



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, *Nancy* State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: July 15, 2008
SUBJECT: 2008 Maryland School Assessment Results

PURPOSE:

To provide Board members with a summary and overview of the statewide results of the 2008 Maryland School Assessments, which were administered in spring 2008.

BACKGROUND:

The 2008 administration of the Maryland School Assessments in reading and mathematics included all state elementary and middle school students in grades 3 through 8. The results of the assessments plus student attendance rates are combined to determine if schools meet annual targets for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The Assessments have been administered since 2003 with the expectation that all students in all subgroups will achieve proficiency by 2014—the target year identified in the federal No Child Left Behind law. The State Board will be briefed on the 2008 state level results in the aggregate and by race and special services subgroups (students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals, students with disabilities, and students who are receiving English language learner services).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Beginning in 2003, Maryland and many other states revised its State assessment and accountability program under the federal No Child Left Behind law. The curriculum was revised to identify specific content to be included in instruction and state assessments grade-by-grade for students in grades three through eight. Federal law also required the implementation of assessments at each of those grades as well. Prior to 2003, the state instructional frameworks covered content at each of the three grade bands (kindergarten through grade 3, grades 4 and 5, and grades 6 through 8). Similarly, assessments covered across each of those grade bands (grades 3, 5, and 8).

In 2001, the Visionary Panel for Better Schools recommended that grade-by-grade content standards and grade-by-grade assessments in reading and mathematics should be implemented. Consequently, the State has experienced five years of consistent and clear direction for teachers on the State expectations for content. This approach has assured that students leaving any classroom in the State and moving to another school will have much more consistency in instruction than ever before. The annual administration of the assessments has helped schools follow the progress of students as they matriculate through the grades.

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The Maryland School Assessments include selected response (multiple choice) items and items requiring students to produce a written response—some requiring short one- or two-sentence responses, some requiring longer responses. The assessments are routinely administered in March and returned to local school systems around the close of the same school year. In 2008, the spring breaks for school systems forced MSDE to schedule assessments three weeks later than usual, causing the return of results to be delayed similarly. The 2009 administration of the assessments will return to the same March timeframe.

Local school systems have been notified of the school and system results for the MSA along with preliminary determinations for schools on their annual status for Adequate Yearly Progress. School systems have been given an opportunity to appeal to the State any results for any school that they feel include possible locally generated technical glitches. In some instances, schools have miscoded students, producing inaccurate school results.

The 2008 assessments are important because they provide the first look at a cohort of students experiencing their entire elementary and middle school education from grades 3 through 8 under the auspices of the new curriculum and assessments. Also administered in 2008, but not reported at this meeting are newly required science assessments at grades 5 and 8. Results of those assessments will be released later this summer.

ACTION:

No action required. For information only.

NSG:sks