



Illinois State Board of Education

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FACT SHEET

2015 PARCC ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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Beginning Dec. 11, families will receive score reports from the first administration of the new statewide assessment, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam, in English language arts and math. Starting in March 2015, Illinois students in grades 3-8 and some high school students took the PARCC test in two parts – the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year (EOY) exam – that used different types of questions to measure students' knowledge and skills. The PBA and EOY will result in one score that will help educators and parents know how well students have mastered the appropriate grade-level material to prepare them for the next grade and eventually for college and careers.

The PARCC exam is not an "additional" test but replaces the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). It also marks a significant departure from these previous assessments. This change will produce different test results that will give us more detailed information about individual student performance. The PARCC assessment measures students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and writing skills, which are all essential for success in higher education and the workplace. Students must demonstrate and explain their knowledge and understanding as opposed to simply reciting memorized facts or filling in a bubble for a correct answer. These changes mean that we cannot compare PARCC exam results to those of the ISAT and PSAE.

The PARCC score reports will show how a student performed on each portion of the PARCC assessment as well as the student's overall score, which will fall within one of five performance levels that indicate the extent to which a child demonstrated understanding of grade-level subject standards. Students whose scores fall within level 4 or 5 demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of grade-level content and are on the right track to being ready for college-level coursework. Students with level 3 scores are approaching expectations, but may need additional assistance mastering content. Students earning level 1 or 2 scores need greater supports and help to master content.

The PARCC assessment sets new goals for our students using higher expectations that match the rigor and scope of the Illinois Learning Standards. Therefore, lower proficiency scores do not mean that our schools are performing worse or that students are less capable. The change is simply a reflection of how statewide assessments have evolved to meet higher standards that promote college and career readiness in the 21st century for all students.

The first year of PARCC testing is a baseline for test scores and will establish the performance targets for future years. Therefore, the 2015 scores have taken additional time to produce because Illinois educators and their colleagues from other states needed to review students' work to determine

the performance levels. Going forward, PARCC test results will be available sooner so that they can help teachers, parents, and students inform instruction during the school year.

The PARCC exam provides an opportunity to better prepare students for the next step of their academic career along the continuum of their K-12 journey. While no single test can give a complete picture of achievement, the PARCC exam will provide more accurate information about how each child is performing against our internationally benchmarked learning standards. This information will help teachers and parents determine if a student requires remediation or more advanced instruction earlier in his or her schooling, ensuring they graduate from high school fully prepared for the demands of college and/or their chosen career field.

For more information about the PARCC exam and other statewide assessments, please visit www.isbe.net/parcc-place/default.htm or www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm.