



**POLICY 8120**  
**TESTING: STATE AND LOCAL**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROTOCOLS**

**Board of Education**

Effective: February 10, 2022

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**Policy Outline**

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**I. Policy Value Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County recognizes the importance of administering state-mandated, district-selected, and district-designed assessments to the educational process. Assessment results combined with other data sources are used to measure the progress that students and schools are making toward achieving system-wide goals/objectives and to identify students at risk for not achieving learning outcomes. In addition, assessment results combined with other data are used to guide classroom instruction, curricular programs, and delivery of services, while also providing students, parents and the community with nationally and internationally benchmarked indicators of academic achievement.

The Board also recognizes its responsibility to maintain an assessment and accountability program in compliance with state laws and regulations, and to provide for the security of mandated assessment materials, the ethical administration of assessments, and the accurate and ethical reporting of assessment data.

**II. Purpose**

This policy establishes provisions for how state-mandated, district-selected, and district-designed assessments are approved, secured, administered, and reported in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

### III. Standards

#### A. Approval of Assessments

1. Assessments administered to students in the system will be on the approved assessment list. Assessments are placed on the approved list according to the following guidelines:
  - a. State-mandated assessments are automatically placed on the approved assessment list.
  - b. District-selected and district-designed assessments will align with current HCPSS goals and objectives.
2. Assessments that are not governed by this policy include:
  - a. Teacher-made assessments designed to assess achievement in individual classrooms.
  - b. Assessments provided with approved HCPSS instructional materials or curricula.
  - c. Diagnostic tools administered by Special Education and Student Services.

#### B. Administration of Approved Assessments

Guidelines for ethically and properly administering and securing approved assessments will be followed for all assessment administration.

1. HCPSS employees and students will adhere to the guidelines for the administration and security of approved assessments, maintain the security of assessment materials, demonstrate proper behavior related to testing, and cooperate in the reporting and investigation of any violations related to testing.
2. All HCPSS employees will follow security procedures promulgated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the HCPSS, and/or published in assessment administration manuals and other documents for mandated assessments.
3. Any failure to comply with assessment administration procedures by either a student or HCPSS employee will be reported to the appropriate administrator or supervisor and investigated according to state regulations and/or HCPSS processes.

#### C. Violations of Assessment Administration

1. HCPSS will investigate any allegations of violations regarding state-mandated assessments, as well as district-selected and district-designed assessments, and will cooperate in MSDE investigations regarding allegations of testing violations for state-mandated assessments.

2. Testing violations by HCPSS employees may result in disciplinary action.
3. Testing violations by students may result in disciplinary action under the guidelines of Policy 9200 Student Discipline and the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

**D. Results and Reporting of Approved Assessments**

1. Violations of data collection and reporting protocols for an individual or a school are identified in COMAR 13A.03.04.
2. The HCPSS will use assessment data combined with other data to make decisions about classroom instruction, curricular programs, and delivery of services.
3. The HCPSS will provide assessment results to appropriate stakeholders and through measures that protect the anonymity, when applicable, of individual students, groups of students, and/or schools.
4. The Superintendent/designee will assist HCPSS employees and the public with interpretations of assessment results.

**E. Electronic Devices**

1. All personal electronic equipment not related to testing (eg. cell phones, tablets, cameras, handheld devices, or any electronic devices that enable the taking of photographic images or the transmission of text, voice messages, or photo images) are prohibited during assessments. Electronic devices may be allowed for medical or audiological purposes during testing.
2. Electronic devices, such as a second computer, may be allowed to deliver appropriate accommodations for an individual student.
3. In the testing environment, test administrators/examiners may only have access to electronic devices for assessment related tasks.

**IV. Responsibilities**

- A. The Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) will ensure the HCPSS adheres to protocols established by MSDE and the HCPSS for state-mandated, district-selected, and district-designed assessments.
- B. The School Test Coordinator (STC) will follow all procedures established by MSDE and the HCPSS for the assessment program.

- C. All HCPSS employees whose duties involve either assessment administration or data collection and reporting will be held accountable for compliance with all requirements of the MSDE, the HCPSS, and this policy.

## **V. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures for the implementation of this policy.

## **VI. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Accommodation – Prescribed assessment practices and procedures that provide students with documented disabilities equitable access during assessments.
- B. Anonymity – Assurance that an individual not be identified by name, the individual's identity is protected, and the individual is unknown.
- C. Approved Assessments – State-mandated assessments, as well as district-selected and district-designed assessments, that are evaluated and selected according to the guidelines outlined in this policy.
- D. Assessment Materials – Any of the documents or supplemental supplies and equipment used for testing.
- E. Diagnostic Tool – Assessments administered to determine eligibility for special programs or to measure progress within such programs.
- F. District-Designed Assessments – HCPSS generated K-12 assessments aligned with the school system's essential curriculum by grade and course, which may be mandated to be administered to specified populations of students.
- G. District-Selected Assessments – Assessments evaluated and selected by the HCPSS which are placed on the approved assessments list and may be mandated by the school system to be administered to specified populations of students.
- H. Employee – An individual who whose compensation is paid in whole or part by the Board and/or an individual who is a pre-service teacher, an intern, consultant, or an independent contractor for the school system.
- I. Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) – An HCPSS employee appointed by the Superintendent, who is responsible for overseeing the HCPSS assessment program and who serves as the liaison between the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the HCPSS.

- J. Mandated Assessments – State-mandated assessments, as well as district-selected and district-designed assessments, that must be administered to specified populations of students.
- K. Proctor – An HCPSS employee or pre-service teacher candidate who is trained to work under the direction of the test administrator/examiner for a specific assessment and has school-based administrator approval to assist with assessment administration.
- L. School Test Coordinator (STC) – An administrator appointed by the principal to oversee the school’s assessment program.
- M. State-Mandated Assessments – Assessments required by the MSDE to be administered system wide for purposes of system evaluation, school improvement, and evaluation of individual performance standards.
- N. Test Administrator/Examiner –An HCPSS employee who is identified to administer a specific assessment and who meets the specified criteria of that individual test.
- O. Testing Violation (by HCPSS employees) – Conduct or action taken by an HCPSS employee that does not comply with the information, rules, guidelines, and procedures in this policy, or in administrator/examiner’s manuals, assessment administration and coordinator manuals, handbooks, memos, and related documents from the MSDE or the HCPSS.
- P. Testing Violation (by Students) – Conduct or action taken by a student, including cheating and academic dishonesty, that is inappropriate based on information, rules, guidelines, and procedures in this policy, or in administrator/examiner’s manuals, assessment administration and coordinator manuals, handbooks, memos, and related documents from the MSDE or the HCPSS.

## VII. References

- A. Legal
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Title 7, Public Schools, Subtitle 2. Evaluation and Graduation of Students
  - COMAR 13A.03.02.06 Maryland High School Assessments
  - COMAR 13A.03.04 Test Administration and Data-Reporting Policies and Procedures
  - COMAR 13A.12.05 Suspensions and Revocations
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline
  - Policy 8000 Curriculum
  - Policy 8010 Grading and Reporting: Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade 5
  - Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: Middle and High School
  - Policy 8030 Graduation Requirements
  - Policy 9050 Student Records

Policy 9200 Student Discipline  
Policy 9260 Search and Seizure

- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
  - Approved Assessment List
  - HCPSS Student Code of Conduct
  - Maryland Accommodations Manual

## VIII. History<sup>1</sup>

ADOPTED: November 12, 1992  
REVIEWED: December 19, 2019  
MODIFIED: February 10, 2022  
REVISED: May 23, 2002  
September 7, 2006  
May 7, 2015  
EFFECTIVE: February 10, 2022

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<sup>1</sup> Key: **Adopted**-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; **Reviewed**-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; **Modified**-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; **Revised**-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; **Effective**-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.

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**I. Approval of District-Selected and District-Designed Assessments**

- A. District-selected assessments will be evaluated and placed on the approved assessment list by the Superintendent's Cabinet.
- B. District-designed assessments may be recommended for approval by curriculum offices and evaluated by the Superintendent's Cabinet for placement on the approved assessment list.
- C. Criteria for evaluation will include, but are not limited to the:
  - 1. Alignment with the current Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) goals and objectives.
  - 2. Validity and reliability of the assessment.
  - 3. Number of students impacted by the assessment.
  - 4. Effects of the assessment on delivery of instruction.
  - 5. Cost of the assessment.
  - 6. Applications of the assessment data.
  - 7. Accessibility of the assessments.

**II. Administration of State-Mandated, District-Selected and District-Designed Assessments**

- A. The Superintendent/designee will:

Appoint a central office administrator who serves as the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC), who is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of state and local assessment administration and data reporting policies within HCPSS and who serves as the liaison between MSDE and HCPSS regarding assessment administration.

B. The LAC will:

1. Be the sole individual authorized to procure assessment materials for the HCPSS.
2. Create and publish the HCPSS assessment calendar, which will include all testing windows for assessment administrations and serve as the official document to guide school planning for those administrations.
3. Make available the approved assessment list.
4. Coordinate all state-mandated assessments and related activities at the district level.
5. Train School Test Coordinators (STCs) on the state, local and vendor-specific policies and procedures and guidelines necessary to administer all assessments in their schools.
6. Communicate all necessary information related to testing to the STCs as it becomes available.
7. Inform schools of the arrival dates and pick-up procedures for assessment materials and the requirements for the secure receipt and storage of those materials.
8. Inform STCs of the requirements and procedures for storing assessment materials in schools.
9. Direct and coordinate the distribution of assessment materials to, and collection of assessment materials from, schools.
10. Develop implementation procedures for state-mandated and district-selected assessments.
11. Investigate and report testing violations.
12. Sign a certification of training form and/or a non-disclosure agreement.

