
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)

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.*