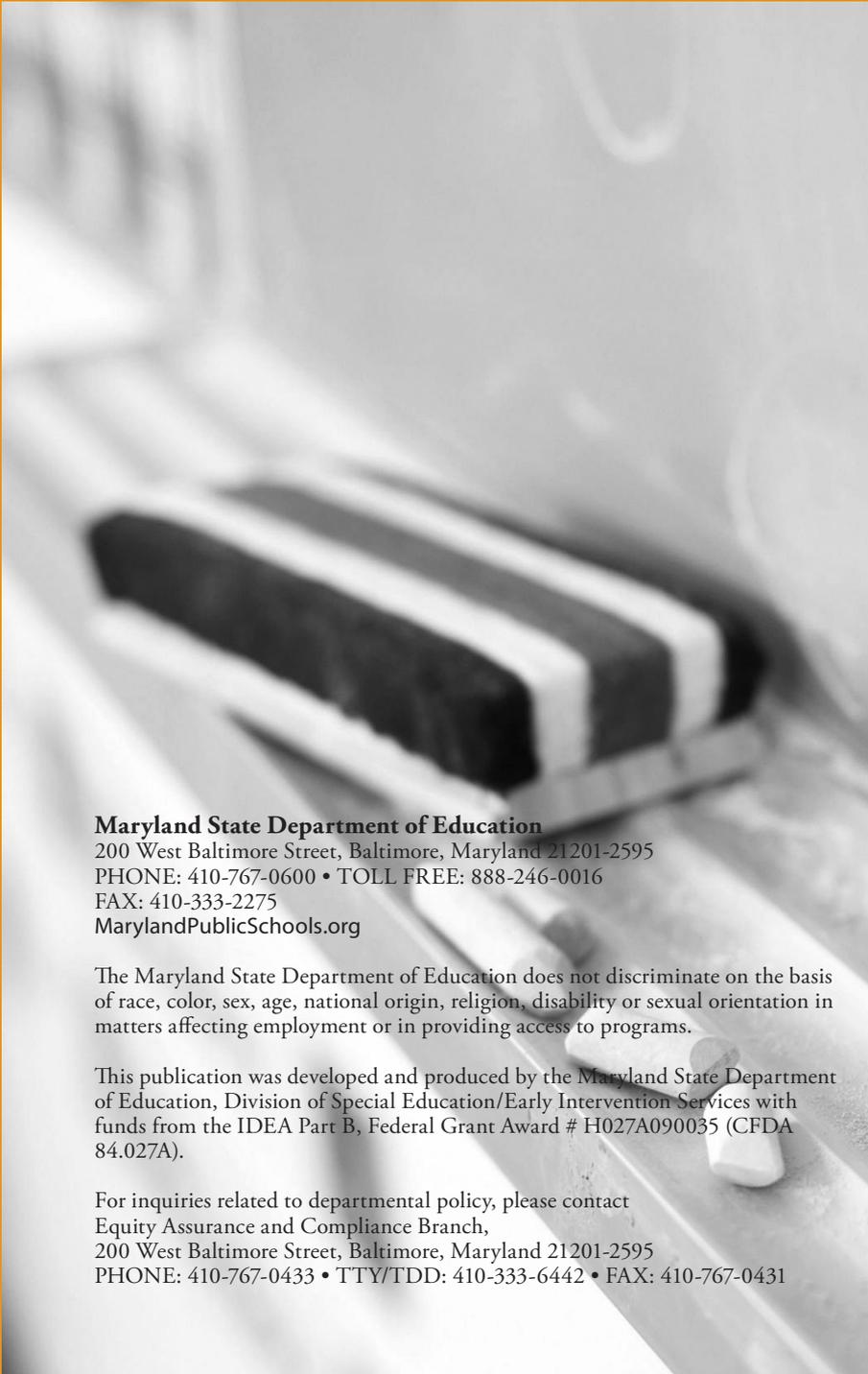




A Parent's Guide

Maryland's plan for preK-12 education 2009-2010



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Introduction

Parents want the best education possible for their child. In Maryland, no matter where you live, no matter where your child goes to school, students are getting an outstanding education. Maryland's 24 school systems have made great strides in improving public education from prekindergarten through high school to ensure children are getting a high-quality education.

