

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

August 21, 2003

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Progress in Grades 7 and 8 on the 2003 Maryland Functional Tests

Students in Grades 7 and 8 performed above last year's results on the 2003 census administration (first administration) of the Maryland functional tests in reading, mathematics, and writing. Passing rates for Grade 7 students rose from 91 percent to 93 percent in reading and from 72 percent to 73 percent in mathematics. Passing rates for Grade 8 students rose from 83 to 86 percent in writing. At the same time, gains were evident in most content areas among all racial/ethnic groups of students and students with special needs.

These results are notable because the number of students tested continues to climb, particularly those students challenged by poverty and English language limitations, without the decline in scores that usually accompanies such a trend. Compared with 2002, for example, the number of students tested in 2003 who were receiving English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services grew by 5 percent in reading, 11 percent in mathematics, and 27 percent in writing. Yet, ESOL students improved their passing rates in all three content areas. These results also are notable because, like 2002, this year's calculation of passing rates includes all special education and general education students who participated in testing. Prior to 2002, results of special education students receiving 15 or more hours of service were calculated and reported separately. For this reason, 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with 2001 results and earlier.

Disaggregation of results by racial/ethnic groups shows that although Asian American and White students continue to have higher passing rates than their African American and Hispanic peers, the achievement gaps narrowed in 2003 in all three areas, as illustrated in the table that follows.

Average Percent Passing Maryland Functional Tests, 2002–2003

Test	Year	African American and Hispanic Students	Asian American and White Students	Difference
Mathematics	2002	51	87	36
	<b>2003</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>35</b>
Reading	2002	82	96	14
	<b>2003</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>11</b>
Writing	2002	72	89	17
	<b>2003</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>14</b>

Students participating in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) and the ESOL program gained in their passing rates across all three content areas. Students receiving special education services improved their passing rates in reading and writing, and had a slight decline from 46 to 45 percent passing in mathematics.

The county's System of Shared Accountability (SSA) standard of performance for schools is that at least 90 percent of students pass the Maryland functional tests on the first administration. Of the 36 middle schools represented in this report, 29 schools (81%) met the SSA standard in reading and 2 schools (6%) met the SSA standard in mathematics. Of the 35 middle schools that participated in the writing test, 16 schools (46%) met the SSA standard in this content area. Many schools that did not meet these standards have passing percentages close to 90 percent. Herbert Hoover Middle School met all three SSA standards in 2003.

Passing the Maryland functional tests is a Maryland state requirement for high school graduation. The Maryland State Board of Education is likely to decide on the future of these tests once it takes action on passing standards for the Maryland High School Assessments this summer or early fall.

The attached report summarizes the results of the 2003 census administration.

JDW: jws

Attachment

Copy to:

Executive Staff  
Directors of School Performance  
Dr. Newman



**Results of the 2003 Census Administration of the  
Maryland Functional Tests**

**Office of Shared Accountability**

**August 2003**

**Jose W. Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Testing**



**OFFICE OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**

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## Results of the 2003 Census Administration of the Maryland Functional Tests

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students posted gains on the 2003 census administration of the Maryland functional tests in reading, mathematics, and writing relative to last year's results.<sup>1</sup> In Grade 7, countywide passing rates improved by 2 points (93%) in reading and by 1 point (73%) in mathematics. In Grade 8, countywide passing rates rose by 3 points (86%) in writing. At the same time, gains were evident in most content areas among all racial/ethnic groups of students and students with special needs. Passing these tests is a Maryland state requirement for high school graduation.

These results are notable because the number of students tested continues to climb, particularly those students challenged by poverty and English language limitations, without the decline in scores that usually accompanies such a trend. Compared with 2002, for example, the number of students tested in 2003 who were receiving English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services grew by 5 percent in reading, 11 percent in mathematics, and 27 percent in writing. Yet, these students improved their passing rates in all three content areas. These results are also notable because, as in 2002, this year's calculation of passing rates includes all special education and general education students who participated in testing. Prior to 2002, results of special education students receiving 15 or more hours of service were calculated and reported separately. For this reason, 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with 2001 results and earlier.

