



**GREAT Expectations**

State of Education 2003

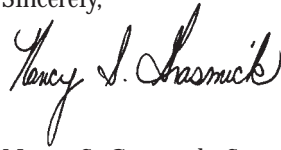
Dear Friends of Maryland Public Education:

Maryland's new plan for school reform, called Achievement Matters Most, is about making sure every child has opportunities to learn and achieve. It's about supporting teachers, involving parents, and working with businesses and communities to improve schools for kids. It's about great expectations for all students. The plan also encompasses the recommendations and requirements of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and the state Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act.

Achievement Matters Most is driving change in Maryland public schools. We're developing new assessments, accountability measures, a statewide voluntary curriculum, teacher quality initiatives, and much more. But despite the changes, Maryland's bottom line — raising children's achievement — remains constant.

It is my pleasure to share with you the good news about Maryland public schools. We have made progress in many areas, including attendance, graduation rates, and academic achievement. We're focusing on increasing students' health and safety. And we're working hard to increase partnerships among schools, families, and communities. I also share with you data on our greatest challenges: improving teacher preparation, recruitment, and training and the elimination of achievement gaps. This is the state of education in 2003.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools

### Enrollment & Attendance

Maryland public school enrollment is a model of diversity. During the 2001-2002 school year, 860,640 children were enrolled in Maryland public schools. African-American students comprise 37.2% of K-12 enrollment. The number of Hispanic students is on the rise and now makes up 5.4% of enrollment. Students of Asian and Pacific Island heritage are the fastest growing minority group, representing 4.6%. Although White students represent a majority of enrollment at 52.4%, their percentage has been declining since 1997.

In high schools, 92.8% of students were present for at least half the average school day — a record high percentage. For elementary and middle school students, attendance rates were 95.3% and 94.2%, respectively.

### Graduation

Maryland's graduation rates are on the rise. The percentage of twelfth graders who graduate rose from 79% in 1996 to 83.9% in 2002. The percentage of entering ninth graders who continue school through graduation rose to 74% in 2002, the third straight year it has improved.

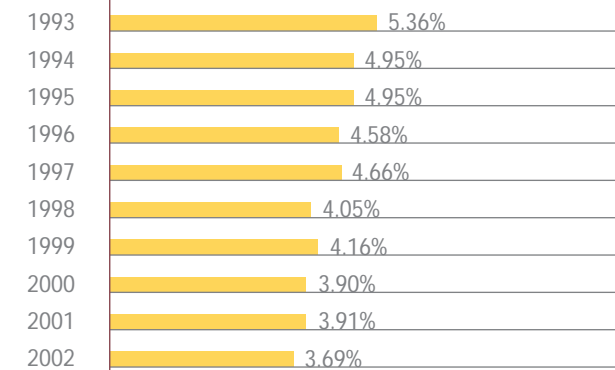
The dropout rate hit a new low in 2002, falling to 3.69%. The rate also has fallen among all races and ethnicities over time. For African-American students, the dropout rate decreased from 9.31% in 1993 to 5.2% in 2002, and for Hispanic students, from 4.75% to 3.44%.

**State Earns B+ in Preparing Students for College** "Measuring Up 2002," a higher education report card published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, found Maryland students better prepared for college than those from most states and gave the state a grade of B+.



## More Children ATTENDING School, STAYING in School

Dropout Rate, Grades 9-12



It's about helping every child  
LEARN and ACHIEVE



Maryland has replaced the MSPAP test with the Maryland School Assessment. The new test will produce data (including individual student and school scores) that will be used for planning instructional improvements, measuring schools' progress toward state standards, and making accountability decisions, such as identifying schools for local or state reconstitution. Maryland School Assessment results will be returned to schools and parents more quickly than MSPAP's were. In administering the new testing program, Maryland is fulfilling recommendations of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools as well as requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The Maryland School Assessment was administered for the first time in March 2003. Scores from that administration will be available in late August 2003.

Maryland students' SAT performance ranks fourth among states where at least 60% of high school students participated in testing. The state's SAT composite score rose two points to 1020 in 2002, even as more students took the exam. The mean math score in Maryland improved three points between 2001 and 2002, a point more than the nation's progress as a whole. Among ethnic minority groups, Hispanic achievement improved considerably; the mean math score for Mexican-Americans alone rose 13 points. However, there remains a disturbing gap between the performance of both

Maryland ranked fourth in the nation for its cumulative SAT score among states with a participation rate of 60 percent or higher for the class of 2002. Math scores were third in the nation.

