

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND PARCC

How are the CCSS (Common Core State Standards) related to the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments? What has one got to do with the other?

When New Jersey adopted the CCSS in both Math and English Language Arts (ELA), these standards became the foundation upon which all districts in the State built their curriculum. South Brunswick's Math curriculum was developed in alignment with these standards in 2011 (elementary and high school) and 2012 (middle school), and the ELA curriculum K-12 was developed in alignment with these standards in 2012. The NJASK and HSPA (which have been transitioning toward the CCSS for the past two years) have been the State assessments of standards up until this point. The PARCC is the new, State-selected set of tests that will assess student progress toward achievement of the standards. The PARCC is completely aligned with the CCSS.

PARCC RESOURCES

What resources are available for parents to learn about PARCC?

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, PARCC, has a very comprehensive website, <http://parcconline.org>, which includes sections entitled: About PARCC, the PARCC Assessment, PARCC States, PARCC Resources, and News and Updates.

The following documents can be found in the PARCC Resources for Parents section of the website: FAQs, Fact Sheet, Glossary, Overview PowerPoint, A New Vision of Assessment PowerPoint, and Expanding Access – A Parent's Guide.

PARCC maintains open communication through Twitter. You can follow them @PARCCPlace.

Where can I see PARCC questions?

All state tests are secure documents and are not released for public review. Test security prohibits staff members from reviewing or discussing the test content. This was also true of the NJASK and HSPA. However, there are samples available by grade at PARCC online <http://www.parcconline.org>

How is PARCC different from NJASK?

The major difference is that PARCC is an online assessment and is given during two testing windows. Students in grades 3-11 will take this assessment in Language Arts. Students in grades 3-8 will take this assessment in math, until they are enrolled in Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2. Two years ago NJASK began transitioning to align with the common core.

Why is PARCC divided into March and May sessions? (What is to be accomplished by the division?)

Since the PARCC consortium created these testing periods, at the district level we don't know the exact rationale behind all of the decisions. What we do know is that the majority of the March portion will be scored by hand, and the May section will be scored completely by the computer. Therefore, we can assume that the PBA is done earlier in the year to allow time for the hand scoring to be done and to provide timely feedback.

The March Problem Based Assessment (PBA) will be given at 75% of the school year and the May End of Year (EOY) will be given at 90% of the school year. These two sessions have been established by PARCC.

How are the subjects divided for the PARCC and what should the students expect for the March test in Math v. the May test in Math and similarly in Language Arts? Is it divided based on curriculum or some other format?

The English Language Arts Performance Based Assessment (PBA) taken in March includes:

- Literary Analysis, Narrative Task, Research Simulation Task (three writing tasks based on reading)
- EBSR (evidence based selected response) and TECR (technology enhanced constructed response) (based on reading comprehension)

The English Language Arts End of Year Assessment (EOY) taken in May includes:

- EBSR (evidence based selected response) and TECR (technology enhanced constructed response) (based on reading comprehension)

The Math Performance Based Assessment (PBA), taken in March, is focused on applying skills, concepts, and understandings to solve multi-step problems requiring abstract reasoning, precision, perseverance, and strategic use of tools.

The Math End of Year Assessment (EOY), taken in May, calls on students to demonstrate further conceptual understanding of the Major Content and Additional and Supporting Content of the grade/course (as outlined in the PARCC Model Content Frameworks - in essence, the Common Core Standards), and demonstrate mathematical fluency, when applicable to the grade.

You can find PARCC Model Content Frameworks here:

<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks>

PARCC has not released which content standards will be covered in March, but the understanding is that the majority of the test will be focused on the Common Core practice standards, which you can find here: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice>

How many questions will need to be answered?

ELA:

- For the PBA, PARCC has not released specific information regarding the number of multiple-choice questions. There will be three writing tasks administered across three days.
- For the EOY, as of now PARCC has communicated that there will be 13 paired question sets in response to two reading passages. (This could be subject to change.)

Math:

- PARCC has not yet released the number of questions that will be on the PBA and the EOY. Questions, however, are not all multiple choice. There will be some multiple choice, but there are also open-ended questions (the PBA is mostly open-ended). There are many different types of technology enhanced questions - such as drag and drop, single-answer boxes, drop down boxes, and others. The PARCC practice tests that are available on the PARCC website will give you examples of these types of questions.

