

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*\* Edited on pp. 5 and 6 to indicate that Algebra I and Geometry results are for all students, not just middle school.*

August 28, 2019

Dear Team BCPS,

In just one week, our schools will welcome about 115,000 students, and I want you to know how we will raise the bar and close gaps to prepare each student for the future.

2019 student assessment results on the MCAP (Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program) were released today by the Maryland State Department of Education based on what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. In English language arts (ELA) and math, far too few of our students are meeting or exceeding expectations. Our performance also differs widely by race and ethnicity, and based on whether students are receiving services from three programs: special education, English for speakers of other languages, and free and reduced-price meals (FARMS).

Although no data set can tell the entire story about our students' performance, I believe we have to reexamine our practices. We can and must do better. Every one of our children is capable of learning, and it is our job to support their academic success. I am committed to leading change that gives every student the opportunity to learn at higher levels, and that accelerates growth for students who are further behind.

Last week, I shared this urgency with school and central office leaders based on similar data from 2018. I also announced the first of our comprehensive changes over the next few years.

Here's what we are doing differently:

- Supporting students by name and by need based on stronger school professional learning communities, where leaders and educators use data to discuss equity and instructional practice.
- Intensifying staff awareness of racial equity and opportunities for children to learn.
- Strengthening English language arts by addressing the unique ways that students learn to read, and by ensuring culturally responsive instruction.
- Completely overhauling our math curriculum.
- Guiding school goals and actions through a streamlined School Progress Plan (school improvement) process.
- Driving how central office supports schools based on the needs of students, teachers, and school leaders.
- Focusing the budget process for 2020-2021 on raising the bar and closing gaps.
- Analyzing all available data in new ways to guide further action, including input from my 100-day entry plan and ongoing opportunities to hear from our community.

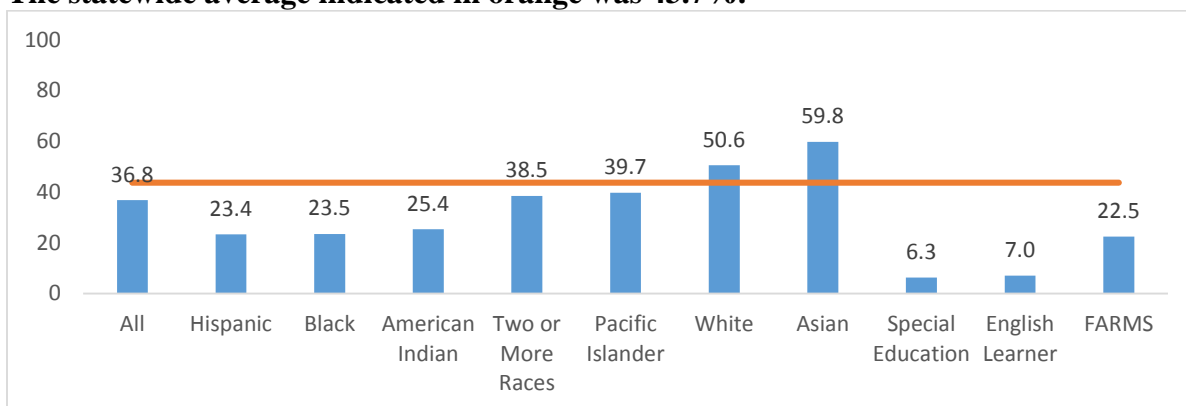
Our performance and gaps reviewed below are our baseline, but there is no limit to where we will take all students.

**English Language Arts and Math**

- From 2017 to 2019, elementary student performance was flat in English language arts and math, as well as middle school ELA.
- Middle school math declined sharply because only students enrolled in the Grade 8 math course took that test. In prior years, all Grade 8 students took the test, including students enrolled in higher levels of math including Geometry 1 and Algebra 2.

