



MAPSS

Maltese Association of Parents
of State School Students

Benchmark Examinations.

MAPSS POSITION ON THE BENCHMARK EXAMINATIONS

Prepared by:
MAPSS
(Maltese Association of Parents of State School Students)
Postal Address: P.O. Box 4, University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080.
V.O No. 0930

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MAPSSS Position on the Benchmark Examinations as feedback to the Benchmark Review Board.

The following points are insights about the Benchmark Examinations which MAPSSS Committee would like to share with the Benchmark Review Board.

We understand that the shift from the Junior Lyceum Exams to the Benchmark Examinations was meant to reduce the examination pressure on the pupils and to allow for better inclusion between students of different attainment levels within the shift for a comprehensive school system. May we point out that some students still face a lot of pressure in preparation for the Benchmark Examinations.

We question if what is now expected from the pupils through the current examination system is similar or more demanding than what was expected from them in the Junior Lyceum Exams. We strongly suggest that a review of the past Benchmark Examinations papers is carried out to see if there have been any changes in the attainment level expected from the pupils. We are aware that some teachers feel that the Benchmark exams may be more difficult from the previous Junior Lyceum Exams.

Moreover, we question if these examinations will privilege pupils with particular learning styles rather than others who may be more prone to Technical Reasoning or Confluence (<http://www.letmelearnmalta.org/>) hence creating an education barrier to a cohort of the pupils' population risking labelling them and hindering their education progression.

One cannot ignore that the marks obtained from the Benchmark Examinations will determine the class in which the students will be categorised according to the banding system which is based on the attainment levels of the students rather than their learning style. This may not reflect the spirit of two of the main goals of the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024: Goal 1 – Reduce educational gaps and Goal 2 – Support educational achievement of students to avoid early school leaving.

One should consider continuous assessment as part of the examination process from the primary cycle to the secondary cycle of the education system.

MAPSSS Committee

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Scicluna Simon – General Secretary
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Mifsud Hooley Ruth
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