

# Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland

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OVERVIEW AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **Introduction**

This document provides information to assist local school system staff members with implementation of the graduation requirements currently in effect for students graduating in 2018, 2019, and 2020. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.00 – 12](#). Please see the Tool Kit on the MSDE website for College and Career Readiness Requirements.

### **I. Graduation Requirements**

There are three requirements that students must meet in order to graduate with a Maryland High School Diploma:

- credit;
- service learning;
- assessment.

The local school system may also impose local requirements. See COMAR [13A.03.02.09\(B\)\(2\)](#).

#### **A. Credit**

To be awarded a diploma, a student must earn a minimum of 21 credits, 18 of them in the subjects below. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.03B](#). Students must also complete an Environmental Literacy Program. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.03C](#).

1. **English** - four credits of organized instruction in comprehension of literary and informational text, writing, speaking and listening, language, and literacy, of which one credit shall be aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for English;
2. **Fine Arts** - one credit in visual arts, music, theatre, or dance, or a combination of these;
3. **Mathematics** - three credits, including one with instruction in algebra aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for algebra or one or more credits in subsequent mathematics courses for which algebra is a prerequisite, and one with instruction in geometry aligned with the content standards for geometry;
4. **Physical Education** - one-half credit;
5. **Health Education** - one-half credit;
6. **Science** - three credits of organized instruction which includes a laboratory component engaging in the application of the science and engineering practices, the crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas including Earth/space science, life science, physical science (chemistry and physics), and engineering, technology, and applications of science, and aligned to the Maryland High School Assessment for science.
7. **Social Studies** - three credits including one credit in United States history, one credit in world history, and one credit in local, state, and national government aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for government;

8. **Technology Education** – one credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities; and
9. **One of the following:**
  - a. Two credits of world language, which may include American Sign Language;
  - b. Two credits of advanced technology education; or
  - c. Successfully complete a State-approved career and technology program.

While most students will earn credits in classes during the regular school day, there are several other ways to earn credits. They are summer school, evening school, online courses, tutoring, work-study, job entry training, college courses, independent study/internship, and credit through examination. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.04](#).

## **B. Service Learning**

To be awarded a Maryland High School Diploma, a student must meet the service learning requirements. A student must either complete 75 hours of student service or complete a locally designed program in student service that has been approved by the state Superintendent. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.05](#).

## **C. Assessment**

To be awarded a Maryland High School Diploma, a student must meet the graduation assessment requirements. A student may meet the graduation assessment requirements in the following ways:

- (1) by taking and passing the Maryland High School Assessments (MHSAs) in English 10, Algebra I, science and government; or
- (2) by taking and passing approved alternative assessments for the MHSAs; or
- (3) by successfully completing the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation; or
- (4) through a waiver of the MHSAs graduation requirement in certain circumstances.

### **1. The Maryland High School Assessments**

Students take Maryland High School Assessments (MHSAs) if the student received credit for taking any of the following courses aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.06](#).

- English
- Algebra
- Science
- Government

"Maryland High School Assessments" means the HSA, PARCC, or other assessments in algebra, science, English, and government developed or adopted by the Maryland State Department of Education that are aligned with and measure a student's skills and knowledge as set forth in the Maryland Standards for those subjects. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.02](#).

**a. Overview of “Participation” versus “Pass” requirements**

There are a variety of regulations that address whether a student need only participate, but not pass, a particular MHSA. The participation only requirements were instituted for MHSA English 10 and MHSA Algebra I during school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 to allow sufficient time for LEAs to make a complete transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready standards. Likewise, the participation only requirement was instituted for the HSA Biology in 2016-17, and the High School Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (HS MISA) in 2017-18, and 2018-19 in order to account for the transition to the Maryland Next Generation Science Standards. Thus, for some years and some assessments, students are required only to participate, but not pass, the assessment.

The following regulations define the participation only requirements.

- Students who took the MHSA English 10 and MHSA Algebra I in the school years before the 2016-2017 school year needed only to participate, but not pass. See COMAR 13A.03.02.06G (adopted June 2015) and [13A.03.02.09](#) (adopted February 2013).
- Students graduating in 2017-2018 *and* who were *first-time* MHSA English 10 and/or MHSA Algebra I test takers in those school years need only participate, but not pass, the assessment. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.06](#) and [09](#).
- Students who took the HSA Biology in the 2016-2017 school year, only needed to participate in the assessment; they did not need to earn a passing score.
- Students who take the HS MISA in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years, only need to participate in the assessment. They do not need to earn a passing score.