This guide provides information and online links, including:

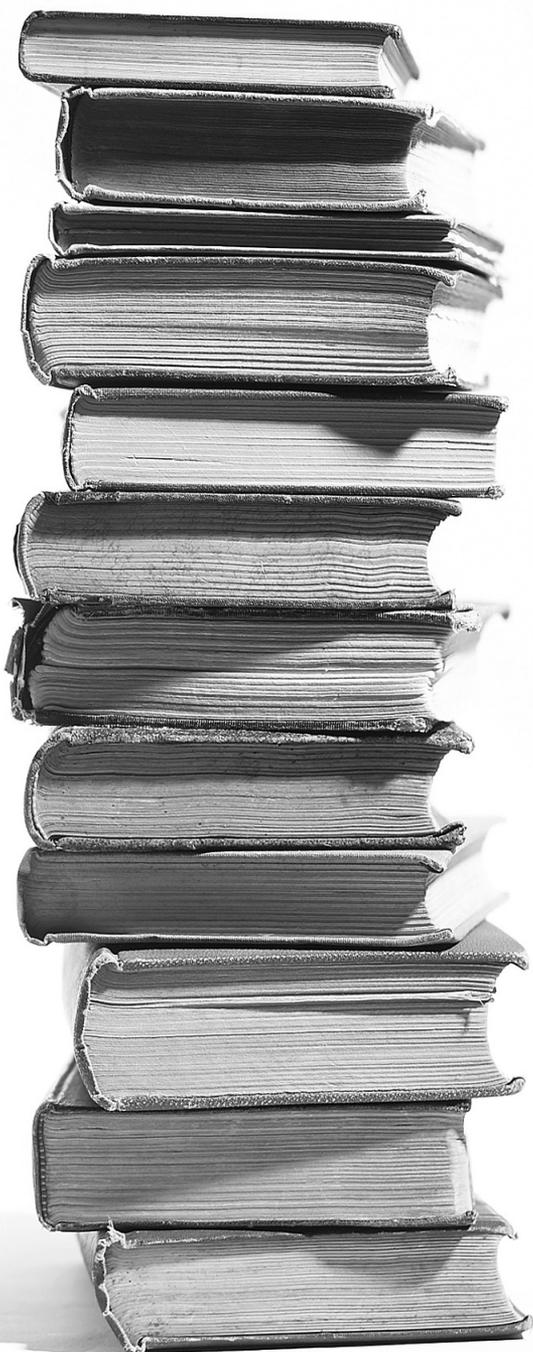
- Maryland's state testing and reporting processes
- Programs available to support student achievement
- Ways parents can be involved in their child's education
- Help for children with disabilities and special needs
- Programs to help plan for a child's future

For general information about the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), go to MarylandPublicSchools.org.

For additional information about Maryland public education, go to

- MdK12.org
- MdReportCard.org
- HSAexam.org

For a list of local school system websites, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/schoolsystems.



Foundation For Life

Students need to know and be able to do more than ever before. The State Curriculum (SC), and accountability and assessment standards are in place so every student can have a strong education foundation.

What is State Curriculum (SC)?

The State Curriculum (SC) provides clear and detailed information about what Maryland students should know and be able to do at each grade level. All of Maryland's 24 local school systems have included the SC as part of the local school system curriculum. For more information, go to

mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/index.html.



What are the benefits of the State Curriculum (SC)?

The SC ensures that no matter where a child attends school, he/she will be held to high expectations and will learn the same challenging skills as other students across Maryland. The SC:

- provides teachers with the content students must master to be successful on statewide assessments; and
- helps reduce the amount of time spent repeating and reviewing skills each school year.

The SC gives teachers a basic foundation to build lessons upon, leaving ample opportunity to go beyond the state standards.

What are Maryland's statewide assessments?

Maryland statewide assessments are based on the SC. Maryland has assessments for the grade levels as follows:

- Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) in kindergarten measures social and personal development; language and literacy; mathematical thinking; scientific thinking; social studies; the arts; and physical development. For more information go to [Instruction - Early Education on MdK12.org](#).
- Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) cover math and reading from grades 3 through 8; and science in grades 5 and 8. For more information go to [Assessments - Maryland School Assessments on MdK12.org](#).
- Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs) cover four core subject areas – algebra/data analysis, English, government, and biology. For more information, go to [HSAexam.org](#).

Foundation For Life

How are student statewide assessment scores used?

