



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: February 23, 2021
SUBJECT: State Assessments for Spring 2021

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this presentation is to provide updated information on the administration of the State Assessments for spring 2021. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is recommending an adjusted schedule that includes administering *only* the mathematics and English language arts assessments for grades 3-8 and high school.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states and districts to ensure that all students graduate high school ready for college and career. To measure progress against that goal, states must administer annual statewide assessments to identified students.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaassessmentfactsheet1207.pdf>

The data from state assessments can help educational leaders understand how to support curricular training and implementation, identify achievement gaps and where interventions are needed, and direct instructional support to schools. For families, assessment results can identify areas of concern or provide confirmation that a student is on track and progressing appropriately.

The purpose of assessment has always been to know:

- the effectiveness of instruction,
- how students are progressing, and
- where learning gaps exist.

Now, more than ever, information about student's understanding is essential.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a unique challenge for classroom instruction as most students have spent a significant portion of the 2020-2021 school year in remote learning. We are aware of the need to make data driven decisions about instruction and resource allocation moving forward. Federally, we are required to administer statewide assessments to provide this data.

The MSDE understands the challenges that schools face as we return to in-person hybrid instruction. Utilizing classroom instructional time is a priority as well as gathering reliable information on student learning and gaps in understanding. To assist in minimizing the time dedicated to assessment, the MSDE is prioritizing the core contents of English language arts and mathematics to provide the needed information to guide educational leaders and families in understanding where students are academically in light of the mixed modes of instruction this school year.

The assessments administered tie directly to our statewide content standards and will provide quick turnaround (48 hours or less) data that teachers and administrators can use to inform instructional direction and movement forward.

Guidance provided by national experts recommends that school systems test later in the year to maximize the learning time before the assessments are administered. They also recommend that the assessment windows should be extended to accommodate testing in smaller groups and to take into consideration possible limited technology availability. The MSDE testing calendar has been modified to accomplish both.

ACTION:

To request state board approval of the revised spring 2021 Maryland State Assessment schedule to include the administration *only* of the mathematics and English language arts assessments for grades 3-8 and high school.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment I – State Assessments for Spring 2021, Power Point



MARYLAND STATE
Department of Education

State Assessments for Spring 2021

State Board Meeting
February 23, 2021



Need for Assessment

The purpose of assessment has always been to know:

- the effectiveness of instruction,
- how students are progressing, and
- where learning gaps exist.

<https://www.educationnext.org/assessment-data-can-help-us-build-back-better-forum-statewide-assessments-2021/>

Delink Assessment and Accountability

We must temporarily delink assessment from accountability and find creative solutions to the challenge of administering assessments during the pandemic.

Benefit for Educators and Families

School leaders need a standards-aligned look at how their students are doing.

These data help educators better understand how to support instruction by:

- identifying where deep instructional interventions are needed, and
- directing educator expertise to schools and classrooms in need.

For Families -

- Parents and guardians deserve a reliable, timely lens into how their child is mastering grade-level skills.
- Assessment results can flag areas of concern or provide confirmation that students are progressing as expected.

Testing During a Pandemic

Leading experts say:

- State education agencies should allow school systems to test later in the year than they normally would to maximize learning time.
- Extend testing windows to accommodate smaller groups or limited technology.

Maryland has done both.

https://www.nciea.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/CCSSO_RR_Alt_Approach_State_Test_2021_0.pdf

Administration for Spring 2021

Students will test *only* in mathematics and English language arts (ELA).

- The testing windows have been extended out through June 4, 2021.

Allowable time for these assessments:

- 2.6 hours for math
- 4.6 hours for ELA (longer due to writing component)

School systems have flexibility in setting up testing times.

- 1 or more sections may be administered on a testing day allowing for regular instruction to take place on all testing days

Sample Text – Grade 5 ELA

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Two Places to Call Home

by Jody Kapp

- 1 Goodbye, bedroom, cozy and small. Goodbye, picture books and stuffed animals. Today I'm going home, to the place my family comes from.
- 2 Mama and I are going to Ghana. Ghana is a small country on the west coast of Africa. It is where my mother was born. This will be my first time meeting my grandmother and grandfather and my first time flying on an airplane!
- 3 Up, up we go, sailing high over the Atlantic Ocean. Outside my small window the bright blue water slowly disappears under a carpet of fluffy white clouds. The airline attendants push carts of pretzels and drinks up and down the tiny aisles. They give us bags of sweet-smelling lotion, eye masks to help us sleep on the long flight, and headphones. When I plug the headphones into the special arm of my seat, I hear music playing—a symphony above the clouds.
- 4 Slowly we land in the night. My mother and I step out and breathe in our country. As the warm, moist air greets us, Mama sighs, “Ah, what sweetness!”
- 5 We climb aboard a rickety old bus and travel to my grandparents' home. The dust from the road swirls up through the open windows and dances around our heads. Grandfather is waiting for us outside the cattle fence. He calls out to me, “Tall boy, you've grown faster than the trees in my yard.”

Sample Test Question – Grade 5 ELA

What is the meaning of the phrase **breathe in our country** as it is used in paragraph 4?

- A. to smell the air near the airplane
- B. to take a break after the long trip
- C. to experience their surroundings
- D. to clear the dust from their faces

Sample Test Question - Grade 5 Math

Daniel used plastic bricks to build 200 figures in 5 hours.

- He built 60 figures during the first hour and 50 figures during the second hour.
- During the first two hours, he used 3 bricks to build each figure.
- During each additional hour, Daniel used 4 bricks to build each figure.

Which **three** questions can be answered using the given information?

Select the **three** correct answers.

- A** How many figures did Daniel build using 4 bricks?
- B** How many bricks did Daniel use during the fifth hour?
- C** How many bricks did Daniel use during the second hour?
- D** During which hour did Daniel build the greatest number of figures?
- E** What is the total number of bricks Daniel used to build all the figures?

Quick Turnaround Scoring

The Spring 2021 assessments will have a quick turnaround score reporting feature.

- All machine-scored item scores will be available **within 48 hours** of test completion.
- As the hand-scored items are scored, the tool will update in real time until the full assessment is scored.
- Scaled scores and levels will be available in fall of 2021 after standard setting.

Thank you