



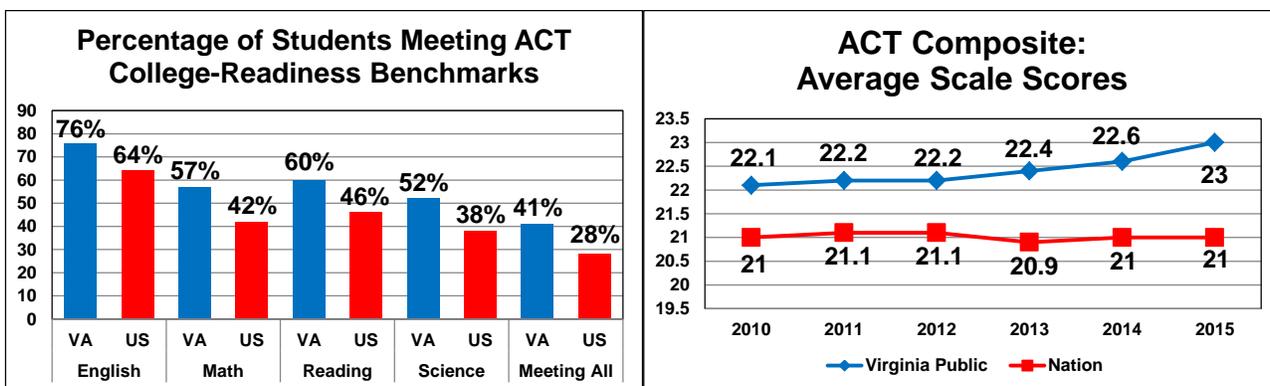
For Immediate Release: August 26, 2015

Contact: Charles B. Pyle, Director of Communications, (804) 371-2420

## Virginia Students Outperform Nation on ACT *Achievement up in Commonwealth, Flat Nationwide*

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-admissions examination continued to grow.

The percentage of Virginia public school students meeting the ACT’s college-readiness benchmark in each assessed content area was 12 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.



“As more Virginia students elect to take the ACT, the assessment becomes an increasingly useful measure of the commonwealth’s success in preparing young people for the challenges they’ll face in their first year of college,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “These latest ACT results are evidence that high state standards, innovative leadership at the division and building levels, and outstanding secondary teachers are producing better outcomes for more and more of Virginia’s high school graduates.”

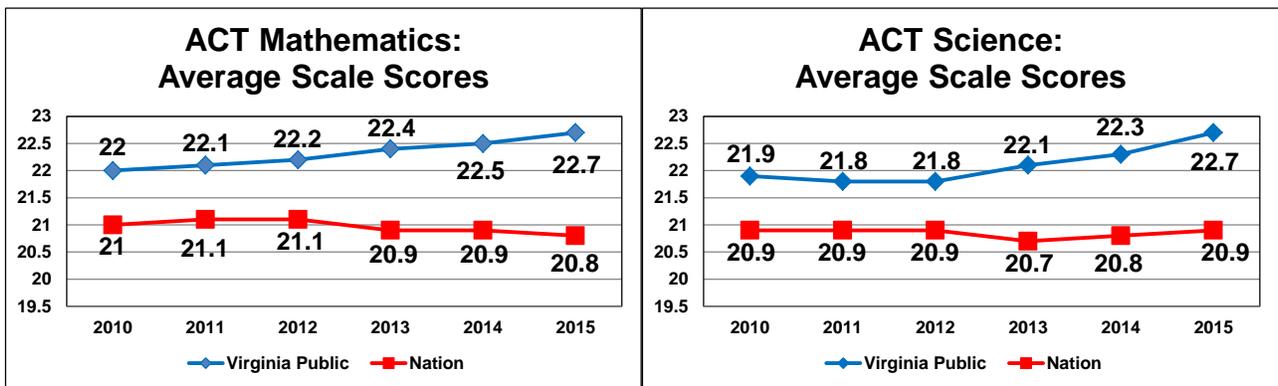
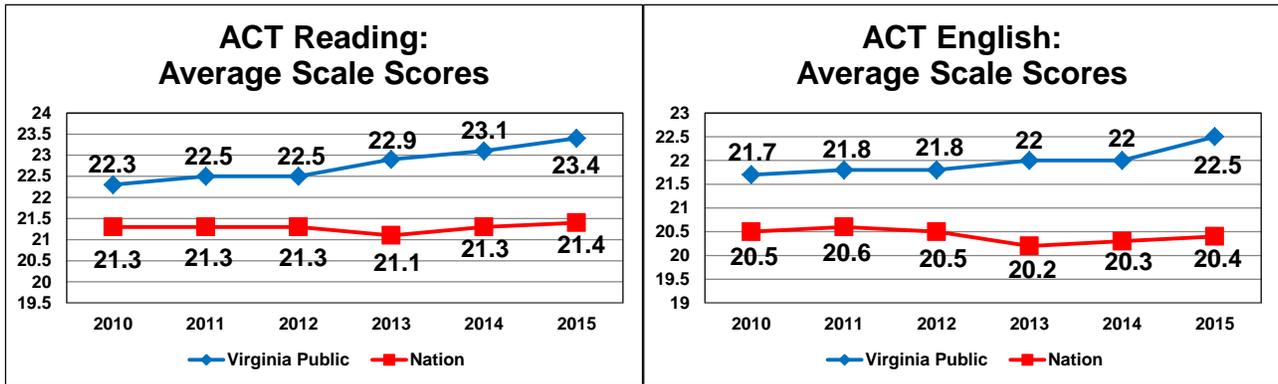
The commonwealth’s public school students achieved a composite score of 23.0 on the ACT, compared with 21.0 for graduates nationwide, and public school students accounted for 25 of the 32 Virginia graduates who achieved perfect scores on the test.

Virginia public school 2015 graduates achieved statistically significant gains on the mathematics, reading, English usage and grammar, and science portions of the ACT, compared with the average scores in 2014. Performance of students nationwide was relatively flat.

“The upward trend in the performance of Virginia students on the ACT since 2012 corresponds with the implementation of college- and career-ready state standards and assessments in mathematics, language arts and science,” Board of Education President Billy K. Cannaday Jr. said. “The progress of students toward meeting these higher state expectations is reflected in the ACT.”

(more)

ACT results are reported on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest score. When comparing average scores, a difference of 0.1 percent or greater is considered statistically significant.



An estimated 30 percent of 2015 Virginia graduates — including private and homeschooled students — took the ACT, up from 28 percent the year before and 22 percent in 2010. The overall composite score for Virginia high school graduates — public, private and homeschooled — was 23.1.

A total of 21,189 Virginia 2015 public school graduates took the ACT, compared with 16,118 of the state's 2010's public school graduates, a 31-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.

###