

### Key Findings

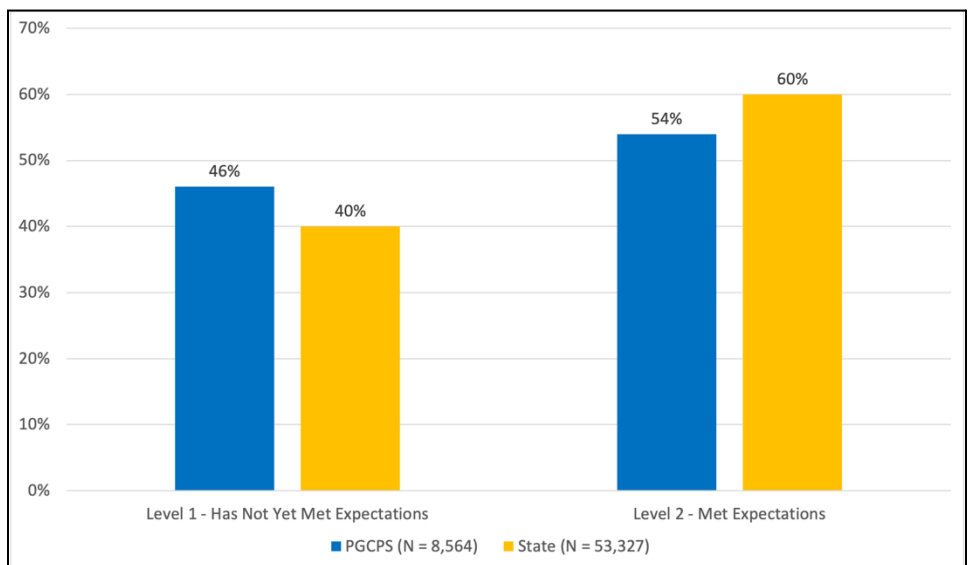
- More than half of PGCPS students met expectations on the *HSA for Government*, lagging behind the state by six percentage points.
- At least half of male and female students met expectations, with female students outperforming their male counterparts by eight percentage points.
- More than half of students in most racial/ethnic groups met expectations, with White and Hispanic or Latino students having the highest and lowest percentages, respectively.
- Forty-nine percent of students who receive FaRMs met expectations, a 10% difference in percentage points between them and their non-FaRMs counterparts.
- Twenty percent of SWDs met expectations, though there was a 37% difference in percentage points between them and their non-disabled counterparts.
- Eighteen percent of ELs met expectations, while 60% of their non-EL counterparts demonstrated this level of performance.

## Student Performance on SY22's High School Assessment in Government

The *High School Assessment (HSA) in Government* is a state test used to measure student progress against a set of social studies standards ([MSDE, 2020](#)). An end-of-course assessment, the test specifically assesses core content and skills that students acquire and develop through the class *Local, State, and National (LSN) Government* ([PGCPS, 2022](#)). Until recently, high school students were required to pass the test (i.e., earn a performance level of two) to graduate high school ([MSDE, 2022a](#)). However, with ongoing revisions to state legislation, specifically *COMAR 13A.03.02.06*, students are currently only required to take “the requisite Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) assessments after earning [the corresponding class’] course credit” to satisfy graduation requirements in accordance with MCAP ([MSDE, 2022b, p. 5](#)). In this data brief, the results of the *HSA in Government*, one of the MCAP assessments, are discussed, with a specific focus on the most recent, currently embargoed, data from SY22.

**Overall Performance:** More than half of Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) high school students met expectations on the *HSA in Government* (Figure 1). Fifty-four percent (4,588) demonstrated a performance level of two, while 46% (3,976) demonstrated a performance level of one. High schoolers in the district who met expectations lagged behind the state by six percentage points.

**Figure 1. PGCPS and State Performance Levels**



**Notes.** Performance levels of one and two indicate scale scores of between 240-393 and 394-650, respectively.  
**Source.** Maryland State Department of Education, District Performance Level Summary Report, July 14, 2022.

**Performance Levels by Gender:** Female students outperformed their male counterparts on the *HSA in Government* (Table 1). Specifically, 58% of female students met expectations, while 50% of male students attained this same level of performance. At least half of students in both genders, however, met expectations on the assessment.

**Table 1. Percentage of Students Who Met Expectations by Gender**

	Gender	
	# of Test-Takers	% Met Expectations
Male	4,440	50%
Female	4,122	58%

**Notes.** Data from non-binary students were not reported due to low representation (N = 2).

**Source.** Maryland State Department of Education, District Performance Level Summary Report, July 14, 2022.

**Performance Levels by Race/Ethnicity:** More than half of students in most racial/ethnic groups met expectations on the *HSA in Government* (Table 2). These percentages include students who are American Indian/Alaska Native (67%), Asian (65%), Black/African American (58%), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders (OPI) (75%), White (76%), and of mixed race (75%). When compared, White students outperformed their racial/ethnic counterparts, with the highest percentage of students demonstrating a performance level of two (76%). In contrast, Hispanic or Latino students had the lowest percentage of students (44%) to meet expectations on the assessment.

**Table 2. Percentage of Students Who Met Expectations by Race/Ethnicity**

	Race/Ethnicity	
	# of Test-Takers	% Met Expectations
Am. Indian or Alaska Native	21	67%
Asian	213	65%
Black or African American	4,748	58%
Hispanic or Latino	3,152	44%
Native Hawaiian or OPI	20	75%
White	285	76%
Two or More Races	84	75%

**Notes.** Students whose race/ethnicity was not indicated (N = 41) were not included in this table.

**Source.** Maryland State Department of Education, District Performance Level Summary Report, July 14, 2022.

**Performance Level by FaRMs, EL, and Disability Status:** Student service group categories, including free and reduced-priced meals (FaRMs), students with disabilities (SWDs), and English learners (ELs), had varying degrees of students who met expectations on the *HSA in Government* (Table 3). Nearly half of students who receive FaRMs (49%) demonstrated a performance level of two, while 20% and 18% of students who receive services through special education and the ESOL program, respectively, met expectations. When compared to their counterparts who do not receive services through these means, students in the aforementioned service groups had less percentages of students to meet expectations on the test. More specifically, 59% of non-FaRMs, 57% of non-IEP, and 60% of non-EL students met expectations on the *HSA in Government*.

**Table 3. Percentage of Students Who Met Expectations by FaRMs, EL, and Disability Status**

Student Service Groups		
	# of Test-Takers	% Met Expectations
FaRMs	4,742	49%
Non-FaRMs	3,822	59%
SWD		
	# of Test-Takers	% Met Expectations
SWD	736	20%
Non-SWD	7,828	57%
EL		
	# of Test-Takers	% Met Expectations
EL	1,402	18%
Non-EL	7,162	60%

**Notes.** Students with disabilities (SWD) refers to students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) only.

**Source.** Maryland State Department of Education, District Performance Level Summary Report, July 14, 2022.

**Discussion:** According to SY22 data, 8,564 PGCPs high school students (Figure 1) have satisfied an important requirement for graduation; that is, they have taken one of the four MCAP tests ([MSDE, 2022a](#)). While passing the *HSA in Government* was not mandatory ([MSDE, 2022b](#)), the extent to which PGCPs students successfully met (or did not meet) expectations warrants a discussion.

In particular, more than half of high school students demonstrated a performance level of two (Figure 1), indicating that a majority of them had acquired and developed the appropriate knowledge and skills through their *LSN Government* course needed to demonstrate proficiency on key social studies standards ([MSDE, 2020](#)). This finding was observed within different subgroups. For example, more than half of female students met expectations on the assessment (Table 1). In addition, more than half of students in most racial/ethnic groups, specifically American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/OPI, White, and mixed race, met expectations (Table 2). While the same cannot be said for male students and Hispanic or Latino students, the data show that close to a majority of students in those groups met expectations on the *HSA in Government*, 50% and 44%, respectively (Tables 1-2). Similarly, nearly a majority of students who receive FaRMs (49%) met expectations on the assessment (Table 3). In sum, many PGCPs high school students during SY22 met expectations on a test they were otherwise not required to pass.

Despite this success, more than 75% of SWDs and ELs did not meet expectations on the *HSA in Government*. Additional research, however, is needed to explore factors that strongly contribute to this outcome. It is worth noting, though, that Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students, the racial/ethnic groups with the least percentages of students to meet expectations, account for the majority of SWDs, 62.9% and 31.1%, respectively<sup>1</sup>. In addition, Hispanic/Latino students account for the vast majority of ELs (86.4%). Future research may include an exploration of these factors, specifically how challenges with disabilities and language acquisition influence the performance of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students on state assessments such as the *HSA in Government*.

<sup>1</sup> Data were gathered from the SY22 *HSA in Government* student file.

## References

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