



For Immediate Release: September 27, 2016

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Virginia Students Outperform Nation on SAT *Performance in Reading Improves, Mathematics Steady*

Virginia public school graduates in 2016 continued to buck a multiyear, nationwide trend of sharply lower achievement on the SAT college-admissions test.

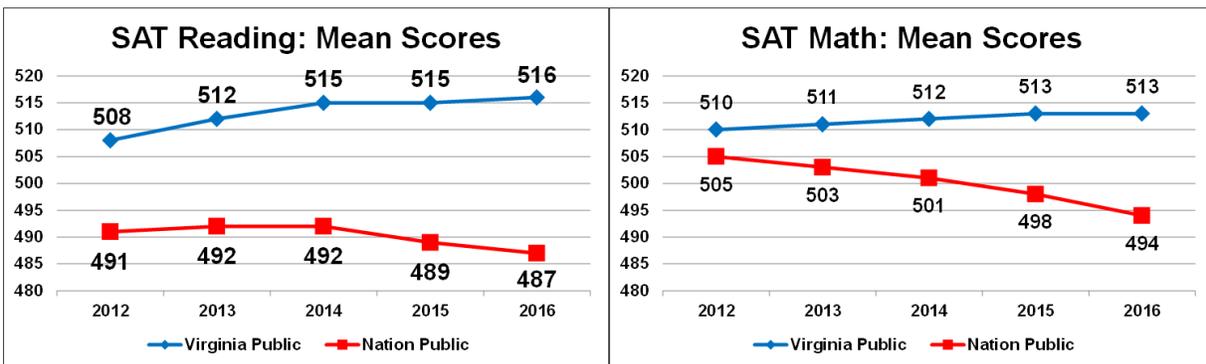
The College Board, which publishes the SAT, reported today that the average scores for public school graduates in the commonwealth rose by one point in reading, held steady in mathematics, and fell one point in writing. Nationwide, achievement declined in all three subjects on the SAT.

Sixty-five percent of Virginia’s 2016 public school graduates took the SAT, which is, by far, the predominant admissions test in Virginia, and therefore is a key indicator of the effectiveness of schools in preparing students for the first year of college.

“With the redesign of the SAT this year, the performance of Virginia’s 2016 graduating seniors caps a decade-long trend of increased achievement,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “The challenge now as the commonwealth revises its diploma standards is to maintain strong academic performance while expanding the high school experience to include the 21st-century skills demanded by today’s employers.”

The commonwealth’s public school graduates outscored their nationwide peers on all three subsections of the college-admissions test:

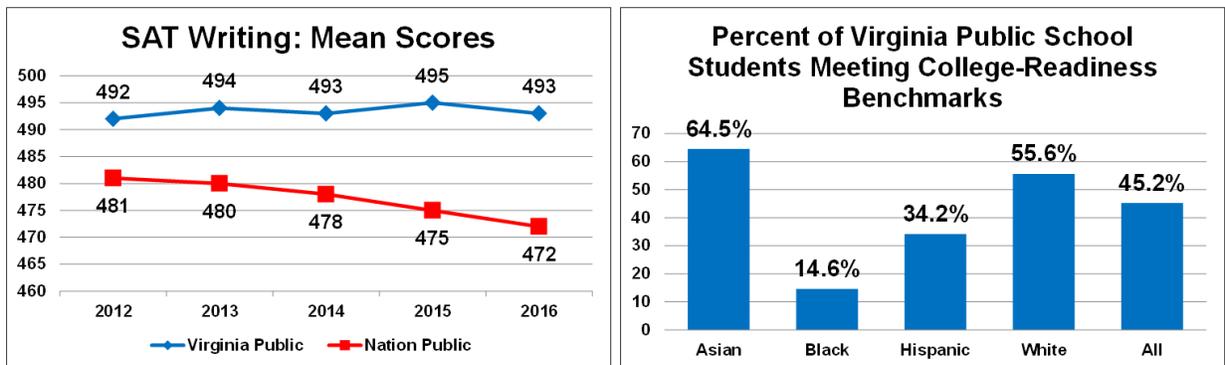
- Virginia’s public school mean score in reading of 516 was 29 points higher.
- Virginia’s public school mean score in mathematics of 513 was 19 points higher.
- Virginia’s public school mean score in writing of 493 was 21 points higher.



Of the 2016 Virginia public school graduates who took the SAT, 45.2 percent achieved the College Board’s benchmark for college readiness. The benchmark score of 1550 (critical reading, mathematics and writing sections combined) indicates a 65-percent likelihood of achieving a B-grade-point average or higher during the first year of college. Nationwide, 37.3 percent of SAT takers met the readiness standard.

(more)

“While the overall performance of Virginia students compares favorably with that of their nationwide peers, the wide achievement gaps visible when we dig deeper into the data remind us that outcomes are not improving for far too many students of color,” Board of Education President Billy K. Cannaday Jr. said. “Narrowing and ultimately closing these gaps is the state board’s top priority.”



The achievement gaps between student subgroups are also reflected in their mean scores.

2016 SAT Virginia Public School Mean Scores						
Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Public School Students	516	487	513	494	493	472
Asian	555	530	590	575	545	526
Black	439	423	431	419	418	408
Hispanic	494	441	489	446	470	429
White	542	524	537	528	516	505

The “2016 SAT Virginia All-Student Mean Scores” table includes the performance of private, parochial and home-schooled students.

2016 SAT Virginia All-Student Mean Scores						
Group	Critical Reading		Mathematics		Writing	
	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation	Virginia	Nation
All Students	520	494	517	508	498	482
Asian	551	529	594	602	544	534
Black	442	430	433	425	420	415
Hispanic	498	448	492	453	475	436
White	545	528	538	533	520	511

The College Board also reported today that 2016 Virginia public school graduates took 140,170 Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. Of those tests, 62.6 percent earned a grade of 3 or higher, the generally accepted benchmark for college credit.

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