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires every state to measure reading, math, and science achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Maryland fulfills NCLB by reporting MSA and HSA scores to the U.S. Department of Education. For more information about NCLB, go to www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml.

Statewide tests are useful for:

- guiding school-wide curriculum development efforts;
- creating or modifying classroom lesson plans;
- understanding a child's academic strengths and weaknesses;
- developing individualized strategies for that child; and
- providing information on where a child may need extra support.

How will I know how my child did on an assessment?

You will receive a Home Report with your child's scores from your local school system. Contact your child's school or the Local Accountability Coordinator for the local school system to find out when the Home Report will be sent. For a list of local school system websites, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/schoolsystems.

Where can I find out how my child's school is doing on statewide assessments?

Information about how schools, school systems, and the state are doing is printed in an annual "report card" (the Maryland School Performance Report). The online report provides an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) chart for each school that shows whether or not the school made all of its performance goals. To find your child's school information, go to MdReportCard.org and use the navigation bar at the top.



Support for Students

MSDE views each student as a whole person with intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development needs. An important way to meet those needs is to ensure the entire family has access to support systems. MSDE's Division of Student, Family, and School Support has a number of programs and initiatives in place within schools and school systems to help parents and students with needs or issues beyond academics. These programs and initiatives cover areas such as:

- school counseling and career development;
- school psychology and social work;
- positive behavior and character education;
- drug-free schools and school safety;
- at-risk behavior education and intervention;
- school health services;
- neglected and delinquent student strategies and interventions; and
- drop out prevention and alternative education.

For more information about MSDE's various programs, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/student-schoolsvcs/.

For information about specific programs and initiatives in place locally, contact your local school system or your child's school. For a list of local school system websites, go to

MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/schoolsystems.



Over thirty years of research show that early and active involvement by a parent throughout their child's education—helping with homework, talking about school, attending school activities—is the most powerful influence on student success in school and has benefits that reach far beyond the preK-12 years.

Parents are also a powerful influence in schools and school systems, and that influence can have tremendous benefits whether the involvement is within or outside the school building. Parent involvement has gone beyond volunteering in the classroom to transforming student performance and attitudes, fostering and leading school improvement initiatives, and strengthening support for school staff and administration.

For examples of the many ways parents have been involved in Maryland public schools, go to the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award program website at MarylandPublicSchools.org/PIMA. Then talk to your child's principal or teacher to find out how you can be involved too.

Additional information about parent involvement can be found at Mdpta.org or ProjectAppleseed.org.



Early Learning (Prek-3)

A child begins learning the moment they are born. This is why access to high-quality early childhood programs is so important. Maryland is the first, and only, state to combine early childhood programs with early care and education programs into one Division of Early Childhood Development within MSDE. This approach helps coordinate the wide variety of services, training, and programs available for our youngest learners.

How can I find quality child care?

The division website lists community-based agencies, organizations, and program centers, from Judy Centers to Accredited Early Care and Education Programs, from Head Start and prekindergarten programs to resources to help pay for child care. To find child care near you, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care.



How can I help my child get ready to enter school?

At this age, everything is a learning experience for a child. Exposing your child to a wide variety of positive experiences as early as possible, like reading books; playing games (i.e. peek-a-boo, counting steps); listening to music; dancing; finding a good play group; and visiting museums, parks, and playgrounds, will help develop the skills teachers will be looking for in kindergarten. Ready at Five, in partnership with MSDE, has an online series called **Parent Tips** that has information about how parents can help build a child's skills and abilities which can be found at [ReadyAtFive.org](https://www.ReadyAtFive.org).

Maryland's Early Childhood Curriculum Project provides information and resources to child care and other nonpublic early childhood programs for three, four, and five-year-olds. For information about materials and how you can be assured that your child is learning the skills needed to start their kindergarten experience on the right foot, go to [MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/preschool_curriculum](https://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/preschool_curriculum).

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), a kindergarten-level assessment teachers complete for each student, is a set of indicators of what children should know and be able to do. The information collected allows teachers to plan instruction that will help develop the skills, behaviors, and abilities necessary to meet kindergarten expectations and move on to the first grade. For more information about the MMSR, go to www.MdSchoolReadiness.org or Instruction - Early Education on [MdK12.org](https://www.MdK12.org).