Table 1  
Census Administration of the Maryland Functional Tests:  
Countywide Number of Students Tested and Passing Percentages, 1994–2003

Year	Mathematics (Grade 7)		Reading (Grade 7)		Writing (Grade 8)	
	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing	Number Tested	Percent Passing
1994	7,769	73	7,724	93	-	-
1995	8,087	76	8,017	94	-	-
1996	8,256	73	8,278	93	-	-
1997	8,402	78	8,346	92	7,875	91
1998	8,671	75	8,661	94	8,256	89
1999	8,620	75	8,712	94	8,736	93
2000	9,229	73	9,057	94	8,797	89
2001	9,527	71	9,486	94	9,252	87
2002	10,619	72	10,445	91	10,327	83
<b>2003</b>	<b>10,779</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10,652</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>10,644</b>	<b>86</b>

*Note:* The 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with previous years' results. The calculation of the 2002 and 2003 results reflects student inclusion criteria that are different from the criteria used in previous years.

1. These results are different from the results that the Maryland State Department of Education presents on its yearly Maryland School Performance Program (MSPP) report. Results on the MSPP report are the cumulative passing rates on these tests by the end of Grade 9 and Grade 11.

## Results by Race/Ethnicity

Results for Hispanic students were particularly impressive. Their passing rates improved by 3 points in mathematics (55%), 5 points in reading (87%), and 7 points in writing (77%). The results for the other racial/ethnic groups include the following:

- African American students improved their passing rates by 3 points in reading and writing (85% and 77%, respectively), while maintaining in mathematics (50%).
- Asian American students had gains of 1 to 2 points in all three areas, raising their passing rates to 88 percent in mathematics, 91 percent in writing, and 96 percent in reading.
- White students showed gains of two points in reading (98%) and three points in writing (91%), while maintaining their performance in mathematics (86%).

Table 2  
 Census Administration of the Maryland Functional Tests:  
 Countywide Number of Students Tested and Passing Percentages by Race/Ethnicity, 2002–2003

Test	Year	African American		Asian American		Hispanic		White	
		Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Mathematics	2002	2,284	50	1,415	87	1,731	52	5,161	86
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2,409</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>5,060</b>	<b>86</b>
Reading	2002	2,266	82	1,385	95	1,628	82	5,141	96
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1,411</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5,087</b>	<b>98</b>
Writing	2002	2,158	74	1,445	89	1,519	70	5,183	88
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5,160</b>	<b>91</b>

Although Asian American and White students continue to have higher passing rates than their African American and Hispanic peers, the achievement gaps in 2003 were smaller in all three areas than in 2002. (See Attachments A, B, and C for historical data.) Table 3 below shows these data.

Table 3  
Average Percent Passing Maryland Functional Tests:  
African American and Hispanic Students Compared with Asian American  
and White Students, 2002–2003

Test	Year	African American and Hispanic Students	Asian American and White Students	Difference
Mathematics	2002	51	87	36
	<b>2003</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>35</b>
Reading	2002	82	96	14
	<b>2003</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>11</b>
Writing	2002	72	89	17
	<b>2003</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>14</b>

### Results by Gender

Countywide results by gender showed that female students tend to perform better in reading and writing than male students. Female students had a 4- to 10-point lead over male students in these content areas. In mathematics, there was little difference in performance by gender. (See Attachments A, B, and C for historical data.)

Table 4  
Census Administration of the Maryland Functional Tests:  
Countywide Number of Students Tested and Passing Percentages by Gender, 2002–2003

Test	Year	Male		Female	
		Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Mathematics	2002	5,509	72	5,110	73
	<b>2003</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>74</b>
Reading	2002	5,421	89	5,024	93
	<b>2003</b>	<b>5,483</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5,169</b>	<b>95</b>
Writing	2002	5,235	78	5,092	87
	<b>2003</b>	<b>5,515</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5,129</b>	<b>91</b>

### Students Receiving Support Services

Students participating in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) program and the ESOL program gained in their passing rates across all three content areas. Students receiving special education services improved their passing rates in reading and writing, and had a slight decline (from 46% to 45%) in mathematics. Table 5 shows these data.

