

Q&A about PARCC
(From the 10/16/14 presentations to parents)
(Revised January 2015 to reflect most current information)

State / PARCC Requirements:

1. Are the schools mandated to use it (PARCC)? Beginning in spring 2015, the State of New Jersey requires school districts to administer the PARCC assessment in grades 3 - 11. The PARCC assessment replaces NJ ASK as an assessment of math and language arts.
2. Are students required to take the PARCC? School districts are required by law to assess all students during the state-assigned testing windows.
3. Will NJ ASK Science conflict with the PARCC window? NJ ASK Science will still be administered in grades 4 and 8. The science assessment is a paper based assessment at this time. This school year, it will be administered May 27.
4. Are most schools around the country doing PBA? The PARCC test takes place in two testing windows. When the school year is approximately 70% complete, the PBA (Performance Based Assessment) will be administered. When the year is 90% complete, the EOY (End of Year) test will be administered. The two parts of the assessment make up the year's full PARCC test. The PBA and EOY are administered in all participating PARCC states.
5. Are 8th graders (who take a high school math class) tested on a high school level? Seventh and/or eighth grade students at Warren Middle School who are taking Algebra I or Geometry are required to take the End of Course PARCC for Algebra I or Geometry. These students will not be required to take the portions of the PARCC designed for grade 7 or grade 8 math.
6. Do they have to take the end-of-course test? Students who are taking Algebra or Geometry at the middle school must take the end of course test.
7. Have any other states adopted this? 12 states and the District of Columbia are currently scheduled to administer the PARCC assessment in 2015.
8. Do you have feedback from early adoption states? The PARCC consortium did not provide student results from the field tests administered in 2014. In evaluating the field test, the test developers reduced testing times for certain levels. In the early grades, reading and writing passages were also reduced.
9. Are all of the schools in New Jersey ready for PARCC? The Warren Township School District has excellent technology and curriculum frameworks. The district has taken the necessary steps to successfully administer the online PARCC in 2015.

Hardware / Digital Testing Platform

10. What learning platform is used? PARCC is designed by the Pearson Corporation. The digital testing platform developed by Pearson is called TestNav. Publicly available practice tests and tutorials that illustrate TestNav can be found at www.PARCCOnline.com.**
11. What are available tools/features in the testing platform? There are a number of features within the TestNav platform that students can elect to access during the test. Among these are: reading screens, magnifiers, highlighters, answer eliminators, answer flagging, a glossary for specific words, and use of headphones to eliminate peripheral sounds.
12. Who will be teaching the students that these features exist and how to use them? Tech coaches, computer teachers, and classroom teachers will all contribute to developing student understanding of how to use TestNav features. The initial introduction will be supported by tech coaches and computer teachers. This will take place in late fall. Classroom teachers will provide additional opportunities for students to experience TestNav features.
13. Will the students have access to the Internet? If students attempt to access the Internet or any other program outside of TestNav, the TestNav will stop the test and lock the computer. A student will need to be restarted by the teacher who is administering the exam.
14. Will the students have access to a calculator? Calculator access varies by grade. Generally, younger grades do not have calculator access during PARCC. If a calculator is to be used in a particular section of the test, it will actually appear as a feature within the TestNav.
15. What kind of keyboards are available (i.e., if my child has small hands)? Literature suggests that students are able to successfully learn keyboarding in third grade. Even students with small hands are able to develop age appropriate keyboarding fluency. Keyboarding has been a part of the Warren computer curriculum for many years. This year, the Edotyping program has been introduced to support keyboarding practice.
16. Will students use a regular computer or iPad? Many classrooms have access to iPads. However, students will only take the PARCC on laptop computers, desktop computers, or Chromebooks. Individual buildings will develop their administration plans, but plans will be similar across the district. Students will use the devices with which they are most familiar and typically use throughout the year.
17. How do they get the computation on the screen? TestNav provides students an Equation Editor that provides students a mathematical “keyboard” to input mathematical responses. The Equation Editor can be found within the math practice test and within the tutorial available at www.PARCCOnline.com.** PARCC is expected to release tutorials specific to the Equation Editor in the near future.
18. Can you cut and paste from a given text? The cut and paste feature is available as part of the word processing tool bar that students can use when required to type an essay response. The feature is

intended to be used within the word processing document and currently does not enable students to cut and paste information directly from reading passages.

19. Does an unanswered question flag itself? If a student forgets to answer a question or did not answer a part of a question that required multiple responses, the test Answer Review tool enables students to view which questions are unanswered.
20. Will students have time to walk away from the screen? As with any test, if students need to use the restroom or take a short break, they are able to do so.
21. Do they have a notepad to work out problems? All students are provided with composition or graph paper to organize their ideas and do any paper and pencil planning or figuring prior to typing responses. All scrap paper is considered a secure test material by the state and must be collected and destroyed at the conclusion of the test.
22. Where do they show their work? In mathematics, students will record their work using the Equation Editor and a text box. In writing, students will record their work in a text box. Both text boxes will expand to allow students to record detailed responses.
23. How do they show their math? Students show their math figuring using the Equation Editor. For constructed responses, students will be required to explain their reasoning using text and the Equation Editor.
24. Why don't 8th graders have Chromebooks? A 1:1 Chromebook Initiative has been expanded to include grades 5, 6, and 7. As the Chromebooks have been adopted, a greater number of laptop computers are available to all grade 8 classes. There are enough devices for all middle school students to have daily access to a Chromebook or a laptop computer. In the elementary schools, grade 5 students having 1:1 devices enabled additional laptops to be available to grades 3 and 4.
25. If a student wants a mouse, will they get it? A computer mouse will be made available to students. However, during the field test in 2014, the Warren students who participated generally elected not to use a mouse.

Student Access

26. Will there be a typing class? Keyboarding has been a part of the Warren Township computer curriculum for a number of years. The EduTyping program has been adopted for use in all schools. This is a web-based program that, as it is introduced and used, can be accessed by students from any device with access to the Internet.
27. Are practice tests for math built into the curriculum? The Warren Township Schools Math curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. As a result, the content assessed by PARCC is taught on a daily basis. Practice test items will be utilized by teachers as well as additional curriculum specific materials. The focus of staff will remain on effective teaching

28. Will the teacher communicate if my child is not ready for the test? Teachers will communicate about student progress related to the district curriculum.
29. Are there practice tests currently available? 2014 PARCC Field Test items are currently available at www.PARCConline.com.** Additional practice tests were released in late January 2015.

Curriculum

30. Has the curriculum been adjusted? The State of New Jersey adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010. Each summer, the Warren Township Board of Education has provided for staff to revise curriculum so it is fully aligned to the Common Core in ELA and mathematics. Curriculum documents are available on the district webpage.
31. If a curriculum is based on Sept-May, what is this test testing? Hypothetically, certain concepts won't be tested? The Common Core State Standards have required districts to narrow the scope of grade level curriculums so topics can be investigated in greater depth and detail. The PARCC assessments assess the acquisition of cross cutting skills and practices across grade levels. A student taking a grade 3 assessment will utilize strategies and skills taught in earlier grades.
32. Do you know what topics will be covered? PARCC has issued detailed grade level test blueprints that outline the goal statements (claims) around which each question has been developed. The blueprints also outline the number of multiple choice, short constructed response, and essay questions included in each assessment. Blueprints do not provide any specific questions.
33. If the curriculum is aligned to PARCC, shouldn't students be ready? Since the district curriculums are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC is an assessment of these standards, the focus is on high quality instruction. As much as possible, technology skills necessary for success with the PARCC TestNav program are being embedded within the curriculum in meaningful ways.

Administration / Scoring:

34. Does math offer partial credit for thinking? Constructed math responses are hand scored by Pearson testing. Scorers will be trained to use rubrics to evaluate student responses. It is possible for a student to receive credit for correct mathematical reasoning even if the final calculation was wrong because of a minor error.
35. What if they get the answer correct but the scorer doesn't like their thinking? Scorers will be trained to be objective and base scoring judgments within anchor scoring exemplars and rubrics.
36. Can they ask questions about taking the test? Test administrators may reread general directions to students as many times as needed. Test administrators cannot read test questions aloud to students or clarify what a specific question is asking. Test administrators are not to take any action that may influence a student's response to a test item. Test administrators can assist students with technology accessibility questions.

37. How much pressure is on teachers/principals for high scores? Teachers and administrators work extremely hard to make sure that curriculum is delivered in a manner that is true to student learning and does not teach to a standardized test.
38. How will these scores be used? What are the consequences to the school? The State of New Jersey uses testing information to rate individual schools with other state schools that have like characteristics. The results of NJ ASK and PARCC are one of the data points used to rate schools. PARCC results also are a small percentage of teacher and administrator evaluations for the 2014-2015 school year.
39. How will the scores be used for placement? (NJ ASK has been used for math placement - will you use PARCC?) The district uses multiple measures to identify students for specific programs. As PARCC data becomes more widely available, the district will make an evaluation as to how to most appropriately use or not use it as one of the identification indicators.
40. What is the plan, from a high school perspective? Articulation is ongoing with the high school about end of course requirements that are currently used and how the PARCC might be used in the future.
41. Are these graded on a curve? PARCC is not graded on curve. In the summer of 2015, the PARCC consortium will anchor and scale results. Scoring reports for the initial full implementation of PARCC will not be available to schools until October 2015.
42. How long is the March assessment? Testing times can be found within the PARCC Parent Presentation which can be found in the curriculum section of the district website.
43. When do you get test results? It is expected that results from the 2015 assessment will be available in September/October 2015. The State of New Jersey and PARCC have not yet issued a calendar with specific dates.
44. Will districts have exams at different times? PARCC testing windows are the same for all districts throughout the State of New Jersey. Districts have flexibility in designing testing schedules within these windows that enable them to assess all students in grades 3-11.
45. Will you get the March results back before EOY? No. All results will be received at one time.
46. Is PBA more difficult than EOY? The PBA and EOY are considered two different parts of one test. The PBA requires students to complete more open-ended items that require extended constructed responses. The EOY will be more multiple choice and short answer-based. All items on the EOY are machine scorable.

47. Will 7th grade Algebra and 8th grade math be with their grade? All efforts will be made to have students take their assessments with their grade level peers. However, there are a number of scheduling issues specific to buildings that will be addressed in the upcoming months.
48. Will all the students get the same test? There are multiple versions of each grade level test, so not all students at each grade will have exactly the same test.
49. Is the system stable enough? Within Warren Schools, there were no issues with the TestNav system during the field test.
50. Why don't they give students a stylus? PARCC has communicated that there are test features under development to enable students to use a stylus instead of the equation editor for mathematics. However, there is no solid issue date for this type of technology.
51. What is your recommendation for parents to help? Teachers will provide students experiences in preparing for the testing platform and plan to use the practice test items, among other tools, within school. It is strongly recommended that parents help their children by supporting their daily success at school.

** Please note: The PARCC website is updated regularly so please check back often.