

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY**

**Board Agenda Item**

**TITLE:** Report on the Results of the 2005 Administration of the Maryland School Assessment and Adequate Yearly Progress Decisions

**DATE:** June 21, 2005

**OVERVIEW:**

Results of the 2005 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for elementary and middle schools were released this month. In every grade, more than 70 percent of HCPSS students were scoring at proficient or above in reading and mathematics—an accomplishment that few systems in the state could match. In addition to exceeding the proficiency standards established by the State of Maryland, every elementary and middle school met or exceeded the rigorous local standard of having 70 percent of students scoring at or above proficient in reading. Nearly every elementary and middle school met this standard in mathematics, an area where much progress was made and scores increased significantly. The impressive growth in performance on the MSA over three years was largest for African American, Hispanic, and special services student groups. This is noteworthy as the achievement gap between student groups lessened in 2005. Strategies to support this growth will continue.

The state also released tentative Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) decisions and the HCPSS had no schools entering improvement. Nearly every school met AYP, and the four schools that did not missed in the student group of special education or English Language Learners. The specific information for each school is being reviewed to determine if there is a basis for appeal.

**FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The HCPSS will continue to implement strategies that have proved to be highly effective in improving achievement. Moving forward, the HCPSS will bring together school improvement planning teams to begin the process of continuous improvement at the Summer Institute and will continue these conversations and training opportunities throughout the school year at administrator meetings. The Department of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation will work with staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to evaluate the impact of intervention programs. The connection between HCPSS's Goal 2 and academic achievement will be highlighted as the local standards and indicators for safe and nurturing schools are established and training in Cultural Proficiency continues.

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**Approval/Concurrence:**

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## Introduction

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The Maryland School Assessments (MSA) are tests in reading and mathematics that are given to students in Grades 3 through 8 and as an end-of-course exam in Geometry and English 10 measuring student performance to comply with the federal mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). Students in Grades 3 through 8 complete the reading and mathematics tests, which include both selected response and constructed response items, in early March. Geometry and English 10, which meet the federal requirement for testing at the high school level, are end-of-course exams that are given in late May and which also feature selected response as well as constructed response items. Each of these tests has identified score ranges that identify if a student is basic, proficient, or advanced for that content area and grade. The expectation of NCLB is that every student (100 percent) will be able to score at proficient or advanced by 2014.

Another requirement of NCLB is that all students participate in testing, including special education students who are not working toward a regular high school diploma. These students take an alternate assessment known as the Alt-MSA in Grades 3 through 8 and Grade 10. The Alt-MSA requires that each student have ten individualized objectives for performance in mathematics and reading. The student's ability to master these objectives is assessed by reviewing a portfolio that is developed throughout the year and scoring a video documenting the student's actual performance on a selected objective. Students must be able to show 80 percent mastery on these objectives to be identified as proficient.

When scores for the MSA and Alt-MSA are released by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), they are first presented according to proficiency level. Every school and school system receives scores indicating what percent of students in each grade and content area were able to score at or above proficient. These percentages are presented for the total student population and for each student group based on gender, race/ethnicity, and special services received. These scores become part of the calculation used to determine if schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), another mandate of NCLB.

Given the mandated NCLB target of 100 percent of students being proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014, each state was asked to develop annual measurable objectives (AMO) to monitor each school's progress in moving toward the goal. Maryland developed baseline AMOs after the first year of administering the MSA; these targets vary by level and content area and are outlined in Table 1. Each year the AMO increases to assure that by meeting these targets, schools are on course to achieving the ultimate goal of 100 percent proficiency. In order to achieve AYP, the total population and every identified student group with five or more students must reach the AMO. These student groups include African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, White, English Language Learners (ELL), students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals System services (FARMS), and students receiving special education services. When calculating the percent proficient for AYP purposes, the scores of every student who was enrolled in the school throughout the year and who participated in the MSA or Alt-MSA are included. Therefore, the number of students included in the proficiency reports and the number of students included in AYP calculations are not the same.

Table 1: Annual Measurable Objectives for the Maryland School Assessment

Level	Reading			Mathematics		
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
Grades 3-5	46.3%	57.8%	62.5%	44.1%	53.6%	58.8%
Grades 3-8	46.1%	57.2%	62.0%	36.9%	44.7%	50.8%
Grades 6-8	45.6%	56.7%	61.5%	22.7%	35.8%	42.9%
Grades 9-12	45.5%	*TBD	*TBD	27.5%	40.7%	47.3%
School System	45.9%	*TBD	*TBD	34.6%	44.1%	TBD

\*Since the English 10 MSA is a new test, the AMO for high schools and school systems will be readjusted and announced after proficiency standards are set.

