



Teacher FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

What is PARCC?

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states working together to develop high-quality assessments that give teachers, students and parents information they can use to improve instruction and meet the needs of individual students. The PARCC assessments are well aligned with what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level and they serve students who are academically advanced, on grade level, and struggling by identifying where they have areas of need, as well as where they are excelling.

What types of accommodations are allowed for students with disabilities?

There are several ways in which PARCC is made accessible for student with disabilities. First, PARCC uses universal design principles that guide the construction of the assessments and test questions in ways that make them easily understood for all students. Second, because PARCC is a computer-based test, we have many more options for which accommodations to offer. These accommodations can now incorporate assistive technology devices and include embedded American Sign Language videos and closed captioning for students with hearing impairments. Third, PARCC allows accessibility features (similar to universal design components) that support instructional strategies like highlighting important evidence in reading passages, providing glossaries of words, and allowing the mathematics assessments to be read aloud if a student has difficulty reading. Having accommodations or using accessibility features does not impact a student's score in any way.

When will PARCC results be available?

PARCC's goal is to have results from the PARCC assessment returned close to the end of the school year (June/July timeframe) each year. Because this is the first year of administration, the performance-level setting process must take place prior to the release of PARCC results. Consequently, schools will receive results this fall.

Why are the PARCC results important?

We all want the best possible education for all of our children. The results of state assessments help us meet this goal. Assessment results provide parents with valuable information about student progress towards becoming college and career ready and provide teachers with information they need to improve teaching and learning.

How will the PARCC results be shared at the district, school, and student level?

All PARCC reports will be shared in a manner similar to what we did for NECAP reports in that they will be shared via online access to electronic reports and via hard-copy student reports that are sent to schools and parents. Teachers will be able to access their students' results via the Rhode Island Instructional Support System.

Who is scoring the PARCC assessment and what are their credentials?

PARCC states partner with our testing company, Pearson, which recruits and trains qualified scorers at the national and local levels. Applicants complete a rigorous and selective evaluation, hiring and training process to qualify as PARCC scorers. Accuracy and consistency of scoring is monitored throughout the scoring process. Only applicants who have a Bachelor's degree or higher in mathematics, English, education or a related field may be hired to score PARCC assessments. Not all scorers are teachers, but most have previous teaching experience and half are *current* K-12 teachers.

Can we compare PARCC results with NECAP results?

PARCC was a new assessment for the 2014-15 school year and we recognize that student achievement may differ between PARCC and NECAP. This year's PARCC results establish a new baseline that we can use to track student performance in the future, and only in the future with additional years of data. We will not measure PARCC results against the results of NECAP because scores and performance levels on PARCC and NECAP cannot be compared. The PARCC is simply a different test. It has a different scale for scores, and its five performance levels cannot be equated with NECAP's four levels. PARCC 2015 results will set a new baseline or starting point. Going forward, we can use these baselines to see whether our state as a whole, our schools, and our students are making progress towards our state standards.

How can teachers use PARCC information to inform classroom instruction?

Teachers can use PARCC assessment results, along with other local assessment results and other information, to determine what additional supports students may need in order to improve achievement. In addition, teachers should review released items and sample student work as models of evidence of high-quality student work.

We encourage teachers to look at the PARCC results of all of their current students to see which students may need additional support. In addition, we encourage teachers to look at the PARCC results of the students they taught during the previous school year to explore answers to questions such as, "Were there some areas in which many of my students performed below expectations?" and "Were there areas in which many of my students excelled?" Answers to these and other questions may help teachers decide whether modifications in instructional practices are necessary.

Will PARCC results be used for teacher evaluation?

Yes, but not until 2017. The PARCC results for the 2014-2015 school year will set a baseline. Teacher evaluations are based on growth and improvement, so PARCC assessments will not affect effect evaluations until three years of results are available – at which point there will be enough data to measure improvement over time.

Will PARCC results affect students' grades?

The scores and achievement levels students attain on the 2015 PARCC assessments will set a baseline or starting point that will be used to measure progress going forward. In future years, schools and school districts may decide to use PARCC results as a component in determining students' grades. For example, schools could choose to use PARCC results as an end-of-course assessment. The use of PARCC results is a decision that schools, districts, or school committees will make at the local level.