

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1166  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Owings)

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Education - Passage of Examinations or Assessments - Prohibition as a  
Graduation Requirement

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This bill prohibits the State Board of Education (SBE) from using passage of a single examination or assessment or a series of examinations or assessments as a requirement for graduation from a public high school.

The bill is effective July 1, 2003.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill would not materially affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill would not materially affect local school finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The requirements for graduation from a public high school are established through rules and regulations adopted by SBE and policies set by local school systems. Currently, SBE requires high school students to pass the Maryland Functional Tests in order to graduate.

**Background:** From 1991 to 2002, the percentage of eleventh grade students who passed all the Maryland Functional Tests ranged from 91% to 95%. More than 99% of eleventh grade students passed the reading portion of the tests in all 12 years, 94% to 97% passed

the mathematics portion of the tests annually, and 98% to 99% of students passed the writing portion of the tests each year.

Maryland is in the process of implementing new statewide high school assessments. When the program is fully phased in, it will measure school performance and individual student performance through a series of 12 end-of-course tests. Students took the new high school assessments as field tests in 2000 and 2001, and scores from the 2002 assessments are the first that have been made public. Test results were scored on percentile ranks, meaning half the students in the State scored below 50 and the other half scored above 50. County by county test results are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

SBE envisions the new high school assessments becoming graduation requirements at some point in the near future. Currently, the class of 2007 (students entering ninth grade in fall 2003) is projected to be the first class that will be required to pass the assessments to graduate.

**State Fiscal Effect:** The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 requires statewide testing in high schools. It is assumed, therefore, that eliminating testing as a graduation requirement would not alter the test schedule already in place for high schools. The State pays the majority of the costs associated with required statewide tests.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 14, 2003  
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**Exhibit 1**  
**Local Percentile Ranks from High School Assessments**  
**January 2002**

<u>County</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Biology</u>	<u>Subject Geometry</u>	<u>Govt</u>	<u>Algebra</u>
Allegany	51	59	42	45	46
Anne Arundel	49	55	56	48	53
Baltimore City	34	24	20	37	23
Baltimore	46	49	51	50	51
Calvert	56	61	55	65	56
Caroline	49	45	34	45	40
Carroll	62	61	55	65	56
Cecil	47	50	58	48	64
Charles	50	55	56	48	46
Dorchester	44	37	25	42	36
Frederick	62	62	57	62	64
Garrett	49	52	45	48	59
Harford	50	49	55	54	57
Howard	72	70	65	67	65
Kent	51	50	42	58	51
Montgomery	67	70	70	70	72
Prince George's	34	31	25	32	28
Queen Anne's	58	51	47	57	56
St. Mary's	50	50	56	50	49
Somerset	46	40	31	45	43
Talbot	55	57	42	62	48
Washington	52	52	57	50	64
Wicomico	46	48	45	54	41
Worcester	57	57	40	53	46

Source: Maryland State Department of Education