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001. list	Re: School officials [partial] (1 page)	02/07/97	P6/b(6)
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FOLDER TITLE:

[Annapolis, Maryland Trip] [2]

2012-0160-S

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
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- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

facsimile
TRANSMITTAL

to: Mike Cohen
fax #: (202) 456-7028
re: Maryland's education reform
date: February 6, 1997
pages: 15, including this cover sheet.

Here is information promised on school reform in Maryland:

1. How Maryland Measures Up -- a synopsis of how the state's education initiatives align with President Clinton's education goals and State of the Union address
2. School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains -- news release on the 1996 school report card
3. MSDE Bulletin -- highlights of the report card
4. Rising Expectations for Maryland Students -- the High School Assessment Program under development
5. State Board reviews options for High School Assessment -- Jan. 28 news release
6. Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16

Please let me know if you need additional information.

From the desk of...

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Maurice Moran

HOW MARYLAND MEASURES UP:

A synopsis of how Maryland's education initiatives align with President Clinton's Education Goals in the State of the Union Address

President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
1. Every state should adopt high national standards. The Federal Government will lead an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math.	♦ Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) For the past five years, through our school reform initiative, the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), Maryland has already had high standards, as attested to by the A (100%) Education Week's report card gave Maryland in Standards and Assessments. We have already developed a test to measure how well students are meeting those standards — the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). MSPAP measures how well schools are teaching students the reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies skills they need for future careers. Maryland holds schools accountable to these standards through a variety of measures, including our annual Maryland School Performance Report, a "report card" on our state's schools. In addition, the suggestion of national voluntary tests in reading and mathematics is a good match with Maryland's MSPAP, which very closely relates to the current National Assessment of Educational Progress both in terms of rigor and content. ♦ Maryland's Proposed High School Assessments With the assistance of the College Board and the Pew Charitable Trust, Maryland's proposed High School Assessments would extend the MSPP through high school. The series of 10 end-of-course tests, including three exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies, will gauge both school performance and individual student performance. They will be graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2004. ♦ K-16 Partnership With support from the Pew Charitable Trust, MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the Chancellor of the University of Maryland System are collaborating in developing the K-16 partnership. The purpose of this partnership is the development of a seamless system of education between public schools and institutions of higher education that will allow Maryland students to move easily and directly from high school into the State's colleges and universities. The partnership is working to align content and performance standards of high schools and higher education.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
2. To have the best schools, we must have the best teachers. Federal budget will enable 100,000 teachers to seek certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.	♦ Proposed Legislation Currently, MSDE is supporting a bill (SB 460) which would constitute a focused strategy for improving the quality of teaching in Maryland schools by establishing a three-year pilot program to provide state and local support for 48 teachers to pursue National Board Certification every year. The state and local system will pay the certification fees for these teachers. The bill also provides for a statewide staff development plan to utilize the skills and knowledge of these teachers. ♦ Professional Development Schools In addition, teacher preparation and professional development are being aligned with our school reform efforts and our new assessments through 14 pilot professional development schools, involving partnerships between local school systems and higher education institutions. ♦ Business Partnerships In cooperation with the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), MSDE developed recommendations to revamp teacher professional development. ♦ Teacher Licensure No one is allowed to teach in a Maryland classroom unless they have a Maryland teaching license, or are eligible for one.
3. We must do more to help all our children read. - The America Reads initiative will use AmeriCorps volunteers and college students to make sure every child can read independently by third grade. - A challenge to parents to read with their children every night.	♦ Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) In Maryland, third graders must have achieved the ability to read independently, and are tested on that ability through the third-grade administration of the MSPAP, which focuses on both basic and higher order skills. ♦ Even Start The Even Start Family Literacy Program focuses on the family and provides participants with a program of early childhood education, adult literacy, basic skill instruction, and parent education. The program currently serves approximately 160 children ages 0-3 and approximately 170 children ages 4-7. ♦ Parent and Family Involvement Network MSDE has developed a Parent and Family Involvement Network which includes parents, teachers, PTA presidents and other local liaisons to share best practices for parent involvement. We participate in Partnership 2000, linking schools and communities together to increase student achievement and our Special Education Parent Training Centers provide parenting skills training and help parents meet the special needs of their children in school. ♦ Additional Assistance is Always Welcome Additional AmeriCorps volunteers to help some of our high-risk children would still be of great benefit.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
4. Learning begins in the first days of life. - The budget will expand Head Start to one million children by 2002. - The President and First Lady will hold a conference on early learning and the brain this spring. - Vice-President Gore and Mrs. Gore will hold an annual family conference in June to make sure parents are an active part of their children's learning.	♦ Early Intervention and Prevention Services (EIPS) The Early Intervention and Prevention Services Initiative (EIPS) assists local school systems in improving early learning programs serving all children ages 3 to 9. It directly addresses the first National Education Goal: ensuring that all children start school ready to learn. The program's goal is to help schools and communities provide the most comprehensive and appropriate services possible for all young learners and their families and to heighten public awareness about the programs that are available to help. ♦ Head Start Collaboration Network As part of EIPS, MSDE is working with the Governor's Office to develop collaborative models between public schools and the Head Start program. MSDE provides technical assistance to schools looking to develop these models and serves on the Head Start Collaboration Network Advisory Council. ♦ Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) The Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) serves over 8,000 four-year-old children with learning opportunities, health, and other support services. ♦ Mandatory Kindergarten Since 1992, Kindergarten has been mandatory in Maryland and, statewide. ♦ Early Children Special Education Programs Early Children Special Education Programs, cooperative efforts of MSDE, local school systems, and child care providers, ensure special education and services to children with disabilities. The programs help to prepare children for pre-school, coordinate services between Head Start and local schools, address their daily needs, and place them in the least restrictive school environment.
5. Every state should give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. The Budget will have additional funding for charter schools.	♦ Charter Schools Maryland's 24 local school systems are free to establish Charter schools, as evidenced by Baltimore City's plan to privatize 9 schools, under an agreement that would make the schools privately managed, but publicly funded and still accountable in certain basic ways to Baltimore City Public Schools and the State. Individual school systems also create their own policies concerning school choice. The State Board of Education's Task Force on Charter Schools has determined that we have the authority in Maryland to establish Charter schools.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
6. Character Education must be taught in schools. And we must continue to promote order and discipline . . . No new Budget items.	♦ Statewide Character Education Initiative Maryland has instituted a statewide character education initiative, directed by the State Character Education Office. Currently, there are five county-wide pilot programs — Prince George's, Baltimore, Calvert and Frederick counties and Baltimore City. In these counties, each school has developed a character education program to fit its unique needs. In general, the program focuses on the core ethical values which form the basis of a democratic society — respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship. This program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Education: Partnerships in Character Education. ♦ School Order and Discipline Legislation In addition, the Governor's bill "School Order and Discipline" went into effect October 1. It contains tough measures to deal more aggressively with students who frequently disrupt the learning of other students, as well as funding for local efforts to solve their violence and disruption problems. Among other things, the law gives principals the authority to suspend students for up to 10 days, requires restitution from students who damage property while violating the law, protects school staff from legal action when they try to prevent violence, and requires state guidelines for a code of discipline. ♦ Service Learning Currently, Maryland is the only state in the country that requires students to complete 75 hours of student service as a requirement for high school graduation. Each of Maryland's 24 local school systems has developed its own service learning program, designed to help students understand many of the social issues they learn about in school. In addition, service-learning helps students see their roles as citizens, and as active participants in the solutions to some of our most critical problems as a nation.
7. We cannot expect our children to raise themselves up in schools that are literally falling down. Includes \$5 billion in interest subsidies to help communities finance \$20 billion in school construction over the next 4 years.	♦ School Construction Funding Currently, for FY 98 we have requests for over \$310 million in school construction funding. Governor Glendening has requested \$138.4 million in his budget. This federal funding would allow us to expand and extend school construction money at both the state and local level.

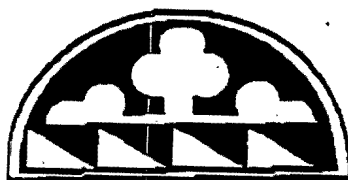


President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
8. We must make the 13th and 14th years of education . . . universal . . . we must open the doors of college to all Americans. America's HOPE scholarship — 2 year \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, which is enough to pay for community college.	❖ Proposed Scholarship Program Governor Glendening has proposed a Maryland HOPE scholarship (SB 231/HB 493), which would pay the full tuition at a Maryland community college or university for students in families with incomes less than \$60,000 who have a B average in high school and maintain that average in college.
9. We must expand the frontiers of learning across a lifetime. GI bill for America's workers to transform many federal training programs into a simple skill grant directly to workers.	❖ Community College Career and Technology Programs Maryland has a variety of Career and Technology Programs in our Community Colleges, some of which prepare students for immediate employment, and others which pave the way for transfer to a four year college. While high school students can earn college credit for these programs while still in high school, a skill grant would definitely benefit those adults who wish to return to school. ❖ School to Careers Career Connections is Maryland's comprehensive school-to-careers system, supporting school reform, workforce preparation, and economic development. The goal of the program is to ensure that all high school graduates are prepared to enter a career and/or higher education. The program is funded by a federal grant of \$25.2 million over five years. ❖ Adult Education In addition, Maryland is serving approximately 42,000 adults with adult basic education and high school credentialing programs. These programs support workforce skills development and family and parenting skills development and support helping these adults earn a high school diploma. Approximately 6,100 adults annually earn their diploma through the GED, and approximately 400 earn their diploma through the Adult External Diploma Program. In addition, adult education classes in literacy skills and high school completion are housed at homeless shelters throughout the state.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
10. We must bring the power of the information age into all our schools. • A challenge to America to connect every classroom for Internet access.	❖ Educational Modernization Initiative Maryland accepted this challenge, and through NetWeekend wired approximately 600 schools for Internet access. The Educational Modernization Initiative Technology in Schools is designed to increase the technology capabilities of Maryland schools, and an additional 149 schools are scheduled to be added in the FY 98 budget. In FY 97, \$4.5 million was spent on 90 project schools. The initiative provides schools with a complete building wiring system, as well as hardware, software, and funds for staff training. Maryland also receives federal funds to support school technology through the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. ❖ Business Partnerships MSDE and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) have developed <i>The Maryland Plan for Technology in Education</i>, a detailed plan for education technology in Maryland's schools. Norman R. Augustine, President and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, was the first president of the MBRT and is a strong supporter of Maryland's school reform.





Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

*Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Schools for Success*

NEWS RELEASE

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

EMBARGOED for Release
December 12, 1996 -- 10 a.m.

For more information: Ronald Peiffer (410) 767-0473

School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains ***"School Reform Is Working," Says State Superintendent Grasmick***

BALTIMORE, MD (December 12, 1996) -- "School reform is working to drive Maryland schools toward higher levels of performance," State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick declared today in releasing the 1996 report card on schools.

"More students are graduating, more students are attending school every day, and more students are learning at higher levels," Dr. Grasmick said.

On the most challenging measure of student learning -- the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), the report shows that local school systems have improved in 15 out of 18 content areas, with 19 of 24 school systems posting higher achievement on the tests this year than last year.

The report also indicates steady improvements over the past six years in dropout and attendance rates, as schools seek to reach the high accountability standards set by the state in these areas. The state's dropout rate declined by nearly 2 percentage points since 1990, down to 4.58 percent. The State Department of Education estimates that, had students continued to dropout at the 1990 rate of 6.5 percent annually, there would be 3,600 fewer high school seniors in Maryland high schools today.

"The graduating class of 1997 will produce 3,600 more young people prepared for further schooling or the workforce," Dr. Grasmick said. Similarly, the Superintendent said, improvements in attendance rates mean that "7,700 more students are in school and learning every day. Good attendance sets the stage for good instruction."

The State School Superintendent released the seventh annual school report card at a news conference in Baltimore. Governor Parris N. Glendening and legislative, education, and business leaders from across the state filled the state board room to receive the progress report on the state's 1,260 schools.

Governor Glendening said, "In its quest for better schools, Maryland is among the nation's leaders. On behalf of all Marylanders, I commend the hard work of our teachers and school communities in continuing our progress toward excellence. We have made education my Administration's top priority, providing the resources to enable our students to succeed today and in the future."

MORE...

In releasing the school report card, the Superintendent said MSPAP tests are prompting instructional improvements system by system, school by school, and student by student. For example:

- ▶ From 1993 to 1996, the percentage of students performing at the satisfactory level in one or more MSPAP areas has increased an average of 10 points to 66 percent in grade 3, 72 percent in grade 5, and 70 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The percentage of schools meeting or approaching at least one MSPAP standard has increased significantly since 1993 – to 46.5 percent of schools in grade 3, to 56.25 percent in grade 5, and to 61.9 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The number of school systems with at least 40 percent of students scoring at satisfactory on the MSPAP tests increased from four in 1993 to 16 in 1996. School systems making consistent gains include Allegany, Anne Arundel, Caroline, and Carroll.
- ▶ The state as a whole registered improvements in 21 of 30 State measures of school performance and student learning.

