



Press Release

102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014 • Teri D. Kranefeld, Manager of Communications
Office: 410-588-5203 • teri.kranefeld@hcps.org • www.hcps.org • fax: 410-893-2478

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford students on track with new accountability requirements

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) achieved a graduation rate of 87.4 percent based on the class of 2011 students. This rate represents a slight increase from the 85.7 percent rate for the class of 2010. For accountability purposes, the graduation rate is lagged for one year. The state graduation rate is not expected to be released by the Maryland State Department of Education until January 2013.

Graduation rate is calculated by dividing the total number of diplomas awarded by the number of students who entered the ninth grade four years earlier. Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, Fallston, Harford Technical, North Harford and Patterson Mill high schools all achieved graduation rates higher than 90 percent.

“We are proud of our students and staff for their continued hard work and diligence to improve our overall graduation rate each year by ensuring that all of our students receive the proper preparation for life beyond high school,” said Superintendent Robert M. Tomback. “Our goal remains that each and every student graduating from our schools is equipped for college and/or a career.”

In order to graduate, students must pass each of the Maryland High School Assessments (HSA), achieve a combined minimum score on all HSA tests, participate in the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation program or receive a waiver. Countywide, 94.8 percent of students met the requirement through success on the assessments. This exceeds the state’s overall pass rate of 90.1 percent. The remaining students met the HSA requirements through the Bridge Plan or by waiver.

This year, Maryland was granted flexibility regarding the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. The new Maryland accountability plan focuses on student growth, on-time graduation rates, and college and career readiness for all students. While the assessments remain unchanged, the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), or state-established proficiency rates, are calculated differently to reflect school-specific data based on 2011 baseline data. Rather than focusing on all students achieving 100 percent proficiency by 2014, the new plan sets a trajectory for steady increased student proficiency by 2017.

As in the past, accountability measures all students, as well as racial subgroups and groups of students receiving additional services, such as special education and English Language Learners. As a result of the NCLB flexibility granted to Maryland, the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) indicator has been eliminated. Therefore, schools not meeting the AMOs will no longer be classified on a school improvement list. Maryland’s new plan now focuses special attention on the schools with subgroups not meeting their AMOs.

This year, four of the 10 HCPS high schools did not meet the AMOs for graduation rate. One high school did not meet in one subgroup area for reading proficiency. The focus will remain on providing support and intervention for those schools who did not meet all of their AMOs.

Harford County and individual high school scores are now available on the MSDE report card website (www.MDReportCard.org).

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