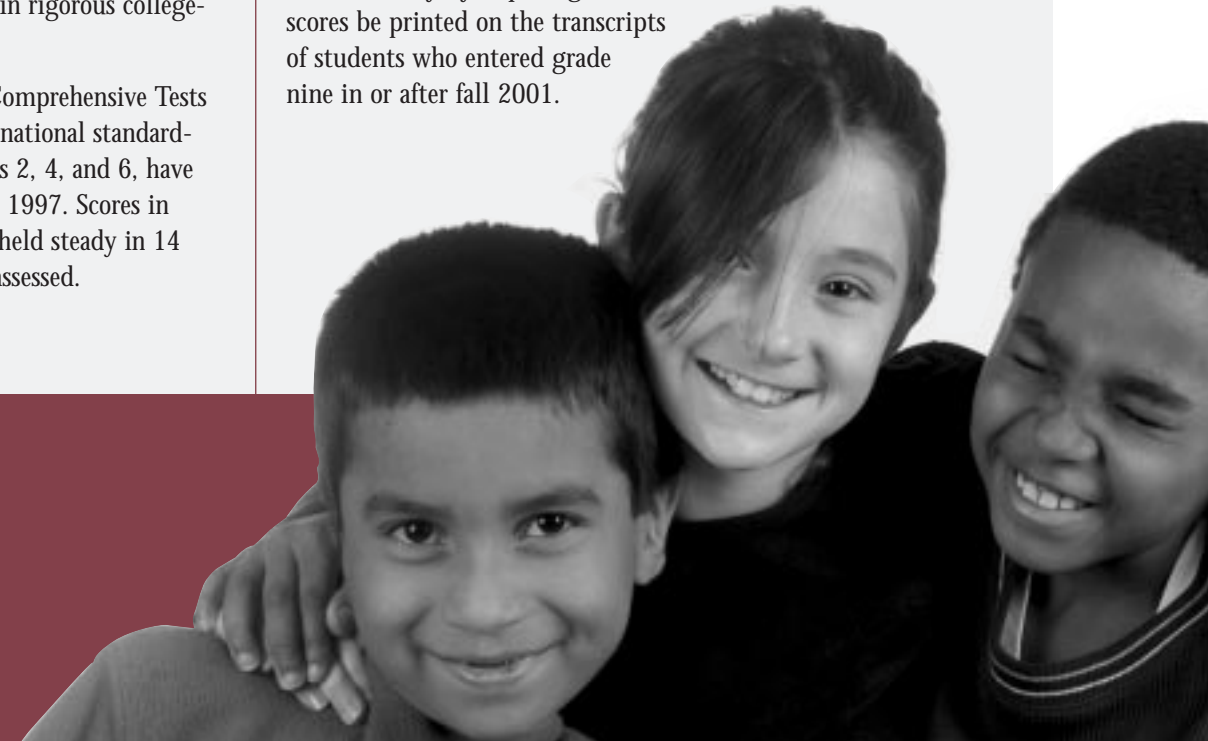


Hispanic and African-American students and that of Asian-American and White students. Moreover, African-American performance on the 2002 SAT dipped slightly, mirroring a troubling national trend.

Student participation in Advanced Placement (AP) exams rose 14% in 2002, continuing a pattern of dramatic participation increase. The number of African-American AP test-takers was up 17.8% over the previous year. And African-American students in Maryland were twice as likely to score well as African-American students nationally. The AP exams assess knowledge gained in rigorous college-level courses.

Maryland scores on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS), a national standardized exam given in grades 2, 4, and 6, have been rising steadily since 1997. Scores in 2002 either increased or held steady in 14 out of the 15 categories assessed.

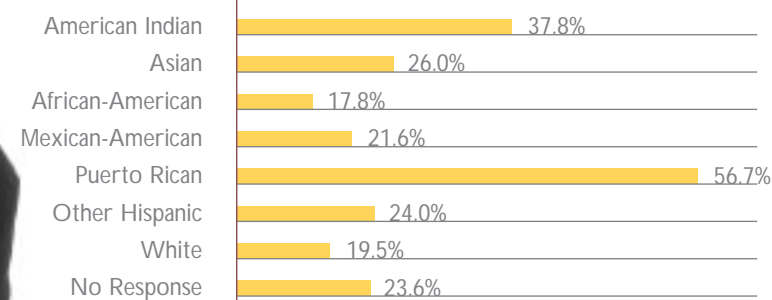
In 2001-2002, Maryland schools administered the new High School Assessments in English, algebra/data analysis, geometry, biology, and government. These assessments are designed to raise the academic skills required for the high school diploma from those currently measured by the Maryland Functional Tests. Although Maryland high school students must take the High School Assessments as a requirement for graduation, passing them is not yet required. However, the State Board of Education has introduced individual accountability by requiring assessment scores be printed on the transcripts of students who entered grade nine in or after fall 2001.



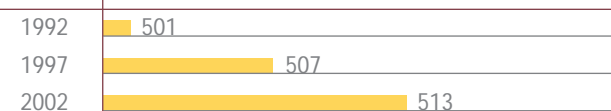
## STRIDES and CHALLENGES in Achievement



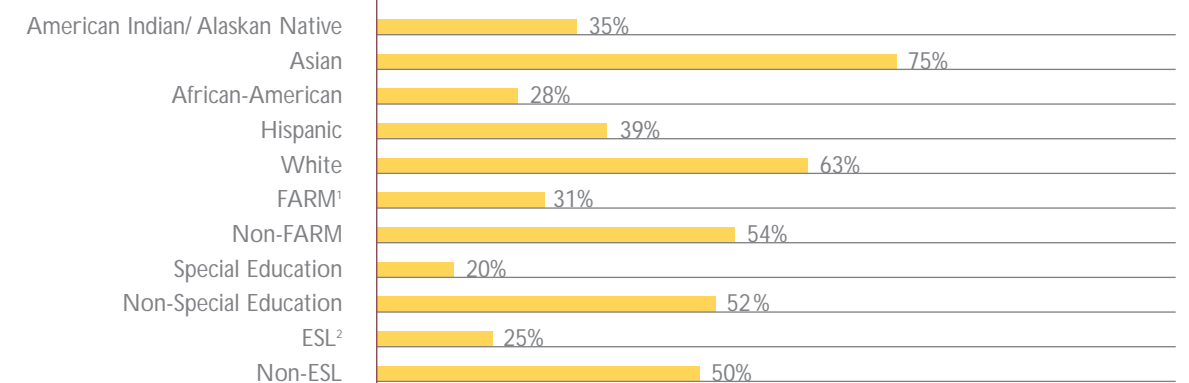
Percentage Change in Number of AP Exams Taken Among Members of Ethnic Groups Between 2001-2002



Maryland SAT Math, scale 500-520



Achievement Gaps on the 2002 High School Assessment State Median Percentile Ranks for Algebra by Race/Ethnicity and Special Services



<sup>1</sup> The term "FARM" describes students participating in the Free and Reduced-Price Meals program, which is an indicator of poverty.

<sup>2</sup> The term "ESL" describes students participating in English as a Second Language programs.

Maryland faces continued shortages of certified teachers in a number of key areas, such as advanced mathematics and science, technology education, English for speakers of other languages, Spanish, and special education. As a result, schools in all 24 school systems have been forced to hire teachers who have not received full certification. Although Maryland colleges and universities have increased the number of teacher preparation program graduates, there remains a yawning gap between the number of graduates and the number of open positions. Further complicating the shortage is the fact that Maryland school systems must compete for candidates with neighboring states, a number of which offer higher salaries and greater incentives.

Maryland is addressing the recruitment challenge in many ways. Maryland's Alternative Routes to Certification Options (MARCO) is a new program that will create innovative ways to recruit and train highly qualified career-changers and recent college graduates. The program, which received a \$2 million federal grant, was developed by the University of Maryland University College in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education. The Department is also working with Leadership Maryland's Forum for Policy Change to support teacher recruitment, incentives, mentoring, and professional development.

“A bold vision now exists for the next decade of school reform in Maryland. Turning the vision into reality will require hard work, additional resources and sustained public will.”

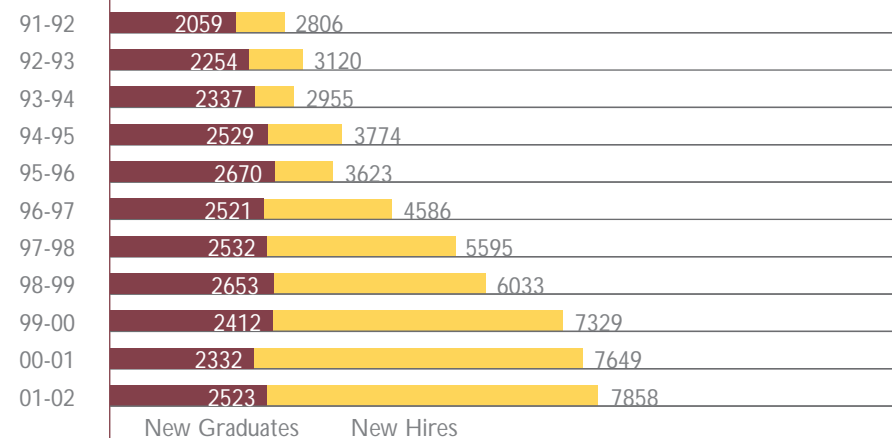
Jann Jackson, Advocates for Children and Youth, *The Baltimore Sun*, January 23, 2002

Maryland Earns Another “A” in Standards & Accountability *Education Week's* “Quality Counts 2003” report named Maryland as one of just two states to earn an “A” grade for three straight years for a comprehensive standards and accountability system.