To determine if a requirement applies to a student:

- identify the year the student is expected to graduate;
- identify the year in which the student first took the assessment; and
- consult the charts on pages 12 through 14 which will indicate whether participation only or passing was required the year the student first took the test.

**b. Passing Scores by School Year and Combined Score Options**

**i. Passing Scores for MHSA English 10 and MHSA Algebra I**

<b>Assessment/School Year</b>	<b>English 10 Assessment Cut Score</b>	<b>Algebra I Assessment Cut Score</b>
High School Assessments (HSA) taken during <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2013-2014</li> <li>• 2014-2015</li> </ul>	English 10 Participation Only	Algebra/ Data Analysis Participation Only
PARCC Assessments taken during <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014-2015</li> <li>• 2015-2016</li> </ul>	Participation Only	Participation Only
PARCC Assessments taken during <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016-2017</li> <li>• 2017-2018</li> <li>• 2018-2019</li> <li>• 2019-2020</li> <li>• 2020-2021</li> <li>• 2021-2022</li> <li>• 2022-2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduating 16-17 and 17-18: Participation Only</li> <li>• First time ninth grader 2019-2020 and earlier: 725</li> <li>• First time ninth grader 2020-2021 and later: 750</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduating 16-17 and 17-18: Participation Only</li> <li>• First time ninth grader 2019-2020 and earlier: 725</li> <li>• First time ninth grader 2020-2021 and later: 750</li> </ul>

Students graduating from high school in 2022-2023 or before need a passing score of 725 on the MHSA English 10 and MHSA Algebra I.

Students graduating from high school in 2023-2024, who are first time ninth graders in 2020-2021 and beyond, need a passing score of 750.

**ii. High School Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (HS MISA)**

Students were required to pass the HSA Biology every year until the 2016-2017 school year. The passing score was 400.

For students who participated in the HSA Biology in school year 2016-2017, the graduation requirement for Biology has been met. For all other students, please refer to the following projected implementation process and timeline.

### **School Year 2017-2018**

Students will be required to participate in the no fault field test for HS MISA if they:

- have met their LEA's determination of readiness for HS MISA; or
- have not met their science assessment requirement as determined by participation in the school year 2016-2017 administration of the HSA Biology; or
- have not completed a Biology Bridge Project for Academic Validation by school year 2016-2017.

### **School Year 2018-2019**

Students will be required to participate in the no fault operational test for HS MISA if they:

- have met their LEA's determination of readiness for HS MISA; or
- have not met their science assessment requirement as determined by participation in the school year 2017-2018 administration of HS MISA.

### **School Year 2019-2020**

Beginning in school year 2019-2020, to fulfill the science graduation assessment requirement, students will be required to pass HS MISA.

### **iii. MHSA Government**

The MHSA Government was eliminated in school year 2011-2012. MHSA Government was reinstated in school year 2012-2013. Students in the 2012-2013 school year were required to participate in MHSA Government, but not pass. First-time test takers in school year 2013-2014 and beyond are required to earn a passing score of 394.

### **iv. Combined Score Option**

A student must meet the assessment graduation requirement for English, algebra, science and social studies using one of the described methods. The "combined-score" option is one of the methods. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.09\(B\)\(3\)\(b\)](#). The combined-score option allows a student to offset lower performance on one test with higher performance on another. The student does not have to attain a minimum passing score on each test. Scores from the PARCC assessments may not be combined with scores from other High School Assessments.

<b>Combined Score Option</b>
<p><b>A. Combined Score-2 PARCC Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting in 2016-2017 all current 7th-12th grade students may use the following combined score option.</li> <li>• Combined minimum scores for English 10 and Algebra I = 1450</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. Combined Score- 4 Former HSAs</b></p> <p>1602 for Algebra I, English 10, biology, government</p>
<p><b>C. Combined Score-3 Former HSAs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1208 for Algebra I, English 10, biology</li> <li>• 1206 for Algebra I, biology, government</li> <li>• 1190 for English, biology, government</li> <li>• 1202 for English 10, Algebra I, government</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Combined Score-2 Former HSAs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 808 for English 10, Algebra I</li> <li>• 812 for Algebra I and biology</li> <li>• 806 for Algebra I and government</li> <li>• 796 for English 10 and biology</li> <li>• 790 for English 10 and government</li> <li>• 794 for biology and government</li> </ul>

With the variations in participation versus passing requirements over the last several years, calculations of the combined-score options change from year to year.

