

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

Board Agenda Item

TITLE: Report on the Results of the 2006 Maryland High School Assessments

DATE: September 7, 2006

OVERVIEW:

Results of the Algebra, Biology and Government 2006 Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) for middle and high schools have been finalized. In all three content areas, more than 82 percent of HCPSS students passed the test—an accomplishment that few systems in the state could match. The 2006 results are the highest ever for HCPSS students. The overall percent of students passing the 2006 HSA in our system was:

- Algebra 85% (increase of 10.7%)
- Biology 82% (increase of 5.3%)
- Government 85% (increase of 2.9%)

This was an important year for the HSA program, as the first wave of students who need to pass the assessment as a graduation requirement received their scores. Beginning with students who entered Grade 9 in the fall of 2005, students are now required to pass the assessment as a graduation requirement. In spring 2006, HCPSS had 2065 high school students taking the algebra HSA who had to pass the assessment. Nearly 78 percent of them passed the test. There were also 2055 middle school students taking the algebra HSA who had to pass, and 98 percent of them did! In biology, 907 students had to pass the assessment and 99 percent of them did!

FUTURE DIRECTION:

While the 2006 HSA results are excellent, assuring that every HCPSS student is prepared to pass the HSA continues to be a priority. We continue to implement strategies that have proved to be highly effective in improving achievement, and are working collaboratively across departments and schools to use continuous improvement processes to guide systemic improvement. Targeted professional development and targeted staffing will be used to support schools in making sure that every student group meets with success on these high stakes assessments.

Submitted by:

Approval/Concurrence:

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Introduction

The Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) are end-of-course tests in algebra, biology, English, and government. Currently, there are two different graduation requirements for students regarding the HSA. Students who are currently in Grades 11 and 12 have only to take the HSA; whereas, students who entered Grade 9 in 2005-2006 (current Grade 10 students) and all incoming high school students are required to take and pass the HSA to meet their graduation requirement.

Students who must pass the HSA in order to earn a Maryland High School Diploma have several options for fulfilling this requirement:

1. Pass all four HSA by earning the passing scale score or higher.
2. Earn passing scores on state-approved substitute tests and substitute one or more of those scores for passing scores on the HSA. (The Maryland State Department of Education recently approved several Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests as possible substitute tests.)
3. Earn a minimum score on each test **and** earn the minimum combined score. The minimum score for each test will be lower than the passing scores but the minimum combined score will be equal to the total of all HSA passing scores.

The minimum score and passing score for each HSA is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Cut Scores for the Maryland High School Assessments

High School Assessment				
Content	Minimum Scale Score	Passing Scale Score	Proficient Scale Score	Advanced Scale Score
Algebra	402	412	412	450
Biology	391	400		
English II	386	396	396	429
Government	387	394		
Total Combined Score Option		1602		

Two of the HSA tests, algebra and English II, are also used as the Maryland School Assessment to measure high school performance in reading and mathematics. These tests are also used in the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations for high schools and represent the scores of first-time test takers only. Those results will not be released until later this fall. The current algebra results represent the percent of students passing for all test takers, and include the scores of students who were retaking the test.

Results and Trend Performance for the HSA

The performance of students throughout the HCPSS on the 2006 HSA improved over the last four years, and this year's results are the highest scores we have ever achieved on each of the tests. However, we have not yet met the rigorous local target of having 95 percent of students pass the assessment on their first attempt. The 2006 overall pass rate for the HSA in each content area is as follows:

- Algebra 85%
- Biology 82%
- Government 85%

Table 2 presents the countywide 2006 HSA performance for all student groups. Included in these numbers are the scores of 56 students who had to retake the algebra test and 82 percent of them passed.

Table 2: Countywide Performance on the 2006 HSA by Student Group

Group	Algebra		Biology		Government	
	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing
All Students	4350	85%	3875	82%	3934	85%
Males	2186	84%	1940	81%	1987	83%
Females	2164	87%	1935	84%	1947	87%
Asian	541	94%	527	88%	526	89%
African American	956	65%	798	63%	795	69%
White	2643	92%	2698	89%	2466	90%
Hispanic	187	63%	141	66%	135	73%
American Indian	10	100%	10	90%	9	78%
Not Reported	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
ELL	97	57%	59	47%	58	50%
FARMS	433	58%	319	50%	339	60%
Special Education	349	49%	285	42%	278	52%

Trend performance is presented in Figures 1 through 3. It is important to note that the American Indian and Not Reported student groups are not included on these graphs due to numbers less than 5 in those groups for some years. There has been steady improvement for all student groups since 2003, with notable gains for students receiving special services, as well as African American and Hispanic students.

