



Advanced Placement: How Virginia Compares

Of Virginia's 2008 public school graduates, 21.3 percent earned a grade of three or better on at least one AP examination, compared with 20.4 in the class of 2007 and 16.5 percent in the class of 2003. Only two states, Maryland and New York, had higher percentages of seniors earning grades of three or better. The national average for the class of 2008 was 15.2 percent.

States with the Greatest Percentage of Seniors Scoring 3 or Higher on an AP Exam					
State	Class of 2003	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	1-Year Change	5-Year Change
Maryland	17.7	22.6	23.4	0.8	5.7
New York	20.6	22.4	23.3	0.9	2.7
Virginia	16.5	20.4	21.3	0.9	4.8
Connecticut	16.1	19.6	21.0	1.4	4.9
Massachusetts	16.8	19.7	20.8	1.1	4.0
Nation	12.2	14.4	15.2	0.8	3.0

AP Participation and Performance

Virginia has seen a steady increase in the number of graduating seniors taking one or more AP exams and an increase in the number of exams earning a 3 or higher.

Of the students in the class of 2008 who took at least one AP test, 17,200 earned a grade of three or higher, a 7.4 percent increase over the class of 2007, which included 16,011 graduates who performed as well on AP tests. The number of seniors earning a three or higher has increased by 42.9 percent since 2003, when 12,040 graduates scored as high.

All Students AP Performance in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers Earning 3 or higher	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	17,200	1,189	7.4%	5,160	42.9%
2007	16,011				
2003	12,040	NA			

The number of 2008 Virginia graduates who took at least one AP exam during high school increased by 7.1 percent compared with the class of 2007 and by 46.3 percent compared with participation by the class of 2003. Of the seniors in the class of 2008, 27,468, or 34.1 percent, took at least one AP exam compared with 25,639, or 32.6 percent, in the class of 2007, and 18,778, or 25.7 percent, in the class of 2003.

All Students AP Participation in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	27,468	1,829	7.1%	8,690	46.3%
2007	25,639				
2003	18,778	NA			

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The College Board report recognized Virginia for closing the “equity gap” for Hispanic students in AP achievement. The number of Hispanic graduates who earned a 3 or higher on an exam increased by 92, or 9.6 percent, between 2007 and 2008 — from 961 in 2007 to 1,053 in 2008. From 2003 to 2008, there has been an increase of 429, or 68.8 percent — from 624 in 2003 to 1,053 in 2008.

Hispanic Students AP Performance in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers Earning 3 or Higher	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	1,053	92	9.6%	429	68.8%
2007	961				
2003	624	NA			

Between 2007 and 2008, the number of Hispanic graduates who took at least one AP test increased by 139, or 9.3 percent — from 1,487 in 2007 to 1,626 in 2008. This compares with an increase of 706 between 2003 and 2008 — a 76.7 percent increase in five years.

Hispanic Students AP Participation in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	1,626	139	9.3%	706	76.7%
2007	1,487				
2003	920	NA			

The number of African-American graduating seniors who earned a 3 or higher on an exam increased by 164 or 18.4 percent, between 2007 and 2008 — from 892 in 2007 to 1,056 in 2008. From 2003 to 2008, there has been an increase of 434, or 69.8 percent — from 622 in 2003 to 1,056 in 2008.

African-American Students AP Performance in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers Earning 3 or higher	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	1,056	164	18.4%	434	69.8%
2007	892				
2003	622	NA			

Between 2007 and 2008, the number of African-American graduates who participated in AP testing increased by 424, or 16.4 percent — from 2,585 in 2007 to 3,009 in 2008. This compares with an increase of 1,318 between 2003 and 2008 — a 77.9 percent increase in five years.

African-American Students AP Participation in Virginia 2003-2008					
Year	# AP Test Takers	1-Year Increase		5-Year Increase	
2008	3,009	424	16.4%	1,318	77.9%
2007	2,585				
2003	1,691	NA			

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Most Popular AP Exams

Of the AP exams taken by Virginia public school graduates, U.S. Government & Politics was the most popular. There were 13,627 exams given and, of those, 7,091 — 52.0 percent — received scores of 3 or higher.