## The TEACHER RECRUITMENT Imperative

New Hires by Maryland Public Schools & New Graduates of Teacher Training Programs at Maryland Colleges and Universities



New Graduates      New Hires



**S**afe, healthy school climates are a prerequisite for learning. Although students' safety has always been a priority, it has come to the forefront in the wake of terrorist incidents and acts of school violence that have shaken the nation. Every school has a safety plan and code of conduct. And all Maryland schools must follow state regulations designed to increase safety and reduce harassment and bullying.

Healthy school climates are drug-free climates. According to students, alcohol and other drug use is declining in Maryland and the nation. The biannual Maryland Adolescent Survey, last published in 2001, found that Maryland students were less likely to use drugs than their peers in other states. And a December 2002 study from the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported an encouraging drop nationwide in marijuana, cigarette, and alcohol use, with marijuana use showing its lowest numbers in nearly a decade.



**W**hen families and communities are involved in schools, student achievement and teacher morale increase. The Maryland State Department of Education has stepped up its support of family involvement by introducing the "Take 15 for the Family" initiative, which encourages Maryland families to dedicate at least 15 minutes each day to turning routine activities, like preparing meals, into learning opportunities. A section of the Department's Web site, [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org), is devoted to the initiative.

The Maryland State Department of Education ended 2002 with the first in a series of town meetings hosted with the Maryland PTA. The well-attended meeting, held in Annapolis, brought together

educators and parents to discuss student achievement and how schools and families can work together to improve it. More such efforts are planned for 2003 and will be critical to the success of Maryland's school reform movement.

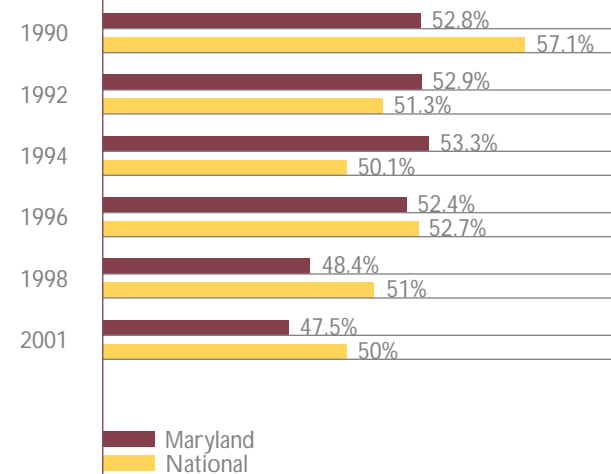
Businesses are also key partners in improving education. "Take 15 for the Family" is supported by local and national chain businesses. MINT — Maryland's Initiative for New Teachers — is funded entirely through corporate and foundation partners, such as the McDonald's Family Restaurants of Greater Baltimore. And the Northrop Grumman Engineering Scholars program will award nearly a quarter-million dollars per year in engineering scholarships to promising Maryland high school seniors.



## Fostering HEALTH & SAFETY

## Working TOGETHER

Comparison of Maryland and National Alcohol Use Trends, Twelfth-graders Using Alcohol in the Last 30 Days



The National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University honored the Maryland State Department of Education for excellence in developing, maintaining, and improving its leadership and for helping school systems and schools develop programs on school, family, and community involvement.

“...Marylanders have decided to level the public school playing field as quickly as possible — so that all of the state’s children have a chance at decent lives. Other states, including New York and California, could learn from this enlightened example.”

*The New York Times*, editorial, “A Visionary School Plan For Maryland”

Maryland School Performance Report  
on the Web at [www.msp.msde.state.md.us](http://www.msp.msde.state.md.us)

## ACHIEVEMENT Matters Most

With Achievement Matters Most, Maryland is entering a new era of school reform, one in which all students will have adequate, equal opportunities to learn and achieve. Key to making this possible is the Bridge to Excellence Act, which provides school systems additional funding targeted to economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency, and students receiving special education services. The No Child Left Behind Act also has profound implications for schools, as it provides guidelines and deadlines for increasing teacher quality and student achievement.

Maryland’s state of education is promising. With Achievement Matters Most, the state is poised to turn great expectations into even greater achievements.



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