

## Planning Suggestions for PASS 2

### Parent Academy for Student Success #2 Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

#### A to Z Supports for Districts and Schools

##### A Suggested Planning Process for Implementation of the Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) Model

Prior to implementing the PASS model it is particularly valuable for educators to discuss and consider a new meaning of home/school learning partnerships for the district, school, and community. The PASS model is not an instructional program where educators “teach” parents in the same way that they teach students; rather it is a focused opportunity for a discussion on a critical topic that includes student instructional strategies for use out-of-school. The main goal of PASS is to create and strengthen home/school partnerships specifically designed to meet the academic needs of children.

Supporting a child’s education is an important task for any parent, but it can be difficult to find support and resources that align with and extend the lessons that they are learning in school. The PASS model suggests building academic partnerships between home and school wherein instructional strategies are shared and teaching and learning are enhanced both in and out of school.

It is important to note that instructional strategies are typically understood as interactions between teachers and students. However, limiting the use of instructional strategies to students and teachers eliminates the possibility – and at best - weakens the potential of effective parent engagement and support for academic achievement because it restricts the benefits of “wrap-around” learning that all students need in order to make significant academic gains.

Instructional strategies are designed to engage students in learning, help activate students' curiosity about a class topic, probe critical thinking skills, keep students on task, engender sustained and useful classroom interaction, and, in general, to enable and enhance the learning of course content. The purpose of the suggested PASS model is to reach those same goals, build authentic academic partnerships between home and school, share specific instructional strategies to support classroom performance, and enhance teaching and learning. Through PASS partnerships, parents and educators can develop instructional strategies for use outside of school in order to support learning inside of school.

The purpose of the PASS model is to engage in highly focused, authentic home/school partnerships that will drive student learning and success.

The fundamental steps below are recommendations, not a prescription, for creating a purposeful shift in home/school partnerships that are clearly focused on student learning. Effective PASS implementation requires a new dialogue and a commitment from every stakeholder group in the education community. Therefore, discussions about the suggested steps below should include superintendents, board of education members, principals, supervisors, and classroom teachers.

# TOP 10 and A-Z

To help plan the steps to pass success

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**Step 1 - Assess potential**

**Step 2 - Invest**

**Step 3 - Articulate mission, vision, and goals**

**Step 4 - Develop objectives and strategies**

**Step 5 - Motivate**

**Step 6 - Prepare**

**Step 7 - Complete the plan**

**Step 8 - Collect Feedback**

**Step 9 - Engage stakeholder leaders in the application of feedback**

**Step 10 - Plan for the next PASS event**

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## **1. Assess potential**

- a) Traditional and nontraditional leaders within the school community search for data that links parent involvement activities to academic achievement. Utilize the evidence to conduct an authentic conversation about the direct impact that current activities have on direct student performance.
- b) Stakeholder leaders review and discuss the suggested PASS model.

## **2. Invest**

- c) Gain investment from superintendent, members of the board of education, principals, teachers, parents and families, students, and other leaders in the education community.
- d) Overview of plans presented to the board of education. The board approves and places Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) events on the official school calendar.
- e) District leaders hold open meetings to share their commitment with staff and discuss implementation of the PASS model.

## **3. Articulate mission, vision, and goals**

- f) Identify the mission and goal(s) unique to each district/school and clearly align them with data, climate, and culture of the education community. Identify unique and priority issues.

## **4. Develop objectives and strategies**

- g) Identify a common definition for the PASS in each unique education community.
- h) Utilize PASS documents for guidance and a new perspective on home/school academic partnerships.
- i) Make a distinction between PASS academic content and other parent involvement activities, such as fundraising, attendance at student performances, volunteering, etc. (PASS events are solely about student achievement.)

## **5. Motivate**

- j) Among individuals planning the PASS implementation, discuss past results of current and former parent involvement activities.
  - o Identify how the past activity directly affected student achievement.
  - o Identify patterns for at-risk students.
  - o Summarize data from above discussions.
- k) Combine the school's unique data with the PASS document titled Mission, Justification, and Goals from the PASS Toolkit. Share the information with stakeholder leaders to build a new vision and obtain buy-in.

## **6. Prepare**

- l) Use the PASS overview materials to redefine meaningful parent and family involvement and specifically identify previous barriers that relate to parent support for student learning. Some considerations might be: one-way communication with parents, limited parent representation in key decision-making, inconsistent

communication styles, the climate and culture of schools, lack of culturally responsive classrooms, staffing issues, etc. Breaking down barriers to improvements are markers of a great school and doing so prior to PASS will improve successful outcomes.

m) Plan strategies to address potential barriers to PASS.

## 7. Implement the plan

- n) Develop a draft agenda that will motivate, yet not overwhelm parents; too much, too fast is not digestible. Do not blend PASS events with other more traditional family involvement activities. Keep the agenda topics clearly focused on two-way academic communication about teaching and learning. (This narrow focus may keep attendance low for the first few meetings; however, once students' results become clear, PASS will gain parents' respect and motivation to support their own child.) Ensure that topics, speakers, data, and materials address opportunities for home/school/student support. The agenda must reflect a well-coordinated, thoughtful, and positive tone that clearly indicates a commitment to a different method of parent and family involvement in their child's academic support.
- o) Utilize the NJDOE RESOURCE PACKET.
- Review the entire toolkit with an eye to utilizing home/school partnerships as an instructional strategy that supports student learning. (Refer to the comments in number four above on home/school academic partnerships as an instructional strategy.)
  - Review and consideration of materials and handouts will take time. They must reflect a different tone of partnership and may best be addressed by a team.
  - Add/eliminate language in the PASS materials to meet the needs of the education community.
  - Translate handouts in languages that respond to individual community needs.
  - Place the school logo or name on the packet cover and documents if individualization is desired.
- p) In Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), grade bands, or content-specific teams, teachers review the PASS model, build instructional strategies, and identify activities that can support students' understanding of the transfer between classroom learning and its application to "real-world" opportunities. Strategies should not be limited to content-based homework assistance. They should be differentiated and serve to enrich and strengthen learning skills.
- q) Consider offering the PASS event at two different times to meet the needs and schedules of parents. Reserve space, design the room set-up, identify breakout locations, arrange light refreshments for the final Q&A session, and perform other required logistics.
- r) Refer to the recommended agenda for the general session with parents, the key talking points and other tools to develop a school specific agenda. Consider inclusion of student leaders in demonstrations and academic activities where they can provide examples of new teaching, learning, and personal assessment methods for their own success.
- s) Send home invitations, the PASS overview, agenda, justification, facts on how the new academic partnerships can help each child's learning, and other handouts, as appropriate.
- t) Identify a school link where materials will be available. Place the information on district/school web pages and initiate automated phone message systems.
- u) In consideration of transient families, post information at convenience stores, gas stations, churches/synagogues/mosques and other key community locations.
- v) **At the Academy:**
- Prepare hand-outs, as appropriate. If it is not possible to provide hard copies of handouts, use PowerPoint presentations and tell parents how to find the documents on the school webpage. (Priority - Include the "Glossary", "Frequently Asked Questions", and "Resource" sections for all parents.)
  - Use the guide or team created agenda and provide suggested handouts.
  - After the keynote sessions, break parents into age-appropriate 20-minute sessions: ELA, math and learning across the curriculum. In breakout sessions, teachers provide 10-15-minute overviews and Q&A.

### **At the end of the Academy:**

- Escort parents back to the initial room. Offer refreshments and provide them with appropriate summary documents from the toolkit.
- Hold "Table Talk" conversations where parents discuss and write what they learned on large paper.
- Facilitate the report out.

- Explain that PASS is one way that parents and teachers can work together to help children learn successfully in their best way.
- Invite parents to ask *general* questions that apply to all students. Place answers in an FAQ on the website. Build that document to include additional questions and answers as they arise.
- Give parents information on the next steps that your district/school will take to partner with them on their child's learning. Commit to follow up on their feedback and ideas.
- Have teachers at tables around the room to answer *individual* questions.

## 8. Gather feedback from all participants

- w) Use a survey and encourage follow-up conversations with classroom teachers and the principal.

## 9. Engage stakeholders

- x) Follow up with a thank you note to all attendees.
- y) Invite PASS #1 attendees to take part in a working group to review feedback and ensure that it is included in development of the next PASS.

## 10. Plan for the next PASS event

- z) Use feedback and student achievement data to motivate members of the district/school community to participate in the next PASS. Develop a suggested, sustainable framework that strengthens the communication, partnerships, and conversations surrounding new expectations of teaching and learning.

## Building authentic academic partnerships, educators, parents, and families can strengthen student learning both in and out of school.

### PLC Agenda Possibilities

Use any of the PASS 1 or PASS 2 documents to begin to evaluate the current state of family-school partnerships at your school. (See suggestions at the end of this packet.) Share them in advance of the PLC working meeting.

- ✓ List all of the parent involvement activities at your school.  
Create two categories:
  1. Activities that are purely learning partnerships, which directly change student achievement
  2. Activities that serve other goals, i.e. raise funds, provide volunteer services, participation on committees, attendance at meetings, chaperone events, attendance at student performances, etc.
- ✓ Isolate the activities that directly impact student learning and performance. Do not include activities that are of benefit or convenience to educators, but solely focused on a change in student learning and achievement results. It may help to further divide this category into "parent involvement" and "parent engagement." Teasing out the nuances of the various activities at your school surfaces educators beliefs about the value of parents playing a key role to make a difference in their child's education. This is a challenging – and opinionated - conversation that must be held in order to unify the school culture.
- ✓ Create a short and compelling vision for parent/school *learning partnerships* at your school.
  - Use simple, powerful language and don't go beyond two or three bullets. Remember this is your "elevator speech" on effective home/school *learning* partnerships. Your words should clearly reflect that your school's vision of parent engagement is directly plugged-in to student learning and it is different from that of other school communities.)
- ✓ Identify incentives and barriers to meaningful parent engagement in the educational program at your school.
  - Address the weakness and barriers you identified and decide three ways to minimize them now and next school year. (Don't forget to recognize how the weaknesses sap energy and resources!)
  - Evaluate if the incentives currently offered are necessary to drive your new vision of meaningful parent engagement.
- ✓ Align policies, programs, and practices. Prepare to communicate and activate changes that will impact student achievement. **SHARE THE CHANGES AT YOUR PASS EVENTS.**

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## Benefits: How the PASS 2 Model Contributes to Student Success

### Parent Academy for Student Success #2 Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

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The theme of the first PASS toolkit was Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS): <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/pass1/>. The follow-up program, PASS 2, explores student assessment and the PARCC test to engage parents and educators in meaningful partnerships that emphasize core academic content, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, effective communication, self-directed learning, and students' academic mindset.

The updated student learning standards – the Common Core State Standards – and the aligned PARCC assessments are the most advanced tools that New Jersey has ever had to teach students and measure performance. There are many benefits of the updated teaching, learning and assessment system that all provide opportunities for schools and parents to gain meaningful data and insight. They can work together to raise the personal performance levels of their children and help improve classroom instruction for all students. These opportunities must include and provide parents with a key role to collaborate with educators and strengthen the system of education for all of New Jersey's children.

Engaging parents in the conversation about assessing learning with PARCC will empower parents by providing informative feedback and opportunities to know whether their children are on track to be properly prepared for college and careers. NJDOE's model of the Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) enriches the conversation and makes strong home/school academic partnerships a reality.

Sometimes neither parents, nor educators, know how to begin conversations about meaningful strategies for students' academic success. In addition, a school community may be entrenched in more traditional parent involvement efforts such as volunteering, fundraising, meeting attendance, passing school budgets, chaperoning field trips, etc. – all of which are important to every school community, but show little to no direct evidence of increasing student achievement. Therefore, NJDOE offers the PASS model to support the capacity of educators and families to implement partnerships that focus only on academics to improve student success. Suggested PASS tools and continued state support will serve to enable a sustained movement toward active academic partnerships between home/school.

#### What are some benefits of the PARCC assessments?

- PARCC assessments are designed to measure whether students are actually on track for college or careers.
- Prior assessments were grounded in students' memorization of facts, and didn't allow for creativity or flexibility in demonstrating their ability to apply new knowledge and perform new skills.
- The PARCC tests are administered online and will give students a chance to use their new knowledge and apply new skills to solve simulations of real-world problems. They will not only have to solve complex problems, but they will need to show *how* they solved them.
- PARCC includes performance tasks that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

- PARCC is directly aligned with the CCSS - the updated student learning standards. This means that students learn through instruction aligned to the CCSS and PARCC measures student understanding of the skills addressed in the standards. The results will be more accurate when learning and assessments are directly aligned.
- The test outcomes will provide a balanced perspective of the important link between teaching, learning, and measurement of student learning.
- Schools, districts, and states that administer the PARCC assessments will be able to draw comparisons between their students' progress to ensure that they are preparing their students to be college and career ready.
- The purpose of PARCC is to determine students' mastery of the subject-area content (mathematics and English language arts/literacy), using technology as an important 21st century tool for teaching, learning, assessing, and preparing students for college and careers.

The PASS model is constructed from a half-century of research and professional studies, which shows that when schools partner with parents about teaching and learning *inside* the classroom, parents can better support learning *outside* of the classroom. When parents understand learning expectations:

- They can help their child achieve better grades, earn higher test scores, make easier transitions to the next grade level, have better attendance, graduate on time, become more motivated to learn and succeed in college and careers.
- Students take more responsibility for their own learning, show more curiosity and innovation, are more organized and self-disciplined, consistently complete their homework assignments, have higher class participation rates and have fewer suspensions for disciplinary reasons.
- It is easier to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the culture in school. Children from diverse backgrounds do better when there is a partnership between home and school that indicates a clear and consistent commitment to academic priorities.

### Some of the many benefits of implementing the PASS model

- PASS materials include suggested supports and activities to help educators and parents discuss key academic topics. The theme for PASS 1 is *Learning with the Common Core State Standards* (URL: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/pass1/>). The theme for PASS 2 is *Assessing Student Learning and PARCC* (URL: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/pass2/>).
- Implementation of the suggested PASS model will allow educators to share models of what effective teaching, learning, and assessment look like in the classroom.
- The PASS model focuses on shifts from teachers' teaching to learners' learning. The model allows teachers to become more creative when differentiating and personalizing student learning strategies.
- Participation in PASS activities creates a common language and understanding among all stakeholders.
- Home/school learning partnerships developed at the academies add value to parent-teacher conferences and provide a framework for personalized student learning strategies.
- The PASS model is easily adaptable to any K-12 grade level and it provides a suggested structure for all New Jersey districts and schools; wherein, they have the flexibility to design and strengthen activities that support parents and families as they guide their children's learning from preschool through high school.
- PASS implementation is aligned with New Jersey's professional standards, such as:

- NJ Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders;
- Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC);
- Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC); and
- National Parent and Family Involvement Standards.

- PASS implementation is designed to complement other parent involvement programs at the local level and is geared toward lowering barriers to home/school academic collaboration.
- PASS support materials are intended for individualization by each school and district. PASS documents can be used to build the foundation of partnerships and are designed for use individually or as a packet to best meet the unique communication and engagement needs in each community.

When parents are informed about what and how students learn at school, the ways that learning is measured, and meaningful strategies that they can use to support classroom learning with out-of-school experiences, students achieve more.

*That is the genesis - and key benefit - of the New Jersey Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) model.*

**Sources with Multiple Research Studies and Evidence on Engaging Parents and Families in Academic Issues to Produce Higher Student Achievement and a Better Education System for All Children**

**Harvard Family Research Project** – <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement>

**Johns Hopkins University** – Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships National Network of Partnership Schools - Joyce Epstein.

**A New Wave of Evidence** – Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp: A report from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. <http://www.nea.org/tools/17360.htm>

**The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement** – Henderson, Anne T., Ed.: An annotated bibliography. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED315199>

**EIRC and NEA** – <http://0-eric.ed.gov.opac.msmc.edu/?q=parent+involvement>

**National PTA National Standards Implementation Guide** – <http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?itemnumber=1804&navItemNumber=3339> and <http://www.pta.org/search/searchresults.cfm>

*PASS 2 documents and partnership supports are intended to complement information about the New Jersey Department of Education's Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Assessments and provide resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to work together in the best interest of New Jersey students.*

*For information on the NJDOE PASS model, the PASS #1 theme of **Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards** or the PASS #2 theme of **Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and PARCC** go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: [informccs@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:informccs@doe.state.nj.us).*

## What Makes the PASS Model Different from Other Partnership Activities?

Parent Academy for Student Success #2  
Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and  
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*A meaningful K-12 education and college/career preparation is less about students' memorization of facts and more about empowering students to think and apply that information to real-world challenges.*

**The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) model is different from other traditional parent/family involvement activities. The model allows parents and educators to ...**

- Discuss the details of new teaching and learning practices and strengthen positive home/school relationships to benefit all students;
- Develop a suggested, sustainable framework that strengthens the communication and academic partnerships surrounding expectations of students' learning and success including integrated support from superintendent/ board of education/ school leaders/ teachers/ parent leaders;
- Encourage educators to utilize out-of-school learning as an instructional strategy to support a student's classroom success;
- Deepen the accountability for student learning among all stakeholders;
- Link the school's current parent involvement activities with student performance data and prioritize activities that have a direct impact on student achievement;
- Create a window into a Common Core classroom where parents can see modeling of new instructional techniques, student learning methods and measurement of learning;
- Review classroom examples of the shifts in ELA and mathematics teaching and learning;
- Utilize strategic timing to review student achievement and hold informed conversations about the evidence of student learning and growth (The suggested PASS model recommends that academies occur after the first, second, and third marking periods.);
- Select from a variety of flexible PASS support tools to develop individual programs to best meet the needs of respective education communities;
- Engage in PASS conversations about what students are learning, how teachers and parents know when students are learning and what to do if they don't/can't learn the content;
- Use PASS partnerships as a baseline to construct conversations that lead to mutually designed personalized learning targets and plans for students;
- Share a new vision for student homework and out-of-school support; and
- Discuss, define, and help students meet 21<sup>st</sup> century skills required for college and career.

## Description - Mission - Justification - Goals

### Parent Academy for Student Success #2 Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has designed an innovative model for strategic support to enhance student achievement through home/school academic partnerships. The purpose of *The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) Model* is to engage in highly focused academic partnerships that will drive student learning and success.

The NJDOE PASS model is singularly focused on student learning and **grounded in a new type of home/school partnerships**. PASS content is honest, give-and-take communications among stakeholders. Effective PASS implementation requires a new dialogue and commitment from every stakeholder group in the education community. Therefore, PASS partners include superintendents, boards of education, principals, teachers, parents/families, and students.

PASS is not a program where educators "teach" parents and families as they do their students; rather, it is a change in operations regarding an unwavering commitment to critical academic issues shared between educators and parents. Together educators and families hold informed conversations, exchange important information about how students learn, and use instructional strategies that can be applied out-of-school to support in-school performance. PASS partnerships serve as a basis for personalized student success strategies that can be developed among teachers, parents and students.

The model complements a school's traditional methods of parent and family involvement. Attendance at concerts, support for fundraisers, volunteer services, committee membership, and other highly valued traditional activities are vital to a healthy school community; however, such activities rarely have a direct impact on student achievement. In order to align academic partnerships with direct student achievement, the PASS implementation model is clearly separate from conventional parent and family involvement activities. In addition, large groups or small groups, PASS success is measured by impact on student learning rather than attendance at an event. There is one bottom-line question for PASS partnerships and activities - *Will there be a direct outcome on student achievement?*

The toolkit provides materials that are customizable for each school and each PASS event. The documents can be used together as an extended sequence of communication events, a comprehensive packet of information to share with parents, or as individual communications to serve as the focus for alliance.

The PASS tool kit includes items that can be used as: planning guides, handouts, sample agendas, talking points, conversation starters, supplements for classroom conversations, guidance for parent/teacher conferences, topics for professional development, policy guides, information for newsletters/websites, and instructional strategies to strengthen student learning.

It is important to note that instructional strategies are typically understood as interactions between teachers and students. However, limiting the use of instructional strategies to students and teachers eliminates the possibility – and at best - weakens the potential of effective parent engagement and support for academic achievement because it restricts the benefits of “wrap-around” learning that all students need in order to make significant academic gains.

Instructional strategies are designed to engage students in learning, help activate students' curiosity about a class topic, probe critical thinking skills, keep students on task, engender sustained and useful classroom interaction, and, in general, to enable and enhance the learning of course content. The purpose of the suggested PASS model is to reach those same goals, build authentic academic partnerships between home and school, share specific instructional strategies to support classroom performance, and enhance teaching and learning. Through PASS partnerships, parents and educators can develop instructional strategies for use outside of school in order to support learning inside of school.

Suggested opportunities to implement academies are after the first, second, and third marking periods when parents, teachers, and students can review evidence of student performance and hold informed conversations about learning.

## **Mission: A Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)**

The mission of the New Jersey Department of Education's model for a Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) is to enhance student achievement through effective home/school academic partnerships.

### **Mission of PASS 2**

The mission of PASS 2 is to engage parents and educators in a conversation about assessment through strong home/school academic partnerships for students' benefit.

