

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY  
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

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|----------------------|---|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>TITLE:</b>        | Report on the Results of the 2009 Maryland School Assessment (MSA)    | <b>DATE:</b> | August 13, 2009 |
| <b>PRESENTER(S):</b> | Jose Stevenson, Director of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation |              |                 |

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**OVERVIEW:**

Howard County Public Schools System (HCPSS) students continue to perform progressively higher on the Maryland School Assessment according to the latest results released by the Maryland State Department of Education in June. Since the first administration of the MSA in 2003, HCPSS students have made sustained, steady gains in reading and mathematics in every grade and student group, and notably the Hispanic, African American and special services student groups, bringing the schools closer to meeting the *No Child Left Behind* goal of having all students reach proficiency by 2014. All grade levels are now performing at about the 90 percent proficient or advanced level in reading and mathematics.

The most recent gains build on successful practices that HCPSS has been implementing over the past several years, including a curriculum and assessments aligned to the standards, instructional techniques that address the student learning styles, access to data to inform classroom instruction, and a districtwide commitment to improvement.

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**RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

While the performance of HCPSS students on the MSA is a cause for celebration, important to our current and future successes is the system's continuous commitment to ongoing analysis and reflection of curriculum, instruction, and programs for the benefit of all students.

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**Submitted  
by:**

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Theresa R. Alban  
Chief Operating Officer

**Approval/  
Concurrence:**

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Sydney L. Cousin  
Superintendent

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Jose Stevenson, Director  
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## Background

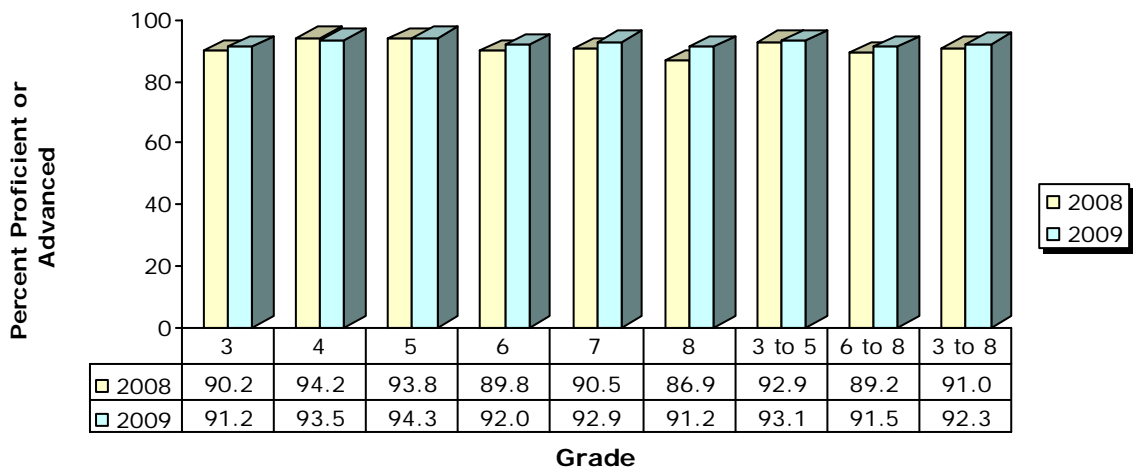
The Maryland School Assessment (MSA) provides measures for proficiency in reading and mathematics in compliance with the *No Child Left Behind* mandate to have full proficiency in these content areas by 2014. All students in Grades 3 through 8 participate in MSA testing and all of their scores are reported to the school system and schools as basic, proficient, or advanced. The High School Assessments in English and Algebra provide evidence for proficiency for high school students. Some special education students who meet specific participation criteria based on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can take the Alternate MSA (Alt-MSA) or the Modified MSA (Mod-MSA). Students scoring at or above state standards on these tests are deemed proficient. The results presented in this report include performance on MSA, Alt-MSA and Mod-MSA combined.

## 2009 MSA Results – Elementary and Middle School

Students in Grades 3 through 8 in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) continue to show strong achievement in reading and mathematics as reflected in their performance on the 2009 administration of the MSA.