Table 5  
 Census Administration of the Maryland Functional Tests:  
 Countywide Number of Students Tested and Passing Percentages by  
 Support Services, 2002–2003

Test	Support Service	2002		2003	
		Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Special Education</b> General Education	<b>1,267</b> 9,352	<b>46</b> 76	<b>1,258</b> 9,521	<b>45</b> 77
	<b>ESOL</b> Non-ESOL	<b>494</b> 10,125	<b>43</b> 74	<b>547</b> 10,232	<b>48</b> 74
	<b>FARMS</b> Non-FARMS	<b>2,394</b> 8,225	<b>46</b> 80	<b>2,533</b> 8,246	<b>50</b> 80
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Special Education</b> General Education	<b>1,216</b> 9,229	<b>63</b> 94	<b>1,277</b> 9,375	<b>71</b> 96
	<b>ESOL</b> Non-ESOL	<b>375</b> 10,070	<b>63</b> 92	<b>394</b> 10,258	<b>71</b> 94
	<b>FARMS</b> Non-FARMS	<b>2,213</b> 8,232	<b>78</b> 94	<b>2,429</b> 8,223	<b>83</b> 96
<b>Writing</b>	<b>Special Education</b> General Education	<b>1,170</b> 9,157	<b>57</b> 86	<b>1,216</b> 9,428	<b>61</b> 89
	<b>ESOL</b> Non-ESOL	<b>345</b> 9,982	<b>47</b> 84	<b>438</b> 10,206	<b>62</b> 87
	<b>FARMS</b> Non-FARMS	<b>2,011</b> 8,316	<b>68</b> 86	<b>2,243</b> 8,401	<b>74</b> 89



## Results by Schools

The MCPS System of Shared Accountability (SSA) established rigorous standards for passing rates on the Maryland functional tests at the school level, to ensure that middle school students are proficient in the skills measured by these tests. The SSA standard of performance is that at least 90 percent of Grade 7 students pass the reading and mathematics tests and an equal percentage of Grade 8 students pass the writing test on the first administration.

Compared with last year's results, middle schools were more successful in meeting the SSA standard for reading and writing than for mathematics. Table 5 summarizes these results.

- Eighty-one percent, or 29 of the 36 middle schools, met the SSA standard for the reading test in Grade 7, compared with 63 percent in 2002. Of the seven schools that did not meet standard this year, six are in the 85 to 89 percent range.
- Six percent, or 2 of the 36 middle schools, met the SSA standard for the mathematics test in Grade 7, compared with 14 percent last year. Of the 34 schools that did not meet standard this year, four are in the 85 to 89 percent range.
- Forty-six percent, or 16 of the 35 middle schools, met the SSA standard for the writing test in Grade 8, compared with 37 percent in 2002. (Newport Mill opened in the 2002–2003 school year without a Grade 8 class.) Of the 20 schools that did not meet standard this year, 5 are in the 85 to 89 percent range.

Herbert Hoover Middle School met all three standards in 2003.

Table 5  
Number and Percent of Middle Schools Meeting the SSA Standard for  
Maryland Functional Tests, 2002–2003

Test	2002		2003	
	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Grade 7 Mathematics	5	14	2	6
Grade 7 Reading	22	63	29	81
Grade 8 Writing	13	37	16	46

Tables 6, 7, and 8 below show passing rates for individual schools.

Table 6  
Maryland Functional Mathematics Test Passing Percentages by School, 2002–2003

School	2002		2003	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Argyle	222	64	214	58
Baker	273	86	246	77
Banneker	333	76	388	71
Briggs Chaney	268	62	273	74
Cabin John	286	83	331	89
Clemente	255	75	283	60
Eastern	289	70	284	66
Farquhar	230	91	226	82
Forest Oak	311	68	343	64
Frost	382	93	370	88
Gaithersburg	225	77	253	73
Hoover	384	95	339	93
Key	312	49	293	46
King	313	78	347	74
Kingsview	432	80	433	74
Lee	236	81	223	75
Montgomery Village	239	47	240	47
Neelsville	274	66	274	53
Newport Mill	--	--	215	65
North Bethesda	216	91	256	87
Rosa Parks	321	84	307	84
Parkland	423	60	367	58
John Poole	139	83	163	91
Pyle	411	91	428	86
Redland	302	70	320	73
Ridgeview	319	77	358	78
Rocky Hill	231	70	249	72
Shady Grove	254	56	274	78
Silver Spring Int'l	307	43	304	72
Sligo	406	55	209	66
Takoma Park	314	70	341	70
Tilden	224	82	224	84
Julius West	402	63	343	79
Westland	393	79	394	79
White Oak	295	69	312	68
Wood	351	60	328	70
<b>County</b>	<b>10,619</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>10,779</b>	<b>73</b>

Table 7  
Maryland Functional Reading Test Passing Percentages by School, 2002–2003

School	2002		2003	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Argyle	229	84	217	92
Baker	261	94	241	95
Banneker	329	88	373	93
Briggs Chaney	263	93	266	92
Cabin John	286	96	329	98
Clemente	257	85	296	89
Eastern	286	90	304	90
Farquhar	233	93	226	93
Forest Oak	319	91	333	92
Frost	378	99	366	98
Gaithersburg	220	90	249	91
Hoover	375	98	330	99
Key	314	89	290	83
King	323	88	346	93
Kingsview	417	94	441	94
Lee	226	88	214	86
Montgomery Village	237	84	231	87
Neelsville	279	90	267	89
Newport Mill	--	--	197	93
North Bethesda	205	94	249	98
Rosa Parks	316	96	300	97
Parkland	414	80	364	93
John Poole	140	91	197	96
Pyle	405	99	429	100
Redland	294	93	319	93
Ridgeview	316	94	349	95
Rocky Hill	219	91	246	97
Shady Grove	250	83	274	91
Silver Spring Int'l	294	83	303	86
Sligo	393	88	204	87
Takoma Park	311	91	341	91
Tilden	215	97	219	95
Julius West	386	90	327	94
Westland	389	94	388	96
White Oak	303	82	314	91
Wood	330	88	315	94
<b>County</b>	<b>10,445</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>10,652</b>	<b>93</b>

Table 8  
Maryland Functional Writing Test Passing Percentages by School, 2002–2003

School	2002		2003	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
Argyle	204	86	214	73
Baker	229	97	274	97
Banneker	339	90	316	92
Briggs Chaney	266	80	278	74
Cabin John	336	94	288	89
Clemente	242	83	255	82
Eastern	286	83	286	78
Farquhar	236	83	236	96
Forest Oak	267	76	308	70
Frost	362	98	392	98
Gaithersburg	225	79	221	89
Hoover	365	98	401	96
Key	308	85	325	76
King	295	91	321	96
Kingsview	404	66	438	65
Lee	229	76	222	77
Montgomery Village	239	71	233	88
Neelsville	262	90	265	91
North Bethesda	219	95	215	99
Rosa Parks	339	98	327	95
Parkland	378	65	403	84
John Poole	152	81	138	73
Pyle	430	95	429	96
Redland	278	87	307	91
Ridgeview	317	78	330	92
Rocky Hill	274	68	236	88
Shady Grove	271	57	249	82
Silver Spring Int'l	274	62	285	84
Sligo	363	76	410	67
Takoma Park	303	70	325	86
Tilden	238	91	222	91
Julius West	345	90	397	95
Westland	384	89	376	97
White Oak	312	95	305	94
Wood	318	70	347	78
<b>County</b>	<b>10,327</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>10,644</b>	<b>86</b>

## **Attachments**

Attachment A—1994–2003 Grade 7 Maryland Functional Mathematics Test Results

Attachment B—1994–2003 Grade 7 Maryland Functional Reading Test Results

Attachment C—1997–2003 Grade 8 Maryland Writing Test Results

**Attachment A**  
**Grade 7 Maryland Functional Mathematics Test Results, 1994–2003**

**Gender**

Year	Male		Female	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1994	3,940	72	3,829	74
1995	3,991	75	4,096	77
1996	4,204	72	4,052	73
1997	4,363	78	4,039	78
1998	4,380	75	4,291	75
1999	4,311	75	4,309	75
2000	4,593	73	4,636	73
2001	4,738	71	4,789	71
2002	5,509	72	5,110	73
<b>2003</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>74</b>

