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Subject: A+ Eligibility and Delayed Release of 2017-2018 Algebra I EOC Scores



A+ Eligibility and Delayed Release of 2017-2018 Algebra I EOC Scores

At its March 2018 meeting, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education took action to address an A+ scholarship eligibility issue for some 2018 high school seniors. This message provides background about this issue and information about the accommodations approved by the CBHE.

For the past several years, achieving a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) exam has been a basic eligibility requirement for the scholarship component of the A+ program. In November 2017, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced the administration of new mathematics EOC exams for the 2017-2018 school year. As a result of the new exams, DESE's score evaluation process cannot occur until after the end of the 2018 testing cycle, with the release of scores based on the new scoring thresholds expected in late summer or fall 2018. The delayed score release will impact A+ Scholarship eligibility for some 2018 seniors who took the Algebra I EOC in 2017-2018 and who will not know if they have achieved a qualifying Algebra I EOC score until after summer or fall 2018 enrollment has begun.

To reduce uncertainty and ensure all eligible students receive timely reimbursement, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education has instituted a temporary waiver of the Algebra I EOC requirement for either mid-year or spring graduates of the senior class of 2018 who are impacted by the delayed score release. This allows 2018 high school seniors who took the Algebra I EOC, or a higher level math EOC, during their senior year and are otherwise eligible for the A+ Scholarship to receive reimbursement pending release of the Algebra I EOC scores.

Under the temporary waiver, A+ designated high schools will continue to verify a student has met the A+ eligibility criteria, but will delay affixing the A+ stamp to the transcript for the affected students until DESE releases the EOC scores. In place of the A+ stamped transcript, high schools must provide a letter with the unstamped transcript verifying the student is included in the waiver population and is otherwise eligible for the A+ Scholarship. **This temporary protocol only applies to otherwise eligible 2018 seniors who took the Algebra I EOC in 2017-2018 and are affected by the delayed score release.** High schools should not provide waiver letters to 2018 seniors who did not take the Algebra I EOC during the 2017-2018 academic year. In addition, high schools must continue to provide an A+ stamped transcript for those students who have met all of the A+ Scholarship eligibility criteria, including those who have already achieved a qualifying Algebra I EOC score or met the alternative. Once a waiver-eligible student's Algebra I EOC score is known, the student will be required to return to the high school to verify their eligibility and, if they are eligible, request a copy of the A+ stamped transcript be sent to the postsecondary institution in which they are enrolled. High schools are encouraged to notify these students upon receipt of the scores.

Until MDHE sends notification of the score release in fall 2018, A+ participating postsecondary institutions may request reimbursement for the 2018 seniors who either have an A+ stamped transcript, or an unstamped transcript accompanied by a verification letter from the high school. After notification of the score release, institutions must have an A+ stamped transcript on file for all students prior to requesting reimbursement.

Students found to be eligible after DESE releases the Algebra I EOC scores are responsible for ensuring their A+ participating postsecondary institution has all of the information required to request reimbursement. Students found to be ineligible after DESE releases the Algebra I EOC scores may retain any A+ funds received under the temporary waiver of the requirement. However, they cannot receive any additional A+ funds unless they achieve the combined ACT math subscore/high school grade point average alternative to the Algebra I EOC requirement at a later time. If the alternative is achieved later, the student must provide documentation of the achievement to the high school and request an A+ stamped transcript be sent to the A+ participating postsecondary institution.

MDHE expects this situation will have some impact on the spring 2018 term because of the affected mid-year graduates, but we expect the greatest impact will be to the summer 2018 term. We hope DESE will be able to release the scores early enough in the fall 2018 term to allow for A+ participating postsecondary institutions to collect an A+ stamped transcript prior to requesting fall reimbursement.

In the meantime, MDHE recommends the affected students continue to try to meet the combination ACT math subscore/high school grade point average alternative to the Algebra I EOC requirement prior to graduation, or on the June national test date immediately following graduation.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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