

APPENDIX B - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

I. THE PLAN, PRESENTATIONS, AND METHODS USED

The goal of the public engagement process was to (1) provide stakeholders with opportunities for learning about the High School Assessment, (2) collect input and feedback on elements of the assessment designs, and (3) identify key issues stakeholders believe the Maryland State Board of Education should consider in the design and implementation of the assessments.

When developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the HSA, the Maryland State Department of Education placed a high priority on and emphasized its sensitivity to the public knowing, hearing, discussing, inquiring, and making recommendations about the initiative. As a consequence, the Department included as one of the deliverables in the RFP the following:

Deliverable/Service 2: Plan, Coordinate, Facilitate, and Document Public Engagement (Work to be completed August 1996 through January 1997)

In response to MSDE's mandate, the College Board and ETS proposed a public engagement activity that had three primary purposes, namely (1) to inform stakeholders of the basic assumptions, specifications, requirements, and guidelines considered for several different test options; (2) to facilitate stakeholders' review of, reaction to, and input on the proposed options and alternative specifications; and (3) to obtain stakeholders' review and support of the modifications made to the initial test design options during the iterative design process.

Given the time line on which the HSA was being designed, it was necessary that public engagement activities occur concurrently with the initial design of the assessment system (Deliverable/Service 1), which involved the proposal of HSA design options that would be presented to stakeholders for their reaction and recommendations.

Three tasks were involved in the implementation of the public engagement activities:

- develop an overall plan, in conjunction with MSDE, for the involvement of key constituency groups in the public engagement process.
- schedule and coordinate all public engagement activities.
- document and analyze reactions, recommendations, and input obtained throughout the public engagement process.

A. Planning for Public Engagement

Following the award of the contract, College Board and ETS staff met with MSDE staff to review the proposed public engagement plan developed in the proposal and to clarify expectations and the respective roles of MSDE and the contractors. The activities coordinated by the College Board/ETS team are one component of the public engagement process. MSDE staff collaborated in this series of engagement activities. In addition, MSDE staff also conducted some separate public engagement activities during this period of time and will continue to interact with key

constituencies during the development of the High School Assessments (HSAs). This report only details activities and comments related to those public engagement activities conducted by the College Board and ETS and does not include feedback from additional activities undertaken solely by MSDE staff.

One major objective of the HSA public engagement process was to ensure that all major stakeholder groups were involved. The following constituencies were identified as the primary stakeholders to involve in the public engagement process; however, other groups were also considered and involved in specific activities:

- Parents of K-12 students
- Representatives of the state and local Parent-Teacher Associations
- Parents of students with special needs
- Community leaders
- Members of local boards of education
- Representatives from the legislative community
- Maryland educators, K-12
- Maryland educators representing subject-matter or content areas across the state
- Representatives from the Maryland State Teachers Association
- High school and college guidance/career counselors
- School and district administrators (e.g., principals, superintendents)
- Special education teachers
- Secondary students, including students with special needs
- Representatives from Maryland Higher Education
- Representatives from the Maryland Business Roundtable

Once these key constituencies were identified, a series of town meetings was planned in eight of the 24 local districts to ensure regional representation. In recognition of MSDE's expertise and awareness of state and local concerns, and in order to avoid duplication of efforts, College Board and ETS staff worked in a coordinated manner with the Department. Consequently, MSDE determined which of the proposed public engagement activities would involve College Board/ETS participation, which activities/constituencies should receive priority, the number of meetings held, and where and when those meetings should occur. Because MSDE was undertaking some additional public engagement activities separate from those coordinated with the College Board and ETS team, a substantial amount of coordination was required to ensure that there was no duplication of effort and responses to questions about the HSA were consistent. In many instances, MSDE staff were able to take advantage of already scheduled statewide meetings or conferences to interact with specific constituency groups, resulting in a more cost-effective and efficient engagement process. In other instances, special meetings were scheduled to provide groups with input on the HSA.

College Board and ETS staff had originally proposed a broad array of mediums and formats for some activities, such as electronic town meetings, videoconferencing, in-person town meetings, focus groups, individual interviews, and the creation of a World Wide Web page to collect reactions and input. In consultation with the Department, it was decided during the planning

meetings that the public engagement function would be best served by limiting the number of formats used and ensuring the facilitation of person-to-person dialogue. It was also decided that more person-to-person contact than originally proposed was needed. Thus, electronic means of delivering the HSA message and the creation of a World Wide Web page to collect reactions and input gave way to more meetings during which stakeholder groups could engage MSDE and College Board and ETS staff in dialogue. MSDE staff consulted with the contractors in advance of every public engagement activity and identified a "point of contact" with local districts, schools, and other constituencies involved in each activity.

B. Public Engagement Activities

Basically two different types of public engagement activities were involved in the work conducted by the College Board/ETS team between September and December, 1996. First, large open meetings or town meetings were conducted at eight of Maryland's local school districts. Open meetings were conducted with teachers, other educators, and school/district staff from 4-6 p.m., followed by a town meeting with members of the public (e.g., parents, students, local leaders) from 7-9 p.m. On September 20, correspondence was sent from Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, to the superintendents of all local districts in Maryland announcing that the High School Design effort had been awarded to the College Board and ETS. The correspondence noted that these organizations would be contacting the superintendents and principals for assistance in scheduling and disseminating information at the open meetings and town meetings. Dr. Grasmick requested that districts assist the College Board/ETS team in the public engagement activities and noted the importance of these meetings. Follow-up correspondence was mailed by the College Board to all superintendents, principals, and school improvement leaders at all schools (elementary, middle, high school) in Maryland during the next two weeks. This correspondence included specific requests for each school to notify teachers, staff, and parents of the importance of the HSA efforts, and details concerning the date and time of the public engagement activities. A second mailing to all superintendents and principals followed in late October as additional public engagement dates were scheduled. Copies of all correspondence are included in Appendix C.

Second, a series of smaller meetings was held with specific constituency groups. These smaller meetings were either scheduled to coincide with prescheduled meetings of the groups or were arranged by MSDE to provide an opportunity for input and feedback. All told, almost 40 different public engagement activities were suggested and scheduled by the Department to provide the following key constituency groups (stakeholders) access to information about the HSA (see the Public Engagement Matrix in APPENDIX C):

- MD Higher Education Panel (Two Meetings)
- Business Roundtable
- High School Principals (Two Meetings)
- Assistant Superintendents of Instruction
- Special Education Directors
- Western Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers (Washington County)
- Western Regional Town Meeting (Washington County)

- Special Education Parents and Advocates
- Curriculum Content Leaders - Science
- Curriculum Teams
- South Central Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers (Anne Arundel County)
- **South Central Regional Town Meeting (Anne Arundel County)**
- Curriculum Content Leaders - English
- **Queen Anne's County Town Meeting**
- Southern Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers (Charles County)
- **Southern Regional Town Meeting (Charles County)**
- Superintendents (Two Meetings)
- Baltimore City Content Supervisors and Teachers
- **Baltimore City Town Meeting**
- Eastern Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers (Caroline County)
- **Eastern Regional Town Meeting (Charles County)**
- North Central Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers (Baltimore County)
- **North Central Regional Town Meeting (Baltimore County)**
- Presidents of Local Boards of Education
- Eastern Shore Meeting of Content Supervisors and Teachers (Salisbury)
- **Eastern Shore Town Meeting (Salisbury)**
- Maryland Assessment Group
- Curriculum Content Leaders - Math
- High School Assessment Task Force (Two Meetings)
- Maryland Association of Student Councils
- Montgomery County Content Supervisors and Teachers
- **Montgomery County Town Meeting**
- Higher Education/K-16 Council

As might have been expected, the public engagement meetings were both small and large. The meetings were geographically dispersed to ensure that stakeholders from all parts of the State could conveniently attend and participate. This was especially true of the eight Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers Meetings and the Town Meetings that were held across the state. Approximately 1,800 individuals,¹ excluding College Board, ETS, and Department staff, participated. Overall, College Board and ETS staff had many opportunities to engage parents and community leaders and educators from across the state in discussions on the design of the HSA, including content leaders, principals, and superintendents. College Board and ETS staff had little or no opportunity to engage other stakeholder groups such as business leaders, the higher education community, and the PTA in the process. However, as noted above, MSDE has

¹ It was very difficult to obtain exact numbers of participants at each event. The College Board and ETS distributed sign-in sheets at all public engagement activities. In many cases participants would sign-in as they entered a room, yet on some occasions, individuals entered through side doors or entered late in the session and did not sign in. At other events the sign-in sheet would stop with a particular individual and never make it across the table. Staff always made a count of attendees to provide an estimated attendance.

undertaken separate engagement activities, and it is assumed that they have engaged these groups in separate discussions about the HSA.

The format of the presentations and meetings varied according to the group, but usually included a welcome and overview by a member of the MSDE staff, followed by a description of the HSA system by College Board and ETS staff. Transparencies were used, which provided an overview of the HSA, design options, and the multiple constraints imposed on the assessment system. Because a high priority was placed on the need for public input and reaction, the majority of time at most sessions was devoted to discussion and questioning by the audience. Questions were fielded by MSDE and College Board and ETS staff alike, depending on their focus. Typically one representative from MSDE introduced each session, providing opening remarks, reviewing the overall context and history of Maryland's Systemic Reform and School Improvement efforts, and introducing the one or two College Board/ETS staff conducting the session. On most occasions several MSDE staff were present at the meetings, and for most meetings College Board/ETS administrative staff attended to provide a summary of the meeting.

As mentioned previously, in preparation for these meetings and discussions, College Board and ETS staff produced a transparency presentation, which was revised as options and circumstances changed. The most recent version is found in **APPENDIX C**. Additionally, staff produced several handouts that were distributed to participating stakeholders:

- a 2-page description of the HSA developed by the Department, providing a summary of the background of the HSA, the uses to which it will be put, and the time line by which it will be implemented.
- a comment sheet for participants in the public engagement sessions to write down any questions or recommendations and mail them to the contractors. This was developed to aid some individuals who might not be comfortable speaking out in public, and for situations when there was not ample time to field all of the questions asked.
- an evaluation sheet on some of the initial public engagement activities was distributed to inform contractors and MSDE about the overall reaction to these activities.
- a sign-in sheet was developed, in order to have some sense of not only the numbers but the names of those who attended and the constituency groups that they represented.

Each of the referenced forms is found in **APPENDIX C**. Few participants in the public engagement process took the time during the sessions to complete the comment and feedback sheets. However, the contractors received approximately 30 comments through the mail, e-mail, and telephone from Maryland residents concerning the HSA. A total of 85 evaluation sheets were also returned from the four public engagement sessions where they were distributed.

College Board and ETS staff completed a summary of key points from almost all meetings to provide documentation to the Department of the issues and concerns raised as well as the suggestions offered. The summaries in draft form were shared with Department staff within a few weeks of each meeting. The summaries are contained in **APPENDIX C**.

To provide additional unedited documentation of the proceedings, all Regional Content Supervisors and Teachers Meetings as well as Town Meetings were professionally recorded. Tapes are available for the Department's future use and record.

II. THE CONCERNS AND COMMENTS OF THE SEVERAL CONSTITUENCY GROUPS

During the course of the public engagement process undertaken by the College Board and ETS, many comments, concerns, and suggestions were shared. These range from specific comments concerning the HSA to very general comments on existing statewide education and assessment programs and the allocation of resources. This section of the report highlights comments and concerns about implementation of the HSA that surfaced during the public engagement meetings. It is followed by a section on the contextual issues that surround implementation of the HSA. Finally, the last section is a complete classification of the public engagement issues that emerged this fall during activities conducted by the College Board/ETS team.

A. Standards and Use of the Maryland High School Assessment

During the public engagement sessions, MSDE public engagement staff routinely noted the importance of high academic standards as embodied in the Maryland Core Learning Goals. The vision of the High School Assessment is that it will link to the Core Learning Goals, raise the expectations for student achievement, and give greater meaning to the Maryland high school diploma. The planned uses for the HSA include individual student accountability, school/program accountability, and higher education placement and/or admissions decisions.

Individual Student Accountability - Several requests were made for MSBE to reconsider the proposed high-stakes use of the HSA as a graduation requirement. Significant concern was expressed at most public engagement sessions about the planned use of the HSA for awarding a high school diploma to individual students beginning in 2004. Even though 2004 appears a long way off and would impact the current class of 5th graders, many Maryland residents involved in public engagement did not feel that the time line is adequate. There were concerns about students who don't pass the tests and don't receive a diploma. Will the HSA encourage students "on the edge" to increasingly drop out of school and lead to disenfranchisement of some students and some urban communities? Many tend to view the high school diploma as a right that should not be denied. Finally, many teachers and educators expressed concern that the individual accountability associated with the HSA may not be consistent with the philosophy and emphasis of MSPAP, which is on school accountability.

Use of HSA for Determining High School Course Grades - Because HSA tests are planned as end-of-course assessments, numerous questions and concerns surfaced regarding the interaction between course grades and the results of the HSAs. What will happen to students who pass the course and fail the test and vice versa? Serious concerns were raised about the legal defensibility of denying a high school diploma on the basis of HSA test scores when course credits have been successfully earned.

