

**COMAR 13A.03.02, .06, and .09 – Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland**  
*Changes adopted by the State Board of Education*  
October 25, 2016

*Italics indicate inclusions*

All language in [brackets] has been removed

**.02 Definitions.**

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined.
  - (1) "Combined score" means the total of the passing scores established by the Department on the Maryland High School Assessments in algebra, biology, English, and government.
  - (2) "Credit" means successful demonstration of a specified unit of study.
  - (3) "Department" means the State Department of Education.
  - (4) "HSA" means the high school assessments *in biology and government* aligned with the *Maryland College and Career Ready Standards*.
  - (5) "Individualized education program (IEP)" means a written description for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with 20 U.S.C. §1414 and COMAR 13A.05.01.
  - (6) "Maryland High School Assessments" means the HSA, PARCC, or other *assessments* in algebra, biology, English, and government developed or adopted by the Department that are aligned with and measure a student's skills and knowledge as set forth in the *Maryland College and Career Ready Standards* for those subjects.
  - (7) "Minimum score" means an acceptable score established by the Department below the passing score on a Maryland High School Assessment that may be used by a student to satisfy the combined score option.
  - (8) "PARCC Assessment" means the assessments *in Algebra and English* aligned with the *Maryland College and Career Ready Standards*.

**.06 Maryland High School Assessments.**

- A. A student shall take the requisite Maryland High School Assessment during its next regular administration if the student received credit for taking, by the methods identified in Regulations .03 and .04 of this chapter, any of the following courses aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment:
  - (1) Algebra;
  - (2) Biology;
  - (3) English; or
  - (4) Government.
- B. To be awarded the Maryland High School Diploma, all students, including elementary and middle school students who take high school level courses, shall take the Maryland High School Assessment for algebra, biology, English, and government after the student completes the required course.
- C. Each local school system shall provide appropriate assistance to strengthen areas of weaknesses for students who have not achieved satisfactory scores on the Maryland High School Assessments.
- D. Each student who failed a Maryland High School Assessment *once may participate in the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation* and shall be provided at least one opportunity to retake the appropriate assessment in accordance with the testing schedule issued by the Department.

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**E. Bridge Plan for Academic Validation.**

(1) Eligibility Criteria. Except for the students identified in §G of this regulation, a student shall participate in the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation if the student has:

- (a) Failed one or more Maryland High School Assessments at least twice;
- (b) Received a passing grade and earned credit in the course or courses related to the assessment or assessments;
- (c) Demonstrated overall satisfactory attendance in the most recent school year completed; and
- (d) Demonstrated satisfactory progress toward achieving the high school diploma requirements specified in COMAR 13A.03.02.09B(1) and (2); and
- (e) Participated successfully in appropriate assistance as defined in §C of this regulation after having failed one or more of the Maryland High School Assessments.

(2) The Bridge Plan for Academic Validation shall consist of:

- (a) Specific modules developed by the Department in each of the Maryland High School Assessments content areas;
- (b) The assignment by the local school system of one or more modules for completion by each student meeting the eligibility criteria;
- (c) Scoring by the local review panels of the completed modules according to State-developed, Statewide scoring protocols;
- (d) A recommendation from the local review panels to the local superintendent as to the outcome of the scoring of each student's module or modules;
- (e) Acceptance or rejection by the local superintendent of the local review panel's recommendations; and
- (f) An opportunity for the student to appeal the local superintendent's decision to the State Superintendent of Schools.

**F. Reporting Student Performance.**

(1) A school system shall state on the student's performance record card only that the student has or has not met all assessment requirements and shall not describe the option used to meet the requirement.

(2) For the purpose of this section, *except for students identified in §G of this regulation*, "met all assessment requirements" means achieving a passing score on all Maryland High School Assessments, or meeting the requirements of the combined score option, or successfully completing a Bridge Plan in those assessment areas that the student did not.

**G.** *For students who are graduating in school years 2016—2017 and 2017—2018 and who are first-time test takers of Algebra I and/or English 10 in those school years*, if a student has taken an Algebra I and/or English 10 course and has passed the course(s) but failed the *Maryland High School Assessment* aligned with those course(s), that student is exempt from completing a Bridge Plan for Academic Validation *and will have met the assessment requirement for Algebra I and/or English 10.*

**.09 Diplomas and Certificates.**

A. The types of diplomas and certificates specified in §§B—D of this regulation shall be awarded to any student who meets the requirements for award.