In addition to meeting the reading and mathematics AMOs, schools are also required to meet one academically related target to achieve AYP. For elementary and middle schools, the target is based on school attendance; while for high schools, the target is based on graduation rate. The target for attendance is 94 percent. The target for graduation rate is 90 percent. School Systems are held accountable for both of these categories as well.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) recognized that many schools were already achieving the AMOs established by MSDE and decided to establish more rigorous local targets for performance on the MSA for the system and schools. The first target was that by 2005, every school would meet AYP and have 70 percent of its students performing at or above proficient. The second target was that by 2007, every school would meet AYP and have 70 percent of every student group (racial/ethnic and special services) achieving at or above proficient. These targets are part of the HCPSS *Bridge to Excellence* plan.

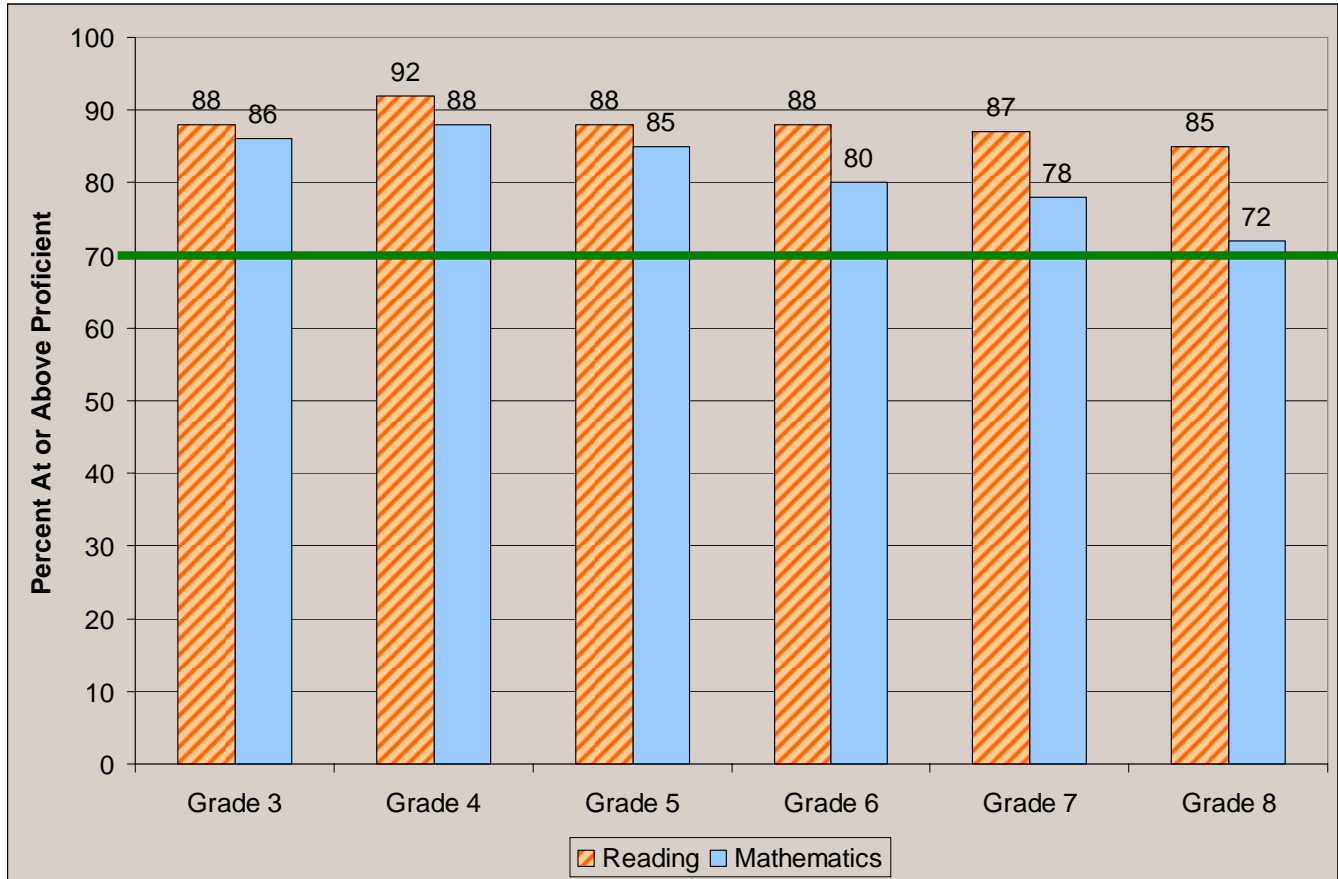
The results presented in this report include only elementary and middle schools because the MSDE has not yet released information for the high schools. Final performance and AYP calculations for high schools and school systems will be released in the fall, at which time an update will be provided.

