

Number 6 | August 2010

Virginia Performs:
A Regional
Perspective

issue insight

Dear Reader:

Virginia has much to be proud of: The state and many of its local governments are widely recognized as among the best managed in the country; the Commonwealth routinely performs among the top states in terms of jobs and incomes; and we boast perhaps the best system of public higher education in the country.

And yet, as we continue to assess Virginia's overall performance, it remains evident – sometimes jarringly so – that high statewide averages mask significant differences in regional performance. For example, per capita personal income in Northern Virginia is twice the levels in Virginia's Southside and Southwest regions. The fact that there are sometimes very large regional differences in almost every state is of little comfort.

This Issue Insight, *Virginia Performs: A Regional Perspective*, provides a high-level summary of key outcomes in Virginia's diverse regions. The data and analysis presented here complement information provided on Virginia Performs (VaPerforms.Virginia.gov). The goal is to help improve our understanding of the challenges ahead. For example, research predicts that future economic growth will become even more concentrated in denser, high-performing metropolitan regions, with potential long-term implications for a number of Virginia's less urbanized regions.

As always, your questions and comments are welcome.

Jane N. Kusiak

Executive Director

Council on Virginia's Future



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Virginia Performs: A Regional Perspective

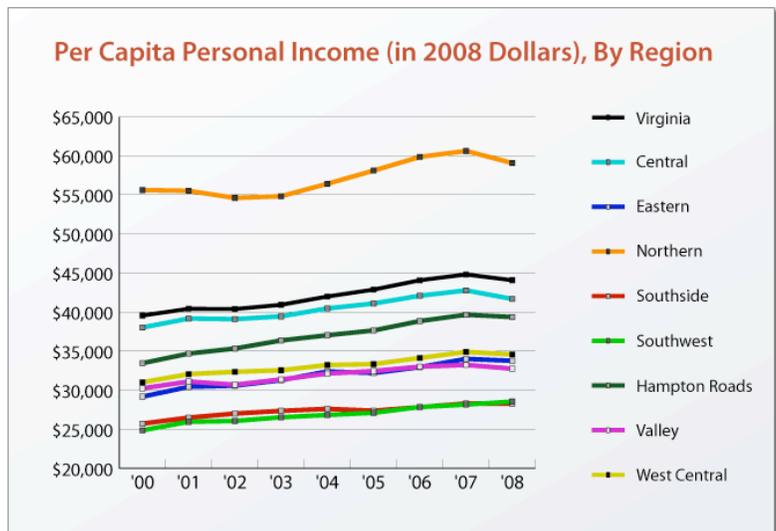
I. Virginia Performs: Regional Outcomes

This report is based on and complements data presented on the Virginia Performs website (VaPerforms.virginia.gov), which includes a high-level scorecard for Virginia based on nearly 50 quality-of-life indicators. The information here focuses on regional outcomes. The eight regions that the Council uses for analysis purposes are presented on page 15.

While Virginia fares well on many performance measures, some of Virginia's diverse regions do not fare nearly so well; statewide averages tend to mask the sometimes significant differences in regional outcomes. While differences among regions are not unusual in states with growing urban and slower growing or declining rural areas, the contrasts can be stark, and a few indicators are presented here to highlight some of these differences.

Regional Economies

In several respects, Virginia's diversity is nowhere more apparent than in the economic arena. The gap between inflation adjusted per capita personal income levels in Northern Virginia and the rest of the state is large. The Northern region had the highest income in 2008, which at \$59,068 was almost 42 percent higher than that of the second highest, the Central region at \$41,682. The Southside and Southwest regions had the lowest per capita personal income at \$28,286

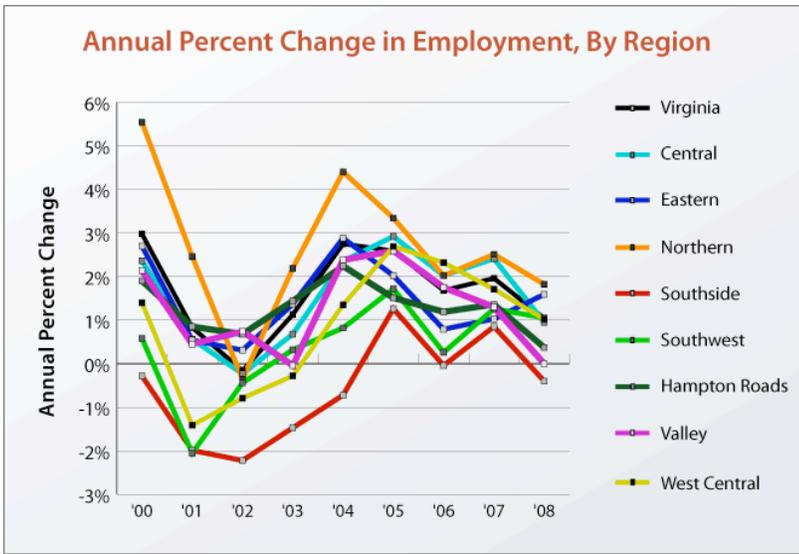


and \$28,547, respectively. The impact of the Northern region on the state average is apparent: no other region reached the statewide average.

Between 2000 and 2009 Virginia's per capita income grew at a rate of 1.2 percent, compared to the national average of 0.4 percent over the same period. Within Virginia, Hampton Roads had the fastest growth rate at 2.05 percent between 2000 and 2008, followed by the Eastern (1.85%) and Southwest (1.74%) regions. The Northern region had the slowest growth at 0.76 percent.



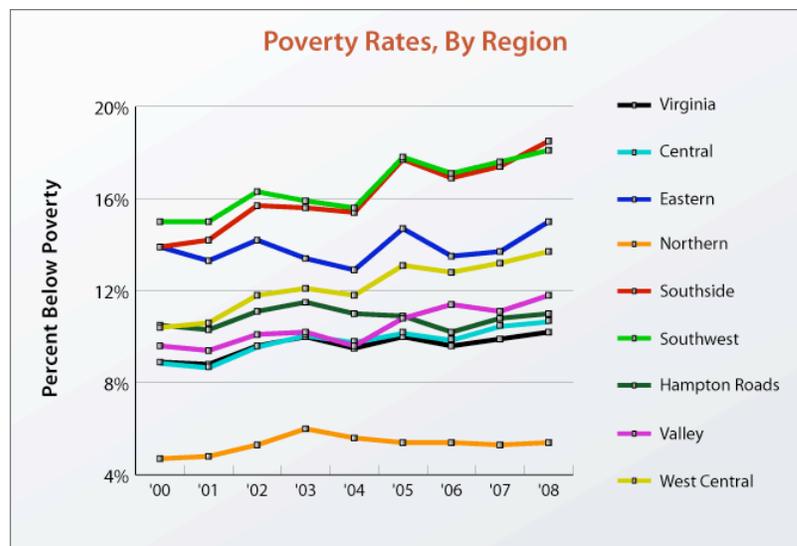
Unemployment grew significantly across Virginia in 2009, rising at the state level from slightly less than four percent in 2008 to 6.7 percent in 2009. The unemployment rate varied in 2009 from a high of 11.6 percent in the Southside region to a low of five percent in the Northern region. The Southwest region was second highest with 9.1 percent unemployment. Unemployment in the other regions ranged from a low of 6.8 percent in Hampton Roads to 7.6 percent in the Eastern region.



Between 2000 and 2005, Virginia's employment grew at a faster rate than the national average but it lagged U.S. growth during 2006-2008. Regional employment growth data in 2008 indicates that the Northern region (1.82%) had the fastest growing rate in the state over the previous year. The Eastern region exhibited the second highest employment growth at 1.59 percent. Virginia's remaining regions all saw rates at or below 1.05 percent.

Data from the Virginia Employment Commission indicates that by the end of 2009, nonfarm employment fell by 183,500 from Virginia's pre-recession high of 3,780,200 achieved in April 2008. Statewide in 2009 there were 135,400 jobs lost, or 3.6 percent of nonfarm employment. All sectors lost jobs except for Private Education and Health Services, which grew by 9,600 jobs or 2.1 percent, and Federal Government (6,700 jobs or 4.1%).

Differences in job growth and income levels affect poverty levels. Statewide, Virginia had the 12th lowest poverty rate in the nation in 2008. Within Virginia, the Southside region had the highest percentage (18.5%) of individuals living below the poverty level of any region in the state, followed by the Southwest (18.1%) and Eastern (15.0%) regions. At the other end of the scale, the Northern region (5.4%)





had the lowest percentage of individuals living below the poverty level, followed by the Central (10.7%) and Hampton Roads (11.0%) regions.

Educational Attainment

Researchers have suggested that success in reading at the third grade level is a good indicator of future educational progress. Virginia students take the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for the first time in the third grade. Overall pass rates for the third grade reading assessment for the 2008-09 school year were at 86.8 percent. For the regions, in 2008-09 the Eastern and Valley regions had the lowest pass rates, at 78.4 and 84.7 percent, respectively. The Southwest and Northern regions experienced the highest pass rates in 2008-09, at 88.2 percent.

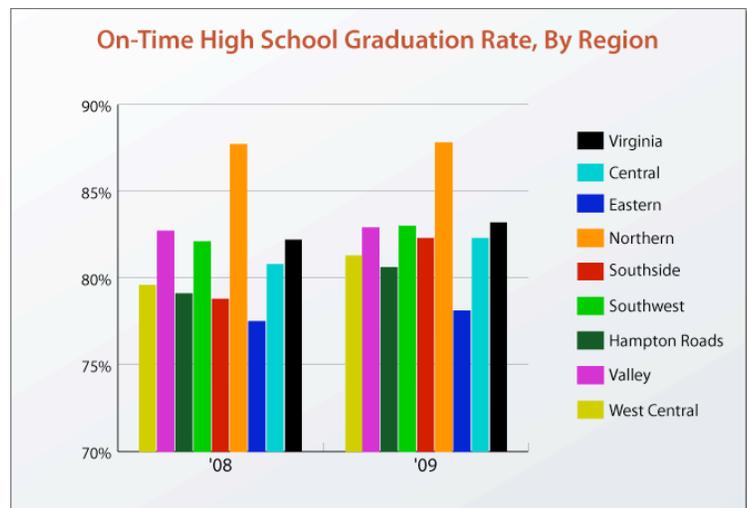


The average advanced pass rate meaning students who passed at least 31 of 35 items was 18.8 percent in 2004-05. Since revisions to the SOLs were put in place four years ago, the advanced pass rate has improved dramatically, more than doubling on average. There was, however, a slight decrease in 2008-09 (37.2%) from the previous year's rate (38.9%).

In 2008-09, the Northern region had the best advanced performance at 41.2

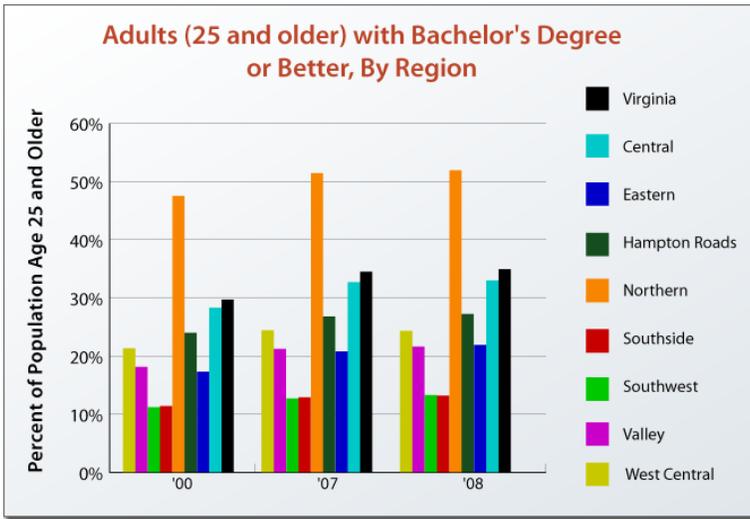
percent, followed by the Central region at 40.4 percent. The Southside region had the lowest advanced pass rate at 29.8 percent.

The high school graduation rate is a good indicator of the health of Virginia's school system and of the future success of its young citizens. Completion of high school or its equivalent is increasingly the minimum level of education sought by employers; moreover, unemployment rates are lower and lifetime earnings are substantially higher for high school graduates than for high school dropouts.





Regional graduation data for 2008-09 is based on Virginia's new measurement of on-time graduation performance, which is calculated as a percentage of the corresponding cohort of students entering the freshman class four years prior. This data now accounts for students who moved and those who were held back or promoted; individual students are tracked from year to year using the Commonwealth's longitudinal student data system.



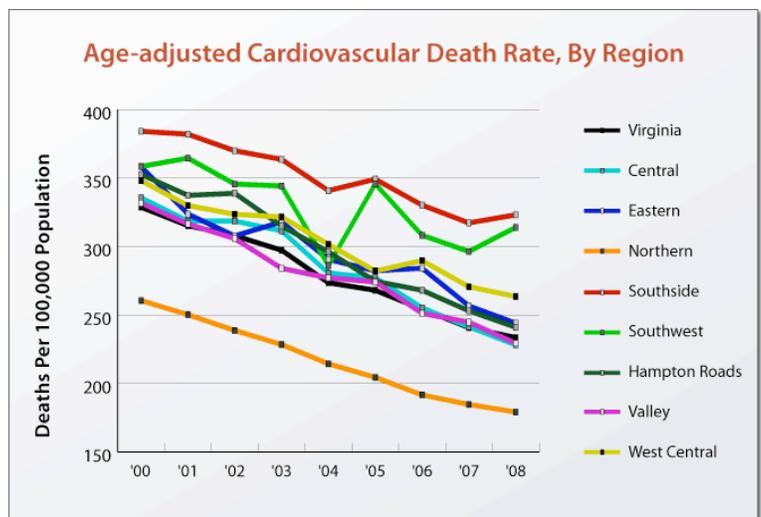
Workforce quality is closely tied to labor productivity, making it a key determinant of economic growth and wages. Educational attainment, in turn, is considered a major determinant of workforce quality and is often an indicator of a region's ability to attract and develop high-skilled, high-paying jobs. One measure of educational attainment is the percentage of the adult population with at least a bachelor's degree.

In 2008, approximately 34.7 percent of all adults 25 and older in Virginia had attained at least a bachelor's degree. More than 14 percent of the population had achieved an advanced degree, one of the ten best rates in the country. However, attainment rates vary significantly among the regions, ranging from 51.7 percent in the Northern region in 2008 to 13.0 percent and 13.1 percent in the Southside and Southwest regions, respectively. The second and third best regions - Central at 32.8 percent and Hampton Roads at 27.0 percent - were below the statewide average, indicating once again the impact of the Northern region on statewide averages.

