



## *Harford County Public Schools*

102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014 ● Teri D. Kranefeld ● Manager of Communications  
office: 410-588-5203 ● cell: 443-752-2062 ● [teri.kranefeld@hcps.org](mailto:teri.kranefeld@hcps.org) ● [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) ● fax: 410-893-2478

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **HARFORD STUDENTS REALIZE GAINS ON STATE TESTS Graduation rate continues to rise, elementary reading proficiency soars**

Harford County Public Schools achieved a graduation rate of 88.38 percent for the class of 2010, an increase of 1.65 percent compared to 2009, and outpaced the state average of 86.6 percent, according to data released today, Wednesday, October 6, by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The 2010 graduation rate increase represents the second highest graduation rate ever achieved for the county and the third consecutive year of improvement in that area. In addition, elementary students excelled on the Maryland State Assessment (MSA), demonstrating 90.1 percent proficiency in reading and nearly that many, 89.4 percent proficient, in math. Middle school students also realized an increase with 87.7 percent proficient in reading and 77.3 percent in math. High school scores remained steady in math at 92 percent proficient and fell slightly in reading by four points to 81.2 percent.

To meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Maryland, all students within a school, as well as eight student subgroups within that school (African American, Asian, White, and Hispanic students, those students receiving free and reduced price meals, students with limited English proficiency, and students receiving special education services) must reach the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) in both reading and math, and other indicators. Graduation rate is the “other” academic measure for AYP in high schools while elementary/middle schools are measured on attendance rate. Both groups achieved attendance rates of 95 percent, surpassing the state standard of 93.7 percent.

“Harford County realized gains in many areas of the statewide assessments due to the work and dedication of our students, teachers, administrators and parents,” said Superintendent Robert M. Tomback. “However, we will continue to focus our resources and attention on student achievement in all areas for every child.”

Graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates by the sum of dropouts for grades nine through 12, plus the number of high school graduates. Bel Air, Fallston, C. Milton Wright, Harford Tech, North Harford, and Patterson Mill high schools all achieved graduation rates higher than 90 percent. In order to graduate, students must pass each of the four state High School Assessments (HSAs), achieve a combined score of 1,602 on all four tests, participate in the Bridge Plan Program, or receive a waiver. Countywide, 95.7 percent of students met the requirement through the test, exceeding the statewide average by 10.7 percent.

The number of students meeting the HSA requirement through the Bridge Program increased from 45 to 99; however the number of students requesting a waiver decreased by half compared to 2009. For the second consecutive year, no Harford County Public Schools students failed to graduate because of the HSA requirement.

(More)



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There are currently eight schools in various stages of school improvement, two elementary, three middle, and three high schools. Two of the schools currently in School Improvement -- North Harford Middle and Edgewood High School -- met AYP in 2010. To exit school improvement, they will need to achieve AYP again in 2011. Edgewood Middle School exited school improvement in 2010 realizing an increase in all subgroup areas.

Two high schools failed to meet the AMO for graduation rate: Joppatowne High and the Alternative Education Center, while the remaining schools improved by meeting or exceeding the objective for 2010.

The challenges that all school systems face in meeting AYP continue to grow as the percent of proficient students required for a subgroup (or all students) continues to rise until 2014 when all students must be proficient in all areas. In addition, the confidence interval (or acceptable range set below and above the AMO) will decrease each year requiring all student subgroups to meet the exact target in order to achieve proficiency.

Individual high school scores, system-level AYP, and state-level AYP data are now available on the MSDE report card website ([www.MDReportCard.org](http://www.MDReportCard.org)).

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