CHAPTER II: MODIFIED HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

Section 8. Introduction

The Maryland Modified High School Assessments (MD Mod-HSAs) were introduced in May 2008. These assessments are a modified version of the MD HSAs designed for special education students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Eligibility to take the MD Mod-HSAs is determined by a student's IEP and evidence of progress in learning course content.

The MD Mod-HSAs consist of end-of-course tests in Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, English, and Government and assess the same skills as the MD HSAs. The MD Mod-HSAs may be taken in place of one or more of the MD HSAs.

Students who entered ninth grade in the 2005–2006 school year or subsequent school years are required to earn satisfactory scores on all four content areas measured by the MD Mod-HSAs or HSAs in order to earn a Maryland High School Diploma.[8] Results from the Algebra, Biology, and English administrations are used in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports, required under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Information on the interpretation of scores is provided to students, parents, schools, and other stakeholders via the MSDE website.

MD Mod-HSA items were derived from banked MD HSA items, with the question format simplified. For example, the MD Mod-HSAs contain selected response (SR) items that have three answer options instead of four, and the items have a reduced reading load and simplified graphics. All items are based on content outlined in Maryland's Core Learning Goals (CLGs).[9]

MD Mod-HSA forms are administered both online and in paper format. The goal is eventually to have most students test online, with only the special Braille, Kurzweil, and large-print forms administered on paper.

Detailed information regarding the development of MD Mod-HSA forms as well as descriptions of the methods used to align them to the MD HSA reporting scale are provided in the Maryland Modified High School Assessment 2008 Technical Report.[10]

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[8] More information on state graduation requirements is available on the Maryland State Department of Education website at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/hsa/.

[9]The MD HSA Core Learning Goals documents can be found on the Maryland School Improvement website at http://www.mdk12.org/assessments/standards/9-12.html.

[3]The report is available at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/planningresultstest/HSA+Technical+Reports.htm.

This chapter of the 2011 technical report provides information about the October 2010 administration and the January, April, May, and Summer (July/August) 2011 administrations of the MD Mod-HSAs.

The item response model used to calibrate the items in the MD Mod-HSAs was the three-parameter logistic (3PL) model. Currently, this model is used to estimate both total test scores and subscores. Both total test scores and subscores were estimated using item-pattern (IP) scoring. Total test results in the scale score metric are reported to students. Subscores are not reported to students but are aggregated at the classroom level to provide teachers and administrators with information about student performance in each of the subscore categories.

The MD Mod-HSA forms are constructed using pre-equated item parameters. When pre-equated item parameters are used, the parameters are not estimated following an administration; instead, existing bank parameters are used to produce student scores. Using this approach, scores can be calculated and assigned to students immediately after their answer documents have been processed.

All technical support and analyses were carried out in accordance with both the *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness* (2002) and the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, issued jointly by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999).

This chapter of the technical report consists of five other sections and one appendix. Section 9 describes the procedures used for test construction and administration. Section 10 discusses the validity of the MD Mod-HSAs. Section 11 describes the scoring procedures and score types. Section 12 summarizes the results of analyses of the test reliability, decision consistency and decision accuracy. Section 13 presents summary statistics and descriptive information about student characteristics. Appendix 2 provides classical item statistics for each operational form.