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Maryland State Department of Education Provides Update to Statewide Spring 2022 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) Results

Maryland Students Return to Pre-Pandemic Performance on English Language Arts (ELA) Assessments; Maryland Students Continue Performing Below Proficient in Mathematics with Many Students Performing Just Below Proficiency.

BALTIMORE, MD (January 24, 2023) – Today at the January Board meeting, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released an update to 2021-2022 school year English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessment data, which detail student proficiency in the first administration of the new Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). Following national assessment trends, statewide ELA results signal a return to pre-pandemic proficiency rates with improvements across all grade levels and student groups. The percentage of students proficient on the math assessments has not returned to pre-pandemic levels of proficiency. Maryland math assessment data results also indicate a decreasing proficiency in math as students advance from third to eighth grades, demonstrating a persistent decline in the mastery of math skills evident prior to the pandemic. Although math outcomes reflect national trends of persistent low proficiency rates, the results show that many students are near proficiency levels, scoring in the performance level just below proficient. For example, statewide data indicates that while 24.6% of fifth grade students were proficient in math, 49.4% of fifth graders scored at performance level 2, developing learners.

Maryland students have returned to pre-pandemic proficiency in ELA, with students across all grade levels attaining similar or improved proficiency rates in comparison to school year 2018-2019 ELA performance. Results varied across local education agencies (LEAs), with a low of 21% to a high of 64% proficient. More students in third, fourth and sixth grades scored at the proficient level this past school year in comparison to the 2018-2019 school year. In the high school English 10th grade assessment, 53% of all students taking the assessment were proficient, an increase of 10 percentage points as compared to the 2018-2019 school year.

In mathematics, student performance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. In fact, math proficiency percentages for grades 3 through 8 combined decreased from 33% in 2018-2019 to 22% in 2021-2022. In middle school, 18% of sixth grade students were proficient in math and just 7% of students who took the grade 8

assessment were proficient. LEA results varied from 7% to 38% of students proficient in mathematics. The percent of students proficient in Algebra I was 14%, below pre-pandemic results of 27% proficient in 2019.

With national data indicating that grade levels were affected differently by the pandemic, an analysis of cohort data provides information on the performance of the same students over time. Nationally, an analysis of test results that followed groups of students between school years 2016-2017 and 2021-2022 in 21 states demonstrated a decline in middle school math proficiency rates 3-4 times greater than the decline in ELA. Following cohorts of students over time in Maryland, ELA proficiency has increased 4-5 percentage points between third and eighth grades, while math proficiency decreased by 24-26 percentage points.

“State investment in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, emergency federal funding, bold leadership, and the development and implementation of our strategic plan must provide the foundation and resources needed to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and ensure all students have every opportunity to thrive academically, socially and emotionally,” said Maryland State Board of Education President Clarence C. Crawford. “Just as we saw notable improvements between the early fall assessment and this past spring, we will continue to push forward and partner with LEAs in redoubling our efforts so that all students have the opportunity to master both ELA and mathematics skills for success in school, college, career and life.”

“As a result of the inspiring work and commitment of our educators and school leaders, we continue to address and overcome the learning challenges that have long existed and were only exacerbated by the pandemic. Even as we begin to return to pre-pandemic outcomes, our latest MCAP results underscore that normal is not good enough, especially for our historically underserved students,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “By leveraging best in class and evidenced-based strategies to accelerate student learning, MSDE must provide the guidance, leadership, and support to carry out the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future boldly, collaboratively and with urgency. We must do whatever it takes to ensure that every student has access to excellent education opportunities to realize their full potential at every stage and transition point of their academic journeys from elementary school to high school graduation and beyond.”

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to assess students annually in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in ELA and mathematics. The assessment measures mastery of Maryland content standards to ensure that all students are progressing and receiving the necessary supports for remediation, acceleration, and enrichment. The newly designed MCAP ELA and mathematics assessments were administered to Maryland students for the first time in Spring 2022, and include four student performance levels: distinguished learner, proficient learner, developing learner and beginning learner. Both distinguished and proficient learners are considered proficient.

All Maryland students participating in the Spring 2022 assessments will receive an Individual Student Report (ISR). This report enables educators and families to better understand a student’s proficiency on Maryland content standards individually and in comparison, to peers in their school, county or city, and the State. The 2021-2022 assessment results, including disaggregation of data by LEA and student groups, will be published on the Maryland Report Card website. Individual student data has been provided to the LEAs, and printed student reports will be sent to the LEAs in March. Results in the future will be made available more expeditiously following the completion of the administration of the assessments.

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