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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: January 29, 2018
SUBJECT: Social Studies Assessments

PURPOSE:

To provide a follow up to the December presentation to the Board which updated progress on Md. Ed. Art §7-203, Education Accountability Program, as it pertains to social studies assessments in high school American Government and eighth grade United States History.

BACKGROUND

At the December 4, 2017 work meeting of the Board, four questions were posed as a follow up to the presentation on the social studies assessment program. A summary of responses appear below.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Describe how locals assess US History, provide samples and scoring/results.

The assessment options vary by LEA; however, all give common district-wide benchmarks and a final. Some LEAs also use common unit assessments, common writing tasks and common source analysis tasks. Several LEAs tie these assessments/tasks to the teacher SLOs. Harford County has volunteered to share their final exam but it must remain a secure document so they do not have to create another one due to its being made public.

Has the testing cap impacted US History testing?

The testing cap has impacted US History testing. There are varying responses from the LEAs on how they are accommodating for this legislative mandate. Several LEAs are no longer administering pre-assessments in social studies. The length of the assessments have also been shortened.

How does passing HSA compare to local testing results?

For the LEAs that use assessment tools as predictors for student success on the HSA, common district-wide benchmarks and the final exam are comprised of public release items from previous HSA exams. There has not been a study to determine the percent of students that pass the local 8th grade final or middle school social studies assessments compared to the percent that pass the Government High School Assessment.

When will the revision of the Social Studies Standards take place?

A review of the current six social studies standards will be done during the summer of 2018.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

None

ACTION:

For information only.