

Taking the *Next Great Step*

For Maryland Public Schools

State of Education 2010

More Recognition for Maryland's Education System

- According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, Maryland is also one of six states to earn an "A" in college preparation.
- Maryland's Class of 2009 graduating seniors were offered a record \$802 million in scholarship funding to continue their pursuit of knowledge at the college of their choice, compared to \$576 million in 2008 and less than \$500 million in 2007. About 1 in 3 students received scholarship offers. The scholarships included more than 250 National Merit Finalists and 450 scholarship offers from Ivy League institutions.
- The Maryland State Department of Education has awarded more than \$3.8 million in federal 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant funding to 11 programs to provide opportunities for literacy and related educational development to children and their families in high-poverty schools or schools identified for improvement.
- The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) marked the largest number of Maryland Green Schools named in the program's 11-year history, recognizing 69 new Maryland Green Schools, 2 new green environmental education centers, and 24 re-certifications. With the new schools, there are now 271 Maryland schools with Green School status.
- Approximately half a million students engaged in 11,451 service-learning projects during the 2008-2009 school year. Maryland is the only state with a service-learning requirement for high school graduates.
- The graduating Class of 2009 amassed more than 4 million hours of service-learning activities, which is a conservative estimate since many students volunteer well over the required 75 hours. (58,200/students x 75/hours = 4,365,000).
- The National Art Education Association awarded Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick with the Distinguished Service, Outside the Profession Award as a testament to her exemplary leadership and commitment to ensuring all students receive a quality education, *April 2010*.
- State Superintendent Grasmick receives the College Board's William U. Harris Award of Excellence for her exemplary leadership skills in the field of education, *May 2010*.



Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr., President, Maryland State Board of Education





Taking the *Next Great Step*

**“Maryland...
is a role model
for access and
achievement.”**

–USA Today, 2/4/2010

**“Maryland’s
students and
educators
should be
proud of the
success their
hard work has
created.”**

–College Board
President, Gaston
Caperton

Dear Friends of Maryland Public Education:

Maryland public schools continue to pick up honors and receive recognition for the work going on in our classrooms! For the second straight year, Maryland’s education system has been ranked as number one in the nation by *Education Week*, the nation’s leading education publication. The *College Board* followed that up by ranking the State first in performance in the nation on the rigorous Advanced Placement program for the second consecutive year. Our schools have also caught the eye of both *Newsweek* and *USA Today* for their remarkable achievements, and with good reason—for the seventh year in a row, all of our school systems registered improvements in 2009.

Other state systems are trying to catch up to Maryland. If our State stands still, our education system falls behind. We have no intention of resting on our laurels, but instead pledge to further strengthen our schools. In taking the next great step, we are aggressively working towards receiving *Race To The Top* funding; however, our reform efforts are about implementing Maryland’s education agenda. As part of that, Maryland has also signed on to the *Common Core State Standards Initiative*—a state-led effort to develop common English and mathematics standards for the nation.

This publication summarizes some of the many good things taking place in Maryland classrooms and the work being done by our state’s educators. It also looks at where our schools are headed. Please continue to partner with us as we take the next great step for Maryland public schools. We greatly appreciate your support as we work on behalf of all of our students.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

Another Remarkable Year For Maryland’s Education System

**Ranked
#1
in the
nation
again,
and
again,
and
again!**

Education Week placed Maryland at the top of the list again this year, with the nation’s only B+ average in the *2010 Quality Counts Report*. The ranking is based on State education policies and student performance that reflect nearly two decades of work on a PreK-12 curriculum, state accountability and standards, teacher effectiveness, and work on school readiness, high school reform, and student preparation for college and work. The report finds that no other state has a more consistent record of excellence than Maryland.

College Board ranked Maryland number one in the nation again this year in the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher on at least one Advanced Placement (AP) exam. *A score of 3 or higher on the 5-point scale is considered mastery of college-level work.* Maryland has also dramatically increased AP participation among minority students. Nearly 10 percent (9.6%) of students scoring 3 or better in Maryland were African American—that’s the fourth-highest percentage among states in the nation. Hispanic students also showed increases in participation and success in the program as 7.5 percent of the seniors who scored 3 or higher on the AP exam were Hispanic.

Newsweek ranked Maryland number one on its list of *America’s Top Public High Schools* for the highest percentage of high schools offering, and students taking, college-level courses. Almost 32 percent of Maryland high school students attend one of the 83 Maryland schools on the list.

Maryland’s *Vision for Reform*

Maryland’s 3rd Wave of Education Reform Is Coming. *It is the Next Great Step.*

Race To The Top (RTTT)

While we work towards receiving federal *Race To The Top* funding, our reform efforts are about initiating Maryland’s education agenda.

Maryland’s reform efforts include:

- Revising the Maryland State Curriculum PreK–12 assessments and accountability system based on the **Common Core State Standards** to assure that all graduates are college and career ready;
- Building a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement;
- Redesigning the model for the preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals; and
- Fully implementing the innovative **Breakthrough Center** approach for transforming low-achieving schools and districts.

**“This effort will set a
high standard for all our
students and will level the
playing field with students
in other states and across
the globe.”**

–Nancy S. Grasmick

Maryland has signed on to the **Common Core State Standards Initiative**—a state-led effort to develop common English and mathematics standards for the nation. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is jointly led by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Maryland joins 49 other states and territories in the development of common K-12 standards that are research-based, aligned with college and work expectations, and internationally benchmarked. For Maryland, adoption of the Common Core State Standards is a logical next step in providing a set of standards for our state’s schools that builds on work the Maryland State Department has led over the last decade. (http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/)

American Diploma Project

Another program included in our reform efforts is the *American Diploma Project (ADP)*. In September 2009, the American Diploma Project’s Assessment Consortium, a group of 15 states that banded together with the goal of creating high quality, rigorous assessments, released results of the Algebra II exam. The first national ADP Algebra II assessment was administered in spring 2008; Maryland administered its first Algebra II exam in spring 2009 and will administer the test again in 2010. A small number of Maryland students took the Algebra II exam (1,295), a group not representative of the State’s population as a whole. But, Algebra II is where we want all students to be as our sights are set on preparing our students for work, college, and international competition and that is where the data from the Algebra II test will help us. The new Algebra II results give our students and our teachers a look at something else entirely: high-end performance. The floor has been raised and the bar has been set and we are confident that our students will reach it.

STEM Education

In 2008, Governor Martin O’Malley created the *STEM Task Force*, charged with making recommendations to establish Maryland as a global leader in the development of its workforce of the future and in its science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) based research and economic development infrastructure. This task force was specifically charged with ensuring that rigorous STEM teaching and learning are accessible to all learners at all levels; increasing the number of degree holders and program completers trained in STEM fields; offering strategies to link education, workforce creation, research, and economic development; and creating measurable goals, benchmarks, and the resources required to implement the plan. Maryland is enlarging the pipeline to market STEM programming to all students, particularly those under-represented in STEM majors. Maryland has increased the number of students who take rigorous math and science coursework; established STEM schools and programs; scaled-up the Project Lead The Way (high school pre-engineering programs); and piloted the Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Program. STEM in Maryland will drive 21st Century economic growth and workforce demand. (<http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/stem/>)

BRAC Ready

While Maryland is strongly committed to raising its education standards, there is also an immediate and more compelling reason to strengthen its STEM instruction—BRAC (Base Relocation and Closure). The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) created a BRAC website that provides families with a wide array of information about Maryland’s local school systems in an effort to better assist them as they make the transition to Maryland. On the MSDE webpage are links to Maryland’s 24 local school systems; security clearance information; and publications and materials that are topic specific or that provide a snapshot of Maryland’s education excellence. In addition, there is information related to STEM education; the Gifted and Talented program; Minority Achievement; Environmental programs; Autism; Child Care; Career Technology Education; Teacher Certification and transfer; and the latest in BRAC news. Over the next few years, BRAC will bring even more science, IT, and engineering jobs to the State—that’s tens-of-thousands of jobs. (<http://marylandpublicschools.org/BRAC>)

Creating *Stronger Schools and Better Students*

Students Are Achieving Early *and* Into The Future.

Early Childhood Education

According to the *State of Preschool 2008*—a national report issued by the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), Maryland's state-funded prekindergarten program ranks in the top 10 states for percentage of children enrolled in the program.

In 2009, according to their teachers, 78 percent of entering kindergartners were fully ready for school—that's a 5 percent increase over the previous year and a 29 percent increase since 2001-02. This statistically significant increase occurred for both the composite score for *Language Literacy* and *Mathematical Thinking* from 2001-02. The increase in *Languages and Literacy* has risen 31 percent and *Mathematical Thinking* has climbed to 32 percent.

The Maryland State Department of Education expanded its state-recommended list of early childhood curricula for child care centers, Head Start programs, and nursery schools. The **Early Childhood Curriculum Project** is meant to offer resources for the classroom, which match up with the state's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten curricular frameworks, also known as the State curriculum. The project is designed to support preschool age children before they start their school careers. (www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/early_learning/)

Career/Technology Education

The Maryland State Department of Education has recognized that success in 21st Century careers requires that students develop strong academic and technical skills. Maryland's Career and Technology Education (CTE) prepares students for further education and careers as part of their high school experience. There are 48 state developed programs of study offered. All of these programs provide students the opportunity to explore careers, apply academic concepts, and develop technical skills needed in the 21st Century workplace. These programs also provide students with the opportunity to earn early college credit and/or industry certification, which gives them a step ahead toward college and careers.

New statewide CTE programs have been developed to prepare more students for opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines, while more traditional CTE programs have been revised to include advanced technical preparation and increased opportunity for high school students to earn early college credit and industry certifications. The fastest-growing CTE programs include STEM-related fields such as pre-engineering, biomedical sciences, IT networking, and interactive media.

Financial Literacy

Maryland is taking the lead in financial literacy education. During the 2008 session of the General Assembly, the *Task Force to Study How to Improve Financial Literacy in Maryland* was created and recommendations relating to financial literacy education in primary and secondary schools were presented to the State Board of Education in January 2009.

The Department's Financial Literacy Education Design Team completed a draft state curriculum organized in grade bands of 3 to 5; 6 to 8; and 9 to 12 to ensure that financial literacy education is provided across the learning levels beginning in the elementary grades and continuing through high school. Currently, seven school systems require some form of financial literacy education in high school – most include it as a component of another subject.

In January 2010, the State Board of Education accepted the State curriculum. Once included in the **Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)**, local school system superintendents will be required to certify that a program of instruction in financial literacy education is offered to all students.

Achievement Matters *Most*

Students Are Set for College and Work. More Students Graduate. Fewer Drop Out.

Maryland "State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick is right to push for [education] reforms..."
—*Washington Post* Editorial, 2/25/10

The Maryland State Department of Education has been focused on education reform for years, especially through **Achievement Matters Most**, which revolutionized MSDE's approach to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability. Maryland students continue to experience academic success in the High School Assessments (HSAs), the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs), and Advanced Placement exams. Further, these efforts are resulting in a narrowing of the performance gaps among minority students.