Elementary/Middle School (Grades 3-8)

In elementary school, students are beginning to stand on solid academic ground. By middle school, they are being prepared for the more rigorous work ahead in high school. These students are also trying to find their place in the world around them—basically, where they fit in at school and at home. MSDE’s Division of Student, Family and School Support is dedicated to helping parents nurture the whole child with a number of programs and initiatives so that your child has what he/she needs to develop to his or her fullest potential. For more information about MSDE’s programs and initiatives, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/ or contact your child’s school.

Every student will take Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) as part of the elementary and middle school experience. These statewide assessments measure how well children are learning so parents and educators can be sure every child has the opportunity to succeed. Along with other measures (such as homework, classwork, quizzes, and projects), the MSAs provide information about students’ academic progress—information that can help teachers and parents better support a student’s school work. For more information about the MSAs, go to MdK12.org.

The MSAs are given each spring in reading and mathematics for grades 3-8, and in science for grades 5 and 8. Parents should contact their school system for the specific test dates. More information about the MSAs can be found in *A Parent’s Guide to the MSAs*, available at MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/pubs_md_classroom [Vol. 13 No.1 July 2009].

Parents are sent a Home Report with their child’s MSA scores from the local school system. Reading and math scores are made available over the summer. Science scores are available the following September.



Supplemental Educational Services

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are available under the federal NCLB Act to students from low-income families in Title I schools in Year 2 of improvement, restructuring, or corrective action. Services can include free tutoring and other educational assistance.

The goal of SES is to help:

- students improve academically, especially in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- parents with options for getting a quality education for their child; and
- schools with a number of incentives to improve instruction.

Contact the school's counselor to find out if your child qualifies for SES. For more information about SES, go to

MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/esea/Supplemental+Educational+Services.

High School (Grades 9-12)

We live in a world that grows smaller by the mouse click. Maryland has worked hard to provide students with a rigorous and well-rounded education to help prepare them for the highly competitive, global marketplace.

Maryland High School Diploma

For a student to graduate from high school with a Maryland High School Diploma, he/she must meet the following graduation requirements:

- Complete all State course requirements — 21 specified credits
- Complete State service-learning requirements — 75 hours or equivalent
- Complete all State testing requirements (*see below*)
- Complete all local graduation requirements — local school systems frequently add course and other requirements beyond the State's minimum requirements

State Testing Requirement (High School Assessments)

Students have three options to meet the State testing requirement.

1. **Pass each of the four High School Assessment (HSA) tests**

The passing scores for each of the HSAs are: algebra/data analysis, 412; English, 396; biology, 400; and government, 394.

There are two potential test substitutions:

- **Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) tests** – For students who have earned a score approved by the MSDE
- **Modified HSA** – An alternative test for students with disabilities who meet the specific participation criteria based on the IEP process

2. **Combined-Score Option.** Students must earn a combined score of 1602 when the four HSA test scores are added together. This allows students to offset a low score on one test with a high score on another test(s).
3. **Bridge Plan for Academic Validation.** Students who did not pass one or more of the HSAs after taking the test twice and meet eligibility criteria must successfully complete assigned projects in the specific HSA content area to fulfill the testing requirement for that content area.

Testing

Testing opportunities are available in October, January, May, and in the summer. A fifth test administration is available in April for seniors only. There is no limit to the number of times a student can take an HSA test.

Locally-administered or Approved Assistance

Students who do not pass one or more of the HSAs must be offered locally-administered or approved assistance by their school. The student is responsible for taking advantage of the assistance to help prepare for retesting. A student must also participate in locally-administered or approved assistance to qualify for the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation option.

For more information about the HSAs and the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation, go to [HSAexam.org](https://hsaexam.org).

Contact your local school system or your child's school for local graduation requirements. For a list of local school system websites, go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/schoolsystems.

Special Education/Early Intervention

All public school students have a legal right to instructional and testing accommodations that will help them learn and demonstrate what they have learned. MSDE's Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) works with families, local early intervention systems, and local school systems to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to appropriate services and educational opportunities to which they are entitled under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

There are specific processes in the public school system and public agencies for developing individualized plans to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities. Parents with children, birth through 21 years old, with a suspected disability can begin the process of getting special assistance by writing a letter (and keeping a copy) to the school principal or by contacting the local **Child Find** office or by calling **1-800-535-0182**. When contacting Child Find, explain that you believe your child has a disability and needs services under IDEA, and request an evaluation to determine eligibility for services.

What happens once a student is identified as having a disability?

The school will begin the process of developing an individualized plan for the child. The plan will be a written document with supporting evaluation information that will specify how a child with disabilities will receive instruction, related services, and supports.

What kinds of plans are there?

- **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**. Through the lead agency for the local Infants and Toddlers Program, the IFSP is developed to provide services to eligible infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years old) and their families.
 - **Extended IFSP Option (3-5)**. Before the age of three, if a child with a current IFSP is determined eligible for special education and related services, the child's parent may choose to continue to receive early intervention services with an educational

component that promotes school readiness and incorporates preliteracy, language, and numeracy skills through an IFSP until the child enters kindergarten.

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP).** Through the local school system, the IEP is developed for students ages 3-21, who as a result of a disability require special education and related services.
- **504 Plan.** The 504 Plan is for students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- **English Language Learner Plan (ELL).** The ELL Plan is for students whose primary or home language is other than English and have been assessed as having limited or no ability to understand, speak, read, or write English.

Are the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plan the same?

No. Students with disabilities identified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act receive different services and supports.

Who participates in the development of an IEP?

An IEP team is created that includes the student's parents/guardians, a general education teacher, a special educator, a public agency representative, someone who can interpret instructional implications of evaluation results, and when appropriate, the student. The team may also include others who have knowledge or expertise about the student or the student's disability.

Does a student with special needs as outlined in an IEP, ELL, or 504 Plan have to take statewide tests?

Yes. All students must participate. Maryland is committed to improving achievement for each student including measuring the progress of students with disabilities, special needs, and limited English proficiency. MSDE has developed a number of alternative testing and accommodation options so that students who receive special education services can take statewide tests.

Special Education/Early Intervention

What are Maryland's alternative statewide testing options for students with disabilities?

MSDE has developed a number of alternative statewide testing options so students who receive special education services can participate in Maryland's accountability system.

- **Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA).** Given to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and grade 10 for whom the IEP team has determined that the students meet the specific participation requirements. The Alt-MSA is a portfolio assessment tailored to each student's unique instructional needs in reading, mathematics and science. Students taking the Alt-MSA do not receive a high school diploma. They receive a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.
- **Modified Maryland School Assessment (Mod-MSA).** Given to a small number of students in grades 3-8 with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for whom the IEP team has determined that the students meet the specific participation requirements. The Mod-MSA is based on grade level content standards and modified academic achievement standards. The Mod-MSA incorporates variation in test delivery to meet the specific learning characteristics of the students. This does not include those students with disabilities taking the Alt-MSA.
- **Modified High School Assessments (Mod-HSA).** Given to a small number of students in grades 9-12 with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for whom the IEP team has determined that the students meet the specific participation requirements. The Mod-HSA is based on Core Learning Goals and modified academic achievement standards. The Mod-HSA incorporates variation in test delivery to meet the specific learning characteristics of the students. This does not include those students with disabilities taking the Alt-MSA. Students pursuing the Mod-HSA are not precluded from completing the requirements for the regular high school diploma.

What support is available to families?

MSDE supports a network of family support services personnel in every jurisdiction in Maryland. These parent-friendly support personnel work directly with families to answer questions, provide guidance and resources, and assist parents in the planning process. The link to a complete listing of MSDE's Special Education Statewide Family Support Services Contacts can be found below.

Special Education Resources

MSDE Special Education Statewide Family Support Services Contacts:

[MarylandPublicSchools.org/msde/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/about/family_support_services](https://marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/about/family_support_services)

Local Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (Ages Birth – 3)
County-by-County Directory of Contacts:

[MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/directories/single_point_entry.htm](https://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/directories/single_point_entry.htm)

Local Child Find Phone Numbers (Age 3 – 21):

[MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/directories/child_find.htm](https://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/infant_toddlers/directories/child_find.htm)

Understanding the Evaluation, Eligibility, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process in Maryland

www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/6FB406E5-4D57-44B4-BB53-37C093D1DCC6/21840/UnderstandingtheIEP.pdf

MSDE Autism Connect: [AutismConnectMd.org](https://autismconnectmd.org)

Maryland Early Childhood Gateway: [MDECGateway.org](https://mdecgateway.org)

MSDE State Performance Plan Results: [MdIdeaReport.org](https://mdidea.org)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY): [Nichcy.org](https://nichcy.org)

Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE): [Directionservice.org/cadre](https://directionservice.org/cadre)

English Language Learners

Maryland has always attracted people from all nations as a great place to live and work. For families whose ability to speak English is limited, the challenge of entering the education system process can be overwhelming. MSDE has specific staff members, programs, and services to help families navigate the education system as well as learn English.

Who can I contact in the local school system?

Each local school system has an ELL (English Language Learning) coordinator to help parents and students with school system processes. Parents should contact the local school system headquarters or ask the school counselor who that person is. For a list of local school system websites, go to

MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/schoolsystems.

What is available for a student who does not speak English or who has limited English proficiency?

Students whose primary or home language is not English will be assessed for his/her proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. An English Language Learner (ELL) plan will then be developed by the school's ELL committee.

How does Maryland measure English language proficiency?

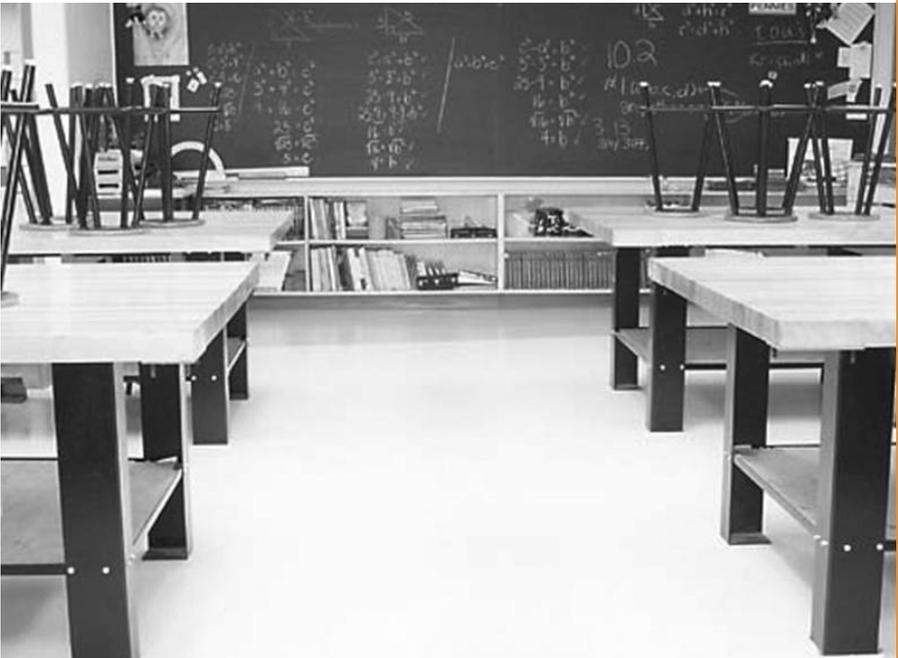
Maryland has adopted the Language Assessment Scales Links (LAS-Links) test, which is aligned with English language proficiency standards, to measure progress towards attainment of English language proficiency.

Are English Language Learners required to take statewide tests?

Yes. All students must participate. A recently arrived Limited English Proficient (LEP) student who has attended schools in the United States for less than 12 months is exempt from one administration of the State's English/language arts assessment. At the appropriate grade level, English language learners will take either the Maryland State Assessments (MSAs) in elementary/middle school or the High School Assessments (HSAs) in high school.

What accommodations are there for English Language Learners?

Each school's English Language Learner (ELL) committee makes decisions about appropriate accommodations for the ELL students' participation in statewide tests.



English Language Learners

What is required of the state and local school systems to measure the child's development and attainment of English proficiency?

Under the federal NCLB regulations for Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, states must conduct an annual statewide assessment of English Language Learners (ELL) and local school systems are required to meet Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) for ELLs from kindergarten through 12th grade. These AMAOs include:

- increases in the number or percentage of children making progress in learning English (AMAO I);
- increases in the number or percentage of children attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year (AMAO II); and
- making adequate yearly progress for limited English proficient children (AMAO III).

Since the 2006-2007 school year, Maryland has made all three required AMAO determinations for the 24 local school systems. Prior to the 2006-2007 school year, Maryland used AMAO I and II only for AMAO determinations.

If your child is an English Language Learner, contact your school's counselor to learn more about instruction and testing plans.

English Language Learners Resources

MSDE CONTACTS & INFORMATION

Karen Gianninoto, Specialist, Adult ESOL Programs

Telephone: 410-767-4150

Email: kgianninoto@msde.state.md.us

Title III:

MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/title_III/?WBCMODE=Presen%252%25%3e

MSDE Foreign Language Translation Publications:

MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/pubsother/foreign_translations.htm

MARYLAND RESOURCES

The Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs:

MarylandAsian.org

The Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs:

MarylandHispanics.org

Maryland State Parental Information Resource Center

<http://mdpirc.org>

NATIONAL RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Education

Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA):

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html

Tool Kit for Hispanic Families:

www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/2006toolkit/index.html

National PTA:

www.pta.org

Gifted and Talented



A gifted and talented student in Maryland is identified as “having outstanding talent and performing or showing the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students (Maryland Annotated Code §8-201)” as identified by using test scores, observations of gifted behaviors, and student work samples. Gifted and talented children have unique learning styles and instructional needs such as general intellectual ability (IQ), specific academic aptitudes (math, science, etc.), creativity (unique ideas and products), the visual and performing arts, and leadership. These students may learn more rapidly than their peers; seek to solve complex problems; invent novel solutions, products, or performances; and/or concentrate for long periods in an area of interest.

Maryland offers a continuum of programs in gifted education—some serving all students, and some serving considerably fewer. In general, as program intensity increases, the number of students participating decreases.

- Primary Talent Development Early Learning Program (PTD). This program involves a “thinking” curriculum which is used with preK–2nd grade students. The curriculum and strategies are based in GT and early childhood theory and practice. Teachers use open-ended, engaging lessons—not to teach discrete content, but to target one of the seven PTD expert learning behaviors: perceptiveness, communicativeness, inquisitiveness, persistence, resourcefulness, creativity, and leadership.
- Schoolwide Enrichment Programs. Most schools provide all students general enrichment activities that expose them to potential areas of interest: field trips, guest speakers, cultural events, etc. For students whose interest is piqued beyond general exploratory experiences, schools have implemented programs ranging from a Shakespeare Festival or Book Club for students interested in literature the Book Club; the Math Olympiad for those interested in math; debate for those into forensics; Black Saga for those into history; and TV Production for those into media.

- Magnet Schools/Center Programs for the Highly Gifted. Magnet schools/center program typically require students to go through an application process that is based on extensive criteria, including students' academic performance; standardized test scores; recommendations from teachers, parents, and school-based staff/committees; evidence of motivation, intellectual curiosity, analytical thinking, and creativity; and an indication that the student can succeed with accelerated and enriched instruction. The above-grade level curriculum is based on interdisciplinary, thematic units, and instruction promotes critical thinking, shared inquiry and application of research skills, authentic problem-solving, communication, academic risk-taking, and creative self-expression. Teaching and enrichment experiences are tailored to students' strengths and needs, their interests and learning styles, and their readiness levels.

One of the world's largest creative problem-solving programs for K-college learners is Destination ImagiNation. More than 400 Maryland teams in eight regions compete each year in brainstorming challenges that may cover the sciences, technology, mechanics, engineering, theater, improvisation, goal-setting, time and budget management, team-building, and leadership.. For more information, go to Maryland's Destination ImagiNation site: ImaginThis.org.

For more information about the specific programs and resources available in your area, contact your school principal or your local school system's program coordinator. The Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education (MCGATE) holds an annual conference for parents and educators, and has additional information at www.mcgate.org. You can also read more about Gifted Education in Maryland in MSDE's publication, Maryland Classroom, September 2008, Vol. 14, No. 1 at www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/pubs_md_classroom/ or go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented.

Career & Technology Education (CTE)

