



In the 2014-2015 school year, Maryland will give new statewide assessments that are aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. These standards provide students with the relevant, real world knowledge and skills they need for success beyond high school. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) and other school districts in the state will be using Maryland's new PARCC Assessments (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) for English 9, 10, and 11 and Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II in our high schools.

The Maryland graduation requirements continue to include assessments in the areas of Algebra I, English 10, and Biology. Government will be an additional requirement for students entering grade 9 in the 2013-14 school year and each school year thereafter. The new PARCC Assessments for Algebra I and English 10 will become graduation requirements as the current Algebra 1 with Data Analysis and English 10 HSA's are phased out.

During the transition to PARCC, determining exactly which graduation requirement each student must meet may seem confusing. To ensure that all high school students and their families are aware of their own specific graduation requirements, FCPS will send a communication at the start of the 2014-15 school year to detail each child's individual graduation requirements, ensure accurate record keeping, and allow for parents to reach out to their child's high school counselor should questions arise.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is using a recent volume of "Maryland Classroom" to help inform students and parents about the changes in high school graduation requirements. We've attached it for your information. We would like to offer the following additional points of clarification specific to the Algebra I and English 10 graduation requirements:

Algebra I

- Current middle or high school students who have taken and passed the Algebra I with Data Analysis HSA have already met their graduation requirement for this content area.
- Current middle or high school students who have taken the Algebra I with Data Analysis course and HSA and do not pass may either re-take the HSA or take the Algebra I PARCC course and assessment to meet their graduation requirement.
- Students enrolled in Common Core Algebra I during the 2013-14 school year will be required to pass the HSA Algebra I with Data Analysis unless they will re-take the course next year.
- Students new to Algebra I in the 2014-15 school year will take the PARCC Assessment.

English 10

- Current high school students who have taken and passed the English 10 HSA have already met their graduation requirement for this content area.
- Current high school students who have taken the English 10 course and HSA and do not pass may either re-take the HSA or take the English 10 PARCC course and assessment to meet their graduation requirement.
- Students new to English 10 next year will take the PARCC Assessment.

We look forward to partnering with our families and supporting our students through this transition. The following Frequently Asked Questions provide additional details:

How are the PARCC Assessments different from the current HSA's?

Computer-based assessments with Technology Enhanced Items (TEI's) will create a more efficient, innovative, and engaging experience for students. Accessibility features for all students will be available, while accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners will also be delivered. Each PARCC Assessment will include a Performance Based Assessment given 75% of the way through instruction and an End of Year Assessment given 90% of the way through instruction. This will enable teachers and parents to better monitor student progress at multiple points.

How long will students be allowed to retake the current HSA's?

HSA exams will be given in October 2014, January 2015, April 2015 (for seniors only), May 2015, and summer 2015. Due to the limited availability of the current HSA's, if a student has not passed one of the HSA exams after the second attempt (and is not eligible to take PARCC exams), that student will enter into the Bridge Validation Program. The Bridge Validation Program will be available for high school students whether taking the HSA's or PARCC Assessments.

Will Maryland still have a combined score option?

Standard setting will take place in Summer 2015 to identify passing cut scores for all PARCC Assessments. After that a combined score option will be identified for the PARCC Assessments required for graduation. MSDE has recommended the graduates of 2017, 2018, and 2019 may have a modified composite score due to the impact of the transition to new standards and new assessments.

Will Maryland still have Alternate Assessments?

Yes, students with disabilities may still qualify for an alternate assessment based on the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Will Maryland still have Modified Assessments?

The Modified Assessments (MOD) will no longer be administered after May 2015. The United States Department of Education (USDE) no longer allows modified assessments.