

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford graduation rate continues upward trend
Students remain on track with new accountability requirements

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) achieved a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 88.4 percent for the class of 2012 students. This rate represents a slight increase from the 87.4 percent four-year adjusted cohort rate for the class of 2011. For accountability purposes, the graduation rate is lagged for one year.

According to Maryland State Department of Education (www.mdreportcard.org), the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. For any given cohort, students who are entering grade 9 for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently “adjusted” by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out or are withdrawn from the school system during that same period. Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, Fallston, Harford Technical, North Harford and Patterson Mill high schools all achieved graduation rates higher than 90 percent in the ‘all students’ category for which schools are held accountable.

“Our graduation rate as a county increases steadily each year, which is a true testament to the hard work and dedication of our students and staff,” said Interim Superintendent of Schools Barbara Canavan. “As a school community, we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that each individual child reaches his or her maximum potential and is adequately prepared for college and/or 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, nearly 96 percent of students met the requirement through passing all tests or achieving the combined minimum score. This well exceeds the state’s overall rate of approximately 90 percent. The remaining students met the HSA requirements through the Bridge Plan or by waiver.

Maryland was granted flexibility regarding the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, and the new state accountability plan emphasizes 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 current plan sets a trajectory for steady increased student proficiency for the next several years.

Harford County and individual high school scores are now available on the MSDE report card website (www.mdreportcard.org). For more information from MSDE, please access the [press release](#).

In addition to the climbing graduation rate, HCPS students achieved a 25 percent increase in Advanced Placement (AP) participation and realized gains in each of the three tested areas on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). See the previously distributed [press release](#) for more details.

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