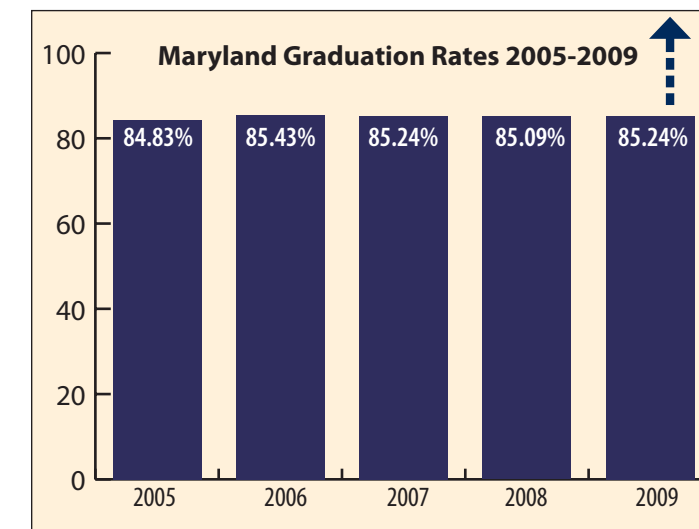
High School Assessments

The High School Assessments (HSAs) have set the floor higher; they are not the ceiling. Maryland must continue to raise standards to ensure that all students have the skills to be college- and work-ready. More than two-thirds of Maryland's Class of 2009 graduates met the HSA threshold by passing outright each of the four exams: algebra/data analysis, biology, English II, and government. By tracking achievement for students overall, for students of different races, and for those needing special services, the Department ensures that schools and school systems are held accountable for the performance of all students. The Bridge Plan option proved particularly important to special education and English Language Learners (ELL) students. Approximately 13 percent of special education and 8 percent of ELL students used the Bridge Plan to meet their HSA requirements. Only 11 students failed to graduate solely because of the exams. (www.hsaexam.org)

"I want to applaud our educators statewide for...making certain that so many students graduated on time." —*State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick referring to the Class of 2009 meeting High School graduation requirements through successful participation in the HSAs.*

Graduation Rates Rise

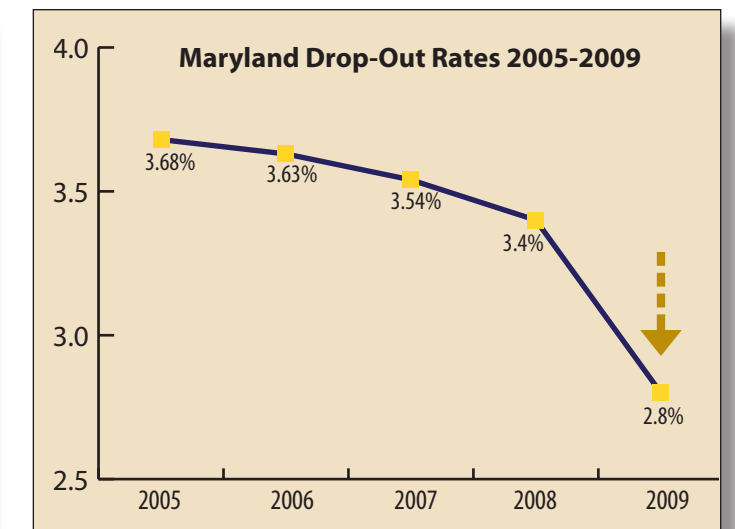
Nearly 60,000 students graduated in the Class of 2009 despite the institution of the HSAs. The 2009 graduation rate improved slightly from 85.1 percent to 85.2 percent—improving for both African American and Hispanic subgroups.



Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Dropout Rates Fall

Maryland's dropout rate fell from 3.4 percent to 2.8 percent between 2008-2009—the lowest it has been in the 14-year history of the Maryland Report Card. The dropout rate has consistently improved over the past five years.



Source: Maryland State Department of Education



Achievement Matters *Most*

Reading and Math Scores Improve.
Students Shine on National Assessments.
School Enrollment Grows More Diverse.
Maryland's Teachers Are Prepared To Teach.



“Hard work in the classroom continues to prevail and our students are the beneficiaries of improved instruction.”

—Nancy S. Grasmick

Maryland School Assessments (MSAs)

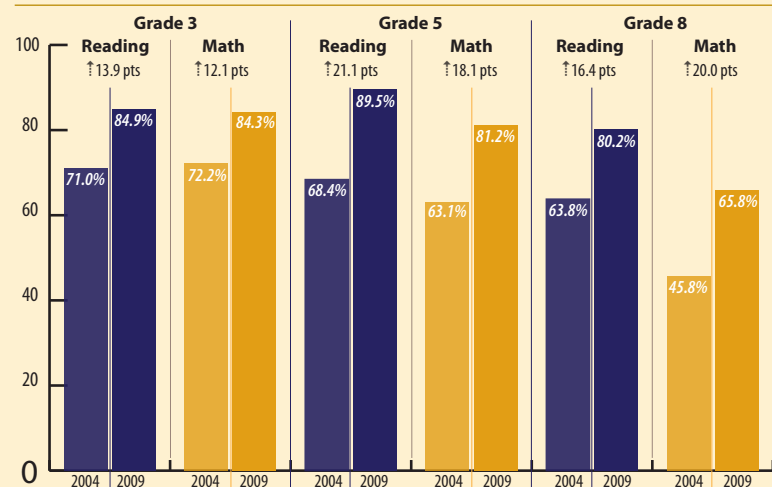
In 2009, Maryland experienced continued improvement in Reading and Mathematics scores on the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) – building on the steady progress made over the past six years. And, the 2009 assessment score data show a continued closing of the achievement gaps that have plagued schools nationwide.

