

## 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 for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) score reports from the spring 2016 tests, they may have questions for their students' teachers and principals. This guide provides answers to some of the most common questions teachers and school leaders can anticipate from families and students.



#### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PARCC ASSESSMENT

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Q: What is the PARCC Assessment?

A: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a statewide assessment that has been administered in DC for the past two years. Students take the PARCC assessment in English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA/L) and Mathematics annually in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. It measures the knowledge and skills that matter most for students — understanding complex texts, evidence-based writing, mathematical problem-solving — all skills that lead to confidence and success in key academic areas. The PARCC assessment is designed to help you and your child's teachers better understand the progress your child made last school year. We know that these scores do not tell your child's whole academic story. PARCC results are one of several measures — including report card grades, classroom performance, and teacher feedback — that together create a broader picture of your child's progress.

Q: What types of questions were asked?

A: The assessment included innovative technology-enhanced questions, traditional multiple choice questions, and questions that asked students to write well-organized essays and explain their reasoning. To see sample test questions, visit <https://parcc.pearson.com/sample-items/>.

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

A: All students, except those with the most significant cognitive disabilities, will take the PARCC tests. The test has accommodations and built-in supports for students with disabilities and/or English learners. These accommodations include text-to-speech, Braille, closed captioning, an English/native language word-to-word dictionary, and many more. In addition to accommodations for English learners and students with disabilities, there are also embedded accessibility features available to all students, such as a highlighter, magnifier, and answer eliminator. For full information on the accommodations and accessibility features available to students taking the PARCC assessments, visit <http://osse.dc.gov/service/testing-accommodations>.

Q: If a student was not familiar with computers, were supports or exceptions made for technology? Did students have enough time to finish?

A: Students are expected to take their PARCC assessment on a computer. Resources were made available to give students the opportunity to practice on computers in class. This included taking PARCC practice tests, so students could become familiar with the test's online tools and its different types of questions. To see a practice test, visit <http://www.parconline.org/assessments/practice-tests>. Additionally, assessments 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.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCORE REPORTS

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Q: What should I take away from this report?

A: The score report helps you understand your child's academic progress towards the grade level expectations in both subjects. In each subject, the score has been broken down to reflect areas where your child is doing well or needs more support. OSSE has developed a 2016 Guide to Understanding PARCC Score Reports. You can download it at [www.osse.dc.gov/parcc/2016results](http://www.osse.dc.gov/parcc/2016results).

Q: What does my child's PARCC score mean?

A: Your child's score indicates how well he or she met the expectations of the grade level. You will also be able to see how your child did in comparison to peers across the grade and school, and across DC. You can explore more detailed information on your child's school, local education agency (LEA), and the state overall performance of the state at <http://results.osse.dc.gov>.

Q: How is achievement measured on the PARCC Assessment?

A: Your child's score falls into one of five performance levels. The performance levels identify where your child's score falls and if your child has met the expectations for the grade level. A score in Level 4 or 5 means your child has met or exceeded expectations in the subject. It also means he or she is on track for the next grade level and to leave high school college and career ready. Students scoring below a level 4 may still be developing grade-level skills and knowledge.

Q: My child is participating in MSAA and not the PARCC assessment. Where can I find information on this assessment?

See OSSE's website, [www.osse.dc.gov/alternate](http://www.osse.dc.gov/alternate), for more information.

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION

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Q: Do teachers receive the same kind of information as families?

A: Teachers receive the same information as families. Teachers and school leaders in DC will also have access to information for students in their classrooms through a secure online assessment resource site.

Q: How will my child's score be used by the school?

A: Teachers will use scores to guide their instruction so they can provide additional supports in the areas where students need improvement or more challenging work in areas where they excel. Scores will also be used to measure how well schools, local education agencies (LEAs), and states are doing against standards.

Q: What if my child did well on his or her report card last year, but not as well on PARCC?

A: The PARCC assessment is designed to help you and your child's teachers better understand the progress your child made last school year. We know that these scores do not tell your child's whole academic story. PARCC results are one of several measures — including report card

grades, classroom performance, and teacher feedback — that together create a broader picture of your child’s progress. To further explore your child’s academic performance, talk with his or her teacher.

Q: 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?

A: PARCC is only one of several measures of how well a student is progressing in school. Students who score at Level 4 or above in ELA or mathematics have met the expectations of the grade level in the subject matter, and specifically, are on track to be college and career ready. Students who score below level 4 may need additional supports to ensure they are on track for success in college and a career.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

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Q: How can I use the PARCC results to help my child improve?

A: There are several ways you can use the scores to help your child improve in school:

- The score reports include a breakdown of your child’s performance in categories within each subject. To find resources in every category and at every grade level, visit <http://belearninghero.org> or [parcconline.org](http://parcconline.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.
- You can use the test results to guide a discussion with your child’s teacher(s) about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in class, as well as other ways to support your child at home. The score report contains four questions to guide that conversation.

Q: What resources are available to support mychild?

A: There are several resources available to support your child’s learning and development. The 2016 Guide to Understanding PARCC Score Reports, which you can download at [www.osse.dc.gov/parcc/2016results](http://www.osse.dc.gov/parcc/2016results) contains a robust resources page at the end of the guide. A few ones to note immediately are:

- [GreatSchools.org](http://GreatSchools.org) which features content and grade-specific videos so you can conduct lessons and exercises with your child at home.
- [BeALearningHero.org](http://BeALearningHero.org), which contains a wealth of resources for parents, including the Skills Builder page and Learning Tools page, which customize resources for DC based on grade, subject, and content area.
- [PRC.PARCCOnline.org](http://PRC.PARCCOnline.org), which also offers practice tests and sample questions for students from grades 3 through 11.