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TO: Local School Superintendents

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
State Superintendent of Schools

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SUBJECT: Elimination of Minimum Score for HSA Combined-Score Option

Recently, we have been asked by both parents and school-based personnel about the status of the Combined-Score Option, given the recent State Board decisions making changes to the High School Assessment program. We believe it is important to ask your assistance in notifying your school staffs of the change in rules for the Combined-Score Option and the possible impact on individual students who need to retake failed assessments.

Procedures for Using Combined-Score Option

As a result of the State Board of Education's October 2007 decision, students entering high school in fall 2005 or later and using the Combined-Score Option will no longer need to meet the minimum score for any High School Assessment. This means that to use the Combined-Score Option, students must earn a total of 1602 scale score points when their scores on all four assessments are combined or added together. Regardless the score on any of the four High School Assessments (algebra/data analysis, English, biology, or government), students achieving a total of 1602 scale score points will be deemed to have met the High School Assessment requirement for graduation.

Transfer Students and the Combined-Score Option

As you know, a student transferring into a Maryland high school from a non-public school in Maryland or a school in another state can still access the Combined-Score Option even if he or she has taken and received credit for one or more of the High School Assessment courses prior to moving to Maryland. For such students, the target combined score is still 1602.

The Maryland receiving school decides what credits to accept for the courses the student has previously passed (COMAR 13A.03.02.12B(2)). When the school awards transfer credit for a High School Assessment course, the student does not have to take and pass the corresponding HSA. If the student chooses to use the Combined-Score Option, the student is assigned the passing score for the HSA from which the student is exempt. This assigned passing score is added to the student's other HSA scores. If the total equals or exceeds 1602, the student is deemed to have met the High School Assessment graduation requirement.



Notifying Staff

Please assist us in providing this information on the Combined-Score Option to all central office and school-based staff who will be working with students in areas related to student record-keeping, counseling students, assessments, and administration.

For More Information

If you need additional clarification regarding the Combined-Score Option or any other HSA requirement, please contact me or call Ron Peiffer, Deputy State Superintendent for Academic Policy, at 410-767-0473 or Sandy Shepherd of the same office at 410-767-0476. Data related questions can be directed to Janice Johnson of the Division of Assessment and Accountability at 410-767-0025.

NSG:sks