## Systemwide Reading Results

MSA reading test scores rose across the board for all grades levels relative to 2008, except Grade 4—which held steady at about 94 percent proficiency. All grade levels are now performing at least at the 90 percent proficient or advanced level.



Overall, 92 percent of students in Grades 3 to 8 scored proficient or advanced in reading, a 1 percent gain over 2008.

Elementary Student Groups. Elementary student groups maintained their high levels of performance in reading over 2008, with some exceptions. Hispanic students and English Language Learners (ELL) decreased their percentage of students at proficient or advanced by 3 and 4.8 percentage points, respectively. Conversely, special education and American Indian students improved their performance by 4.5 and 8.9 percentage points, respectively. The performance of the American Indian group needs to be interpreted with caution. Their small number (about 30 in 2009) has a strong impact on calculations of percentage changes each year. Table 1 presents these data.

Table 1. Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced  
Grades 3 – 5, Reading MSA

|      | Male | Female | Asian | African Amer. | White | Hisp. | Amer. Indian | ELL  | FARMS | Special Ed. |
|------|------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|------|-------|-------------|
| 2008 | 91.3 | 94.7   | 95.8  | 84.7          | 96.0  | 85.1  | 84.4         | 78.1 | 78.6  | 66.4        |
| 2009 | 91.6 | 94.7   | 95.5  | 85.6          | 96.5  | 82.1  | 93.3         | 73.3 | 78.8  | 70.9        |

The improvement of the special education group from 66.4 in 2008 to 70.9 percent proficient or advanced marks the first time that every student group in elementary reading exceeded 70 percent proficient or advanced.

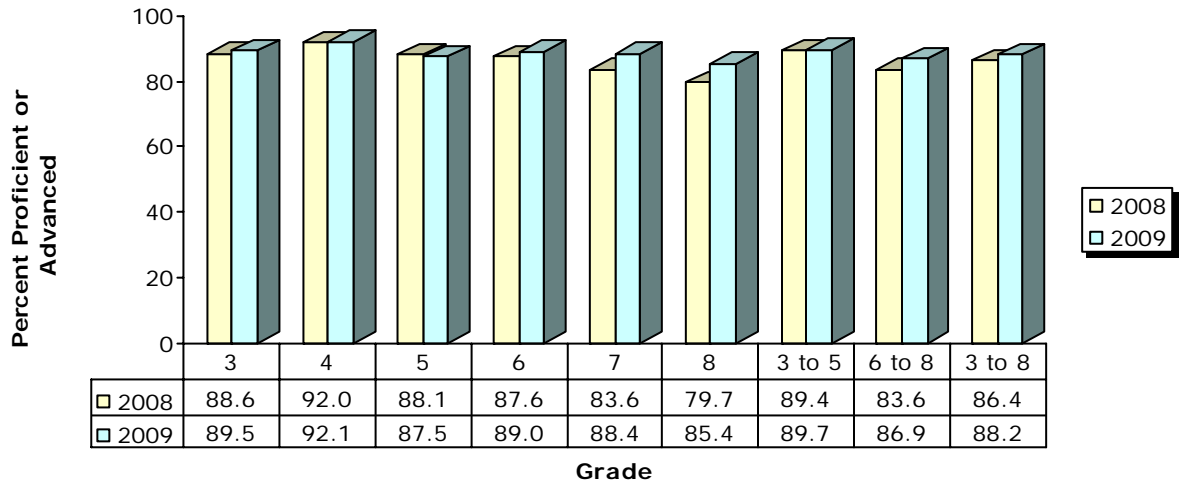
Middle Student Groups. Every middle student group improved performance in reading over 2008, except the American Indian group—which has smaller numbers that impact percentage changes each year. The greatest gain came from the special education students with a 14.3 percent increase in the percentage of students proficient or advanced. Table 2 presents these data.

