

# Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers (PARCC)

## Overview

(as of March 5, 2013)

In 2011, New Jersey became a member of the Governing Board of PARCC to help to develop new assessments that would address these shortcomings. PARCC, a partnership of 22 states, has been working over the last several years to launch new assessments in English language arts and math, aligned to the Common Core, in the 2014-15 school year. These tests will replace our current statewide assessments (NJ ASK and HSPA).

The length of the PARCC assessments will allow for the measurement of the full range of the Common Core State Standards, with sufficient items within each standard to allow for more sophisticated conclusions about student and instructional strengths and weaknesses. PARCC will measure the full continuum of student abilities, including the performance of high and low performing students.

### 1. PARCC Components

The separation of the assessment into two components, described more fully below, will allow for the test results to be returned in a more timely fashion so that both student placements and supports for ongoing school improvement and professional development can be developed. The PARCC assessments will be administered in two components:

- A performance-based assessment component (PBA) to be administered after approximately 75% of the school year (*mid-March to mid-April*???)
- An end-of-year assessment component (EOY) to be administered after approximately 90% of the school year (*end of May*???)

### ELA/Literacy

PBAs at each grade level will include:

- a research simulation
- a literary analysis
- a narrative task.

For each task, students will be asked to:

- ✓ read one or more texts
- ✓ answer several short comprehension and vocabulary questions
- ✓ write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the text(s).

EOYs at each grade level will include:

- 4- 5 texts with a number of short-answer comprehension and vocabulary questions.

### Mathematics

PBAs at each grade level will include:

- Short response questions focused on conceptual knowledge and skills, and the mathematical practices of reasoning and modeling
- extended-response questions focused on conceptual knowledge and skills, and the mathematical practices of reasoning and modeling.

EOYs at each grade level will include:

- primarily of short-answer questions focused on conceptual knowledge, skills and understandings.

## 2. PARCC Blueprint

The PARCC blueprint will look different than the current NJ ASK blueprint. Most notably, the number of testing sessions under PARCC will be higher than NJ ASK, but on average the duration of those individual sessions will be shorter. PARCC assessments will require:

- an individual student to participate in a total of nine testing sessions throughout the year as follows:
- At each grade level, the PBA component will require five sessions :
  - ✓ three for ELA/literacy
  - ✓ two for mathematics.
- At each grade level, the EOY component will require four sessions:
  - ✓ two sessions for ELA/literacy
  - ✓ two sessions for mathematics.

The division of the assessments into two components is a significant change from our current design, allowing for more but shorter testing sessions. *For example, NJ ASK3 is currently a little over five hours long, spread over four days. PARCC 3rd grade assessments will have nine sessions (including both the PBA and the EOY components) with an estimated testing time of eight hours, meaning that each session will last on average less than one hour each (as opposed to a full morning of testing).*

Much like current assessments, districts will continue to be offered a “window” of time in which they can offer the assessments, allowing for flexibility in scheduling at the local level.

## 3. Rule of Thumb Guidance

### Number of Devices

Table 1: Guidance on Number of Devices Need to Administer Computer-Based Tests

School Type	Minimum Number of Devices	Recommended Number of Devices
For a school with three tested grades (K-5, 6-8, 9-12)	Two students per device for the largest tested grade. EX: if the largest tested grade has 100 students, then 50 devices will be necessary.	One student per device in the largest tested grade
For a school with six tested grades (K-8)	One student per device in the largest tested grade	One student per device for the two largest tested grades

### Bandwidth

PARCC is providing local educators with an *Assessment Capacity Planning Tool*, a spreadsheet that will allow schools to evaluate the extent to which their current computer inventory and bandwidth is sufficient to administer PARCC’s computer-based assessments, as well as model what they could do with increased capacity

#### **4. Performance Level Descriptors (PLD)**

Also, in late 2012, PARCC adopted a framework for reporting student achievement on the PARCC assessments using five performance levels. (New Jersey currently uses three levels: Partially Proficient, Proficient and Advanced Proficient.) Although no formal names for the levels have been adopted, the PLDs will describe the level of command that a student demonstrates of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level, as follows:

- Level 5 Distinguished Command
- Level 4 Strong Command
- Level 3 Moderate Command
- Level 2 Partial Command
- Level 1 Minimal Command

#### ***College- and Career-Ready (CCR) Determinations***

Additionally, PARCC has now adopted PLD Level 4 as the threshold score for earning the determination of college- and career-readiness in collaboration with its higher education partners who are members of the Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR).

#### **5. High School Graduating Requirements**

- The graduating cohort of 2013 is expected to have successfully completed 20 credits of Language Arts Literacy, 5 credits of Algebra I, and 5 credits of Biology.
- The graduating cohort of 2014 will also include the successful completion of Geometry and a second science.
- The graduating cohort of 2016 will also include the successful completion of a third course in mathematics and science.

#### **6. Special Education & English Language Learners**

PARCC also anticipates releasing:

- a Draft Accommodations Policies for students with disabilities
- a Draft Policy for English Language Learners.

#### **7. Resources**

PARCC Model Content Frameworks that are guiding the development of the PARCC assessments and which may also be useful to you in your efforts to implement the Common Core are currently available here: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks>

PARCC items and task prototypes are currently available here: <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>

The Assessment Capacity Planning Tool and accompanying users' guide are currently available here: <http://www.parcconline.org/technology>.