

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Joy Schaefer
President

Telephone 301-696-6850
FAX 301-696-6950

October 23, 2014

Dr. Lillian Lowery, State Superintendent
Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, President
Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Subject: Request for a Two-Year Delay in Use of PARCC Results

Dear Dr. Lowery and Dr. Dukes:

On behalf of the Board of Education of Frederick County (Board), I am writing again to communicate our concern regarding the use this school year of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments scores as high stakes tests and to respectfully request you grant a delay of at least two years in their use in determining students' eligibility for graduation.

Our Board communicated our concern about this issue to you on April 22, 2014 (correspondence attached). At that time, we expressed our commitment to the goals of Maryland's reform efforts. While we do not object to the administration of these state assessments, we oppose using the results of these new tests to determine a student's eligibility to graduate. We are most concerned with the following aspects of the timeline:

- The more rigorous assessments, aligned with the increased rigor of the curriculum, will have a substantial impact for all students, especially those who have been struggling to achieve success with the current high school assessments.
- The short time frame that is currently planned to develop cut scores for graduation requirements, as well as college or career readiness, is not adequate to establish baseline data that would allow us to determine and evaluate the true meaning behind student scores.
- As the first cohort of students participate in the new assessments, school systems will need time to adjust instruction and develop interventions and supports to students who do not pass the exams initially.

The timeframe we are suggesting reflects the cautious and deliberate approach to test development that the Maryland State Department of Education has conducted in the past. Students and educators benefitted from the time and space created by the test development

timeline of the current HSA's, which began in earnest in 1993. Student performance was tied to graduation only after a long period of test design, trials, field testing and, finally statewide implementation in 2001. Passing scores were not determined until 2003, with the first class of students to take them as a graduation requirement in 2005.

The Board of Education of Frederick County appreciates being able to provide you with comment on this issue and to share our concerns. We acknowledge this is a critical juncture in our state's education reform effort. We remain fully committed to our students' success as we move through these changes and look forward to continuing this work with you in the best interest of our students, schools and communities.

Respectfully,



Joy Schaefer
President

Attachment

- c: Members, Maryland State Board of Education
- Dr. Theresa Alban, Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools
- Members, Board of Education of Frederick County
- Frederick County Delegation
- Board of County Commissioners of Frederick County
- Maryland Association of Boards of Education
- Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland