



# High School Improvement Update

April 2006

Welcome to a new edition of *High School Improvement Update*, a newsletter for principals from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Inside this issue is information on the Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) administration dates and scoring (pp.1-2), state supports for intervention/remediation (pp.3-4), and graduation questions and answers (pp.5-6).

## Upcoming HSA Administrations

The official state assessment calendar through 2009-2010 is accessible through MSDE’s HSA Web page: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa/>. Dates for the remaining 2006 administrations are below.

### May Primary Admin.—May 22–25

- 5/22—English
- 5/23—Algebra/Data Analysis
- 5/24—Government
- 5/25—Biology

### May Makeup Window—May 30–31, June 2, 5–8

- 5/30—English
- 5/31—Algebra/Data Analysis
- 6/01—Government
- 6/02—Biology
- 6/05—English
- 6/06—Algebra/Data Analysis
- 6/07—Government
- 6/08—Biology

### Summer Admin. 1—July 24–28

- 7/24— Algebra/Data Analysis
- 7/25—English
- 7/26—Government
- 7/27—Biology
- 7/28—Makeups of all contents

### Summer Admin. 2—July 31–August 4

- 7/31—Algebra/Data Analysis
- 8/01—English
- 8/02—Government
- 8/03—Biology
- 8/04—Makeups of all contents

## Reporting HSA Scores

MSDE’s goal is for the test vendor to return scores—including individual student score labels—to school systems within 9 weeks of testing. The school system’s central office then forwards those scores to schools. Scores from the May 2006 administration should be returned to local school systems by mid-August or earlier. On the next page is a basic overview on how HSA scores are reported. Keep this overview handy and make copies to share with interested staff.

## HSA Passing/Minimum Scores

High School Assessment				
Content	Minimum Score	Passing Score	Proficient Score	Advanced Score
Algebra	402	412	412	450
Biology	391	400		
English 2	386	396	396	429
Government	387	394		
<b>Total Combined Score Option</b>		<b>1602</b>		

- The operational scale for all HSAs is 240 to 650.
- Students using the Combined Score Option must earn at least the minimum scale scores and the Total Combined Score of 1602.
- Proficient and Advanced scores were established only for Algebra and English because these are the only HSAs used to measure Adequate Yearly Progress as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. NCLB requires that test performance be reported as basic, proficient, or advanced.

## HSA Subtest Scores

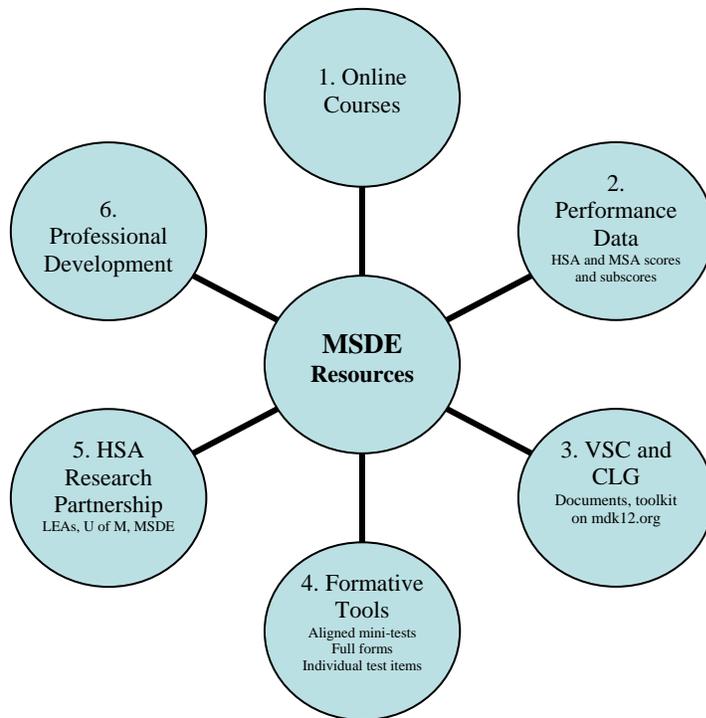
MSDE began producing subtest scores in 2004. Subtest scores are a breakdown of student performance on different test sections. State and school system subtest scores are available at [www.mdk12.org/data/hsa/index.asp](http://www.mdk12.org/data/hsa/index.asp). (After navigating to your school's information, go to Analyze Data/How did students perform on specific content standards?) Subtest scores for individual students are sent to school systems and should be made available to parents upon request. When reviewing subtest scores, keep in mind that they are produced based on fewer test questions than the overall test score, and therefore are not as statistically reliable as the overall test score.