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- B. Maryland High School Diploma. Except as provided in Regulation .12 of this chapter, and in §C of this regulation, to be awarded a Maryland high school diploma, a student shall:
- (1) Complete the enrollment, credit, and service requirements as specified in this chapter;
  - (2) Complete local school system requirements; and
  - (3) *Meet the graduation assessment requirements in the following ways:*
    - (a) Achieve a passing score on the Maryland High School Assessments for *Algebra I* and *English 10*, in the following way:
      - (i) For school year 2016—2017, a score of 725;
      - (ii) For school year 2017—2018, a score of 733;
      - (iii) For school year 2018—2019, a score of 741;
      - (iv) For school year 2019—2020, and beyond, a score of 750; and
      - (v) Assessment in *English 10* and/or *Algebra I*, the passing score on the retest shall be the passing score in the year in which the student first took the assessment.
    - (b) Achieve a passing score as established by the Department on the Maryland High School Assessments for biology and government;
    - (c) Achieve a combined score(s) as established by the Department on the Maryland High School Assessments;
    - (d) If a student has not achieved a passing score on the Maryland High School Assessment in *English 10* and/or *Algebra I*, achieve a score as established by the Department on Department-approved assessments for algebra, and/or English, , aligned with the Maryland High School Assessments such as Advanced Placement examinations, SAT , ACT, and International Baccalaureate examinations; or
    - (e) Except for students described in .06G of this chapter, if a student is unable to meet the requirements in §B(3)(a)—(d) of this regulation, then satisfactorily complete the requirements of the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation as set forth in Regulation .06E of this chapter.
- C. *Exception To Passing Score Requirement*
- (1) For students who are graduating in school years 2016—2017 and 2017—2018 and who are first-time test takers during those school years of the Maryland High School Assessment in *Algebra I* and/or *English 10*, the requirements set forth in §B(3)(a) of this regulation do not apply. For those students only, taking the *Algebra I* and/or *English 10* Maryland High School Assessment for the first time will meet the graduation assessment requirement for *Algebra I* and *English 10*.
  - (2) For all students taking the HSA biology assessment in the 2016—2017 school year, taking the HSA biology assessment will meet the graduation assessment requirement for biology.
- D. Maryland High School Diploma by Examination.
- (1) General Educational Development Testing Program. A Maryland High School Diploma by Examination may be awarded for satisfactory performance on approved general educational development tests if the student meets those requirements as defined in Labor and Employment Article, §11-808, Annotated Code of Maryland, and COMAR 09.37.01.04.

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- (2) Maryland Adult External High School Diploma Program. A Maryland High School Diploma by Examination may be awarded for demonstrating competencies in general life skills and individual skills on applied performance tests if the student meets those requirements as defined in COMAR 09.37.01.20.
- E. Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.
  - (1) This certificate shall be awarded only to students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma but who meet the following standards:
    - (a) The student is enrolled in an education program for at least 4 years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent, and is determined by an IEP team, with the agreement of the student and the parents of the student, to have developed appropriate skills for the individual to enter the world of work, act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life, with the world of work including but not limited to:
      - (i) Gainful employment;
      - (ii) Post-secondary education and training;
      - (iii) Supported employment; and
      - (iv) Other services that are integrated in the community; or
    - (b) The student has been enrolled in an education program for 4 years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent and will have reached age 21 by the end of the student's current school year.
  - (2) An Exit Document that describes the student's skills shall accompany the Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.
  - (3) The final decision to award a student with disabilities a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion will not be made until after the beginning of the student's last year in high school.
  - (4) A student with significant cognitive disability may not meet high school graduation requirements, in accordance with §B of this regulation, if a student:
    - (a) Participates in an Alternative Assessment based on Alternative Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS); and
    - (b) Continues to receive instruction based on Alternative Academic Achievement Standards through high school.
  - (5) If a student participates in a graduation ceremony prior to the completion of the student's education program, at the ceremony the school system shall issue to the student a Certificate of Achievement or other similarly titled certificate in place of a diploma.
- F. Local Endorsements. Consistent with procedures established by the Department, each local school system may add endorsements to the diploma as incentives for students to meet locally established requirements and outcomes in instruction beyond the minimums specified by the State.
- G. *At least yearly, through the end of the implementation, the State Board will review and assess updated information on the graduation assessment requirements and scores.*