

POLICY	BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND
ASSESSMENTS	POLICY 511
511.1 Purpose 511.2 Definitions 511.3 Policy Statement 511.4 Evaluation of Assessments 511.5 Mandated Testing 511.6 Refusals 511.7 Students with Disabilities	

511.1 Purpose

To establish the role of assessments within the instructional program.

511.2 Definitions

Screening Assessment – brief, valid, and reliable measurement procedure used to identify or predict whether a student may be a) at risk for poor learning outcomes or b) in need of enrichment or acceleration.

Local Assessments – assessments generated and required by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS); such assessments do not include tests or assessments generated by teachers or other optional systemic assessments.

State Assessments – those formal assessments required by state and/or federal law.

Multi-tiered System of Supports - includes varying levels of service intensity that are delivered to students based on need. The needs of students are determined through a set of decisions, each based on the systematic use of assessment data.

511.3 Policy Statement

A. Role

Local assessments should provide timely data in order to inform and improve instruction. Assessments must provide meaningful information to system leaders, teachers, parents and students regarding student performance and mastery of the curriculum.

System leaders should also be able to use assessment results to identify and close gaps in achievement, ensure equity in instruction, and to inform strategies to increase performance across all student groups.

State assessments are administered as required by law.

B. Time / Frequency

Local assessments shall be used in a balanced way as a part of a student's total instructional program.

Local assessments shall not be conducted in a way that is disruptive to the schedule or the instructional day.

State assessments shall be administered in a way that minimizes disruption to the instructional environment.

Every effort should be made to ensure that assessments be scheduled in a way that minimizes the overlap in the administration of multiple assessments.

Some assessments are required; however, system leaders, teachers, and staff should have the flexibility to choose additional local assessments that work best for their students and that fulfill the goals delineated in this policy.

A local plan to address screening students for reading and math difficulties is necessary to ensure all students receive appropriate interventions within FCPS' Multi-tiered System of Supports. While early screening is a legislative priority, FCPS will implement a screening process for students demonstrating deficits in reading or math at any grade level.

511.4 Evaluation of Assessments

System leaders shall evaluate local assessments on a regular basis. System leaders should ensure that feedback from teachers, students, and staff informs the local assessment evaluation process.

Criteria for Evaluation of Local Assessments:

- must fulfill the conditions specified under "Role" specified in this policy
- must be aligned to the current curricula
- must demonstrate that instructional practice is aligned with FCPS strategic goals
- must measure student progress and mastery of curricula
- must be effective instructional and diagnostic tools to improve the practice of teaching and inform instruction supports

Local assessments that are not fulfilling the goals delineated in this policy should be eliminated.

System leaders shall also routinely evaluate the effectiveness of state assessments and provide timely feedback to the state government on ways those assessments may be improved.

511.5 Mandated Testing

A. Required State Assessments

In accordance with federal and state law, the Board of Education (Board) recognizes annual testing of students is required in mathematics and reading/language arts in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Science is required in grades 5 and 8 and once in high school. Also, students in grade 8 are required to take a state social studies assessment. Under federal and state law, as well as FCPS Regulation 400-62 *Test Administration and Data Reporting*, staff are prohibited from excluding students from participation.

High school students have state assessments administered in English 10, Algebra I, Biology and Government that serve to meet graduation requirements. The College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act (CCRCCA) adds the possible addition of needed assessments in English 11 or Algebra II or other CCRCCA allowable assessments.

The Board recognizes the importance of students and parents being provided clear, detailed and accurate information to ensure students are adequately informed of mandated high school graduation requirements.

B. Required Reading Screening

In alignment with Maryland law, students in kindergarten and grade 1 shall be screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties. The screening instrument shall be based on foundational reading skills that include phonological and phonemic awareness and processing. Students will be assessed according to the FCPS Local Assessment Framework schedule. The time required for this screening may not be included in the time limitation for assessments.

The screening assessment must accurately and reliably identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, be developmentally appropriate, be economical to administer in time and cost, and use norm-referenced or criterion-based scores. The screening may be conducted by a classroom teacher, a school psychologist, a special education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, a reading interventionist, a designated reading/literacy specialist, or any other educator trained in screening instruments and protocols.

511.6 Refusals

- A. The Board recognizes that the State of Maryland has not passed legislation allowing for parental opt-out of statewide testing as part of the regular instructional program of the public school system. Consequently, the Board cannot grant parental requests to opt-out of testing on behalf of their children. However, the Board acknowledges that in spite of the declaration of the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board), some students may still refuse to take assessments or may be barred from doing so by their parents. In the case of refusals, it is the Board's expectation that students and families are treated by school staff with the same equity, dignity and respect as provided to test takers. If a school administrator is able to provide an alternative activity it must align with testing protocol.

- B. Alternative Mode of Refusal – The Board recognizes that students communicate in a variety of methods throughout the school system, including through the use of a communication device. Therefore, it is the expectation of the Board that staff will honor any student’s typical mode of communication in the matter of honoring refusals.

511.7 Students with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires students with disabilities to be included in state assessments.

Students with significant disabilities are assessed using the multi-state alternate assessment (MSAA) which is designed to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and IDEA.

Legal Reference	Annotated Code of Maryland	Education Article	§ 4-135 § 7-204 § 7-203(b)(2)(3)
	COMAR	Public School Standards	§ 13A.01.04.01.A § 13A.01.04.04.A § 13A.01.04.05.C § 13A.03.04.03
	Maryland College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act (CCRCCA)		
	Maryland State Board of Education Opinion No. 16-13		
	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)		20 USC 1400
	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)		20 USC 70
	Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)		
Cross Reference	Board Policy 405 <i>Graduation Requirements</i>		
	FCPS Regulation 400-62 <i>Test Administration and Data Reporting</i>		
Policy History	Reviewed 2/25/09; 6/24/15; 2016; 2019	Adopted 3/11/09	Revised 12/11/19