



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

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Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420  
Julie C. Grimes, Communications Manager, (804) 225-2775

## Virginia Students Continue to Outperform Peers Nationwide on SAT *Participation and Performance of Commonwealth’s Ethnic Groups Also Increase*

Virginia’s 2012 public school graduates outperformed their peers nationwide on the SAT college-admissions test, according to results released today by the College Board. The commonwealth’s graduating seniors achieved at higher levels than public school students nationwide on all three SAT subsections:

- The average reading score of 508 for Virginia public school students is 17 points higher than the national average.
- The average mathematics score of 510 for Virginia public school students is five points higher.
- The average writing score of 492 for Virginia public school students is 11 points higher.

In addition, Virginia public school students in all ethnic groups that the College Board reports, — American Indian, Asian, African American, Hispanic and White — outperformed their peers nationwide on all three SAT subsections.

**2012 SAT Virginia Public School Mean Scores**

Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Public School Students	508	491	510	505	492	481
American Indian	502	479	493	485	481	458
Asian	536	519	579	573	537	522
Black	432	424	427	425	417	412
Hispanic	486	443	489	458	474	437
White	535	523	535	533	516	508

The College Board also reported that four out of every 10 Virginia public school 2012 graduates who took the SAT were members of a minority group, which reflects the commonwealth’s racial and ethnic diversity. Sixteen percent (8,778 students) of public school SAT takers reported that English is not exclusively their first language. Additionally, 32 percent reported their parents’ highest level of education as a high school diploma or less.

A total of 53,806 public school graduates in the state took the SAT — a slight increase in participation over the previous year’s 53,457 public school participants. In all, 68 percent of the state’s public school graduates in 2012 took the SAT.

“As with the mathematics standards, Virginia’s new English standards require students to demonstrate their ability to reason, draw conclusions and defend their responses,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “These are the very critical-thinking and higher-level reasoning skills students must have for success on today’s SAT.”

Virginia students were tested for the first time in 2011-2012 on the revised and more rigorous mathematics standards that the Board of Education approved in 2009. This school year, new English assessments — based on college and career ready standards approved by the board in 2010 — will be implemented.

“By incorporating more rigorous and challenging standards in all subjects we are preparing our students with 21st-century skills,” Board of Education President David M. Foster said. “The board takes seriously its duty to ensure that students graduating from a Virginia public school are prepared to succeed in college and the workplace.”

The average scores for 2012 Virginia public school graduates rose three points in mathematics, dropped by one point in critical reading and remained unchanged in writing over last year’s results. Among public school students nationwide, achievement dropped in all three areas — by two points in critical reading, one point in mathematics and one point in writing.

Since 2008, average SAT scores of Virginia public school students have increased by one point in both reading and mathematics and decreased by two points in writing, compared with five-year decreases in public schools nationwide of five points in reading, three points in mathematics and six points in writing.

Overall average achievement of all Virginia high school seniors — including private and home-schooled students — decreased by two points in reading, increased three points in mathematics and was unchanged in writing.

- Virginia’s all-student average of 510 in reading is 14 points higher than the national all-student average of 496.
- The commonwealth’s all-student average of 512 in mathematics is two points lower than the national average.
- Virginia’s all-student average writing score of 495 is seven points higher than the national average.

While the number of Virginia students taking the rival ACT is increasing, the SAT remains the dominant college-entrance examination in Virginia.

The College Board also reported that the number of Virginia public school students who took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) examination during their high school career increased by 5.7 percent this year and the number of tests taken increased by 9 percent.

### 2012 AP Virginia Public School Participation & Achievement

Group	Test Takers			Exams Taken		Number of 3-5 Scores	
	Total	Increase from last year	% of Total	Total	Increase from last year	Total	Change from last year
All Students	70,067	5.7%	100	133,245	9.0%	80,194	12.2%
American Indian	312	1.6%	0.4	551	3.2%	290	-6.1%
Asian	8,792	5.0%	12.5	19,867	8.0%	13,114	13.0%
Black	7,931	5.0%	11.3	12,764	7.6%	4,200	16.2%
Hispanic	4,727	6.6%	6.7	8,305	11.2%	4,273	12.2%
White	42,136	4.6%	60.1	80,668	8.1%	52,198	10.7%

The number of AP examinations taken by 2012 public school graduates that qualified for college credit increased by 12.2 percent. Of the 133,245 AP tests taken by Virginia public school students, 80,194, or 60.2 percent, earned a grade of 3 or higher.

The College Board’s February 2012 *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* ranked Virginia third in the nation in achievement on AP examinations. The College Board will use the AP data released today to update its state rankings early next year.

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