



Why Is the PARCC Assessment Valuable for My Child?

1. Why should my child take the PARCC test?

- The major complaint about New Jersey's previous statewide assessments test in English language arts and math, the NJASK, is that they did little to provide educators to improve your child's classroom, and that it provided parents with little feedback. The PARCC test is a more sophisticated assessment designed to address those issues. PARCC is aligned to the state's new academic standards that are guiding what and how your children are taught in class. In addition to providing an overall score in both subjects, the test also shows how well your child is performing in comparison to peers in his or her grade level, school and district, as well as useful information about your children's strengths and areas for improvement.
- PARCC is not meant to provide a complete picture of student achievement, but when combined with other measures, including teacher reports and student grades, it provides important information about your child's progress.

2. What makes PARCC different from previous state tests?

- The test goes beyond multiple-choice questions to get a deeper understanding of your child's learning. The questions require your child to apply his or her knowledge and skills to address real-world problems and describe the reasoning. Because the test questions are more in-depth, parents and teachers receive more detailed information about student learning than previous tests.

3. Can PARCC help my child improve?

- Yes. The PARCC reports break down each subject tested into different categories of skills, and shows how well your child performed in each. This helps you and your child's teacher understand where your child is doing well and where he or she needs more support. You can use this information to guide a discussion with your child's teacher(s) about additional supports or challenges needed in class, and other ways to support your child at home. Teachers and principals will use this information to improve classroom instruction and provide more effective and targeted support and professional development. They can also identify where your child has mastered content so they can provide more challenging work to continue to keep him or her engaged and making progress.

4. Why is my child's participation important?

- These tests serve as an 'academic checkup.' Although they are only one measure of your child's progress, the scores on the PARCC test can be compared from one year to the next. The test is a useful tool to determine your child's performance and the level of progress and readiness for the next grade. Ultimately it will tell you how well your child is prepared for success after graduation.

5. How much instructional time does my child spend on the PARCC assessment?

Students in New Jersey will spend less than 1 percent of their time in school on the annual PARCC assessment.

- Since the assessments are aligned to our state standards, all learning prepares students for these assessments. Good teaching will always be the best method of preparing students for success—whether that’s success on an assessment, a presentation, or to move on to the next grade.
- Officials from New Jersey and other states in the PARCC consortium listened to the concerns of educators, and reduced the total amount of testing for 2016.

6. How will the test be shorter this year?

- The total testing time will be reduced, with the math test being shortened by 60 minutes and the English language arts test by 30 minutes.
- In addition, the two testing windows used last year (one portion of the test was given in the early spring, and another was given at the end of the school year) will be combined into one testing window for 2016.

7. Should I be concerned with over-testing?

- We are committed to preparing all students for success in college and career, and part of that requires assessing students. As a district, we’re working to ensure that our students only take assessments that provide meaningful data for students, teachers and parents. We’re committed to administering fewer, fairer and more accurate tests.

8. Should I be concerned about the privacy of my child’s data?

- Protecting student data and privacy is a top priority. Protections are in place at both the state and federal levels, as well as through all state-level contracts and agreements, to prevent student-identifiable data from being marketed or distributed. Federal law prohibits the creation of a federal database with students’ personally identifiable information. Any recommended data collection adheres to all federal and state privacy laws, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- The selling of student data was never allowed under the previous tests in New Jersey, and it is not allowed under PARCC.

9. Where can I go for more information?

- For more information on the PARCC test, including FAQs, videos and links to practice tests, visit <http://understandthescore.org/>. To see a practice test and for resources to help your child at home, visit <http://bealearninghero.org/classroom/PARCC>. Also visit the New Jersey Department of Education’s resources online: <http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment>.