



Deputy Commissioner
Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Educational Technology

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TO: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public Schools
Charter School Leaders

FROM: Ken Wagner

SUBJECT: Update on PARCC

As you may know, New York is a Governing State of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which is a consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands (see <http://www.parcconline.org>). Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, PARCC will provide member states access to English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments in grades 3-11 that measure student progress on the Common Core State Standards and on the readiness trajectory for college and careers. The PARCC assessments will leverage technology to include innovative performance-based items not practical with traditional paper-and-pencil assessments (although PARCC plans to offer a paper-and-pencil version as states ramp up their technology capacity).

New York has committed to field testing the PARCC assessment and will continue to support the successful development of these next generation assessments, which promise an innovative design that is supportive of classroom instruction and student learning. Because New York State currently has high-quality Common Core assessments in place, the Board of Regents can be strategic about the timeline for implementing the PARCC assessment to ensure a smooth transition. Department staff will provide a PARCC update to the Board of Regents in the fall, and until the Board establishes a timeline for transition, New York will continue to administer its own New York State Common Core assessments for accountability purposes at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels.

PARCC Field Testing

Field tests are always necessary when building high quality tests that are fair and useful to students, parents, and educators. Each question must be field tested before it can be included on an operational test for scoring purposes. Educators and test developers do everything possible to write good test questions, but field tests are the only way to be sure that the question actually measures the student knowledge and skills it was designed to measure. Similar to New York State, PARCC will be

administering field tests in spring 2014 to finalize the questions that will be included on future operational tests.

It is in New York's interest to contribute to the development of a next generation testing program; therefore, PARCC has been authorized to contact local school districts and charter schools to determine if the district or school is willing to have one or more schools participate in the spring 2014 PARCC field tests. PARCC will be allowed to include in its sample a maximum of 600 New York schools in grades 3 to 11, with a maximum of two grades per school unless the school agrees to more grades. Schools will be invited to field test either PARCC's "Performance-Based Assessment" test component (which includes constructed response questions) or its "End-of-Year" test component (which includes multiple choice questions) using either a paper-and-pencil or a computer-based testing administration format. Each selected grade will be asked to field test only one content area, ELA or math. A small number of schools may be asked to administer field tests in both the Performance-Based Assessment and End-of-Year Test in one content area to one grade of students.

We make every attempt to limit field testing to the least amount necessary to build high quality tests that are fair, valid and useful to students, parents, and educators. Therefore,

- New York will endeavor to exclude from New York State field testing in ELA and math all schools that agree to participate in PARCC field testing.
- Schools that participate in PARCC field testing will be expected to participate – if selected – in New York State field testing in other subjects (e.g., science).
- Schools that do not participate in PARCC field testing will be required to participate in all typical New York State field testing.

Since PARCC was authorized only to include 600 New York schools statewide, the vast majority of schools will be expected to participate, as always, in all New York State field testing. All schools will have access to a PARCC practice test in spring 2014 to learn more about the PARCC test design and to determine their computer-based testing capacity.

Finally, please note that a school may be selected by PARCC for paper-and-pencil or computer-based field testing. If, for whatever reason, the school would prefer paper-and-pencil field testing, but was selected for computer-based field testing (or the reverse), the school may decline to participate in its initial selected modality (e.g., paper-and-pencil) but request to be considered for future selections in the alternate modality (e.g., computer-based testing).

The table below summarizes the timing of PARCC field tests in comparison to the New York State testing milestones. **Schools will be expected to meet all New York State milestones and should consider these when deciding whether or not to participate in PARCC field tests.**

PARCC Field Test Type	Dates	Overlapping New York State Exam-Related Events
PARCC field testing for the “Performance-Based Assessment” test component (which includes constructed response questions)	Any time at local discretion between March 24 to April 11, 2014	<p>Grades 3-8 ELA test administration and makeup tests (April 1-8)</p> <p>Grades 3-8 ELA test scoring (April 9-11)</p>
PARCC field testing for “End-of-Year test component (which includes multiple choice questions)	Any time at local discretion between May 5 and June 6, 2014	<p>Grades 3-8 Math make-up tests (May 5-7)</p> <p>Grades 3-8 Math test scoring (May 5-14)</p> <p>Grades 4/8 Science Performance Tests (May 21-30)</p> <p>Secondary-level field tests (May 11-31)</p> <p>Grades 4/8 Science Written Tests and makeup tests (June 2-4)</p> <p>Common Core Regents Exam in Algebra I and ELA (June 3)</p>

Thank you for your continued assistance with this important work. If you have any questions about the New York State testing program, please contact us at emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov. Districts and charter schools invited to participate in the PARCC field tests will be contacted directly by PARCC’s field test partner (Pearson) by late August. If you have additional questions about the PARCC field test, please contact PARCC’s field test partner (Pearson) during business hours at 1-888-493-9888 or PARCC@support.pearson.com.