



Nancy S. Grasmick
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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools *Nancy*
DATE: October 26, 2010
SUBJECT: 2010 High School Assessment Requirements and Graduation Results

PURPOSE:

To provide Board members with a summary and overview of the statewide results on the High School Assessment (HSA) requirement and graduation rate data for students in the Class of 2010.

BACKGROUND:

Maryland's 2010 high school graduating class is the second class for which graduation depends on meeting the High School Assessment requirement in English, Algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. The requirement is met by either passing all four High School Assessments, attaining a combined passing score of 1602 points across all four tests, or by satisfactorily completing assigned projects from the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation in lieu of passing failed tests.

In addition to serving as high school graduation requirements in Maryland, the High School Assessments fulfill federal requirements for high school assessments in mathematics, English language arts, and science as part of the school accountability plan mandated under the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Federal rules require the use of English and Algebra assessment results along with graduation rate data for determining if schools, systems, and the state are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward annual performance targets. The State Board will be briefed on the 2010 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:

HSA Development. Maryland's High School Assessments are end-of-course exams that have been under development since the mid-1990's, with some tests administered on a no-fault basis to students as early as 2000. The original Maryland plan envisioned up to three different course assessments for each of the four core academic areas, but the federal passage of the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind), helped lead state policy makers to narrow the testing plan down to one test in each of the four core academic areas—English 10, Algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. Two of the tests, English 10 and Algebra/data analysis, are required by federal law to be used along with graduation rate data to determine if a school, system, or state meets the mandated annual performance targets or achieves Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).



Biology results must be reported under federal rules, but they are not incorporated into AYP determinations. The fourth test, government, is a Maryland requirement and is reported for State purposes only.

Because the tests are end-of-course exams, the AYP determinations are based on the number of students passing the assessments by the end of their senior year, with students taking the tests as they complete the courses. In some instances, students pass the assessments as they take the courses earlier in their high school career, with those results incorporated into AYP calculations in the senior year upon graduation. Students unable to achieve passing scores on High School Assessments are permitted to retest only after they have been given an opportunity for further instruction or remediation. If such students eventually pass the failed assessments, their passing results are incorporated into the AYP determination as "passing students."

Options for Students Failing Tests. Students who are unable to pass a High School Assessment have two options. Recognizing that some students are particularly strong in some areas and weaker in others, the Combined Score Option allows students to compensate lower HSA scores with higher scores in others as long as the total number of points across the four assessments equals 1602. However, for students unable to pass all four tests or achieve 1602 points, a third mechanism is used. A student failing any HSA at least two times can meet the Maryland graduation requirement by completing extensive assignments of independent instructional work related to the course for which they failed the HSA as part of the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. A student successfully completing an assigned Bridge Plan project is deemed as meeting the HSA requirement related to the failed test. However, federal rules require Maryland to count only passing students for English and Algebra/data analysis when calculating Adequate Yearly Progress.

Curricular Alignment. In 2001, the Visionary Panel for Better Schools recommended that the elementary and middle school curricula be realigned to better prepare students to be successful in the High School Assessments and that a new set of tests, the Maryland School Assessments be administered through grade 8 to assure progress toward those high school standards. The High School Assessments are based on Core Learning Goals, which form the core academic content that all local school systems were mandated by State Board action for inclusion in all High School Assessment courses in the late 1990's. Local school system curricula include some variation in course content and in the nomenclature for courses. However, all Maryland students must have been taught the mandated content.

Annual Testing Cycle. The assessments include selected response (multiple choice) items designed to facilitate rapid scoring and turnaround of results. The tests are administered five times per school year. The three major administrations coincide with the local academic year cycle and are given at the end of the first and second semesters and during the summer term. One additional administration is also made available in the early fall of each year to accommodate students who may have failed the end of year administration and need only minor review at the beginning of the school year to demonstrate the skills to pass. Finally, an administration is available in spring of each year for seniors who have not met the requirement only to permit expedited scoring so that results can be incorporated into local graduation decisions for the relatively small number of seniors still attempting to meet the HSA requirement in the second semester of the senior year.

