

TOP 10 THINGS

Parents Need To Know About the HSAs

1. Be informed

To graduate with a Maryland High School Diploma, students must meet all State course, service-learning, and testing (HSA) requirements as well as all local school system graduation requirements. Ask your child's school counselor about the specific high school graduation requirements and begin to develop an academic plan for your student.

2. Four Core Tests

The four HSA tests – algebra/data analysis, biology, English, and government – are based on the Core Learning Goals, which clearly outline course content and learning objectives for each content area. The content covered in HSA-related courses and on an HSA test is a basic level of knowledge that will be built on as a student continues his/her education.

3. Know the Score

Passing scores for the four HSA content areas are:

Algebra/Data Analysis: 412
Biology: 400
English: 396
Government: 394

A student who earns a state-approved score on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) test does not have to take the HSA in the related subject. The student will receive the passing score for the content area.

Scores are mailed to the local school system (LSS) 6 weeks after the test was taken. The LSS then sends the individual student scores to the schools. The schools are responsible for sending students' scores to the parent/guardian. Contact your child's school if you do not receive his/her HSA scores in a timely manner.

4. Know the Plan

Each local school system has a plan of when HSA-related courses are typically offered to students. The school counselor can help plan a course of study for your child to graduate from high school as well as help prepare him/her for the future.

5. Know the Options

There are a number of options to meeting the testing requirement for graduation which include:

1. Passing all four HSA tests (see #3);
2. Earning a combined score of 1602 on the four HSA tests (*The Combined-Score Option allows students to offset a lower score on one HSA test with higher score on another HSA test.*); OR
3. Using the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation (*Students who have failed an HSA twice and meet the eligibility criteria complete one or more projects in the HSA content area. The school counselor can provide more information about the Bridge Plan or go to the program website at HSAexam.org.*)



Maryland High School Assessments
Algebra/Data Analysis • Government • Biology • English

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7. Help at School

Students who do not pass one or more HSAs must be offered locally-administered or approved assistance.

Each school system has developed strategies for providing assistance, which could include sample test reviews, tutoring, or after-school or Saturday instruction. The school determines what assistance will be provided to students.

There are also a number of tools in the Resources section of HSAexam.org, including the Online HSA Course for Parents and sample HSA tests.

A student who is considering the Bridge Plan for a specific HSA test is required to participate in locally-administered or approved assistance and retake the test a second time. The student is responsible for taking advantage of the assistance to help prepare for retesting.

9. Know Your Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) details the rights parents have access to their children's education records. Your child's school counselor can provide specific information about FERPA.

Nancy S. Grasmick, *State Superintendent of Schools*

Martin O'Malley, *Governor*

James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr, *President*
State Board of Education

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
MarylandPublicSchools.org

6. Students with Accommodations

Students with disabilities are entitled to receive both instructional and testing accommodations as outlined in his/her IEP. If you have questions about your child's accommodations for an HSA or Mod-HSA test, or the Bridge Plan, contact your child's teacher or IEP team.

The Mod-HSA is an alternative test for students with an IEP who meet specific participation criteria. A student with an IEP who has taken and failed the HSA once may have the opportunity to take the Mod-HSA if approved by the school.

8. Take and Retake

The HSAs are given in October, January, May, and July/August. A special, seniors-only administration will be given in April.

Students can retake an HSA as many times as necessary to earn either a passing score or a score high enough to allow them to use the Combined-Score Option (*see #5*).

Students who do not pass one or more HSAs must be offered locally-administered or approved assistance (*see #7*).

10. Additional HSA Information

Information about the HSAs and the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation can be found on the Internet at:

HSAexam.org

For specific answers to an HSA question, call

1-877-472-HSAExam (3926)

or

410-333-6442 (TTY)

for the hearing impaired.