



Illinois State Board of Education

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NEWS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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PARCC test will be shorter, easier to administer beginning next school year

*PARCC states vote to simplify test administration and shorten test time
while ensuring reliable results*

SPRINGFIELD — The new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment will return next year with a shorter, simpler format to improve the testing process for both students and educators.

The exam was originally divided into two parts that measure different types of knowledge and skills. The PARCC Governing Board voted to consolidate the two testing windows into one and reduce total test time for most students by 90 minutes beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The vote came in response to school district feedback during the first year of testing and a careful review of the test design.

“These changes to the structure will not take away from the PARCC test’s vital purpose to ensure that each student in every school is learning the skills and knowledge needed in order to advance to the next grade level and ultimately, college and/or careers,” said State Superintendent of Education Tony Smith, Ph.D. “We made the changes in response to the insights and comments we’ve heard from teachers, students, and parents. We are committed to listening to feedback, now and in the future, and will continue working on the content and process based upon that feedback.”

The decision will make the test easier for schools and districts to administer, takes less student time in most instances, and also reduces the amount of time necessary to administer the test. The exam will continue to align to the new Illinois Learning Standards and maintain its focus on critical thinking, concept mastery, and writing skills. The PARCC assessment will also still provide reliable and valid information about student achievement that students, their families, teachers, and schools can use to improve teaching and learning for individual students and for students as a group.

The single testing window will simplify the test administration for schools that expressed concerns about the challenge of scheduling two testing windows. Although the assessment will be given in one testing window in future years, the test will still contain the same extended tasks and writing exercises that are important for measuring students' critical thinking and concept mastery. The testing window will be up to 30 days and will extend from roughly the 75 percent mark of the school year to the 90 percent mark.

Going forward, the PARCC exam will also now consist of six or seven test units, depending on grade level, compared to the eight or nine sessions that students took this year. The PARCC Governing Board's decision also reduces the math testing time by 60 minutes and removes a half hour from the English language arts portion for most students. (Each year a limited number of students will participate in an additional embedded ELA field-test unit.)

Results from the first PARCC exam administration will be available in late fall. The 2015 results will take additional time to produce because classroom teachers and higher education content experts from each state, including Illinois, must review the first year of student scores and determine performance levels based on appropriate score ranges.

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