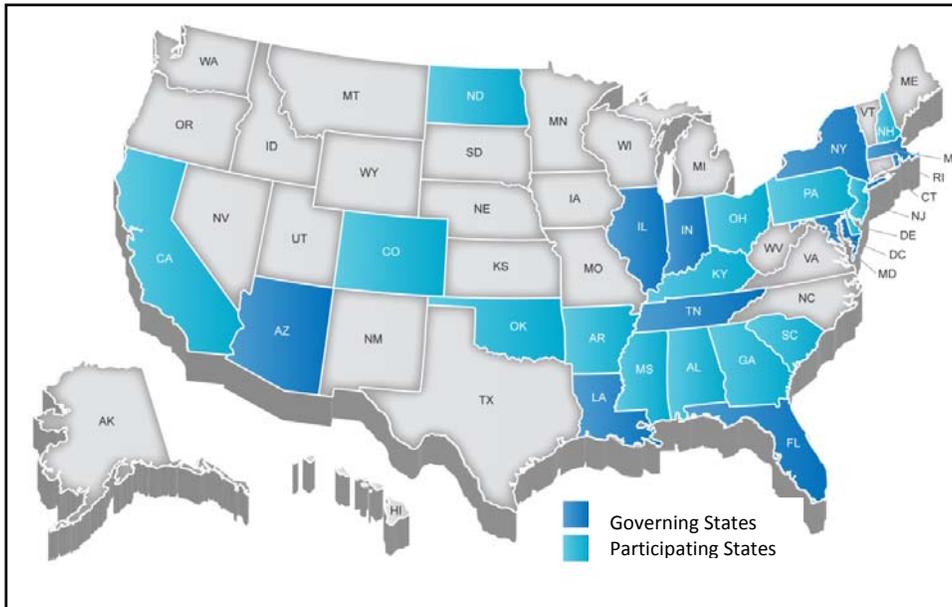


Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Race to the Top Assessment Proposal Summary

In states across the country, far too many students graduate from high school without the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and 21st century careers. This puts those students' future opportunities at risk and has a harmful effect on our states' and the nation's economy. To address this problem, leaders from 26 states formed the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to create a next-generation assessment system that will ensure students across the country are expected to meet common, high standards that will prepare them for their futures. **States in the Partnership share one fundamental goal: building their collective capacity to dramatically increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace.**



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

- PARCC includes 26 states that educate more than 31 million public K-12 students in the U.S.; those in bold are “governing states” and serve on the governing board: Alabama, **Arizona**, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, **District of Columbia**, **Florida**, Georgia, **Illinois**, **Indiana**, Kentucky, **Louisiana**, **Maryland**, **Massachusetts**, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, **New York**, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, **Rhode Island**, South Carolina and **Tennessee**.
- PARCC states collaborated to apply for the Race to the Top Assessment competition to develop a shared set of K-12 assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. The new assessments will be ready for states to administer by the 2014-2015 school year.
- Over 200 two- and four-year institutions of higher education (IHE’s) – representing nearly 1,000 individual campuses across the 26 states and 90% of direct matriculation students in public IHE’s in all Partnership states – have committed to participate in the Partnership. Higher education leaders

and faculty will help design the high school assessments and, ultimately, use the assessments as one indicator of students' readiness for entry-level postsecondary courses.

- PARCC has selected Achieve to coordinate the work of the Partnership, leveraging the organization's deep experience in educational standards, assessments and the broader college- and career-ready policy agenda.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PARCC PROPOSAL

- **States in PARCC will adopt common assessments and performance standards.** Because the assessments will be developed by states in partnership with one another, they will provide a common metric for measuring the performance of their students. For the first time, meeting standards in one state will mean the same thing as in the others.
- **The Partnership's assessment system will be *anchored in college and career readiness*.** K-12 leaders and higher education system and institutional leaders in PARCC states have agreed to develop high school college-ready assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy that can be used to signal whether students have acquired the prerequisite knowledge and skills for entry-level, credit-bearing postsecondary courses. Higher education faculty will play a key role in defining what it means to be ready for entry-level courses. Assessments in grades 3-8 and earlier in high school will measure whether students are *on track* to achieve readiness by high school graduation. Assessing students against this standard gives parents a clear signal of whether their children are prepared for their next steps, and it gives schools a chance to close any gaps in students' academic skills before they graduate.
- **Students will take parts of the assessment at key times during the school year, closer to when they learn the material.** The Partnership's assessment system will include several *through-course assessments* in each grade, which will be combined with more streamlined end-of-year tests to produce a more complete picture of student performance. These assessments will measure student learning closer to the time when classroom instruction takes place and will give feedback throughout the year, allowing educators to adjust instructional practices or give extra support to students who need it.
- **PARCC assessments will be computer based.** In recognition of the powerful role technology is playing in students' lives, the majority of the new assessments will be designed to be administered by computer. This will enable much faster turnaround of results, and it will allow for innovations in test items by leveraging new technologies. Moving to computer-based testing will also reduce costs for states.
- **PARCC assessments will include sophisticated items and performance tasks to measure the standards more effectively.** The Partnership's assessments, both end-of-year and through-course, will include challenging *performance tasks* and *innovative, computer-enhanced items* that elicit complex demonstrations of learning and measure the full range of knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and 21st century careers. The inclusion of performance tasks will ensure that the assessments measure skills that are difficult to measure in on-demand assessments, and they will help model effective classroom instruction.

BENEFITS OF THE PARCC ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

- **PARCC assessments will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards and enable cross-state comparisons of results.** The Partnership is committed to building assessments that measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards. States in the Partnership will also adopt common performance standards so results will be comparable across states.
- **The Partnership will pool expertise and resources to develop the nation’s highest-quality assessments.** States in PARCC are the nation’s education reform leaders. Collectively they have the highest standards and best assessment systems in the country. The Partnership will leverage the best features of current assessments to design new assessments that press further than any one state has gone to date.
- **Achievement results will be based on a more meaningful standard – college and career readiness.** Anchoring the assessment system to a college- and career-ready benchmark creates a more meaningful target for students, parents and schools. Scoring “proficient” on the assessments will mean students are on track for the next steps in their education, such as placement into credit-bearing courses at two- and four-year colleges.
- **PARCC provides an unprecedented opportunity for K-12 and postsecondary leaders to design supporting policies that go well beyond the creation of just a “good test.”** These policies could transform students’ transitions from high school to college by creating seamless expectations between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, inspiring highly-coordinated curriculum programs, fostering partnerships between high schools and colleges, promoting clearer communication to parents and students about what it truly means to be “ready,” and, ultimately, lead to greater rates of student success.
- **Classroom teachers will have an assessment system that provides as much for them as it asks from them.** Teachers will be able to focus their instruction on clear targets and those targets will represent meaningful progress toward an evidence-based standard of college and career readiness. Teachers will also have access to actionable assessment data much more frequently, allowing them to adjust instruction, individualize interventions and fine-tune lessons and units throughout the school year. The Partnership will develop training tools for educators to deliver the assessments to students and, critically, to use the results from the assessments to inform instructional decisions throughout the school year.
- **The assessment system will help make state accountability systems better drivers of improvement.** The Partnership’s assessments will reflect challenging standards and will engage students in more meaningful demonstrations of their knowledge and understanding than traditional tests, better reflecting the kinds of quality classroom instructional practices that will be necessary to help students meet college- and career-ready standards. Since these assessments will form the backbone of educator and school accountability systems, they will serve as a positive influence on what goes on in schools and classrooms.

For more information on PARCC, please contact Achieve at 202-419-1540 or on the web at www.achieve.org.