Other Indicators

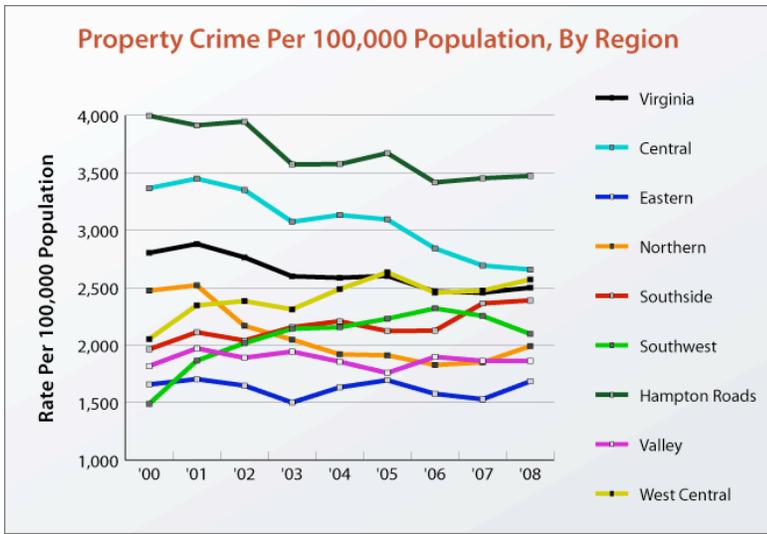
Differences among the regions are also evident across a range of health outcomes as many health-related risk factors tend to decrease with increases in educational attainment and incomes.

Cardiovascular death rates, even though they continue to fall across much of the state, present a good example. In 2008, the Northern, Central, and Valley regions of Virginia had the lowest age-adjusted





death rates for major cardiovascular disease, with 179, 228, and 229 deaths per 100,000 people, respectively. Southside had the highest rate in 2008, with 323 deaths per 100,000 people.



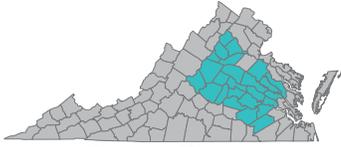
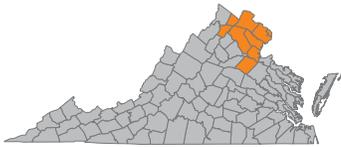
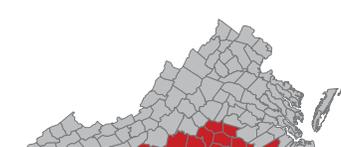
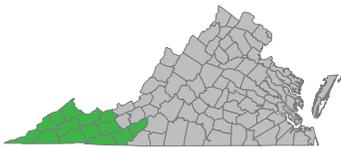
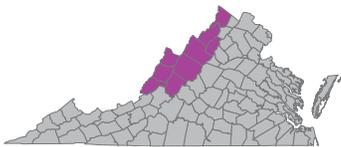
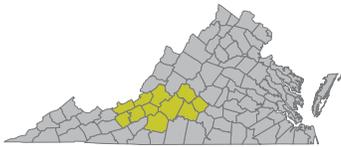
Crime rates do not follow this pattern as clearly: urbanization appears to play an important role. Virginia's highest violent crime and property crime rates in 2008 were in the Hampton Roads region, which saw rates of 431 and 3,473 per 100,000 people. This property crime rate is down significantly from its 2000 rate of 3,996. The lowest property crime rate was in the Eastern region, with a rate of 1,685 per 100,000 people.

The table and charts in the following pages present summary information for each of the eight regions.



II. Regional Summaries

NOTES: All population figures are in the thousands (000's); average growth percentages listed are since 2000.

Region			Key Characteristics
 Central Region	Population: 2009: 1,547.2 State Share: 19.6% Avg. Growth: 1.39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified economy, second lowest poverty rate • The 2009 high school graduation rate lagged the state average and rates in four other regions • Second highest advanced pass rate for the 3rd grade SOLs in 2009 	
 Eastern Region	Population: 2009: 150.8 State Share: 1.9% Avg. Growth: 1.03%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural economy with lower educational attainment and higher poverty rates • 3rd grade SOL pass rates and high school graduation rates are the lowest among the regions • Highest high school dropout rate 	
 Hampton Roads Region	Population: 2009: 1,652.4 State Share: 21.0% Avg. Growth: 0.59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maritime and the military play leading roles in the regional economy; growing technology assets • The 3rd grade SOL advanced pass rate declined by 6.2 points between 2006 and 2009 • Second lowest high school graduation rate 	
 Northern Region	Population: 2009: 2,551.2 State Share: 32.4% Avg. Growth: 2.10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic “engine” for Virginia • Heavy technology and government presence • Highest educational attainment levels, along with highest performance in 3rd grade reading and high school graduation. 	
 Southside Region	Population: 2009: 383.2 State Share: 4.9% Avg. Growth: -0.10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant economic dislocation due to historic reliance on manufacturing and agriculture • Largest decline in high school dropout rates • 3rd grade SOL reading advanced pass rate declined by 5 points from 2006 and is now lowest in the state • Lagging performance on a range of economy, education attainment, and health indicators 	
 Southwest Region	Population: 2009: 418.9 State Share: 5.3% Avg. Growth: 0.15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic reliance on manufacturing and mining • Lagging performance on a range of economy, education attainment, and health indicators • High school graduation improved to the second highest in the state for the 2008-09 school year • Second highest advanced 3rd grade SOL pass rate 	
 Valley Region	Population: 2009: 477.2 State Share: 6.0% Avg. Growth: 1.22%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic reliance on agriculture and poultry mitigated by growth in manufacturing • Largest decline in 3rd grade SOL advanced pass rate between 2006 and 2009 (7.5 percentage points) • High school graduation rate slightly below the state average 	
 West Central Region	Population: 2009: 706.8 State Share: 9.0% Avg. Growth: 0.63%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing remains an important component of the economy • Third lowest high school graduation and 3rd grade SOL advanced pass rates for the 2008-09 school year • Higher education a strength along the Blacksburg-Roanoke-Lynchburg corridor 	

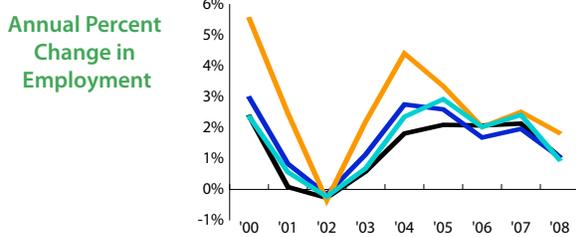


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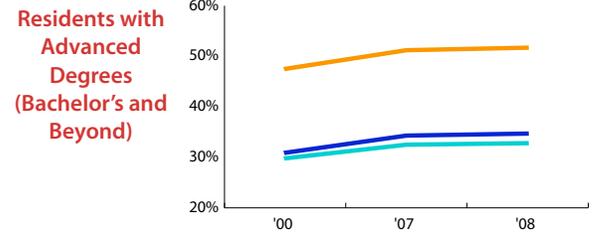
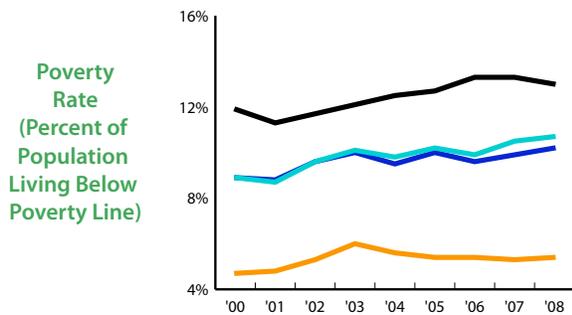
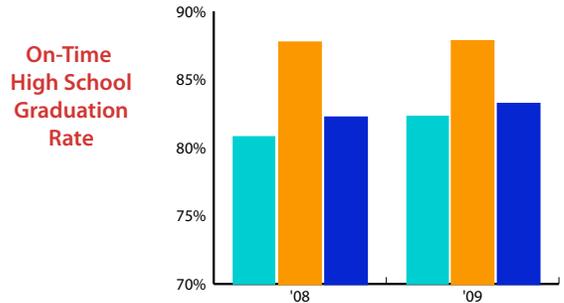
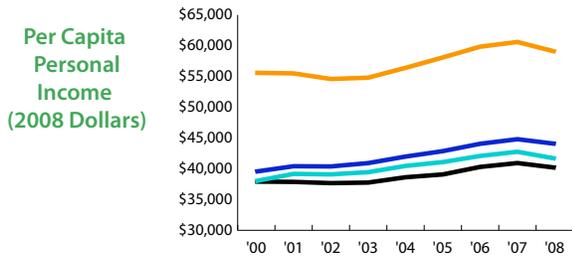
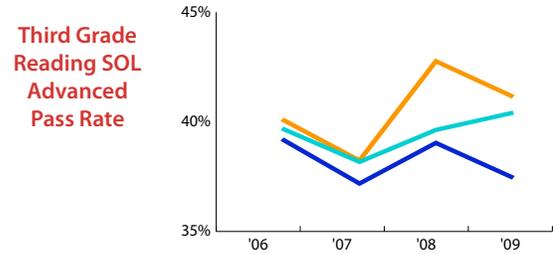
Central Region

- Central
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

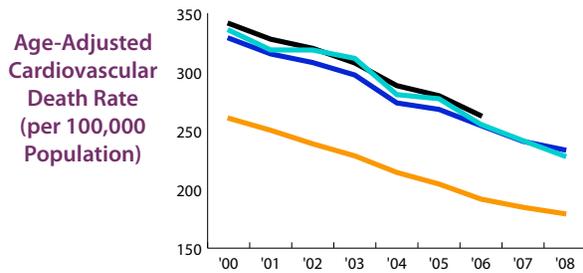
Economy



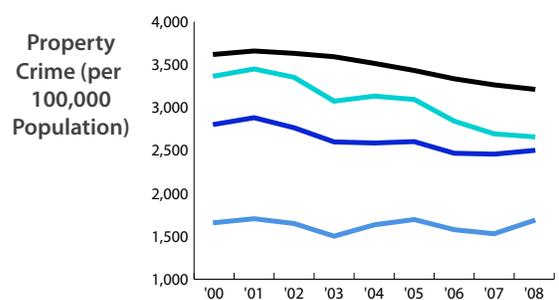
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



NOTE: National data only available through 2006.

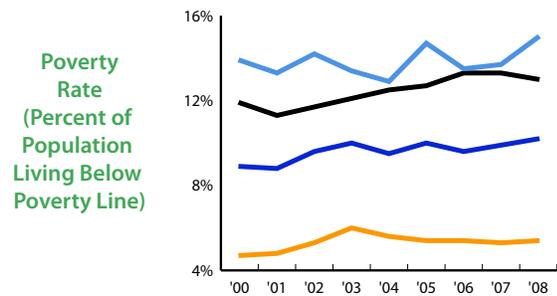
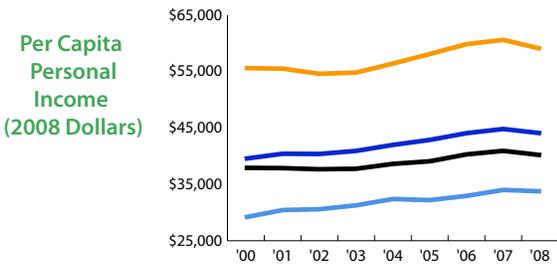
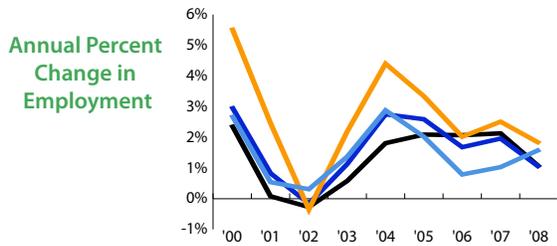


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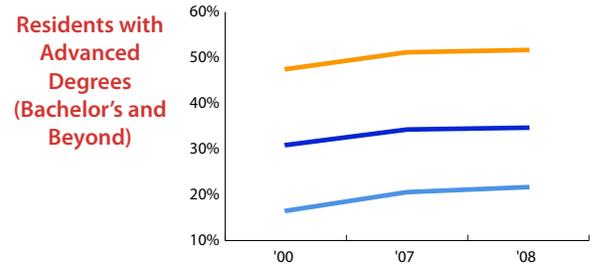
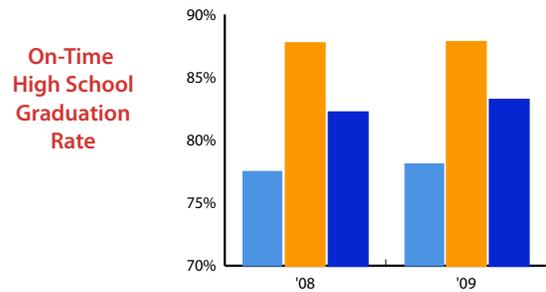
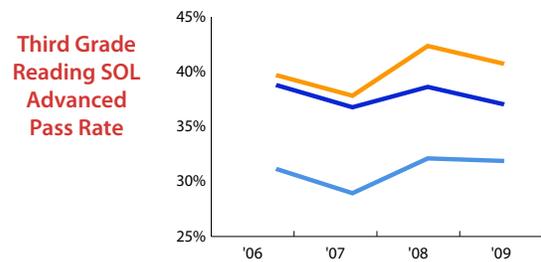
Eastern Region

■ Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime) ■ Northern (Leading Region) ■ Virginia ■ National

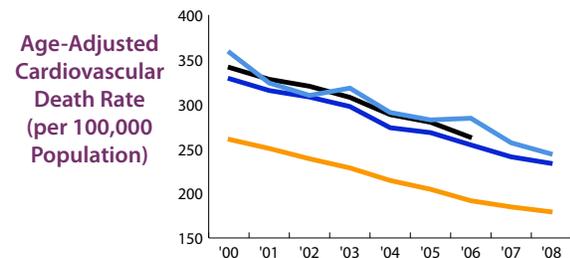
Economy



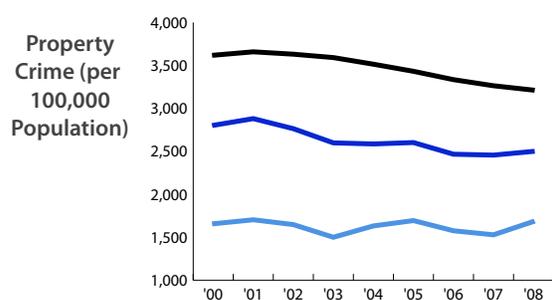
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



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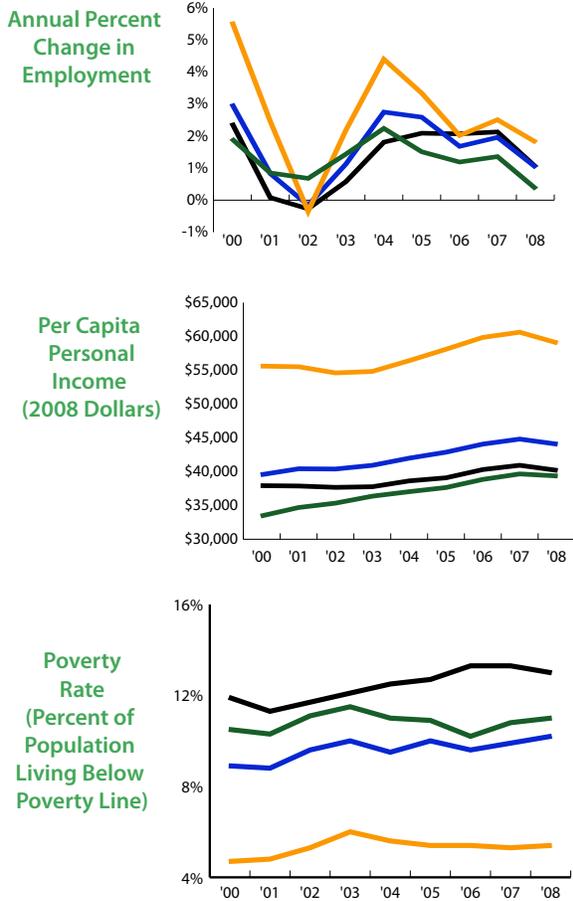


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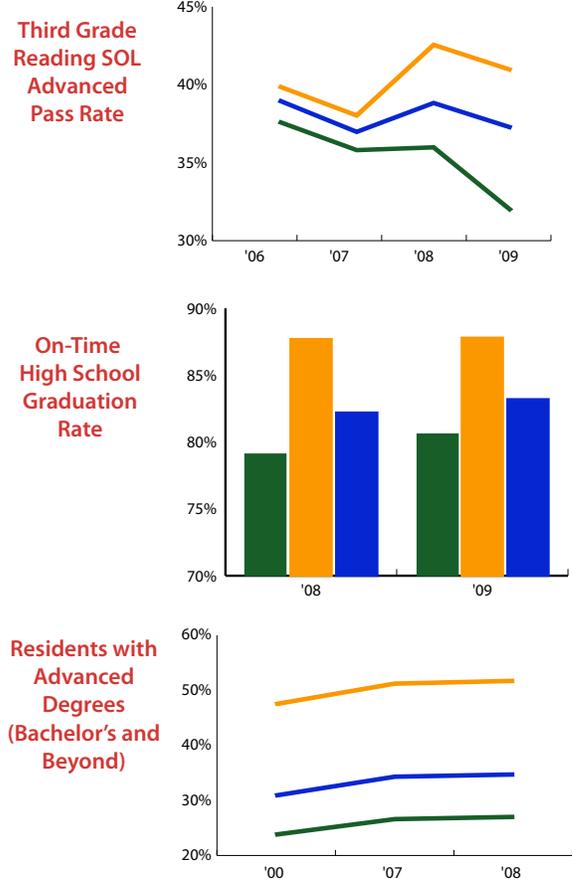
Hampton Roads Region

- Hampton Roads
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

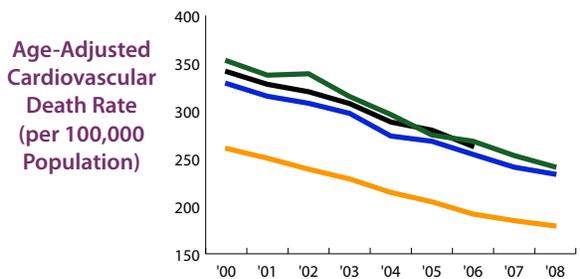
Economy



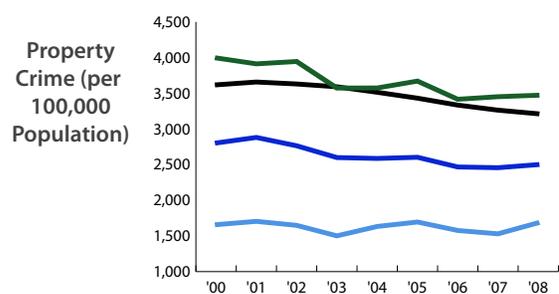
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



NOTE: National data only available through 2006.



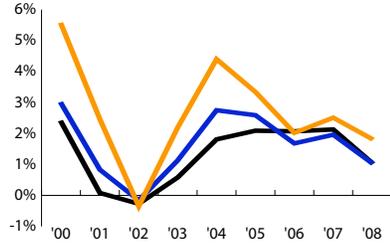
VirginiaPerforms Trends for Selected Indicators:

Northern Region

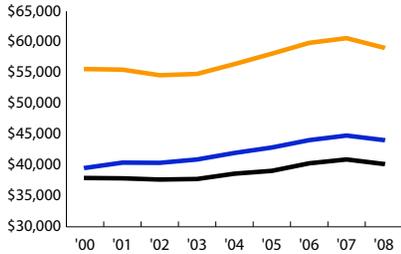
■ Northern (Leading Region)
 ■ Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)
 ■ Virginia
 ■ National

Economy

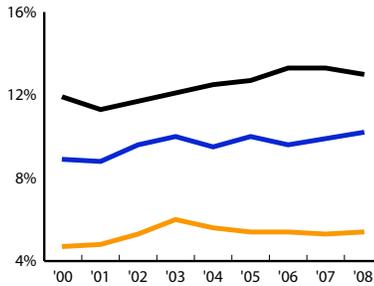
Annual Percent Change in Employment



Per Capita Personal Income (2008 Dollars)

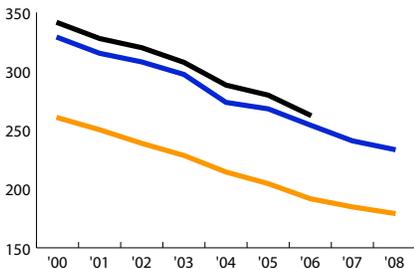


Poverty Rate (Percent of Population Living Below Poverty Line)



Health and Family

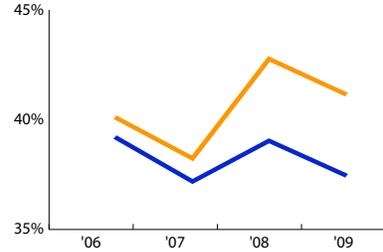
Age-Adjusted Cardiovascular Death Rate (per 100,000 Population)



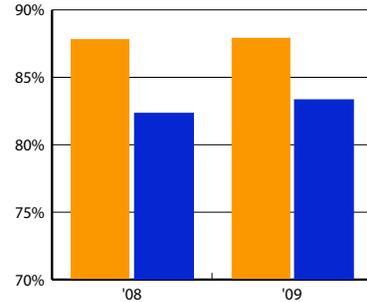
NOTE: National data only available through 2006.

Education

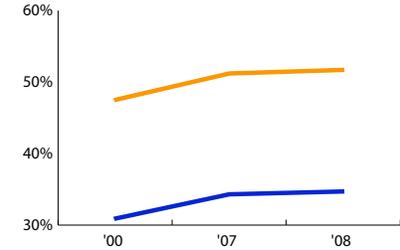
Third Grade Reading SOL Advanced Pass Rate



On-Time High School Graduation Rate

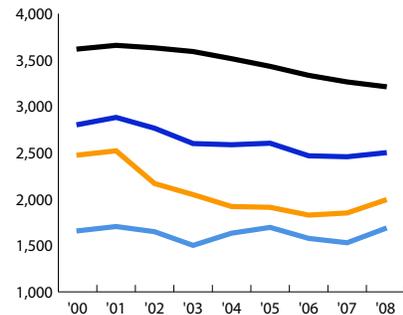


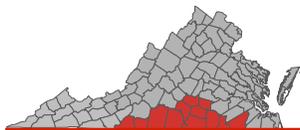
Residents with Advanced Degrees (Bachelor's and Beyond)



Public Safety

Property Crime (per 100,000 Population)



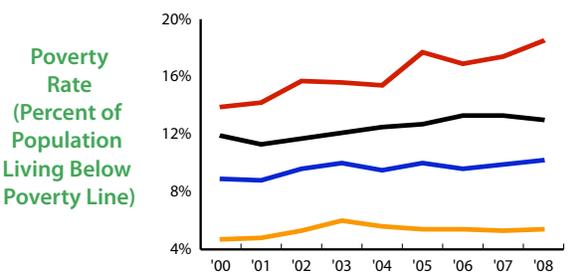
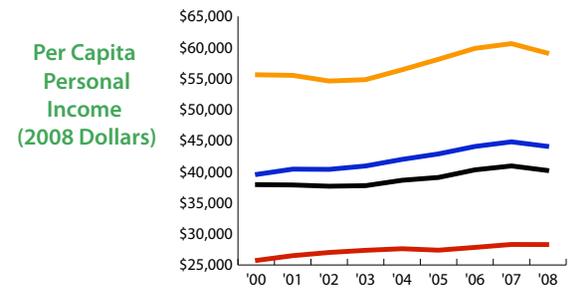
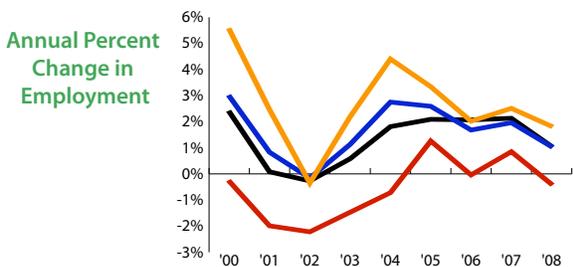


VirginiaPerforms Trends for Selected Indicators:

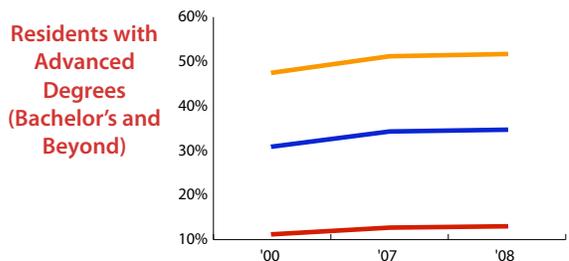
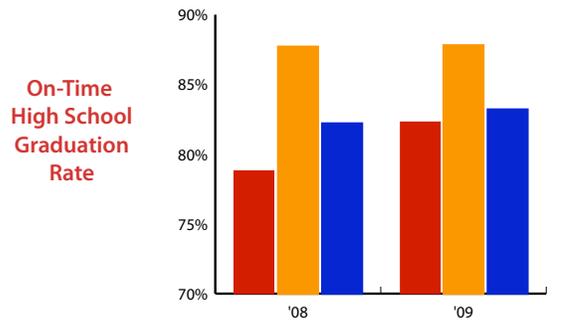
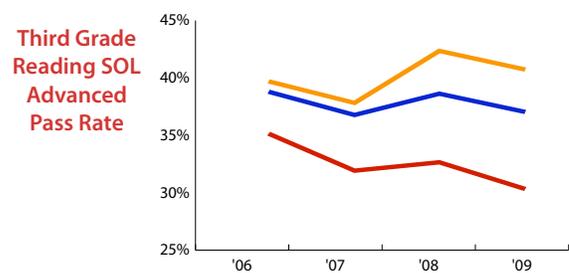
Southside Region

- Southside
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

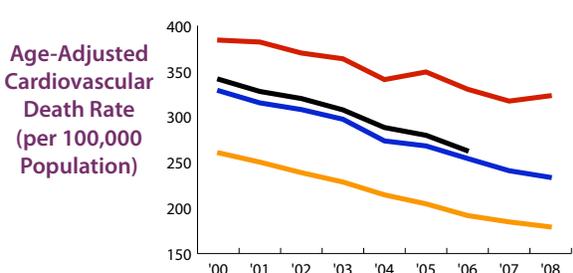
Economy



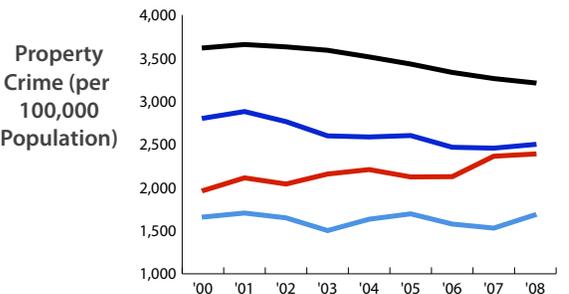
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



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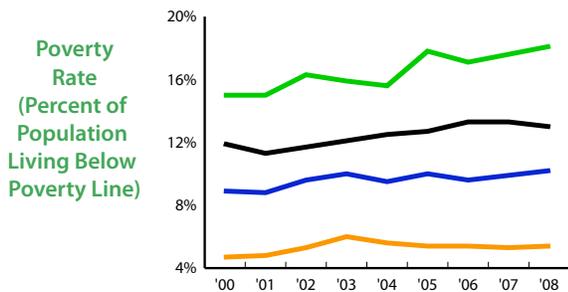
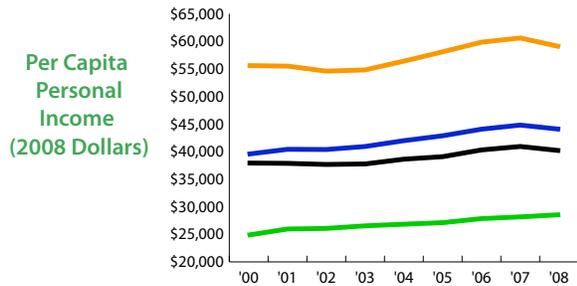
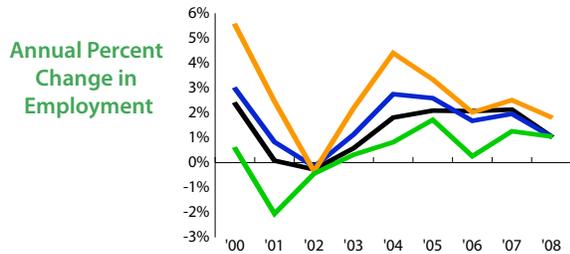


VirginiaPerforms Trends for Selected Indicators:

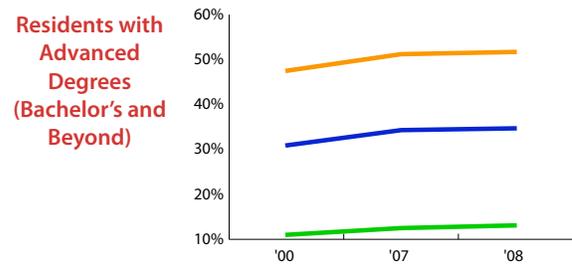
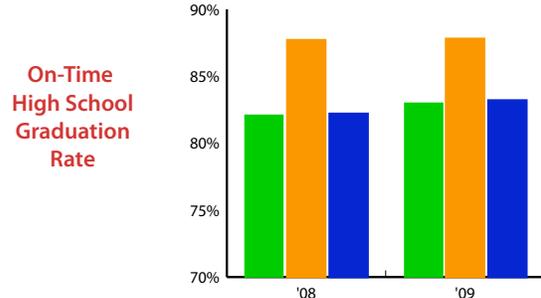
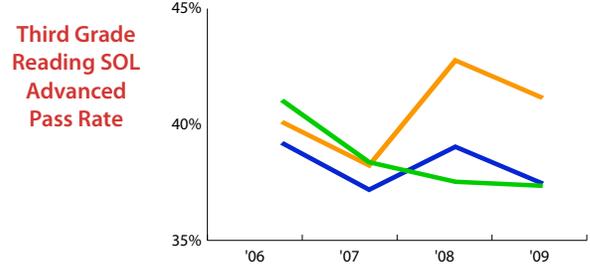
Southwest Region

- Southwest
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

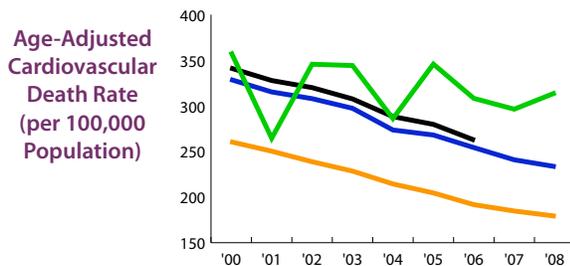
Economy



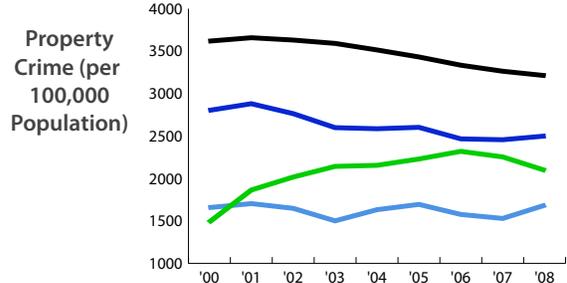
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



NOTE: National data only available through 2006.

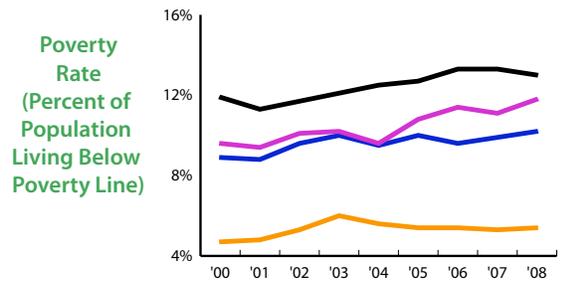
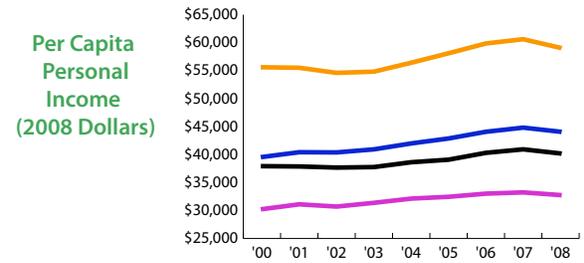
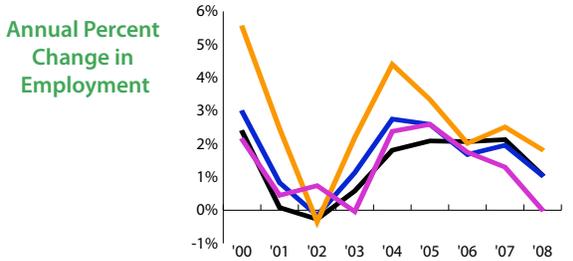


VirginiaPerforms Trends for Selected Indicators:

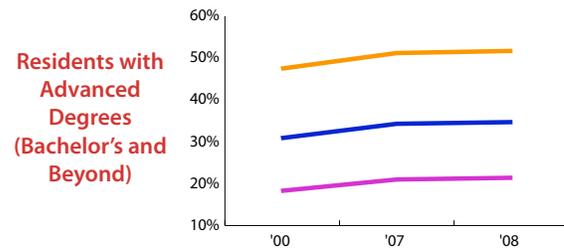
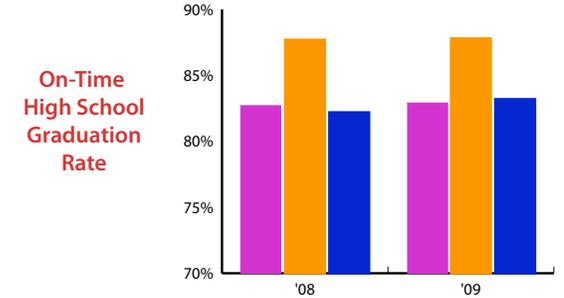
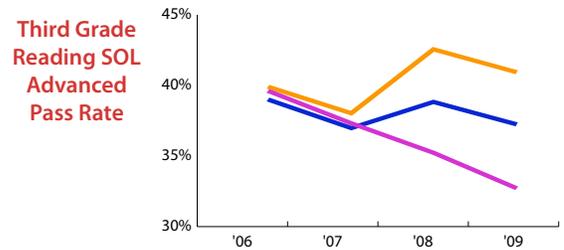
Valley Region

- Valley
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

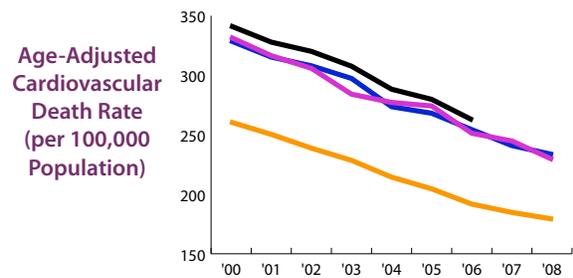
Economy



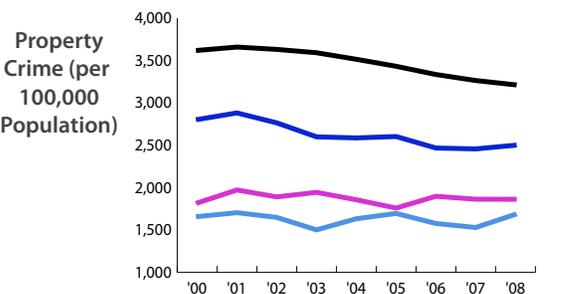
Education



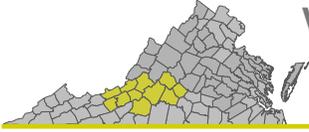
Health and Family



Public Safety



NOTE: National data only available through 2006.

