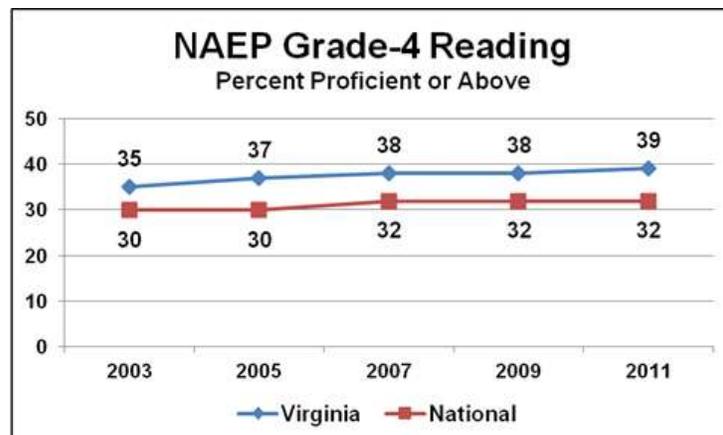
NAEP, also known as the Nation’s Report Card, is a national measure of student achievement. Results reflect the performance of representative samples of students in each state and nationwide. The 2011 NAEP sampling of Virginia students included approximately 7,600 fourth-grade students from 120 elementary schools and 5,500 eighth graders from 100 middle schools. NAEP results are not reported by division or for individual schools.

Reading and mathematics tests are administered every two years and provide a means of comparing the progress of states in raising student achievement. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a proficient NAEP score represents solid performance on challenging subject matter — a more rigorous standard than grade-level achievement.



Forty-six percent of Virginia grade-4 students scored proficient or above in mathematics — six points higher than the percentage nationwide and a three-point increase since 2009. Since 2005, the percentage of Virginia fourth graders achieving at proficient or above has risen by a statistically significant seven points. The percentage of fourth graders achieving at the advanced level in mathematics rose from seven percent in 2009, to nine percent. A three-point increase in advanced achievement on the grade-4 mathematics test since 2005 is regarded as significant.

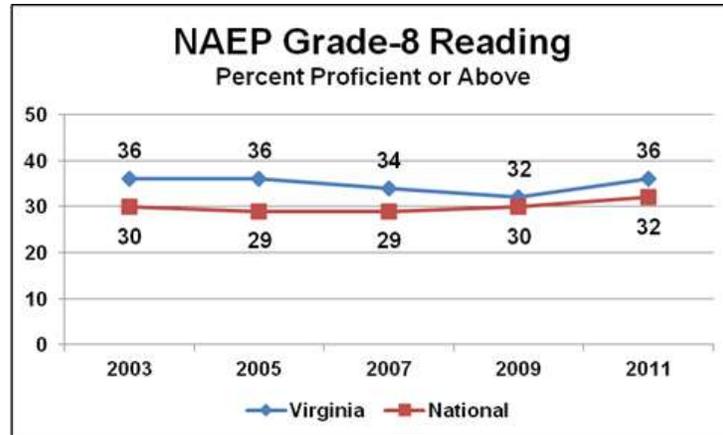
The average mathematics score of Virginia fourth graders was 245, a statistically significant five points higher than the national average of 240, and a two-point increase in grade-4 mathematics achievement since 2009. The average score of Virginia fourth graders has increased a statistically significant five points since 2005.



Reading achievement of Virginia fourth-grade students on the 2011 NAEP was statistically similar to performance on the 2009 test. The percentage of Virginia fourth-grade students scoring proficient or above increased from 38 to 39 percent. The percentage performing at the advanced level increased two points to 11 percent. Since 2005, advanced reading achievement for Virginia fourth graders is up by a significant three points.

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Fourth-grade Virginia students achieved an average score of 226 in reading, which was significantly higher than the average for the nation. Only three states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New Jersey, had statistically higher grade-4 reading scores. Two years ago, only Massachusetts outperformed Virginia in grade-4 reading. The change in the average score of Virginia fourth graders since 2009 — from 227 to 226 in 2011 — is not statistically significant.



The reading performance of Virginia eighth graders was flat compared with achievement in 2009 and since 2003. Thirty-six percent of Virginia grade-8 students performed at the proficient level or above in reading in 2011, a four-point, but statistically insignificant, increase since 2009. The increase in the percentage of Virginia eighth graders reading at the advanced level — from two percent in 2009 to four percent in 2011 — was statistically significant.

Virginia eighth-grade students achieved an average reading score of 267, which was higher than the national average, but statistically similar to the 2009 state average of 266.

“The revised English standards that schools will begin implementing in 2012-2013 place increased emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary and research — areas critical to strengthening adolescent literacy and building college readiness,” Wright said. “As schools implement these more challenging standards, it is my expectation that the reading performance of Virginia eighth graders on the NAEP will improve.”

The next administration of the national reading and mathematics assessments is scheduled for 2013. More information about NAEP achievement of Virginia students is available on the [NCES website](#).

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