High School Assessment Subtests	
<b>English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading and Responding to Literature</li> <li>▪ Composing Skills</li> <li>▪ Controlling Written Language</li> <li>▪ Evaluating Language Use and Content of Texts</li> </ul>
<b>Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skills and Processes of Biology</li> <li>▪ Structure and Function of Biological Molecules</li> <li>▪ Structure and Function of Cells and Organisms</li> <li>▪ Inheritance of Traits</li> <li>▪ Mechanism of Evolutionary Change</li> <li>▪ Interdependence of Organisms in the Biosphere</li> </ul>
<b>Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ U.S. Government Structure, Function, and Principles</li> <li>▪ Systems of Government and Foreign Policy</li> <li>▪ Protecting Rights and Maintaining Order</li> <li>▪ Impact of Geography on Governmental Policy</li> <li>▪ Economic Principles, Institution, and Processes</li> </ul>
<b>Algebra/Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyzing Patterns and Functions</li> <li>▪ Modeling Real-World Situations</li> <li>▪ Collecting, Organizing, and Analyzing Data</li> <li>▪ Using Data to Make Predictions</li> </ul>

# State Supports to Local HSA Intervention and Remediation Efforts

MSDE has numerous efforts in the works to help schools support students' performance on the HSA.

**1. Online Courses**—MSDE has developed online courses that teachers can use with students as an intervention strategy, or that students may take themselves to review tested material. Courses in Algebra and Government are online now; Biology is slated for fall 2006, and an English course will follow. To learn more about using these courses in your school, contact the appropriate content supervisor at your school system's central office.



**2. Performance Data**—In response to educators' requests for as much performance data as possible, the HSAs and MSAs produce scores and subtest scores at the state, school system, school, and student levels. The School Improvement in Maryland Web site ([www.mdk12.org](http://www.mdk12.org)) is designed to help principals and school improvement teams analyze the data.

**3. Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) and Core Learning Goals (CLG)**—The full VSC and CLG documents are available on the School Improvement in Maryland Web site ([www.mdk12.org](http://www.mdk12.org)), along

with a toolkit to support teachers' use of these documents in the classroom. The picture below shows all of the teaching and learning resources available on the site for Mathematics alone.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN MARYLAND

Instruction

**Teaching and Learning: Mathematics**

"In mathematics, the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is needed if our students are going to experience success. The essential mathematics that should be taught in every classroom throughout Maryland can be found in the Voluntary State Curriculum. Teaching the curriculum in a way that helps students make sense of what they are learning helps them to view mathematics as a useful subject as opposed to a set of rules to memorize. Finally, formative and summative assessments should reflect the instruction while spanning the various levels of cognitive demand in mathematics."

—Donna Watts, introduction to the Mathematics Voluntary State Curriculum



**VSC/CLG**  
PK • K • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 •  
6 • 7 • 8 • ALGEBRA/DATA  
ANALYSIS • GEOMETRY



**Instruction**  
K-8 • ALGEBRA/DATA  
ANALYSIS • GEOMETRY



**Assessments**



**Toolkit**  
VSC • CORE  
LEARNING GOALS

Ask the Mathematics Team   Web Resources

Return

The picture below is a snapshot from the toolkit for the Algebra/Data Analysis CLG.

**Using the Core Learning Goals: Algebra/Data Analysis**  
 FUNCTIONS & ALGEBRA | Data Analysis & Probability



**View:**  
 Introduction/Rationale  
**Print:**  
 Mathematics:  
 Mathematics Goals 3/2001 (Acrobat 115k)  
 Algebra VSC 7/2004 Draft (Acrobat 145k)

**CLG TOOLKIT**  
 Tools aligned to CLG expectations and/or indicators.  
**Skill Statements**  
 Describes how a student demonstrates an understanding of an indicator.  
**Public Release** Items  
 HSA items and annotated student responses as appropriate

**Goal 1 Functions and Algebra**

The student will demonstrate the ability to investigate, interpret, and communicate solutions to mathematical and real-world problems using patterns, functions, and algebra.

**Expectation**  
 1. The student will analyze a wide variety of patterns and functional relationships using the language of mathematics and appropriate technology.

**Indicator**  
 1. The student will recognize, describe, and/or extend patterns and functional relationships that are expressed numerically, algebraically, and/or geometrically.

**Skill Statements** **Public Release**

**Assessment limits:**

- o The given pattern must represent a relationship of the form  $y = mx + b$  (linear),  $y = x^2 + c$  (simple quadratic),  $y = x^3 + c$  (simple cubic), simple arithmetic progression, or simple geometric progression with all exponents being positive.
- o The student will not be asked to draw three-dimensional figures.
- o Algebraic description of patterns is in indicator 1.1.2

**Indicator**  
 2. The student will represent patterns and/or functional relationships in a table, as a graph, and/or by mathematical expression.

