




Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

To: Members of the State Board of Education
From: Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools 
Date: December 6, 2022
Subject: Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program Cut Points Achievement Standards Adoption

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to request that the State Board adopt the cut scores and achievement standards for the following state assessments in the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP): English Language Arts (ELA) 3-8 and English 10, mathematics 3-8, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry, high school Life Science Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (LS MISA), and high school government. Maryland’s cut scores and achievement standards, once established, will place student test scores into the Performance Levels of Distinguished Learner, Proficient Learner, Developing Learner, or Beginning Learner.

Background/Historical Perspective

Every Student Succeeds Act State assessment requirements

The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) provides information to families, educators and the public on the academic progress students are making towards mastery of the Maryland content standards and fulfills federal and state assessment requirements.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to assess students annually in grades 3-8 and once in high school in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Each state is required to administer academic content assessments aligned to academic content standards and report on student results using at least three achievement standards. Each assessment used for federal accountability must go through a federal Peer Review after the first year of a new assessment administration.

Maryland assessment requirements

The State Board and the State Superintendent shall implement an assessment program in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies. The assessment program, administered annually, provides information on the educational progress made at the school, local education agency and state levels, and provides information on the learning gains of students and academic mastery of the skills and knowledge of the State’s curricula (Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-203 (West)).

Standard Setting Process

During the summer and fall of 2022, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Assessment convened panels of teachers to participate in standard setting for the assessments. The panelists were Maryland

teachers, instructional specialists/coaches, and administrators. Expert psychometricians trained panelists on using a modified Angoff method to make judgments about the number of points that a student would need to earn to achieve a specific achievement standard.

Panelists experienced the test items as a student would and then developed a collective definition of a “borderline” student. Panelists participated in three (3) rounds of judgments and were provided with additional information after the rounds to inform their decisions including item difficulty data (the percentage of test takers who achieved each score point), and impact data to show how their current judgments would reflect in the percentage performing at each Performance Level. The final step in the process was vertical articulation to ensure that cut scores made sense between grades.

Executive Summary

MCAP achievement standards

The recommendations by the standard setting panelists were reviewed by MSDE staff and cut scores and achievement standards have been determined for use in federal and state reporting of assessments.

Action

Request adoption of the new cut scores and achievement standards for the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program.