PARCC Field Test in DC Lessons Learned

What is the PARCC Field Test and how many students in DC participated?
DC is a member of the PARCC assessment consortium. This spring, DC participated in field tests for the PARCC in Math and ELA/Literacy. Over 6,000 students at 108 schools and 18 LEAs participated. Most students took the field test on computers, but some schools field tested paper exams. The PARCC is administered in two parts: Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and End of Year (EOY) Students generally only took one portion of the test (PBA or EOY) in one subject.

The field tests served several purposes:
- Results from the field tests in DC, along with other PARCC consortium states, will be used to research and design content for next year's operational PARCC assessments.
- Field testing gave many school and LEA leaders a preview of what PARCC assessments will be like for their students, and gives them a chance to better prepare for next year.
- Feedback from field tests will help LEAs and OSSE set policies surrounding new assessments.

PARCC Field Test Lessons Learned for DC, based on LEA feedback and school visits:

- Test Preparation
    - Training: PARCC administration can be a steep learning curve for test coordinators and test administrators. DC will work with PARCC towards a "one-stop shop" online resource and training center for test coordinators and administrators. Additionally, OSSE will plan to offer trainings for PARCC early in the 2014-2015 school year.
    - Manuals: OSSE is working with PARCC to revise administration manuals. DC-specific communications materials and instructions whenever possible.
    - Student Data Uploads: OSSE should facilitate data upload process with LEA-specific templates and clearer guidance on upload procedures.
    - Student Preparation: Work with PARCC to advocate for more grade-specific test preparation materials for students, and tutorials that closely mirror the testing experience for each grade.
    - Scheduling: There will be LEA/school flexibility in scheduling test windows; the procedures for scheduling windows and exact rules will be announced in July

- Technology
    - Pearson Access: For test administrators to use Pearson Access (the back end administrative portal) as designed during testing, more training will be necessary
    - Infrastructure trials and proctor caching were both essential tools for field testing schools
    - Almost all browsers and testing devices used could be made to work with technical support. Schools had particularly good experiences with Chrome browser and with the PARCC App for Chromebooks
    - OSSE should share device-specific guidelines and explore the possibility of connecting schools based on testing technology to share advice
    - Many schools were open to the proposal of an optional pre-testing OSSE site visit to assist with PARCC technology setup

- Test Administration
  - Test directions: Should be separated by grade, more clear and concise
  - Test security: Test security guidance and procedures under the Testing Integrity Act will need to be revised with computer-based testing and PARCC requirements in mind.
  - Accommodations: OSSE is working internally to align the special education data system with PARCC accommodations and to inform IEP teams of any changes well in advance of PARCC.
  - Unfamiliar item types were a challenge for students, emphasizes importance of using preparation materials. Keyboarding skills also a challenge on the PBA.

- Looking Forward
  - Monthly Next Generation Assessment Stakeholder Meetings
  - Next Generation Science and Health Assessments: Feedback from field testing schools to streamline training and work as much as possible with PARCC if systems and procedures will be similar. If they are not similar, preference would be to administer health and science completely separate from the PARCC.

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