

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

MARYLAND

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The Maryland State Assessment System

The Maryland State Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) has long been the established testing system in the state, along with CTBS-5, a norm referenced test. The process of moving from the Functional Tests to a High School Assessment is currently underway.

• ***Grade Levels and Subjects Tested***

MSPAP: Grades 3, 5, 8 are tested in Reading, Math, Writing, Language Usage, Science, and Social Studies

Functional Tests/High School Assessment (H.S.A): The Functional tests that have been in place will be eliminated for students entering the 9th grade in the fall of 2001. The test will be replaced with the H.S.A., a series of end-of-course tests that will cover English, Math, Science and Social Studies:

- English: 3 Exams to end English 1, 2, and 3
- Math: 2 Exams to end Algebra/Data analysis and probability and Geometry
- Science: 2 Exams for 2 of the following areas: Earth/Space Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- Social Studies: 3 Exams to end US History, World History, Government

These 12 tests will be phased in over a period of years, with Phase 1 in the fall of 2001. Students will be required to pass three tests: one in English, one in Algebra or Geometry, and one in Government in order to graduate. A test in Biology may also be required at the discretion of local districts. The SBE will decide when other tests should be implemented.

CTBS-5: tests grades 2,4,6 in basic skills.

- ***Norm or Criterion Referenced***
 1. **MSPAP and H.S.A.** are criterion referenced in connection with the Maryland Learning Outcomes.
 2. **CTBS-5** is norm referenced.
- ***Matrix or Census Testing***
 1. **MSPAP:** matrix sample-each student takes only one-third of the grade level assessment
 2. **H.S.A.:** census testing
 3. **CTBS-5:** census testing
- ***Item Types***
 1. **MSPAP:** Performance Tasks
 2. **H.S.A.:** Still in Development
 3. **CTBS-5:** Multiple Choice

- ***Student Performance Levels***

The MSPAP was designed to produce performance information about schools and not individual students. However, five proficiency levels exist to report results, with 1 as the highest and 5 as the lowest. 3 was determined to be the satisfactory or proficient score. Individual student scale scores in the six MSPAP content areas are reliable and valid for determining general levels of school performance on MSPAP. However, these scores were not meant to be used in making decisions for individual students (e.g., placement in special instructional programs) and are not adequately reliable and valid for individual student use “under any circumstances.”

- ***Inclusion Policies***

State policy is to include all students to the fullest extent possible. Maryland recognizes five categories of accommodations:

- scheduling
- setting
- equipment
- presentation
- response.

MSPAP allows 31 accommodations for students with IEPs or who have limited English proficiency. Accommodations must have been operational during the school year as part of instruction.

Students with disabilities may be exempted from MSPAP if:

- the Maryland Learning Outcomes are not the instructional outcomes for the student - the IEP then drives outcomes
- the student is LEP. ESL/LEP students may be exempted **once** after determination that they do not meet locally established guidelines for the minimum language proficiency required for MSPAP
- the student has been accommodated to the point that the accommodation renders the test invalid

- the student has been excused prior to the test due to the potentially harmful impact of the test on that student. A student may be excused during a test if s/he demonstrates extreme frustration, disrupts others, becomes ill, etc.
- a student has transferred to the school from out-of-state or from a non-public school less than 91 days before the test.

- ***Other Assessment Systems***

Maryland piloted a Braille version of the MSPAP grade 5 tests, and there is a Braille version of the functional tests. The state is developing an alternative assessment for students with disabilities who are exempt from the MSPAP.

- ***State requirements for Local Assessment***

No such requirements exist.

Performance Data

- ***What data are reported?***

Information is provided on results in: the state Functional Tests/(H.S.A.), MSPAP, attendance, dropout rates, and high school completion.

The Maryland School Performance Report is released in 2 parts:

1. state and school systems (districts) - published by MSDE
2. school systems and schools - published by the LEA.

Data includes information in the following areas:

- (MSPAP) for grades 3, 5, and 8.
- Maryland Functional Testing Program status for grades 9 and 11.
- Attendance.
- Dropout rate for grades 9 - 12.
- Enrollment.
- Students receiving special services.
- Student mobility.
- High school program completion.
- Grade 12 documented decisions.
- Other factors (wealth per pupil, per pupil expenditures, staff per 1,000 pupils, length of school day, length of school year).
- Gifted and talented student information.

Exempted ESL and students with disabilities are not included in the denominator when calculating the school's MSPAP scores.

- ***How are the data distributed?***

Maryland School Performance Reports (MSPR) are published each December and present state, school and district level performance data and show whether or not schools have met the standards. This report is also available on the Internet.

- ***How are the data disaggregated?***

By gender and race/ethnicity.

State and District Accountability Systems and the Federal Role – 6/2000

The Maryland State Accountability System

Accountability in Maryland is based on the School Performance Index (SPI) and schools as well as students are held accountable.

- ***Student Accountability***

Students must pass the Functional Tests/High School Assessment (H.S.A.) in order to graduate. They are not held accountable for performance on the MSPAP or the CTBS-5.

- ***School Accountability***

School performance is measured by the Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) indicators: MSPAP, Functional Tests (soon to be H.S.A.), attendance rates, dropout rates, and high school completion rates. The state's accountability goals for schools include:

- (a) MSPAP: to have 70% of students at or above satisfactory performance level 3 on each subject area (mathematics, science, social studies, reading, writing, and language usage) by the year 2000; schools will be considered excellent if 25% of students have reached level 2 or better;
- (b) Maryland Functional Tests (until H.S.A. is in place): to have 90% on all four tests; schools will be considered excellent if 96% pass all four tests;
- (c) Attendance Rates: 94% is satisfactory, 96% is excellent;
- (d) Dropout Rates in 9-12: 3% is satisfactory; 1.25% is excellent.