The term **assessment** refers to the wide variety of tools and methods that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition of students. While assessments are often equated with traditional tests, educators use a diverse array of assessment tools and methods. Just as academic lessons have different functions, assessments are typically designed to measure specific elements of learning.

## **Justification: A Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)**

When educators and parents share information, resources, commitment, and support, PASS empowers parents to contribute to home/school academic partnerships and to their child's achievement in the classroom and beyond. Such academic partnerships enable achievement in school and out of school as a foundation for achievement in life.

Implementation of the suggested academy model:

- Provides districts and schools with a framework for supporting home/school partnerships and important two-way conversations focused solely on student learning and performance;
- Strengthens the communication, partnerships and conversations surrounding new expectations for teaching and learning;
- Encourages educators to utilize out-of-school learning as an instructional strategy to support classroom success; and
- Planning for PASS serves as a model for professional conversations that link a school's parent involvement activities with student performance data.

### **Justification for PASS 2**

- Educators, parents, students, and the public have requested communication on the benefits of the updated teaching, learning, and assessment system of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC).
- Implementation of PASS provides opportunities for schools and parents to learn and work together in partnership and develop strategies to use the CCSS and PARCC to raise the personal performance levels of all children and help improve classroom instruction for all students.

## Goals: A Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)

- Districts and schools will provide clarification of learning expectations and facilitate a meaningful exchange where parents and educators share ideas, information and activities that fully support student learning in and out of school.
- Educators will value parents as primary partners in their child's education and will inform them of learning strategies that support student learning in and outside of school.
- Local districts and schools will create a new, bold and proactive approach to focus home/school partnerships solely on teaching and learning.
- Local districts and schools will use the suggested PASS model to design and implement a unique, progressive series of opportunities for parents to become informed and engaged in supporting their child's academic achievement.
- Parents will seek opportunities to gain information and understanding of new teaching and learning techniques to actively support their child's learning in and outside of school.
- Parents and teachers will engage in continuous, two-way, meaningful academic communication to influence student learning and achievement.

### Goals for PASS 2

- The state and districts will share facts and consider concerns regarding assessment and PARCC.
- Districts and schools will keep stakeholders informed and engaged in conversations about meaningful assessment of student learning as it applies to college- and career-readiness.
- Through home/school partnerships, districts and schools will develop strategic and technical information about high-quality assessments that will help all students graduate from high school prepared for college and a career.
- Schools will highlight the use of technology as a tool for assessment and familiarize parents with the format of PARCC.
- Schools will provide examples of how teachers assess and measure the kind of work students are already doing in classrooms under the CCSS.
- The state, districts and schools will address questions and conversations on assessment topics.

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*PASS 2 documents and partnership supports are intended to complement information about the New Jersey Department of Education's Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Assessments and provide resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to work together in the best interest of New Jersey students.*

*For information on the NJDOE PASS model, the PASS #1 theme of **Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards** or the PASS #2 theme of **Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and PARCC** go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: [informccss@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:informccss@doe.state.nj.us).*

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Overview of PASS 2: Assessing Student Learning and  
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

Parent Academy for Student Success #2  
Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and  
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

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The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) model is different from other traditional parent/family involvement activities. The model allows parents and educators to discuss the details of new teaching and learning practices and strengthen positive academic home/school relationships that will benefit student achievement.

The topic for PASS 2 is the engagement of parents in district and school discussions around high learning standards and the measurement of student learning.

- ✓ The New Jersey student learning standards in English language arts and mathematics were updated in 2010. The new standards - the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) - replaced outdated learning standards and are based on the knowledge and skills that students need to succeed in the next grade level and after graduation.
- ✓ Since the CCSS adoption in 2010, both teaching and learning in New Jersey classrooms have been aligned to the new standards. After using the CCSS for the past four years, it is the appropriate time to begin to measure how well students are learning.
- ✓ Student learning with the CCSS will be measured with assessments called the Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC). Students in New Jersey will take the PARCC tests in spring 2015. However, the results will not affect students until 2019.
- ✓ PARCC is a computer-based test that replaces the current New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) and the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).
- ✓ PARCC assessments are carefully designed to challenge students to go beyond a surface-level understanding of academic subject matter and learn how to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their learning to the real-world workplace. The standards and assessments both raise the bar for students' knowledge and skills to accurately measure student progress toward success after graduation and match the rigor of college and the workplace.

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Assessing student learning is a complex process with a simple goal -- measure *what* students know and *what* they can *do* with what they know.

