

TEMPLATE: Key Messages and Talking Points

Key messages

1. **PARCC assessment is more rigorous and presents a fuller picture of student learning.** By 2020, 76% of jobs in the District will require some form of postsecondary education. The PARCC assessment includes more rigorous and authentic questions, starts with what do students need to succeed in entry-level college coursework, without remediation.
2. **Scores will look different than on DC CAS.** Not because our students learned less, but because this test is measuring a different kind of student learning.
3. **We will improve from this new baseline.** Just as we saw improvement over time on DC CAS, we are confident our results will improve in future years. We have seen significant progress over the last few years, and know that we will continue to see our results over time as we support our educators and students in meeting this higher bar.

Talking points

- We are committed to preparing all students for success in college and career.
- We know that in college and in the workplace, our students will need to be able to think critically and solve complex problems. Ensuring that our students have these tools empowers families and students, because it gives them the ability to make choices about their futures and make the most of their opportunities.
- The new PARCC assessment in English language arts and math replaces the previous DC CAS assessment in reading, composition and math. It is a more rigorous test and presents a fuller picture of student learning.
- The PARCC assessment is a better measure of the academic goals laid out in the Common Core State Standards.
 - The more rigorous and authentic questions align with what students will need to know to succeed in entry-level college coursework without remediation.
- As with any change, there is a period of adjustment as teachers and students get used to the new standards and tests.
 - Scores will look different than on DC CAS - not because our students learned less, but because this test is measuring a different kind of learning focused on critical thinking and problem solving.
- We will improve from the new baseline set today. Working together, we will see scores increase over time, just as we saw improvement over time on DC CAS.
 - Having a more rigorous assessment helps inform teaching and learning.
- The fall release of test scores is a one-time event. For the 2016 tests and beyond, test results will be available in the summer.

- We are continuing to support teachers through professional development on Common Core and the new assessments so that they can further strengthen instruction. We applaud their efforts and will continue to find ways to help them grow in their practice.
- In the same way, we are working to ensure every school has the resources they need to help students who may be struggling and need additional support.
- Teachers are the experts about what is happening in their classrooms and are an invaluable resource for families. I encourage families to reach out to your child's teacher(s) with any questions you may have about your child's score report or academic trajectory.