

HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED: A Guide to the New PARCC Assessment

What is PARCC?

The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career, or PARCC, is the new annual assessment that replaced the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) for math and English language arts in the 2014-15 school year. District of Columbia students in grades 3 through 8 and high school take the PARCC assessment online each spring. The required high school assessments in the District are Geometry or Integrated Math II and English II.

Why does the PARCC assessment matter?

By 2020, 76% of jobs in the District will require some form of postsecondary education.

PARCC was created to address a pressing national concern: Across the country, too many of our students entered college and found they struggled with first year coursework had to take remedial classes. To address this challenge, the District of Columbia came together with a group of other states that formed the PARCC consortium to design a test that started with the outcome of college and career readiness in mind. From there, the test was designed based on what students would need to know in each grade to be prepared for the rigors of college coursework. More than 30 educators from the PARCC states reviewed each item included in the assessments.

How is PARCC different?

PARCC is a more rigorous, computer-based assessment that aligns with the Common Core State Standards and measures essential skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, reason well, and solve real-world problems. PARCC requires students to think more deeply and presents a fuller and more authentic picture of student learning. For example, consider these 7th grade writing prompts:

DC CAS (PRIOR ASSESSMENT)

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

PARCC ASSESSMENT

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.

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



When will PARCC scores be available?

Students took the PARCC assessments for the first time in the 2014-15 school year. OSSE will publicly release DC-wide, LEA and school level results in late October for high school assessments and in late November for grades 3-8. Individual students' results will be sent home in December. For the 2015-16 school year, results will be released earlier in summer 2016.

How will PARCC scores be used?

PARCC score reports will help parents to understand their child's needs and strengths and work with their school to identify resources to support their child's education. Schools can use the information to better plan instruction, support and enrichment for students in the coming year and strengthen instruction for all students. Visit www.osse.dc.gov/parcc for additional resources for parents, educators, and local educational agencies.