



NEWS RELEASE

Jillian Balow | Superintendent of Public Instruction

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2021-2022 SOL Results Show Continuing Impact of School Closures

RICHMOND — Results from Standards of Learning and other state assessments taken by Virginia students during the 2021-2022 school year reflect the continuing impact of prolonged school closures on student learning. Despite one-year gains in most subjects, student achievement in all areas remained well below pre-pandemic levels. The 2021-2022 school year marked the return to in-person learning for all 132 Virginia school divisions and the return to normal levels of student participation in the state testing program.

“The bottom line is that in-person instruction matters. When we compare the 2021-2022 data with achievement in 2020-2021 — when the majority of our students were learning remotely or on hybrid schedules — we can see the difference our teachers made once they were reunited with their students in their classrooms,” **Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow** said. “I want to thank all of our teachers for everything they did last year to begin what will be a multiyear recovery effort.”

16-Point Proficiency Gap in Mathematics from 2018-19 to 2021-22

In mathematics, 66% of students overall passed, compared with 82% before the pandemic. Gaps between pre-pandemic math performance and achievement in 2021-2022 were much wider among Blacks, Hispanics, economically disadvantaged students, English learners and students with disabilities.

Mathematics: Overall Percentage Passing Pre-Pandemic vs. 2021-2022

Student Group	2018-2019	2021-2022	Gap
All Students	82%	66%	-16 points

Mathematics: Student Groups Percentage Passing Pre-Pandemic vs. 2021-2022

Student Group	2018-2019	2021-2022	Gap
Asian	94%	86%	-8 points
Black	70%	49%	-21 points
Economically Disadvantaged	72%	52%	-20 points
English Learners	59%	36%	-23 points
Hispanic	74%	53%	-21 points
Students with Disabilities	55%	39%	-16 points
White	88%	76%	-12 points

“The first step in addressing the learning loss our students have experienced is to dive into the SOL data at the state, division and school levels and identify the instructional supports and interventions

students require individually and in the aggregate to get back on track to grade-level proficiency,” **Balow** said. “This is especially critical for our youngest learners who have spent more than a third of their early elementary years without the benefit of in-person instruction.”
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5-Point Proficiency Gap in Reading Despite Less Rigorous Proficiency Standards

Seventy-three percent of students overall passed SOL and other state assessments in reading, five points below the pre-pandemic pass rate in 2018-2019. Gaps between pre-pandemic performance and reading achievement in 2021-2022 were wider for Hispanic students and economically disadvantaged students.

Balow said the reading results for 2021-2022 understate the extent of learning loss — especially in the early elementary grades — given the adoption of less-rigorous proficiency standards by the Board of Education when introducing new reading tests during the 2020-2021 school year. “Had the board retained the pre-pandemic level of rigor on the reading SOLs, we would be looking at less recovery in reading,” **Balow** said.

Reading: Overall Percentage Passing Pre-Pandemic vs. 2021-2022			
Student Group	2018-2019	2021-2022*	Gap
All Students	78%	73%	-5 points
<i>*Less rigorous proficiency standard on 2021-2022 reading assessments.</i>			

Reading: Percentage Passing Pre-Pandemic vs. 2021-2022			
Student Group	2018-2019	2021-2022*	Gap
Asian	89%	88%	-1 point
Black	65%	60%	-5 points
Economically Disadvantaged	65%	59%	-6 points
English Learners	35%	32%	-3 points
Hispanic	66%	60%	-6 points
Students with Disabilities	47%	43%	-4 points
White	85%	82%	-3 points
<i>*Less rigorous proficiency standard on 2021-2022 reading assessments.</i>			

“The prolonged closure of schools exacerbated downward trends in achievement that began several years before COVID-19 and our efforts to address learning loss must go beyond making up for lost seat time,” **Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera** said. “Moving forward, we must restore a culture of high expectations for every child in every school in the commonwealth. This includes working with the Board of Education to raise standards, increase transparency and create an accountability system that drives improvement and sets grade-level achievement as the goal for every child.”

Greater Learning Recovery Among Students with More In-Person Learning

A Virginia Department of Education analysis of statewide data shows a strong correlation between in-person instruction during 2020-2021 and higher achievement on the 2021-2022 SOLs. For example, 69% of students who experienced in-person instruction for nearly all of 2020-2021, and 62% of students who experienced in-person instruction for most of 2020-2021 passed their 2021-2022 math tests, compared with 39% and 37% who experienced nearly all or mostly remote instruction, respectively.

