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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
**DATE:** August 22, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** *Alternative Academic Achievement Standards*

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide an update on the Maryland Alternative Assessment Program for English/language arts, mathematics, and science and to seek Board approval for continuation of the Program.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (PL 114-95) (ESSA) requires that all students be assessed and receive an individual score in reading, mathematics, and science in grades 3-8 and once in high school. ESSA also requires that states provide an Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS). These standards and assessments are for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in a regular assessment, even when accommodations are provided. Additionally, the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires states to provide an Alternate Assessment for the population of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Federal regulations require that all states administer an Alternate Assessment based on alternate achievement standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities and to ensure that students have access to a curriculum that is aligned to the general curriculum. This alternate curriculum is one component of an interconnected alternate instructional framework built on a foundation of communicative competence. The alternate instructional framework is intended to lead to post-secondary opportunities in college, in a career and in the community. Students who take this assessment must meet certain participation requirements and should include no more than 1% of the tested State population. Previously, Maryland students with significant cognitive disabilities took the Alt-MSA, a portfolio assessment for reading, mathematics, and science. As Maryland has adopted the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, students now take the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) and the Alternate Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (Alt-MISA), both online assessments. These alternate assessments are aligned to the Core Content Connectors and Essential Elements, which are both aligned to the MCCRs and NGSS.

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MSAA differs from the previous alternate assessment (Alt-MSA) in two important ways.

- (1) MSAA provides a single administration.
- (2) The Alt-MSA was an entirely paper-pencil assessment, MSAA is administered online, with a stage-adaptive design, and a paper and pencil option is available. A stage adaptive assessment administers items based on a student's performance on previous items.

**ACTION:**

The MSDE is seeking approval for the continuation of Maryland's Alternate Assessment – Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) program including the adoption of the Core Content Connectors and the Essential Elements.

# Maryland State Department of Education

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Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate  
Achievement Standards (AA-AAS)

August 2017

# Purpose

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- **Provide an update on the Maryland Alternate Assessment Program**
  - English language arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
- **Seek State Board of Education approval for continuation of the Program**



# Alternate Assessment: Federal Regulations

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- **No Child Left Behind (2001); Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004); Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)**
  - ALL students must be assessed and receive an individual score in reading, mathematics, and science in grades 3-8, and once in high school
  - States must provide an Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) for the population of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities
  - Population of AA-AAS test takers should not exceed 1% of the State test takers

# Annual IEP Decision-Making Process

The student:

- Has an IEP
- AND**
- Has a significant cognitive disability
- AND**
- Is learning content aligned with general education standards
- AND**
- Requires extensive, direct, and repeated instruction

Maryland  
College &  
Career Ready  
Standards

Core Content  
Connectors &  
Essential  
Elements

Partnership for Assessment  
of Readiness for College and  
Careers (PARCC)  
Maryland Integrated Science  
Assessment (MISA)

Multi-State Alternate  
Assessment (MSAA)  
Alternate Maryland  
Integrated Science  
Assessment (Alt-MISA)

Parental Consent

# A Student in Action



Thank you to **Worcester County Public Schools!**

**College**

**Community**

**Career**

### Curriculum

- Maryland College and Career Ready Standards
- Core Content Connectors
- Essential Elements

### Instruction

- Grade Level Lessons
- Accessible Educational Materials
- Accommodations

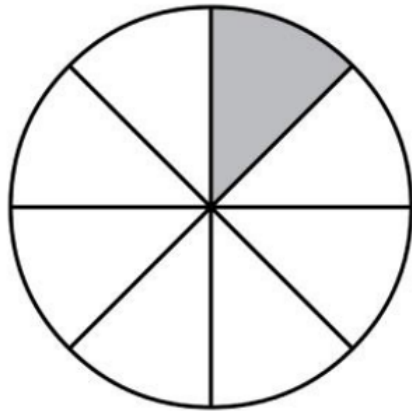
### Assessment

- Formative (ongoing during school year; monitors learning)
- Summative (end of year or end of course; evaluates learning)

# Communication Competence



# Sample Item: Math Grade 3



What part of the fraction circle is shaded?

- $\frac{1}{2}$
- $\frac{1}{4}$
- $\frac{1}{8}$

## Maryland College

### and Career Ready Standard:

3.NF.A.1: Understand a fraction  $\frac{1}{b}$  as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into  $b$  equal parts.

### Alternate Standard:

CCC: 3.NO.1 | 1: Identify the number if highlighted parts of a given representation (rectangles and circles).

# Alternate Assessment Program: Maryland

## □ WHO

- Roughly 5,000 students that meet the eligibility criteria
- Grades assessed:
  - English/language arts and mathematics: 3-8 & 11
  - Science 5, 8, and 11
- Comprising less than 1% of the overall state tested population

## □ WHEN

- Single administration in the spring (opposed to portfolio)

## □ RESULTS

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ 2015-16 Proficiency | ■ 2016-17 Proficiency |
| ■ ELA: 29.48%         | ■ ELA: 33.54%         |
| ■ Mathematics: 34.45% | ■ Mathematics: 39.67% |

# Statewide Implementation

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## Actions:

- Family Webinar
- Professional Learning
- Quarterly Alt-Facilitator meetings
- Stakeholder engagement
- Quarterly Newsletters & Guidance materials
- Statewide Communication Competence Conferences
  - Everyone Has Something to Say
  - Everyone Has Something MORE to Say!
  - Everyone Has Something to Write!

## Next Steps:

- Focus on instruction
- Maryland applied for and was awarded the competitive US ED Enhanced Assessment totaling \$3.8 million over four years. This will support the development of:
  - Instructional materials
  - Formative assessments
  - Dashboards to monitor student learning

# Summary

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- MSDE is seeking the approval for the continuation of Maryland's AA-AAS program. This includes the adoption of the Core Content Connectors and the Essential Elements along with the use of the related instruments.