

Online HSA Help

For Parents

Starting with the class of 2009, all students must pass the High School Assessments (HSAs) in order to graduate.

The Maryland State Department of Education has created free, online courses and resources for all four HSAs—algebra/data analysis, biology, English 2, and government—that you can use to help your child.

These online courses and resources cover the content students need to know for the HSAs.

With HSA online courses, you and your child can:

- Learn or review HSA content.
- Practice questions that mirror the HSA format.
- Receive feedback through computer-based practice exercises.

The online HSA courses are Web-based, interactive tools that **will help your child** prepare for the **High School Assessments.**



Maryland High School Assessments
Algebra/Data Analysis • Government • Biology • English

Steps

1. Open your Internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari) and type the following into the address bar:

http://msde.mdk12online.org

2. At the Desire2Learn login screen, enter the following information:

Username: online.course

Password: parent
(Figure 1)

3. Once you have logged in, the best place to begin is with the tutorials. The **"New Users"** section on the right lists tutorials that show you how to use the online courses. (Figure 2)

Figure 1

Login

Username:

● **online.course**

Password:

● **parent**

Please note your password is case sensitive.

Figure 2

New Users

If this is the first time that you have signed into D2L or a course, please complete the orientation tutorials below.

Welcome to the Your Orientation Tutorials.

Click on the underlined text to access the tutorials.

● [Getting Started in D2L](#)

● [Tips for Working with New Windows](#)

● [Overview of Course Home](#)

● A brief overview of the site's content and layout.

● Directions for customizing page layout.

● Thorough tutorials for each aspect of the online course. This section includes video demonstrations on using the course.

HSAexam.org

For questions and additional resources, email

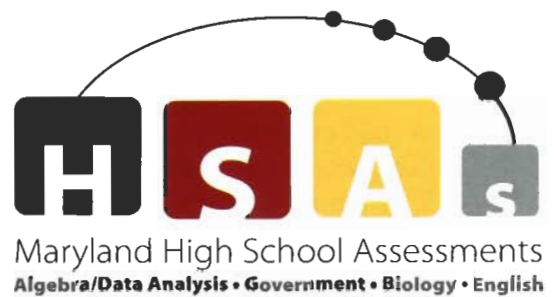
onlinehsa@msde.state.md.us.

For more information about the HSAs, go to

HSAexam.org.



Top **10** things parents need to know about the HSAs



#1

They count now!

Any student who entered 9th grade in or after 2005 must pass the High School Assessments (HSAs) to receive a Maryland high school diploma.

Students take the HSAs at the end of the class, NOT senior year.

The HSAs are end-of-course exams that your child takes at the completion of four core subjects (English, algebra, government, and biology) in whichever grade he or she happens to take the class—even if that grade is in middle school.

#2

The HSAs test what should be taught and learned in key subjects.

These end-of-course exams test the knowledge and skills that students should have learned while taking the course. Coursework in these subjects is aligned with the Core Learning Goals, a part of Maryland's curriculum that clearly outlines high school course content and learning objectives.

#3

Teachers, students, and parents should have a good understanding of what is expected of students at the beginning of the class. To review the Core Learning Goals, visit HSAexam.org.

Preparation for the HSAs begins long before high school.

The HSAs establish a performance floor for students—not an achievement ceiling. While passing the HSAs is a graduation requirement, the exams actually test courses that most students take as freshmen or sophomores. In fact, more than one in three Maryland students takes algebra (and, therefore, the algebra/data analysis HSA) in middle school.

So start talking early to your child and to your child's teachers about high school expectations, and help your child plan his or her coursework accordingly. The teachers who work with your child every day know how he or she is progressing and what additional help may be necessary.

#4

#5

Your child can take the HSAs as many times as he or she needs to pass them.

If your child fails an HSA, he or she has many chances throughout the year to retake the test. In 2007–08, the HSAs will be administered in October,* January, May, and July/August.

Beginning with the 2008–09 school year, high school seniors will have yet another chance to retake the tests. A special seniors-only administration of the HSAs in April will help 12th-graders who have struggled on the tests to graduate on time. Visit HSAexam.org for the full testing calendar.

*New administration

#6

There are two ways to pass the HSAs.

1. Your child can pass all four HSAs. The passing scores are: algebra/data analysis, 412; government, 394; biology, 400; and English, 396.
2. Your child can use the combined-score option, in which students must earn a minimum score on each test and a combined score of 1602. This allows students to offset lower performance on one test with higher performance on another.

Visit HSAexam.org for more information.

There are options for students struggling on the HSAs.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has proposed a plan to help students who struggle on the HSAs earn a high school diploma. The Bridge Plan would be open to students ending their junior year who have failed one or more HSAs at least twice (and failed to meet the state's minimum- and combined-score requirements).

To be eligible for the Bridge Plan, students would have to satisfy all other graduation requirements and meet additional criteria such as a minimum grade point average, passing course grades, school attendance, and participation in remediation work (for example, tutoring, summer school, or after-school programs). Students would then be able to meet the HSA testing requirement by completing a customized project that is as challenging as the HSA. The projects would be evaluated by your local school district and final approval would be granted by your district superintendent or his/her designee.

The State Board of Education will vote on this proposed Bridge Plan in fall 2007. For more information, go to HSAexam.org.

#7

Students can practice taking the HSAs online.

#8

MSDE has created online courses that students can take in whole or in part—either as preparation for an upcoming exam or for review if he or she fails one.

Check out the courses at MdK12.org. At the login screen, enter "**online.course**" as the username and "**parent**" as the password. The "New Users" section on the right will steer you toward tutorials on using the courses.

Teachers will be using these same courses with students as part of regular instruction or as a supplement for students who need extra practice or extended learning time.

Online courses in algebra/data analysis and government are online now. Courses in English and biology will be available in fall 2007.

HSAexam.org is your online source for HSA information.

#9

On HSAexam.org, you can review sample HSA questions and take a test online, access testing dates, learn about how the tests are scored, review the standards and content covered by the HSAs, register for online HSA courses, and find people in your school system and at MSDE who can answer your test-related questions.

For questions about the HSAs or your child's performance on them, call 877-HSA-EXAM.

MSDE has set up a toll-free telephone line—1-877-HSA-EXAM—to answer commonly asked HSA questions and to put you in touch with MSDE staff who can handle more specific ones. If you leave a message on the line, someone from MSDE will return your call within 24 hours.

#10