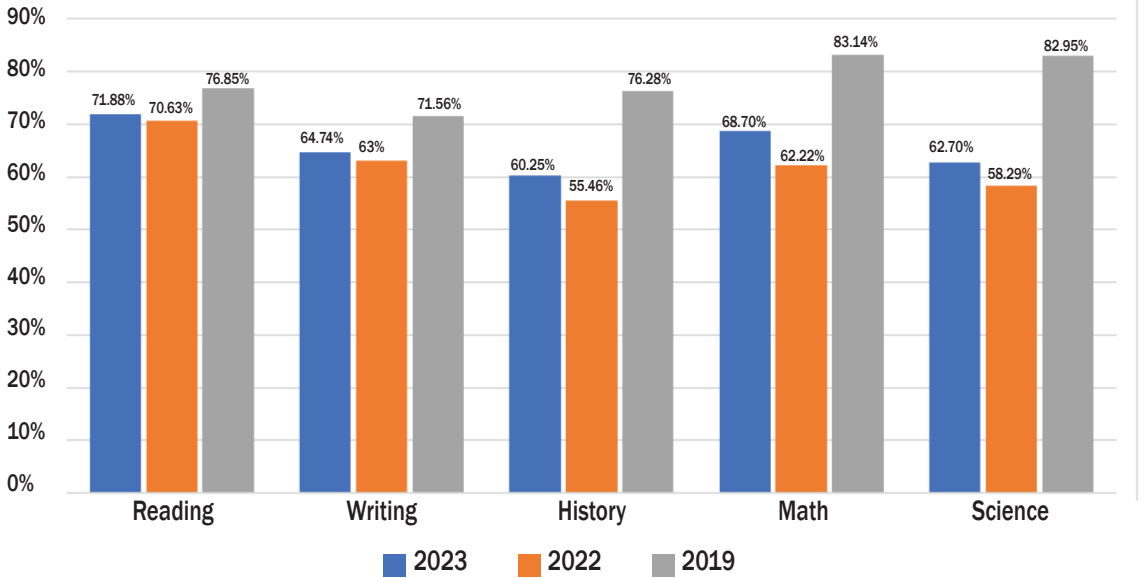


## SOL Pass Rate



# SPS appeals JFK Middle's accreditation status

## VDOE releases strength of learning report

**BY ED PUGH**  
EDITOR

The latest Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning report finds all but one Suffolk Public School received full state accreditation status.

John F. Kennedy Middle School failed to meet accreditation standards in English, according to the state report, resulting in being accredited

with conditions. Under state guidelines, any school with one or more indicators at level three is subject to accreditation with conditions.

Level three, defined by VDOE, is where performance meets a specified range using the best of the current or cumulative three-year rate or has stayed at a level two or three rating through four consecutive years.

Suffolk Public Schools

released a statement saying the division has submitted an appeal to the Board of Education for Virginia in hopes of gaining full accreditation of the school.

“Suffolk Public Schools is extremely proud of the hard work and dedication from our students and staff for their Standards of Learning scores and our current accreditation results,” the release said.

# Accreditation: SPS sees areas of improvement

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“Only one of our schools is listed as Accredited with Conditions, and the school division has submitted an appeal for John F. Kennedy Middle School, which will be heard by the Board of Education for Virginia.”

Overall, the division saw year-over-year improvements in all academic pass rates, with the most progress in mathematics, jumping from 62.22% in 2021-2022 to 68.7%. English reading and writing both saw minor improvements with less than a 2% increase in pass rate.

While improvements were minor, the division pass rates for reading, writing and math finished

less than 1% below the state average. History and social science fell nearly 5% below the state average, while science fell just above 4%.

Although improvements are being made, pass rates compared to pre-COVID-19 years are still cause for concern, VDOE said.

“The pass rates are even more alarming when considering the large number of students who are in the ‘low proficient’ level and would have likely failed the SOLs under the 2018-2019 cut scores,” VDOE said in a news release on the 2023 data. “Proficiency cut scores were lowered between the 2018-2019 and 2020-

2021 test administration. These lowered cut scores enabled students to pass that would not have otherwise received a passing score. Students who fall into this band are considered ‘low proficient.’”

Science has shown the least improvement for SPS schools compared to pre-COVID pass rates, finishing 20.43% below 2019. History and social science is down 16.03%, and mathematics is down almost 14.44% to 2019 pass rates. English reading and writing finished down 4.97% and 6.82%, respectively.

As with most divisions in the state, the SPS struggles with chronic absenteeism, which saw

an absenteeism rate of 20.4%. However, absenteeism improved by nearly 7% from 2022, just under 1% higher than the state average but significantly lower than in 2019, where the division saw a chronic absenteeism rate of 9.4%.

Students are considered chronically absent if they miss two or more instructional days per month (18 days, or 10 percent of a 180-day school year), regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

The complete report can be found on the VDOE website at [school-quality.virginia.gov](http://school-quality.virginia.gov).