## Proficiency Results for the 2005 MSA

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The performance of students throughout the HCPSS on the 2005 MSA exceeded both the state and local targets at every grade and in both content areas. Figure 1 presents the percent of students achieving at or above proficient for Grades 3 to 8 in reading and mathematics. Combining the scores of these 22, 830 students, 88 percent of them were proficient or above in reading and 82 percent of them were proficient or above in mathematics. The 2005 performance of students on the MSA improved from the 2004 performance in both reading and mathematics from Grades 4 through 8. The greatest gains occurred in mathematics in Grades 6 to 8.

Figure 1: Proficiency Results for 2005 MSA



Schools throughout the system were also very successful at exceeding state and local targets for proficiency on the 2005 MSA. Every HCPSS elementary and middle school was at or above the local target of having 70 percent of its overall student population at or above proficient in reading. All but two elementary schools met or exceeded the local target of having 70 percent of its overall student population at or above proficient in mathematics—and those two schools had 67 percent and 69 percent of their students proficient in mathematics. All but five middle schools and the K-8 school achieved the local target for mathematics, but all of these schools demonstrated growth as they achieved between 58 and 66 percent of their students reaching proficient or above in mathematics. The preliminary proficiency results for Grades 3, 4 and 5 combined for each elementary school and Grades 6, 7 and 8 combined for each middle school are presented in comparison to the 2004 performance in the attached School Trend Reports. The status “Met” or “Not Met” on these reports refer to the local standard of 70 percent at or above proficiency.

Many schools are also showing impressive progress in meeting the local target for 2007 because many of the student groups already have 70 percent or more of the students at or above proficient in reading and mathematics. Table 2 presents the number of elementary schools who have met the 70 percent target for each student group and Table 3 presents this information for middle schools. It is important to note that none of the schools had more than five students in the American Indian student group; therefore information for that student group is not included in the tables.

Table 2: Number of Elementary Schools Meeting the HCPSS 2007 Target for Student Groups

Student Group	Reading	Mathematics
	Number of Schools	Number of Schools
All students	37	35
Male	36	35
Female	37	35
Asian	37	37
African American	33	23
White	37	37
*Hispanic	18	14
*ELL	4	9
*FARMS	19	11
Special Education	12	10

\* Several schools had five or fewer students and could not be included in calculations. Therefore, the total number for Hispanic students is based on 29 schools, for ELL students on 23 schools, and for FARMS students on 32 schools.

Table 3: Number of Middle Schools Meeting the HCPSS 2007 Target for Student Groups

Student Group	Reading	Mathematics
	Number of Schools	Number of Schools
All students	18	13
Male	18	13
Female	18	13
Asian	18	18
African American	13	3
White	18	16
*Hispanic	11	4
*ELL	1	3
FARMS	3	1
Special Education	1	1

\* Several schools had five or fewer students and could not be included in calculations. Therefore, the total number for Hispanic students is based on 17 schools and for ELL students is based on 14 schools.

Cradlerock School is a K-8 school in the HCPSS and has to meet different AMOs for the state accountability program because it includes Grades 3 to 8, but is expected to meet the same local targets as the elementary and middle schools. In 2005, Cradlerock met the 2007 target for student groups for all students, male, female, and every racial/ethnic group in reading. For mathematics, Cradlerock met the 2007 target for the female, Asian, and White student groups.