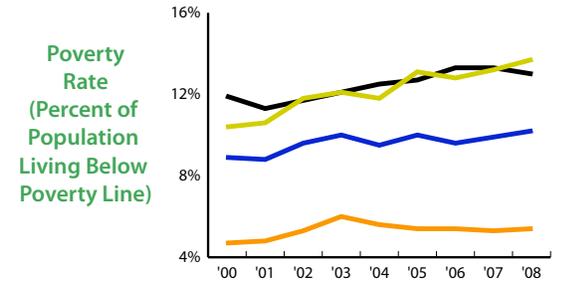
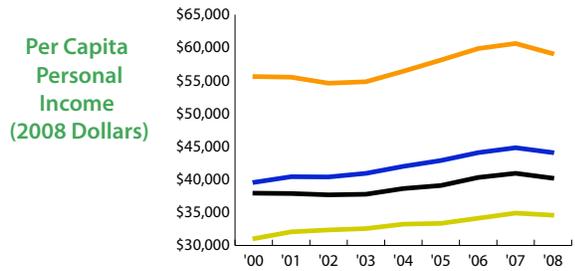
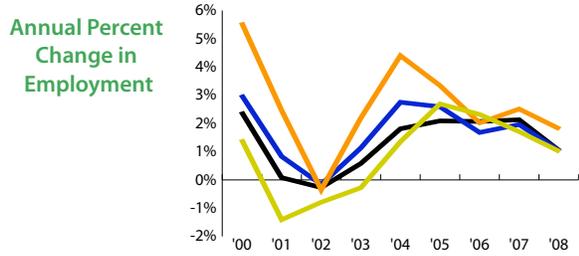


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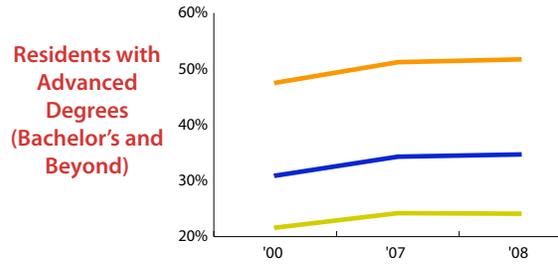
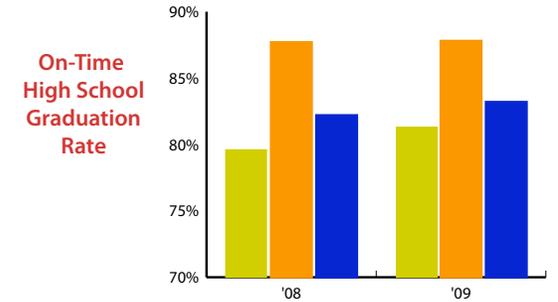
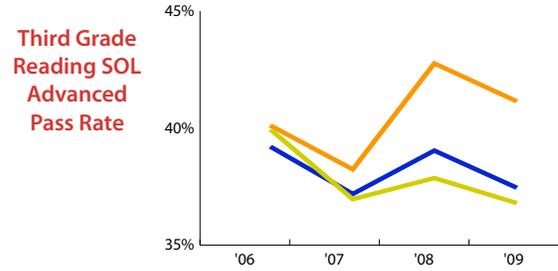
West Central Region

- West Central
- Northern (Leading Region)
- Virginia
- National
- Eastern (Leading Region for Property Crime)

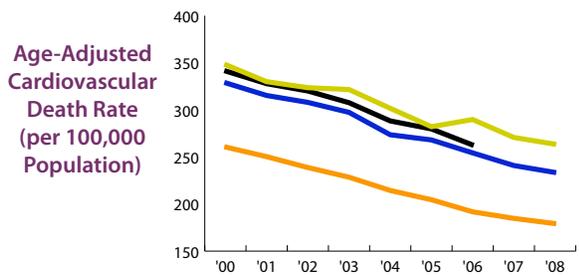
Economy



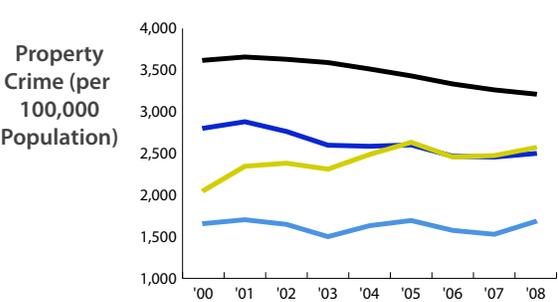
Education



Health and Family



Public Safety



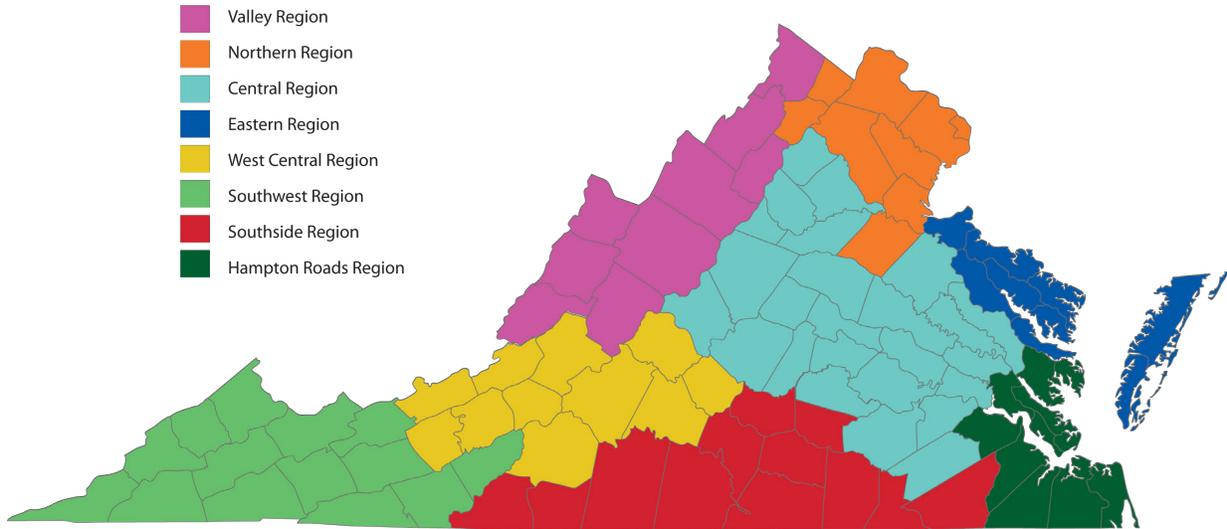
NOTE: National data only available through 2006.



III. Council on Virginia’s Future: Eight Regions

For purposes of analysis, the Council’s Virginia Performs system divides the state into eight regions.

Virginia Performs Regions



Valley	Northern	Central
Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Buena Vista, Covington, Frederick, Harrisonburg, Highland, Lexington, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester	Alexandria, Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax (city and county), Falls Church, Fauquier, Fredericksburg, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren	Albemarle, Amelia, Buckingham, Caroline, Charles City, Charlottesville, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Culpeper, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Fluvanna, Goochland, Greene, Hanover, Henrico, Hopewell, King & Queen, King William, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, New Kent, Orange, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Rappahannock, Richmond (city), Sussex
Eastern	West Central	Southwest
Accomack, Essex, King George, Lancaster, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond (county), Westmoreland	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford (city and county), Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke (city and county), Salem	Bland, Bristol, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Galax, Grayson, Lee, Norton, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe
Southside	Hampton Roads	
Brunswick, Charlotte, Danville, Emporia, Greensville, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Martinsville, Mecklenburg, Notoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Southampton	Chesapeake, Franklin, Gloucester, Hampton, Isle of Wight, James City, Mathews, Newport News, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Surry, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, York	



IV. Additional Information

Sites of Interest

Virginia Performs: VaPerforms.virginia.gov

Hampton Roads Performs: HamptonRoadsPerforms.org

Council on Virginia's Future: future.virginia.gov

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