SUPPORT AT HOME

How can parents prepare students at home?

Although there are many websites with sample questions, many teachers are incorporating those into lessons. You may encourage your children to type and become familiar with the online tools of PARCC. The most important thing for parents to do is to keep the assessment in perspective so as not to create too much pressure. The best thing to do is have meaningful conversations with your children about what they think and why. You can watch a good nature show, watch a how-to demonstration, read a book or article and discuss your opinions. When your children make a point, ask them to justify the answer (explain why) and give some proof (where or how did you get that). This is the way that they will demonstrate their knowledge on PARCC.

TESTING SCHEDULE

When will the PARCC be administered during the 2014-2015 school year?

The following link is the most current PARCC assessment calendar. More specific details about the testing schedule will be released as we approach the testing windows this spring. Every effort will be made to minimize the impact on instructional time.

http://www.sbschools.org/departments/testing_services/testing_dates.php

What impact will testing have on the elective programs at the High School?

The high school schedule for PARCC testing is still being created, with a goal of minimizing the impact on the daily schedule.

How many hours of testing for students? How much total time per school will be spent on a testing schedule given that all children in the grade level cannot test simultaneously?

It is too soon to give an exact answer on the total testing time a school will use for this assessment. There are too many factors, such as number of available devices, extended time for our special education and limited English proficient students, breaks during testing, and whether or not all students use the additional time allotted by the test administration directions. The approximate time is nine hours for both testing windows, English Language Arts and Mathematics. Below you will find the “Unit Time” is the total amount of time students will be given. Along with the “Est. Time on Task”, the actual amount of time that they expect students will take for each section. They have built in an extra 20-25 minutes to ensure that students have enough time to finish. These times are also based on the actual time that students took on field tests, so it seems likely that students will have enough time for each section.

		PBA Unit 1	PBA Unit 2	PBA Unit 3	EOY Unit 1	EOY Unit 2
GRADE 3 ELA	Unit Time	75	75	60	75	-
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>-</i>
GRADE 3 MATH	Unit Time	75	75		75	75
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>
GRADES 4-5 ELA	Unit Time	75	90	60	75	-
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>-</i>
GRADES 4-5 MATH	Unit Time	80	70		75	75
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>

GRADES 6-8 ELA	Unit Time	75	90	60	60	60
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>
GRADES 6-8 MATH	Unit Time	80	70		80	75
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>
GRADES 9-11 ELA	Unit Time	75	90	60	60	60
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>
ALGEBRA I GEOMETRY	Unit Time	90	75		80	75
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>
ALGEBRA II	Unit Time	90	75		90	75
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>

SOUTH BRUNSWICK PREPARATION

How is South Brunswick preparing students for PARCC?

Our curriculum has been aligned to the common core for three years. PARCC is an assessment of the common core. Additionally, South Brunswick teachers at every level (elementary, middle and high school) are learning about PARCC, taking sample tests and/or experiencing sample questions. Having participated in the spring 2014 field test, we are familiar with the format of PARCC. Teachers are incorporating best instructional practices, which support both the technology and the content assessed by PARCC.

Are students expected to read and write on the math sections?

Math instruction includes explaining answers. Neither our curriculum nor PARCC value computation only. It has an important place in math, but students at all levels must be able to justify answers and explain their reasoning. During math assessments, students will have pencil and paper to use for solving problems. They may be asked to explain their process.

TYPING

How do we ensure that children are prepared when it comes to keyboarding skills?

This is our 2nd year of purposeful integration of Chromebooks throughout the district. In the elementary schools, students in grades 2-5 have Chromebooks in their classrooms. At the middle school, Encore classes are routinely using the Chromebooks and each unit has access to Chromebooks. At the high school, Chromebooks are utilized through departments.

The following typing apps are on our Chromebooks: Type Scout, TypingClub, and Typo Express.

Will students have enough time to type responses?

Through the data gathered from the field test, PARCC has established testing times. They have built in additional time for each session.

TECHNOLOGY

How will South Brunswick handle the technology load of PARCC?

South Brunswick has an upgraded network which supports our normal operations and meets PARCC's requirements. During PARCC testing, test content will be "proctor cached" to local machines in advance of the test. In other words, test content will be readily available and local to the building as opposed to a live stream. Should an interruption with connectivity occur, proctor caching keeps the environment operational.

In the event of a device failure, the mantra will be "when in doubt, swap it out". We can do this with an online test because each time a student clicks the "next button" to advance to the next question the results are being saved. This allows for a swap of devices by having the student log back into the system and pick up the test where they left off.

Is the district equipped with enough Chromebooks to administer the test efficiently?

The South Brunswick School District has enough Chromebooks for students who require extended time per an IEP, 504, or as needed by English Language Learners to have an individual device for the length of test. General education students will be sharing devices during split testing sessions. We have enough devices to account for technology issues to swap out if necessary.

Will technology be available for instruction during PARCC testing?

Teachers are aware of the testing windows and will plan lessons according to device availability. There are still Chromebooks, iPads, Document Cameras, Projectors and other technology tools that will be available during testing. The instruction may look different during the testing windows. In our middle schools, every student is testing, which means that the schedule will be adjusted and teachers will know in advance to best plan for instructional time.

How much does PARCC testing cost our district?

South Brunswick's technology plan demonstrates thoughtful planning through the years. As our instructional technology has increased so has the infrastructure to support this; therefore, there was not one specific cost associated for PARCC testing. The Chromebooks selected were for compatibility with the PARCC assessment and cost efficiency.

ACCOMMODATIONS and ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES

How does the PARCC assessment accommodate students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP, special education)?

There are accommodations available for students with disabilities. School Child Study Teams are reviewing the possible accommodations and revising IEPs as necessary. PARCC contains many "good for all" accessibility features that can be found on their website.

How will students with 504s be affected?

Yes, there are accommodations that will be available for students with 504s. The school-based 504 team is reviewing the possible accommodations and revising 504s as necessary.

REFUSAL "OPT OUT"

Will there be a policy regarding "opting students out of PARCC testing"?

Less than .04% of the students in Grades 3-8 refused to take the NJASK last year. With such a small minority, the South Brunswick School District is not creating an Opt Out Policy. We are required to give the PARCC to all students who are present during the testing window. There will not be an alternate educational experience offered for these students, as staff members will be administering the assessments. Our leadership team and teaching staff values the results of standardized assessments. This is one measure we use to guide daily instruction and program decisions.

SCORING and REPORTING

How will the tests be scored and by whom?

Similar to NJASK, scoring will be conducted by computer and by people. Trained individuals will be scoring these assessments guided by rubrics to evaluate student responses and written compositions.

When do you expect to receive PARCC results?

PARCC results will be available in the fall based on the information we have at this time. The March and May test results will be combined.

Will PARCC results be part or all of the criteria used to identify [Gifted and Talented and Instructional Support] students going forward?

The South Brunswick School District will continue to use multiple criteria for determining eligibility for Gifted and Talented and Instructional Support, which has included standardized test results. Once we learn more about PARCC scoring we will make adjustments to our criteria if necessary.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

Will PARCC be a graduation requirement?

The NJ Department of Education has determined that for the classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018, students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in both ELA and Mathematics by meeting **ONE** of the criteria in each column below:

English Language Arts	Mathematics
Passing score on a PARCC ELA Grade 9 <i>or</i>	Passing score on PARCC Algebra I <i>or</i>
Passing score on a PARCC ELA Grade 10 <i>or</i>	Passing score on PARCC Geometry <i>or</i>
Passing score on PARCC ELA Grade 11 <i>or</i>	Passing score on PARCC Algebra II <i>or</i>
SAT \geq 400 <i>or</i>	SAT \geq 400 <i>or</i>
ACT \geq 16 <i>or</i>	ACT \geq 16 <i>or</i>
Accuplacer Write Placer \geq 6 <i>or</i>	Accuplacer Elementary Algebra \geq 76 <i>or</i>
PSAT \geq 40 <i>or</i>	PSAT \geq 40 <i>or</i>
ACT Aspire \geq 422 <i>or</i>	ACT Aspire \geq 422 <i>or</i>
ASVAB-AFQT \geq +31 <i>or</i>	ASVAB-AFQT \geq +31 <i>or</i>

Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal	Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal
---	---

Why doesn't our district implement SAT as the graduation requirement?

The SAT is not administered to all students in South Brunswick and families must pay for this assessment. At this point it will not be the sole assessment used as a graduation requirement. It is however, an optional assessment towards the graduation requirement.