In Algebra, the greatest gains since 2003 have been made by African American students (up 22 percentage points). In biology, the greatest gains since 2003 have been made by students receiving FARMS (up 17 percentage points) and in government, students receiving special education posted the greatest gains (up 16 percentage points).

Figure 1: Trend Performance on the Algebra HSA

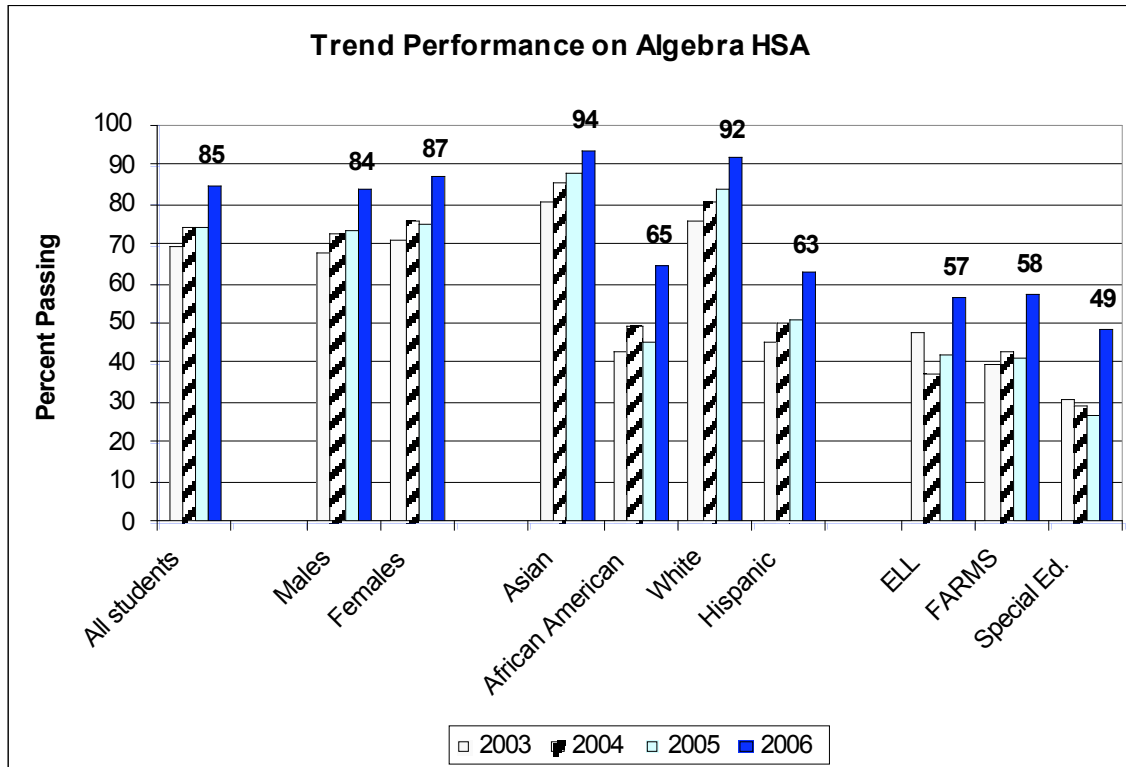


Figure 2: Trend Performance on the Biology HSA

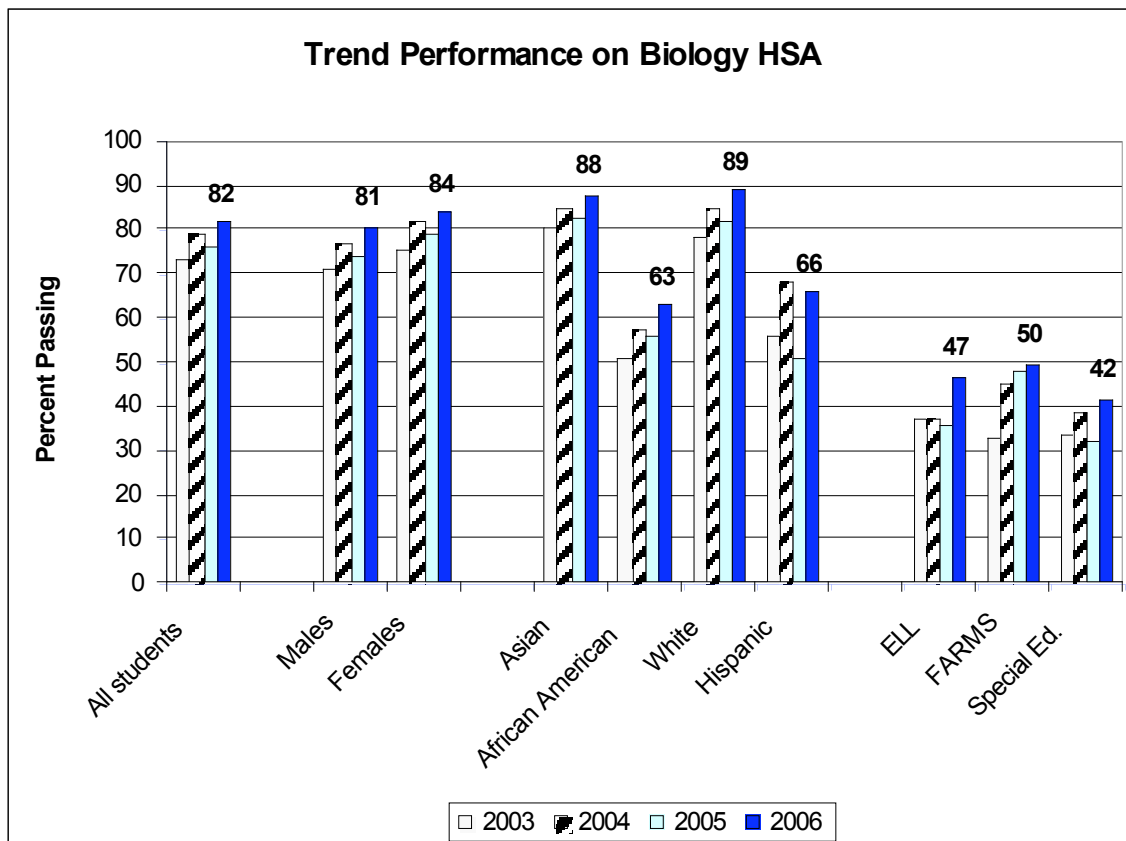
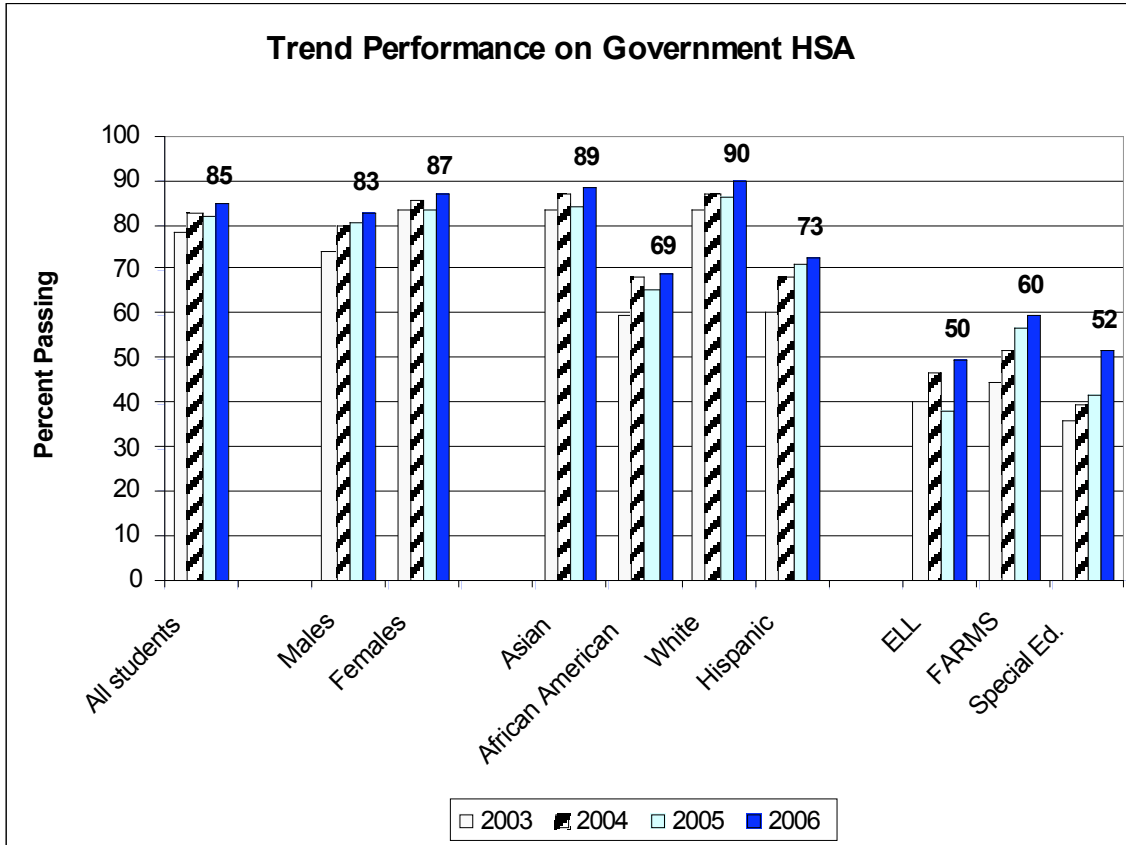


Figure 3: Trend Performance on the Government HSA



School Results

All of our middle schools and high schools posted gains on the HSA algebra test in 2006. All of the middle schools had more than 90 percent of their students passing, and 11 middle schools had 100 percent pass rates! River Hill High School had the highest algebra passing rate (97%) for any high school in the state.

Performance on the 2006 biology and government HSA tests was also strong, especially since these courses are typically taken in 10th grade and most test takers in 2006 were not required to pass the tests for graduation. The results for each high school are presented in Table 3 and the results for middle schools are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: HSA 2006 Results for High Schools

High School	Algebra Percent Passing	Biology Percent Passing	Government Percent Passing
Atholton	75	87	93
Centennial	88	88	93
Glenelg	76	93	94
Hammond	59	78	81
Howard	79	78	82
Long Reach	67	75	81
Marriotts Ridge	88	93	93
Mount Hebron	84	82	82
Oakland Mills	63	73	79
Reservoir	70	78	82
River Hill	97	93	92
Wilde Lake	64	71	73

Table 4: HSA 2006 Algebra Results for Middle Schools

Middle School	Algebra Percent Passing
Bonnie Branch	100
Burleigh Manor	99
Clarksville	100
Cradlerock	98
Dunloggin	100
Elkridge Landing	100
Ellicott Mills	100
Folly Quarter	98
Glenwood	100
Hammond	100
Harper's Choice	98
Lime Kiln	100
Mayfield Woods	100
Mount View	98
Murray Hill	93
Oakland Mills	100
Patapsco	100
Patuxent Valley	90
Wilde Lake	94

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The performance of HCPSS students on the HSA continues to be among the highest in the state. Assuring that every HCPSS student is prepared to pass the HSA continues to be a priority. We will implement strategies that have proved to be highly effective in improving achievement, and are working collaboratively across departments and schools to use a continuous improvement process to guide

systemic improvement. Targeted professional development and targeted staffing will be used to support schools in making sure that every student group meets with success on these high stakes assessments. Our schools are closely monitoring the performance of individual students on local assessments and the MSA in previous grades to ensure that every student receives the necessary support to be successful on the HSA.

There are several options available to students who do not pass the HSA on their first attempt. Before retaking the test, students must receive appropriate assistance. This year, an HSA Mastery course will be offered to prepare students for retaking the test in January. Students may also opt to retake the course during the regular year or in summer school. There is an HSA administration in May and August.

More information from the MSDE is also expected regarding the Modified HSA, for students with Individualized Education Plans. This is part of a revision to NCLB that will be incorporated into the state's accountability system in 2006-2007. Also, a state task force is examining the possibility of a comparable HSA for students who have difficulty demonstrating their understanding on traditional pencil and paper tests. More information about both of these assessments will be shared as it becomes available.