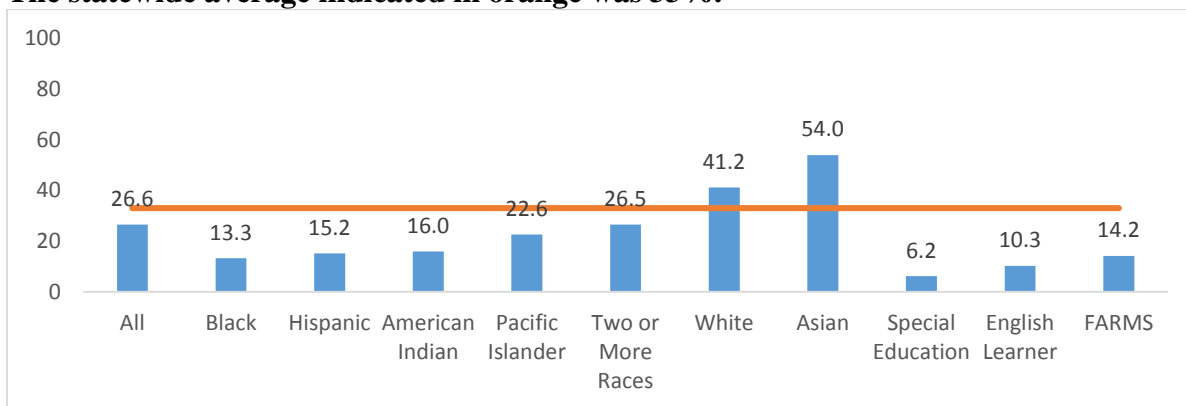
**In 2019, 36.8% of students in Grades 3-8 met or exceeded standards in ELA.**

**The statewide average indicated in orange was 43.7%.**



**In 2019, 26.6% of students in Grades 3-8 met or exceeded standards in math.**

**The statewide average indicated in orange was 33%.**

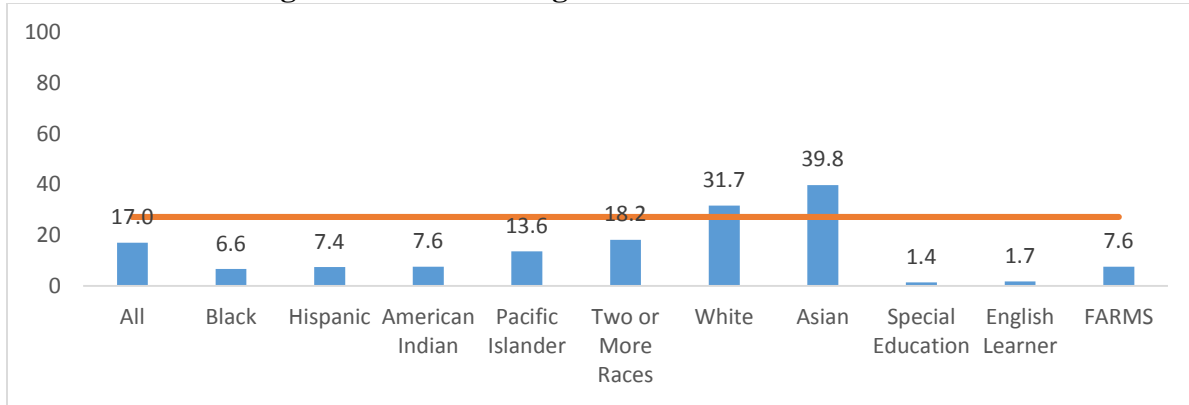


## Algebra 1

- From 2017 to 2019, student performance decreased in Algebra 1 both overall and for all student groups.

**In 2019, 17% of students met or exceeded standards in Algebra 1.**

**The statewide average indicated in orange was 27.2%.**

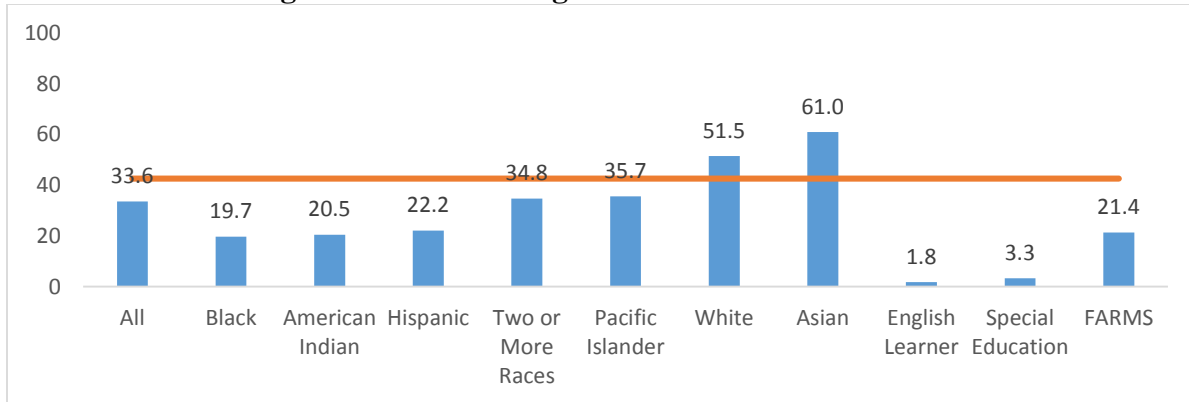


## English 10

- From 2017 to 2019, student performance decreased on the English 10 test both overall and for all student groups.

**In 2019, 33.6% of students met or exceeded standards in English 10.**

**The statewide average indicated in orange was 42.7%.**

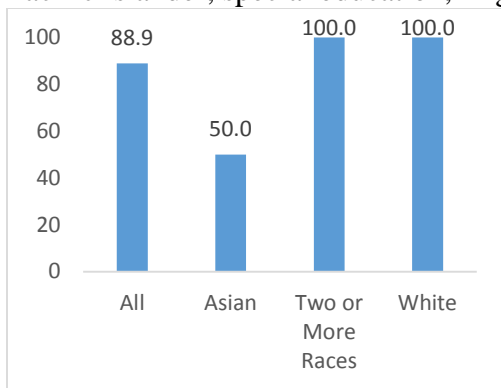


## Algebra 2 and Geometry

- 2019 was the first year that middle school students took Algebra 2 or Geometry.

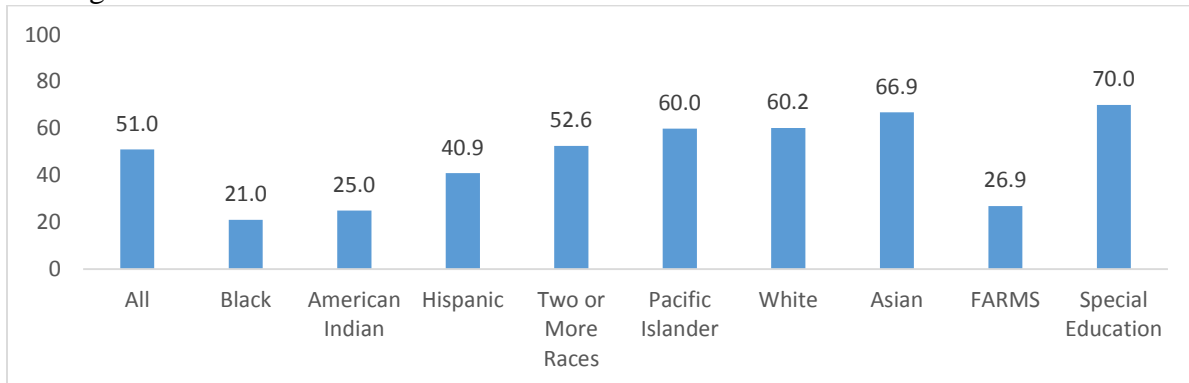
### **In 2019, 88.9% of middle school students met or exceeded standards in Algebra 2.**

There were no students tested from the following groups: American Indian, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, special education, English learner, and FARMS.



### **In 2019, 51% of students met or exceeded standards in Geometry.**

No English learner students were tested.



Once again, this is just the beginning of our work together. I look forward to working as a team to support all students, staff, and schools.

Sincerely,  
Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*