

[News](#) / [Schools](#)

# Chesapeake Science Point: After-school help boosted PARCC scores



By **Cindy Huang** · **Contact Reporter**  
chuang@capgaznews.com

SHARE THIS



"They deserve to be challenged — that's why they come here."

NOVEMBER 11, 2015, 7:32 PM

**A** group of students in an honors English class challenged each other's ideas on the interplay of respect, reputation and power in pre-colonial Nigeria.

These same kinds of critical thinking skills helped them on the new [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers](#) tests.

"Being respectful determines your reputation..." said a Chesapeake Science Point student, attempting to form a thesis as part of a small group analyzing the novel "Things Fall Apart."

Chesapeake Science Point is a public charter school, which means it's funded by the county but has more flexibility to deviate from the curriculum than county public schools. For example, the school has a Saturday session. County students gain admittance to the math and science-focused Hanover school through a lottery.

*Article continues below* ↓

The county has two charter schools. The other is Monarch Academy in Glen Burnie, which is kindergarten through 8th grade.

Chesapeake Science Point performed higher than the county average scores on the PARCC tests. Monarch students also performed well in the only test they took — Algebra I.

County schools spokesman Bob Mosier said it is difficult to compare the Chesapeake Science Point scores to those from other schools because of grade level and curricular differences. But he said the school system was proud of how Chesapeake Science Point -- and all county schools -- are

doing.

Chesapeake Science Point staff attribute the test success to parent involvement, small school size, and helping struggling students catch up after-school. The school has 462 students in grades 6-to-12.

The scores at the school, which has a majority of minority students, more than doubled the county's average in Algebra II, were above average in English and slightly better than average in Algebra I.

About 65 percent of students at Chesapeake Science Point met the state standard in English, which is a score of 4 or 5 on a five-point scale. In all, 39 percent of county students achieved those scores. About 39 percent of Chesapeake Science students scored a 4 or 5 in Algebra II, compared to the county average of 15.4 percent.

About 39 percent of county students scored a 4 or 5 in Algebra I, and about 41 percent of Chesapeake Science Point students reached those scores.

But about 75 percent of students who took Algebra I at Chesapeake Science Point were in middle school. And the majority of county middle school students scored a 4 or 5 in Algebra I, with some schools with more than 80 percent of students with a 4 or 5.

Donna McCallister, chairwoman of the English department, said that parents who take the time to enter their children into the lottery for the charter school are invested in the academic success of their children.

As they are in all schools, teachers are also invested in student success.

McCallister said when a handful of English students were getting poor grades during the first semester last year, she held two-hour-long bi-weekly after school sessions for them.

After three months, many students showed improvement and some even scored high on the PARCC tests, she said.

English students at the charter school said they learned skills that helped them on the exam, such as summarizing complicated texts and identifying quotes to answer specific questions. Algebra students said they solved math problems that were written about real-life situations, such as deciding whether to buy or rent a car.

Principal Ilker Gurbuz said the school challenges high achieving students to take rigorous classes

— but also focuses on reviewing material for struggling students.

He said about 50 to 70 students attend Saturday school. And teachers call parents to recommend their children attend the session, according to staff.

Imelda Valencia, chairwoman of the math department, teaches a 9th grade Algebra I for students who previously took the class but did not achieve good grades, despite passing the course. Gurbuz said the point of the class is to get students ready for the next level in math.

"They deserve to be challenged — that's why they come here," he said.

@ChuangCapGaz

---

---

## Get caught up before the evening commute with our Afternoon Update email.

SIGN UP

[Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright © 2015, Capital Gazette, a Baltimore Sun Media Group publication | [Privacy Policy](#)

**This article is related to:** [Charter Schools](#), [Education](#), [PARCC](#)

**BE THE FIRST TO COMMENT**

---

**Content Continues Below**