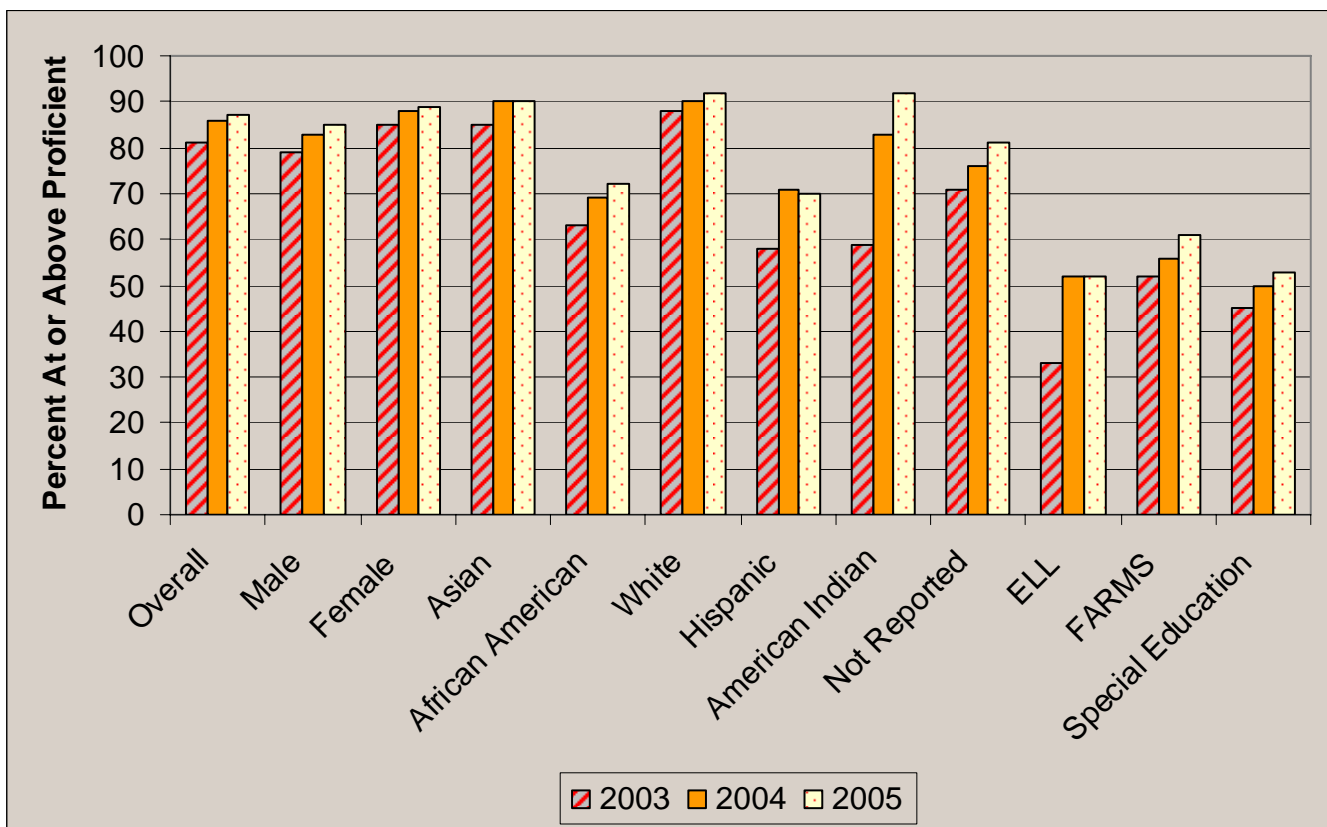
## Trend Performance on MSA

While the performance on the 2005 MSA by HCPSS students was impressive, it is important to monitor progress over time to determine if systemic initiatives are achieving the desired results. Generally, it is best to examine trends using three or more years of data. Since the MSA is a relatively new assessment, and has been rolled out in stages, there is only three years of data for Grades 3, 5, and 8. An

examination of the trend performance in these grades indicates generally positive growth, with African American, Hispanic, ELL, and Special Education students making the highest gains.

