



Maryland High School Assessments

An Overview of the Maryland High School Assessments

Marylanders want it. • Teachers built it. • Students can do it!

THE NEW FOUNDATION

- ◆ For several decades, Maryland schools have concentrated on four core subjects as the foundation of student learning: English, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- ◆ The High School Assessments, or HSAs, cover the four core subjects - English (English 2), mathematics (algebra/data analysis), science (biology), and social studies (government).
- ◆ HSAs simply measure what has been required in classrooms for over ten years—a foundation of skills and knowledge that students can build upon in and after high school.

TEST REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT NEW

- ◆ From 1989 to 2003, Maryland students had to pass four functional exams in order to graduate from high school. As job and college requirements changed, new tests were needed to help prepare students for the 21st Century.
- ◆ Currently, 65% of the nation's high school students are required to pass some sort of high school graduation exam.
(State High School Exit Exams: A Challenging Year, August 2006, Center on Education Policy)

SUPPORT FOR HIGHER STANDARDS

- ◆ 85% of Marylanders think high school graduates need a higher level of skills than they did 10 years ago.
- ◆ 95% of Marylanders think students should be required to reach a minimum level of skill in core subject areas.
- ◆ 85% of Marylanders say students should pass “a series of tests” to graduate.
(Based on December 2006 poll by the Schaefer Center for Public Policy)

TEACHER DEVELOPED

- ◆ Every Maryland high school teacher (as well as many middle school and elementary school teachers) was asked to provide input on what content high school students should know (*Core Learning Goals*).
- ◆ Hundreds of Maryland teachers wrote, reviewed, and refined the final HSA tests, and set the passing scores.

STUDENTS ARE PREPARED

- ◆ The class of 2009 will be Maryland's best prepared graduating class in history.
- ◆ 87% of students in the class of 2009 (currently eleventh graders) who have taken all four HSA tests have met the testing requirement for graduation.

LEVELS THE FIELD

- ◆ All students deserve the opportunity to learn and achieve in English, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- ◆ HSAs make us accountable for giving every student, including those who struggle, what they need for the future and sometimes have not gotten in the past.

SAFEGUARDS FOR STUDENTS

- ◆ Students have options for meeting the testing requirement:
 - **Passing all 4 HSA tests**
 - Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) test substitution allows students to use an approved score on the HSA-related AP or IB test in place of taking the HSA.
 - Modified HSAs with altered test items are available for a small portion of students with disabilities.
 - **The Combined-Score Option** allows students to offset a lower performance on one test with higher performance on another. (Maryland is the only state that has this option.)
 - **The Bridge Plan for Academic Validation** for students who have been unable to pass one or more HSA test, despite assistance. Students must meet three general eligibility criteria: test failure, assistance participation, and academic progress. Once a student is eligible for participation, school staff will meet with the student to determine the projects to be included in the student's Academic Validation Project Package.

Visit HSAexam.org for more information or call 1-877-HSA-EXAM