Dr. Grasmick said these gains reflect a strong commitment to continuous improvement in instruction, staff development, and other areas that result in a better education for students. However, she stressed the need to maintain a strong focus – in all elementary and middle school grades – on the basic skills and academic content areas as the foundation for the higher level of student performance required by MSPAP. "School reform is more than preparing students a few weeks before test time," the Superintendent added.

Dr. Grasmick said the report card on schools is also an important tool for identifying school systems and instructional areas where new efforts are needed. In the coming months, she said, State educators, local school systems, and school improvement teams will give new attention to writing instruction in middle schools and preparation in the primary grades for the third grade challenges of MSPAP. New efforts are also needed, she said, to identify successful programs and practices as a way to improve instructional areas where student performance is lagging.

State Board President Christopher T. Cross said the report indicates "there is much work for all of us—at the State level, in every school system, and in every school – to realize the full potential of school reform."

"We need to be courageous, to be bold," Dr. Grasmick said. "But most importantly, we need to keep our focus on children. The Maryland School Performance Program is not about numbers. It is about children, about their school experiences today and their lives in the 21st century."

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Dec. 12, 1996

Vol. 7, No. 14

MSDE Bulletin

Keeping You Current on Education Reform in Maryland

Better Schools, Better Students

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

By almost any standard, the Maryland School Performance Program is making the kind of profound, across-the-board gains it was designed to make.

That's the gist of the new 1996 state report card, released at a Dec. 12 celebration in Baltimore. Viewed over four years since the 1993 base year, progress on the Maryland School Performance Assessment tests has been especially striking:

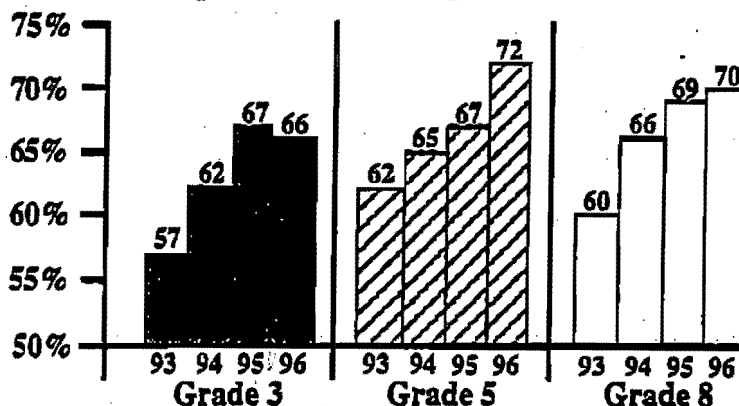
- **Student by student.** Since 1993, the percentage of students who met one or more MSPAP standards in grades 3, 5, and 8 has climbed an average of 10%.
- **School by school.** Since 1993, the number of schools meeting or approaching standards in one or more content areas has doubled or tripled.

- **System by system.** In 1993, four systems had 40% or more students at the satisfactory level on the MSPAP. This year, 16 of 24 had 40% to 60%.

(Please see Report Card on Page 2)

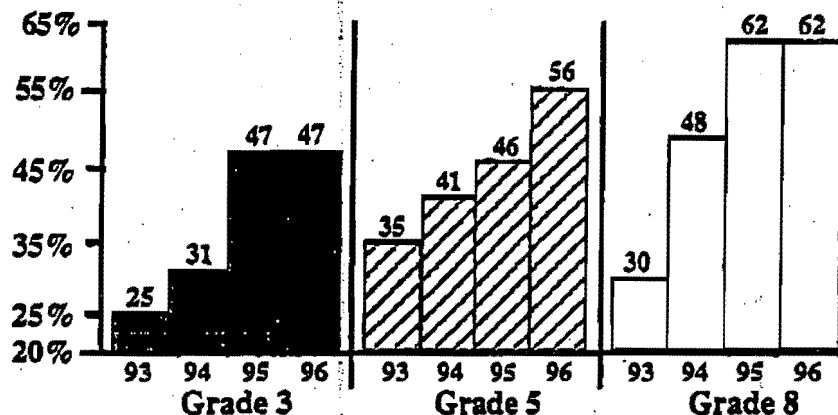
MSPAP GAINS AMONG STUDENTS

The Percentage of Students Meeting One or More Standards



MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOLS

The Percentage of Schools Meeting and Approaching One or More Standards



BY THE NUMBERS

A closer look at Report Card 1996

- Nineteen of 24 school systems are performing at higher overall MSPAP levels than in 1993; all 24 are doing better than in 1991.
- Fifteen of 18 MSPAP areas are up over 1993 results.
- Maryland's 4.38% dropout rate is down 50% from 1993 and 1.9% from 1990. Without school reform, we estimate that 2,600 students of the class of 1997 would have dropped out by now.
- Some 7,100 more students are in class each day thanks to higher attendance rates.
- As many as 174,000 students took the MSPAP in 1996.

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

Report Card (Continued)

At each level, this year's report card shows, the state's educational system is performing at a higher standard than in years past. In 1996, 21 of 30 report card performance areas are up.

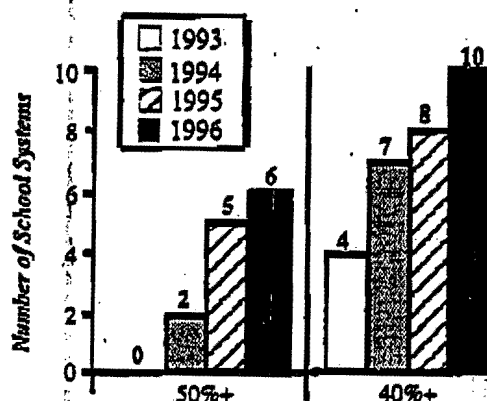
"This year's report is a dramatic and heartening affirmation of our belief that school reform in Maryland is working," said State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. "Our progress continues to be steady and, in some schools and school systems, breathtaking."

The 1996 report card, released by Dr. Grasmick and Governor Parris N. Glendening, detailed significant progress over 1995 results. Among the gains were improvements in 15 of 18 MSPAP areas and a continued reduction of Maryland's dropout rate.

MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOL SYSTEMS

✓ In 1993, only 4 school systems had 40% or more of students at satisfactory level

✓ In 1996, 16 school systems had 40 to 60% of students at satisfactory level



School reform is also helping to reduce absenteeism. Attendance rates are up in all areas, progress since 1990 that translates to 7,700 students in school today instead of being on the streets.

When more students are in school and preparing for the future, Dr. Grasmick said, everyone benefits.

Dr. Grasmick's Message: We Must Do More

State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick knows that while there is much to celebrate in the 1996 report card, more must be done to realize the full potential of school reform. Some excerpts from her message this year:

"If you look at the 1996 report card and you listen to teachers and principals, you conclude that the next steps in school reform will require a universal effort. Teachers and principals in grades K through 12 will need to keep working, keep checking their progress, and keep improving."

"Have high expectations for every student in every content area. . . . I would (also) challenge school improvement teams to really dig into the data. . . . Just because you are doing something new and different does not mean you are doing the right thing."

What do you think?

The MSDE Bulletin welcomes readers' comments. Send them to the editor at the address at left.

MSDE BULLETIN

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WHERE WE STAND

MSPAP Composite Scores by county
from 1993 (base) to 1996

County	1993	1996
■ Allegany	36.5	40.2
■ Anne Arundel	36.6	42.3
■ Baltimore City	40.4	43.3
■ Baltimore Co.	34.9	44.7
■ Calvert	34.6	48.9
■ Caroline	25.1	38.7
■ Carroll	42.0	53.3
■ Cecil	32.4	41.3
■ Charles	30.1	43.5
■ Dorchester	21.0	39.1
■ Frederick	44.5	54.2
■ Garrett	35.6	43.4
■ Harford	38.4	52.2
■ Howard	43.7	56.9
■ Kent	32.6	40.7
■ Montgomery	46.4	50.8
■ Prince Georges	21.5	29.6
■ Queen Anne's	34.3	42.9
■ St. Mary's	27.2	45.7
■ Somerset	25.3	29.8
■ Talbot	23.4	36.5
■ Washington	31.9	43.9
■ Wicomico	26.3	33.6
■ Worcester	26.5	35.8



Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street ♦ Baltimore, MD 21401 ♦ (410) 767-0600
Parris N. Glendening, Governor ♦ Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

October 1996

Raising Expectations for Maryland Students

- ♦ By 2004, Maryland graduates will be better prepared for work and postsecondary education
- ♦ New, tougher high school assessments will be tied to graduation

Purpose and History

Maryland's proposed high school assessments help extend the Maryland School Performance Program through high school. To succeed in the next century, today's young people will be expected to know more and have higher-level skills than any previous generation. Schools will raise academic expectations, building a firm foundation from the basics and ensuring the higher level skills demanded by the modern workplace and higher education.

The Maryland School Performance Assessments, or MSPAP, given in third, fifth, and eighth grade, are already raising academic performance in Maryland's elementary schools. The high school assessments will extend these higher expectations into grades 9-12. The tests will gauge both school performance and individual student performance, providing valuable information for school improvement planning.

Proposal

The proposed high school assessment is a series of 10 end-of-course tests in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and skills for success. All Maryland high school students, starting with the class of 2004, will be required to pass them to graduate.

Students will take three end-of-course exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies. Skills for success — learning, thinking, communication, technology, and interpersonal skills — should be taught in every course and will be essential to performing well on all the tests.

A test development firm will work with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems to prepare blue-prints for an assessment that:

- ♦ is a graduation requirement for all students.
- ♦ recognizes different levels of achievement.
- ♦ combines multiple choice, short answer, performance, and essay questions.

Development

The high school assessment is being developed in collaboration with teachers, business leaders, community members, and professional education-related organizations from around Maryland. Both national and international standards are being used to help develop the assessments.

Recognizing that teachers must play a vital role in developing the assessments, the Maryland State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have contacted every high school in the state to obtain teacher feedback on what students should be required to know and be able to do. The State Board of Education is exploring the possibility of local alternatives for certifying the competency of students who do not pass the state assessments.



Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

*Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Schools for Success*

NEWS RELEASE

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State Board reviews options for High School Assessment

BALTIMORE, MD (January 28, 1997) -- The Maryland State Board of Education today began to consider four possible designs to use for Maryland's planned High School Assessment, as well as other options to incorporate into the challenging tests before they are administered to students as part of high school graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2004.

The State Board is expected to take action on the designs next month, as well as a series of questions that will determine the final shape and philosophy of the proposed High School Assessments. The Board is scheduled to decide these questions at its February 25-26 meeting.

The High School Assessment exams first were proposed in July 1995 as a series of end-of-course tests covering the core learning areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The assessment is an extension of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program in grades 3, 5, and 8 used to determine the performance levels of individual schools. The High School Assessment, however, would likely focus on individual student performance as well as provide valuable information for school improvement planning.

Unlike the Maryland Functional Tests, which measure minimum competency among high school students in six subject areas, the High School Assessment would be designed to be more rigorous and meaningful to students and thus better prepare them for the variety of challenges they will encounter in life and in their careers. As the High School Assessments come on line beginning with the Class of 2004, the Functional Tests are scheduled to be gradually phased out.

Since their inception, the assessment tests have been the focus of a 35-member task force and the subject of dozens of public meetings across the state held to gather feedback from parents, teachers, students, and others involved in developing the tests. The results of those meetings were also reported today to the State Board.

More than 1,800 people attended more than 40 meetings to discuss the High School Assessments. Among the issues raised by the public, educators, and others included the

— More —

High School Assessments

Page 2

importance of high academic standards, how the assessment would be used, how the tests would be administered, and alternatives to the tests for students who do not successfully complete them.

"The complexity and volume of decisions that must be made on these questions and others about the High School Assessment demand that we proceed with caution and common sense," said Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. "The intent of the Board and of the Department is to create assessments that are fair, challenging, and meaningful for every high school student in Maryland."

Among the questions the Board was requested to consider and resolve next month are issues such as whether passing the exams would be a prerequisite for graduation, the number of tests to be developed, and whether it would be acceptable to have three annual test administrations with make-up sessions for each tests for those students who do not pass on the first attempt.

"These are among the most important and far-reaching deliberations and decisions this Board will likely ever make," said Christopher T. Cross, President of the Maryland State Board of Education. "There will be a lot of thought and reflection that will go into these decisions so that we may be assured of a plan that will truly challenge all our students and help each of them to reach their full potential."

The test options were designed with assistance from the College Board / Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., a group noted for its administration of the widely-used Scholastic Achievement Tests. The CB/ETS report on design options for the High School Assessment outlined four proposed test designs for the Board's consideration:

- **Portfolio Plus:** A year-long portfolio of student work would be scored by a classroom teacher and combined with a 2-3 hour assessment scored centrally.
- **Preparation Plus:** This assessment would draw upon common learning experiences in a 2-3 hour standardized assessment involving "real-world" applications.
- **Combination:** Students would be asked during a 2-3 hour assessment to use documents, laboratory results, or other tools to answer a series of constructed-response questions.
- **Limited Combination:** This assessment type would use challenging machine-scorable questions and answers in a 2-3 hour test.

