



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*
DATE: October 28, 2008
SUBJECT: HSA Status Report for Class of 2009

PURPOSE:

To review the status of current seniors in the Class of 2009 as they work to satisfy the High School Assessment graduation requirement and to advise the State Board on the progress students are making toward meeting the requirement. A full analysis of the data will be sent to State Board members in advance of the meeting so there will be time to review the data prior to the day of the meeting.

BACKGROUND:

Overall, seniors in the Class of 2009 have been working toward high school graduation for four years with the knowledge that they are members of the first graduating class that must meet the High School Assessment graduation requirement in order to receive the Maryland High School Diploma. Students take the assessments when they complete algebra/data analysis, biology, English, and government. These are courses typically taken by students in the tenth grade.

Students have multiple options for meeting the requirement for the four assessments. These options include passing the assessments, achieving the combined score of 1602, or using the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation to demonstrate mastery of the course content for any HSA the student did not pass. Identified students with cognitive disabilities may take the modified High School Assessment (Mod-HSA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The presentation and discussion of the high school assessments and the status of seniors in the Class of 2009 will be conducted in three parts. First, Dr. Leslie Wilson will share data and her analysis of HSA results for students who are currently enrolled as seniors and scheduled to graduate in 2009. Dr. Wilson's presentation will be followed by comments offered by a panel of distinguished educators:



Dr. Andres A. Alonso, CEO, Baltimore City Public School System
Dr. Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County Public Schools
Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools
Mr. William Hite, Jr., Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools
Dr. Carl D. Roberts, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland
Mr. Matt Gandal, Executive Vice President, Achieve, Inc.

All panel members were requested to submit in advance of the meeting summaries of the remarks that they would present to the Board. Attached are the remarks submitted by Dr. Alonso and Dr. Roberts.

The presentations by Dr. Wilson and the panel to the State Board will include a focus on the following questions:

- How are students in the Class of 2009 progressing toward meeting the HSA requirement?
- How are students using the various options to meet the HSA requirement?
- What have we learned from the analysis of the data about how students are performing on the HSAs?
- How are local school systems helping to ensure that students graduate?
- How are Maryland's efforts with the HSA requirement and high school reform consistent with similar efforts elsewhere?

Time for questions and answers along with Board discussion will be provided following the conclusion of the panel presentation.

ACTION:

For information only, no action required.

Attachments (2)
NSG:sks

State Board of Education
Panel on High School Assessments
Testimony of Andres A. Alonso, Ed.D,
Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore City Public Schools
October 28, 2008

- I view every decision through the lens of how it will affect teaching and learning in the Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools).
- Evidence is unassailable that present practice has not worked for Baltimore students. The evidence includes graduation and dropout rates, as well as data on college enrollment and college graduation over time.
- If we establish standards, we must measure whether we have met them. That is true at the state, city, school, classroom and student level.
- We have been graduating students who are not prepared for what is next at the most basic level. There have been no standards.
- I see the criteria for graduation as necessary for the conversation about teaching and learning in the city.
- If students are not ready, they should not graduate. If students are not ready, we should continue to work with them until they are ready. The present framing of the conversation does not encompass what should happen.
- The focus on every individual student, which began last year, is already having a measurable impact on our practices and outcomes.
- Returning to past practices, on the basis of concern for individual students who might not be able to graduate this year will spare the sensibilities of adults, but will not help those students. They are unprepared for what comes next.
- There is no such thing as a perfect accountability system. What is important is how we use that accountability system for the benefit of children.

Remarks to Maryland State Board of Education
Carl D. Roberts, Ed. D.
Executive Director
Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland
October 28, 2008

1. High School Assessments in English 2, Biology, Government and Algebra 1 present minimal expectations for student performance in high school.
2. School systems have aligned H.S.A. course content with the State content standards. Students who pass these specific courses should be able and expected to demonstrate proficiency (passing score) on the end of course H.S.A.
3. The State BOE must keep passage of the H.S.A.'s as a requirement for graduation for the Class of 2009. Any delay will result in a loss of momentum and motivation that the work of many dedicated teachers and other instructional personnel has created.
4. As superintendent of the Cecil County Public Schools for the past twelve years,
 - a. We embraced the accountability measured by the H.S.A.'s when initially introduced.
 - b. Put forth significant effort to ensure that the curricula were aligned with the state content standards.
 - c. Provided the required staff development to ensure that highly qualified teachers can deliver the content as designed.
 - d. Informed students and their parents that this graduation requirement was as significant and necessary as any other graduation requirement.
 - e. Analyzed the results of each administration and made the necessary adjustments to improve the results in the next administration.
 - f. Implemented a comprehensive appropriate assistance plan to accommodate students unable to demonstrate mastery through the normal process.
5. Twenty-three of twenty-four local superintendents in Maryland support the H.S.A.'s as a graduation requirement for the class of 2009. (October 23, 2008)
6. Twenty-three local school superintendents recommend that the Maryland State Board of Education members keep passage of the H.S.A.'s as a graduation requirement for the class of 2009.