



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for the on-going discussions we have had regarding accountability assessments for advanced middle school mathematics students. We have defined those students as ones who are taking high school level courses in middle school, specifically, Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II.

As you are aware, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that in the case of mathematics and reading/language arts, the same academic assessment shall be administered in each of grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9-12. ESSA allows for an exception for middle school students taking Algebra I. A state may exempt any 8th grade mathematics assessment if a student takes the end of course assessment that the State typically administers to meet the ESSA requirement in high school mathematics which in Maryland is the Algebra I assessment. Maryland requested and was granted this exception in its recently approved ESSA Consolidated State Plan.

On March 8, 2018, Maryland submitted a waiver to allow this exception to also apply to students who are taking high school mathematics courses in grades 6 and 7. This waiver, if granted, will require each Maryland middle school student who is enrolled in a high school level mathematics course (Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II), regardless of grade level, to take the end-of-course assessment commensurate with his/her course of study instead of a grade-specific mathematics assessment.

As a follow-up to the waiver request, the U.S. Department of Education requested that Maryland identify what the course taking plan would be for each grade level. In response to the U.S. Department of Education's request, Maryland will require students in middle school who take a high school mathematics course to take the corresponding high school mathematics assessment. Students taking Algebra I in the 6th or 7th grade must be assessed using a more advanced mathematics assessment in subsequent years in middle school, namely Geometry or Algebra II depending on when they take Algebra I. All other students would take the Algebra I course and assessment either in 8th grade or in high school.

For students taking Algebra I in the 8th grade, they could be assessed with the SAT in high school. In response to the request from USED, Maryland submitted the following courses and assessments which will be used for accountability for middle school students who complete high school mathematics coursework:

Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		High School	
Course	Assessment	Course	Assessment	Course	Assessment	Course	Assessment
Math 6	PARCC Math 6	Math 7	PARCC Math 7	Math 8	PARCC Math 8	Algebra I	PARCC Algebra I
Math 6	PARCC Math 6	Math 7	PARCC Math 7	Algebra I	PARCC Algebra I	Geometry or other HS Math Course	SAT or PARCC Geometry
Math 6	PARCC Math 6	Algebra I	PARCC Algebra I	Geometry	PARCC Geometry	Algebra II or other HS Math Course	SAT or PARCC Alg II
Algebra I	PARCC Algebra I	Geometry	PARCC Geometry	Algebra II	PARCC Algebra II	Other HS Math Course	SAT

The last three rows indicate grades where the Exception for Advanced Mathematics in Middle School applies.

This option of using the SAT as a high school accountability assessment will be available for the 2018-19 school year. In order to receive approval to administer the SAT for high school accountability, Maryland will have to set performance levels for the SAT and submit the SAT for Peer Review. Maryland covers the cost of PARCC assessments grades 3-8, PARCC Alg I, PARCC Alg II, PARCC Geometry and would require the local school systems to cover the cost of the SAT.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,



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