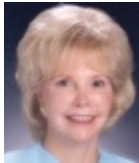


# MARYLAND Education Bulletin

*News from the Maryland State Department of Education*

January 30, 2009

| MSDE Home | Newsroom | MDRreportcard.org | School Improvement |



**A few words  
from State  
Superintendent  
of Schools  
Nancy S.  
Grasmick**

We continue to receive a lot of positive notices on Maryland's number 1 ranking in *Education Week's* respected "Quality Counts" report. The ranking represents many years of consistent work here at MSDE, along with the dedication of our teachers, administrators and students. What makes "Quality Counts" so important is the independent nature of its research. It draws from scores of reports as well as its own reporting to reach its conclusions.

Keeping our schools strong and healthy is the best investment Maryland can make in the future. The recent independent report by MGT of America analyzing the Bridge to Excellence Act proved that the additional State funds served as a great investment. Student achievement has improved and gaps that have separated subgroups for far too long have diminished.

If you come by the Maryland State Department of Education, you'll see "No. 1" in our display case, as well as in all of our exterior windows. This is a big honor, and I hope you join us in celebrating this accomplishment.

MGT's final report on Bridge to Excellence includes a lot of terrific ideas

## SENIOR CLASS CLOSING IN ON NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

The class of 2009 is well on its way to completing its high school graduation requirements, according to data presented this week to the Maryland State Board of Education.



Baltimore City Schools CEO discussed the progress of the system in an appearance before the State Board this week.

With another full semester remaining, only 4,000 seniors had not completed their High School Assessment (HSA) requirements, according to MSDE estimates based on data provided by local school systems.

Moreover, that figure does not include recent HSA test administrations and many of the alternative assessment

completers.

Local school systems say they are making big strides with their senior classes. Baltimore City Schools CEO Andres Alonzo told the State Board that it does not appear as though the new HSA requirement will adversely affect his system's graduation rate.

"We will come close to the numbers we were projecting," Dr. Alonzo said. "It is worth applauding."

Students in the class of 2009 are the first who must complete the HSA requirement in order to receive a Maryland High School diploma. There are several ways to complete the requirement: by passing each of the four assessments in

for schools and school systems to use.

Please take some time to review the report. The complete report is detailed, but we've made it available online at: MGT Report: An Evaluation of Increased State Aid to Local School Systems through the Bridge to Excellence Act: Final Report.

---

## Calendar

February 4 — Governor's Town Hall Meeting on Education and the Economy – Mountain Ridge High School, Frostburg, MD

February 11 — Governor's Town Hall Meeting on Education and the Economy – Prince George's County

February 24-25 — State Board Meeting

---

### Having trouble viewing this email?

Click [here](#) to view on the web.

Click [here](#) for a PDF version of the MSDE January 30, 2009 Bulletin.

If you would prefer not to receive future Newsletters from us, simply [click here](#), and insert in the subject line, Unsubscribe.

algebra, biology, English, and government; by using the combined score option of the exams (a four-test total of 1602 points); or by using the project-based Bridge Plan for Academic Validation for areas of deficiency.

Dr. Alonso said the new requirement has improved instruction in Baltimore City schools, and Baltimore County Area Assistant Superintendent Robert Tomback said a similar phenomenon is taking place in Baltimore County. He said Baltimore County Schools have eliminated low-level courses, increased rigor, and increased the number of support programs to help students meet the HSA mandate.

State Board members pressed for improved data on the graduation class, and State officials said better numbers would be available by March, after information from the January test administration has arrived.

## STATE LEGISLATORS PRESS FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY STANDARDS

Three members of the Maryland General Assembly met with the State Board this week to advocate for a strengthened financial literacy curriculum in Maryland Schools.

Del. Dana Stein, Del. Susan Krebs, and Sen. Katherine Klausmeier, said that the current recession has made it clear that Americans need to learn more about the economy and personal finance. As members of the Task Force to Study How to Improve Financial Literacy in the State, they believe Maryland needs to develop and adopt new standards for K-12 personal financial literacy.

“This is a very basic life skill, especially in light of the current economic times,” Del. Stein said. “We feel this is an urgent issue.”



Del. Krebs noted that the Carroll County Schools have added personal finance as a graduation requirement, and said the program has been both well-received and inexpensive to

Sen. Katherine Klausmeier, Del. Susan Krebs, and Del. Dana Stein met with the State Board this week to discuss the importance financial literacy.

implement.  
Board member Richard Goodall said he understood the importance of financial

literacy. However, he was concerned about adding new requirements for students and new duties for MSDE. "We may need to come back to you and ask which programs you want us to keep," he said.

The State Board will study the recommendations from the Task Force over the next several weeks and report back on next steps.

*The Maryland Education Bulletin is Published by:*

Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
MarylandPublicSchools.org  
410.767.0600  
410.333.6442 (TTY)  
1.888.246.0016

**Nancy S. Grasmick**, *State Superintendent of Schools*

**JoAnne L. Carter**, *Deputy State Superintendent  
Office of Instruction and Academic Acceleration*

**Ronald A. Peiffer**, *Deputy State Superintendent  
Office of Academic Policy*

**John Smeallie**, *Acting Deputy State Superintendent  
Office of Administration*

**James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr.**, *President  
State Board of Education*

**Martin O'Malley**, *Governor*



A Publication of the Office of Academic Policy

**Bill Reinhard and Gail Tucker**, *Editors*

MSDE Videos: <http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/newsroom/videos>

© 2009 All Rights Reserved