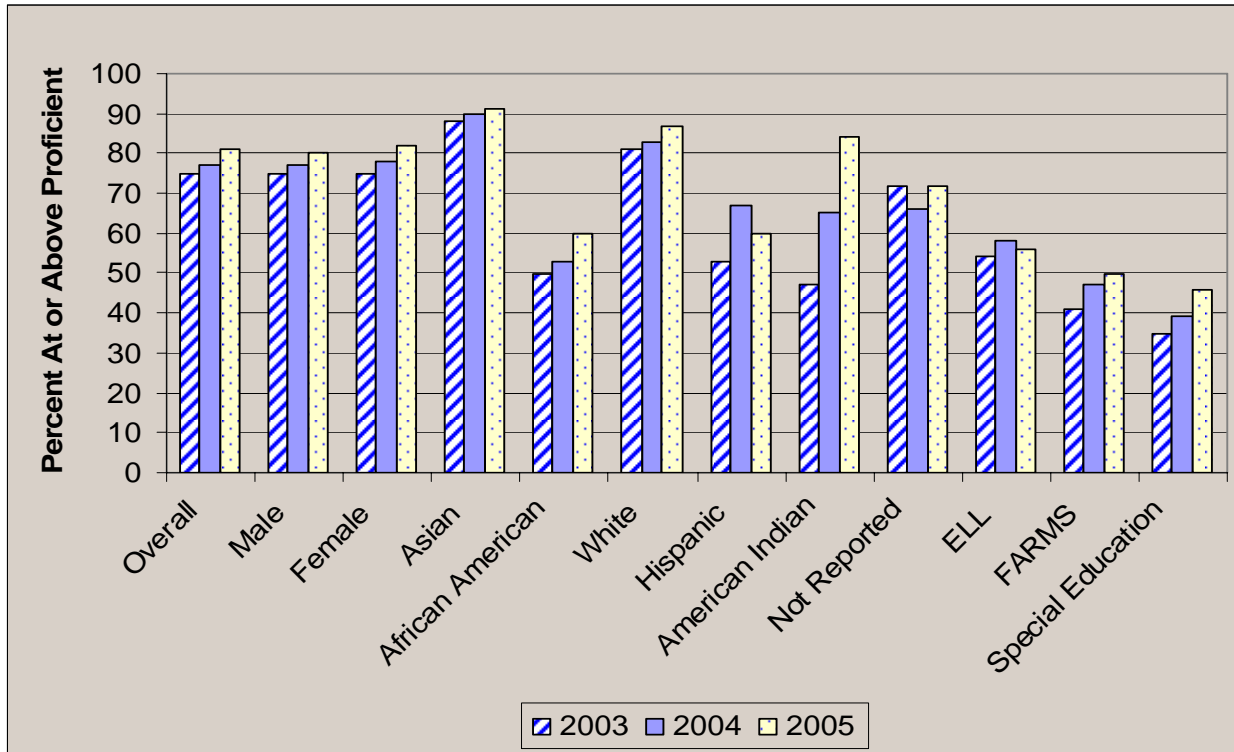
The trend performance in reading for all student groups is depicted in Figure 2. The student group identified as “Not Reported” is used for those students who choose not to provide a single race/ethnicity code in their records. As illustrated in Figure 2, the greatest gain was achieved by American Indian students growing from 59 percent to 92 percent proficient. However, given the small number of American Indian students in the HCPSS, this gain must be interpreted with caution. The other student groups posting impressive gains are the Hispanic students, growing from 58 percent to 70 percent at or above proficient, and the African American students moving from 63 to 72 percent proficient. There was also a 19 percent gain for ELL students from 33 percent to 52 percent at or above proficient in reading.

Figure 2: Trend Performance in Reading for Grades 3, 5 and 8



The trend performance in mathematics is presented in Figure 3. As illustrated in Figure 3, the greatest gain was achieved by American Indian students growing by 37 percent. However, given the small number of American Indian students in the HCPSS, this gain must be interpreted with caution. The other student groups posting impressive gains are the African American students moving from 50 to 60 percent proficient and the Hispanic students moving from 53 to 60 percent proficient in mathematics. There was also an 11 percent gain for Special Education students from 35 percent to 46 percent at or above proficient in mathematics.

Figure 3: Trend Performance in Mathematics for Grades 3, 5 and 8



### Performance of School Improvement Unit Schools for 2005 MSA

One of the strategies that the HCPSS used to respond proactively to the accountability measures of NCLB was to identify schools facing challenges in meeting state and/or local targets to become part of a professional learning community called the School Improvement Unit (SIU). These schools worked collaboratively with each other and central office staff on school improvement efforts. They met regularly for training, monitored data constantly, and participated in intensive program reviews as part of a comprehensive effort to improve achievement for all students.

The 2005 MSA results reflected the progress these SIU schools made, as every elementary school in the SIU exceeded the state target of 57.8 percent proficiency and the local target of 70 percent proficiency in reading. In mathematics, all seven of the SIU elementary schools exceeded the state target of 53.6 percent proficiency and five exceeded the local target of 70 percent proficiency. The two schools that did not exceed the local target were very close with 67 and 69 percent proficiency in mathematics.