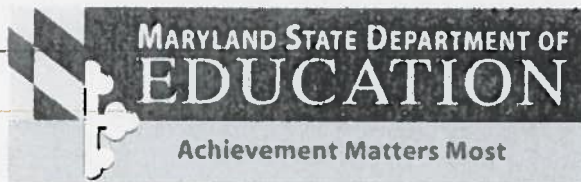
HSA Waiver Option. State Board regulations also permit local superintendents to grant waivers to a limited number of students not passing one or more HSAs under extraordinary circumstances. This provision was implemented in 2009 and revised somewhat for the high school graduating class of 2010. Though students who are granted waivers can receive their diplomas, they are counted as “not passing” when HSA results are reported for both state and federal purposes.

Summary of Results. Today the State Board is discussing the results received in September related to the high school graduating class of 2010, including a report on the number of students passing the assessments, students unable to pass the assessments, students meeting the requirement through the Bridge Plan Option, and students granted waivers by local superintendents. Results are disaggregated by race/ethnicity and special services. Results were previously posted at MSDE’s report card website, mdreportcard.org on October 6.

ACTION:

For information only, no action required.

NSG:law



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CONFIDENTIAL

To: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education
From: Nancy S. Grasmick, ^{Nancy} State Superintendent of Schools
Re: High School Assessment Requirement, Graduation Rate and Adequate Yearly Progress Release
Date: September 30, 2010

The following confidential data is provided for your personal information.

On Wednesday, October 6, 2010, MSDE will release to the public the following data for the Class of 2010:

- High School Assessment (HSA) Requirements
- Graduation and Dropout Rate
- High School AYP

This confidential memorandum provides you with data and highlights of the 2010 results for your information only. At the State Board of Education meeting in October, you will receive a complete briefing on the Class of 2010 HSA and graduation results and the results of high school and summary results for all schools on Adequate Yearly Progress. The briefing will include state level results disaggregated by race and special services, and will provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the results.

Public release. As per past practice, detailed statewide, system, and local school High School Assessment (HSA), graduation, dropout rate, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data will be posted Wednesday, October 6, 10 a.m. on the Maryland State Department of Education's report card Web site, www.mdreportcard.org.

Summary of High School Assessment (HSA) Results

I wanted to review for you some of the key findings in the 2010 High School Assessment graduation requirements results. This year's data show that:

- more students passed all four HSA tests than in 2009
- fewer waivers for the requirement were granted by local school systems
- and the Class of 2011 is well positioned to meet the HSA requirements as well

The Results. There were a total of 59,721 "completers" in 2010. Of these, 58,290 students received diplomas and 737 students received Special Education Certificates. These certificates are for students with severe disabilities who complete their individualized education program, which does not align to the requirements of a Maryland diploma.

There were 688 students who entered Grade 9 prior to 2005, and therefore had no HSA requirement. The breakdowns of how the remaining students met their HSA requirements are as follows:

Passed 4:	42,437
Combined Score:	10,429
Bridge:	5,012
Waiver:	303

Of the 4,102 non-completers, 33 did not graduate solely because of the HSA requirement. Two thousand nine hundred and eighteen (2,918) did not meet other requirements, 229 entered Grade 9 before 2005 and were not subject to the requirement, and 922 were continuing to work on a special education certificates (which they can do until age 21.)

Table 1 shows the breakdown of results reported in percentages and for subgroups. The top line of the chart shows the data for the Class of 2009 for comparison purposes. The Class of 2010 had more students pass all four, more students meet the combined score option, and more students complete the Bridge. The Bridge option continues to be especially important to English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities – the exact students the Bridge was designed to serve. Fewer waivers were issued in 2010 as well.

Table 1. Percentage of Students Meeting HSA Requirements by Method and Subgroup

	No Req.	Passed All Four	Combined Score	Bridge	Waiver	Not Met Other	Not Met HSA Only
All Students (Class of 2009)	5.7	68.0	15.9	5.8	0.9	3.8	0.0
Class of 2010							
All Students	1.1	68.6	16.9	8.1	0.5	4.7	0.1
Asian	1.2	84.1	9.4	2.6	0.4	2.2	0.0
African American	1.5	49.6	24.2	16.0	0.8	7.7	0.1
White	0.5	82.8	11.7	2.7	0.0	2.2	0.0
Hispanic	2.9	57.0	20.9	8.9	2.1	8.1	0.0
Special Education	2.7	25.0	28.7	30.4	1.6	11.4	0.2
ELL	10.0	24.5	24.8	17.9	12.1	9.7	0.0
FARMS	1.7	48.5	24.3	16.0	1.1	8.4	0.1

Table 2 shows the number of waivers by subgroup for 2009 and 2010, in addition to the percentage of each group receiving them. All groups but Hispanic and ELL students show a decrease in the number and percentage of waivers granted. The Hispanic students had the exact same percentage of waivers in 2009 and 2010, and the ELL students show an increase, from 9.1 percent in 2009 to 11.8 in 2010.