Rank by Number of Exams Taken		
Rank	Exam Name	Number of Exams
1	U.S. Government & Politics	13,627
2	U.S. History	12,181
3	English Literature	9,580
4	English Language	8,679
5	Psychology	5,772
6	Calculus AB	5,642
7	World History	3,972
8	Biology	3,929
9	Statistics	3,611
10	Environmental Science	2,949

More U.S. History exams taken by Virginia graduates — 7,110, or 58.4 percent — received scores of 3 or higher.

Rank by Number of Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher		
Rank	Exam Name	Number of 3 Or Higher Exam Scores
1	U.S. History	7,110
2	U.S. Government & Politics	7,091
3	English Literature	6,052
4	English Language	5,573
5	Psychology	3,880
6	Calculus AB	3,296
7	World History	2,551
8	Biology	1,967
9	Statistics	1,898
10	Environmental Science	1,451

A greater percentage of psychology exams taken by Virginia graduates — 67.2 percent — received scores of 3 or higher.

Rank by Percentage of Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher		
Rank	Exam Name	Number of 3 Or Higher Exam Scores
1	Psychology	67.2
2	English Language	64.2
	World History	
4	English Literature	63.2
5	U.S. History	58.4
	Calculus AB	
7	Statistics	52.6
8	U.S. Government & Politics	52.0
9	Biology	50.1
10	Environmental Science	49.2

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AP Participation by Subject Area

34.1 percent of Virginia’s Class of 2008 took at least one AP exam during high school compared with 25.0 percent nationally — a 9.1 point difference.

Percentage of Class of 2008 Who Took an AP Exam During High School by Subject Area		
Subject Area	Virginia Percentage	National Percentage
ALL	34.1	25.0
Art	2.2	1.6
English	16.9	12.2
Language	4.8	3.7
Math	12.8	9.3
Science	11.8	8.3
Social Science	26.9	15.4

26.9 percent of Virginia’s Class of 2008 took at least one Social Science AP exam during high school as compared with 15.4 percent nationally — 11.5 points higher.

Percentage of Class of 2008 Who Took an AP Exam During High School by Subject Area Ranked by Difference				
Rank	Subject Area	Virginia Percentage	National Percentage	Difference
1	Social Science	26.9	15.4	11.5
2	English	16.9	12.2	4.7
3	Math	12.8	9.3	3.5
	Science	11.8	8.3	
5	Language	4.8	3.7	1.1
6	Art	2.2	1.6	0.6

The percentage of Virginia’s Class of 2008 participating in AP testing outpaced the nation in all subject areas.

Percentage of Class of 2008 Who Took an AP Exam During High School by Subject Area Ranked by Virginia Percentages			
Rank	Subject Area	Virginia Percentage	National Percentage
1	Social Science	26.9	15.4
2	English	16.9	12.2
3	Math	12.8	9.3
4	Science	11.8	8.3
6	Language	4.8	3.7
7	Art	2.2	1.6

AP Equity and Excellence

21.3 percent of Virginia’s Class of 2008 earned a 3 or higher on one or more AP exams during high school compared with 15.2 percent nationally — a 6.1 point difference.

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Virginia's Class of 2008 outperformed their peers nationwide in all subject areas.

Percentage of Class of 2008 Earning 3 or Higher on One or More AP Exams During High School Ranked by Virginia Percentage			
Rank	Subject	Virginia Percentage	National Percentage
1	ALL	21.3	15.2
2	Social Science	15.8	8.4
3	English	10.8	7.1
4	Math	7.5	5.6
5	Science	6.0	4.4
6	Language	2.8	2.4
7	Art	1.4	1.0

Virginia graduates outpaced their peers nationwide by 7.4 points for scores earning a 3 or higher on social science exams: 15.8 percent of Virginia graduates earned a 3 or higher on a social science exam compared with 8.4 percent of graduates nationally.

Percentage of Class of 2008 Earning 3 or Higher on One or More AP Exams During High School Ranked by Difference				
Rank	Subject	Virginia Percentage	National Percentage	Difference
1	Social Science	15.8	8.4	7.4
2	English	10.8	7.1	3.7
3	Math	7.5	5.6	1.9
4	Science	6.0	4.4	1.6
5	Art	1.4	1.0	0.4
	Language	2.8	2.4	

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