



## Maryland High School Assessment (HSA)

*If You Do Not SIT and PASS the HSAs, You Do Not WALK at Graduation.  
Don't Get Left Behind!*

*According to the 2008 Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) results, 76 percent of seniors, who have taken all four HSAs, have passed in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). Overall, 65 percent of PGCPS students in the Class of 2009 fulfilled the state's testing requirements for graduation prior to the October 2008 test administration.*

*If a student has not completed one or more HSA exams, they should speak to a professional school counselor about participating in the January and April 2009 HSA testing opportunities in order to graduate on time. If you miss an HSA exam, make-up dates are scheduled in January and April as well.*

### **What are the Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs)?**

The HSAs are tests in four core subjects: English, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology. Students take each test whenever they complete the course. For example, some students may take algebra in seventh grade, while others may not take it until 10th grade.

The tests contain multiple-choice questions and questions requiring written responses. These questions are based on the content outlined in Maryland's Core Learning Goals. More information on the Core Learning Goals and sample test questions are available on the Web at [http://mdk12.org/assessments/high\\_school/](http://mdk12.org/assessments/high_school/).

### **What is the Maryland testing requirement?**

For a student who entered the 9th grade in or after the 2005-06 school year to graduate from high school with a Maryland High School Diploma, he/she must meet the a testing requirement as well as meet the State course requirements, service learning requirements, and local graduation requirements.

### **How can a student meet the testing requirement?**

There are three options to meeting the testing requirement, as follows:

- 1. Pass each of the four High School Assessment (HSA) tests** - algebra/data analysis, English, biology, and government. These tests are generally taken in the 9th and 10th grades. There are two potential substitutions:
  - Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Tests - For students who have earned a score approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the HSA-related AP or IB test.
  - Modified HSA - An alternative test for students with disabilities who meet the specific participation criteria based on their IEP process.
  - If a student does not pass an HSA, they should contact a school counselor immediately about extended learning/tutoring opportunities during and after the school day to prepare for the next HSA testing opportunity.



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- 2. Combined-Score Option** - A student would need to earn a combined total of 1602 points across the four exams to meet the testing requirement. This option allows students to offset lower performance on one test with higher performance on another.
- 3. Bridge Plan for Academic Validation** - A student who has not passed an HSA after taking the test twice and participating in a PGCPs extended learning/tutoring program, can complete one or more project modules in the content area. The projects modules will be submitted to a local review panel and the local superintendent for approval.

### **What criteria will a student have to meet to be eligible for the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?**

A student who has not passed an HSA test after two attempts would be eligible for the Bridge Plan if he/she:

- participated in a PGCPs extended learning/tutoring program;
- passed the HSA-related course;
- is making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

### **When can a student begin the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?**

Local school systems determine when a student may begin work on a Bridge Plan.

### **Will the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation be easier than taking an HSA test?**

No. The Bridge Plan is a series of challenging projects linked to the Core Learning Goals tested by each HSA. Once a student is deemed eligible by the local school system to participate in the Bridge Plan, he/she must complete one or more projects as determined by the student's highest HSA score in a specific content area.

### **What happens once a student is eligible for the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation?**

A designated school staff member will meet with the student and parent/guardian to design an Academic Validation Project Package. The Academic Validation Project Package includes a number of forms that indicate which project module(s) the student must complete, the assigned work period, and the assigned project monitor. The forms also verify that the student's Academic Validation Project Package will meet the core values of academic integrity.

### **Who will review and approve the individual student project?**

Once a student completes his/her Academic Validation Project Package, a local review panel, established by the local school system, will review the materials and provide a recommendation to the local superintendent. The local superintendent will conduct a final review for approval or refusal of the student's work.

### **How does the local superintendent's decision effect the student?**

If the Academic Validation Project Package is approved, the student will have met the testing requirement for the specific HSA. If the Academic Validation Project Package is refused, written feedback will be provided to the student so he/she can continue work on the Project Package and resubmit at a later date. A student can also submit an appeal of a local superintendent's refusal in writing to the State Superintendent.

### **Are there alternative paths to meeting the testing graduation requirement?**

Yes. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recognizes that Maryland has a diverse population of students with diverse needs. The Modified HSAs (Mod-HSAs) are being developed for a small portion of students with disabilities. The Mod-HSAs are based on the same course content as the HSAs, but the question format may be altered. The Mod-HSAs will be given for the first time in May 2008.

To earn a Maryland High School Diploma, students must still meet all credit, service learning, and attendance requirements as well as any local school system requirements. A summary of state graduation requirements is available on the Maryland State Department of Education Web site at

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa/>.