## 2. Approved Alternative Assessments

A second pathway to meeting the graduation assessment requirements is by substituting MSDE-approved assessments for particular MHSAs. A student must achieve a passing score on the Approved Alternative Assessment. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.09\(B\)\(3\)\(c\)](#); Codified in 2005, re-codified in 2017, [13A.03.02.09\(B\)\(3\)\(d\)](#). The list of MHSAs approved alternative assessments and passing scores are listed below:

MHSA	AP Exam (Score of 3+)	IB Exam (Score of 5+)	MHSA (Score of 3+)
Algebra I	Calculus AB Calculus BC Statistics	Mathematical Studies SL Mathematics SL Mathematics HL	Algebra II
English 10	English Language and Composition English Literature and Composition	English A1	
Government	United States Government and Politics		
Biology	Biology	Biology SL Biology HL	
HS MISA	No substitute assessments	No substitute assessments	

## 3. Bridge Plan for Academic Validation

The third way to meet the graduation assessment requirements is the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation (Bridge Plan). A student who fails to achieve a passing score on one or more assessments may be eligible to complete Bridge Projects in the assessment areas. If the student completes the Bridge Project successfully, the graduation assessment requirement is met for that assessment area. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.06](#).

- a. A student is eligible to use successful completion of a Bridge Project to satisfy graduation assessment requirements if he/she:
  - i. failed one or more Maryland High School Assessments at least twice; and
  - ii. received credit in the course or courses related to the assessment or assessments; and
  - iii. demonstrated overall satisfactory attendance in the most recent school year completed; and

- iv. demonstrated satisfactory progress toward achieving the high school diploma requirements specified in [COMAR 13A.03.02.09B\(1\)](#) and [\(2\)](#); and
  - v. participated successfully in appropriate assistance after having failed one or more of the Maryland High School Assessments.
- b. A student may begin a Bridge Project after the first failure, but must take the assessment a second time and fail in order to use the successful Bridge Project to meet the graduation assessment requirement. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.06.D.2 and.3](#)
4. Waiver of the MHSA graduation assessment requirement

Sometimes situations occur that place a student in an extreme disadvantage in his/her effort to meet the graduation requirement assessment requirement. In those particular cases, pursuant to the regulatory requirements, a school principal may recommend to the superintendent that a particular assessment requirement for an individual student be waived. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.09-1.E.](#)

- i. For such a waiver to be considered by a local superintendent, the following three conditions must be satisfied.
  - 1. The student has or will meet all other graduation requirements.
  - 2. The student has or will take all required Maryland High School Assessments before the graduation date.
  - 3. The student participated in one or more interventions or remediation opportunities, including the Bridge Plan.
- ii. The student is prevented from meeting the Maryland High School Assessment graduation requirements due to any of the following circumstances.
  - 1. A decision made by the local school system concerning the provision of appropriate assistance as required by [COMAR 13A.03.02.06C.](#)
  - 2. A special, extraordinary, or extenuating circumstance or combination of circumstances preceding the administration of the most recent Maryland High School Assessment, such as a recent death in the immediate family, a serious or prolonged illness or pregnancy with medical complications, an accident causing serious injury, or a destructive house fire.
  - 3. The student moved to the United States in junior or senior year and is literate in his/her native language but not literate in English.

4. The student moved to Maryland in his/her senior year, has passed all the Maryland High School Assessment courses, but has failed the related Maryland High School Assessment, and has not had adequate opportunity for intervention.
- iii. The regulation governing the waiver process for assessment requirements identifies the following dates on which certain waiver-related decisions are to be made. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.09-1.\(E\),\(F\),\(G\),\(I\)](#).
1. By April 1, the principal “*shall consider* whether to recommend” a student for an assessment waiver and on or about April 1 notifies the parent and student that he/she “is being considered for a waiver.”
  2. On or about May 1, the principal shall make his waiver recommendations to the superintendent.
  3. Sometime after May 1 but before graduation, the superintendent will decide to grant or deny a waiver recommendation.

*Note:*

This regulation should not be interpreted to allow or to require a final waiver decision *by* April 1. The regulation clearly intends a measured decision making process to extend into May and possibly June. That time period gives students the opportunity to complete Bridge Projects successfully or take an assessment and additional time to pass. A waiver decision in April forecloses those learning opportunities to students.