Table 2. Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced  
Grades 6 – 8, Reading MSA

|      | Male | Female | Asian | African Amer. | White | Hisp. | Amer. Indian | ELL  | FARMS | Special Ed. |
|------|------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|------|-------|-------------|
| 2008 | 86.8 | 91.8   | 93.0  | 77.4          | 94.0  | 74.0  | 96.6         | 52.3 | 66.4  | 49.5        |
| 2009 | 89.3 | 94.0   | 94.4  | 82.1          | 95.5  | 81.2  | 76.3         | 58.0 | 72.4  | 63.8        |

## Systemwide Mathematics Results

The mathematics results parallel the reading results. Except for a slight decline in Grade 5 of less than 1 percent, mathematics performance is on the rise at every grade level from the previous year.



Overall, 88 percent of students in Grades 3 to 8 scored proficient or advanced in mathematics, a 2 percent gain over 2008.

Elementary Student Groups. Elementary student groups maintained or improved their high levels of performance in mathematics over 2008, with some exceptions. Hispanic students and English Language Learners (ELL) decreased their percentage of students at proficient or advanced by 3.8 and 4.8 percentage points, respectively. Likewise, the performance of American Indian student group declined by 13.3 percentage points, reflecting the impact that their small numbers has on percentage changes each year. Table 3 presents these results.

Table 3. Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced  
Grades 3 – 5, Mathematics MSA

|      | Male | Female | Asian | African Amer. | White | Hisp. | Amer. Indian | ELL  | FARMS | Special Ed. |
|------|------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|------|-------|-------------|
| 2008 | 88.6 | 90.4   | 95.2  | 76.5          | 94.2  | 75.8  | 87.5         | 72.6 | 67.6  | 55.9        |
| 2009 | 88.8 | 90.6   | 95.5  | 78.1          | 94.6  | 72.0  | 74.2         | 67.8 | 69.3  | 59.3        |

Middle Student Groups. Every middle student group improved performance over 2008, except American Indian—which has smaller numbers that impact

percentage changes each year. Every middle school student group receiving special services improved performance. English Language Learners gained 6.8 percentage points, special education students gained 11.1 percentage points, and students receiving FARMS services increased 9.2 percentage points. Hispanic and African American students also showed marked improvement of 8.9 and 7.4 percentage points, respectively. Table 4 presents these data.

Table 4. Percentage of Students Proficient or Advanced  
Grades 6 – 8, Mathematics MSA

|      | Male | Female | Asian | African Amer. | White | Hisp. | Amer. Indian | ELL  | FARMS | Special Ed. |
|------|------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|------|-------|-------------|
| 2008 | 82.7 | 84.6   | 93.8  | 62.7          | 90.7  | 66.1  | 86.2         | 61.6 | 52.6  | 43.3        |
| 2009 | 85.7 | 88.3   | 96.0  | 70.1          | 92.3  | 75.0  | 84.6         | 68.4 | 61.8  | 54.4        |

### School-by-School Results

The 2009 MSA results indicate that HCPSS schools continue to show progress towards the 2014 goal of 100 percent proficiency in reading and mathematics for all of their students.

At the elementary level:

- In reading, every elementary school had 80 percent or more students scoring proficient or advanced. There were 26 schools with more than 90 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced.
- In mathematics, every elementary school had more than 74 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced. There were 22 schools with more than 90 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced.

At the middle school level:

- In reading, every middle school had more than 81 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced. There were 11 schools with more than 90 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced.
- In mathematics, every middle school had more than 72 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced. There were 9 schools with more than 90 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced.

### Trend Performance

The percentage of students in Grades 3 through 8 scoring proficient or advanced on the MSA has risen steadily since 2003. The greatest gains have occurred to students receiving special services and African American and Hispanic students in both reading and mathematics. Tables 5 and 6 present these trends.

Table 5. Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced  
Reading MSA, Grades 3 – 8

|                   | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Change<br>from 2003<br>to 2009 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| Overall           | 81   | 87   | 88   | 88   | 88   | 91   | 92   | +11                            |
| Male              | 79   | 84   | 86   | 86   | 86   | 89   | 90   | +11                            |
| Female            | 85   | 89   | 90   | 90   | 90   | 93   | 94   | +9                             |
| Asian             | 85   | 91   | 91   | 93   | 92   | 94   | 95   | +10                            |
| African American  | 63   | 72   | 74   | 75   | 74   | 81   | 84   | +21                            |
| White             | 88   | 91   | 93   | 92   | 93   | 95   | 96   | +8                             |
| Hispanic          | 58   | 73   | 71   | 75   | 71   | 80   | 82   | +24                            |
| American Indian   | 59   | 85   | 96   | 91   | 88   | 90   | 84   | +25                            |
| ELL               | 33   | 52   | 50   | 54   | 58   | 68   | 67   | +34                            |
| FARMS             | 52   | 59   | 63   | 65   | 64   | 73   | 76   | +24                            |
| Special Education | 45   | 50   | 55   | 55   | 54   | 58   | 67   | +22                            |

