

# NCLB Making a Difference in Virginia



- Between 2002 and 2005 (latest data available):
  - Fifth-grade reading proficiency increased by seven percentage points
  - Fifth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by 10 percentage points
  - The black-white achievement gap in fifth-grade reading narrowed by eight percentage points
  - The black-white achievement gap in fifth-grade mathematics narrowed by 11 percentage points
  - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fifth-grade reading narrowed by seven percentage points
  - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fifth-grade mathematics narrowed by four percentage points

(*Virginia Report Card*)
- “A four-year assessment of Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) scores shows that the achievement gap between black and white students in the Newport News Public Schools has grown smaller in core subject areas. An analysis of scores from 2001 to 2004 indicates that the performance gap between black and white students on SOL tests narrowed an average of six percentage points in the elementary schools, eight percentage points in the middle schools and nearly six percentage points at the high schools. ... An independent audit released last summer cited the school system for failing to take steps to reduce the racial achievement gap. Since then, officials have strengthened literacy and math instruction, monitored student progress more regularly and encouraged more students to take SAT preparation courses. ... Superintendent Marcus Newsome noted that black students are catching up to white students academically while both groups are showing improvement, a trend that officials want to continue.” (*Newport News Daily Press*, 7/1/05)
- “Over six years, [Norfolk’s] Lake Taylor’s pass rates increased in several subjects, including as much as 60 percentage points in algebra. ... ‘Our curriculum includes SOL standards, but it also includes other things above and beyond [Standards of Learning],’ [Superintendent of Schools Denise K.] Schnitzer said. Ultimately, she said, the [Standards of Learning] have been helpful to Norfolk by reinforcing the notion that all children can learn. ‘We’ve always served some students well,’ she said. ‘We’re serving more students better now.’” (*Virginian-Pilot*, 5/8/05)
- “Large urban schools...showed gains in math and reading scores since 2003, especially in elementary grades, according to a report released by the Council of the Great City Schools. ... One of the success stories cited was the Richmond system, where the rate of improvement was greater than for Virginia students generally in math and English tests given in the third-, fifth- and eighth-grades. Deborah Jewell-Sherman, the city’s school superintendent, said the system set academic targets that were ‘far more aggressive than anything the district had experienced in the past.’ Richmond’s curriculum was brought into line with state requirements, she said. Teachers were retrained so they understood what needed to be taught. ... Classes are constantly being assessed. Students who are falling behind are assigned to morning, afternoon and Saturday remedial programs.” (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3/29/05)