Should the Board choose a design option and complete its series of decisions in February, the State Department of Education is scheduled to begin accepting proposals from bidders for test development in April. At the same time, MSDE will begin working more intently with local school systems to determine what they need, such as training, instructional adjustments, etc., in order to prepare for the High School Assessments.

###

MARYLAND PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING K-16

Maryland State Department of Education  Maryland Higher Education Commission  University of Maryland Systems
Nancy Grasmick, Superintendent *Patricia Florestano, Secretary* *Donald Langenberg, Chancellor*

200 West Baltimore Street
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Phone: 410-767-0368
FAX: 410-333-3867

MARYLAND K-16 PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT

The K-16 Partnership is a bold departure from traditional education reform, heralding a new and substantive collaboration among leaders in the business community, K-16 education, and local and state government. This unprecedented alliance is critical to the creation of a new community of learning that strives for all of its members to achieve the highest levels of excellence throughout all levels of education and in the workplace. Building on the reforms inaugurated by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, this new Partnership derives its strength from the diversity of its members, who bring to the Partnership their unique perspectives, expertise, resources, and needs.

Schools must have the high standards needed for our students to develop and adapt to an increasingly technological world, preparing all students for work and life-long learning. Higher education must take seriously its obligation to educate new teachers who have the knowledge, skill, and confidence to teach in tomorrow's classrooms, and together in partnership with local school systems engage in the continuous professional development of teachers. General education experiences in higher education institutions must prepare our future leaders by instilling an understanding of technology, an appreciation of the arts and humanities, and a profound respect for diversity. Academic majors must link requirements with career expectations. Businesses must be engaged in the development of standards and curriculum throughout K-16 education that give students the knowledge and capability they will need to adapt to a workplace that is changing at an extraordinary rate, and provide meaningful jobs that enable students to use these skills. Businesses must instill and affirm an ethic of life-long learning in their workforce and actively support their employees in their educational goals. State and local government officials must thoughtfully allocate resources to ensure that they are used in the most effective way possible to achieve these goals, and remove policy and legal barriers to the collaborations necessary to attain them. Further, all must bear responsibility for ensuring that our students are prepared to accept their responsibilities as citizens—as active participants in the social, cultural, and political life of our State, nation, and world.

The success of the Partnership also depends on necessary change, significant improvement, and constant assessment. Standards at every level must retain rigor and relevance. Assessments must be developed to provide meaningful evaluations of student performance and to evaluate how well students are supported in their efforts to meet these standards. The Partnership will address and develop strategies for strengthening K-16 standards, competencies, and assessments, the professional development of teachers, and community engagement in the K-16 initiative.

Acting individually, these partners could not achieve any of these goals. Each is an essential and equally important contributor to the Partnership. Further, nothing can be done without the active support and engagement of the community at large and parents in particular. The most critical task of the Partnership is to foster opportunities for members to establish comprehensive and substantive collaborations that enable all stakeholders to engage in the far-reaching changes needed in our education system. The Partnership will enable the State of Maryland to create an educational system that gives its citizens the skills they will need to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

HOW MARYLAND MEASURES UP:

A synopsis of how Maryland's education initiatives align with President Clinton's Education Goals in the State of the Union Address

President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
1. Every state should adopt high national standards. The Federal Government will lead an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math.	♦ Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) For the past five years, through our school reform initiative, the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), Maryland has already had high standards, as attested to by the A (100%) Education Week's report card gave Maryland in Standards and Assessments. We have already developed a test to measure how well students are meeting those standards — the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). MSPAP measures how well schools are teaching students the reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies skills they need for future careers. Maryland holds schools accountable to these standards through a variety of measures, including our annual Maryland School Performance Report, a "report card" on our state's schools. In addition, the suggestion of national voluntary tests in reading and mathematics is a good match with Maryland's MSPAP, which very closely relates to the current National Assessment of Educational Progress both in terms of rigor and content. ♦ Maryland's Proposed High School Assessments With the assistance of the College Board and the Pew Charitable Trust, Maryland's proposed High School Assessments would extend the MSPP through high school. The series of 10 end-of-course tests, including three exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies, will gauge both school performance and individual student performance. They will be graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2004. ♦ K-16 Partnership With support from the Pew Charitable Trust, MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the Chancellor of the University of Maryland System are collaborating in developing the K-16 partnership. The purpose of this partnership is the development of a seamless system of education between public schools and institutions of higher education that will allow Maryland students to move easily and directly from high school into the State's colleges and universities. The partnership is working to align content and performance standards of high schools and higher education.



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facsimile
TRANSMITTAL

to: Mike Cohen
fax #: (202) 456-7028
re: Maryland's education reform
date: February 6, 1997
pages: 15, including this cover sheet.

Here is information promised on school reform in Maryland:

1. How Maryland Measures Up -- a synopsis of how the state's education initiatives align with President Clinton's education goals and State of the Union address
2. School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains -- news release on the 1996 school report card
3. MSDE Bulletin -- highlights of the report card
4. Rising Expectations for Maryland Students -- the High School Assessment Program under development
5. State Board reviews options for High School Assessment -- Jan. 28 news release
6. Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16

Please let me know if you need additional information.

From the desk of...

Ron Peiffer
School & Community Outreach Office
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 767-0472
Fax: (410) 333-2275

Maurice Moran

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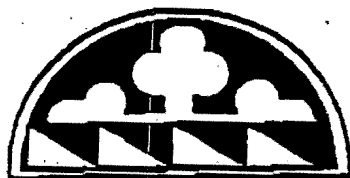


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Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Schools for Success

NEWS RELEASE

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

EMBARGOED for Release
December 12, 1996 — 10 a.m.

For more information: Ronald Peiffer (410) 767-0473

School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains ***"School Reform Is Working," Says State Superintendent Grasmick***

BALTIMORE, MD (December 12, 1996) — "School reform is working to drive Maryland schools toward higher levels of performance," State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick declared today in releasing the 1996 report card on schools.

"More students are graduating, more students are attending school every day, and more students are learning at higher levels," Dr. Grasmick said.

On the most challenging measure of student learning -- the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), the report shows that local school systems have improved in 15 out of 18 content areas, with 19 of 24 school systems posting higher achievement on the tests this year than last year.

The report also indicates steady improvements over the past six years in dropout and attendance rates, as schools seek to reach the high accountability standards set by the state in these areas. The state's dropout rate declined by nearly 2 percentage points since 1990, down to 4.58 percent. The State Department of Education estimates that, had students continued to dropout at the 1990 rate of 6.5 percent annually, there would be 3,600 fewer high school seniors in Maryland high schools today.

"The graduating class of 1997 will produce 3,600 more young people prepared for further schooling or the workforce," Dr. Grasmick said. Similarly, the Superintendent said, improvements in attendance rates mean that "7,700 more students are in school and learning every day. Good attendance sets the stage for good instruction."

The State School Superintendent released the seventh annual school report card at a news conference in Baltimore. Governor Parris N. Glendening and legislative, education, and business leaders from across the state filled the state board room to receive the progress report on the state's 1,260 schools.

Governor Glendening said, "In its quest for better schools, Maryland is among the nation's leaders. On behalf of all Marylanders, I commend the hard work of our teachers and school communities in continuing our progress toward excellence. We have made education my Administration's top priority, providing the resources to enable our students to succeed today and in the future."

MORE...

In releasing the school report card, the Superintendent said MSPAP tests are prompting instructional improvements system by system, school by school, and student by student. For example:

- ▶ From 1993 to 1996, the percentage of students performing at the satisfactory level in one or more MSPAP areas has increased an average of 10 points to 66 percent in grade 3, 72 percent in grade 5, and 70 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The percentage of schools meeting or approaching at least one MSPAP standard has increased significantly since 1993 — to 46.5 percent of schools in grade 3, to 56.25 percent in grade 5, and to 61.9 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The number of school systems with at least 40 percent of students scoring at satisfactory on the MSPAP tests increased from four in 1993 to 16 in 1996. School systems making consistent gains include Allegany, Anne Arundel, Caroline, and Carroll.
- ▶ The state as a whole registered improvements in 21 of 30 State measures of school performance and student learning.

Dr. Grasmick said these gains reflect a strong commitment to continuous improvement in instruction, staff development, and other areas that result in a better education for students. However, she stressed the need to maintain a strong focus — in all elementary and middle school grades — on the basic skills and academic content areas as the foundation for the higher level of student performance required by MSPAP. "School reform is more than preparing students a few weeks before test time," the Superintendent added.

Dr. Grasmick said the report card on schools is also an important tool for identifying school systems and instructional areas where new efforts are needed. In the coming months, she said, State educators, local school systems, and school improvement teams will give new attention to writing instruction in middle schools and preparation in the primary grades for the third grade challenges of MSPAP. New efforts are also needed, she said, to identify successful programs and practices as a way to improve instructional areas where student performance is lagging.

State Board President Christopher T. Cross said the report indicates "there is much work for all of us—at the State level, in every school system, and in every school — to realize the full potential of school reform."

"We need to be courageous, to be bold," Dr. Grasmick said. "But most importantly, we need to keep our focus on children. The Maryland School Performance Program is not about numbers. It is about children, about their school experiences today and their lives in the 21st century."

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Dec. 12, 1996

Vol. 7, No. 14

MSDE Bulletin

Keeping You Current on Education Reform in Maryland

Better Schools, Better Students

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

By almost any standard, the Maryland School Performance Program is making the kind of profound, across-the-board gains it was designed to make.

That's the gist of the new 1996 state report card, released at a Dec. 12 celebration in Baltimore. Viewed over four years since the 1993 base year, progress on the Maryland School Performance Assessment tests has been especially striking:

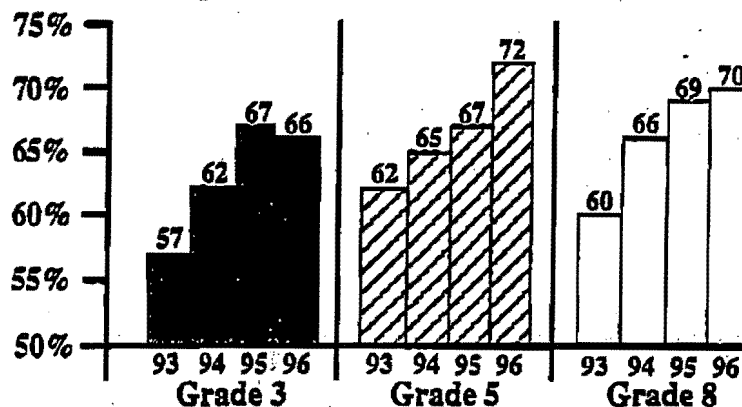
- **Student by student.** Since 1993, the percentage of students who met one or more MSPAP standards in grades 3, 5, and 8 has climbed an average of 10%.
- **School by school.** Since 1993, the number of schools meeting or approaching standards in one or more content areas has doubled or tripled.

- **System by system.** In 1993, four systems had 40% or more students at the satisfactory level on the MSPAP. This year, 16 of 24 had 40% to 60%.

(Please see Report Card on Page 2)

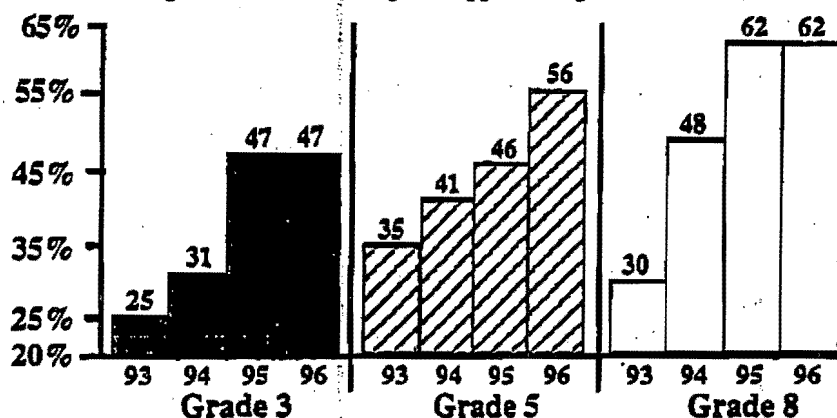
MSPAP GAINS AMONG STUDENTS

The Percentage of Students Meeting One or More Standards



MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOLS

The Percentage of Schools Meeting and Approaching One or More Standards



BY THE NUMBERS

A closer look at Report Card 1996

- Nineteen of 24 school systems are performing at higher overall MSPAP levels than in 1995; all 24 are doing better than in 1993.
- Fifteen of 18 MSPAP areas are up over 1995 results.
- Maryland's 4.38% dropout rate is down .37% from 1995 and 1.9% from 1990. Without school reform, we estimate that 2,600 students of the class of 1997 would have dropped out by now.
- Some 7,100 more students are in class each day thanks to higher attendance rates.
- As many as 174,000 students took the MSPAP in 1996.