Use for College Placement and/or Admissions - In general, this topic received very little attention with most audiences. When it was addressed, Maryland residents noted a general disconnect between high school assessment standards and college admission and placement requirements. Questions and concerns arose as to how this planned use of the test would fit with existing testing and placement requirements currently in use at Maryland colleges and universities. A few participants expressed strong concern that a single test (or assessment system) would be responsible for all aspects of a student's future -- high school diploma, higher education, and employment, questioning the educational soundness of such multiple uses of one test. During the two meetings with representatives from higher education community, a number of complex logistic issues arose requiring substantially more input from this group. The importance of basing admissions decisions on multiple sources of information (not simply the results from any one test or testing system) and the need for colleges to continue to maintain independent standards for admissions and placement decisions which best meet their needs (and those of their students) were the two major themes emerging from these meetings. However, a great deal more interaction with the higher education sector will be required if the HSA design is to be responsive to the concerns of this group and if the assessments are to be used appropriately for these other purposes.

Use for School and Teacher Accountability - What criteria will be used to judge school and teacher accountability? If schools and teachers will be judged by student HSA passage rates, then teachers will begin teaching to the test. Additional concerns were expressed that students are not held to high standards before entering high school and that many students are ill-prepared to master the Core Learning Goals. Some participants felt that more accountability must be placed on students and schools before they enter 9th grade.

B. Options For Addressing Concerns About the Use of HSA for Graduation

Participants at the public engagement meetings offered several recommendations to address concerns about the use of the HSA for award of the high school diploma. These recommendations follow:

Battery of Tests - The tests should be viewed as a battery rather than as independent tests. A battery would address the issue of balancing poor performance on one assessment with strengths on another assessment. This method would not reject students below the standard. A proficiency level would need to be set for the battery. Many educators were especially critical of a multiple hurdle approach where students would be required to "pass" all HSAs, noting that such models are not consistent with learning theory regarding individual differences and would result in a high failure rate.

Phase-in of Tests - The number of tests required for high school graduation should be phased in slowly over time, thus raising the bar incrementally and giving schools and students additional time to prepare and do well on the HSA.

Phase-in Level of Standards - This approach would raise the standard or required passing score on the HSA gradually over time to raise the level of standards and achievement slowly.

Differentiated Diplomas - The idea of having differentiated diplomas was raised at many of the public engagement sessions and reflects several concerns. First is the issue of denying a diploma to students who are not successful on the HSA; a differentiated diploma system would involve awarding a diploma or certificate of attendance for students who successfully complete their high school course work but do not successfully complete the HSA. The second, higher-level diploma would be for those students who are successful on the HSA. The New York Regents Examination model was the most often cited exemplar of a differentiated diploma system, where students would need the higher-level diploma for further (or preferred) consideration at some state universities.

Second, there was significant disapproval of the differentiated diploma concept among special educators and parents of special education students. This constituency felt it would be unfair to offer special education students a certificate of attendance (for students who might fail the HSA) because they have to work very hard and overcome great difficulties. Their view was that everyone should get a Maryland diploma, but that students who are successful on the HSA should have a meritorious endorsement attached to their diplomas.

Reward vs. Punishment - Some participants cited the need to emphasize rewarding students who demonstrate competence on the tests as opposed to punishing those students who do not perform well (i.e., denying the diploma). Georgia's Hope Scholarships for students were cited as a possible model, where students could receive financial support or scholarships from the state that would offset the costs of attending a state university (if admitted) once they achieved a certain proficiency level across the tests.

C. Implications of High Standards/HSA for Maryland Students

The public engagement sessions produced little consensus on whether or not implementation of the HSA is the optimum way to raise standards and the level of academic achievement in the state. Some Maryland residents expressed concern that the HSA will increase the drop-out rate and discourage at-risk students from persevering in school.

Negative Consequences for Students - Great concern was expressed about the anticipated unacceptable failure rates on the HSA when it is implemented. A 30 to 60 percent failure rate is anticipated by many educators and administrators based on MSPAP proficiency levels. At a meeting with special education parents and advocates on October 22, 1996, it was noted that "Maryland has been able to stand the heat with establishing high standards on MSPAP, but a high failure rate on the HSA could push the limit." Participants at some town meetings were quite concerned that the HSA would have an adverse impact on minorities and students in urban districts. One participant in the Baltimore town meeting asked what we would do with the increased numbers of students who can't pass the tests -- "we will turn more and more students out of the schools and increase the number of homeless and unemployed in this city."

Another concern about high failure rates is that they will lead to lowered standards and that teachers will be forced to teach to the lower standards so that most students can graduate and the

schools will look good. This, of course, would defeat the purpose of the HSA which is to raise standards and achievement levels. Some representatives of the business roundtable communications group recommended that a phase-in approach to individual accountability be considered because the alternative of lowered standards was not acceptable. There is also concern about the preparation and quality of the teaching force and whether it is fair to hold students individually accountable when they may not be getting adequate instruction to enable them to pass the HSA.

Opportunity to Learn - Many parents and educators at the open meetings and town meetings expressed concern about issues related to students' opportunities to learn the Core Learning Goals. Individuals questioned existing practices and resources in the schools today, noting that an unlevel playing field exists that could support legal challenges to state tests. Some examples that were cited include instances where students fail a test:

- when they have not been exposed to adequate coverage of the Core Learning Goals in a specific classroom or school.
- when the classroom teacher has been absent for much of the year and a variety of substitute teachers have been used.
- when a class clearly has less instructional time prior to an assessment than other classes in other districts (e.g., semesterized block scheduling).
- when a teacher is not certified in the subject area (e.g., math, science) taught.
- when a school has significantly fewer resources (e.g., laboratory equipment, graphing calculators, computers) and relies on outdated materials that are directly related to tasks contained in the assessments.

In each of these instances, some participants felt that the local school and state would be in jeopardy because unequal educational conditions would exist while equal outcomes were required. Generally, there was a perception on the part of many participants that the state was devoting substantial time and resources to the assessment component of educational reform without devoting the needed attention and resources to the instructional, staff development, and learning-centered components.

The problem of over-testing was raised at many of the public engagement sessions. There is a concern that too much testing is already taking place and that the HSA will only exacerbate the problem. In addition, while the majority of comments received at the public engagement sessions were not supportive of the HSA for individual accountability, there was support expressed at some sessions. Some participants felt that students need to be imbued with a sense of responsibility for their education and that implementation of the HSA would facilitate this process. Others expressed support for the HSA as the best way to incorporate the Core Learning Goals into the curriculum. Still others echoed the concern that the status quo is not acceptable and higher standards will motivate all students to higher performance.

D. Administration of Assessments

A host of concerns about administration of the HSA surfaced at the public engagement sessions with school and district administrators and other educators. These ranged from how the administration of the tests will mesh with the current semester block schedule to who is going to administer and grade the tests. Educators have concerns about the additional burden the HSA will place on schools already employing a semester block schedule. Lost instructional time was also a concern.

Given the current high-stakes plans for the HSA, educators are concerned about test security and how this will be implemented given the semester block schedule system. "Strategic absences" by students and options for make-up exams were also raised as test security concerns.