C. Principals will:

1. Appoint an administrator as the STC and a certificated employee as the alternate STC before the beginning of the school year, and notify the LAC of any changes in appointment.
2. Facilitate the release of the STC to attend required training meetings.
3. Ensure that a locked, secure, non-instructional area is available for storage



of all assessment materials before, during, and after the administration.

4. Distribute assessment results as required and safeguard electronically stored data and assessment items within their schools.
5. Advise students of proper behavior and testing violations in accordance with this policy, Policy 9200 Student Discipline, the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, and protocols specific to individual assessments.
6. Provide ongoing notification to school employees and the community of the school's assessment schedule/calendar.

D. STCs will:

1. Be the sole individual authorized to receive assessment materials from the LAC, the MSDE, the HCPSS, and its vendors for his/her school.
2. Oversee the administration and security of state-mandated and district-selected assessment programs in their schools.
3. Facilitate identification and application of assessment accommodations for special populations through collaboration with MSDE, the LAC, case managers, parents, and HCPSS employees.
4. Ensure that only qualified employees are designated as test administrators/examiners, proctors, and accommodators.
5. Train test administrators/examiners, proctors, and accommodators in alignment with state, local, and vendor-specific policies and procedures. Training includes expectations for employee behavior and assessment security procedures.
6. Maintain documentation and accounting of assessment administration according to the implementation procedures outlined by the LAC.
7. Attend each required training meeting. (The alternate STC will attend in the STC's absence).
8. Sign a certification of training form and/or a non-disclosure agreement.
9. Direct and coordinate distribution and collection of assessment materials within the school according to established procedures.
10. Notify the appropriate persons of discrepancies related to the inventory of assessment materials. These discrepancies include the initial receipt of materials as well as lost and damaged materials.

11. Make provisions for the security of assessment materials while they are in the school, including documentation of the chain of custody. The secured storage area will be under the jurisdiction of the STC.
  12. Be the only person authorized to remove assessment materials from the secure area for assessment administration preparation activities and for actual assessment administration.
  13. Retain the names and student identification numbers of students assessed, as well as the names of all test administrators/examiners, and accommodators, for six school years following each MSDE mandated assessment administration.
  14. Return all assessment materials to the MSDE, LAC, or the appropriate vendor in accordance with approved procedures.
  15. Report all testing violations immediately to the school principal and to the LAC.
- E. Test Administrators/Examiners, Proctors, and Accommodators will:
1. Attend all required training sessions provided by HCPSS and/or MSDE to learn all required procedures for each assessment.
  2. Adhere to all required assessment administration procedures as outlined in state and local manuals, training materials, and documents provided by the MSDE and/or HCPSS.
  3. Sign a certification of training form and/or a non-disclosure agreement.

### **III. Reporting and Investigating Alleged Testing Violations**

- A. Allegations of potential testing violations by students or HCPSS employees at the school level will be reported immediately to STC, to the school principal, and to the LAC.
- B. The LAC and other appropriate central office administrators will investigate reports of alleged testing violations.
- C. In investigating reports of alleged violations involving state-mandated assessments, the LAC will be guided by MSDE, HCPSS, and vendor-specific policies and procedures as referenced in Section VII. of this policy.
- D. All cases of alleged violations for state-mandated assessments will be reported to the MSDE according to their guidelines.

- E. In investigating reports of alleged testing violations involving district-selected assessments, the LAC will be guided by assessment manuals and other assessment administration documents related to the specific tests. Following an investigation, if it is determined that a violation has occurred, consequences will be determined by the Superintendent/Designee.
- F. The LAC will meet all requirements and requests of the MSDE where applicable and all requirements and requests of the HCPSS where applicable.
- G. Violations of this policy by HCPSS employees or students may result in the invalidation of assessment results.
- H. Violations of this policy by an HCPSS employee may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal by the Superintendent.
- I. Testing violations by an HCPSS employee with regard to state-mandated assessments may also result in the suspension and/or revocation of administrative or teaching credentials, or both, by the State Superintendent of Schools.

#### **IV. Students Receiving Home and Hospital Services or Assigned to Evening School**

- A. All persons administering assessments to students receiving home and hospital services or assigned to evening school will receive all required training and adhere to all procedures for assessment security and administration developed by the LAC.
- B. Students assigned to evening school are required to participate in all state-mandated and district-selected assessments.
- C. Students receiving home and hospital services will participate in state-mandated and district-selected assessments.
- D. Students receiving home and hospital services may take state mandated, district-selected and district-designed assessments at their designated schools. When students are unable to be assessed in their designated schools, arrangements will be made to administer assessments by a certified administrator/examiner in an appropriate setting.

#### **V. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Accommodator – An HCPSS employee or pre-service teacher candidate who is trained to administer modifications of a student’s testing environment.
- B. Chain of Custody – The secure transfer of assessment materials that includes the chronological documentation of distribution, receipt and return.

- C. Designated School – The school assigned by virtue of a student’s attendance area.
- D. Testing Window – The period of time designated for schools to administer an assessment.

## VI. Monitoring

Policy 8120 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Office of the Deputy Superintendent.

## VII. History<sup>1</sup>

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