

For Immediate Release
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Virginia Students Again Meet or Exceed All NCLB Objectives **7 of 10 Schools also Meet Higher Benchmarks for Achievement in Reading & Mathematics**

Virginia and 71 percent of the commonwealth's public schools met or exceeded all No Child Left Behind (NCLB) objectives based on statewide testing during the 2008-2009 school year as student achievement increased in reading, mathematics and other subjects.

It was the second consecutive year and the fourth time in the last five years that the commonwealth made what the federal law describes as "adequate yearly progress," or AYP, toward 100-percent proficiency for all students in reading and mathematics, the two subjects that are the primary focus of the federal law.

The commonwealth and seven of ten schools made AYP despite four-point higher benchmarks in both reading and mathematics.

"Student achievement — especially among minority students — increased overall and in critical areas such as early reading and middle school mathematics," Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. "This continued progress reflects improvements in teaching and learning in formerly low-performing schools and a data-driven, student-by-student approach to raising achievement."

For a school, school division or the state to have made AYP, at least 81 percent of students overall and students in all AYP subgroups — white, black, Hispanic, limited English proficient (LEP), students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged — must have demonstrated proficiency on Standards of Learning (SOL) and other assessments in reading, and 79 percent must have passed state tests in mathematics.

Despite the higher benchmarks, 1,321, or 71 percent, of the commonwealth's 1,855 public schools made AYP by meeting or exceeding all objectives in reading, mathematics and other indicators of academic progress, compared with 74 percent last year.

"Meeting annual AYP benchmarks becomes increasingly challenging as required pass rates move closer to 100 percent," said Board of Education President Mark E. Emblidge. "I encourage educators to continue their focus on instruction while policymakers determine how federal education law must evolve to maintain accountability without penalizing schools that really are making progress."

Adequate Yearly Progress for Virginia Public Schools

	Made AYP	Did Not Make AYP	To Be Determined	Total
School Results	1,321 (71%)	525 (28%)	9 (<1%)	1,855

Of the 525 schools that did not make AYP, 198 met all but one of the federal law's 29 annual measurable objectives for participation in statewide testing and achievement in reading, mathematics and other subjects. The AYP status of nine schools remains to be determined.

The schools that made AYP include 1,094 that also met all benchmarks last year and 213 schools that did not. Of the schools that did not make AYP, 273 made AYP during the previous year.

More School Divisions Make AYP

Fifty-nine of Virginia's 132 school divisions made AYP, compared with 54 last year. The AYP rating of one division — Buchanan County — is to be determined. Of the 72 school divisions that did not make AYP, 13 met all but one of the 29 objectives for achievement and participation in testing.

Adequate Yearly Progress for Virginia School Divisions

	Made AYP	Did Not Make AYP	To Be Determined	Total
Division Results	59 (45%)	72 (55%)	1 (<1%)	132

In 25 school divisions, all schools made AYP. These divisions are Bland County, Bristol, Buena Vista, Caroline County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County, Dickenson County, Falls Church, Floyd County, Galax, Highland County, Lee County, Lexington, Manassas Park, Mecklenburg County, Nelson County, Northumberland County, Norton, Poquoson, Prince George County, Radford, Rappahannock County, Salem, Scott County and West Point.

Of these divisions, 21 also made AYP at the division level. These divisions are Bland County, Bristol, Caroline County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County, Dickenson County, Floyd County, Galax, Highland County, Lee County, Lexington, Manassas Park, Mecklenburg County, Northumberland County, Norton, Prince George County, Radford, Rappahannock County, Salem, Scott County and West Point.

Higher Achievement and Shrinking Gaps in Reading

Overall achievement in reading increased by two points with 89 percent of Virginia students passing state tests in the subject compared with 87 percent last year.

- Reading achievement of black students increased three points to 81 percent.
- Achievement of Hispanic students increased four points to 85 percent.
- Achievement of white students rose two points to 93 percent.
- Achievement of LEP students increased four points to 83 percent.
- Achievement of economically disadvantaged children increased four points to 81 percent.
- Achievement of students with disabilities increased six points to 73 percent.

During the last three years, the achievement gap between black and white students in reading has narrowed by two points, despite a three-point increase in reading for white students. In addition, Hispanic students have narrowed the achievement gap with white students by ten points during the last three years.

Students made continued progress toward the Board of Education’s goal of proficiency in reading for all students by the third grade as students in all subgroups demonstrated improved reading skills. Eighty-six percent of grade-three students passed in reading, compared with 84 percent last year and 80 percent in the previous year.

- Black students achieved a 78-percent pass rate in grade-three reading, four points higher than last year and seven points higher than two years ago.
- Hispanic students achieved an 83-percent pass rate in grade-three reading, compared with 79 percent last year and 65 percent two years ago.

Achievement Gaps Also Narrow in Mathematics

Eighty-six percent of students passed mathematics assessments, compared with 84 percent last year.

- Black students increased their overall achievement by four points to 77 percent.
- Achievement of Hispanic students increased four points to 79 percent.
- Achievement of white students increased two points to 90 percent.
- Achievement of LEP students increased four points to 79 percent.
- Achievement of economically disadvantaged students increased four points to 77 percent.
- Achievement of students with disabilities increased six points to 71 percent.

Black and Hispanic students continued to narrow achievement gaps with white students in mathematics. During the last three years, the gap has narrowed by four points for black students and three points for Hispanic students even though the achievement of white students increased by five points.

At the elementary level, the mathematics pass rates of all AYP subgroups in grades 4 and 5 increased, as did the percentages of students in each subgroup performing at the advanced level.

Middle school students continued to make significant gains on rigorous, grade-level mathematics assessments introduced three years ago.

- Sixth-grade students increased their achievement to 73 percent, compared with 68 percent last year and 60 percent in the previous year.
- Thirty-two percent of sixth graders achieved at the advanced level in mathematics, compared with 29 percent last year and 21 percent two years ago.
- The pass rates of all AYP subgroups in grade-six mathematics increased, as did the percentages of students in each subgroup performing at the advanced level.
- Seventh graders improved their performance to 71 percent compared with 65 percent last year and 56 percent two years ago.
- Twenty-eight percent of seventh graders achieved at the advanced level, compared with 24 percent last year and 20 percent in the previous year.
- The pass rates of all AYP subgroups in grade-seven mathematics increased, as did the percentages of students in each subgroup performing at the advanced level.

“Mathematics specialists with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will continue to collaborate with their division-level counterparts and middle school mathematics teachers on new strategies and resources to help students meet these challenging standards,” said Dr. Wright. “Students who achieve these standards are ready for Algebra I in grade eight and have a foundation for success in even higher-level mathematics courses in high school.”

History/Social Science Achievement Increases

Eighty-nine percent of Virginia students taking tests in history and social science passed compared with 88 percent last year.

- Achievement of black students increased two points to 81 percent.
- Hispanic achievement in history increased three points to 82 percent.
- Achievement of white students improved one point to 93 percent.
- LEP students increased their pass rate three points to 80 percent.
- Achievement of economically disadvantaged students increased three points to 80 percent.
- Achievement of students with disabilities increased two points to 72 percent.

Science Achievement Steady

Eighty-nine percent of students passed tests in science, a one-point gain from the previous year.

- Black achievement in science increased one point to 80 percent.
- Achievement of Hispanic students increased two points to 80 percent.
- Ninety-four percent of white students passed — the same percentage as last year.
- Achievement of LEP students increased two points to 76 percent.
- Economically disadvantaged students increased their pass rate by one point to 79 percent.
- Achievement of students with disabilities was unchanged at 69 percent.

Writing Achievement Remains High

Students achieved an overall pass rate in writing of 89 percent, which was unchanged from the previous year.

- Writing achievement of black students increased one point to 83 percent.
- Achievement of Hispanic students was unchanged at 83 percent.
- Performance of white students was unchanged at 92 percent.
- Achievement of LEP students was unchanged at 78 percent.
- Achievement of economically disadvantaged students increased one point to 80 percent.
- Sixty-one percent of students with disabilities passed, which is the same percentage as the previous year.

Title I Schools No Longer Sanctioned

Seventeen formerly sanctioned Title I schools made AYP for a second consecutive year, and in doing so, exited “school-improvement” status. These schools are Carlin Springs Elementary in Arlington County; Colonial Beach Elementary in Colonial Beach; Ervinton Elementary in Dickenson County; Riverside Elementary in Fairfax County; Joseph P. King Jr. Middle in Franklin; Hugh Mercer Elementary and Lafayette Upper Elementary in Fredericksburg; Robert E. Lee Elementary in Hampton, Lakeside Elementary in Henrico County; Shawsville Elementary in Montgomery County; Gretna Middle in Pittsylvania County; Prince Edward Middle in Prince Edward County; Belmont Elementary and Suella G. Ellis Elementary in Prince William County; Elkhardt Middle and Lucille M. Brown Middle in Richmond; and Rocky Run Elementary in Stafford County.

Schools receiving federal funding under Title I of NCLB provide educational services to low-income children and are the focus of most of the law's accountability provisions. Under the law, Title I schools that do not make AYP in the same subject area for two or more consecutive years are identified for improvement. School-improvement sanctions increase in severity if a school fails to make AYP in the same subject area for additional consecutive years. A Title I school escapes federal sanctions by making AYP for two consecutive years.

Seventy-two percent, or 515, of the commonwealth's 720 Title I schools made AYP. The AYP status of four Title I schools remains to be determined.

- Fifty-eight Title I schools entered or remained in "year one" of improvement and must offer students the option of transferring to a higher-performing public school.
- Twenty-six entered or remained in "year two" of improvement status and — in addition to offering transfers — must also provide supplemental educational services or tutoring free-of-charge to children who request these services.
- Six schools entered or remained in "year three" of improvement status. These schools must offer transfers and tutoring, and take at least one of several corrective actions specified in federal law to raise student achievement.
- Seven schools — Jefferson-Houston Elementary in Alexandria, Randolph Elementary in Arlington County, Dogwood Elementary in Fairfax County, Francis Mallory Elementary in Hampton, Orange Elementary in Orange County, Thomas C. Boushall Middle in Richmond and Sussex Central Middle in Sussex County — entered or remained in "year four" of improvement status. School divisions must develop alternative governance plans for these schools while offering transfers and tutoring and continuing to implement corrective action.

Six Title I schools in improvement status for five or more years are required to implement or continue implementing restructuring or alternative governance plans because of their repeated failure to make AYP.

- Three schools — Essex Intermediate in Essex County, and J.E.B. Stuart Elementary and Peabody Middle in Petersburg — are in "year five" of improvement.
- Two schools — Hoffman-Boston Elementary in Arlington County and Tappahannock Elementary in Essex County — are in "year six" of improvement.
- One school — Vernon Johns Junior High in Petersburg — is in "year seven" of improvement.

These schools must take or continue implementing one of the following actions:

- Reopen as a charter school;
- Replace all or most of the school staff relevant to the school's failure to make AYP;
- Turn the management of the school over to a private educational management company or another entity with a demonstrated record of success; or
- Any other major restructuring of school governance.

AYP ratings and student achievement data for all Virginia public schools and school divisions are available in the Virginia School Report Card section of the VDOE Web site (<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/index.shtml>).

State school accreditation ratings, which also are based on student achievement on SOL tests and other statewide assessments, will be released by VDOE in September.

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