



Harford County Public Schools

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Harford elementary and middle schools meet/exceed new state standards

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) students in grades three through eight continue to meet or exceed Maryland School Assessment (MSA) targets in both reading and mathematics, according to data released today by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Nearly 98 percent of all middle and elementary schools achieved proficiency in mathematics, while reading scores followed behind with an 83 percent overall proficiency rate. HCPS students continue to outpace the state in both elementary reading (HCPS – 91 percent; state – 88 percent), elementary mathematics (HCPS – 90 percent; state – 88 percent), middle school reading (HCPS – 86 percent; state – 82 percent), and middle school mathematics (HCPS – 81 percent; state – 76 percent).*

This year, Maryland was granted flexibility regarding the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. The new Maryland accountability plan focuses on student growth, on-time graduation rates, and college and career readiness for all students. While the assessments remain unchanged, the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), or state-established proficiency rates, are calculated differently to reflect school-specific data based on 2011 performance. Rather than focusing on all students achieving 100 percent proficiency by 2014, the new plan sets a trajectory for steady increased student proficiency by 2017. The 2011 MSA data set a new baseline, and the AMOs will continue to rise over the next six years.

As in the past, accountability measures all students, as well as racial subgroups and groups of students receiving additional services, such as special education and English Language Learners. As a result of the NCLB flexibility granted to Maryland, the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) indicator has been eliminated. Therefore, schools not meeting the AMOs will no longer be classified on a school improvement list.

The AYP calculation for elementary and middle schools was previously attained by all students within a school and disaggregated subgroups meeting attendance rates and the AMOs for both reading and mathematics. Maryland's new plan now focuses special attention on the schools with subgroups not meeting their AMOs.

“Although we have experienced a change in the way we calculate and measure student achievement at the state level, the high expectations that we set for our students have not and will not change,” said HCPS Superintendent of Schools Robert M. Tomback. “We are proud of the accomplishments of our students, and we look forward to working with the new state accountability program and Common Core standards to ensure that all of our students graduate from high school ready for college and/or a career.”

Harford County schools are on track to meet the new 2017 rigorous goals. In 2012, 28 of the 42 elementary and middle schools received at least a 90 percent proficiency rate overall in reading and 21 schools received at least a 90 percent proficiency rate overall in mathematics. All elementary and middle schools achieved their AMOs for attendance rates. Of the 16 schools that did not make AYP last year in the NCLB accountability model, 11 schools met their AMOs in 2012. This year, eight of the 42 elementary and middle schools did not meet the AMOs in reading and/or mathematics in one or more subgroups, falling short by just one or two students in

*Figures are preliminary and approximate.

most cases. While the gap continues to decrease, the focus will remain on providing support and intervention for those schools in need.

The transition away from the NCLB School Improvement process is the first of many changes that the state education system will experience in the coming years. For more information regarding Maryland's new accountability program, [click here](#). Harford County and Maryland MSA data is available on the Maryland Report Card website at www.MDReportCard.org.

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