



Christie Administration Announces That Majority of School Districts Have Volunteered To Participate in PARCC Field Tests

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Contact: Mike Yaple
Rich Vespucci
609-292-1126

Trenton, NJ – Seventy percent of school districts and charter schools across New Jersey have volunteered to take part in field testing for the new "PARCC" assessments this spring, the Department of Education (DOE) announced today. PARCC – the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers – is a consortium of 19 states working together to develop a common set of assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers.

"We're grateful for the overwhelmingly positive response of the superintendents and school leaders who volunteered to take part in helping us fine-tune the PARCC assessments," said Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. "The vast majority of districts that were approached about this opportunity signed up. Through their input, we can look forward to having a powerful statewide assessment that will inform local decisions to improve curriculum and instruction, raise student achievement, and ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college or career."

The field tests are an opportunity for districts to experience both the content of the new PARCC tests as well as the process for administering the computer-based assessments. There will be no consequences for students, teachers or schools associated with the field testing. In addition, PARCC has recently released a new privacy policy to protect students from the release of personal information.

A total of 1,276 schools (approximately 58 percent of all schools with tested grade levels) in 445 of New Jersey's 637 "local education agencies," which includes school districts and charter schools, will take part in field testing of the new PARCC student assessments. Typically, the field tests will be done in one or two classrooms in each participating school. Students participating in the PARCC field test will take only a portion of test so individual student or school reports will not be generated.

For the past two years, the DOE has tested portions of the PARCC assessments with a limited number of students and in a limited number of schools and districts. The coming field test of the PARCC assessments will occur in March and May, before the PARCC tests are implemented statewide in the spring of 2015.

Districts were selected to participate in this pilot by PARCC to represent a statistical sample both of New Jersey students and students nationwide.

The PARCC assessments will replace New Jersey's current assessments, the Assessment of Skills & Knowledge (NJASK) and the High School Proficiency Assessments (HSPA). PARCC will measure students' critical thinking skills and their ability to apply what they learned to the real world, rather than simple memorization of facts.

The tests are aligned to the Common Core State Standards, which are higher standards in math and literacy that 46 states have voluntarily adopted. The Common Core State Standards are internationally benchmarked and focus on developing the critical thinking skills that are crucial in the 21st century. The New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the Common Core standards in 2010 and implemented it in schools over a three-year timeline to give districts time to make necessary changes in instruction.

"Since the inception of PARCC, we have been collaborating with educators and leaders from both K-12 and higher education to develop assessments that are worthy of our students' time and efforts and that will provide valuable, timely and actionable feedback to educators," said Commissioner Cerf. "We thank the education leaders in New Jersey for their enthusiasm to assist in this next stage of development of these assessments."

For a full list of districts and schools taking part in the PARCC field test, [click here](#).

The full implementation of the PARCC tests in 2015, five years after the adoption of the Common Core standards by the State Board, is part of an overall effort by the DOE to ensure a careful, deliberate transition to the Common Core. Since this past summer alone, the Department has provided more than 300 training programs, directly reaching more than 50,000 educators. Extensive information and instructional materials have been made available in print and online. And last month, the Department introduced a new website, www.njcore.org, as a free resource for all educators to access, upload and rate instructional materials that can be used in the classroom.

