

PRESS RELEASE

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Tuesday, July 21, 2009

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SMCPS CONTINUES TO MAKE GAINS ON MSA

LEONARDTOWN, MD -- St. Mary's County Public Schools' (SMCPS) students continue to make steady gains on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The results of the 2009 MSA, released by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), show more students reaching proficient or advanced levels of performance than last year.

"We are a high performing school district," said Dr. Michael J. Martirano, superintendent of schools. "The state of Maryland has been declared the #1 state in the nation for education. Our overall results exceed those of the state, and these scores are a testament to the hard work of our students, the support of their parents, and the dedication of our teachers. Our aligned curriculum and quality instruction are preparing students for the Maryland School Assessments and paving the path for future success in high school and beyond."

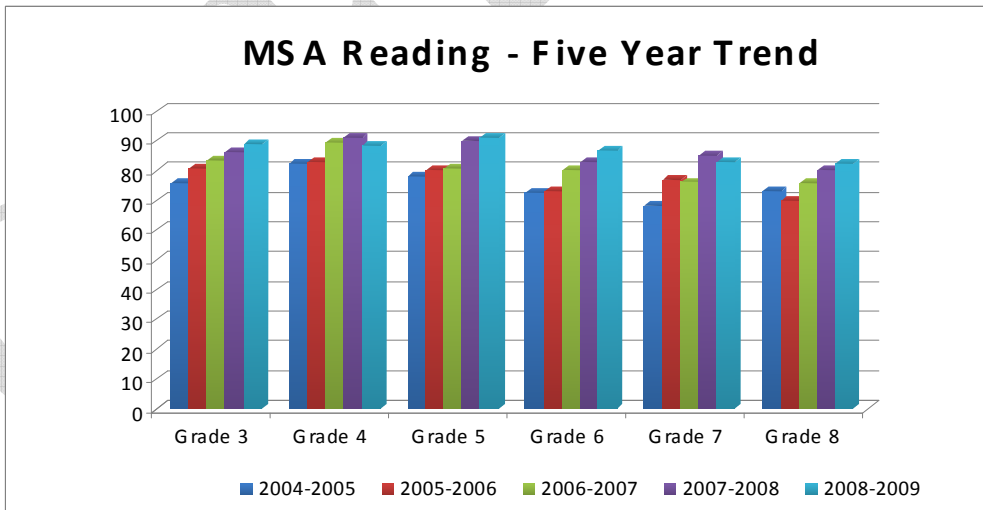
SMCPS continues to exceed the state averages in mathematics for all grade levels and all but one grade level in reading.

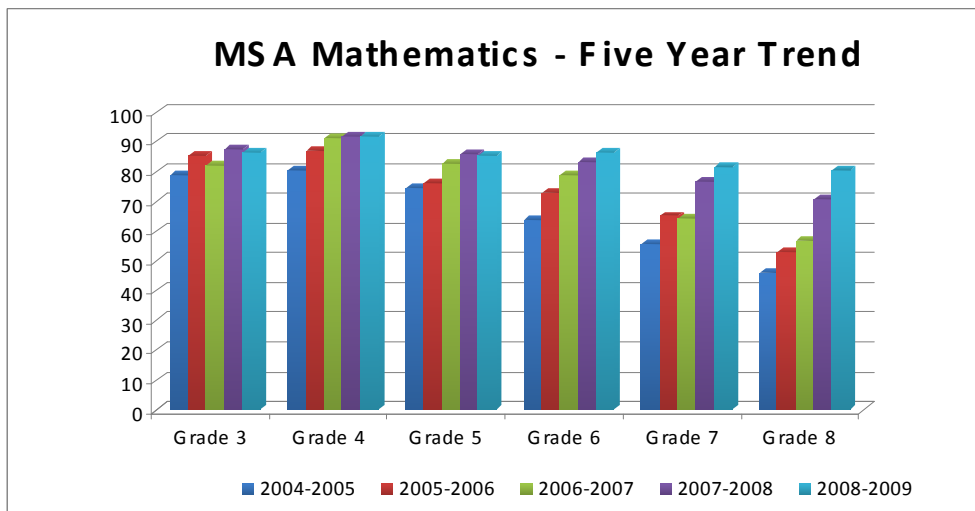
| MSA Mathematics Proficient/Advanced Percentages 2008-2009 | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Mathematics | 2008-2009 Maryland | 2008-2009 SMCPS |
| Grade 3 | 84.3 | 86.6 |
| Grade 4 | 89.2 | 91.9 |
| Grade 5 | 81.2 | 85.1 |
| Grade 6 | 77.1 | 86.4 |
| Grade 7 | 73.1 | 81.5 |
| Grade 8 | 67.2 | 80.3 |

