Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

SUMMARY
Gap Analysis for Building Blocks 3 & 4

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Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

CURRENT MD DESIGN FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Courses & Supports	Assessments	Credentials
Grade-level courses	End-of-course & PARCC tests (Eng, Math, Science, History)	High school diploma
AP	AP tests	College and Career Ready Credential*
IB	IB tests	AP score
College courses (Dual-enrollment)	College exam	IB Diploma
CTE	Skills test approved by state or industry	Industry- or MD-approved skills certificate
Bridge Program	Bridge project-based assessments	
Transition Classes	Accuplacer	

* Entitles credential holder to enter community college without remediation. Can be earned by passing PARCC tests with required scores or in many other ways. In most cases, PARCC tests are administered at the end of 11th grade.

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RECOMMENDED MD DESIGN FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Grade 9/10 Course & Supports	College and Career Ready Qualification	Grade 11/12 Course Offerings	Upper Division Credentials
English 9 & 10	Awarded on basis of PARCC and EOC tests administered at end of 10th grade	Grade-level courses	High school diploma
Algebra I	Can be pursued through end of 12th grade	AP	AP credits/Diploma
Geometry	Entitles student to pursue all available upper division options	IB	IB Diploma
Other courses required for HS graduation		College courses (Dual-enrollment)	U of Cambridge Diploma
Early warning system with extra supports		CTE	Industry- or MD-approved certificate
		2-yr college degree in high school	Associate's degree
		More time to reach CCR	

A Few Big Points

- MD's standards, assessments and curriculum supports compare favorably to those of many if not most American states.
- MD is far ahead of many other states in providing support to teachers to help them teach to the new standards and in providing support in high school to students who fail to reach high school standards.
- MD legislation has set the 2019-20 school year as the deadline for fully implementing new CCR standards.

A Few Big Points

But:

- Transition to envisioned system very complex, poorly understood
- Ultimate goal indistinct, also not widely understood
- Role of high school diploma in relation to CCR not clear
- Pathways in relation to CCR not clear

A Few Big Points

- Not clear how CCR will improve CTE or increase the numbers ready to succeed in selective colleges and universities
- CCR sets exams for end of 11th grade, not leaving enough time for students who might be years behind the standard to reach it by the end of high school
- CCR standard likely 2-3 years below the global standard for students of that age

Modified Design

- The recommended design, similar to that in many top-performing countries, is intended to:
  - Build on what Maryland has already done;
  - Be easy to understand;
  - Enable Maryland students to match the average achievement of top performers; and
  - Allow excellent students to quality for admission to the world's top universities and to lay the base for creating an internationally competitive technical work force, with good jobs for everyone who wants one.

Modified Design

- Set the system up so that all students can take the courses they need to take to meet the college and career standard at the end of 10th grade, not 11th grade.
- Base the CCR standard on cut scores on the PARCC tests that are empirically determined to correlate with succeeding in the typical first-year program in MD's community colleges and on a formula related to the MD system of end-of-course exams.

Modified Design

- Create a clear, detailed curriculum framework for each of the subjects in the required K-10 curriculum that makes it clear what topics are to be covered in each grade or in grade spans in order to master the required curriculum to the CCR standard.
- Create examples of student work that meet the standards for each grade or grade span for each topic, along with commentary as to why that work meets the standards.
- Create model lessons for students from different backgrounds aligned with the curriculum framework, along with recommended texts and ancillary materials.
- MD has made a good start in these areas, especially in English and Math.

Modified Design

- Make it clear that, while all students are expected to master the CCR standards, it is understood that:
  - Especially able students should be given an enriched curriculum that will enable them to reach the 10th grade with a deeper understanding of the subjects in the core curriculum;
  - Some students will not be able to meet the CCR standard by the end of the 10th grade and, if that becomes clear *before* they reach the 10th grade, they are given more time than others to master the curriculum framework;
  - The CCR standard will be reached by almost all students but the standard is fixed while the time needed to reach it is not; and
  - The primary focus of the Maryland school accountability program will be on student progress toward the CCR standard.

