



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo: PARCC Assessment

TO: District 36 School Board

FROM: Alison Hawley, *Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment*

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Overview & Background

The inaugural *Partnership Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers* (PARCC), a computer-based assessment, will be given to all students grades 3-8 for math and English language arts/literacy in March and May of 2015. The ISAT will no longer be given by the State of Illinois.

The PARCC is intended to assess the newly implemented Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that target critical thinking and writing skills. *The Standards for Mathematical Practice* will also be a major component of the assessment. Results of the March Performance Based Assessment (PBA), and the May End of Year Assessment (EOY) will be combined to determine an overall score and/or performance level for each student. Specific testing windows are listed on the District Assessment Calendar and will be posted on the District website pending principal review.

Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)

For the English language arts/literacy portion of the assessment, students will be expected to analyze literature and produce narrative writing. Students will be directed to read a series of texts and write several pieces in order to demonstrate their understanding of complex texts with independence. The writing portion will also require students to compare ideas across texts and offer a clearly written synthesis and interpretation of the author's intent.

The math portion of the assessment will expect students to not only solve real-world mathematical problems based on the standards for their grade level, but also develop mathematical arguments and clearly explain their thinking in terms of how they approached the problem and the pathway they took to arrive at the solution.

The PBA will be reviewed by teams of educators utilizing grade-level specific rubrics based on the established standards.

End-of-Year-Assessment (EOY)

The EOY assessment is not as lengthy as the PBA, and resembles a more traditional assessment that will be machine scored.

The PARCC consortium has emphasized the best way for school districts to prepare for the assessment is to implement their newly aligned curricula and implement the *Standards for Mathematical Practice*. Traditional test preparation that many districts traditionally engage in is not necessary or effective for the PARCC.

Description of Initiative

The Curriculum Office, Department of Student Services, and Department of Technology have collaboratively developed an action plan to support three key components of the implementation: infrastructure, communication, and data literacy. Please see the [PARCC Implementation Action Plan](#) for department specific tasks and associated time frames.

There are several factors to take into consideration during our transition from ISAT to PARCC:

- 1) Insuring that our curricular scope and sequences are aligned with the PARCC assessment may take more than one year.
- 2) The change in learning standards has required all school districts to re-evaluate their learning resources and acquire CCSS aligned materials. Identifying the appropriate materials to support the rigor of the new standards will take several years. The majority of publishers have not had

the time to bring the newly aligned materials to the market.

- 3) The new standards require the re-training of teachers. The *Standards for Mathematical Practice* and the expectation for engaging students in close reading strategies are two prime examples regarding instructional elements that are brand new to teachers. Given the limited amount of time within our schedule and school calendar to provide training, this too, will take time.
- 4) Familiarizing students with the computer-based platform and the length of testing sessions may present unforeseen challenges, especially at the lower grades.

The Curriculum Office continues to evaluate the needs for professional development for all content areas in order to structure purposeful and targeted training. The Curriculum Office is also in the process of identifying and procuring the essential resources to support our continued expectation for high-quality instruction.

Next Steps

PARCC will be releasing professional development modules for teachers in early September. Prior to the release of these modules, teachers will receive logistical information and sample items to the extent they are currently available. PARCC has removed its field testing site and is in the process of creating a new site that will contain revised information and procedures based on the results of the field testing conducted last spring.

PARCC intends to set achievement levels, which will include college ready performance levels during the summer of 2015. Once PARCC has established these levels, District 36 will then set assessment targets as required by the State of Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA).