

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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William O. George III, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Amy P. Gallagher, CPA
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

March 2, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

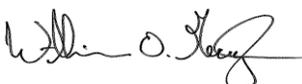
I am deeply concerned with the growing number of parents who have recently indicated that they are refusing to have their children take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. I believe this is a mistake. It is my firm conviction that all students in grades 3 through 11 should take the PARCC assessment. I have spoken at multiple parent and Board of Education meetings about the benefits of PARCC, information has been available on our District Website, and building level administrators have presented to parents on this topic.

There has been a great deal of publicity about the PARCC assessment; some of which has been fueled by special interest groups. Below is accurate information about the assessment.

- The time scheduled for PARCC administration does not deviate significantly from the testing time under the state's previous standardized tests, NJASK and HSPA. Furthermore, students taking the PARCC assessments are engaged in rigorous tasks that require critical thinking and problem solving, which align with the curricular instruction students are receiving in the classroom on a daily basis.
- We are confident that our students are well prepared to excel on the PARCC assessment. Over the course of the past three years, the District has revised over 187 curricula to align with the Common Core State Standards. These are the standards that are assessed by PARCC. Ongoing professional development has been provided to ensure that our teachers are utilizing best practices of instruction to engage students in higher order thinking skills.
- PARCC results will provide parents and educators with valuable information about which concepts and skills their students have mastered or are still learning. Teachers will be able to use this data to inform their instruction for current students as well as their students in the years to come. Data from the PARCC will not be used for course or program placement during the 2015-16 school year.
- All public schools in New Jersey are required to administer standardized assessments as part of the federal law known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The implementation of this law may impact District funding.
- Although PARCC scores will not be used as a graduation requirement this year, there are many benefits of taking the test for high school students. The assessment aligns to the revised SAT and other tests students will encounter in college. Experience with a computer based assessment will benefit these students in the future.
- The NJ State Department of Education and the US Department of Education are working with colleges and universities to use PARCC scores in lieu of college placement tests as an indication that students are prepared to enter credit bearing college courses. Thus, providing an opt-out for non-credit bearing remedial courses that cost parents and students millions of dollars each year.

If you are a parent who has contacted us about refusing to have your child(ren) take the PARCC assessment, I encourage you to reconsider. Any parent who wishes to reconsider their decision to refuse the test should contact their child's building administrator prior to the close of the March testing window. For more information about PARCC, please visit our District Website (www.middletownk12.org).

Sincerely,



William O. George III, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools