

# PREPARING DC STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

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## Setting a New Baseline for Success

# Preparing for the Future

Whether in college or the workplace, our students need to be able to think critically and solve complex problems.



# Preparing for the Future

- But across the country, too many of our students are reaching college and finding themselves unprepared for first year coursework.
- PARCC presents a fuller and more authentic picture of student learning. For example, consider these 7<sup>th</sup> grading writing prompts:

**DC CAS:** In a well-developed composition, describe what you consider to be a perfect vacation.

**PARCC:** You have read a passage from *The Count of Monte Cristo* and a scene from *Blessings*. Think about the similarities and differences in how the two authors develop the themes in each text. Write an essay in which you identify a theme from each text and analyze how each theme is developed. Be sure to include specific details from both selections.

- While this is a more rigorous test than DC CAS and we expect that results will look different in this baseline year, we know that our students and educators will continue to improve over time.

# District Leaders Support College- and Career-ready Standards and Assessments

- “This new baseline better positions all of us – parents, community members, educators, and policymakers – to focus our efforts around our shared goal of ensuring all of our students receive the supports they need to move onto college without remediation.” -- Hanseul Kang, State Superintendent of Education
- “The District’s commitment to ensuring our students are college and career ready will not only put them in the best position to succeed, but also benefit the city as a whole.” -- David Grosso, DC Council At-large Member and Chair, Committee on Education
- "By planning backwards from college and career readiness standards and assessments, schools build curricula that provide students with rigorous, meaningful educations, continually challenging them to develop their true potential as critical and creative thinkers ready to face an ever changing future." -- Mary Lease, English/Language Arts Curriculum Manager, Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy

# District Leaders Support College- and Career-ready Standards and Assessments

- “The District's PARCC results give us a new education benchmark. We are able to see where our efforts are succeeding and where we need to work harder. We have a long way to go, but with accurate measures like PARCC we can ensure that every student is ready for success.” -- Jack Jacobson, President, State Board of Education
- "We need the PARCC assessment to show us how our students are performing and whether they really are ready for college and career." -- Jennifer Niles, Deputy Mayor for Education
- "It is essential that assessments bring about benefits for every child regardless of disability. Collecting accurate data from young children is challenging and theoretically demanding. The PARCC Assessment has encompassed both a clear benefit in direct services to the children and in enriched quality of educational programs” -- Sabrina Brown Robinson, Director of Student Services, Savoy Elementary School

# What are DC's standards?

- The Common Core State Standards are DC's standards for math and English language arts
- They are more rigorous expectations for what students should know and be able to do to be college- and career-ready
- They ask students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills in areas such as critical thinking, analytical writing, and problem solving
- They are not a curriculum

# How are we measuring the new standards?

- The District is part of the PARCC testing consortium for math and English language arts (ELA) tests.
- Questions for the PARCC ELA and math assessments were developed by educators
  - Dozens of educators from DC spent hundreds of hours on test development and performance level setting.
- All assessment questions are aligned to college- and career-ready standards
- Students will receive a scaled score and a performance level score

# How are the tests scored?

- Students receive a numerical scale score from 650 to 850 and, which fall into one of five performance levels:
  - Level 5 = exceeded expectations
  - Level 4 = met expectations
  - Level 3 = approached expectations
  - Level 2 = partially met expectations
  - Level 1 = did not yet meet expectations
- Students who score a Level 4 or 5 are deemed on track for college- and career-readiness
- Students who score below a Level 4 will need additional support to fully meet the expectations in the tested grade and subject.



# How were performance levels determined?

- Performance level thresholds were determined in a process with representatives from all PARCC states:
  - K-12 Educators (including ESL and special education teachers)
  - Postsecondary faculty
  - State education experts
- Educators Reviewed:
  - Preliminary scores
  - Performance level descriptors
  - Empirical studies
- State chiefs from PARCC states reviewed and voted on recommendations from educator committees.

# How will scores compare to DC CAS?

- Scores are not comparable to old standardized tests
- We are setting a new baseline for student performance
- Performance expectations have changed
  - We're asking students to challenge themselves to think critically and analyze data
- We are putting all District of Columbia students on the path to college and career

# What will new score reports look like?

## English Language Arts & Literacy

### Scott Testtaker

Anywhere ES

### 5th Grade Assessment Results

DC Public Schools

#### About This Assessment

Scott took the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) in English Language Arts & Literacy in Spring 2015. This test was given for the first time in 2015 and is different from the DC CAS. PARCC asks students to answer more challenging and real-world questions that measure the knowledge and skills needed for success in their grade, and ultimately in college and careers.

If you have questions about this report, please talk to your student's teacher or principal, or contact DCPS at (800) 555-1234. If you have questions about the PARCC test, please go to [parcconline.org](http://parcconline.org), or contact OSSE at (800) 555-1234.

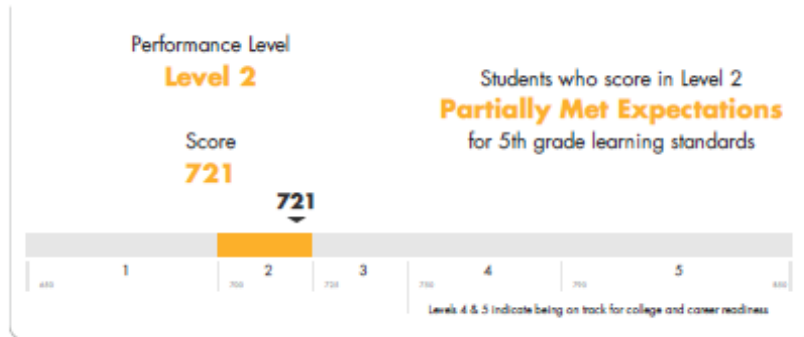
#### How Can You Use This Report?

