



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

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

DATE: December 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Waiver request for Seniors taking the American Government Assessment in the 2020-2021 School Year

The purpose of this memo is to clarify graduation requirements for seniors in the 2020-2021 school year who need to take the high school assessment in American Government in the 2020-2021 school year.

All students are required to earn credit in American Government in order to graduate (COMAR 13A.03.02.03B(7)). Students must also take and pass the high school assessment in American Government as a graduation requirement (COMAR 13A.03.02.06A and B). This requirement, in addition to being required in COMAR, is included in the Maryland Code, Education §7-203, which states: “The following assessments shall be implemented and administered annually... At the high school level, a statewide, standardized, end-of-course assessment that is aligned with and that measures each public school student's skills and knowledge of the State's adopted curricula for the core content areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies.”

Depending on the scheduling model utilized in high schools across the State, many students taking American Government will complete the American Government course at the end of first semester (late January 2021). The assessment window for these students is January 11, 2021, through February 5, 2021. There is an additional testing window February 22, 2021 through June 4, 2021. Based on the conditions created by the pandemic, students are receiving virtual instruction, which makes administering a secure assessment problematic. Second semester may face the same challenges.

Therefore, the Maryland State Department of Education is requesting a waiver of COMAR 13A.03.02.06A and B *Maryland High School Assessments* for seniors who need to take the high school assessment in American Government in the 2020-2021 school year from taking and passing the assessment. The request also includes a waiver for seniors in the 2020-2021 school year from completing the Bridge Plan for American Government. These students must still pass the American Government course.



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

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: December 8, 2020
SUBJECT: Waiver request for Seniors taking the American Government Assessment in the 2020-2021 School Year

PURPOSE:

To request a waiver of graduation requirements for 2020-2021 seniors who need to take the high school assessment in American Government in the 2020-2021 school year.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact the mode of instruction in Maryland schools. Since the opening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year, local school systems have continually implemented virtual instruction along with multiple models of in-person instruction including returning small groups of students and utilizing a hybrid model. Due to the increased impact of the pandemic, as of December 2020, the majority of schools have returned to full virtual instruction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

All students are required to earn one credit in American Government in order to graduate (COMAR 13A.03.02.03B(7)). Students must also take and pass the high school assessment in American Government as a graduation requirement (COMAR 13A.03.02.06A and B).

Many students taking American Government will complete the American Government course at the end of first semester (late January 2021). The assessment window for these students is January 11, 2021, through February 5, 2021. Based on the conditions created by the pandemic, students are receiving virtual instruction, which makes administering a secure assessment problematic. Second semester may face the same challenges. Graduation for seniors should not be jeopardized by conditions created by the pandemic.

ACTION:

Request approval of a waiver of graduation requirements for 2020-2021 seniors who need to take the high school assessment in American Government in the 2020-2021 school year. Earning one credit in the American Government course remains a graduation requirement for seniors.