## Assessment Requirements for Specific Graduating Classes

### Assessment Requirements for Graduating Class of 2017-2018 (Entered 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in School Year 2014-2015)

School Year in which Assessment was First Taken ↓	Biology/ Science Assessment Requirement Met By	English 10 Assessment Requirement Met By	Algebra I Assessment Requirement Met By	Government Assessment Requirement Met By
2014-2015 (9 <sup>th</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 400 on Biology HSA; or</li> <li>• Combined-score; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>	Students do not take the English 10 assessment until 10 <sup>th</sup> grade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Algebra Data Analysis HSA or the PARCC Algebra I Assessment; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 394; or</li> <li>• Combined-score or</li> <li>• AP US Government and Politics exam Score of 3+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>
2015-2016 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 400 on Biology HSA; or</li> <li>• Combined-score; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3 +;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Assessment; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>		
2016-2017 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Biology HSA Assessment; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>			
2017-2018 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in HS MISA Assessment;</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> <li>• AP and IB exams are not acceptable substitutions for HS MISA.</li> </ul>			

**Assessment Requirements for Graduating Class of 2018-2019  
(Entered 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in School Year 2015-2016)**

<b>School Year in which Assessment was First Taken</b> ↓	<b>Biology/ Science Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>English 10 Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>Algebra I Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>Government Assessment Requirement Met By</b>
<b>2015-2016 (9<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 400 on Biology HSA; or</li> <li>• Combined-score; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>	Students do not take the English 10 assessment until 10 <sup>th</sup> grade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the PARCC Algebra I Assessment or the Algebra Data Analysis HSA (in earlier years) or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 394; or</li> <li>• Combined-Score or</li> <li>• AP US Government and Politics exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>
<b>2016-2017 (10<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Biology HSA Assessment; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+;or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 725;</li> <li>• Combined score as set by MSDE; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Pass Bridge Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 725;</li> <li>• Combined score as set by MSDE; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Algebra II score of 725; or</li> <li>• Pass Bridge Project</li> </ul>	
<b>2017-2018 (11<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in HS MISA Assessment;</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> <li>• AP and IB exams are not acceptable substitutions for HS MISA due to the integrated nature of the assessment.</li> </ul>			
<b>2018-2019 (12<sup>th</sup>)</b>				

**Assessment Requirements for Graduating Class of 2019-2020**  
**(Entered 9<sup>th</sup> Grade in School Year 2016-2017)**

<b>School Year in which Assessment was First Taken</b> ↓	<b>Biology/ Science Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>English 10 Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>Algebra I Assessment Requirement Met By</b>	<b>Government Assessment Requirement Met By</b>
<b>2016-2017 (9<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Biology HSA Assessment; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> </ul>	Students do not take the English 10 assessment until 10 <sup>th</sup> grade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 725;</li> <li>• Combined score as set by MSDE; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Algebra II score of 725; or</li> <li>• Pass Bridge Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 394; or</li> <li>• Combined-Score or</li> <li>• AP US Government and Politics exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• Pass the Bridge Project</li> </ul>
<b>2017-2018 (10<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in HS MISA Assessment;</li> <li>• No Bridge Requirement</li> <li>• AP and IB exams are not acceptable substitutions for HS MISA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve score of 725;</li> <li>• Combined score as set by MSDE; or</li> <li>• AP exam score of 3+; or</li> <li>• IB exam score of 5+; or</li> <li>• Pass Bridge Project</li> </ul>	<p><i>Note:</i>  <i>Students who took the PARCC Algebra I or the Algebra Data Analysis Assessment prior to the 2016-2017 school year met the Algebra I Assessment requirement through participation.</i></p>	
<b>2018-2019 (11<sup>th</sup>)</b>				
<b>2019-2020 (12<sup>th</sup>)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass HS MISA Assessment cut score TBD or</li> <li>• Pass Bridge Project</li> <li>• AP and IB exams are not acceptable substitutions for HS MISA</li> </ul>			

## II. Frequently Asked Questions

### A. Credits

1. **Question:** Can high school credits be earned in ways other than going to school during regular days/year?

**Answer:** Yes. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.04](#) Other Provisions for Earning Credit.

2. **Question:** Can a student earn a Maryland High School Diploma online?

**Answer:** No. Students cannot earn a high school diploma solely by completing online courses.

3. **Question:** Can online courses be accepted for credit by a school?

**Answer:** Yes, for students currently enrolled in a Maryland public school, credit can be awarded for MSDE-approved online courses with LEA approval. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.04.D](#).

4. **Question:** Must a local school system award high school credit to a middle school student who completes a high school course?

**Answer:** Yes. Maryland law states that a county board shall award credit to a middle school student for any course for which a high school student would be awarded credit if the middle school student meets the same requirements as the high school student. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.04](#)

5. **Question:** Can a student exclude from the transcript an 8th grade course for which high school credit was received?

**Answer:** No. If a student receives credit, the credit must appear on the transcript.

6. **Question:** What alternatives can local school systems offer/provide students so they can fulfill graduation requirements?

**Answer:** At the discretion of the local school system superintendent, an alternative plan to fulfill graduation requirements may be developed as described in [COMAR 13A.03.02.11](#) Alternatives for Structuring Programs. In addition, graduation requirements may also be fulfilled through the Early College Admission Program or Admission to an Approved Vocational, Technical, or Other Postsecondary School Program as described in [COMAR 13A.03.02.10](#). See also [COMAR 13A.03.02.04](#) Other Provisions for Earning Credit.

7. **Question:** Can students receive credits for subjects taken at a school when no official transcript is available?

**Answer:** Yes. There are several ways as described in [COMAR 13A.03.02.12.B\(4\)](#) Unavailability of Official Transcript. A local school system superintendent shall determine, by an evaluation of a student, whether credits earned at a high school will be accepted at the public high school to which the student transfers. This evaluation may include administration of

standardized tests and examinations, observation of student in a classroom setting, and the use of interviews, as well as the inspection of transcripts, report cards, and other documentation.

8. **Question:** Can credits in American Sign Language count as credits in world language?

**Answer:** Yes. COMAR [13A.03.02.03\(B\)\(9\)\(a\)](#), specifies that credits earned through successful completion of American Sign Language courses may count as world language credits.

9. **Question:** Does Computer Science satisfy the requirement for a credit in mathematics?

**Answer:** Yes. COMAR [13A.04.12.01\(j\)](#) defines the Maryland Mathematics Program. The regulation includes reference to Computer Science coursework. The list of mathematics course offerings includes both “AP<sup>®</sup> Computer Science” and “a computer science course that is not AP<sup>®</sup> Computer Science to satisfy the requirement for a credit in mathematics if the local school system determines the course meets the mathematics standards required by this regulation.”

10. **Question:** Does Computer Science satisfy the requirement for a credit in technology education?

**Answer:** Yes. The following Computer Science courses are acceptable: Exploring Computer Science, Foundations of Computer Science, and Advanced Placement (AP<sup>®</sup>) Computer Science Principles. Please note that Computer Science courses used to satisfy the credit requirements of a Career and Technology Education (CTE) Program of Study can only be applied once. If a Computer Science course is used to satisfy the technology education credit requirement, it may not be used to satisfy the requirements of a CTE Computer Science Program of Study. Please consult the local CTE Director for further guidance on how to complete the MSDE curriculum alignment tool to identify additional Computer Science courses that satisfy the technology education credit requirement.

11. **Question:** Can one course be used to satisfy two graduation credit requirements?

**Answer:** No. Awarding two credits for one course is never allowed to meet graduation credit requirements.

12. **Question:** What happens if a student takes an MHSA Algebra I assessment, which is a graduation requirement, before entering high school?

**Answer:** The student satisfies his/her mathematics assessment graduation requirement by meeting the criteria in effect during the school year in which the mathematics assessment was first taken.

## **B. Participation Only vs. Pass Requirement**

13. **Question:** What is the regulatory basis for participation only versus the passing score requirement in the school years set forth in the charts?

**Answer:** There is a cohort of students in various grades who took Algebra I and/or English 10 and the aligned assessments in school years prior to the 2016-2017 school year, passed the course but failed the assessment aligned with the course. The regulations, in effect at the time student was assessed, offered students who took the aligned English 10 and Algebra I, assessments in the years of transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards exemption from high stakes testing.

Students who earned an Algebra I and/or English 10 credit prior to the 2016-2017 school year, but failed to earn a passing score on a HSA or PARCC Algebra I and/or English 10 assessment met his/her graduation requirements related to assessments in English and mathematics by taking the assessments. These students are exempt from completing Bridge Projects.

The HS MISA receives similar exemption from high stakes testing. The participation versus pass requirements related to the high school science assessment are summarized on pages 6-7.