The middle schools demonstrated similar success. All of the middle schools and the K-8 school exceeded the state and local targets in reading. For mathematics, all of the middle schools and the K-8 school exceeded the state target but did not achieve the local target of 70 percent proficiency, although they all had more than 60 percent of their students achieving at or above proficient in mathematics.

As noted earlier, the examination of trend data also tells an important story regarding improvement efforts. The growth that SIU schools have made on the MSA is presented in Table 4. For elementary schools, the growth represents an increase in the percent of students at or above proficient in reading or mathematics for Grades 3 and 5 between 2003 and 2005. For middle schools, the growth represents an increase in the percent of students at or above proficient in reading or mathematics for Grade 8 between

2003 and 2005. For Cradlerock, which became a K-8 school in 2003-2004, the growth represents an increase in the percent of students at or above proficient in reading or mathematics for Grades 3 through 8 from 2004 to 2005.

Table 4: Change in Percent At or Above Proficient for SIU Schools from 2003 to 2005

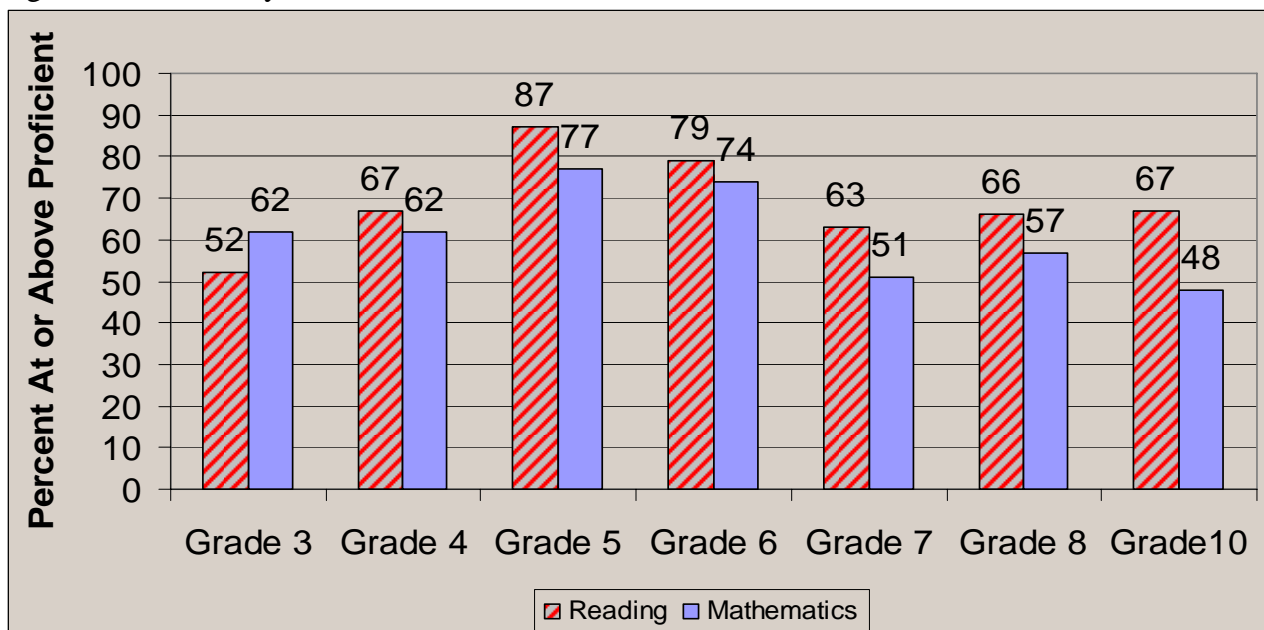
School	Reading	Mathematics
Bryant Woods Elementary	+6	+2
Guilford Elementary	+10	+7
Laurel Woods Elementary	+13	+17
Phelps Luck Elementary	+9	+3
Running Brook Elementary	+2	-8
Swansfield Elementary	+10	+7
Talbott Springs Elementary	+27	+31
Harper’s Choice Middle	+6	+7
Oakland Mills Middle	-1	+1
Patuxent Valley Middle	+4	+11
Wilde Lake Middle	+1	+18
*Cradlerock School	+13	+24

\*Represents change from 2004 to 2005.

### Proficiency Results for 2005 Alt-MSA

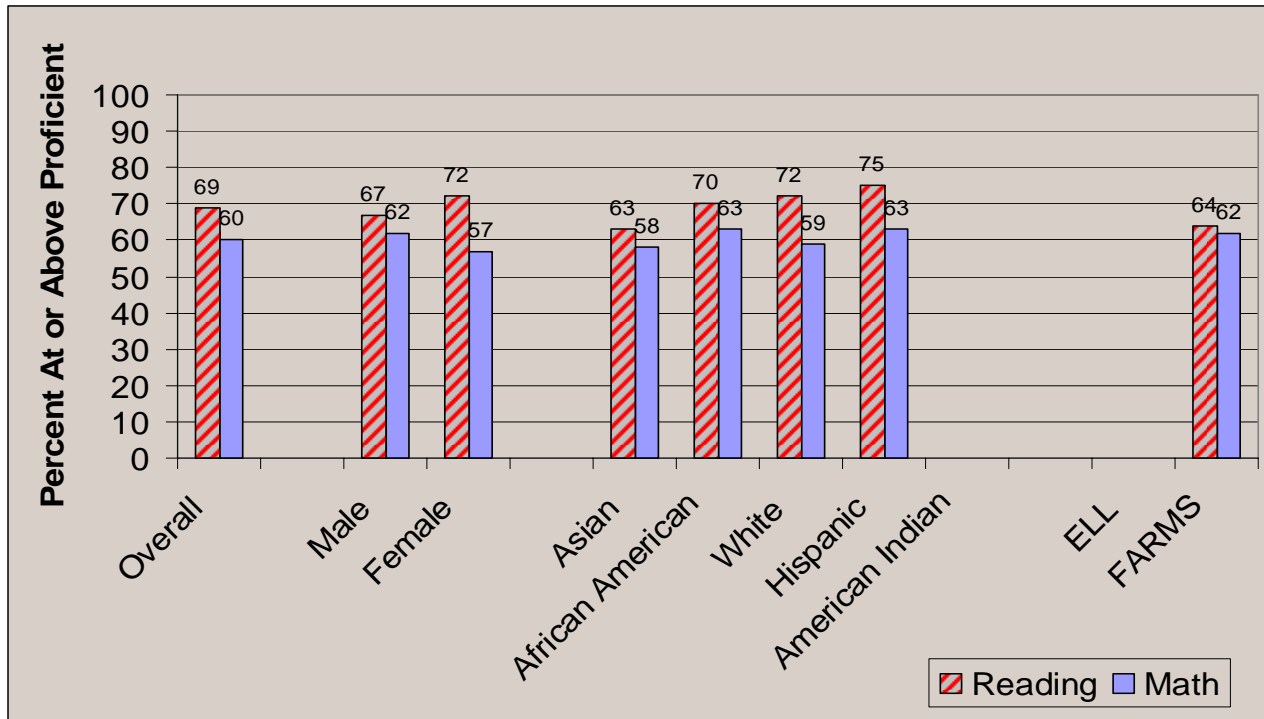
The performance of students in Grades 3 through 8 and Grade 10 who completed the Alt-MSA is presented in Figure 4. To achieve proficient status on the Alt-MSA, a student must master at least 80 percent of the individualized objectives in reading and mathematics. The proficiency results for Alt-MSA are included in AYP calculations. The pattern of performance on Alt-MSA is similar to the MSA results with students performing at higher levels in reading and with elementary students performing at higher levels than secondary students.

Figure 4: Proficiency Results for 2005 Alt-MSA



The performance of student groups on Alt-MSA is illustrated in Figure 5. There is little variation among these groups with the percent proficient in reading ranging from 63 to 75 and the percent proficient in mathematics ranging from 57 to 63. It is not possible to present trend data for the Alt-MSA, as the scoring processes were changed for the 2005 assessment making comparison to the 2003 assessment invalid.

Figure 5: Proficiency Results for 2005 Alt-MSA by Student Group



### AYP Decisions for Elementary and Middle Schools for 2005

Schools are deemed to have met AYP if they had 95 percent of their students in all groups participate in testing, achieved the AMOs (or scored within the confidence interval or received Safe Harbor status) for all students and every student group in both reading and mathematics, and met the target for attendance or graduation rate. Schools who do not meet AYP for two years enter the MSDE improvement process. Schools are allowed to appeal AYP decisions if they have reason to believe the results are inaccurate due to reporting errors.

The MSDE recently announced newly approved methods for calculating AYP that will be put into effect for the 2005 results. These changes include the following:

- Emergency medical exemptions will be considered in the appeals process.
- An interim AYP calculation will be used to estimate the impact a modified assessment would have had in 2005 for schools that were unable to meet AYP because of the special education student group. (A modified assessment will be implemented in 2006 to take advantage of a new federal decision allowing 2 percent of the student population to take a modified assessment for NCLB accountability.)
- Entering school improvement status will only occur if AYP targets for the same reported content area are not met two years in a row.

- Exiting school improvement will now be easier because a school can exit the process if it meets all of the targets in the previously missed content area.
- It is more difficult for School Systems to be placed in improvement because School Systems would have to miss AYP targets in a reported area at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Based on the 2005 tentative AYP calculations, the HCPSS did not have any schools enter improvement. There were 36 elementary schools that met AYP, while one elementary school missed in one category and thus did not make AYP. Sixteen middle schools met AYP and two did not meet AYP. Both of these middle schools have shown tremendous progress in improving overall achievement in their schools, but tentative AYP decisions indicate they missed the target in one category. Similarly, the K-8 school showed growth overall, but failed to meet the target in special education and thus did not meet AYP. A summary of the tentative AYP decisions is presented in Table 5. The information for each school is being carefully reviewed to determine if there is a basis for appeal. If so, an appeal will be sent to MSDE and a final AYP decision will be made by the state within a few weeks. At that time, an update will be provided.

Table 5: Preliminary 2005 AYP Decisions

<b>School</b>	<b>Student Group Not Meeting AYP</b>	<b>Content Area Where Not Met</b>	<b>Status</b>
Phelps Luck Elementary	Special Education	Math	Alert
Patuxent Valley Middle	Special Education	Reading	Alert
Wilde Lake Middle	English Language Learners	Reading	Alert
Cradlerock School	Special Education	Reading and Math	Alert

Homewood School was also identified as not having met AYP, which would put the school in Improvement Year 2. However, based on information shared by the MSDE, the decision was made not to include Homewood as a separate school for 2005 reporting since it housed alternative programs and student scores could be reported for their home schools. Somehow, several students were still reported as Homewood students, therefore an AYP calculation was made for the school. An appeal to correct this situation will be filed.

Two HCPSS schools, Elkridge Landing Middle School and Murray Hill Middle School, were put on Alert status in 2004 for not making AYP. Both of these schools met AYP for 2005.

## Summary and Next Steps

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The HCPSS and its schools demonstrated impressive performance in the 2005 state accountability program for elementary and middle schools. This performance is a tribute to the efforts of students, parents, and school system staff who worked diligently to realize the vision of NCLB. The HCPSS set local targets that challenged schools to reach beyond state expectations in 2005 and 2007, and the schools rose to that challenge. All schools met the 2005 local target in reading and only eight schools were below the 2005 local target in mathematics. Many schools were already meeting the 2007 local targets for several of the student groups; however, work remains to be done in achieving this rigorous target.

As the state testing program enters its fourth year for three grade levels and its third year for three grade levels, the opportunity to examine trend data to evaluate the success of initiatives at the school and system level will become increasingly important to support future improvement efforts. Additionally, collaborating with other school systems that have also improved performance to seek common solutions to educational challenges will also benefit all students.

The HCPSS has already done many things to support the growth and success of students on the MSA. These strategies include but are not limited to the following: 1) designing individual student support plans; 2) emphasizing the power of professional learning communities through the local School Improvement Unit; 3) providing easy access to student level data on the multiple measures used to monitor student progress; 4) conducting Comprehensive Program Reviews; and 5) implementing high leverage strategies as part of the school improvement process. These efforts have led to improved performance by all student groups, but particularly for African American, Hispanic, and students receiving special services. The HCPSS will continue to implement these successful strategies. The achievement gap among student groups is lessening, but there is still much work to be done.

Moving forward, the HCPSS will bring together school improvement planning teams to begin the process of continuous improvement at the Summer Institute and will continue these conversations and training opportunities throughout the school year at administrator meetings. The Department of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation will work with staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to evaluate the impact of intervention programs. The connection between HCPSS's Goal 2 and academic achievement will be highlighted as the local standards and indicators for safe and nurturing schools are established and training in Cultural Proficiency continues.

Finally, it is important to note that the 2005 MSA results are merely one measure used to gauge the performance of the HCPSS. In the fall, the multiple measures used to monitor performance will be presented in the update to the *Bridge to Excellence* plan and will provide a more comprehensive examination of what the HPCSS has achieved.