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FAQs - Transitioning to PARCC

[Overview](#)

[Ensuring Students are Prepared for PARCC](#)

[Use of PARCC Data](#)

[Test Administration and Schedule](#)

[Technology Requirements](#)

Overview:

What does PARCC stand for?

Partnership For Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

What is the PARCC Assessment testing and how was it designed?

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments, which will be administered in the 2014-15 school year, will replace NJASK in grades 3 through 8 and HSPA in grade 11. These assessments were designed to measure whether students are meeting the NJ Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The questions were created to measure deeper learning, critical-thinking and problem solving skills.

The PARCC tests are designed to reflect what students must know each year as they build toward the knowledge and skills needed for college and careers. The PARCC assessment is broken into two smaller sections in order to measure different kinds of knowledge and skills and to give students adequate time to show what they know and what they can do.

The early spring **performance-based assessment (PBA)** captures critical-thinking, reasoning and application skills through “extended tasks.” In English language arts/literacy, students read passages from real texts – fiction and non-fiction, and sometimes watch video or listen to audio. Then they write, using what they’ve learned from the passages and multi-media sources to support their arguments. These skills are critically important for students in college and in the workplace. In the past, students have typically been assessed on their writing only once in elementary school, once in middle school and once in high school. PARCC measures writing at every grade level, grades 3-11, because it is key to college and career readiness, and it shows student growth over time.

In mathematics, students solve multi-step problems that require reasoning and address real world situations. This requires students to use mathematical reasoning, make sense of quantities and their relationships to solve real-world problems, and show their understanding. Many previous assessments focused mostly on low-level skills only.

FAQs – Transitioning to the PARCC Assessments

Students will participate in the **end-of-year assessment (EOY)** shortly before the end of the school year. This consists of innovative, short-answer questions and items to measure concepts and skills. Students demonstrate comprehension of literary and informational texts and give definitions of words based on their reading of texts, rather than on memorization. They also show understanding of mathematical concepts, procedures and short applications.

Will the PARCC assessment be used for academic placement for the 2015-16 school year?

No. Academic placement regulations detail multiple measures which provide the data needed to appropriately place students without the need for state standardized test results.

How will PARCC results be used?

Student testing results will be used to enhance teaching and learning and to identify students who may need additional help in specific areas.

- Students will have clear information about whether they are working at expected levels and are on track for post-secondary success
- Parents will receive clear information about the progress their children are making
- Teachers will receive useful data to inform instruction.

Do I have the option for my child to Opt-Out of the PARCC assessment?

No. According to NJ State regulations, public schools must administer the PARCC to all students in the grade levels and courses identified for testing. The district's attendance policies and regulations will continue to be followed during this time.

What lessons were learned from the PARCC Field Test administered during the 2013-2014 School Year?

Responses from the student surveys administered at the end of the field tests are listed below:

- 94% of students either finished the Computer-based Testing (CBT) ELA field test very early or on time and 87% did so for mathematics.
- Approximately 90% of the students in the PARCC CBT understood the directions read by test administrators.
- Students found the mathematics assessment more challenging than the ELA assessments overall regardless of whether the student took the field test via computer or paper.
- Approximately 90% of students who participated in the ELA CBT and 65% of students who participated in the mathematics CBT reported that it was easy to type their answers.

When will PARCC be Administered?

The PARCC assessment is composed of 2 parts, the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) or long answer questions and the End-of-Year (EOY) component or short answer questions. Beginning March 2, 2015, the Performance-Based Assessment portion of the PARCC assessment will be administered to all students in grades 3 through 11. Beginning April 20, 2015, the End-of-Year portion of the PARCC assessment will be administered to all students in grades 3 through 11.

FAQs – Transitioning to the PARCC Assessments

Will PARCC share student information?

No. The NJ DOE will retain control over student assessment data and will continue to comply with state and federal laws and regulations with regard to the protection of student privacy.

How can parents learn more?

An PARCC presentation will be held on February 11, 2015 at the Park Ridge High School in the Little Theatre at 7:00 PM.

Resources are available at

http://curriculuminstruction.parkridge.k12.nj.us/modules/groups/group_pages.phtml?gid=2151697&nid=442996&sessionid=fbd52e7c5f68100d43b8fdbcbc946af6&sessionid=fbd52e7c5f68100d43b8fdbcbc946af6

ENSURING PARENTS ARE PREPARED FOR PARCC

How are schools preparing our students academically?

The PARCC assessments are designed to measure whether students are meeting the NJ Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. All curricula are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and the instructional sequence is organized to address the most crucial content covered on PARCC before testing begins in March. Park Ridge Schools are continuing to prepare its students to produce the high quality work required by the Common Core Standards.

Are there sample PARCC assessments available?

PARCC released online tutorials that demonstrate how to navigate the test. These tutorials and practice tests and practice test answers & text complexity worksheets are accessible at this web address:

<http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/>

What are schools doing to help students master the technological skills required by the PARCC exam?

We have been using online technology curriculum for seven years in grades K – 6. This curriculum is designed to help our students improve in keyboarding using EasyTech Keyboarding skills, with a focus on basic finger placement and posture. Our students engage in keyboard practice in every grade level as appropriate developmentally during their regularly scheduled technology classes.

Students in grades 6-12 each have a MacBook Air Laptop as part of our 1:1 technology initiative program.

What can families do to help prepare students for the PARCC exam?

FAQs – Transitioning to the PARCC Assessments

- For typing Skills: Learning.com is available for students to access online from any location that has Internet capability. Each student in grades K – 6 has a Learning.com user name and password.
- To learn how to navigate the PARCC test and use the tools available during the PARCC assessment, take the [Test Nav Tutorial](#) before completing any practice tests.
- **Practice Tests:** All students will have an opportunity to navigate and practice the test before the PARCC assessment will be administered. Parents may want to try taking the appropriate grade level practice test to familiarize themselves with what's on the test and how to navigate the test before their big day.

The PARCC Sample Test Questions by grade level are listed below.

- - [PARCC Sample Items \(click here\)](#)
- - [Elementary School Prototypes Questions for Grades 3-4 \(click here\)](#)
- - [Middle School Prototypes \(click here\)](#)
- - [High School Prototypes \(click here\)](#)

USE OF PARCC DATA

Is passing the PARCC assessment a requirement for graduation?

No. At a student level, school counselors can certify that a student in the classes of 2016, 2017, and 2018 met the state proficiency requirements in many ways. For instance, a student may demonstrate proficiency via an SAT or ACT score in addition to the NJDOE's long standing portfolio appeal process. However, if a student does pass a PARCC assessment in English Language Arts or mathematics, a school counselor will not be prohibited from using those scores as a demonstration of proficiency. The state will be providing additional guidance to school counselors on how to determine proficiencies on substitute assessments and the PARCC assessments. It is anticipated that passing the PARCC assessments will become a graduation requirement for the class of 2019.

Do students in the middle school who are taking Algebra I or Geometry have to take the Algebra I or Geometry PARCC assessment?

Yes. If a student is enrolled in Algebra I or Geometry, while in middle school, he/she will be administered the PARCC Algebra I or Geometry assessment in lieu of the grade level math PARCC exam.

Will the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year (EOY) Assessment be scored separately?

No, students will receive a single score report that brings together the student's performance on both the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year (EOY) Assessment sessions.

FAQs – Transitioning to the PARCC Assessments

Is a student who does not pass the PARCC Assessment required to retake the assessment?

No. A student is not required to retake an assessment or retake the course based on their PARCC scores. However, if based on other local measures, a school requires a student to retake the course, the student can participate in the same EOY assessment in the following year or summer school.

TEST ADMINISTRATION AND SCHEDULE

How long is the PARCC exam?

The Performance-Based Assessment portion of the PARCC assessment requires 5 sessions (2 Math, 3 Language Arts) and the End-of-Year portion of the PARCC assessment requires 4 exam sessions (2 Math, 2 Language Arts). The chart below compares overall testing times between the NJASK and the PARCC assessments per year. The actual testing schedule by grade level will be released on February 18, 2015.

English Language Arts					
	PBA -Unit 1	PBA -Unit 2	PBA -Unit 3	EOA Unit 1	EOA Unit 2
Grade 3	*75 minutes	*75 minutes	*60 minutes	*75 minutes	N/A
Grades 4 – 5	*75 minutes	*90 minutes	*60 minutes	*75 minutes	N/A
Grades 6 – 11	*75 minutes	*90 minutes	*60 minutes	*60 minutes	*60 minutes

Mathematics				
	PBA -Unit 1	PBA -Unit 2	EOA Unit 1	EOA Unit 2
Grade 3	*75 minutes	*75 minutes	*75 minutes	*75 minutes
Grades 4 – 5	*80 minutes	*70 minutes	*75 minutes	*75 minutes
Grades 6 – 8	*80 minutes	*70 minutes	*80 minutes	*75 minutes
Alg. 1, Geom.	*90 minutes	*75 minutes	*80 minutes	*75 minutes
Alg. 2	*90 minutes	*75 minutes	*90 minutes	*75 minutes

*Actual testing time.

Will a student be scheduled for more than one test session per day?

No. Although multiple sessions may be given in one day, Park Ridge students will participate in only one test session per day during the regular administration. Each testing session must be completed within the same day and schools must schedule according to "Total Administration Time," so that students who need the additional time are able to use it.

When will the 2015 PARCC scores be available to school districts?

According to the NJ DOE, student score reports will be available toward the end of September/early October 2015.

FAQs – Transitioning to the PARCC Assessments

Are accommodations available for students?

Yes. The PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual on the PARCC website provides guidance to districts and decision-making teams to ensure that the PARCC assessments provide valid results for all participating students.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Is our District PARCC ready?

The Park Ridge School District meets and exceeds all recommendations provided by PARCC and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

What technology equipment will my child use for the PARCC assessment?

All students will use an 11 inch, Apple MacBook Air laptop when taking the PARCC assessment. Headsets and mice will also be available.

Each elementary building has 80 Apple MacBook Air laptops available for students in grades 3 – 5. Students in grades 6 – 12 each have their own MacBook Air laptop.

Does our District have the appropriate Internet and Wi-Fi Connectivity?

Yes. Our Internet circuit is currently 150 mbps which is sufficient for our students.

Resources:

PARCC Online
NJ DOE correspondence
NJ DOE training documentation