

# PARCC Information

- New Jersey has had a long history of establishing state standards for instruction and assessment to help schools ensure that students are meeting educational goals. Standards are what we expect students to know in individual grades. Curricula implementation is how we operationalize those goals into learning.
- Federal and state laws require New Jersey students to take an assessment that measures college and career readiness.
- PARCC is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and more accurately gauges students' progress in achieving these new standards. NJASK incorporated Common Core concepts in last year's exam as a logical step in the transition to PARCC.
- The information we receive will be more comprehensive under PARCC than previous state-wide assessments. PARCC data will help us to better monitor each student's progress by helping to identify strengths and weaknesses. Schools can then respond accordingly with individual support for students and improvements in local curricula, instruction and assessments.
- Colleges / universities have committed to allow a PARCC score of 4 or 5 (viewed as mastery) for purposes of placement in college courses. This means that students won't need to take any remedial courses if they score a 4 or 5 on the exam. It also means they won't have to take the Accuplacer (the test that colleges use to determine college placement).
- PARCC assesses critical thinking skills in students, which is essential if students are to meet the challenges of our current global workforce.
- PARCC is administered electronically. An e-platform will not only eventually help us receive data faster, but will also allow for deeper analysis of the data, helping schools better respond to student needs.
- The change to PARCC has facilitated upgrades in school technology infrastructure, and training for educators to integrate the newest technologies into the classroom. This promotes greater infusion of technology in classroom instruction and assessment to better engage students who are digital natives and prepare them for a future where the use of technology is not an option but a necessity.
- PARCC is administered in 'testing windows' or blocks of time. Schools can choose when to schedule testing based upon their calendar and student schedules. Students will not test for 20 days— rather; there are 20 days within which to schedule testing. This flexibility allows all schools the opportunity to create a schedule that works best for them with the least disruption of instructional time.
- While parents have the right to make the decision for their child not to test, as educators we lose an opportunity to gain invaluable information on how their child is progressing. In addition, there may be monetary implications for the district as the federal government does require student participation in a state-wide assessment.
- The NJ Department of Education realizes that this is the first year of PARCC implementation and that some change may be needed as we move forward. They will be considering all feedback from parents, students, and educators to make informed decisions for subsequent test administrations.

## Middletown Township School District PARCC Procedures

In February 2014, the State Board of Education passed a resolution reaffirming that District Boards of Education are obligated to implement the Common Core State Standards and to ensure students meet the expectations and proficiency standards as measured by current and future State and local assessments. The Middletown Township School District is implementing the Common Core State Standards at every grade level to prepare our students for college and career readiness.

Subsequently, on October 30, 2014, New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner David C. Hespe issued a memo regarding the administration of PARCC testing. For the 2014-2015 school year, Mr. Hespe stated, "The PARCC assessment will replace previous statewide assessments, NJASK in grades 3-8, and the grade 11 High School Proficiency Assessment. In addition, students in grades 9 and 10 will be administered the PARCC assessment." Commissioner Hespe clarified that there is no opt out provision for the PARCC assessment. All students eligible to participate in PARCC testing are expected to take this assessment.

The District is currently working with the New Jersey Department of Education and the Monmouth County Executive Superintendent to make sure that we are meeting our obligation. Our course of action, based on current guidance from the Executive County Superintendent and the New Jersey Department of Education, is as follows:

- Students present in school during scheduled testing sessions will be seated for the test.
- When a parent/guardian informs the school that their child will not participate in testing, the student will remain in the testing room and be provided with District selected literature to read for the duration of the test sessions. The district will accept parents' written correspondence as sufficient notification for test refusal. The student will not need to further refuse to test. No personal electronic devices will be permitted in the testing site.
- The school will notify the parent/guardian of any student who refuses to participate in the testing if prior notification was not received. The conversation will be documented. Any student, who refuses to participate in testing, without approval from the parent/guardian, will remain in the testing room and be provided with District selected literature to read during the duration of the test sessions. No personal electronic devices will be permitted in the testing site.
- If the District does not receive confirmation of refusal from the parent/guardian, students will be seated for their grade level make-up testing sessions.
- Students must be present in school for a minimum of 4 hours daily to receive credit for attendance. Please refer to the District attendance policy for consequences regarding unexcused absences.
- This plan may be adjusted should we receive further guidance and/or clarification from the State Department of Education or the Monmouth County Executive Superintendent's Office.