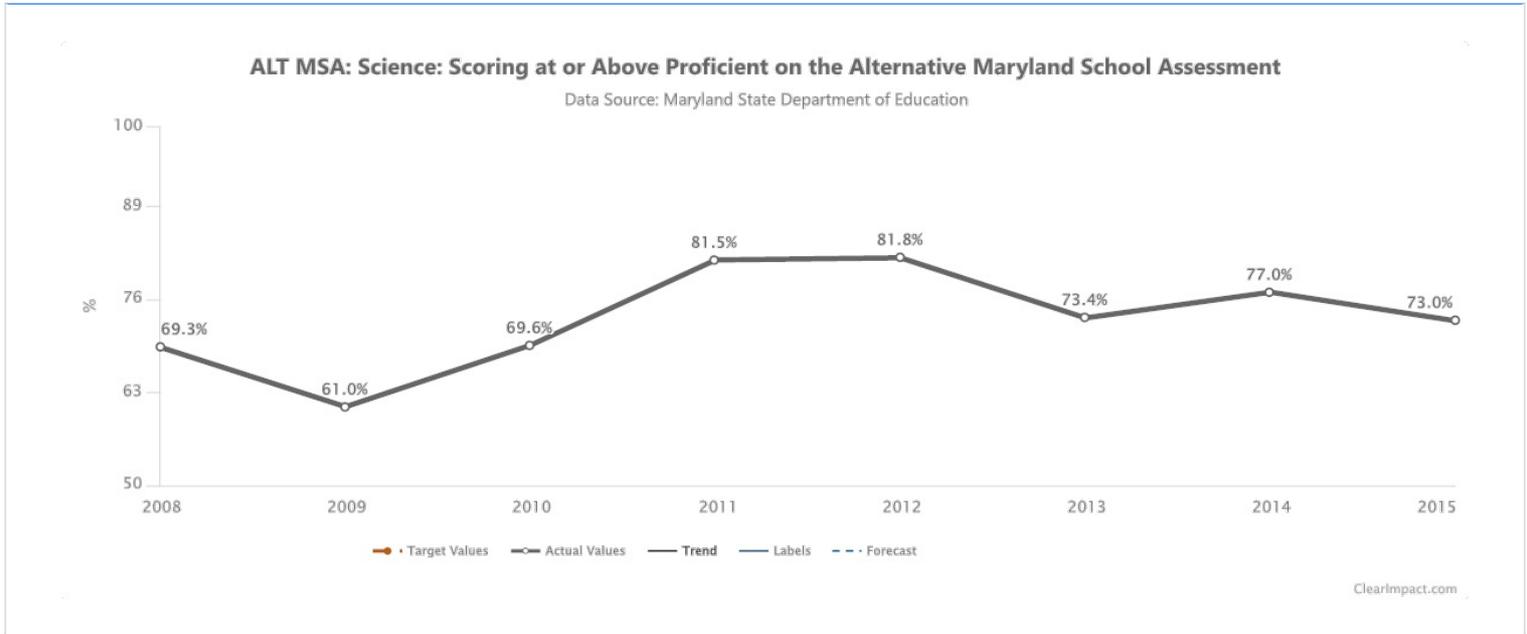


R Children are Successful in School (Statewide)

I ALT MSA: Science: Scoring at or Above Proficient on the Alternative Maryland School Assessment



Story Behind the Curve

The Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA) is the assessment used for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities when, through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team process, it has been determined that the student cannot participate in the Maryland School Assessment, even with accommodations. The Alt-MSA assesses and reports student mastery of individually selected indicators and objectives from the reading and mathematics content standards or appropriate access skills for students in grades 3 through 8, grade 10, and in science content standards for students in grades 5, 8 and 10.

The Alt-MSA is a portfolio assessment constructed of evidence that documents individual student mastery of the assessed reading, mathematics, and science objectives. The Statewide performance standards reflect three levels of achievement: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

What Works

The Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services has worked closely with the Division of Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability to provide support to educators who instruct students with the most significant support needs to understand the content to be taught and assessed in all content areas. In collaboration with the testing vendor, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed resource content materials to support instructional planning, delivery and Alt-MSA implementation for the educator.

Professional development and technical assistance was provided to local school systems in all content areas by MSDE content leads, including instructional strategies and resources to support student achievement. Specifically, in collaboration with the testing vendor and educators from the field, was the development of the Alt-MSA online Professional Development Modules. The priorities of this four module series includes: maximizing efficiency in the classroom, accessing grade-level content, understanding content and standards, gaining science content knowledge, creating artifacts that align to Mastery Objectives, and providing links to websites and resources. These modules are updated yearly with the most current information and best practices.

In addition, pre-approved artifacts for various mastery objects that demonstrate direct alignment between the content and the assessment task item were developed by content experts at MSDE and the testing vendor. These artifacts are available for teachers to select and use as evidence to demonstrate mastery of a skill as selected by the Alt-MSA testing team for a student. The advantage of selecting the pre-approved artifacts is that the artifact is accurately aligned to the content being assessed.

Data Discussion

The percent of students, grades 3 through 8, scoring at or above proficient on the Alternative Maryland School Assessment, by academic year.