Table 6. Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced Trend  
Mathematics MSA, Grades 3 – 8

|                   | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Change<br>from 2003<br>to 2009 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| Overall           | 75   | 77   | 82   | 84   | 85   | 86   | 88   | +13                            |
| Male              | 75   | 76   | 81   | 84   | 83   | 86   | 87   | +12                            |
| Female            | 75   | 77   | 82   | 85   | 86   | 87   | 89   | +14                            |
| Asian             | 88   | 89   | 92   | 94   | 94   | 95   | 96   | +8                             |
| African American  | 50   | 51   | 60   | 65   | 65   | 69   | 74   | +24                            |
| White             | 81   | 83   | 88   | 90   | 91   | 92   | 93   | +12                            |
| Hispanic          | 53   | 61   | 61   | 68   | 66   | 71   | 74   | +21                            |
| American Indian   | 47   | 59   | 85   | 78   | 90   | 87   | 80   | +33                            |
| ELL               | 54   | 53   | 57   | 58   | 60   | 68   | 68   | +14                            |
| FARMS             | 41   | 42   | 50   | 55   | 55   | 60   | 66   | +25                            |
| Special Education | 35   | 36   | 45   | 48   | 48   | 50   | 57   | +22                            |

The percentage of students in Grades 3 through 8 scoring at the advanced level has also risen steadily since 2003 on both the reading and the mathematics MSA. Particularly encouraging is the progress that students who receive special services have made in this regard. Table 7 presents these trends.

Table 7. Percentage of Students Scoring Advanced Trend  
Reading and Mathematics MSA, Grades 3 – 8

|                      | Reading |      |        | Mathematics |      |        |
|----------------------|---------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
|                      | 2003    | 2009 | Change | 2003        | 2009 | Change |
| Overall              | 38      | 53   | +15    | 27          | 44   | +17    |
| Male                 | 34      | 48   | +14    | 28          | 45   | +17    |
| Female               | 42      | 59   | +17    | 25          | 43   | +18    |
| Asian                | 41      | 62   | +21    | 43          | 62   | +19    |
| African American     | 18      | 34   | +16    | 8           | 20   | +12    |
| White                | 44      | 61   | +17    | 31          | 51   | +20    |
| Hispanic             | 19      | 29   | +10    | 8           | 19   | +11    |
| American Indian      | 12      | 41   | +29    | 6           | 34   | +28    |
| ELL                  | 4       | 10   | +6     | 15          | 17   | +2     |
| FARMS                | 11      | 21   | +10    | 6           | 13   | +7     |
| Special<br>Education | 10      | 19   | +9     | 8           | 14   | +6     |

## Summary of Results

Overall, HCPSS elementary and middle schools, with minor exceptions, made considerable strides this year, moving students into the reading and mathematics proficiency category of the MSA, continuing a trend towards higher percentages of achieving students that started in 2003, the baseline year. This is especially true of students who receive special services and African American and Hispanic students. Achievement gains of this magnitude, especially when sustained year after year, reflect the continuous success of school initiatives, student monitoring, parental involvement, professional development, and administrative support.

While this school and student performance is encouraging, the 2009 MSA results also showed that there are opportunities for improvement. Hispanic students and those who are learning English as a second language, while making some progress in some instances, experienced declines in their performances over last year. Both groups decreased their percentage of students who were proficient or advanced in reading and mathematics in elementary school. On the other hand, students in these two groups saw progress in both content areas in middle school.

Staff in schools and Central Office will continue to apply the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) process to support improved academic performance for all students.