

Board of Education Testing Update
Superintendent Report, January, 2014

The Illinois State Board of Education is attempting to “field test” the PARCC test this Spring (2014). There were many districts that declined initially, and we were one of those districts. But since that time we were able to access each grade level from each school, in either the paper-and-pencil version or the computer-based variety.

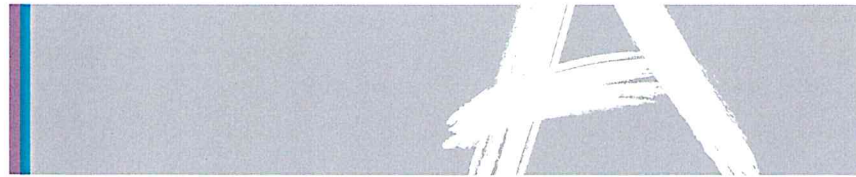
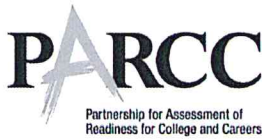
We will not receive any student results for this, as the field-testing is really designed to simply “test” the questions. Neither will we receive any grade level or school summary data. However, we will have first-hand eyes on the questions and the format of the tests. This should help us better prepare our Stage 2 and Stage 3 work in our Atlas Curriculum Mapping project.

It is expected that students who participate in the field test will not be required to then take the ISAT tests in the same subject in which they participated in the PARCC field test. For example, if a student in Grade 3 at Northside participates in the PARCC Math field test, s/he would not take the ISAT Math, but would still sit for the ISAT Reading test.

We are unsure how this may impact our values table results and Adequate Yearly Progress for 2014, since the values table is a cohort statistical report and we will have only limited cohort data for each subject, but we believe that this will be a good experience for our students and staff to get some practice on these tests and to see these types of questions.

Also, the District will be taking the ACT *Aspire* test for grades 3-10 in early April. *Aspire* is a test that is formatted in much the same way as the EXPLORE and PLAN tests, but is aligned to College and Career benchmarks and will give predictive power for up to two years. We are very excited about this and believe this is a progressive move for the district, both to ‘hedge’ against any shortfalls or collapse of PARCC and also to develop a uniform vocabulary and scoring understanding for students, parents and faculty from grades 3-10 preparing for the ACT. We do not see the ACT test going away as an indicator of college and career readiness, and in fact, we know that ACT wants to be a player in the state testing arena. Three states are already moving to *Aspire* and away from PARCC and/or SMARTER BALANCED assessments to measure Common Core Standards attainment. We have some NCLB grant funds to help defray the costs for *Aspire*.

From: parcc@pearson.com
 Subject: IL Spring 2014 PARCC Field Test District Participation List
 Date: December 24, 2013 at 12:13 PM
 To: skuffel@dist228.org
 Cc: dfrederk@isbe.net



December 24, 2013

Scott Kuffel, District Test Coordinator
 Geneseo CUSD 228, Illinois

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Spring 2014 PARCC Field Test. Preparations for the PARCC Field Test are well underway and your contribution is much appreciated. Below is a chart listing the participating schools in your district, information on various training opportunities for you and your schools, and if applicable, helpful guidance for online testing.

Participating Schools

Listed in the chart below are the participating schools from Geneseo CUSD 228.

School Name	Grade/Course	Subject Area	Number of Classes	Mode of Admin.	Component	Number of Sessions ¹
Geneseo Middle School	6	Mathematics	2	Online	PBA	2
Geneseo Middle School	7	ELA	2	Online	EOY	2
Geneseo Middle School	8	ELA	2	Online	PBA	3
Millikin Elem School	3	Mathematics	2	Online	PBA & EOY	4
Millikin Elem School	4	ELA	2	Paper	PBA & EOY	5
Northside Elem School	3	Mathematics	2	Paper	PBA & EOY	4
Northside Elem School	4	ELA	2	Online	PBA & EOY	5
Northside Elem School	5	Mathematics	2	Paper	PBA & EOY	4
Southwest Elem School	3	ELA	2	Online	PBA & EOY	5
Southwest Elem School	4	Mathematics	2	Paper	PBA & EOY	4
Southwest Elem School	5	ELA	2	Online	PBA & EOY	5
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-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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¹ For more information about testing time for each of the sessions by content area and grade level/course, please see <http://www.parcconline.org/field-test>.

What's Next?

The first step for all districts will be to gain access to PearsonAccess, PARCC's single consolidated online system for managing the PARCC Field Test. You will use this site to access on-demand training materials, user guides, and to conduct the pre-administrative activities. PearsonAccess user accounts will be setup by each state starting in **December 2013**. If you have not received a PearsonAccess user ID by January 6, please contact your state contact at 1-866-317-6034 or dfrederk@isbe.net.

What can I do prior to getting a PearsonAccess user account?

- Learn about the PARCC Field Test:** The most important thing you can do prior to administration is to learn more about the PARCC Assessment and, in particular, the PARCC Field Test. The PARCC website is a valuable resource for the latest news and developments related to the PARCC Assessment.
 - General PARCC information: www.parcconline.org
 - PARCC Task Prototypes and Sample Items: <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>
 - PARCC Policies and information related to the Spring 2014 Field Test: www.parcconline.org/field-test
 - Frequently Asked Questions about the Field Test: www.parcconline.org/field-test
- Select Classrooms:** You should work with your schools to select classrooms to participate in the Field Test. Please use the "Number of Classes" column in the table above to determine how many classes for each grade level/course are required. It is important to note that classrooms must be **randomly** selected for the PARCC Field Test. Please refer to the [Classroom Selection Guidance](#) for selecting classes to participate in the PARCC Field Test for a given grade/course test.

If the designated number of sampled classes is less than the number of general education classes in that grade or course, use PARCC's [Random Number Generator](#) to randomly select the classrooms.

I have learned about PARCC and have selected classrooms, now what?

3. **Participate in Trainings:** A variety of resources will be made available starting in January 2014 through the end of testing. On-demand training modules will be posted online for districts/schools to review at their convenience. Links to the trainings will be provided in later communications.

- o **On-demand training tools and modules** on the following seven (7) topics will be available to all Field Test participants to prepare for administration:

1. System Check Tool and Training Module	This module contains information about using the SystemCheck tool to review device and network readiness. It provides information about the content and usage of the 2 available tools: Check Your System - Validates system requirements are met on testing workstations and Provides steps to verify whether TestNav can run on the workstation, and Testing Capacity - Bandwidth testing for Internet and Proctor Caching connections and provides volume estimates for capacity planning.
2. Setting Up an Infrastructure Trial (Dress Rehearsal) Training Module	This module provides a description of an Infrastructure Trial and provides information on the steps to prepare for an Infrastructure Trial using the PARCC Training Center. The Infrastructure Trial is designed to be a "dress rehearsal" exercise where LEAs will simulate their full testing environment before the operational test administration
3. Technical Setup Training Module	This module is designed to describe each of the technology components used in computer-based testing. Configuration and hardware requirements are included as well as common best practices for successfully testing online. Users will be provided with information to access separate training modules for SystemCheck, Emerging Technologies, and Setting Up an Infrastructure Trial to avoid redundancy in training.
4. Test Administration for Computer-Based Testing Training Module	This module covers the tasks and activities for test administration staff using PearsonAccess. Information is provided managing user accounts, student data, and test management. Viewers will also receive information for creating and managing online sessions during the field test administration.
5. Test Administration for Paper-Based Testing Training Module	This module covers the tasks and activities for test administration staff using PearsonAccess. Information is provided managing user accounts, student data, and test management.
6. Emerging Technologies and Security with Computer-Based Testing	This module will cover special considerations with iPads and virtualization solutions. New technologies present additional security challenges and these issues will be discussed as well as general security concerns specific to computer-based testing such as active test monitoring, securing authorization tickets, and computer lab physical configuration.
7. Accessibility Features and Accommodations with Computer-Based Testing Training Module	This module will be designed to provide information about available accessibility features and accommodations for computer-based testing. The module will reference the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual and Full Specifications document available on the PARCC website. This module will also cover the steps to assign an accommodated form to a student in the Create Sessions process within PearsonAccess.

Regional Trainings: If you have not already, you will be receiving notification of in-person Regional Workshops in your state. The intended audience for Regional Workshops is district level staff, including both technical staff responsible for the setup and support of computer-based testing, and administration staff responsible for setting up and managing computer -based test sessions for each student. These workshops are designed to assist district personnel with training school-level personnel on the administration of computer and paper-based testing.

4. **Watch for Bi-Weekly Emails:** Pearson, PARCC's Field Test contractor, will begin sending bi-weekly communications in early January 2014 to keep participating districts informed of relevant topics and PARCC activities. Such topics include, but are not limited to:

- o Information about Training Webinars
- o Technology Guidelines for Computer-Based Testing
- o Technology Readiness Activities
- o Availability of Sample Tests
- o Availability of Administration Manuals
- o Upcoming Activities and Deadlines
- o Frequently Asked Questions

For more information regarding PARCC and the 2014 Field Test, please visit the PARCC website at <http://www.parcconline.org/field-test>. If you have questions regarding the administration of the PARCC Field Test, please contact Pearson's PARCC Help Center: 1-888-493-9888 (open Monday through Friday, 6:00am to 8:00pm CST) or PARCC@support.pearson.com. If you have questions regarding state policies, please contact your state assessment office, 1-866-317-6034 or dfrederk@isbe.net.

We appreciate your participation in this exciting opportunity!

Sincerely,

Pearson PARCC Program Team



Illinois State Board of Education

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Gery J. Chico
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

PARCC Testing Windows

We are committed to sharing information about PARCC as soon as it is available. This memo contains information about the **PARCC testing windows for 2014-15.**

The Illinois PARCC Testing Windows for 2014-2015 will be:

REGULAR ADMINISTRATION

School/District START DATE	Spring Regular Administration of Computer-Based Testing *Paper/Pencil administration should occur during the first two weeks of each designated testing window	
On or before Sept. 1	PBA	March 9, 2015 to April 3, 2015
After Sept. 1		March 16, 2015 to April 10, 2015
On or before Sept. 1	EOY	April 27, 2015 to May 22, 2015
After Sept. 1		May 4, 2015 to May 29, 2015

BLOCKED SCHEDULE COURSES

Fall/Winter Block Administration of Computer-Based Testing *Paper/Pencil administration should occur during the first two weeks of each designated testing window	
PBA	November 3, 2014-November 21, 2014
EOC	December 1, 2014-December 19, 2014
Spring Block Administration of Computer-Based Testing *Paper/Pencil administration should occur during the first two weeks of each designated testing window	
PBA	April 13, 2015-May 1, 2015
EOC	May 4, 2015- May 22, 2015

#Waivers may be requested to adjust the PBA and EOC testing windows to accommodate blocked schedules that extend into January and June (ex. Fall Semester 8/21-1/24 and Spring Semester 1/25-6/6)

Notes and definitions:

- At all grades, 3-11, there is a Performance-Based Assessment component and an End-of-Year or End-of-Course component. (It is called an End-of-Year component in grades 3-8 and an End-of-Course component in high school grades.)
- The **Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)** component will include 3 parts for English language arts/literacy and 2 parts for Math. All content that needs to be hand scored will be on the Performance-Based Assessment component.
- The **End-of-Year (EOY) or End-of-Course (EOC)** component will include 2 parts for English language arts/literacy and 2 parts for Math. All content on the End-of-Year / End-of-Course assessment is designed to be machine-scorable.
- As has been previously announced, the length of the testing window for both the PBA and the EOY/EOC is a maximum of 4 weeks. This is designed to allow schools to set up a schedule where students can take each test part on a cycle with the minimum device count previously announced.
- The length of the testing windows for schools/districts administering the paper-and-pencil test is a maximum of 2 weeks. These will be the first 2 weeks of the computer-based test window.
- Not all students will necessarily take each test part at the same time.

How to set up a schedule within the testing window:

- This information is being released to allow schools to set school calendars for the year.
- However, this is not sufficient information to design a test schedule during the testing window.
- There are two critical pieces of information that are needed to be able to set up a schedule within the testing window:
 - **Length of time of each test part:** this information will be available after the field test this spring.
 - **When each test part will be available during the window:** Every test part will not necessarily be available on every day within the testing window. (For example, the Research Simulation Task may be available in all grades on Mondays and Thursdays but not available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.) PARCC will determine the number and availability of test parts by balancing security of items and flexibility for scheduling with a fixed number of items. This information will be available **after the field test** and we will provide sample schedules at that time.
- **Districts should not attempt to create a schedule for testing during the testing window until this information is available after the field test.**

Notes on Block Schedule:

- PARCC is being designed to fairly assess students on both block and traditional schedules.
- The testing windows for PARCC should not affect decision-making about block scheduling at the high school level.
- Scheduling is a local decision and should be viewed, first and foremost, instructionally.
- In order to meet appropriate instructional time for block schedules the testing windows will be three weeks for both fall and spring.

For more information on the PARCC test and its structure, visit <http://www.parcconline.org/>.