Table 2. Waivers by Subgroup, 2009 and 2010 Comparison

	Class of 2009		Class of 2010	
	Number	Percent of Group	Number	Percent of Group
All Students	531	100.0	303	100.0
Asian	19	0.5	15	0.4
African American	376	1.6	180	0.8
White	45	0.1	13	0.0
Hispanic	90	2.1	95	2.1
Special Education	160	3.1	69	1.2
ELL	77	9.1	110	11.8
FARMS	241	1.7	182	1.0

Graduation Rate Increased and Dropout Rates Declined

The state graduation rate **increased** for the second year in a row, and has now broken the 86 percent mark with a rate of 86.55. The five-year trends by subgroup are presented in Table 3. All subgroups but ELL show improvement this year.

Table 3. Graduation Rates by Subgroup: 5 Year Trend Data

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Students	85.44	85.24	85.09	85.24	86.55
American Indian	82.79	82.49	81.43	78.15	82.25
Asian	94.86	94.47	94.56	94.67	95.66
African American	78.89	78.58	79.01	79.05	80.72
White	89.38	89.79	89.65	90.02	91.07
Hispanic	81.35	79.66	77.54	78.63	80.78
Special Education	76.77	75.61	72.85	70.05	72.31
ELL	85.41	87.91	88.27	82.26	78.21
FARMS	81.76	80.12	82.07	85.53	87.83

Dropouts continue to **decline** and this year's rate marks the **lowest rate in over 11 years**.

Table 4. Dropout Rates by Subgroup: 5 Year Trend Data

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Students	3.6	3.5	3.4	2.8	2.5
American Indian	3.8	5.2	5.0	4.8	3.1
Asian	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.8
African American	5.3	5.0	4.4	3.6	3.2
White	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.2	1.9
Hispanic	5.0	5.1	4.6	3.7	3.7
Special Education	5.6	5.0	5.8	5.1	4.4
ELL	1.2	1.5	3.3	4.0	3.4
FARMS	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.6	3.1

Summary of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results

I also wanted to brief you on the 2010 results of high school Adequate Yearly Progress. Each year, according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Maryland must calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for each school.

Annual targets. The goal of NCLB was to have every student proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014, and targets were set back in 2003 in order to “pace” schools to meet that target. Each year the target (referred to as the Annual Measureable Objective, or AMO) increases to ensure schools progress toward meeting the 2014 goal. Therefore the closer we come to 2014, the harder it becomes for a school to meet these targets for all subgroups. Schools not meeting the AMO target for all subgroups in any given year are designated as having “not met” the Adequate Yearly Progress requirement.

We are celebrating that six high schools exited School Improvement in 2010. However, this year there was an increase in the numbers of schools not meeting AYP. Sixty-one point four (61.4) percent of high schools met AYP in 2010, down from 77.7 percent in 2009. There are currently 34 high schools in School Improvement, an decrease of 9 from 2009. Sixty-two (62) schools entered the local attention category in 2010 because they missed AYP for the first time. This was an increase of 44 from last year. These schools can avoid School Improvement if they make AYP in 2011.

Many schools are struggling with their special education subgroup. Of the 35 high schools that missed AYP because of only one subgroup, 25 (71 percent) failed to make AYP solely because of their special education subgroup.

Across all schools (elementary, middle and high) in 2010, of 1375 schools, 936 (68.1%) met AYP. Twenty-five schools exited school improvement, and five more schools are in school improvement now than in 2009.

A more detailed discussion of the HSA, graduation rates and AYP results will take place at the October Board Meeting. I look forward to our discussion.

ACTION:

For information only

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