



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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November 6, 2013

TO: District Superintendents  
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Evo Popoff  
Assistant Commissioner

RE: **PARCC Technology Readiness Update**

For over a year, the New Jersey Department of Education has been working to support districts and schools as they build the necessary technology infrastructure to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards as well as the PARCC assessments that will be administered in the 2014-15 school year. Starting in the 2011-12 school year, the Office of Educational Technology began a process of collecting and analyzing readiness data in order to support district and school-level planning and decision-making. To further support this effort, the Office of Educational Technology has also provided ongoing, timely information and guidance regarding technology readiness, particularly as it relates to the PARCC assessments. For instance, earlier this year, the NJDOE provided districts with information regarding the *PARCC Technology Readiness Tool*, the *Assessment Planning Capacity Tool*, and the *Rule of Thumb* on the number of devices recommended for testing. In addition, Office of Educational Technology staff has presented over 25 information and training sessions through both webinars (most recent webinars are archived at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/parcc/tech/survey/>) and regional meetings, and have been reaching out directly to information technology and curriculum staff across the state to support their planning.

Further, in order to support district procurement, and the funding needed for such procurement, the state released Regular Operating District (ROD) grants that could be used to fund school bandwidth infrastructure improvement projects in order to help prepare for the PARCC assessments. Also, we provided information regarding the Maine Learning Technology Initiative contract that provides a turnkey solution for the leasing of portable computing devices and wireless networks (<http://www.aboutwsca.org/contract.cfm/contract/e55-2013>).

In the 2013-14 school year, the NJDOE will be stepping up these efforts, by providing more information and targeted support to districts as described in more detail below.

## **I. Technology Guidelines For PARCC Assessments: Version 3.0**

PARCC recently released *Technology Guidelines For PARCC Assessments: Version 3.0*, which provides updated guidance on technology readiness for the PARCC assessments. Updates in this revised technology guidance include:

- i. Information Regarding Minimum Technology Specifications for the PARCC Field Test
- ii. Updated Bandwidth Specifications
- iii. Browser Specifications for the PARCC Field Test and 2014-2015 operational assessments

The full text of the *Technology Guidelines For PARCC Assessments: Version 3.0* is available at <http://www.parcconline.org/technology>.

## **II. NJTRAx Technology Readiness Database and Portal Launch November 14**

In order to provide districts and schools with real-time information on their readiness for online assessments, NJDOE has procured *NJTRAx*, an interactive technology readiness database that will replace the PARCC Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) survey for New Jersey, and a new technology readiness portal. The new *NJTRAx* system will provide districts and schools with a suite of tools to allow them to more easily maintain their technology information, analyze their readiness and plan for their future needs. In addition, analysis and real-time reporting features, as well as a “sandbox” environment that will allow districts and schools to run possible technology readiness scenarios from hypothetical data, will also be available. The first version of *NJTRAx*, consisting of the technology readiness data repository, will be available on November 14th, with new versions containing on-demand reporting and other system enhancements to follow early next year.

**Please note that the *NJTRAx* system will be replacing the TRT survey for the reporting of PARCC technology readiness.** All existing TRT data, as of June 21, has already been imported into the *NJTRAx* database, but we ask that you **check and update your data in *NJTRAx* by November 20.** We realize this is a short time frame, but our goal is to provide timely support to districts and test sites as they make plans regarding technology purchases for the FY 2014-2015 budget cycle. In order to provide this support in the upcoming months, we will be analyzing the data in *NJTRAx* starting November 20 in order to allow time for outreach and consultation to LEAS/Test Sites as appropriate.

In addition to the *NJTRAx* system, NJDOE will also be launching a technology readiness portal that will initially serve as the gateway to *NJTRAx* and eventually provide a comprehensive suite of technology readiness resources for online assessments and digital learning. Version 1.0 will launch on November 14, along with *NJTRAx*, and digital resources will be added in the months to come.

The *NJTRAx* system and the technology readiness portal will be available at <http://njdigitallearning.org> on November 14.

### III. Technology Readiness Webinars and Regional Technical Assistance Dates

As part of our ongoing communication and training efforts, a webinar will be conducted on November 14, 2013 from 10 AM – 12 noon to review the latest PARCC Technology Guidelines and provide an introduction and orientation for *NJTRAx*. It is highly recommended that district and test site administrators, PARCC Coordinators and PARCC IT Contacts attend this webinar. Registration for the webinar is not required. LEA and test site personnel will be able to access the webinar on November 14 through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mmec69f>. All participants are urged to visit the Blackboard Collaborate Web site at <http://support.blackboardcollaborate.com> no later than one day before the Webinar in order to properly configure their computer (Click on “First Time Users” for configuration instructions).

In addition, regional meetings have been scheduled to provide technical assistance regarding *NJTRAx* and planned NJDOE activities to help LEAs/Test Sites with next steps to ameliorate any identified or anticipated technology gaps for PARCC testing. After the formal presentation concludes at 1 PM, NJDOE staff and consultants will be available for individual meetings with participants. **Registration is required.** Please access the NJDOE Calendar of Events at <http://education.state.nj.us/events/> in order to secure your attendance. Refreshments will not be available.

All meetings will be held from 10 AM to 2 PM as follows:

South	Monday, December 9	Clearview Regional High School (Mullica Hill, Gloucester County)
North	Wednesday, December 11	Passaic County Technical Institute (Wayne, Passaic County)
Central	Monday, December 16	NJ Forensic Science Technology Center at Hamilton (Horizon Technology Center) (Mercer County)

### IV. Additional Targeted NJDOE Technology Readiness Support for Districts and Schools

Districts and schools across the state are in the process of developing technology plans that not only to address the needs of the PARCC assessments next year but that will support student learning and delivery of the Common Core State Standards for years to come. In order to support this work, NJDOE has contracted with education technology

experts who will work directly with districts and schools to help analyze their technology readiness and develop plans to address any shortcomings.

Over the next few weeks and months, this team of NJDOE education technology experts will be contacting LEAs/Test Sites in order to confirm technology readiness data and provide assistance as necessary to help prepare for PARCC assessments. The goal is to provide technology recommendations by January 2014 to help inform LEA/Test Site SFY 2014-2015 technology budget decisions. If your LEA/Test Site is contacted, we encourage you to respond as soon as possible in order to allow NJDOE to assist you in PARCC preparation planning. **Because the work of this team will be guided primarily by the data within the NJTRAx system, it is imperative that you verify and update your data in the NJTRAx system by November 20<sup>th</sup>.**

For any questions regarding the information in this memo, or PARCC Technology Readiness in general, please email [parcctrt@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:parcctrt@doe.state.nj.us).

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