This report will help you answer questions about the development of Scott's ELA skills:

- How did Scott perform?
- How well did Scott learn specific knowledge and skills in this subject?
- How did Scott perform compared to other students?

#### How Did Scott Perform On This ELA Assessment?

This section gives detail on your student's overall score on the assessment. The score determines which performance level your student is in.



- Level 5 Exceeded Expectations
- Level 4 Met Expectations
- Level 3 Approached Expectations
- Level 2 Partially Met Expectations
- Level 1 Did Not Meet Expectations

#### Want to Know More?

Turn to the next page to learn about Scott's performance compared to other students, and how well Scott has learned certain ELA skills and knowledge.

### Gr. 5 ELA Details

Performance Level  
**Level 2**

Score  
**721**

#### How Did Scott Score in ELA Categories?

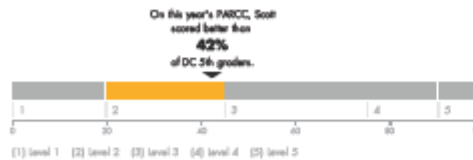
Students who performed at Level 4 on this assessment met 5th Grade expectations and are likely prepared for the next grade or course. This section shows if your student performed as well, nearly as well, or not as well as other groups of students.



✓ Meets or Exceeds Expectations    \* Nearly Meets Expectations    - Below Expectations

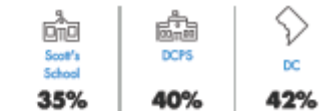
#### How Does Scott's Performance Compare to Past Performance?

The last ELA test that Scott took was the Grade 4 DC CAS. This report does not make a direct comparison between the PARCC and DC CAS because they are very different tests. First, the scoring and performance levels are different. Second, the PARCC is considered more challenging because of the real-world questions that measure the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in their grade, and ultimately in college and careers.



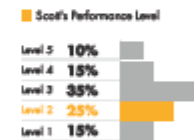
#### How Does Scott's Score Compare to Other 5th Grade Students?

Compared to other 5th Grade students tested on this year's PARCC, Scott scored better than this percentage of students:



#### How Does Scott Compare to Students at the Same School?

Below is the percent of 5th grade students in each PARCC ELA Performance level in Anywhere ES.



#### What is next?

What Can You Ask Scott's Teachers?

- What are Scott's learning goals in language arts and literacy this year?
- How is Scott performing in language arts and literacy class?
- What extra support in school and at home does Scott need to meet these goals?

Where Can You Find More Information?

- [learnDC.org](http://learnDC.org)
- [PARCConline.org](http://PARCConline.org)
- [OSSE.DC.gov](http://OSSE.DC.gov)

# What information will be on score reports?

- Overall scale score and performance levels
- Subcategory performance
  - ELA: Reading and writing sub-scores, literary text, informational text, vocabulary, written expression, use of language
  - Math: Major content and supporting content for the grade level, mathematical reasoning, modeling and application
- Percentile performance compared to other DC students and previous assessment results
- Next steps and resources

# What does it mean if scores are low?

- We will improve from this new baseline
- Just like we saw scores rise over time with DC CAS, we will see scores rise on PARCC
- The test is measuring a different kind of learning
- It will take time for students to get used to the new tests
- It does **NOT** mean that students are learning less than they were before

# How can we ensure improvement?



## **Parents:**

- Support learning at home through additional resources
- Encourage and reassure children that tests are only one indicator of progress
- Work with teachers to develop strategies to improve student performance



## **Teachers:**

- Use differentiated strategies to meet different learning needs
- Attend additional professional development trainings to continue improving instruction

# How can we ensure improvement?



## **Schools:**

- Use data to inform school improvement processes
- Continue to provide professional development and support
- Compare progress with other schools to assess growth areas



## **OSSE:**

- Provide reports and information to parents, teachers and schools
- Provide access to instructional resources such as released PARCC items and optional formative tools

# Tests are only one measure of student learning

- There are many ways of assessing students' skills and abilities
  - Teacher observations of students, in-class assignments and assessments, & homework are all ways we look at student progress
- The PARCC tests show progress on the new standards
- When combined with other measures, the PARCC tests provide a more comprehensive picture of student performance





# Resources

- Resources are available:
  - The Council of the Great City Schools (<http://www.cgcs.org>)
  - The National PTA (<http://www.pta.org/commoncore>)
  - PARCC ([www.PARCConline.org](http://www.PARCConline.org))
  - Be a Learning Hero (<http://bealearninghero.org/>)

# Questions?

- The email account [osse.assessment@dc.gov](mailto:osse.assessment@dc.gov) is consistently monitored to answer your questions about any of the districtwide assessments, including PARCC.
- **Jessie Harteis**, Deputy Chief of Staff, (202) 344-9805, [Jessie.Harteis@dc.gov](mailto:Jessie.Harteis@dc.gov)
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