| MSA Reading Proficient/Advanced Percentages 2008-2009 | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| Reading | 2008-2009 Maryland | 2008-2009 SMCPS |
| Grade 3 | 84.9 | 88.8 |
| Grade 4 | 86.7 | 88.6 |
| Grade 5 | 89.5 | 91.0 |
| Grade 6 | 84.5 | 86.6 |
| Grade 7 | 83.1 | 83.0 |
| Grade 8 | 81.4 | 82.6 |

The MSA exams are given to third through eighth grade students in reading and mathematics. The data is used to meet the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) requirements. Under NCLB goals, all students must score at proficient levels on state tests by 2014.

SMCPS remains committed to the elimination of the achievement gap as outlined in the Superintendent’s Fifteen Point Plan of Priorities. “Academic gaps remain between our student groups, but we are making significant progress in our efforts toward their elimination,” said Dr. Martirano. “At the middle school level, our African American students posted a 13.9 percent change index in 6th grade reading compared to a consistent index for their White counterparts. In 8th grade, African American students earned a 17.7 percent change index in mathematics, compared to a 6.7 percent change index for White students. The gap is closing while most students are seeing improvement in performance.”





“Knowing the individual student’s performance data is the foundation for our continued growth,” said Linda Dudderar, chief academic officer. “All of our county created assessments are aligned to the MSDE Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) and allow teachers, through the use of our data warehouse, to recursively instruct students toward mastery of key learning. Targeted professional development, that supports a productive collaborative professional culture, allows teachers and support staff to best meet the differing needs of our children.”

| MATHEMATICS | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 | 2006-2007 | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 5 Year Trend |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Grade 3 | 79.0 | 85.1 | 82.1 | 87.5 | 86.6 | +7.6 |
| Grade 4 | 80.4 | 86.7 | 91.4 | 91.8 | 91.9 | +11.5 |
| Grade 5 | 74.7 | 76.2 | 82.6 | 86.0 | 85.1 | +10.4 |
| Grade 6 | 63.8 | 73.0 | 78.7 | 83.0 | 86.4 | +22.6 |
| Grade 7 | 55.6 | 65.1 | 64.5 | 76.9 | 81.5 | +25.9 |
| Grade 8 | 46.1 | 53.2 | 56.8 | 70.9 | 80.3 | +34.2 |

| READING | 2004-2005 | 2005-2006 | 2006-2007 | 2007-2008 | 2008-2009 | 5 Year Trend |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Grade 3 | 75.9 | 80.7 | 83.6 | 86.0 | 88.8 | +12.9 |
| Grade 4 | 82.4 | 82.7 | 89.5 | 91.1 | 88.6 | +6.2 |
| Grade 5 | 78.0 | 80.1 | 80.7 | 90.0 | 91.0 | +13.0 |
| Grade 6 | 72.5 | 73.3 | 80.3 | 82.8 | 86.6 | +14.1 |
| Grade 7 | 68.3 | 76.9 | 76.1 | 85.2 | 83.0 | +14.7 |
| Grade 8 | 73.3 | 69.7 | 75.8 | 80.0 | 82.6 | +9.3 |

“Once again, we are pleased that the overall number of students moving from basic to proficient, and from proficient to advanced, has increased,” stated Dr. Martirano. “We continue to see growth at most grade levels, even as proficient/advanced percentages climb into the high 80’s and low 90’s. We

recognize that as we get closer to the goal of 100 percent of students earning proficient or advanced, gains will be smaller and more challenging – but we are dedicated to continuous improvement.”

NCLB charts the progress for the overall student population in the grades tested, as well as that of students receiving any of three categories of special services: Free and/or Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS) or Economically Disadvantaged, Special Education, and Limited English Proficient. It also tracks the success of students in five racial subgroups: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, White, and Hispanic.

State-wide, system-wide, and local school data are now available on the MSDE Report Card website at www.mdreportcard.org.

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