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Virginia Students Outperform Nation on ACT

Virginia students 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-admissions examination continued to grow.

The commonwealth’s public school students achieved a composite score of 22.6, compared with 21.0 for graduates nationwide, and public school students accounted for 24 of the 26 Virginia graduates who achieved perfect scores on the test. ACT results are reported on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest possible score.

Virginia public school 2014 graduates achieved statistically significant gains on the mathematics, reading and science portions of the test compared with the average scores of graduates in 2013. The average for Virginia public school graduates was unchanged on the English usage and grammar section of the ACT.

“These results build on long-term trends of higher achievement and increased participation in ACT testing,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “Both of these trends reflect the successful efforts of educators across the state to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful and pursue their postsecondary dreams.”

Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2010	21.7	20.5	22.0	21.0	22.3	21.3	21.9	20.9	22.1	21.0
2011	21.8	20.6	22.1	21.1	22.5	21.3	21.8	20.9	22.2	21.1
2012	21.8	20.5	22.2	21.1	22.5	21.3	21.8	20.9	22.2	21.1
2013	22.0	20.2	22.4	20.9	22.9	21.1	22.1	20.7	22.4	20.9
2014	22.0	20.3	22.5	20.9	23.1	21.3	22.3	20.8	22.6	21.0

The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting ACT college-readiness benchmarks was 10 or more points higher than the percentages nationwide. The benchmarks identify students whose scores indicate that they are prepared for first-year college English composition, reading, algebra and biology. ACT’s adjustments this year to the benchmark scores in reading and science impacted the college-ready percentages in those subjects.

Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Meeting all 4	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2010	74	66	52	43	59	52	37	29	31	24
2011	74	66	54	45	60	52	36	30	31	25
2012	74	67	55	46	61	52	37	31	32	25
2013	75	64	56	44	56	44	46	36	37	26
2014	74	64	56	43	56	44	48	37	37	26

(more)

During 2014, participation in ACT testing among Virginia public school graduates increased by more than 4 percent: 19,491 of the state’s graduating public school seniors took the ACT, compared with 18,708 in 2013. In all, 22,977 Virginia graduates — including private and homeschooled students — took the test, compared with 22,165 in 2013.

The overall composite score for Virginia high school graduates — public, private and homeschooled — was 22.8. Twenty-eight percent of all 2014 Virginia graduates took the ACT, up from 26 percent the year before.

Virginia All Students School Average ACT Scores										
Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2010	22.0	20.5	22.1	21.0	22.5	21.3	21.9	20.9	22.3	21.0
2011	22.1	20.6	22.2	21.1	22.7	21.3	21.8	20.9	22.3	21.1
2012	22.1	20.5	22.3	21.1	22.7	21.3	21.9	20.9	22.4	21.1
2013	22.3	20.2	22.5	20.9	23.1	21.1	22.2	20.7	22.6	20.9
2014	22.4	20.3	22.7	20.9	23.4	21.3	22.4	20.8	22.8	21.0

Percentage of All Virginia Students Meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks										
Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Meeting all 4	
	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US	VA	US
2010	76	66	53	43	61	52	37	29	31	24
2011	76	66	55	45	61	52	36	30	32	25
2012	76	67	56	46	63	52	38	31	33	25
2013	76	64	57	44	57	44	47	36	37	26
2014	76	64	57	43	58	44	49	37	38	26

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

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