The **School Performance Index (SPI)** is used to measure school progress relative to where they were 3 years prior. SPI is a weighted average of a school's relative distance from the satisfactory standards. The SPI is calculated by dividing the school's performance on those indices by the state standard. Change is determined by comparing the SPI for the current year against the average performance (SPI) of the previous 2 years. If the school is "far below" standard it is eligible for reconstitution.

Specifically, the SPI for the MSPAP Content Areas is the percent of students at proficient levels 1,2, and 3, combined for each content area at the school level divided by the standard, 70%.

The variables included in the SPI are slightly different for each level:

- High School—attendance, drop out rates, composite results of 9th and 11th grade Functional tests.
- Middle School—attendance, Functional tests taken in middle school, MSPAP 8th grade test
- Elementary School—attendance and 3rd and 5th grade MSPAP.

Schools achieving above the satisfactory standard will have an SPI of more than 100, and schools achieving exactly at the satisfactory level will have an SPI equal to 100.

All schools must show "substantial and sustained" progress toward the state performance standards as calculated by the SPI to make adequate yearly progress.

Sanctions and Rewards

Schools may be listed as in Program Improvement, Reconstitution-Eligible or may potentially become reconstituted. Currently, Maryland identifies the poorest performing schools and pulls

from that list only those that have a declining SPI to become reconstitution-eligible. The SPI cutoff points are adjustable. Schools identified as reconstitution-eligible must file a transition plan with the SBE describing their long-term plan for improvement.

The School Performance Recognition Program is a program to recognize and reward elementary and middle schools that are making substantial and sustained progress toward achieving state standards for school performance. Schools selected to receive monetary awards of up to \$64,600 must fulfill one of the following three criteria:

- show statistically significant SPI gains for two consecutive years.
- make consistent SPI improvement for three consecutive years with significant improvement in the most current year.
- Attain an SPI of 100 in the most current year, with three consecutive years of improvement.

The school improvement team in each school that receives an award will determine the use of the funds. It is expected that many schools will use the funds for instructional materials, computers or other technology, staff development, improvement planning, and similar purposes related to continuing the progress in student learning. The funds may not be used to give bonuses or extra pay to staff or to supplant or replace other federal, state, or local funds available to the school.

- ***District Accountability***

The district level definition for adequate yearly progress has not yet been established; it must be defined by 2000. However, districts housing reconstitution-eligible schools must identify school-specific problems and outline steps that the school and district will take.

- ***Subgroup Performance as an Indicator***

The state task force on multiculturalism recommended that recognition and rewards take into account the results of subgroup performance. Procedures for identifying rewards schools are being amended to address this issue.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools

- ***Identification***

Schools not making adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified as program improvement schools. The state first notifies the district which schools are not making progress. The district is asked to identify those schools for program improvement as a means of verification with the state. A district may elect to challenge the finding that a school is not making adequate yearly progress, if they can provide a justification. Very few districts chose to challenge the state in the identification of the school. If the district and school actions that follow do not improve the school's achievement, a school can become reconstitution-eligible. That determination is made between the state superintendent and the district superintendent, with the state holding final determination on reconstitution eligibility.

Districts also determine which of their **Title I** schools are program improvement (PI) schools. They base this decision on the (SPI) *as well as additional local criteria* (if they choose). If a school is both Title I and either reconstitution-eligible or a Challenge School (a school that is struggling to make progress toward the state standards), it will fall into Title I program improvement. These schools must identify how they will use Title I resources in their state-mandated school improvement plan (while meeting the requirements of the Title I law, such as

10 percent for professional development). Personnel from the MSDE's Compensatory Education division review reconstitution-eligible and Challenge schools' school improvement plans.

- ***Assistance***

The lowest performing schools are provided with support to help them meet state standards:

- School Improvement Team Training
- The Carnegie Middle Schools Project: provides funds to 10 middle schools for reform
- The Challenge School Program: assists low performing schools to reach state standards
- School Reconstitution: reconstitution eligible schools become eligible for additional resources from the state.

Maryland is using both Title I and state comprehensive education funds to target schools with the highest concentration of poverty.

1. The **State Compensatory Education (SCE)** program is dedicated to improving and upgrading programs in Title I schools, but this is available to all schools.
2. The **Targeted Poverty Grant Program** (I is available to all districts and II which is available to all districts except BCPS), established in 1994, provides an additional \$8 million to schools with the highest concentrations of poverty (FY97). Funds from both of these programs are used in coordination with Title I funding to increase the capacity of local school systems to help high poverty schools meet state performance standards.
3. The state's **Extended Elementary Education Programs (EEEP)** for four-year old children are also located in Title I schools.
4. The **School Accountability Funding for Excellence (SAFE)** program, a targeted improvement grant resource, is also providing funds and acting as an umbrella program for other funding systems (Title I, CSRD).

- ***Who provides the assistance?***

Both the state and the districts provide assistance.

- ***Does support to Title I schools differ?***

Distinguished educators provide technical assistance to Title 1 schools, and the Blue Ribbon Schools Project is a state sponsored program in which high-achieving schools are paired with Title 1 schools.

Alignment of the State Accountability System and Title I

State and federal assessment and accountability policies are closely aligned in Maryland.

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