



Harford County Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford elementary/middle state test scores remain high *State targets continue to rise; Harford schools hold steady in 2011*

Harford County Public Schools students continue to achieve at a high rate of proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA) taken by third through eighth graders in reading and mathematics. Close to 90 percent of elementary and middle school students are performing at a proficient level in reading, and middle school students are demonstrating equally high performance in reading and lower but improving proficiency levels in mathematics. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) data released today regarding the 2011 MSAs, statewide, student proficiency rates in both reading and mathematics remain high. Since 2004, proficiency rates in both content areas have improved at the elementary and middle school levels statewide and in Harford County. Increases in Harford County have been particularly great in middle school, where the proficiency rate in mathematics increased by nearly 19 points.

The MSA is the assessment administered in Maryland to meet accountability requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In order to attain Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), all students in a school and disaggregated subgroups must achieve state-established proficiency rates, or annual measurable objectives (AMO), for both reading and mathematics. The AMOs reflect increasingly rigorous targets, leading to 100 percent proficiency by 2014. The ten distinct student sub-group areas, as defined by NCLB, include students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners (ELL), students receiving Free and Reduced-priced Meals (FaRMS) and students categorized by seven different race/ethnicity groups. In addition, elementary and middle schools must meet the AMO for attendance rates.

In addition to high proficiency rates countywide, 18 of Harford County's 41 elementary and middle schools achieved a 90 percent or better proficiency rate in reading and mathematics, and an additional eight schools achieved 90 percent or better proficiency in reading only. The number of students achieving advanced levels of proficiency has also grown. Since 2004, for example, the percent of advanced scores in mathematics has more than doubled in every grade. In reading, nearly or more than half the students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 scored at the advanced level this year.

"As our schools reach the highest levels of proficiency – well into the 90's – significant increases become more difficult to achieve," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert M. Tomback. "With that said, our administrators and teachers continue to work diligently to identify and address the needs of individual children, helping each to meet the high expectations established."

As AMOs increase, this year reaching 85 percent in the elementary schools for reading and mathematics, exceeding 85 percent for middle school reading and reaching 79 percent for middle school mathematics, Harford County schools are making progress. This year, 75 percent of the elementary schools met AYP. Of those, four schools—Forest Hill, Fountain Green, Ring Factory, and Youth's Benefit—achieved more than 95 percent proficiency in reading and mathematics. The elementary schools that did not achieve AYP were Magnolia, William Paca/Old Post Road, Bakerfield, Churchville, Deerfield, Edgewood, Hall's Cross Roads, Meadowvale and Riverside.

(more)



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Page 2

As part of the NCLB legislation, Title I elementary schools beginning their second consecutive year in the comprehensive needs pathway without making AYP must offer Supplement Educational Services (SES). In addition to offering school choice, William Paca/Old Post Road and Magnolia elementary schools will both offer SES for the 2011-12 school year. SES refers to extra academic help (tutoring) in subjects such as reading and mathematics, which is provided to eligible Title I students who are enrolled at either Magnolia or William Paca/Old Post Road. Tutoring services are provided by MSDE approved private vendors and are offered during after-school hours.

Although Magnolia and William Paca/Old Post Road elementary schools did not make AYP, both schools showed positive growth in sub-group scores. In 2011, William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School experienced a substantial 17 percentage point increase in proficiency for special education students and a five percent increase for all and for FaRMS students. In addition, of the twenty sub-groups total for reading and mathematics, Magnolia increased or remained stable in nineteen sub-groups; William Paca/Old Post Road increased or remained stable in sixteen sub-groups.

This year, Bel Air and Patterson Mill middle schools achieved AYP. Although Aberdeen Middle School remains on the 2011 Schools in Improvement List, scores increased for nearly every subgroup, including a 30-point increase for ELL students in reading. In addition, the math proficiency rate increased for all students from 66 percent to 69 percent. Havre de Grace Middle School also showed improvement in mathematics, increasing eight percentage points.

The performance of students in traditionally underperforming subgroups is improving but has yet to achieve the standard. However, many achievement gaps are being reduced. For instance, since 2005, the difference in reading proficiency rates between elementary special education students and students in the aggregate has fallen from 25 points to 18 points. In elementary mathematics, the difference in proficiency between FaRMS students and students in the aggregate has been reduced from 16 points to 11 points.

As reported by MSDE, due to the recent [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) changes, new reporting regulations have made it challenging to identify trends in MSA data from 2010 to 2011. Although subgroup accountability for Maryland districts remains at five students, reporting will only occur for groups of 10 students or more. No race trends will be reported by MSDE this year, as categories have changed. In addition, reporting percentages will go only as high as 95 percent or above and as low as five percent or below. Percentages will also be rounded to the nearest whole number. These federal changes have been made in an effort to protect student privacy.

For more information regarding Harford County and State MSA and AYP data, visit the Maryland Report Card website at www.MDReportCard.org.

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