



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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TO: District Superintendents  
Charter School Lead Persons  
District and School Test Coordinators  
District and School Technology Coordinators

FROM: Bari Anhalt Erlichson, Ph.D.  
Assistant Commissioner/Chief Performance Officer

RE: Test Administration Times for PARCC Assessments, Spring 2015

It is my privilege to update you with recent developments in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. Below you will find a chart with both the session unit times and the estimated times for each test sessions for all grade levels of the PARCC assessments recently adopted by the PARCC consortium. As you know, the PARCC assessments will replace our current NJASK and HSPA assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics as our statewide assessments in the spring of 2015. However, the administration of PARCC will vary dramatically from our current assessment programs as schools will be able to exercise considerable discretion in scheduling the test sessions based on local considerations related to the availability of computer devices, space and staff capacity in addition to other local concerns such as field trips and school holidays or celebrations.

The decision to replace NJASK/HSPA with the PARCC assessments was made over four years ago as we adopted our new standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. While NJASK and HSPA fulfilled our federal testing requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), they did not play a significant role in the improvement of instruction or the advancement of student learning outcomes. Our tests were short, in that they had relatively few questions and did not fully incorporate the full range of grade level standards each year. This resulted in cluster scores that could not be translated into school-wide strategies for instructional improvement or meaningful longitudinal trend data. And because our tests were short, many schools have suffered from extraordinary 'ceiling' effects, where as many as 30% of students in a particular grade level could achieve a perfect scale score of 300. Finally, because New Jersey was developing tests on our own, it was cost-prohibitive for the state to release test questions for use by educators in reflecting on their practices, the progress that their students had made, and determining what types of additional supports they and their colleagues needed so that their students could achieve even greater learning outcomes.

The PARCC assessments will be a significant improvement on all of these fronts. They will be longer assessments so that the full range and breadth of the standards can be assessed. This will enable more robust cluster scores to be derived and for you to meaningfully gauge the performance of your highest achieving students. To date, PARCC has already released practice tests and test items, scoring rubrics and exemplars of student responses so that educators can understand how the tests are being constructed and what skills and knowledge students will be asked to demonstrate. More practice tests are expected to be released in the coming weeks.

As a member of PARCC, New Jersey educators and students have played important roles in the design and development of the PARCC assessments through test question development or review and by participating in the field tests last spring. Recently, our state and the other PARCC states reviewed information from the spring 2014 field tests and determined test session times based on that information. This now allows schools to continue their scheduling process. **Please note, for those of you who were involved in field tests this past spring, you will see that the amount of time that schools must schedule for each test session is much shorter than during the field test administration.** NJDOE will be hosting several webinars in October to assist schools in effectively scheduling the PARCC assessments, given local considerations of computer devices, space and staff capacities.

### Session testing times

Based on information about the time it took students to complete test sessions during the spring 2014 field test, the PARCC states have set test session times (called “unit testing” times in the forthcoming test manuals) that should allow the vast majority of students to complete the tests. Most students took less time to complete the field test than projected. The spring 2015 session test times are adjusted accordingly and can be seen in the chart below. The chart indicates the amount of time that must be scheduled, and, for informational purposes only, the amount of time you should anticipate it will take the majority of students to complete the test (“estimated time on task”).

Drawing from field test data, the revised times were established so students would have sufficient time to complete the assessments and ensure that all children have sufficient time to show what they know and can do. In English language arts/literacy, for example, the session times should enable students to do close reading of the passages, draft their written responses, and go back to edit their work.

The PARCC states will re-examine the session test times again following the spring 2015 administration. The PARCC states plan to continuously review the test design to ensure the right balance between generating useful and timely information for teachers and families, and minimizing the time the test sessions take.

In the chart below, the times are presented by grade level and by subject areas in addition to being broken out into either the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) portion of the test – in New Jersey, that corresponds to the March testing window – or the End-of-Year (EOY) portion of the test – corresponding to the April-May testing window in New Jersey. So for instance, in March, third grade students will take five test units – three in English Language Arts (ELA) and two in mathematics. In April/May, third grade students will take three test units – one in ELA and two in mathematics. Districts will have a great deal of discretion and flexibility to schedule these units at any point during the testing windows. For instance, in high schools, it is possible for the test units to be ‘stacked’ or scheduled back to back with a break in between so that the total number of days that a school is engaged in testing is limited.

PARCC Test Session Times

		PBA Unit 1	PBA Unit 2	PBA Unit 3	EOY Unit 1	EOY Unit 2
<b>GRADE 3 ELA</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>-</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>GRADE 3 MATH</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>GRADES 4-5 ELA</b>						
<b>GRADES 4-5 ELA</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>-</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>GRADES 4-5 MATH</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>GRADES 6-8 ELA</b>						
<b>GRADES 6-8 ELA</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>
<b>GRADES 6-8 MATH</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>GRADES 9-11 ELA</b>						
<b>GRADES 9-11 ELA</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>
<b>ALGEBRA I GEOMETRY</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>ALGEBRA II</b>	<b>Unit Time</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>
	<i>Est. Time on Task</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>		<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>

**Unit Testing Time** is the amount of time any student who needs it must be provided to complete the unit. It is the amount of testing time schools must schedule for each unit.

**Estimated Time on Task** is the approximate amount of time, based on data from the field test, in which the majority of students may complete a unit. It is provided for informational purposes only.

- c: Members, State Board of Education
- Senior Staff
- Executive County Superintendents
- Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
- Executive County Business Official
- NJ LEE Group
- Garden State Coalition of Schools