

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 105
Ways and Means

(Delegates Gordon and King)

**Education - High School Graduation - Eligibility Based on Passage of
Standardized Tests Prohibited**

This bill prohibits the State Board of Education or a local board of education from making a student's eligibility to graduate from a public high school and receive a diploma or certificate contingent on the passage of the Maryland High School Assessments or any other similar tests. The bill also subjects policies for the promotion and graduation of public school students to State law.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland High School Assessments would presumably continue but would not become a requirement for graduation.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The promotion and graduation of public school students are in accordance with policies established by the local boards of education and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. Each student who graduates from a public high school must receive the same type of diploma or certificate, regardless of the high school attended or the course taken. Students must pass functional tests in reading, mathematics, and writing in order to graduate from a public high schools in Maryland.

Background: Over the past several years the State Board of Education has been contemplating the possibility of using passage of the Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs) as a graduation requirement. The most recent round of considerations began in

December 2003 when the State board was presented with a proposal to have students in the class of 2009 be the first who would be required to pass the tests in order to obtain a Maryland High School Diploma. The proposal also provides other paths to high school completion, including a less prestigious local high school diploma, a diploma for certain students with disabilities, and a certificate of program completion. HSAs, which have been administered for the last two years, are composed of tests in algebra/data analysis, biology, English I, and government. The tests are considered much more difficult than the Maryland functional tests that are currently used to determine eligibility for graduation. Results from last year's HSAs are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Percentage of Students Passing the Maryland High School Assessments

<u>County</u>	<u>English I</u>	<u>Biology</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Algebra/ Data Analysis</u>
Allegany	35.2	57.7	47.0	40.8
Anne Arundel	40.6	58.2	59.6	55.6
Baltimore City	17.7	26.7	42.0	22.5
Baltimore	36.8	52.8	60.3	57.9
Calvert	48.5	67.8	50.0	64.7
Caroline	25.9	48.2	49.8	33.5
Carroll	51.9	71.8	76.1	66.0
Cecil	34.8	51.4	60.3	66.2
Charles	40.8	58.5	59.8	50.8
Dorchester	23.3	45.9	41.3	47.6
Frederick	45.3	63.7	64.5	64.2
Garrett	32.7	50.8	60.0	63.6
Harford	47.0	59.4	66.2	63.6
Howard	61.5	73.3	78.5	69.4
Kent	33.6	52.1	53.2	44.2
Montgomery	56.3	71.3	77.3	67.1
Prince George's	23.2	31.1	41.0	28.1
Queen Anne's	57.0	63.2	62.9	45.4
St. Mary's	36.8	58.7	56.1	47.5
Somerset	22.1	50.0	44.9	31.7
Talbot	40.1	64.9	77.5	46.1
Washington	41.2	57.6	60.3	68.7
Wicomico	37.8	48.1	61.8	46.6
Worcester	41.1	57.9	67.4	58.0
State	39.8	54.3	60.2	53.2

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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ncs/hlb

Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510