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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **State High School Graduation Rate Demonstrates Slight Increase in 2020-21 School Year; High School Dropout Rate Decreases in the Aggregate**

**BALTIMORE, MD** (March 22, 2022) – Today the Maryland State Department of Education released data for the 2020-21 school year showing that more Maryland high school students are staying in school and receiving a high school diploma in four years. The four-year cohort graduation rate remained consistent and demonstrates a slight increase compared to the 2019-20 graduation rate. The dropout rate decreased as well.

Last year, 58,192 high school students earned a Maryland High School Diploma. In 2021, the Maryland four-year cohort graduation rate was 87.2%. This graduation rate reflects an increase over the rate of 86.8% recorded in 2020. The 2021 four-year cohort dropout rate was 7.4%, which reflects a decrease from 8.3% recorded in 2020.

Last year, while the graduation rate increased for Hispanic students and English Learners, the graduation rate for Black students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students decreased. Additionally, data reported reflects that fewer Maryland students are enrolling in postsecondary institutions. Among the 2020 graduates, 60.5% enrolled in postsecondary education within 12 months, a 5.8% decrease from 2019.

“We have seen some overall improvements, but we cannot be satisfied with these results. It is critical that we overcome the challenges of the pandemic and ensure all students have every opportunity to graduate and succeed in post-secondary education or professions,” said Maryland State Board of Education President Clarence C. Crawford. “The federal emergency funding available and the State investment in the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future provide the resources necessary to seize the promise of this moment and secure a bright future and positive outcomes for every Maryland child.”

“While this data shows that Maryland’s local education agencies did a good job maintaining high school graduation rates during the pandemic, it also reflects the continued achievement and opportunity gap, especially for our English learners, Black students, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “Student achievement, graduation rate, and postsecondary enrollment data for Maryland students, especially for underserved student populations, signal the need to rethink how we prepare our students to succeed. With the investment of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future to transform the education experience, we will enable our students to graduate high school well-prepared for college and career pathways.”

Maryland reports cohort graduation rates in line with federal reporting standards, which follows a set group of students from their high school freshman year through their senior year. The students identified in the class of 2021 cohort were first-time 9th graders in 2017-2018.

The new high school and system data will be available on the Maryland Report Card website. The Maryland School Report Card is available at [MDReportcard.org](http://MDReportcard.org).

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