



# Illinois State Board of Education

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## FACT SHEET PARCC ASSESSMENTS

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**Illinois schools will administer new assessments** created through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in spring 2015. These assessments are fully aligned to the K-12 Illinois Learning Standards in English language arts and mathematics and emphasize academic rigor, critical thinking, problem solving and college and career readiness for all students.

**Third- through eighth-graders will take the PARCC** in both English language arts and math. At the high school level, districts have been given the flexibility this year to choose one of the following three combinations:

- (1) ELA/Literacy 1 and Algebra 1/Integrated Math 1
- (2) ELA/Literacy 2 and Geometry/Integrated Math 2
- (3) ELA/Literacy 3 and Algebra 2/Integrated Math 3

The PARCC replaces the state's former tests, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). Districts may also administer the ACT+Writing and WorkKeys on a state test administration date at no cost to students or the district. See the related "**High School Transition to PARCC**" fact sheet for more details about state testing in grades 9-12.

**This year, we will be using the PARCC summative assessments** which are designed to measure overall curriculum and program effectiveness. These assessments are standardized to allow comparison across student groups. The PARCC summative assessments consist of two required components: a Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and an End of Year assessment (EOY). The PBA component of the PARCC requires that students demonstrate their knowledge and skills through extended tasks and take the PBA when approximately 75 percent of instruction has been completed. Students take the second part, or EOY, at approximately the point when 90 percent of instruction has been completed. The EOY is composed of shorter, machine-scored questions. Note these are not two separate tests but two parts (PBA and EOY) of one summative assessment and are not intended to measure the growth or academic progress gained from one part to the next. Instead, growth can be measured when compared to prior years and when other PARCC assessments become available.

**The PARCC system includes interim and formative assessments** and those are still in development and expected to be available next year (2015-2016). Budget allocations will determine what we can provide to districts. Formative assessments are designed to provide feedback to teachers on a regular basis so they can adjust instruction and improve student learning. Interim assessments are designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction.

**Third- through eighth-graders will take the summative grade level assessment** in both English language arts and math. The high school summative assessments, called “End of Course (EOC),” will be given at the completion of courses that contain the corresponding standards rather than at the end of a specific grade year. That means students would take one of the math exams and the ELA course at any grade, dependent on when they’re taking the course that aligns with the standards and the test. These two assessments might not necessarily be taken in the same year.

**The Illinois PARCC Testing Windows for 2014-15 will be:**

REGULAR ADMINISTRATION		
School/District START DATE	<b>Spring Regular Administration of Computer-Based Testing</b>	
	*Paper/Pencil administration should occur during the first two weeks of each designated testing window	
On or before Sept. 1	<b>PBA</b>	March 9, 2015 to April 3, 2015
After Sept. 1		March 16, 2015 to April 10, 2015
On or before Sept. 1	<b>EOY</b>	April 27, 2015 to May 22, 2015
After Sept. 1		May 4, 2015 to May 29, 2015

**The PARCC differs from Illinois’ former assessment system** in a number of ways:

- The PARCC system aligns college and career readiness expectations from kindergarten through grade 12 for the first time in Illinois.
- The assessments measure whether or not students have the academic knowledge and skills necessary to succeed after high school.
- Using technology-enhanced items and various other innovations, students will get a chance to better showcase their skills and results will become available for use more quickly.
- Students must analyze information and explain their answers.
- The PARCC assessments take advantage of technology to include questions and other tasks that emulate the type of work that students will encounter in their classrooms on a regular basis and after high school. These assessments help to encourage schools to use technology as a day-to-day tool to enhance learning.

**Educators from K-12 and higher education** helped to develop the PARCC assessments, which are grounded in evidence to support college and career readiness. Representatives from higher education will continue to be involved in PARCC development and implementation.

**The multistate test offers a common metric** for both educators and policymakers to gauge student performance on a level playing field. The state and local districts will continue to monitor other metrics, such as student and school progress, attendance and graduation rates, school climate and learning conditions.

**About 500 districts, 1,200 schools and 110,888 students** in Illinois took part in PARCC field testing in spring 2014. The field test was a “practice run” to gather input from teachers and students and to identify and correct problems with this assessment system before its first official administration in spring 2015. As a result, students did not receive individual test scores.

**Students and test administrators completed a survey about the field test experience** with preliminary results showing:

- Two-thirds of students taking the ELA and Math assessments reported that they prefer taking the tests on the computer.
- 95 percent of students taking the ELA test and 88 percent of students taking the Math test finished within the allotted time or early.

**More than half of all Illinois schools will administer the PARCC online** in spring 2015. The ultimate goal is that all schools will eventually administer the PARCC online. Realistically, this goal will take a few more years. As schools continue to update their equipment and infrastructure, PARCC will be available as a paper-based test for schools that lack the capacity needed to test online. Implementation of computer-based testing may not occur all at one time across a district, or even within a building.

**Additional information about the PARCC assessments**, including resources for parents, students and teachers, can be found at the following websites:

- The PARCC website: <http://www.parcconline.org/>
- ISBE Student Assessments website: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/parcc.htm>
- PARCC Practice Tests and sample questions: <http://www.parcconline.org/practice-tests>

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