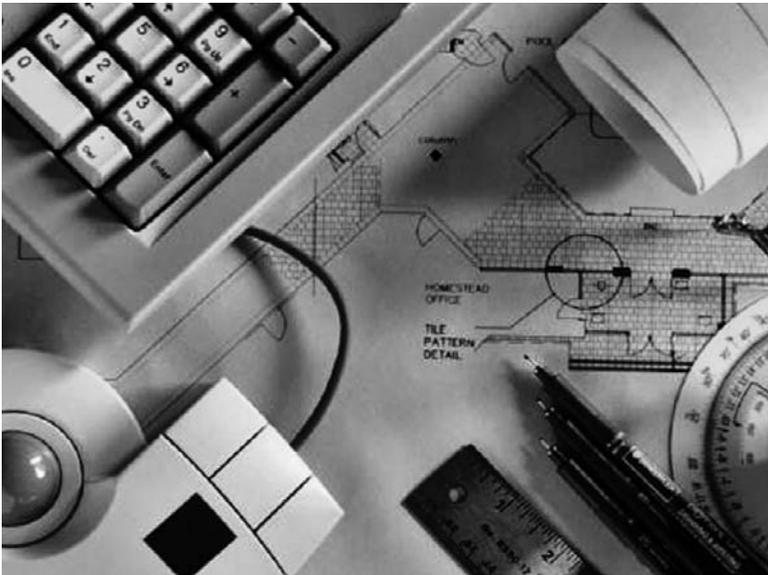
With the growth of careers in technology and the increased demand in other areas of employment, Maryland students can get a jump on future success by enrolling in career and technology education (CTE) programs. Maryland's CTE system, which has long been recognized as a national model, provides a diverse array of programs organized within 10 career clusters. The clusters help connect education to employment to provide a framework for responsive, well-articulated workforce development during secondary education.

MSDE collaborates with school systems, businesses, and industry leaders to develop and expand a number of diverse CTE programs in high-demand careers, such as those in the STEM disciplines. CTE programs typically begin at the 10th grade or later. Virtually all CTE programs offer students the chance to earn college credits and/or industry-recognized certification, credentials, or licensure.

Often, completing a CTE program of study, which includes work-based learning (e.g., internships, industry-mentored projects), can provide students with a head-start on college and careers. For instance, students completing the IT Networking Academy (a program in the Information Technology cluster) can earn college credit and a host of sought-after certifications: CompTIA A+, Network+, and Server+, plus Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician (CCENT), Network Associate (CCNA), and Network Professional (CCNP). In fact, Maryland's Cisco Academy was the first in the nation to offer advanced CCNP courses in high school. In addition, students can join local chapters of national student organizations such as Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) or Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). Participating in career and technical student organizations at the state and national level provides an added level of leadership and interpersonal skill training to help students expand their knowledge and career network.

MSDE has plans that will support more career development and exploration programs and resources for students transitioning from middle to high school. For more information about the specific programs and resources available in your area, contact your school principal or your local school system's program coordinator. You can read more about CTE programs in MSDE's publication, Maryland Classroom, April 2008, Vol. 13, No. 2 at

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications/pubs_md_classroom/ or go to MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology.



Libraries as an Educational Resource

Libraries have always been centers for information, but more and more, they are branching out and becoming vital community hubs providing a wide range of technology and educational resources. MSDE oversees approximately 180 public libraries, the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and the State Library Network, which provides access to materials in more than 400 libraries throughout Maryland. The Division of Library Services also works in close partnership with all MSDE divisions to develop programs and outreach activities for the entire community.

The Maryland public library system literally opens up a world of information with free, high-speed Internet connections available on all public-access computers. Today's librarians have become information specialists who can help guide visitors along the Internet and access online resources as easily as the book stacks.

With an MPOWER CARD, Maryland's statewide library card, students and parents can access materials from any public library across the state as well as websites and searchable databases to help with homework or school projects without even going to the library:

- **Face Time @ Your Library.** The initiative connects families and friends with "live" face-to-face chat anywhere in the world at Maryland's public libraries.
- **AskUsNow! [AskUsNow.info]** This service provides online access to a librarian to answer any question, 24 hours a day
- **SAILOR. [Sailor.lib.md.us]** A website portal that helps Maryland residents get information anywhere, anytime, including:
 - **Science Resource Center.** A science database that allows students, parents, and teachers access without being on site at the library or school
 - **WorldBook Encyclopedia.** A site that searches for articles, state-of-the art multimedia, editor-reviewed Web sites, periodical content, and more
 - **Student Research Center.** A search engine for magazines, reference books, photos, flags, etc.

Feedback

The Maryland State Department of Education strives to provide parents, students, educators, administrators, and the general public with up-to-date and informative materials about public education.

Comments about this publication can be sent to:
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Office of Academic Policy
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Baltimore, MD 21201-2595

While MSDE cannot send an individual response due to volume, we do appreciate your comments to help improve our publications and materials.



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