**Race/Ethnicity**

Year	African American		Asian American		Hispanic		White	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1994	1,378	46	1,046	85	775	49	4,546	83
1995	1,560	52	1,083	90	811	53	4,614	86
1996	1,571	46	1,054	87	926	49	4,688	83
1997	1,545	53	1,171	90	902	56	4,756	88
1998	1,610	50	1,126	88	934	51	4,979	85
1999	1,680	50	1,163	87	989	49	4,769	86
2000	1,879	50	1,245	88	1,223	49	4,843	85
2001	1,892	47	1,364	87	1,312	46	4,944	82
2002	2,284	50	1,415	87	1,731	52	5,161	86
<b>2003</b>	<b>2,409</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>5,060</b>	<b>86</b>

**ESOL**

Year	ESOL		Non-ESOL	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1998	319	43	8,352	76
1999	329	44	8,291	76
2000	458	42	8,771	75
2001	417	38	9,686	70
2002	494	43	10,125	74
<b>2003</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>10,232</b>	<b>74</b>

*Note:* The 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with previous years' results. The calculation of the 2002 and 2003 results reflects student inclusion criteria that are different from the criteria used in previous years.

**Attachment B**  
**Grade 7 Maryland Functional Reading Test Results, 1994–2003**

**Gender**

Year	Male		Female	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1994	3,888	91	3,836	95
1995	3,956	92	4,061	95
1996	4,214	91	4,064	95
1997	4,314	90	4,032	94
1998	4,393	92	4,268	95
1999	4,344	93	4,368	95
2000	4,488	93	4,569	96
2001	4,734	93	4,752	95
2002	5,421	89	5,024	93
<b>2003</b>	<b>5,483</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5,169</b>	<b>95</b>

**Race/Ethnicity**

Year	African American		Asian American		Hispanic		White	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1994	1,783	84	1,010	94	751	81	4,556	97
1995	1,551	87	1,058	95	772	83	4,616	97
1996	1,589	85	1,033	95	911	83	4,728	97
1997	1,533	82	1,148	95	886	81	4,755	97
1998	1,610	87	1,104	96	924	84	5,002	97
1999	1,708	87	1,143	96	979	85	4,861	98
2000	1,849	88	1,219	96	1,139	88	4,817	98
2001	1,909	88	1,336	97	1,258	84	4,968	98
2002	2,266	82	1,385	95	1,628	82	5,141	96
<b>2003</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1,411</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5,087</b>	<b>98</b>

**ESOL**

Year	ESOL		Non-ESOL	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1998	272	60	8,389	95
1999	284	62	8,428	95
2000	324	68	8,733	95
2001	298	60	9,778	92
2002	375	63	10,070	92
<b>2003</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>10,258</b>	<b>94</b>

*Note:* The 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with previous years' results. The calculation of the 2002 and 2003 results reflects student inclusion criteria that are different from the criteria used in previous years.

**Attachment C**  
**Grade 8 Maryland Writing Test Results, 1997–2003**

**Gender**

Year	Male		Female	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1997	3,947	87	3,928	94
1998	4,277	86	3,979	92
1999	4,382	91	4,354	95
2000	4,394	85	4,403	93
2001	4,597	82	4,655	92
2002	5,235	78	5,092	87
<b>2003</b>	<b>5,515</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5,129</b>	<b>91</b>

**Race/Ethnicity**

Year	African American		Asian American		Hispanic		White	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1997	1,506	84	998	95	803	88	4,551	93
1998	1,505	80	1,191	94	880	81	4,656	92
1999	1,601	88	1,145	96	972	87	4,994	95
2000	1,700	82	1,223	93	1,004	79	4,854	93
2001	1,880	79	1,297	91	1,217	76	4,821	92
2002	2,158	74	1,445	89	1,519	70	5,183	88
<b>2003</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>5,160</b>	<b>91</b>

**ESOL**

Year	ESOL		Non-ESOL	
	Number Tested	Percent Passed	Number Tested	Percent Passed
1998	293	70	7,963	90
1999	291	68	8,445	94
2000	359	63	8,438	90
2001	265	53	9,556	85
2002	345	47	9,982	84
<b>2003</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>10,206</b>	<b>87</b>

*Note:* The 2002 and 2003 results cannot be compared with previous years' results. The calculation of the 2002 and 2003 results reflects student inclusion criteria that are different from the criteria used in previous years.