Gaps are closing quickest at the elementary grades – particularly among ELL and students receiving free and reduced-price meals (FARMS). For example, the gap in elementary reading achievement between English Language Learners and those with language proficiency has been reduced by 27.5 percentage points since 2003. More than 70 percent of ELL students scored at the proficient or advanced range in 2009. Gaps are also closing among racial subgroups. The gap in achievement in middle school reading between African American and White students fell 16.5 percentage points between 2003 and 2009, with 72.1 percent of African American students now scoring either proficient or advanced. The gap between Hispanic and White students dropped 13.8 percentage points, with 73.8 percent of Hispanic middle school students now scoring in the proficient range.

Composite MSA reading proficiency at the elementary grades has risen more than 25 percentage points since 2003, and composite elementary mathematics proficiency has increased by 25 points as well. Composite middle school reading proficiency has increased 22 percentage points since 2003, while composite middle school math proficiency has risen 32 points.

The rise in test scores also contributed to 19 schools leaving the federally mandated school improvement process. (www.mdreportcard.org)

Maryland Snapshot: Increase in MSA Scores 2004-2009



Source: Maryland State Department of Education

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Math

Maryland students registered some of the biggest increases in the nation on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics, as both the 4th and 8th grade levels saw improvements in scores. Maryland's 4th grade math students jumped from 240 in 2007 to 244, the second biggest jump by any state. Eighth grade students saw their math score jump from 286 to 288 over the past two years.

Reading

Maryland students in both 4th and 8th grades in reading continue to outperform the national averages on the 2009 NAEP in reading. The average score of Maryland's 4th grade reading students was 226 – higher than the average score of 220 for public school students in the nation. The percentage of Maryland's students scoring in the “advanced” range is 11 percent; tied for 3rd in the nation. The average score of 8th grade students was 267 – higher than the national average score of 262. The percentage of students scoring in the “advanced” range is 4 percent; tied for 4th in the nation.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

The number of graduating seniors taking the SAT has leveled off. The College Board reported that 46,928 Maryland seniors took the exam in 2008 – that number had fallen to 46,562 in 2009. Overall Maryland scores last year held steady, with reading rising one point to 500; mathematics staying at 502; and writing dropping two points to 495.

Diverse School Enrollment

As Maryland's population becomes increasingly more diverse each year, and with the need to prepare students for the global marketplace, the 2008 Maryland General Assembly created the *Task Force for the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland*. The Task Force determined that the strengths of Maryland's state education system, the strategic and international orientation of many of its corporate and governmental employers, and the unique resources of the national capital area, position Maryland to take a strong leadership role in assuring that the language skills of its immigrants are preserved to the benefit of the State and the nation.

While there are more than 150 languages spoken throughout Maryland's classrooms, Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese are the most common heritage languages spoken by ELL in the State. More than 51 percent of Maryland's high school students, 41.6 percent of middle school students, and nearly 13 percent of elementary school students are enrolled in a world language.

According to September 30, 2009 enrollment data, White students make up 45.5 percent of the state's enrollment, followed by African American students (37.9 percent); Hispanic (10.0 percent); Asian/Pacific Islander (6.1 percent); and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.4 percent). As in the previous year, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander student enrollment continues to rise steadily, while both White and African American student enrollment is slowly declining.

National Board Certified Teachers

Maryland ranks 7th in the nation for the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). In the past year, 307 teachers earned their National Board Certification, bringing the total number in Maryland to 1,772. National Board Certification is one way of assuring that Maryland students have access to the education they deserve. The Maryland State Department of Education also offers nontraditional teacher certification programs such as Troops to Teachers and the Resident Teacher Program offering the opportunity to bring talented and deeply committed individuals into the teaching profession and into Maryland schools.