E. Feasibility Issues

Local Burdens - The feasibility of adding yet another testing program to the schools was addressed by both educators and the general public. The administrative burden of scheduling and administering the HSA and how to fit it into existing schedules needs to be determined. Additionally, administrators recognize that implementation of the HSA will result in a database management burden on schools because they will need to keep track of which students have passed which tests when, and they will need to know when individual students have passed all 10 tests for graduation purposes.

Middle School Assessment - The impact of the HSA on middle school students was also raised during the public engagement process. In some school districts, significant numbers of middle school students take and complete high school-level courses, particularly algebra and space/earth sciences. Thus, the issue of administering particular HSA tests to middle school students needs to be addressed as does the award of Carnegie unit credits to middle school students who pass HSA tests. Another issue raised about middle school students concerns the possible use of the HSA for higher education placement and admission. Can exams taken in 7th through 9th grade be meaningfully used for higher education admissions and placement?

Scoring - While scoring of performance assessments received little attention overall, some principals and superintendents familiar with MSPAP raised significant concerns about how teachers can be involved in scoring, given the need for scores before the end of the school year. Many educators view the training that is entailed in scoring performance assessments as a very valuable staff development experience and critical to buy-in for any large-scale assessment program. Costs and local burden (e.g., released time, scheduling) for scoring were major concerns for district and school administrators.

Costs - Many Maryland residents raised questions, concerns, and opposition about the costs associated with implementation of the HSA. These ranged from whether the money would be better spent on classrooms, instructional materials, teachers' salaries, and physical improvement of the schools to concerns about direct and indirect costs that local education agencies (LEAs) will bear once the HSA is in place. LEAs are concerned that HSA is just one more "unfunded mandate" to be imposed by the state. As noted by one participant at the November 4 Baltimore City Town Meeting, "There is no money to prevent drugs or for more classrooms or schools, or

up-to-date textbooks, but we do have the money for more testing. This is not fair.” Another aspect of the cost concerns relates to what the state will do to ensure that Maryland schools have the resources they need to teach the CLGs so students can be assessed on them.

F. Choice and Flexibility

Alternatives for Students Who Do Not Pass the HSA - Implementation of the HSA raises a number of complex questions concerning alternatives for students who have not successfully completed the HSA. What alternatives will be provided to these students? Alternatives suggested during the public engagement process included:

- Locally developed options for demonstrating competence in the four core subject areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- State-approved alternatives for demonstrating competence in the core subject areas.

A major issue related to all alternative options concerns the validity and reliability of those options. When representatives from the College Board and ETS noted that equivalency among alternative options to the HSA is not likely, participants were extremely concerned that these alternative options may not have credibility and be accepted by various constituencies. Several participants felt that if all students are to be tied to the same performance standard, then the same measures must be used. They noted that it would be unacceptable to allow different districts to develop their own assessments and determine locally the passing rates for students retesting.

Modules - Many local educators have expressed support for the development of modules that permit each district to employ assessments that combine portions of different tests which best reflect their curriculum. Specific comments and suggestions included:

- “Modules would work well with general science in 9th grade because students would be prepared to take a module of chemistry and a module of physics.”
- “Design a drop-in module that could be placed in local final examinations so that there would be the same module throughout the state, but locals would be free to test to their own teaching and their own goals, which may be different or even higher than the state tests. From a financial and academic viewpoint, a drop-in module based on the state Core Learning Goals may be something that should be considered along with the four design options.”

At later public engagement meetings, the contractors attempted to demonstrate that it would be virtually impossible to develop many different modular components for the tests and that costs and testing time for such designs would be prohibitive. Local educators remain very concerned about this issue and about how to resolve differences in curricula among districts if only one assessment is provided. While the New York Regents model has been cited as a similar state-based testing program, Regents courses and assessments are standardized. There are no local variations permitted in the curriculum or assessments in the Regents program.

HSA and Courses - The relationship between HSA exam results and grades in courses was raised at many public engagement meetings. For example, can students take the HSA test without taking the course? What credibility will school grades carry if we find that a significant percentage of students with grades of B and C in a course fail the test? Will such results force schools to use test scores in course grading and cause more students to fail courses as well as tests?

Local Assessments - Participants in the Montgomery County public engagement meetings expressed concern about how the HSA would be integrated with the standards and assessment structure currently in place in that county. They urged a strong collaborative effort to integrate the existing assessment system with the new HSA.

AP and IB - At some public engagement meetings, the issue of using Advanced Placement (AP) Examination scores or International Baccalaureate (IB) scores as “waivers” for the HSA was raised. This would potentially reduce testing time for high-ability students who plan to take IB or AP courses/examinations for college credit. Since many Maryland students currently take IB or AP courses, some participants were concerned that these students would be in double jeopardy--having to pass two tests for the same course. A number of participants were concerned that unless waivers were approved for AP and IB, enrollment in these college-level courses would drop and standards for high-ability students would actually be lowered.

G. Assessment Designs

Most of the design issues were of concern to educators across the state, but received little discussion among other groups (e.g., parents, business leaders, students). The intended high-stakes use of the HSA caused great concern about the validity and reliability of the assessments. Concerns were often raised about the one-year, no-fault pilot testing program. Many Maryland residents felt that more no-fault administrations should be given to help prepare students and educators for the new program. Educators stated that they needed to “see the test as soon as possible” in order to know how to prepare their students for the assessments. This was a central theme across most public engagement meetings with educators and suggests that a longer no-fault period or phase-in of higher standards should be considered. Teachers do not believe that the Core Learning Goals provide adequate specification for preparing students for the assessments -- they believe that nothing short of disclosing sample items and tasks will enable adequate preparation.

Multiple-Choice and Performance Assessments - The implementation of MSPAP has created support for performance assessments among many educators and administrators because performance assessments reinforce curriculum and instructional reform. Thus, considerable concern was expressed about the possible overreliance on multiple-choice items in the HSA, because educators have concerns that multiple-choice items do not measure higher-order thinking skills. However, others advocated increased emphasis on testing basic skills and content, due to the perception that MSPAP emphasizes process and not content. As expected, participants in the public engagement sessions are not familiar with the numerous technical limitations imposed in test development, and thus uniformly advocate much more flexibility and choice in the design and

infinitely quicker scoring and reporting of test results than can be accommodated in any testing program.

Basic Skills and Test Disclosure - The issue of access to HSA test questions, often referred to as “test disclosure,” was raised at several public engagement meetings. In particular, several parents believed that they should have access to all test questions in advance. They also expressed very strong distrust of subjective scoring (which is associated with performance assessment), objected to the intrusion of values into assessment content, and insisted that a basic skills, multiple-choice format was the only acceptable design for such tests. However, these same parents appeared opposed to such state involvement in education and were highly critical of MSPAP and the proposed HSA efforts in general.

Proposed Structure for Science Exams - Current plans call for the design and development of 4 science tests. Concerns were raised about the need for 4 science tests when passage of only 2 tests will be required for graduation. Will students or schools determine which 2 of the 4 tests students will take? Additional concerns were raised about the need for the Chemistry and Physics tests because few students will ever take these if they have taken the other two tests. Other concerns were related to the possibly controversial content of the science tests such as evolution/origin of life and dissection requirements in biology. Content specialists expressed strong and consistent support for the use of modules both to accommodate the significant variations in science courses (e.g., combined courses such as Bio/Chem) and to provide an incentive for more districts to undertake curricular reform in science.

Proposed Structure for English Exams - Current plans call for students to take and pass 3 of 4 English exams. Will students or schools determine which tests students will take? English curriculum specialists expressed a preference for performance-based options in English and as few multiple-choice questions as possible. Some public engagement participants recommended that grammar and usage be assessed within the context of literary interpretation and that students be given a choice of texts to use in essay exercises.

Proposed Structure for Math Exams - The one desire expressed for the math exams was that the problems be rooted in “real-world experience” in order to demonstrate the relevance of math to everyday life.

Proposed Structure for Social Studies Exams - Concerns about social studies focused on the need for essays to conform to the Maryland philosophy of writing and composition.

An overall concern expressed about the HSA relates to the degree to which the tests are not currently integrated. Support was expressed for the Prep Plus design option because it promotes cooperative learning. An entirely multiple choice test was deemed to be unacceptable by most participants at the public engagement sessions, although some members of local school boards and parents insisted that a multiple-choice format was preferable for various reasons (e.g., reduced costs, quick turnaround of scores, emphasis on basic skills, removes subjective judgments from high-stakes uses). The challenge to MSBE and MSDE will be to inform the various constituencies of the multiple limitations and constraints imposed by assessment systems used for

high-stakes purposes while ensuring their acceptance of and support for the ultimate design and operational program which may vary substantially from their “preferred design.”

H. Supporting Students Who Do Not Demonstrate Competency

More Details on Remediation Sought - Until the consequences of failing the assessments, opportunities for retaking the tests or demonstrating competence on the CLGs, and details about the remediation options available to these students are better defined, a high level of concern and skepticism will likely remain with members of many stakeholder groups. Many participants perceived a lack of attention to these issues and believed that developers of the HSA are not considering what is in the best interests of the students.

Many participants in the public engagement meetings expressed concern about how to support students who don't pass the HSA. The need for remediation was often discussed and concerns were raised about how to fund the extensive remediation efforts that are anticipated. Educators are concerned about scheduling remediation within the current school time-frame and the costs and burdens associated with summer remediation. Additional issues concern the use of local alternative tests and whether or not students can retake a test without retaking the course to which the test relates.

I. Curriculum Content

Current plans call for the Skills for Success to be assessed within the context of the subject-area tests. Some Maryland residents requested that more emphasis be placed on Skills for Success and suggested that technology be used in assessing these skills. Other concerns were raised about the degree of staff development provided to teachers to enable them to infuse Skills for Success into the curriculum. Other participants raised questions about particular Skills for Success such as interpersonal skills-- “What are these and how are they assessed?”

One of the main concerns addressed at many public engagement meetings was the need to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn the CLGs via their local curriculum. This means that efforts must be made to ensure that the local curriculum is properly aligned with the Core Learning Goals prior to testing. State efforts to evaluate students' exposure to the Core Learning Goals at each school prior to implementation of high stakes were viewed as essential by several participants. There is also concern about the possibility that the assessments will drive instruction and that the Core Learning Goals will become a basis for testing when their real use should be to drive curriculum reform.

J. Score Reports/Scoring

Turnaround Time for Assessments - Next to using the HSA for individual accountability purposes, the issue of scoring and reporting the test results was the most frequently discussed topic across all the public engagement meetings. Turnaround time for the assessments was a critical issue for principals and superintendents. They believed that the assessments must be administered as close to the end of the course as possible, but that scores must be available before

the end of the course as well. This is a particularly urgent need for seniors who must receive their scores prior to graduation and to afford schools adequate time to schedule and structure summer remediation programs for students failing the tests. As one participant noted, "We may need to conduct remediation for up to one-third of our students each summer; we need teachers, busing, resources, and advanced notice to plan this." In the public engagement meetings, the contractors noted the relationship between the various design options and score turnaround time. Generally, performance assessments require substantially more scoring time than traditional multiple-choice tests; all tests require substantial time to ensure comparable and valid results for high-stakes uses.

Score Reports - The format of the score reports also generated considerable interest on the part of educators. They expressed the need for proficiencies or subproficiencies within the tests to be reported along with subscores and percentiles ranking students. The scale upon which test results will be reported was also addressed by public engagement participants. Some suggested using a 5-point scale; others suggested using descriptors to describe performance--satisfactory, proficient, highly proficient--instead of numbers. Educators would like to receive test subscores so students would only need to retake a portion of a test they failed, not the entire test. Representatives from the higher education community would need a more extensive scale (more than five proficiencies) if they were to use the results in the validity studies required for placement in college courses. When the difficulties of accomplishing this are discussed, postsecondary representatives then ask to be provided with diagnostic information to help target remediation efforts for students who need it.

Scoring - Finally, the method of scoring generated numerous questions and comments, including:

- Will tests be scored at the local, state, or contractor level?
- If teachers score the tests, teachers should not score their own students' tests.
- Validity and reliability must be maintained if a local scoring option is implemented.
- During the pilot phase of the testing, use different methods of scoring for comparison purposes.

K. Feasibility Concerns for Specific Groups of Students

Students with Disabilities and Students for Whom English is a Second Language - The contractors held several public engagement meetings with special educators, parents of students with disabilities, and special education advocacy groups. At one session it was stated there are currently over 100,000 special education students in Maryland.

Numerous issues and concerns were raised about the impact of the HSA on students with disabilities. These include concerns about the types of accommodations that will be available for the HSA, the relationship of the HSA to existing individual education plans (IEPs), and alternative testing options that will be available for special education students who do not pass the HSA. Some Maryland educators advocate increased use of technology for assessing students with

disabilities, such as accommodations including computer-based tests, large-print formats, extended time, and voice synthesis.

There are concerns about the anticipated high failure rate of students with disabilities and the need for a differentiated diploma for students who may never demonstrate competency on the HSA. A suggestion was made to “grandfather” some students with disabilities into receiving a diploma following implementation of the HSA.

Transfer Students - Questions were raised about the impact of the HSA on students from out of state who transfer to a Maryland high school during junior or senior year. Will these students be required to pass the HSA even though they will have experienced different curricula and examinations prior to entering the state? The same issue applies to a lesser degree to students transferring within Maryland from one school district to another who may also have experienced different curricular structures and sequencing of HSA tests. The logistical and fairness issues concerning the use of the HSA with these groups of students is a paramount concern of principals and superintendents.

Urban Students - Urban educators and parents, particularly in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, expressed very vocal concerns about the impact of the HSA on their students, for whom the resources to teach to high standards may not be available. It was noted that “Baltimore City has the highest level of poor students and special education students. They can’t pass the functional tests.” Interest in a differentiated diploma for students who may never achieve the high standards associated with the HSA is strong in urban areas.

Other special groups of students include students taught at home, students who attend night school and second-chance programs, and students who attend summer schools. The impact of the HSA on these groups needs further consideration.

ESL Students - Many of the concerns raised about the impact of the HSA on students with disabilities also were raised in regard to ESL students, particularly the concern about having a differentiated diploma for students whose native language is not English. It was suggested that MSDE undertake a special outreach effort to ESL parents to make sure they are aware of the HSA and what will be expected of students. Montgomery County residents expressed particular concern about the impact of the HSA on ESL students in their district. One educator noted there are 7,500 students with limited English proficiency in Montgomery County and 2,000 of them are in high school. There is a need to have the assessment provided in the students’ native language or for special accommodations.

L. Contextual Issues

The public engagement sessions generated significant discussion about the public engagement process itself, the allocation and expenditure of state education dollars, the relationship of the HSA to other Maryland statewide testing programs, and the role of technology and the Core Learning Goals.

Public Engagement Process - Participants at several public engagement events expressed dissatisfaction with how the events were publicized, the lack of adequate advance notice for public engagement meetings, and the resultant low turnout and participation at most meetings. Suggestions included implementation of a major public relations/marketing effort to inform the public about the HSA and to build support for it; development of a presentation by MSDE to be given at "Back-to-School Night" in all elementary schools; letters from MSDE or LEAs to parents of all 5th graders in the state informing them of HSA implementation plans; and widening the net to include other groups, specifically local chambers of commerce. Many participants noted there that was inadequate time to respond to the call for comments and were angry that this process began so late in the test design phase. Participants asked that MSBE approve additional engagement activities and MSDE assured them that staff would be available for more visits over the development phase.

Resource Allocation Issues - Participants at some public engagement meetings asked where the money for development and implementation of the HSA is coming from. Some expressed outright opposition to spending money on another testing program and argued strongly for directing this money toward classrooms, improving school buildings, increasing the use of technology, or staff development.

Relationship of the HSA to Other Existing Maryland Statewide Testing Programs - Public engagement sessions generated significant discussion and comment about the MSPAP program. Many educators are supportive of MSPAP because it is a performance-based assessment and supports curriculum and teaching. However, some parents were critical of MSPAP because it does not emphasize basics and seems to emphasize process over content. Considerable discussion also took place about the potential relationship of the HSA to MSPAP because MSPAP does not require individual accountability and the HSA does. One concern is that students are getting one message up through middle school and then a very different message when they get to high school.

Functional Tests - Perhaps one of the strongest and most supported recommendations to emerge was that MSBE eliminate the Functional Tests and Civics Test prior to implementation of the HSA. As many participants noted, having two entirely different tests required for high school graduation is costly, would result in overtesting, would send mixed signals to students and educators (since many feel the tests have different emphases), and diverts attention from the HSA. Educators asked MSBE to consider this issue sooner rather than later and to provide advance notice on the implementation of the HSA as well as the phase out of Functional Tests.

Use of Technology - Technology concerns raised at the public engagement sessions fell into two categories:

1. Some participants expressed the need for more emphasis on and use of technology within the curriculum (i.e. the need for word processors, spreadsheets, calculators). Acquisition and use of technology varies considerably among school districts and relates to the availability of resources.

2. The possibility of computerizing the HSA was also raised at some public engagement sessions. Some individuals felt the mandated use of technology in the HSAs would force school districts to find the funding for technology. However, few superintendents indicated their schools would be prepared to administer the HSA via computer in the next few years.

Core Learning Goals - A surprisingly large number of key stakeholders (elementary and middle school teachers, members of local school boards) stated that they had never seen copies of the Core Learning Goals and asked MSDE for much wider distribution of them. Many other individuals at public engagement sessions were not familiar with the Core Learning Goals and the contractors often received requests for copies of them. Participants questioned who developed the CLGs and why they were not more widely distributed. Recommendations were made for an extensive distribution of the Core Learning Goals to parents and teachers, business leaders, and the general public.

III. CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COMMENTS

The above section highlights some of the major issues, questions, and concerns that emerged across all public engagement sessions. Well over 1,000 separate comments and recommendations were made by participants in these sessions. A total of 250 separate and distinct issues and questions were raised.

We have attempted to classify all these issues and questions in a matrix by topic and subtopic. This matrix is provided below. The matrix reflects the specific issues, questions, and concerns of educators, parents, and other key constituency groups.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

1. STANDARDS AND USE OF THE HSA

- 1.1. Concerns with (and opposition to) proposed uses of HSA
 - 1.1.1. Use for high school graduation
 - 1.1.2. Use for determining high school course grades
 - 1.1.3. Use for school accountability (how will it affect schools that are on alert or being reconstituted?)
 - 1.1.4. Use for teacher accountability (concern about unintended uses)
 - 1.1.5. Use for program improvement and educational reform
 - 1.1.6. Negative consequences (e.g., encourage drop outs, teach to test, disengagement of students)
 - 1.1.7. Request MSBE reconsider proposed high-stakes use as a graduation requirement
 - 1.1.8. Use for certificate of mastery for workplace
 - 1.1.9. Use for college placement
 - 1.1.10. Use for college admissions
- 1.2. Options for addressing concerns related to use of HSA for graduation
 - 1.2.1. Use compensatory model (e.g., battery of exams)

- 1.2.2. Phase in number of tests required for graduation
 - 1.2.3. Phase in number of tests administered
 - 1.2.4. Phase in level of standards (gradually increase the bar)
 - 1.2.5. Differentiated diplomas (Regents model/certificate of merit)
- 1.3. Implications of high standards/HSA for Maryland students
 - 1.3.1. Will result in unacceptable failure rates (30-50%)
 - 1.3.2. Unacceptable failure rates will lead to lowered standards/teachers will be forced to teach to those lower standards so most students graduate and schools look good
 - 1.3.3. Need to clarify proficiency levels for use by higher education
 - 1.3.4. Need to clarify proficiency levels for graduation, retesting, moving to next course
 - 1.3.5. Concern that current assessments (i.e., MSPAP) place accountability at school level and students are not prepared or conditioned for individual accountability; intellectual maturity of 8th and 9th graders not high enough
 - 1.3.6. Need reinforcement, not punishment to improve programs
 - 1.3.7. Students will have less time for elective courses
 - 1.3.8. HSA will exacerbate the problem of overtesting of students
 - 1.3.9. Standardized nature of HSA will negate the role of the teacher
 - 1.3.10. Legal defensibility of denying a diploma because of test scores when course credits have been earned
 - 1.4. Teachers must be involved in setting the standards or there will not be buy-in to the new assessment system

2. ADMINISTRATION OF ASSESSMENTS

- 2.1. Logistics of administration of HSA in schools
 - 2.1.1. What will a testing schedule at a high school look like?
 - 2.1.2. LEA need to be able to determine local test schedules
 - 2.1.3. Additional burden on schools employing semester block scheduling
 - 2.1.4. Concern with strategic absences by students and options for make-ups
- 2.2. Test security is essential for a high-stakes test
 - 2.2.1. How does block/semester scheduling affect test security?
- 2.3. A review process must be in place to make adjustments to HSA if needed after implementation
- 2.4. Public perception is that the implementation time line is inflexible and key decisions have already been made, a "done deal"

3. FEASIBILITY ISSUES

- 3.1. Burden on schools and LEAs
 - 3.1.1. Concern about administrative burden on schools
 - 3.1.2. Concern about database management burden on schools (which students have passed which exams, when)
 - 3.2. Middle school issues
 - 3.2.1. Concern that MSBE has not addressed burdens on middle schools (many students complete some courses in 7th to 8th grades)
 - 3.2.2. Do 8th graders receive a Carnegie unit for middle school courses if they pass a high school exam?
 - 3.2.3. Can exams taken in 7th to 9th grade be meaningfully used for higher education decisions?
 - 3.3. Costs
 - 3.3.1. Concern (and opposition) about total cost to state for exams
 - 3.3.2. Concern about direct and indirect local costs (unfunded mandate)
 - 3.3.3. Concern about costs for staff development which have not been estimated or examined
 - 3.3.4. Concern about costs and scope of remediation required for students initially failing an exam
- 4. CHOICE AND FLEXIBILITY**
- 4.1. Must address high-ability students (e.g., waivers for AP or IB)
 - 4.2. Alternatives to assessments
 - 4.2.1. Support local options for demonstrating competencies
 - 4.2.2. Support state-approved alternatives for demonstrating competencies
 - 4.2.3. Concern for validity and reliability of any alternative options and credibility of alternatives with specific constituency groups
 - 4.2.4. Require students to retake the test until they pass--alternatives will not be credible for higher education uses and other reporting purposes
 - 4.3. Modules for local flexibility and choice
 - 4.3.1. Modules and options will only add to administrative burdens at school level
 - 4.3.2. Modules will allow tests to adequately assess different curricula
 - 4.3.3. Concern modules result in different standards across LEAs
 - 4.3.4. Modules needed to accommodate local schedules and sequences of courses
 - 4.4. Concern with relationship of exams to course grades--differential pass rates are problematic for LEA, but use of exams in course grading create a double jeopardy for students
 - 4.5. Will students be able to choose exam type (e.g., portfolio or Selected Response)?

- 4.6. Can students take the test without taking the course?
- 4.7. MSBE needs to establish limits on flexibility and choice or each district and school will have their own modular design with no way to compare results

5. ASSESSMENT DESIGNS

- 5.1. Concern for validity and reliability of assessments given the high-stakes uses
- 5.2. No-fault pilot testing (1 year) not adequate, require more no-fault administrations to prepare students and educators
 - 5.2.1. Begin pilot testing with a few school systems rather than the whole state
 - 5.2.2. Inclusion of special needs students in all pilots
- 5.3. Concern that many believe multiple-choice items cannot measure higher-order thinking skills
- 5.4. Concern with basic skills--see need for testing basic skills and knowledge, not processes; content vs. concepts
- 5.5. Critical of MSPAP-like tests which are perceived to emphasize process over content
- 5.6. Supportive of MSPAP because it is perceived to emphasize process
- 5.7. Demand for disclosure of all test items and parent involvement in review of items prior to use
- 5.8. Proposed structure for science exams
 - 5.8.1. Flexibility of choice of science exams and implications for cross-district comparisons
 - 5.8.2. Will students or schools determine choice among 2 of 4 science tests?
 - 5.8.3. Chemistry and physics tests not needed since few students will ever take these tests who have not already taken other science tests
 - 5.8.4. Concern about testing of controversial content such as evolution/origin of life; requirement of dissection in Biology
 - 5.8.5. If Extended Constructed Response items are used, will students choose from a given number of topics?
 - 5.8.6. Because students choose 2 of 4 tests, the perception may be that some tests are easier than others
 - 5.8.7. Would students be required to take/pass additional science tests (i.e., more than 2) if they take additional science courses?
 - 5.8.8. Will the science tests be integrated?
- 5.9. Proposed structure for English exams
 - 5.9.1. Will students or schools determine choice among 3 of 4 English tests?

- 5.9.2. Tests 1, 2, and 3 should correspond to grades 9, 10, and 11, with foundational goals assessed in test 1 and the most synthesized information assessed in test 3
 - 5.9.3. Grammar and usage should be assessed within the context of literary interpretation
 - 5.9.4. Importance of integrating non-print tests (e.g., theater and film) into instruction and assessment is recognized, but access to equipment/technology is an equity issue
 - 5.9.5. Multiple-choice questions are not desirable, but if included, no detextualized questions should be used
 - 5.9.6. Portfolio assessment most desirable, but adoption is not seen as politically realistic. Prep Plus has its advantages
 - 5.9.7. Literary interpretation on demand is very difficult for special education students
 - 5.9.8. Tests should be scored analytically and holistically so that more of the CLGs are assessed
 - 5.9.9. Two-hour test is preferable (perhaps one hour on two consecutive days); two writing/interpretive tasks per test
 - 5.9.10. Choice of texts desirable; students should be permitted to discuss related texts in essays
- 5.10. Proposed structure for math exams
- 5.10.1. Math problems should be rooted in “real-world” experiences
- 5.11. Concern that HSA tests be integrated so students become familiar with one design across all assessments and content areas.
- 5.12. Will students get multiple credit for the same exam (e.g., language arts measured as part of social studies) as is now done in MSPAP?
- 5.13. Because different age groups will take the same test, at what reading level will the test be set?
- 5.14. Proposed testing time (2-3 hours) is too long
- 5.15. What will have the greatest impact on test design: psychometrics, economics, etc.?
- 5.16. Proposed structure of social studies exams
- 5.16.1. Essays must conform to the Maryland philosophy of writing and composition
 - 5.16.2. Choice of essays is desirable but problematic
 - 5.16.3. Prep Plus difficult to administer repeatedly or to administer to students schooled at home. Essays will only tap a small portion of content and goals. Combination option is the best compromise
 - 5.16.4. Concern there is a conspiracy to teach and test values not factual information
- 5.17. Important to present real-life opportunities that involve critical thinking and problem solving

- 5.18. Prep Plus is a good option because it promotes cooperative learning
- 5.19. An entirely multiple-choice test is not acceptable; Portfolio Plus has drawbacks as a high-stakes test (turnaround time is a problem, particularly for students in half-semester courses; difficult to know whose work is being graded)

6. SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO DON'T DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY

- 6.1. Need to identify options for students who fail the test once or more
 - 6.1.1. Can districts use local tests?
 - 6.1.2. Can students repeat the test without repeating the course?
- 6.2. Need alternative options to tests or you may have unacceptable failure and dropout rates
- 6.3. Need subscores and diagnostic assessments to target remediation efforts
- 6.4. Concern that state will not fund remediation efforts
- 6.5. Concern that LEAs cannot implement adequate remediation efforts (volume of students who fail test, busing students in summer for remediation efforts, difficulty of remediation during school year)

7. CURRICULUM/CONTENT

- 7.1. Skills for Success
 - 7.1.1. Need more importance placed upon Skills for Success
 - 7.1.2. Need to incorporate technology in assessment (computer assessments) for Skills for Success
 - 7.1.3. Teachers need substantial staff development for infusion of Skills for Success into existing curriculum (lack training)
 - 7.1.4. What are interpersonal skills and how are they assessed?
- 7.2. Need to ensure all students have adequate opportunity to learn
 - 7.2.1. Need efforts to ensure local curriculum is properly aligned to Core Learning Goals prior to testing
 - 7.2.2. Teachers must be given item types and prior notification on the content that will be covered in the tests
- 7.3. Concern exams will significantly reduce instructional time; assessment is driving instruction
- 7.4. Use the tests to impact the curriculum (leverage reform)
- 7.5. Core Learning Goals should drive curriculum, not just be a basis for testing

- 7.6. Test questions should be broad based to prevent restrictions on professional choice in instruction
- 7.7. Should there be tests in applied math or applied science for tech prep students?
- 7.8. Will the tests be sequential?

8. SCORE REPORTS/SCORING

- 8.1. Time line for score reports
 - 8.1.1. Need quick turnaround time in score reporting
 - 8.1.2. Need scores for seniors prior to graduation
 - 8.1.3. Need to have exams as late in course as possible for curricular validity
 - 8.1.4. Concern that performance assessments require substantially more scoring time than traditional test designs
 - 8.1.5. Combination of test formats so that earlier grades take portfolio (longer scoring time) while senior-level tests are limited combinations (shorter scoring time to accommodate graduation)
- 8.2. Format of Score Reports
 - 8.2.1. Need proficiencies or subproficiencies reported within test
 - 8.2.2. Need subscores within tests
 - 8.2.3. Need percentiles (norm-referenced data)
 - 8.2.4. Score the assessments on a 1-5 scale
 - 8.2.5. Score the assessments as highly proficient, satisfactory, or proficient instead of using a number
- 8.3. Need data management system to collect, store, manage and generate student test data
- 8.4. Methods of Scoring
 - 8.4.1. Will tests be scored at local, state, or contract level?
 - 8.4.2. Teachers should not score their own students' tests
 - 8.4.3. Validity and reliability must be maintained if a local scoring option is implemented
 - 8.4.4. During pilot phase, use different methods of scoring for comparison purposes

9. FEASIBILITY CONCERNS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF STUDENTS

- 9.1. Home-bound students
- 9.2. Urban students in schools without adequate resources in K-12
 - 9.2.1. Need differentiated diplomas for many students who may never demonstrate competency on such high standards
 - 9.2.2. Need additional state funding for equity and parity

9.3. Students with disabilities

- 9.3.1. If accommodations are provided, how do you ensure students meet the same standard, given that they receive the same diploma?
- 9.3.2. Need differentiated diplomas for many students who may never demonstrate competency on such high standards
- 9.3.3. Accommodations should include Braille, extended time, use of readers, large print, access to technology
- 9.3.4. Students with disabilities could benefit from a battery approach that would allow a higher score on one test to offset a lower score on another
- 9.3.5. Grandfather some students with disabilities into receiving a diploma after the implementation of HSA
- 9.3.6. Ten tests is too many to pass
- 9.3.7. Exemptions for some students
- 9.3.8. Students do not have exposure to the same rigorous curriculum
- 9.3.9. Alternative options will mean that more parents will attempt to get students classified to meet graduation requirements

9.4. ESL

- 9.4.1. Need differentiated diplomas for many students who may never demonstrate competency on such high standards

9.5. Transfers within Maryland districts (different curricular structure and ordering of exams)**9.6. Transfers across states**

- 9.6.1. Will students who move into the state be required to pass all tests for graduation?
- 9.6.2. How will this affect the use of portfolios in assessment?

9.7. Students attending night school**9.8. Students attending summer school****10. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT****10.1. Need to engage parents of elementary students who are not present at public engagement activities**

- 10.1.1. MSDE should develop a presentation that would be given at back-to-school night in the elementary schools
- 10.1.2. Outreach is need for ESL parents so that they are aware of what's expected of their children
- 10.1.3. Letters should be sent from the state or local school system to parents of all 5th graders
- 10.1.4. Parents can be informed at middle school orientation

- 10.2. Cannot engage people when exams are 3 to 4 years off; there will be a lot of last minute concerns no matter what happens now
- 10.3. Concern that the public engagement process addressing the design is too short, not adequate time to discuss issues and review design options; events not widely publicized; not enough advance notice
- 10.4. Local chambers of commerce should be included
- 10.5. A major public relations/marketing effort needs to be done to inform the public and create buy-in
 - 10.5.1. The list of issues to be decided by the Board must be distributed widely so input can be provided; provide periodic updates to stakeholder groups
- 10.6. Concern that 5th graders have not been involved in public engagement

11. OTHERS ISSUES

- 11.1. Staff development -
 - 11.1.1. LEAs do not have resources for additional staff development
 - 11.1.2. Teachers need summer training to address Core Learning Goals and HSAs
 - 11.1.3. Teachers need to see exams years before implementation to understand how to change their instructional practices
 - 11.1.4. Teachers need staff development for scoring and preparation of students for HSA
- 11.2. Relationship to MSPAP, Functional Tests, and Civics Test -
 - 11.2.1. Must eliminate Functional Tests immediately - cannot prepare students for two different sets of exams that are so different
 - 11.2.2. Must eliminate Civics Exam; students will be required to pass 2 different state exams during one course (Government)
 - 11.2.3. Functional Test ruined Government curriculum - must be eliminated
 - 11.2.4. MSBE must tell LEAs what will be done with Functional Tests when HSAs are implemented
- 11.3. Computer-based testing (CBT) or Computer-adaptive testing (CAT) Options -
 - 11.3.1. Can help in accommodating students with disabilities
 - 11.3.2. Can reduce turnaround time for scoring
 - 11.3.3. Issues of access for students across districts are severe
 - 11.3.4. Need state support for equipment, staff, training if CBT to be used
- 11.4. Use of technology (need for word processors, spreadsheets, computer programs, calculators)
 - 11.5.1. Equity/funding issues across and within school systems
 - 11.5.2. Effect on scoring

11.5.3. Mandated use of technology in the assessments would force districts to find funding

11.5. Must have a research plan in place to determine if the HSA is working

11.6. Does the proposed Maryland HSA have similarities with other statewide assessments?