



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

DC PARCC Student Score Reports

Frequently Asked Questions from Families: A Guide for Teachers, Principals and LEA Leaders

When families receive their students' DC Partnership Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) score reports from the spring 2015 tests, they may have questions for their students' teachers and principals. This guide provides initial answers to some of the most common questions teachers and school leaders can anticipate from families and students, and highlights school and LEA-specific questions that school and LEA leaders should discuss answers to with their educators prior to the score report release.

1. Why does this score report look so different from my child's previous DC CAS score report? Is my student doing worse than last year?

- In spring 2015, DC students took the Partnership Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) tests for the first time in English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) and mathematics. These tests replaced the DC CAS in reading, composition and mathematics. The PARCC score report helps families understand how their child is progressing in math and ELA relative to DC's learning standards, and how he or she is performing in comparison to peers.
- This is a new test and DC is setting a new baseline for scores. When the standards change, and are more rigorous, a student who was meeting the standards previously might not be anymore. The student is as smart as he or she was before, but might not be meeting the new standards. As students gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet the new higher standards, scores will improve.
- PARCC is only one of several measures that illustrate a student's progress in math and ELA. Report card grades and other measures of success our school uses can include multiple sources of information including participation, work habits, projects, homework that are not reflected in the PARCC score.

Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including: How has your school implemented the Common Core State Standards? What other measures do you use to measure student success and readiness for college and career? How will your school use 2015 PARCC results to inform classroom instruction and any other school activities?

2. How can families use the score reports to help their children improve?

- The score reports will include a breakdown of your child's performance in categories within each subject. This will help you understand where your child needs additional practice or to be challenged by going deeper into a subject. You can also use the test results to guide a discussion about additional supports or strategies that may be needed in class, as well as at home.
 - To find resources in every category and at every grade level, visit <http://bealearninghero.org/> or <http://parconline.org/>. You can use your child's individual score to find resources that will match his or her areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including:
What opportunities exist in your school community for family engagement to help students reach their learning goals?

3. What does it mean if a student did not achieve a Level 4? Should students be promoted to the next grade level if they do not achieve Level 4?

- These tests are only one of several measures of how well a student is progressing against the standards. Students who score at Level 4 or above in ELA or math have met the expectations of the grade level in the subject matter, and specifically, are on track to succeed in first-year college classes without remediation. Students who score below level 4 may need additional supports to ensure they are on track for success in college and career.

Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including:
How do PARCC scores impact promotion to the next grade, graduation or report card grades? What supports are available for students achieving below grade level? Are any educational decisions, such as tutoring, summer school, or grade retention impacted by a student's score or performance level on PARCC? If my high school student did not achieve Level 4, are there any supports you can provide or help me line up in areas my student may need extra help when starting college?

4. Why are families receiving test scores from last spring in the fall?

- Spring 2015 was the first administration of the PARCC assessment. Our administration in DC with approximately 40,000 students – 93 percent of whom took the test online – went extremely well. As is the case with the first year of any new assessment, since last year was the first year of the PARCC test additional time was required to prepare the first score reports and ensure consistency of the scoring process. In addition, performance levels – the five levels that indicate how well students met grade level expectations – had to be set after testing. After this initial year, scores will be available *before* the beginning of the next school year.

5. What if my child is an English learner or student with disabilities? How does the test account for that?

- All students, except those with significant cognitive disabilities, can take the PARCC tests. The test has accommodations and supports that are built into it for students with disabilities and/or English learners. Accommodations include text-to-speech, Braille, closed captioning, and others.

Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including:
What supports does your school provide to help students with disabilities and English learners reach college- and career-ready expectations?

6. If a student was not familiar with computers, were accommodations made for technology? Did students have enough time to finish?

- There were resources available to give students the opportunity to practice on computers in class. This included taking PARCC practice tests, so they could become familiar with the tools and the different types of questions. To see a practice test, visit <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/practice-tests>.
- Tests were intentionally timed to allow most students plenty of time to finish without rushing. Extended time was available for students with disabilities and English learners.

*Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including:
How is technology used for instruction in your classrooms?*

- 7. Do teachers receive the same kind of information as families? If not, what do teachers receive?**
- DC provides the same information to teachers and families. Teachers and school leaders in DC will also have access to additional analysis and information for students in their classrooms through a secure online assessment resource site.

*Schools and LEAs may want to discuss answers to additional potential questions, including:
How are teachers using the data to inform their instruction? How is the school using the data to make decisions to shape the educational environment? What other resources do teachers and school leaders use to track student learning and progress?*

- 8. If scores from the PARCC test cannot be compared to DC CAS, why are these scores important?**
- The scores set a new baseline. They show how well students are progressing against the new, higher standards. It is important for families to know that their child is mastering the necessary skills to be successful in the next grade level, and ultimately ready for success in college and career. Next year we will be able to compare scores against this year's baseline to measure progress.
- 9. Will the PARCC test be different in 2016?**
- Yes. In 2015, the test was given in two separate parts: the performance-based test, which was taken in early spring, and the end-of-year test, taken near the end of the school year. In 2016, these parts will be combined into one window, instead of two separate ones. The total testing time will also be adjusted, with the math test being shortened by 60 minutes and the English language arts test by 30 minutes. These changes were made in response to feedback from educators and parents. We will still be able to compare the 2016 results to the 2015 baseline.