Modified Design

- The PARCC scores required to get the new CCR credential would be based on empirical research done by MD on the reading level of the materials used in typical first-year courses in MD's open enrollment institutions, the topics actually taught in the first-year math courses and the grades given on actual writing assignments by open-enrollment institution instructors. (Mathematics a particular issue here)
- The requirements for admission to the University of Maryland system would become relevant only after the student achieves the CCR Qualification. The same would also hold for the requirements of the Armed Forces, business and industrial organizations and union apprenticeship programs.

A Different Design

- Students who meet the CCR standard by the end of the 10th grade would be able to enroll in:
  - A program made up of Advanced Placement courses or the entire Advanced Placement diploma program
  - The International Baccalaureate Program (including the version of IB that includes a career and technical education component)
  - The University of Cambridge IGCSE diploma program
  - A demanding program of career and technical education offered by the high school, a regional high school or a community college
  - A program designed to result in the award of a two-year college degree offered by the high school or community college or both
  - A dual enrollment program offering a combination of high school and college courses

Modified Design

- Students who do not meet the CCR standard by the end of the 10th grade would:
  - Be in a program intended to result in award of the CCR credential by the end of the 12th grade or sooner, if possible.
  - Will NOT be in a remedial program, but rather in courses that allot more time for the mastery of each course than the regular program; MD has a good start on the design of such a program.
  - Have all the options that other students who met the CCR standards had as soon as they meet them, although they will have less time left in high school to go down the path of their choice.

Why This Design

- The core expectations for all students would be the same and they would be much higher than they are now.
- Students with high potential would not be held back by the common standard, because they would get an enhanced curriculum and would be very well positioned for admission to the world's most prestigious universities by the end of high school.
- Students from very disadvantaged circumstances would not be left behind, because they would get strong support all through their education and would still have more time to successfully complete the CCR curriculum if they need it.

Why This Design

- Career and technical education students would have to reach the same high standards as everyone else, so the status of career and technical education would rise.
- Many more students would be prepared for and would elect to take an AP diploma program, an IB Diploma program or a University of Cambridge program in grades 11 and 12, and would therefore be prepared to go the University of Maryland institution and the most admired institutions in the world.

Why This Design

- Many more students would be ready for success in Maryland's community colleges, increasing enrollment and greatly improving completion rates.
- Because many Maryland students would be ready to take a full two-year degree program in grades 11 and 12 of high school, Maryland families would save a great deal of money.

Why This Design

- Because many students would be taking what is now college in high school, Maryland four-year institutions could raise their standards for the courses they teach, and thereby greatly increase the productivity of the whole system, including higher education.
- Because a much larger fraction of the cohort would get real credentials in high school and be much better prepared to succeed after high school, the significant cohort that now winds up without any credential of significant value in the marketplace would greatly decrease.

Why This Design

- Because Maryland's schools would be producing career and technical education graduates with much higher academic and technical skills, Maryland could become a magnet for high-value-added companies like Massachusetts, the Bay Area, the Austin Area and the Research Triangle in North Carolina.

Two More Proposals

- Find a way for MD to continually benchmark MD schools against the countries participating in the PISA surveys.
  - You can do this by having your schools take the PISA school assessments, or by sampling the state using the PISA sampling system, as Massachusetts does.
  - This plan is designed to enable MD to compete with the top performers worldwide. The only way to know how you are doing on that scale is to measure yourself using the same yardstick.
- Collaborate with some of your neighboring states to create a possible successor to PARCC built as an end-of-course assessment system concentrating on performance assessment incorporating 21st c. skills.
- Create an early warning system with interventions for students in grades 9 and 10 and middle school.

Just Remember

- Maryland could do all of this, but it will not work as planned unless the state also addresses:
  - What happens to families with young children before they arrive in the first grade;
  - The quality of Maryland's teachers;
  - The way Maryland's schools are organized, managed and led,
  - How Maryland's schools are financed; and
  - The extent to which Maryland employers are involved in creating a powerful work-based world-class career and technical education system.