14. **Question:** In school years in which participation only is the graduation requirement, if a student took English 10 and/or Algebra I courses and the related assessment, but ultimately failed the course, does he/she need to retake the assessment in a subsequent year to graduate?

**Answer:** No. If a student takes the assessment in the year that he/she takes Algebra I or English 10 and the participation requirement is met, but does not earn the credit for that year, and has to retake Algebra I or English 10 in the following year, he/she does not have to retake the assessment.

15. **Question:** Does the exemption from passing the assessments extend to all English 10 and Algebra I test takers 2017-2018?

**Answer:** No. The exemption to passing the English 10 and the Algebra I assessments was given only to students who graduated in School Years 2016-2017 or 2017-2018 and who were first-time test takers of those assessments in those school years. See [COMAR 13A.03.02.06G](#). Those students need only to have participated in the assessments to have met the graduation assessment requirement.

16. **Question:** Is a student who is graduating in 2017-2018 eligible for the first-time test taker exemption to passing the assessment if he/she took the English 10 and/or Algebra I assessment in the 2016-2017 school year, his/her junior year? See [COMAR 13A.03.02.09\(C\)](#).

**Answer:** Yes. A student graduating in 2017-2018 is exempt from the passing requirements established for English 10 and Algebra I even if he/she took those assessments for the first time in his/her junior year (2016-2017). The regulation states that “students who are graduating in school years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, who are first-time test takers during those school years,”

are exempt from passing those assessments. This includes first-time test takers in school year 2016-2017 who will graduate in 2017-2018.

17. **Question:** What about students who are graduating in School Year 2018-2019?

**Answer:** Students who are graduating in School Year 2018-2019, who took English 10 or Algebra I for the first time during 2016-2017 or 2017-2018, must meet the passing score or combined-score requirement in place during the first year they took the assessment or successfully complete the requirements of the student's Bridge Project to graduate.

18. **Question:** Is the passing score in the year the student first took the test but failed, the passing score a student must meet in any retakes of assessment?

**Answer:** Yes, the passing score in the year in which the student first took the assessment remains the target passing score the student must achieve on any subsequent assessment retake, even if the passing score in the year of the re-take is higher.

### **C. Combined-Score**

19. **Question:** Can a student take an assessment multiple times in order to raise his/her score to meet the combined-score passing option?

**Answer:** Yes, but there is no mandate to provide additional instructional assistance if the student has already passed the MHSA. Additional instructional assistance must be offered to students who do not achieve the passing score on the MHSA before they can retake the test.

20. **Question:** When a student retakes an assessment and scores lower than the first time, which score counts toward the combined-score?

**Answer:** The higher score counts toward the combined-score.

21. **Question:** Can a student use the combined-score option regardless of how many assessments the student actually passes?

**Answer:** Yes.

22. **Question:** Is the local school system required to offer the combined-score option for students?

**Answer:** Yes. [COMAR 13A.03.02.09B\(3\)\(b\)](#) provides the combined-score option for students. All students must have access to all the scoring options provided under the regulations.

#### **D. Approved Alternative Assessments**

23. **Question:** Can a student satisfy his/her English and/or algebra assessment graduation requirements using a means other than earning a passing score on the Maryland High School Assessment or by successfully completing a Bridge Project? Can high school students opt to substitute certain AP and IB tests for English and algebra High School Assessments?

**Answer:** Yes, students can satisfy their English and algebra assessment graduation requirements using an MSDE Approved Alternative Assessment. See page 9.

#### **E. Bridge Plan for Academic Validation**

24. **Question:** When should a Bridge Project be scored in light of the stipulation that a student must take and fail an assessment twice before a successfully completed Bridge Project may be used to satisfy a Maryland Assessment Graduation requirement but can start a Bridge Project after one failure answer, when should a Bridge Project be scored?

**Answer:**

It is acceptable to score the project before or after the retake of the assessment. However the score cannot be submitted in lieu of the assessment until the second attempt. The new projects are designed as a tool that provides the "appropriate assistance to strengthen areas of weakness" mandated by [COMAR 13A.03.02.06.C](#).

25. **Question:** What happens if there is no opportunity to retake the failed assessment due to scheduling errors?

**Answer:** The second attempt regulation could be waived if a waiver request is made by the local superintendent to the State Board under [COMAR 13A.01.01.02-1](#). In the waiver process, the State Superintendent receives the waiver request and makes a recommendation to the State Board to grant or deny the waiver.