



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: August 28, 2018
SUBJECT: Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program Update

PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the progress of developing the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Maryland is pursuing a next iteration of state assessments as it plans to move away from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test.

For the future success of our students, it is important to us that our new assessments:

- Maintain a focus on critical thinking, reasoning, and communication skills — the capabilities students will need to thrive in the future.
- Produce results that are timely, relevant, and useful for educators, students, and parents to help students improve and grow.
- Reduce testing time as much as possible, while still providing educators with meaningful information about students' mastery and growth.

Maryland plans to maintain the PARCC test for another year to allow us to make an orderly transition and better prepare the field for the new test in 2020. In Maryland, we remain committed to delivering a test that: (1) is of exceptional quality; (2) allows us to track student progress over time; (3) involves local educators in its development process; and (4) meets federal assessment requirements. Meeting these commitments ultimately gives educators and parents confidence that they have a true measure of students' development and readiness for future success. Continuing with PARCC for another year meets all of these goals while we take the necessary time to prepare our educators and students for a new assessment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) will include Maryland assessments in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies K through 12 based on the rigorous Maryland College and Career Standards. In other words, the Maryland College and Career Standards will remain unchanged.

Several states have embarked on the process of developing their own statewide assessments using a combination of nationally recognized items and locally developed items. Under the plan we will contract with a vendor to build new statewide assessments in English language arts and mathematics, incorporating nationally recognized items - such as items that Maryland and other states developed, as well as incorporate other items specifically developed for Maryland.

The testing environment across the country has been evolving rapidly in recent years. The states that used to make up the PARCC Consortium have been steadily planning and building a new approach to test design and development that will enable Maryland to design a test specific to our needs while maintaining the highest quality and reducing costs.

Under the original PARCC model, states collaboratively designed and developed a single test, effectively reducing their costs by achieving economies of scale. Agreeing on the design of a single test that could meet all states' needs, however, was exceeding difficult—so difficult, in fact, that many states requiring greater flexibility left the consortium.

The new model that has emerged allows greater flexibility for each state to develop a test design to meet their needs while incorporating the existing, operationally ready, high-quality nationally recognized content into their state-specific custom test designs. Maryland will take advantage of the new flexibilities of this new approach, developing a Maryland state assessment program while taking advantage of the high-quality content it has helped develop. Maryland educators will have significant input into the design of the next-generation Maryland assessment, and the state will realize the benefits and cost savings of using shared, high-quality assessment content. The assessments themselves, the standards that they assess, as well as the instructional programs aligned to the standards and the assessments, will remain intact

An unintended consequence of transitioning to online assessments is the need for schools to prepare students and their technology infra-structure for multiple administration platforms. To address this, Maryland is moving toward having a single test administration, scoring and reporting vendor with multiple development vendors.

Due to the complexity of multiple vendor involvement as well as needing consistency during transitions with vendors, we need to place less emphasis on consortium or vendor names; instead, the focus should be on Maryland and the individual content areas.

The logo and some points from the communications campaign to increase awareness of the changes are attached.

ACTION:

No action is necessary, for discussion only.

Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program



Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program

WHAT IS DIFFERENT

- Unit times are aligned
- Assessments will be shorter
- Efficiency improved
- Computer adaptive

WHAT STAYS THE SAME

- MD College and Career Ready Standards in Reading, English and Math
- Content based on nationally recognized items
- All MD State Assessments will be part of MCAP