**Skill Statements** **Public Release**

**Assessment limit:** The given pattern must represent a relationship of the form  $mx + b$  (linear),  $x^2$  (simple quadratic), simple arithmetic progression, or simple geometric progression

**4. Formative Tools**—The School Improvement in Maryland Web site ([www.mdk12.org](http://www.mdk12.org)) is home to formative tools for the HSAs. Here users can access mini-tests aligned to the CLG, full test forms of previously administered HSAs, and individual test items. Below is a snapshot of a Government mini-test.

**5. HSA Research Partnership**—MSDE, local school systems, and the Maryland Assessment Research Center for Educational Success (MARCES) at the University of Maryland College Park have teamed up to begin a long-term effort to investigate educational factors that lead to success on the High School

Assessments. MSDE provides financial resources, school systems provide data and guidance, and MARCES provides research and technical analysis. Data and results are shared with Local Accountability Coordinators at each participating local school system and at the annual Maryland Assessment Group (MAG) Conference each November.

**6. Professional Development**—MSDE has a number of initiatives and activities underway. The centerpiece of Maryland’s efforts to build capacity among local school system staffs is the partnerships between MSDE and local school systems. Through collaborative planning, MSDE and local school systems design a series of professional development activities that address school system needs. The activities focus on content and instructional strategies in reading, mathematics, and the HSA courses. MSDE’s Division for Leadership Development provides a variety of professional development opportunities for school leaders designed to improve their instructional leadership skills. Contact Jim Foran, Executive Director, High School and Postsecondary Initiatives, at [jforan@msde.state.md.us](mailto:jforan@msde.state.md.us) for information on upcoming opportunities.

Standards Search

**High School Assessment**

2005 Government Assessment

Mini-Assessments Protecting Rights & Maintaining Order > Item 1 (of 14)

Look at the chart below.

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DECISIONS REGARDING SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS

Year	Case	Ruling
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i>	Segregation in public schools based on race is illegal.
1969	<i>Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education</i>	Schools in Mississippi that have yet to integrate students must do so immediately.
1971	<i>Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education</i>	Federal courts have the authority to oversee integration and recommend ways to integrate in state public schools.

- Describe how the Fourteenth Amendment was the basis for these Supreme Court rulings.
- Was additional Supreme Court action necessary after the *Brown* decision? Explain why or why not.
- Explain how these decisions affect public education today.
- Include details and examples to support your answer.

Write your answer in the answer box below.

Mdk12.org is home to a professional development course for principals wanting to learn more about data-driven school improvement. The course, “Using Data to Improve Student Achievement,” supports principals in leading their school’s improvement efforts through data-driven instructional decisions. You can access the course at [mdk12.org/data/course](http://mdk12.org/data/course).

## Graduation Questions & Answers

Have a question about graduation requirements and HSA? MSDE collects questions from local school systems and uses them to identify areas where policy needs to be clarified. Reprinted here are five of those Q&As. Check MSDE's Web site to see the full set of questions answered to date: The direct Web address is [www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa), and the Q&A document is titled, "Frequently asked questions about High School graduation requirements." If you don't see your question answered in the full document on the Web, please email it to Sandra Shepherd, [sshepherd@msde.state.md.us](mailto:sshepherd@msde.state.md.us), in the Office of Academic Policy. Because some questions require more time to resolve than others, response times will vary.

**1. Do students who take "on-line" or "virtual" courses have to take the High School Assessments?**

Yes. If the student receives credit and the course is one of the courses for which the high school assessment is given, the student must take the high school assessment regardless of how the student received the instruction for the course. See COMAR 13A.03.02.05J.

**2. Do students in the Class of 2009 have to pass all four HSAs?**

Students must obtain either a passing score on all four HSAs or obtain a minimum score on each HSA **and** an overall combined score of 1602. The minimum score for each exam is: Biology 391, Algebra/Data Analysis 402, English 386, and Government 387.

**3. Can a student take an HSA multiple times in order to raise his/her score to meet the combined score passing option?**

Yes, but no additional instructional assistance will be provided if the student has already passed the HSA. Additional instructional assistance must be provided to students who do not achieve the passing score on the HSA before they can retake the test.

**4. If a student retakes an HSA and scores lower than the first time, which score counts toward the combined score and which score counts for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?**

The higher score counts toward the combined score. The first score counts toward AYP.

**5. Is the local school system required to offer the combined score option for students?**

Yes. COMAR 13A.03.02.09B(4)(b) provides the combined score option for students. All students must have access to options provided by the state.

*High School Improvement Update*

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