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

Report Card *(Continued)*

At each level, this year's report card shows, the state's educational system is performing at a higher standard than in years past. In 1996, 21 of 30 report card performance areas are up.

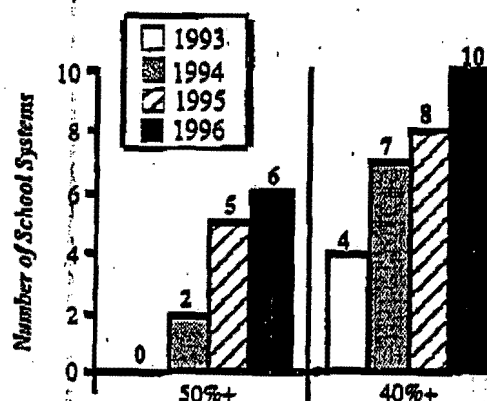
"This year's report is a dramatic and heartening affirmation of our belief that school reform in Maryland is working," said State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. "Our progress continues to be steady and, in some schools and school systems, breathtaking."

The 1996 report card, released by Dr. Grasmick and Governor Parris N. Glendening, detailed significant progress over 1995 results. Among the gains were improvements in 15 of 18 MSPAP areas and a continued reduction of Maryland's dropout rate.

MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOL SYSTEMS

✓ In 1993, only 4 school systems had 40% or more of students at satisfactory level

✓ In 1996, 16 school systems had 40 to 60% of students at satisfactory level



School reform is also helping to reduce absenteeism. Attendance rates are up in all areas, progress since 1990 that translates to 7,700 students in school today instead of being on the streets.

When more students are in school and preparing for the future, Dr. Grasmick said, everyone benefits.

Dr. Grasmick's Message: We Must Do More

State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick knows that while there is much to celebrate in the 1996 report card, more must be done to realize the full potential of school reform. Some excerpts from her message this year:

"If you look at the 1996 report card and you listen to teachers and principals, you conclude that the next steps in school reform will require a universal effort. Teachers and principals in grades K through 12 will need to keep working, keep checking their progress, and keep improving.

"Have high expectations for every student in every content area. . . . I would (also) challenge school improvement teams to really dig into the data. . . . Just because you are doing something new and different does not mean you are doing the right thing."

What do you think?

The MSDE Bulletin welcomes readers' comments. Send them to the editor at the address at left.

MSDE BULLETIN

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY OUTREACH
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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
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BALTIMORE, MD. 21201

RONALD PEIFFER
ASSISTANT STATE
SUPERINTENDENT

CHARLES HERNDON, EDITOR

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WHERE WE STAND

MSPAP Composite Scores by county
from 1993 (base) to 1996

County	1993	1996
■ Allegany	26.3	40.7
■ Anne Arundel	26.6	47.9
■ Baltimore City	40.4	43.1
■ Baltimore Co.	34.0	44.7
■ Calvert	34.6	48.9
■ Caroline	25.1	38.7
■ Carroll	42.0	55.3
■ Cecil	32.4	41.0
■ Charles	30.1	43.5
■ Dorchester	21.0	39.1
■ Frederick	44.5	54.2
■ Garrett	35.6	43.4
■ Harford	38.4	52.2
■ Howard	43.7	56.9
■ Kent	32.6	50.7
■ Montgomery	46.4	50.8
■ Prince Georges	21.3	29.6
■ Queen Anne's	34.4	44.9
■ St. Mary's	20.7	45.7
■ Somerset	23.3	29.8
■ Talbot	23.4	46.5
■ Washington	31.9	43.9
■ Wicomico	26.2	33.6
■ Worcester	25.5	35.8



Raising Expectations for Maryland Students

- ♦ By 2004, Maryland graduates will be better prepared for work and postsecondary education
- ♦ New, tougher high school assessments will be tied to graduation

Purpose and History

Maryland's proposed high school assessments help extend the Maryland School Performance Program through high school. To succeed in the next century, today's young people will be expected to know more and have higher-level skills than any previous generation. Schools will raise academic expectations, building a firm foundation from the basics and ensuring the higher level skills demanded by the modern workplace and higher education.

The Maryland School Performance Assessments, or MSPAP, given in third, fifth, and eighth grade, are already raising academic performance in Maryland's elementary schools. The high school assessments will extend these higher expectations into grades 9-12. The tests will gauge both school performance and individual student performance, providing valuable information for school improvement planning.

Proposal

The proposed high school assessment is a series of 10 end-of-course tests in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and skills for success. All Maryland high school students, starting with the class of 2004, will be required to pass them to graduate.

Students will take three end-of-course exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies. Skills for success — learning, thinking, communication, technology, and interpersonal skills — should be taught in every course and will be essential to performing well on all the tests.

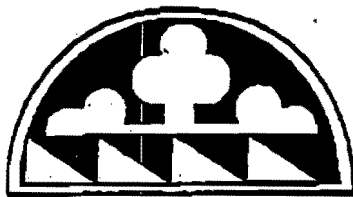
A test development firm will work with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems to prepare blue-prints for an assessment that:

- ♦ is a graduation requirement for all students.
- ♦ recognizes different levels of achievement.
- ♦ combines multiple choice, short answer, performance, and essay questions.

Development

The high school assessment is being developed in collaboration with teachers, business leaders, community members, and professional education-related organizations from around Maryland. Both national and international standards are being used to help develop the assessments.

Recognizing that teachers must play a vital role in developing the assessments, the Maryland State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have contacted every high school in the state to obtain teacher feedback on what students should be required to know and be able to do. The State Board of Education is exploring the possibility of local alternatives for certifying the competency of students who do not pass the state assessments.



Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Schools for Success

NEWS RELEASE

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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State Board reviews options for High School Assessment

BALTIMORE, MD (January 28, 1997) -- The Maryland State Board of Education today began to consider four possible designs to use for Maryland's planned High School Assessment, as well as other options to incorporate into the challenging tests before they are administered to students as part of high school graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2004.

The State Board is expected to take action on the designs next month, as well as a series of questions that will determine the final shape and philosophy of the proposed High School Assessments. The Board is scheduled to decide these questions at its February 25-26 meeting.

The High School Assessment exams first were proposed in July 1995 as a series of end-of-course tests covering the core learning areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The assessment is an extension of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program in grades 3, 5, and 8 used to determine the performance levels of individual schools. The High School Assessment, however, would likely focus on individual student performance as well as provide valuable information for school improvement planning.

Unlike the Maryland Functional Tests, which measure minimum competency among high school students in six subject areas, the High School Assessment would be designed to be more rigorous and meaningful to students and thus better prepare them for the variety of challenges they will encounter in life and in their careers. As the High School Assessments come on line beginning with the Class of 2004, the Functional Tests are scheduled to be gradually phased out.

Since their inception, the assessment tests have been the focus of a 35-member task force and the subject of dozens of public meetings across the state held to gather feedback from parents, teachers, students, and others involved in developing the tests. The results of those meetings were also reported today to the State Board.

More than 1,800 people attended more than 40 meetings to discuss the High School Assessments. Among the issues raised by the public, educators, and others included the

— More —

High School Assessments

Page 2:

importance of high academic standards, how the assessment would be used, how the tests would be administered, and alternatives to the tests for students who do not successfully complete them.

"The complexity and volume of decisions that must be made on these questions and others about the High School Assessment demand that we proceed with caution and common sense," said Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. "The intent of the Board and of the Department is to create assessments that are fair, challenging, and meaningful for every high school student in Maryland."

Among the questions the Board was requested to consider and resolve next month are issues such as whether passing the exams would be a prerequisite for graduation, the number of tests to be developed, and whether it would be acceptable to have three annual test administrations with make-up sessions for each tests for those students who do not pass on the first attempt.

"These are among the most important and far-reaching deliberations and decisions this Board will likely ever make," said Christopher T. Cross, President of the Maryland State Board of Education. "There will be a lot of thought and reflection that will go into these decisions so that we may be assured of a plan that will truly challenge all our students and help each of them to reach their full potential."

The test options were designed with assistance from the College Board / Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., a group noted for its administration of the widely-used Scholastic Achievement Tests. The CB/ETS report on design options for the High School Assessment outlined four proposed test designs for the Board's consideration:

- **Portfolio Plus:** A year-long portfolio of student work would be scored by a classroom teacher and combined with a 2-3 hour assessment scored centrally.
- **Preparation Plus:** This assessment would draw upon common learning experiences in a 2-3 hour standardized assessment involving "real-world" applications.
- **Combination:** Students would be asked during a 2-3 hour assessment to use documents, laboratory results, or other tools to answer a series of constructed-response questions.
- **Limited Combination:** This assessment type would use challenging machine-scorable questions and answers in a 2-3 hour test.

Should the Board choose a design option and complete its series of decisions in February, the State Department of Education is scheduled to begin accepting proposals from bidders for test development in April. At the same time, MSDE will begin working more intently with local school systems to determine what they need, such as training, instructional adjustments, etc., in order to prepare for the High School Assessments.

###

MARYLAND PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING K-16

Maryland State Department of Education  Maryland Higher Education Commission  University of Maryland Systems
Nancy Grasmick, Superintendent *Patricia Florestano, Secretary* *Donald Langenberg, Chancellor*

200 West Baltimore Street
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MARYLAND K-16 PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT

The K-16 Partnership is a bold departure from traditional education reform, heralding a new and substantive collaboration among leaders in the business community, K-16 education, and local and state government. This unprecedented alliance is critical to the creation of a new community of learning that strives for all of its members to achieve the highest levels of excellence throughout all levels of education and in the workplace. Building on the reforms inaugurated by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, this new Partnership derives its strength from the diversity of its members, who bring to the Partnership their unique perspectives, expertise, resources, and needs.

Schools must have the high standards needed for our students to develop and adapt to an increasingly technological world, preparing all students for work and life-long learning. Higher education must take seriously its obligation to educate new teachers who have the knowledge, skill, and confidence to teach in tomorrow's classrooms, and together in partnership with local school systems engage in the continuous professional development of teachers. General education experiences in higher education institutions must prepare our future leaders by instilling an understanding of technology, an appreciation of the arts and humanities, and a profound respect for diversity. Academic majors must link requirements with career expectations. Businesses must be engaged in the development of standards and curriculum throughout K-16 education that give students the knowledge and capability they will need to adapt to a workplace that is changing at an extraordinary rate, and provide meaningful jobs that enable students to use these skills. Businesses must instill and affirm an ethic of life-long learning in their workforce and actively support their employees in their educational goals. State and local government officials must thoughtfully allocate resources to ensure that they are used in the most effective way possible to achieve these goals, and remove policy and legal barriers to the collaborations necessary to attain them. Further, all must bear responsibility for ensuring that our students are prepared to accept their responsibilities as citizens—as active participants in the social, cultural, and political life of our State, nation, and world.

The success of the Partnership also depends on necessary change, significant improvement, and constant assessment. Standards at every level must retain rigor and relevance. Assessments must be developed to provide meaningful evaluations of student performance and to evaluate how well students are supported in their efforts to meet these standards. The Partnership will address and develop strategies for strengthening K-16 standards, competencies, and assessments, the professional development of teachers, and community engagement in the K-16 initiative.

Acting individually, these partners could not achieve any of these goals. Each is an essential and equally important contributor to the Partnership. Further, nothing can be done without the active support and engagement of the community at large and parents in particular. The most critical task of the Partnership is to foster opportunities for members to establish comprehensive and substantive collaborations that enable all stakeholders to engage in the far-reaching changes needed in our education system. The Partnership will enable the State of Maryland to create an educational system that gives its citizens the skills they will need to lead productive and fulfilling lives.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

FAX TRANSMITTAL

TO: Mike Cohen

ORGANIZATION: _____

FAX NUMBER: 456-7028

FROM: JENNIFER DAVIS, Special Assistant to the Secretary

PHONE NUMBER: (202) 401-3049 FAX #: (202) 401-0596

MESSAGE: FYI. Talk to you soon.

If you have trouble receiving this transmission, please call Sherri Lattisaw at 202-401-3003. Thank You.

2 pages to follow

800 INDEPENDENCE AVE., S.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FEBRUARY 2, 1997 THE WASHINGTON POST B1

Md. Educators Weigh Rate Of Failure for Planned Exams

Students May Have to Pass 10 Tests to Graduate

By Dan Beyers and Lisa Frazier
Washington Post Staff Writers

It was just a tiny note to explain a budget estimate, but few comments in the 363-page report delivered to the Maryland State Board of Education last week seemed to sum up so succinctly the stakes involved in the state's decision to develop a set of final exams required for high school graduation.

"Assumes 50 percent repeat rate during the first five operational years and 20 percent thereafter," the note said in justifying costs that could reach \$23 million a year.

The prospect that half of all Maryland high school students might fail one of the 10 new final exams the state wants to develop is driving much of the debate over how to launch the testing program. State education officials are scheduled next month to decide what shape the testing will take, and parents, school officials and even the

state's consultants already have appealed to board members to consider starting with a simpler, less rigorous set of tests or delaying the whole thing.

"The worst-case scenario is to set the bar extremely high, then in the face of protests or legal challenges have to retreat," said Wayne J. Camara, a research scientist with the New York-based College Board, a non-profit group that oversees national standardized testing. He was hired by the state to analyze the testing proposal. "You risk losing some of the political support you had for the tests."

Maryland's struggle to design the new tests reflects the difficulties faced by many states throughout the country as they start similar campaigns to raise academic standards.

Maryland is basing much of its reform effort on requiring students to

pass 10 exams at the end of courses in English, math, science and history. The mandate would take effect with the graduating Class of 2004, which is now in the fifth grade.

Only New York, which last year announced plans to raise testing standards by requiring all students to pass the state's more rigorous honors exams established by the state Board of Regents by 1999, is attempting a testing program comparable to Maryland's. Virginia, by contrast, is planning to require only 11th-graders to take one graduation exam that will include questions from all the basic subject areas.

"This is really uncharted territory," said Daniel Koretz, senior social scientist for the Rand Institute on Education and Training in the District. "Even if Maryland is phenomenally successful in its education reform, you're still going to have a lot of kids who fall below the threshold due to the wide variability of student performance in any school or system."

Determining where to set passing rates for the new tests "is obviously of prime importance," said Christopher Cross, president of the State Board of Education and executive director of the District-based Council for Basic Education. "But so is having a diploma that demonstrates you have mastered the core learning goals we've established."

Cross said he does not expect the exams to stop large numbers of students from getting a diploma because they will be given multiple chances to pass each test. But the need to balance the desire for high standards against concern about failure rates may lead the board to offer different types of diplomas, he said. One might reflect basic competency based on test scores, while a so-called "meritorious" diploma might reflect a higher level of proficiency.

The state board's consultants suggested other options. The board could phase in the number of tests so that students are required to pass only, say, three at first, giving school districts time to adjust to the change. Or the state could set passing scores lower in the initial years and ratchet up their standards over time. The state could even play with the way graduation is determined: Instead of requiring students to pass all the tests, the state could allow students to combine their scores to meet some threshold. That would allow students who do poorly on one exam to recover with a high score on another.

Cross noted, however, that the concerns are similar to the ones expressed in the early 1980s when Maryland instituted functional exams measuring basic competency in reading, math, writing and citizenship for ninth-, 10th- and 11th-graders. No one complains about the functional exams anymore because passing rates exceed 80 percent, he said. Similar performance gains are possible with the new exams, he said, adding that he hopes any student receiving a diploma can step right into college.

But many parents and school officials question the assumption that high school needs to prepare every student for college. And many are skeptical that the state will provide school districts with all the resources they need to deal with the potentially large numbers of students who would fail the exams and need remedial help.

"We think it can have a detrimental effect," said Leroy Tompkins, chief administrator for instruction in Prince George's County. "It almost certainly will increase the dropout rate."

More...

Md. Considers Failure Rate For New Tests

continued...

Prince George's County Board of Education member Alvin Thornton (District 7) put it this way: "If we are willing to hold our children accountable, we can hold our children accountable. As long as the gap exists between the wealth of the state of Maryland and the amount it spends on its children, how can we justify holding children accountable?"

There are other concerns about the new tests beyond their effect on graduation rates. Montgomery County school officials said they worry that the state's tests could force them to revamp their curriculum—stripping them of the control they have over what is taught in county schools. Montgomery, for instance, traditionally has required students to take two semesters of algebra with a final exam at the end of each semester. The single algebra exam mandated by the state could effectively force the county to discard its two-exam regimen, which county officials said covers more material than the state is contemplating.

"We had hoped to fold their test into ours and work as partners," said Joy Odom, coordinator for student exams in Montgomery.

"We're headed for a state-mandated curriculum," said Joseph I. Headman Jr., principal at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac and co-chairman of a team of Montgomery educators studying the state exam program. "I'm very concerned we are moving ahead too fast."

Camara, of the College Board, said there are practical reasons for not developing different tests for different school systems. Such variety could open the state to challenge by a parent who argues that one test is easier than another.

Karl Pence, president of the Maryland State Teachers Association, said he remains concerned about what kind of questions the test will ask. The state currently uses performance-based tests for grades 3, 5 and 8 that require students to work in groups and that feature open-ended questions for assessing whether students know how to put what they learn to practical use. The tests are intended to reform elementary school and middle school instruction.

But state test officials are leaning toward multiple-choice exams for the high school tests because they can be scored faster and are less subjective to administer.

"I'm afraid we might have a malfunction junction if we're not careful," Pence said.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To compare your county's average Scholastic Assessment Test scores with those of other counties in the area, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's site on the World Wide Web at

<http://www.washingtonpost.com>



CBE Fax Cover Sheet

Date: 2/7/97

of pages: _____

Account code: _____

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

symposium

Q: Do public schools need state-mandated educational standards?

Yes: Standards spur student achievement and hold educators accountable for public monies.

BY CHRISTOPHER T. CROSS



Cross is president of the Council for Basic Education and the Maryland Board of Education, and led the educational initiative of the Business Roundtable from 1991-94.

With standards so well accepted in our society, why are they so resisted in education?

Standards are everywhere. Federal standards protect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the medication we take. Radio, television and pilots and planes all are subject to federal standards. Automobile mechanics, veterinarians, lawyers, plumbers and even hairdressers and barbers must meet standards set by states.

Why do we have standards in these and other areas? As a society, we are dedicated to maintaining excellence in the resources and services we depend on; we want to hold government and business accountable for ensuring our high quality of life. Why then, are we willing to accept an education system that has no publicly accepted standards?

It seems that citizens expect but do not demand a great deal from public education. We hope that it provides the knowledge and skills students need to become productive members in the workforce and in our democracy. We would like public education to convey a sense of what it means to be an American. And we would be pleased if public education resulted in students' appreciation for culture and ideas. But how does one verify whether students are learning what they need? How does one help students and schools improve? How do educators ensure that no student is left behind?

Academic standards — statements that describe what all students should know and be able to do by the time they reach specified grade levels — address these questions in four important ways. First, standards set clear, high expectations for student achievement. Second, they provide a basis to hold

educators and students accountable. Third, standards promote educational equity by demanding that all students achieve at high levels. Finally, they help guide efforts to measure student achievement, improve teacher training and develop more effective curricula and instructional strategies.

In the absence of academic standards, academic content is shaped by publishers of textbooks and tests. Many educators have concluded that this content is trivial

and superficial. Their opinion is supported by the largest international study of student achievement ever taken, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study in 1996. The study compared the mathematics and science achievement of eighth-grade students from 41 countries and analyzed each of the countries' curricula, textbooks and teaching. American students performed slightly better than average in science and below average in mathematics. The authors of the study warned that lack of a coherent vision of how to educate U.S. students in mathematics and science resulted in unfocused curricula and textbooks that failed to define clearly what is intended to be taught.

Academic standards provide students, teachers and parents a clear set of objectives for what students should know and be able to do at various points of their educational careers. For example, one math standard might state: By the end of fourth grade, all students will be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions. Students would have a concrete goal to work toward, and teachers would have a framework for developing curricula and assessments that accurately measure student achievement. Parents would have an understanding of the specific goals their children are working toward, which would allow them to increase their participation in the learning process. Finally, future employers and the American public in general would have a clearer sense of the expectations for students of different ages.

Without standards, citizens cannot know whether students are learning essential material because no one can specify what that material is. Similarly, the (continued on page 26)

CROSS: continued from page 24

public cannot know whether a school's educational program is effective, because there is nothing against which it can be measured.

This lack of accountability has eroded the public's faith in public schools: A 1995 survey found that almost half of Americans believe that it is possible to get a high-school diploma without learning even the most basic skills. Many teachers agree there is a problem, but, interestingly, in a recent survey conducted by the American Federation of Teachers, 44 percent of teachers said that they promoted undeserving students because there were no standards to hold them accountable.

Refusing to hold students accountable for learning sends the message to children that they need not work hard or learn essential information and skills; it allows schools to ignore the needs of failing students; and it detracts from the value of a high-school diploma. With standards, schools have a basis to measure student achievement, an objective measure against which students can be assessed to determine whether they need greater assistance before moving on to the next grade. Standards also provide the basis for the public to assess the effectiveness of schools in preparing students to meet explicit goals.

Low-income students who do not perform well in school appear to suffer the most from the absence of standards. Students in poverty-stricken schools often receive good grades despite poor skills and little understanding of basic facts. A 1994 Department of Education study concluded that students in poverty-stricken schools who receive mostly A's in English read only as well as "C" and "D" students in affluent schools. Similarly, students receiving mostly A's in mathematics in poverty-stricken schools perform in math about the same as "D" students in affluent schools.

Without standards, there is no benchmark against which student performance is measured, allowing students and teachers in one classroom to settle for performance that would not be acceptable in another school or classroom.

Grade inflation in poverty-stricken schools not only hurts students, but it incurs real economic costs. For instance, in recent years one result has been an increase in the percentage of students who qualify for college but who require remedial course work once enrolled. In Maryland, an estimated \$17 million was spent last year in public colleges and universities to help students gain skills they should have learned in high school. This money would be better spent helping all students to meet higher standards before they graduated from high school. Students not only would be prepared for postsecondary education, but for the responsibilities of a career and civic life. Moreover, employers, college-admissions officers, the public and students

would understand and appreciate the value of a high-school diploma.

Academic standards also will lead to other necessary educational reforms that, taken together, will significantly raise student achievement. Highly qualified teachers must be recruited, educated in the subjects they teach and trained to know the most effective instructional strategies. Teachers need to be evaluated, and those who are unqualified must be let go. Resources must be reallocated to focus on classroom instruction and student learning. Tests must be created to assess student learning and strategies must be developed for students who fail to meet the academic goals. Finally, schools and districts must engage parents and community members to ensure support for reforms and public responsibility for the education of all students. In order for these reforms to be effective, they must be centered on a common set of goals and coordinated to work in unison. By defining what we expect of students, standards serve as a road map to guide these reforms.

But who should develop the standards and how should they be chosen? Stakeholders include business leaders, educators, parents, citizens and students themselves — all have a strong interest in determining what students should know and be able to do. And meaningful, effective standards must represent a consensus

of all these groups. Government, as the manifestation of our democratic process, can lead stakeholders to begin this process. State government, in particular, is uniquely situated to bridge local and national interests in the development of meaningful standards. School districts can and do use the state standards as a starting point for their own more localized, more rigorous, requirements. That's what happened in Chicago three years ago: Educators and community representatives defined standards that exceeded the Illinois state goals.

State governments also have a great deal of legal authority to ensure educational quality. The Constitution grants the states the authority to provide free education to all children. The Supreme Court has upheld this authority, acknowledging states' fundamental interests in ensuring that children are educated to be productive individuals and responsible citizens.

The court has asserted that "education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments [as] it is the very foundation of good citizenship" (*Brown v. Board of Education*). In other decisions, the court has held that "providing public schools ranks at the very apex of the function of a state" (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*), and that one objective of education is "the inculcation of fundamental values necessary to the maintenance of a democratic system" (*Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser*). The setting of academic standards, we have argued, helps states to meet their responsibility.

There is some early evidence to suggest that rigorous standards aligned with meaningful assessments can raise the quality of the education system. Cornell University Profes-

Refusing to hold students accountable for learning sends the message that they need not work hard or learn essential information and skills.

sor John Bishop examined states, nations and provinces that required students to pass exams tied to their curriculum at the end of high school. He discovered that such systems had higher standards for beginning teachers, paid higher teacher salaries, targeted more resources on core instructional functions, had students who scored higher in mathematics and geography and employed more teachers with a major in the subject that they teach.

Academic standards, however, are not the silver bullet for improving public education. The setting of academic standards does not mean that all or even most students sudden-

ly are going to meet them. The adoption of air-quality standards did not suddenly improve the quality of air in Los Angeles. A great deal of work and new technologies went into reducing the pollutants that came from automobiles and factories. The work and technologies, however, were guided and coordinated by the air-quality standards. Similarly, content standards are a necessary starting point toward meaningful education reform and increased student achievement. ●

Scott Jofus, a policy analyst at the Council for Basic Education, contributed to this essay.

LIEBERMAN: *continued from page 25*

other pejorative if they admit publicly what everyone willing to look at the facts recognizes privately.

The naïveté that characterizes the standards movement is evident from the track record of its major proponents. Inasmuch as they do not view the public-school monopoly as a major problem, they are under some pressure to identify the obstacles to raising the levels of educational achievement. "High standards" meets this need. The teachers' unions are always happy with an educational diagnosis that ignores their responsibility for the state of U.S. education. The practical impossibility of adopting and implementing high standards for everyone will keep the teachers' unions off the hook for several years to come.

What will happen is thoroughly predictable. States that adopt high-school standards and try to impose high stakes for failure to fulfill them will encounter a firewall of criticism. The argument will be made — and already is being made — that it is unfair to expect all students to fulfill high standards unless there is equality of learning opportunity. To achieve equality of learning opportunity, we must allocate huge expenditures for remediation. By the time this argument is played out, another 5 or 10 years will go by — plenty of time to come up with another excuse to maintain the public-school monopoly.

Actually, if the supporters of high standards for all students really believed in the possibility, they should be promoting a show-case example to support their position. They should identify a state or a few districts large enough to test the hypothesis that all children, except for a small minority, can achieve at world-class levels. Instead of dribbling away a few dollars in thousands of school districts, let us find out how much it would cost to enable all children to meet high standards. Does it cost \$1,000 more per pupil? \$5,000? \$25,000? Whatever the cost, let's get on with the experiment. Perhaps the foundations that are trying to convince us that all children can learn at world-class levels will be willing to invest the millions required to test their rhetoric.

Surely, if significant differences in student achievement are due to unequal opportunities to learn, let's find out what it would

cost to equalize the opportunities. If it takes one teacher per child, so be it. But will the average citizen sign on to astronomical new expenditures in public education to get this outcome? Would many parents and taxpayers prefer the alternative of home schooling or school vouchers to obtain the same result outside the public-school system?

In my opinion, the standards movement is afraid to raise these questions, because it fears, and rightly so, that the answer to them will undermine its egalitarian assumptions. Educational standards are lower today than in the past precisely because of futile efforts to apply the high standards for college admission to larger and larger school populations.

True, academic acceleration is desirable. But the feasibility of higher standards leading to acceleration is only one dimension of a complex problem. It is very unlikely that states will reduce the duration of formal education; teacher unions' opposition probably will be sufficient to block that highly desirable option. On the other hand, if substantial numbers of students enroll in colleges at ages 14 and 15 instead of 17 and 18, one has to wonder about the ability of the colleges to manage such a diverse age group in the same academic environment.

The standards movement offers what essentially is a statist approach to the issue of acceleration. Its proponents argue that students should not be allowed to go to

work until they have completed a lengthy period of formal education with a piece of paper at the end of the process — a high-school diploma or "certificate of mastery."

But why protect the education monopoly this way? If education had to compete against the work option, the competition would force the schools to demonstrate and continue to demonstrate that more formal education was preferable to getting a job — not the case for millions of students. In all the rhetoric about standards, we should not overlook the fact that most of what we know and use on the job does not come from formal education. Furthermore, we could do a great deal to equalize lifetime incomes if young people not interested in extended formal education could go to work sooner. ●

Educational standards are lower today than in the past because of efforts to apply the high standards to larger and larger school populations.

Insight

ON THE NEWS

Vol. 13, No. 6

February 17, 1997

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 7, 1997

MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THE MARYLAND EDUCATION COMMUNITY

DATE: February 10, 1997
TIME: 10:40 am - 10:50 am
LOCATION: Maryland State House
CONTACT: Michael Cohen

I. PURPOSE:

To meet the heads of the key education groups in Maryland.

II. BACKGROUND:

Prior to your speech, you will briefly meet approximately 20 leaders in the Maryland education community. This group is inclined to be very active in supporting your call for new national standards given the progress Maryland has made in this area. This is an opportunity to encourage these educational groups to endorse your initiative.

III. PARTICIPANTS:

The President

Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

Christopher Cross, President, State Board of Education

*(*Formerly an Assistant Secretary of Education in the Bush Administration, who worked on standards initiatives. He is supportive of your standards proposal.)*

Robert Kirkley, President, Maryland Association of Boards of Education

Dr. Paul Scott, President, Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals

Sherri-Le Bream, President, Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals

Deborah Montgomery, President, Maryland Middle School Association

Kenneth Lawson, Associate Superintendent, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Student: Jeremy Hsieh (prnnc.: sha), 8th grade student, Severna Park Middle School

Teacher: Mary Beth White, 8th grade Math teacher, Severna Park Middle School

Carmella Veit, President, MD Congress of Parents and Teachers

Bill Middleton, Vice President, Public School Superintendent's Association of MD

Karl Pence, President, Maryland State Teachers Association

Marcia Brown, President, Baltimore Teachers Union

David Williams, Nat'l Foreign Language Teacher of the Year, Dumbarton Middle School

Ms. Alex Pruner, President, Maryland Association of Student Councils

Ron Pfeiffer, Assistant Maryland State Superintendent for School and Community Outreach

Edward F. Mitchell, Immediate Past President, Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Susan Traiman, Director of the Education Initiative, National Business Roundtable

*(*Formerly the Assoc. Director and then Director of Education at the NGA).*

Buzz Bartlett, Director of Corporate Affairs Lockheed Martin

IV. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:

- The President shakes hands and briefly meets each individual.

V. PRESS PLAN:

Closed Press. White House Photo.

VI. REMARKS

None required.

MARYLAND EDUCATION EFFORTS

Standards: As a result of state education reform initiatives over the last five years, Maryland has become known for having high standards. Education Week's report card gave Maryland in Standards and Assessments a 100% rating. Part of the state's education reform efforts included developing a test called the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), which measures how well students are meeting these standards by testing their reading, writing, language, math, science, and social studies skills. The Administration's proposal for national voluntary tests in reading and math is very compatible with the MSPAP.

Charter Schools: There are no serious charter schools bills pending in the legislature, although there are advocates for charter schools legislation in the legislature and on the State Board of Education. Chris Cross, the President of the Maryland State Board of Education and several other Board members have been attempting to promote charter schools legislation for the past year. However, this proposal ran into opposition from the Public School Superintendent's Association of Maryland and the Maryland Association of Boards of Education. A Task Force appointed by the State Board of Education concluded that local school boards already had sufficient authority to establish charter schools -- and several have been established in Baltimore City. Consequently, there are no current proposals in the legislature to authorize charter schools, though most advocates of charter schools believe legislation is needed in order to see any widespread development of new charter schools.

Hope Scholarship: Governor Glendening introduced legislation to create the Maryland Hope Scholarship which will provide tuition, mandatory fees, and a book allowance to students who graduate from a Maryland high school with a "B" average and whose family income is below \$60,000.

facsimile
TRANSMITTAL

to: Mike Cohen
fax #: (202) 456-7028
re: Maryland's education reform
date: February 6, 1997
pages: 15, including this cover sheet.

Here is information promised on school reform in Maryland:

1. How Maryland Measures Up -- a synopsis of how the state's education initiatives align with President Clinton's education goals and State of the Union address
2. School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains -- news release on the 1996 school report card
3. MSDE Bulletin -- highlights of the report card
4. Rising Expectations for Maryland Students -- the High School Assessment Program under development
5. State Board reviews options for High School Assessment -- Jan. 28 news release
6. Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16

Please let me know if you need additional information.

From the desk of...

Ron Peiffer
School & Community Outreach Office
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 767-0472
Fax: (410) 333-2275

Maurice Moran

HOW MARYLAND MEASURES UP:

A synopsis of how Maryland's education initiatives align with President Clinton's Education Goals in the State of the Union Address

President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
1. Every state should adopt high national standards. The Federal Government will lead an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math.	◆ Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) For the past five years, through our school reform initiative, the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP), Maryland has already had high standards, as attested to by the A (100%) Education Week's report card gave Maryland in Standards and Assessments. We have already developed a test to measure how well students are meeting those standards — the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). MSPAP measures how well schools are teaching students the reading, writing, language usage, mathematics, science, and social studies skills they need for future careers. Maryland holds schools accountable to these standards through a variety of measures, including our annual Maryland School Performance Report, a "report card" on our state's schools. In addition, the suggestion of national voluntary tests in reading and mathematics is a good match with Maryland's MSPAP, which very closely relates to the current National Assessment of Educational Progress both in terms of rigor and content. ◆ Maryland's Proposed High School Assessments With the assistance of the College Board and the Pew Charitable Trust, Maryland's proposed High School Assessments would extend the MSPP through high school. The series of 10 end-of-course tests, including three exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies, will gauge both school performance and individual student performance. They will be graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2004. ◆ K-16 Partnership With support from the Pew Charitable Trust, MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the Chancellor of the University of Maryland System are collaborating in developing the K-16 partnership. The purpose of this partnership is the development of a seamless system of education between public schools and institutions of higher education that will allow Maryland students to move easily and directly from high school into the State's colleges and universities. The partnership is working to align content and performance standards of high schools and higher education.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
2. To have the best schools, we must have the best teachers. Federal budget will enable 100,000 teachers to seek certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.	❖ Proposed Legislation Currently, MSDE is supporting a bill (SB 460) which would constitute a focused strategy for improving the quality of teaching in Maryland schools by establishing a three-year pilot program to provide state and local support for 48 teachers to pursue National Board Certification every year. The state and local system will pay the certification fees for these teachers. The bill also provides for a statewide staff development plan to utilize the skills and knowledge of these teachers. ❖ Professional Development Schools In addition, teacher preparation and professional development are being aligned with our school reform efforts and our new assessments through 14 pilot professional development schools, involving partnerships between local school systems and higher education institutions. ❖ Business Partnerships In cooperation with the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), MSDE developed recommendations to revamp teacher professional development. ❖ Teacher Licensure No one is allowed to teach in a Maryland classroom unless they have a Maryland teaching license, or are eligible for one.
3. We must do more to help all our children read. - The America Reads initiative will use AmeriCorps volunteers and college students to make sure every child can read independently by third grade. - A challenge to parents to read with their children every night.	❖ Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) In Maryland, third graders must have achieved the ability to read independently, and are tested on that ability through the third-grade administration of the MSPAP, which focuses on both basic and higher order skills. ❖ Even Start The Even Start Family Literacy Program focuses on the family and provides participants with a program of early childhood education, adult literacy, basic skill instruction, and parent education. The program currently serves approximately 160 children ages 0-3 and approximately 170 children ages 4-7. ❖ Parent and Family Involvement Network MSDE has developed a Parent and Family Involvement Network which includes parents, teachers, PTA presidents and other local liaisons to share best practices for parent involvement. We participate in Partnership 2000, linking schools and communities together to increase student achievement and our Special Education Parent Training Centers provide parenting skills training and help parents meet the special needs of their children in school. ❖ Additional Assistance is Always Welcome Additional AmeriCorps volunteers to help some of our high-risk children would still be of great benefit.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
4. Learning begins in the first days of life. - The budget will expand Head Start to one million children by 2002. - The President and First Lady will hold a conference on early learning and the brain this spring. - Vice-President Gore and Mrs. Gore will hold an annual family conference in June to make sure parents are an active part of their children's learning.	❖ Early Intervention and Prevention Services (EIPS) The Early Intervention and Prevention Services Initiative (EIPS) assists local school systems in improving early learning programs serving all children ages 3 to 9. It directly addresses the first National Education Goal: ensuring that all children start school ready to learn. The program's goal is to help schools and communities provide the most comprehensive and appropriate services possible for all young learners and their families and to heighten public awareness about the programs that are available to help. ❖ Head Start Collaboration Network As part of EIPS, MSDE is working with the Governor's Office to develop collaborative models between public schools and the Head Start program. MSDE provides technical assistance to schools looking to develop these models and serves on the Head Start Collaboration Network Advisory Council. ❖ Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) The Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) serves over 8,000 four-year-old children with learning opportunities, health, and other support services. ❖ Mandatory Kindergarten Since 1992, Kindergarten has been mandatory in Maryland and, statewide. ❖ Early Children Special Education Programs Early Children Special Education Programs, cooperative efforts of MSDE, local school systems, and child care providers, ensure special education and services to children with disabilities. The programs help to prepare children for pre-school, coordinate services between Head Start and local schools, address their daily needs, and place them in the least restrictive school environment.
5. Every state should give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. The Budget will have additional funding for charter schools.	❖ Charter Schools Maryland's 24 local school systems are free to establish Charter schools, as evidenced by Baltimore City's plan to privatize 9 schools, under an agreement that would make the schools privately managed, but publicly funded and still accountable in certain basic ways to Baltimore City Public Schools and the State. Individual school systems also create their own policies concerning school choice. The State Board of Education's Task Force on Charter Schools has determined that we have the authority in Maryland to establish Charter schools.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
6. Character Education must be taught in schools. And we must continue to promote order and discipline . . . • No new Budget items.	♦ Statewide Character Education Initiative Maryland has instituted a statewide character education initiative, directed by the State Character Education Office. Currently, there are five county-wide pilot programs —Prince George's, Baltimore, Calvert and Frederick counties and Baltimore City. In these counties, each school has developed a character education program to fit its unique needs. In general, the program focuses on the core ethical values which form the basis of a democratic society — respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship. This program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Education: Partnerships in Character Education. ♦ School Order and Discipline Legislation In addition, the Governor's bill "School Order and Discipline" went into effect October 1. It contains tough measures to deal more aggressively with students who frequently disrupt the learning of other students, as well as funding for local efforts to solve their violence and disruption problems. Among other things, the law gives principals the authority to suspend students for up to 10 days, requires restitution from students who damage property while violating the law, protects school staff from legal action when they try to prevent violence, and requires state guidelines for a code of discipline. ♦ Service Learning Currently, Maryland is the only state in the country that requires students to complete 75 hours of student service as a requirement for high school graduation. Each of Maryland's 24 local school systems has developed its own service learning program, designed to help students understand many of the social issues they learn about in school. In addition, service-learning helps students see their roles as citizens, and as active participants in the solutions to some of our most critical problems as a nation.
7. We cannot expect our children to raise themselves up in schools that are literally falling down. • Includes \$5 billion in interest subsidies to help communities finance \$20 billion in school construction over the next 4 years.	♦ School Construction Funding Currently, for FY 98 we have requests for over \$310 million in school construction funding. Governor Glendening has requested \$138.4 million in his budget. This federal funding would allow us to expand and extend school construction money at both the state and local level.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
8. We must make the 13th and 14th years of education . . . universal . . . we must open the doors of college to all Americans. America's HOPE scholarship — 2 year \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, which is enough to pay for community college.	❖ Proposed Scholarship Program Governor Glendening has proposed a Maryland HOPE scholarship (SB 231/HB 493), which would pay the full tuition at a Maryland community college or university for students in families with incomes less than \$60,000 who have a B average in high school and maintain that average in college.
9. We must expand the frontiers of learning across a lifetime. GI bill for America's workers to transform many federal training programs into a simple skill grant directly to workers.	❖ Community College Career and Technology Programs Maryland has a variety of Career and Technology Programs in our Community Colleges, some of which prepare students for immediate employment, and others which pave the way for transfer to a four year college. While high school students can earn college credit for these programs while still in high school, a skill grant would definitely benefit those adults who wish to return to school. ❖ School to Careers Career Connections is Maryland's comprehensive school-to-careers system, supporting school reform, workforce preparation, and economic development. The goal of the program is to ensure that all high school graduates are prepared to enter a career and/or higher education. The program is funded by a federal grant of \$25.2 million over five years. ❖ Adult Education In addition, Maryland is serving approximately 42,000 adults with adult basic education and high school credentialing programs. These programs support workforce skills development and family and parenting skills development and support helping these adults earn a high school diploma. Approximately 6,100 adults annually earn their diploma through the GED, and approximately 400 earn their diploma through the Adult External Diploma Program. In addition, adult education classes in literacy skills and high school completion are housed at homeless shelters throughout the state.



President Clinton's Education Priorities	Maryland's Education Reforms
10. We must bring the power of the information age into all our schools. • A challenge to America to connect every classroom for Internet access.	❖ Educational Modernization Initiative Maryland accepted this challenge, and through NetWeekend wired approximately 600 schools for Internet access. The Educational Modernization Initiative Technology in Schools is designed to increase the technology capabilities of Maryland schools, and an additional 149 schools are scheduled to be added in the FY 98 budget. In FY 97, \$4.5 million was spent on 90 project schools. The initiative provides schools with a complete building wiring system, as well as hardware, software, and funds for staff training. Maryland also receives federal funds to support school technology through the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. ❖ Business Partnerships MSDE and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) have developed <i>The Maryland Plan for Technology in Education</i>, a detailed plan for education technology in Maryland's schools. Norman R. Augustine, President and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, was the first president of the MBRT and is a strong supporter of Maryland's school reform.





Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools
Schools for Success

NEWS RELEASE

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

EMBARGOED for Release
December 12, 1996 — 10 a.m.

For more information: Ronald Peiffer (410) 767-0473

School Report Card Shows School, Student Gains ***"School Reform Is Working," Says State Superintendent Grasmick***

BALTIMORE, MD (December 12, 1996) — "School reform is working to drive Maryland schools toward higher levels of performance," State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick declared today in releasing the 1996 report card on schools.

"More students are graduating, more students are attending school every day, and more students are learning at higher levels," Dr. Grasmick said.

On the most challenging measure of student learning -- the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), the report shows that local school systems have improved in 15 out of 18 content areas, with 19 of 24 school systems posting higher achievement on the tests this year than last year.

The report also indicates steady improvements over the past six years in dropout and attendance rates, as schools seek to reach the high accountability standards set by the state in these areas. The state's dropout rate declined by nearly 2 percentage points since 1990, down to 4.58 percent. The State Department of Education estimates that, had students continued to dropout at the 1990 rate of 6.5 percent annually, there would be 3,600 fewer high school seniors in Maryland high schools today.

"The graduating class of 1997 will produce 3,600 more young people prepared for further schooling or the workforce," Dr. Grasmick said. Similarly, the Superintendent said, improvements in attendance rates mean that "7,700 more students are in school and learning every day. Good attendance sets the stage for good instruction."

The State School Superintendent released the seventh annual school report card at a news conference in Baltimore. Governor Parris N. Glendening and legislative, education, and business leaders from across the state filled the state board room to receive the progress report on the state's 1,260 schools.

Governor Glendening said, "In its quest for better schools, Maryland is among the nation's leaders. On behalf of all Marylanders, I commend the hard work of our teachers and school communities in continuing our progress toward excellence. We have made education my Administration's top priority, providing the resources to enable our students to succeed today and in the future."

MORE...

In releasing the school report card, the Superintendent said MSPAP tests are prompting instructional improvements system by system, school by school, and student by student. For example:

- ▶ From 1993 to 1996, the percentage of students performing at the satisfactory level in one or more MSPAP areas has increased an average of 10 points to 66 percent in grade 3, 72 percent in grade 5, and 70 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The percentage of schools meeting or approaching at least one MSPAP standard has increased significantly since 1993 — to 46.5 percent of schools in grade 3, to 56.25 percent in grade 5, and to 61.9 percent in grade 8.
- ▶ The number of school systems with at least 40 percent of students scoring at satisfactory on the MSPAP tests increased from four in 1993 to 16 in 1996. School systems making consistent gains include Allegany, Anne Arundel, Caroline, and Carroll.
- ▶ The state as a whole registered improvements in 21 of 30 State measures of school performance and student learning.

Dr. Grasmick said these gains reflect a strong commitment to continuous improvement in instruction, staff development, and other areas that result in a better education for students. However, she stressed the need to maintain a strong focus — in all elementary and middle school grades — on the basic skills and academic content areas as the foundation for the higher level of student performance required by MSPAP. "School reform is more than preparing students a few weeks before test time," the Superintendent added.

Dr. Grasmick said the report card on schools is also an important tool for identifying school systems and instructional areas where new efforts are needed. In the coming months, she said, State educators, local school systems, and school improvement teams will give new attention to writing instruction in middle schools and preparation in the primary grades for the third grade challenges of MSPAP. New efforts are also needed, she said, to identify successful programs and practices as a way to improve instructional areas where student performance is lagging.

State Board President Christopher T. Cross said the report indicates "there is much work for all of us—at the State level, in every school system, and in every school — to realize the full potential of school reform."

"We need to be courageous, to be bold," Dr. Grasmick said. "But most importantly, we need to keep our focus on children. The Maryland School Performance Program is not about numbers. It is about children, about their school experiences today and their lives in the 21st century."

###

Dec. 12, 1996

Vol. 7, No. 14

MSDE Bulletin

Keeping You Current on Education Reform in Maryland

Better Schools, Better Students

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

By almost any standard, the Maryland School Performance Program is making the kind of profound, across-the-board gains it was designed to make.

That's the gist of the new 1996 state report card, released at a Dec. 12 celebration in Baltimore. Viewed over four years since the 1993 base year, progress on the Maryland School Performance Assessment tests has been especially striking:

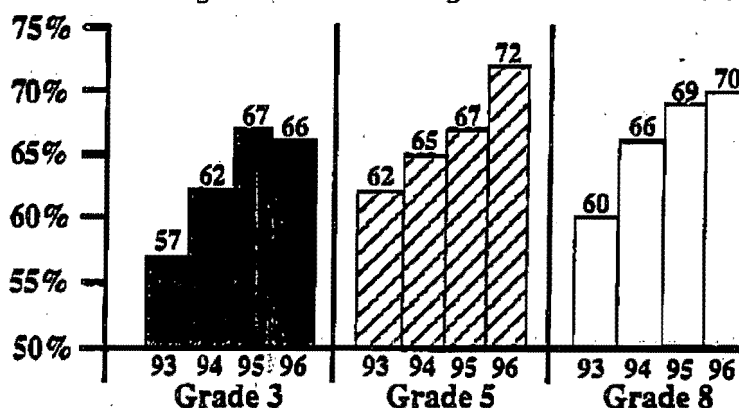
- **Student by student.** Since 1993, the percentage of students who met one or more MSPAP standards in grades 3, 5, and 8 has climbed an average of 10%.
- **School by school.** Since 1993, the number of schools meeting or approaching standards in one or more content areas has doubled or tripled.

- **System by system.** In 1993, four systems had 40% or more students at the satisfactory level on the MSPAP. This year, 16 of 24 had 40% to 60%.

(Please see Report Card on Page 2)

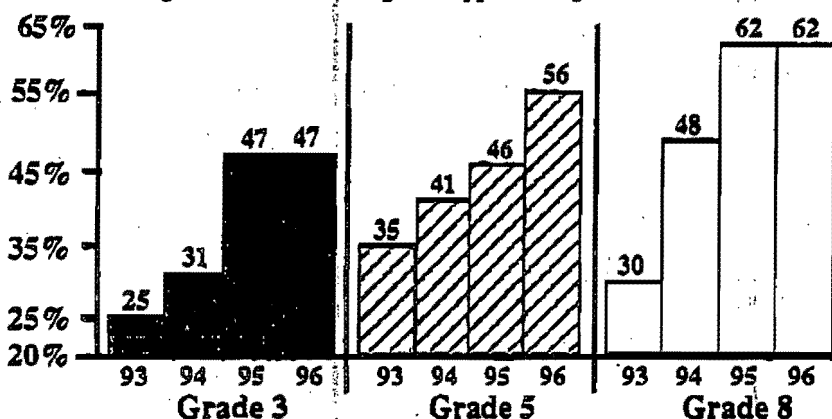
MSPAP GAINS AMONG STUDENTS

The Percentage of Students Meeting One or More Standards



MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOLS

The Percentage of Schools Meeting and Approaching One or More Standards



BY THE NUMBERS

A closer look at Report Card 1996

- Nineteen of 24 school systems are performing at higher overall MSPAP levels than in 1993; all 24 are doing better than in 1993.
- Fifteen of 18 MSPAP areas are up over 1993 results.
- Maryland's 4.58% dropout rate is down .37% from 1993 and 1.9% from 1990. Without school reform, we estimate that 3,600 students of the class of 1997 would have dropped out by now.
- Some 1,700 more students are in class each day thanks to higher attendance rates.
- As many as 174,900 students took the MSPAP in 1996.

The 1996 Report Card: School Reform Works

Report Card (Continued)

At each level, this year's report card shows, the state's educational system is performing at a higher standard than in years past. In 1996, 21 of 30 report card performance areas are up.

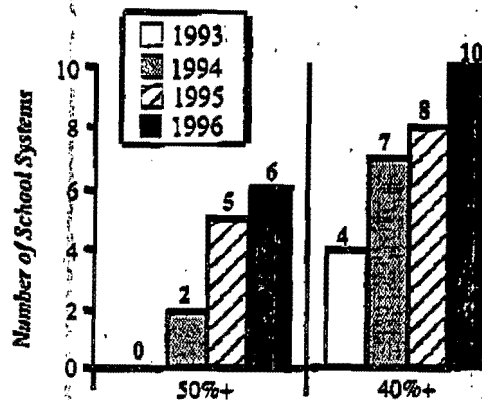
"This year's report is a dramatic and heartening affirmation of our belief that school reform in Maryland is working," said State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. "Our progress continues to be steady and, in some schools and school systems, breathtaking."

The 1996 report card, released by Dr. Grasmick and Governor Parris N. Glendening, detailed significant progress over 1995 results. Among the gains were improvements in 15 of 18 MSPAP areas and a continued reduction of Maryland's dropout rate.

MSPAP GAINS AMONG SCHOOL SYSTEMS

- ✓ In 1993, only 4 school systems had 40% or more of students at satisfactory level

- ✓ In 1996, 16 school systems had 40 to 60% of students at satisfactory level



School reform is also helping to reduce absenteeism. Attendance rates are up in all areas, progress since 1990 that translates to 7,700 students in school today instead of being on the streets.

When more students are in school and preparing for the future, Dr. Grasmick said, everyone benefits.

Dr. Grasmick's Message: We Must Do More

State School Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick knows that while there is much to celebrate in the 1996 report card, more must be done to realize the full potential of school reform. Some excerpts from her message this year:

"If you look at the 1996 report card and you listen to teachers and principals, you conclude that the next steps in school reform will require a universal effort. Teachers and principals in grades K through 12 will need to keep working, keep checking their progress, and keep improving."

"Have high expectations for every student in every content area. . . . I would (also) challenge school improvement teams to really dig into the data. . . . Just because you are doing something new and different does not mean you are doing the right thing."

What do you think?

The MSDE Bulletin welcomes readers' comments. Send them to the editor at the address at left.

MSDE BULLETIN

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WHERE WE STAND

MSPAP Composite Scores by county
(from 1993 (base) to 1996)

County	1993	1996
■ Allegany	26.5	40.2
■ Anne Arundel	26.6	47.3
■ Baltimore City	10.4	13.3
■ Baltimore Co.	34.0	44.7
■ Calvert	34.6	48.9
■ Caroline	25.1	38.7
■ Carroll	42.4	55.3
■ Cecil	32.4	41.3
■ Charles	30.1	39.5
■ Dorchester	21.0	35.1
■ Frederick	44.5	54.2
■ Garrett	35.6	43.4
■ Harford	38.4	52.2
■ Howard	44.7	56.9
■ Kent	32.6	40.7
■ Montgomery	46.4	50.8
■ Prince Georges	21.5	29.6
■ Queen Anne's	34.4	41.0
■ St. Mary's	27.7	45.7
■ Somerset	25.3	29.8
■ Talbot	23.4	46.5
■ Washington	31.9	43.9
■ Wicomico	26.3	33.6
■ Worcester	25.3	35.3



Maryland State Department of Education

200 West Baltimore Street ♦ Baltimore, MD 21401 ♦ (410) 767-0600

Parris N. Glendening, Governor ♦ Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

October 1996

Raising Expectations for Maryland Students

- ♦ By 2004, Maryland graduates will be better prepared for work and postsecondary education
- ♦ New, tougher high school assessments will be tied to graduation

Purpose and History

Maryland's proposed high school assessments help extend the Maryland School Performance Program through high school. To succeed in the next century, today's young people will be expected to know more and have higher-level skills than any previous generation. Schools will raise academic expectations, building a firm foundation from the basics and ensuring the higher level skills demanded by the modern workplace and higher education.

The Maryland School Performance Assessments, or MSPAP, given in third, fifth, and eighth grade, are already raising academic performance in Maryland's elementary schools. The high school assessments will extend these higher expectations into grades 9-12. The tests will gauge both school performance and individual student performance, providing valuable information for school improvement planning.

Proposal

The proposed high school assessment is a series of 10 end-of-course tests in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and skills for success. All Maryland high school students, starting with the class of 2004, will be required to pass them to graduate.

Students will take three end-of-course exams in English, two in mathematics, two in science, and three in social studies. Skills for success — learning, thinking, communication, technology, and interpersonal skills — should be taught in every course and will be essential to performing well on all the tests.

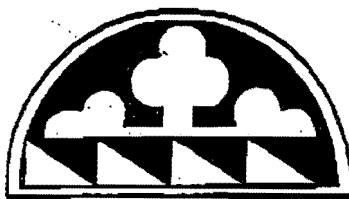
A test development firm will work with the Maryland State Department of Education and local school systems to prepare blue-prints for an assessment that:

- ♦ is a graduation requirement for all students.
- ♦ recognizes different levels of achievement.
- ♦ combines multiple choice, short answer, performance, and essay questions.

Development

The high school assessment is being developed in collaboration with teachers, business leaders, community members, and professional education-related organizations from around Maryland. Both national and international standards are being used to help develop the assessments.

Recognizing that teachers must play a vital role in developing the assessments, the Maryland State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have contacted every high school in the state to obtain teacher feedback on what students should be required to know and be able to do. The State Board of Education is exploring the possibility of local alternatives for certifying the competency of students who do not pass the state assessments.



Maryland State Department of
EDUCATION

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendents of Schools
Schools for Success

NEWS RELEASE

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State Board reviews options for High School Assessment

BALTIMORE, MD (January 28, 1997) -- The Maryland State Board of Education today began to consider four possible designs to use for Maryland's planned High School Assessment, as well as other options to incorporate into the challenging tests before they are administered to students as part of high school graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2004.

The State Board is expected to take action on the designs next month, as well as a series of questions that will determine the final shape and philosophy of the proposed High School Assessments. The Board is scheduled to decide these questions at its February 25-26 meeting.

The High School Assessment exams first were proposed in July 1995 as a series of end-of-course tests covering the core learning areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The assessment is an extension of the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program in grades 3, 5, and 8 used to determine the performance levels of individual schools. The High School Assessment, however, would likely focus on individual student performance as well as provide valuable information for school improvement planning.

Unlike the Maryland Functional Tests, which measure minimum competency among high school students in six subject areas, the High School Assessment would be designed to be more rigorous and meaningful to students and thus better prepare them for the variety of challenges they will encounter in life and in their careers. As the High School Assessments come on line beginning with the Class of 2004, the Functional Tests are scheduled to be gradually phased out.

Since their inception, the assessment tests have been the focus of a 35-member task force and the subject of dozens of public meetings across the state held to gather feedback from parents, teachers, students, and others involved in developing the tests. The results of those meetings were also reported today to the State Board.

More than 1,800 people attended more than 40 meetings to discuss the High School Assessments. Among the issues raised by the public, educators, and others included the

— More —

High School Assessments

Page 2

importance of high academic standards, how the assessment would be used, how the tests would be administered, and alternatives to the tests for students who do not successfully complete them.

"The complexity and volume of decisions that must be made on these questions and others about the High School Assessment demand that we proceed with caution and common sense," said Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. "The intent of the Board and of the Department is to create assessments that are fair, challenging, and meaningful for every high school student in Maryland."

Among the questions the Board was requested to consider and resolve next month are issues such as whether passing the exams would be a prerequisite for graduation, the number of tests to be developed, and whether it would be acceptable to have three annual test administrations with make-up sessions for each tests for those students who do not pass on the first attempt.

"These are among the most important and far-reaching deliberations and decisions this Board will likely ever make," said Christopher T. Cross, President of the Maryland State Board of Education. "There will be a lot of thought and reflection that will go into these decisions so that we may be assured of a plan that will truly challenge all our students and help each of them to reach their full potential."

The test options were designed with assistance from the College Board / Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., a group noted for its administration of the widely-used Scholastic Achievement Tests. The CB/ETS report on design options for the High School Assessment outlined four proposed test designs for the Board's consideration:

- **Portfolio Plus:** A year-long portfolio of student work would be scored by a classroom teacher and combined with a 2-3 hour assessment scored centrally.
- **Preparation Plus:** This assessment would draw upon common learning experiences in a 2-3 hour standardized assessment involving "real-world" applications.
- **Combination:** Students would be asked during a 2-3 hour assessment to use documents, laboratory results, or other tools to answer a series of constructed-response questions.
- **Limited Combination:** This assessment type would use challenging machine-scorable questions and answers in a 2-3 hour test.

Should the Board choose a design option and complete its series of decisions in February, the State Department of Education is scheduled to begin accepting proposals from bidders for test development in April. At the same time, MSDE will begin working more intently with local school systems to determine what they need, such as training, instructional adjustments, etc., in order to prepare for the High School Assessments.

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MARYLAND PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING K-16

Maryland State Department of Education  Maryland Higher Education Commission  University of Maryland Systems
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MARYLAND K-16 PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT

The K-16 Partnership is a bold departure from traditional education reform, heralding a new and substantive collaboration among leaders in the business community, K-16 education, and local and state government. This unprecedented alliance is critical to the creation of a new community of learning that strives for all of its members to achieve the highest levels of excellence throughout all levels of education and in the workplace. Building on the reforms inaugurated by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission, this new Partnership derives its strength from the diversity of its members, who bring to the Partnership their unique perspectives, expertise, resources, and needs.

Schools must have the high standards needed for our students to develop and adapt to an increasingly technological world, preparing all students for work and life-long learning. Higher education must take seriously its obligation to educate new teachers who have the knowledge, skill, and confidence to teach in tomorrow's classrooms, and together in partnership with local school systems engage in the continuous professional development of teachers. General education experiences in higher education institutions must prepare our future leaders by instilling an understanding of technology, an appreciation of the arts and humanities, and a profound respect for diversity. Academic majors must link requirements with career expectations. Businesses must be engaged in the development of standards and curriculum throughout K-16 education that give students the knowledge and capability they will need to adapt to a workplace that is changing at an extraordinary rate, and provide meaningful jobs that enable students to use these skills. Businesses must instill and affirm an ethic of life-long learning in their workforce and actively support their employees in their educational goals. State and local government officials must thoughtfully allocate resources to ensure that they are used in the most effective way possible to achieve these goals, and remove policy and legal barriers to the collaborations necessary to attain them. Further, all must bear responsibility for ensuring that our students are prepared to accept their responsibilities as citizens—as active participants in the social, cultural, and political life of our State, nation, and world.

The success of the Partnership also depends on necessary change, significant improvement, and constant assessment. Standards at every level must retain rigor and relevance. Assessments must be developed to provide meaningful evaluations of student performance and to evaluate how well students are supported in their efforts to meet these standards. The Partnership will address and develop strategies for strengthening K-16 standards, competencies, and assessments, the professional development of teachers, and community engagement in the K-16 initiative.

Acting individually, these partners could not achieve any of these goals. Each is an essential and equally important contributor to the Partnership. Further, nothing can be done without the active support and engagement of the community at large and parents in particular. The most critical task of the Partnership is to foster opportunities for members to establish comprehensive and substantive collaborations that enable all stakeholders to engage in the far-reaching changes needed in our education system. The Partnership will enable the State of Maryland to create an educational system that gives its citizens the skills they will need to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

**Council for Basic Education**Christopher T. Cross
President**CBE Fax Cover Sheet**To: MIKE COHENDate: 2/12

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The Education Beat

Md. doesn't need to add achievement standards

■ **Testing President Clinton's call for national standards would give Maryland students another layer of tests they don't need.**

By MIKE BOWLER
SUN STAFF

BOB SOMERBY, a Baltimore comedian, is one of the few people on the planet who makes a living telling jokes. But Somerby is deadly serious about education. He taught fifth grade in Baltimore for a dozen years and knows something about the multiple problems facing city schools. One of them is not a lack of standards, Somerby believes. President Clinton's call for "national" standards is a joke, he says. And Somerby knows from jokes.

He also makes a good point. There is no shortage of education standards in Maryland, or in Baltimore. Nor is there a shortage of tests to measure how far students are from meeting the standards. In embracing the president's call for national fourth- and eighth-grade tests in reading and mathematics, Maryland education officials have committed the schools to still another layer of testing on top of the thick sediment already in place.

In Baltimore, this will make another major test — the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program exams required by the state, the Baltimore Quarterly Assessment (a MSPAP-like test launched last fall without consultation with teachers) and now the new national tests.

Let us count three ways this is a bad idea:

■ The majority of states have standards for student

achievement. Maryland's MSPAP, as Clinton said Monday in Annapolis, is held up as a national model. It's true that the states' standards are dramatically different from one another. A national "report card" issued a couple of weeks ago by the trade publication *Education Week* made that clear, but that's to be expected in a nation in which education is so deliberately decentralized.

■ We already have a National Assessment of Educational Progress — or lack of it. It's almost 30 years old. It tests reading and math and other disciplines and allows states to compare themselves with one another. Forty-five states participate. The results, issued periodically, are always dismal. For example, Maine had the best score in the nation on the 1994 NAEP fourth-grade reading test, yet 59 percent of its fourth-graders could not read proficiently.

Here's a sample problem from the NAEP eighth-grade math test, on which 80 percent of Maryland 13-year-olds could not demonstrate proficiency two years ago: Tracy said, "I can multiply 6 by another number and get an answer that is smaller than 6." Pat said, "No, you can't. Multiplying 6 by another number always makes the number 6 or larger." Who is correct? Give a reason for your answer.

If four-fifths of Maryland eighth-graders aren't able to discern that Tracy is correct, is the solution to set the bar still higher? Isn't the solution to teach youngsters to multiply at a younger age than 13?

■ Math is probably the easiest field in which to set standards and perhaps the only one in which it would be possible to get agreement on a set of national goals. (The mathematicians already have agreed on common standards.) NAEP has managed to avoid controversy by making state participation voluntary

(which Clinton says his tests also will be) and by allowing score comparisons only at the state level. There's huge disagreement on standards in fields other than mathematics, as the historians proved in trying to set history standards a couple of years ago. Why waste the time and money?

This isn't to say that the federal government has no legitimate role in helping schools. But why not assist students in meeting the standards that are already in place? There's no need for a "national test testing the standards," as the chief standard-bearer put it in Annapolis on Monday.

State's two oldest colleges busy celebrating debating

Washington College in Chestertown and St. John's College in Annapolis vie for the title of the oldest college in Maryland. It's a debate over semantics, really, and only a fool would choose sides.

What's happening at the state's oldest colleges? Washington is celebrating its namesake and sponsor on his birthday Feb. 22 with a convocation and awards for National Endowment for the Arts Chairwoman Jane Alexander, painter James Wyeth and Alonzo G. Decker Jr., retired Black & Decker Corp. chief executive officer.

St. John's is debating the addition of female writers to its canon of Great Books. A 1953 graduate writes in the winter edition of the school's always informative newsletter that though he is an admirer of Emily Dickinson, "I simply cannot imagine putting her on the same level as John Donne."

Among the favorites for Great Books inclusion: Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex," Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" and work by Virginia Woolf.

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