

Top 10 Things

You Need
to Know

About the HSAs

Maryland High School Assessments

The Government HSA is BACK!

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, all students enrolled in the Government course will take the Government HSA. (See #3)

1 Be Informed

To graduate with a Maryland High School Diploma, students must meet all State course, service-learning, and testing —High School Assessment (HSA) — requirements, as well as all local school system graduation requirements. Ask your child's school counselor about the specific high school graduation requirements and begin to develop an academic plan for your student.

2 Four Core Tests

The four HSA tests - algebra/data analysis, biology, English, and government - are based on the Core Learning Goals, which clearly outline course content and learning objectives for each subject area. The content covered in HSA-related courses and on an HSA test is a basic level of knowledge that will be built on as a student continues his/her education.

3 The Reinstated Government HSA

Starting with the administration of the Government HSA in the 2012-2013 school year, the following rules apply:

- Students entering 9th grade in the 2012-2013 school year or in a prior year (*including students who entered 9th grade in 2011-2012, 2010-2011, or 2009-2010*) do not need to pass the government HSA for graduation but may use it for a combined score. These students have two options to meet the combined score option.
 1. Students **MAY** achieve a combined score of 1602 for English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and Government.
- OR**
- 2. Students **MAY** achieve a combined score of 1208 for English, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology.
- Students entering 9th grade in school year 2013-2014 and beyond **MUST** include the Government HSA score to meet a combined score of 1602.

4 Know the Score

Passing scores for the four HSA content areas are:

- Algebra/Data Analysis: 412
- Biology: 400
- English: 396
- Government: 394 [*The entering 9th graders in the 2013-2014 school year WILL BE REQUIRED to pass or obtain a combined score of 1602 on the four HSAs to meet the graduation requirement. (See #3)*]

A student who earns a state-approved score on an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) test does not have to take the HSA in the related subject. The student will receive the passing score for the content area.



5 Know the Options

There are a number of options to meet the testing requirement for graduation which include:

- Taking and Passing the HSA tests;
- Earning a combined score of 1208 on three HSA tests **OR** 1602 on four HSA tests — the Combined-Score Option allows students to offset a lower score on one HSA test with a higher score on another HSA test — *(see #3 in relation to the Government HSA)*; **OR**
- Using the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. *(Students who have failed an HSA twice and meet the eligibility criteria complete one or more projects in the HSA content area. The school counselor can provide more information about the Bridge Plan or go to the program website at www.mdk12.org.)*

6 Take and Retake

The HSAs are given in October, January, May, and July/August. A special, seniors-only, administration is given in April.

The first administration of the Government HSA will occur in January 2013 and again in May and June.

Students can retake an HSA as many times as necessary to earn either a passing score or a score high enough to allow them to use the Combined-Score Option *(see #5)*.

Students who do not pass one, or more, HSAs must be offered locally-administered or approved assistance *(see #7)*.

7 Help at School

Each school system has developed strategies for providing assistance, which could include sample test reviews, tutoring, after-school, or Saturday instruction. The school determines what assistance will be provided to students.

There are also a number of tools in the Resources section of www.mdk12.org, including the Online HSA Course for Parents and sample HSA tests to help prepare students.

A student who is considering the Bridge Plan for a specific HSA test is required to participate in locally-administered or approved assistance and retake the test a second time. The student is responsible for taking advantage of the assistance to help prepare for retesting.

8 Students with Accommodations

Students with disabilities are entitled to receive both instructional and testing accommodations as outlined in his / her Individualized Education Program (IEP). If you have questions about your child's accommodations for an HSA or Mod-HSA test, or the Bridge Plan, contact your child's teacher or IEP team.

The Mod-HSA is an alternative test for a student with an IEP who meets specific participation criteria. A student with an IEP who has taken and failed the HSA once may have the opportunity to take the Mod-HSA if approved by the school.



9 Know Your Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) details the rights parents have regarding access to their children's education records. To learn more about FERPA visit www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa. Your child's school counselor can also provide specific information about FERPA.

10 Test Results

Results are mailed to the local school system 6 weeks after the test is taken. The local school system then sends the individual student results to the schools. The schools are responsible for sending students' results to the parent/guardian. Contact your child's school if you do not receive his/her HSA results in a timely manner.

Each local school system has a plan of when HSA-related courses are typically offered to students. The school counselor can help plan a course of study for your child to graduate from high school as well as help prepare him/her for the future.

For additional information, visit www.mdk12.org and click on High School Assessments.

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