The PARCC tests will measure students' understanding and mastery of the CCSS.

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Districts and schools can use the PASS program to help keep stakeholders informed and engaged in conversations about meaningful assessment of student learning as it applies to college- and career-readiness.

Through the PASS program, educators and parents discuss techniques used in the classroom to provide a real-life context for student performance in and outside of school. Discussions include the following: the purposes and benefits of assessment; how current assessments align with the CCSS that reflect increased rigor for college and careers; and ways that parents can help students learn out of school so that they can gain more from their in-school experiences.

PARCC comprises performance-based items, tasks to provide evidence of learning and some traditional-style questions.

- Performance-based assessments are administered after 75 percent of the school year is complete (March), and they include extended tasks, as well as applications of concepts and skills.
- End-of-year assessments are administered after 90 percent of the school year is complete (May), and they include short-answer items.

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Academic assessment is a powerful tool for measuring student learning and the effectiveness of educational programs. Assessment is not an end in itself, but one vehicle to support student success and enable educational improvement.

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Teacher-designed assessments and PARCC measure students' understanding of the complex nature of learning and the application of knowledge by utilizing a number of different instructional and assessment methods that are designed to collect information, including measures of actual student performance, such as reading a passage and writing about what was learned in that passage.

In the past, assessments required students to recite facts from memory, choose one answer from a multiple-choice list, and select a true/false answer linked to a restrictive statement. We now know that this type of measurement tool does not help students transfer classroom knowledge to real-world situations. Neither teacher-developed assessments nor the PARCC assessments are limited to measuring students' memorization of facts. They assess the knowledge, problem-solving ability, thinking skills and students' ability to apply the needed skills to succeed after graduation.

Some general concepts of the CCSS that are measured through PARCC.....

- English language arts standards build students' skills to:
  - Focus on reading comprehension;
  - Read complex texts independently;
  - Write effectively when analyzing text and using various sources;
  - Build and present knowledge through research;
  - Develop speaking and listening skills; and
  - Acquire other abilities required for success in college and careers.
- Mathematics standards build student skills to:
  - Model real-world problems;
  - Apply skills, concepts and understanding to solve multi-step problems;
  - Combine reading skills and mathematical practices;
  - Reason and justify answers;
  - Use precision, perseverance and strategic tools; and
  - Acquire other abilities required for success in college and careers.

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Student learning standards (CCSS) drive what is taught and learned, and teacher-developed assessments and PARCC measure students' demonstration of the knowledge and skills required in the current and future workplace.

Assessment of improved student learning and deep understanding of the CCSS requires a range of assessment practices with three overarching purposes for students:

- Assessment FOR learning - occurs when teachers in students' current and future grade levels use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching.
- Assessment OF learning - occurs when teachers use assessment results to tailor teaching to best meet students' needs and ensure that the educational program is of the highest quality. Teachers also use evidence of student learning to measure achievement against goals and standards. Educators and states use a summary of test results to ensure that their education program compares positively with other schools, districts, states and nations.
- Assessment AS learning - occurs when students reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their knowledge, skills, motivation to learn and their future learning goals. These skills are called "self-regulated learning" and help students become individuals who are life-long learners.

The overriding purpose of high-quality education assessments, which includes PARCC, is to improve student learning. Learning the concepts of the Common Core State Standards and measuring that learning over time with PARCC assessments can instill change, reinforce growth and increase students' ability to apply their new knowledge and skills to other situations beyond the assessment.

Clearly, student learning and assessment involve mastery of subject knowledge that requires the instructional skills of professional teachers. However, parents can take the lead in discussions about how and when a student learns outside of the classroom. Such discussions may include factors that are difficult to measure in a classroom or on an assessment.

**The PASS 2 model provides tools and supports for use by educators and parents so that they can build partnerships around assessing student learning and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC).**

As the implementation of PARCC assessments continues throughout the state, the Department of Education, districts and schools urge all stakeholders to remain committed to ensuring that our students are learning with high-quality standards and assessments. The PASS model for home/school partnerships will help to ensure that commitment continues.

*PASS 2 documents and partnership supports are intended to complement information about the New Jersey Department of Education's Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Assessments and provide resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to work together in the best interest of New Jersey students.*

*For information on the NJDOE PASS model, the PASS #1 theme of **Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards** or the PASS #2 theme of **Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and PARCC** go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: [informccss@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:informccss@doe.state.nj.us).*