Mathematics: 2020-2021 Instruction and Percentage and Number Passing in 2021-2022		
Instruction in 2020-2021	2021-2022 Percent Passing	2021-2022 Number Passing
Nearly All In-Person	69%	587,870
Mostly In-Person	62%	33,179
Nearly All Remote	39%	12,889
Mostly Remote	37%	1,485

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In reading, 75% of students who experienced in-person instruction for nearly all of 2020-2021, and 69% of students who experienced in-person instruction for most of 2020-2021 passed in 2021-2022, compared with 58% and 52% who experienced nearly all or mostly remote instruction, respectively.

Reading: 2020-2021 Instruction and Percentage and Number Passing in 2021-2022		
Instruction in 2020-2021	2021-2022 Percent Passing	2021-2022 Number Passing
Nearly All In-Person	75%	569,848
Mostly In-Person	69%	32,253
Nearly All Remote	58%	12,755
Mostly Remote	52%	1,472

Wide Achievement Gaps Remain Despite Gains from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

With the exception of writing, students overall and students in all demographic groups made progress in 2021-2022, compared with performance during 2020-2021.

“The growth and progress of students last year accounts for the rebound in achievement in most content areas. Teachers are working so hard to help students catch up and meet academic needs,” **Balow** said. “Schools have the responsibility to target their state and federal pandemic relief funds on proven strategies to address learning loss, such as high-dosage tutoring, before and after-school programs and extended learning opportunities.”

Mathematics: Percentage Passing			
Student Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
All Students	82%	54%	66%
Asian	94%	79%	86%
Black	70%	34%	49%
Economically Disadvantaged	72%	37%	52%
English Learners	59%	21%	36%
Hispanic	74%	38%	53%
Students with Disabilities	55%	31%	39%
White	88%	64%	76%

Reading: Percentage Passing			
Student Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022*
All Students	78%	69%	73%
Asian	89%	85%	88%
Black	65%	54%	60%
Economically Disadvantaged	65%	54%	59%
English Learners	35%	24%	32%
Hispanic	66%	54%	60%
Students with Disabilities	47%	40%	43%
White	85%	78%	82%

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Writing: Percentage Passing			
Student Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
All Students	76%	69%	65%
Asian	91%	88%	88%
Black	61%	53%	47%
Economically Disadvantaged	61%	53%	49%
English Learners	23%	19%	18%
Hispanic	67%	60%	56%
Students with Disabilities	39%	35%	24%
White	83%	75%	73%

Science: Percentage Passing			
Student Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
All Students	81%	59%	65%
Asian	93%	80%	84%
Black	67%	39%	46%
Economically Disadvantaged	68%	40%	49%
English Learners	38%	12%	20%
Hispanic	70%	42%	50%
Students with Disabilities	51%	31%	36%
White	89%	70%	76%

History/Social Science: Percentage Passing			
Student Group	2018-2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
All Students	80%	54%	66%
Asian	93%	76%	87%
Black	66%	35%	47%
Economically Disadvantaged	68%	40%	51%
English Learners	47%	21%	30%
Hispanic	72%	45%	56%
Students with Disabilities	52%	32%	35%
White	87%	65%	76%

Next Steps in Addressing Learning Loss

This fall, VDOE will introduce individualized progress reports for students in grades 1-8 that will allow parents to see where their children are succeeding and where they have fallen behind. The

department will pilot the progress reports in selected school divisions before making them available for students and parents statewide.

The state budget signed by **Governor Glenn Youngkin** last month includes a historic \$3.2 billion in direct aid to school divisions and provides nearly \$10 million for implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act and \$7 million for additional reading specialists. The spending plan also allocates \$100 million to launch innovative college laboratory schools in partnership with Virginia colleges and universities.

The 2021 General Assembly provided \$40 million to school divisions during the 2021-2022 school year to address learning loss. In addition, school divisions have received \$3.2 billion in federal funding since 2020 under three pandemic relief acts to address learning loss and other impacts of the pandemic.

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SOL Results for Divisions and Schools

Additional data on the performance of students on the 2021-2022 assessments — including grade-level and course-specific rates for schools, school divisions and the commonwealth — is available on the [VDOE website](#) and on the department's [School Quality Profile](#) reports.

School Accreditation Ratings Released in September

VDOE will release 2022-2023 school accreditation ratings next month. Accreditation ratings include multiple indicators of school quality and student achievement, including growth in reading and mathematics and high school graduation rates. The department waived annual school accreditation ratings for the last two school years because of the pandemic.

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