



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Acting Commissioner

October 8, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
High School Principals and Supervisors
School Counselors

FROM: Bari Anhalt Erlichson, Ph.D.
Assistant Commissioner/Chief Performance Officer

SUBJECT: Transitioning to PARCC Frequently Asked Questions, Updated

It has been my pleasure to continue to speak to so many of you in the past few days. I am particularly thankful to the leadership of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), the Garden State Coalition of Schools, and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) who have been working closely with their members to raise questions needing additional clarity.

Q1: Are students required to take the SAT or other substitute assessment?

A1: No. The NJDOE is not requiring students to take any commercial test as a condition of graduation but will allow schools to determine graduation readiness in a number of different ways. Although we estimate that 85% to 95% of students currently take a commercial test for admission to college or career, we know that some students do not. These students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiencies either through the PARCC assessments or through the long standing Portfolio Appeals Process. Our goal is to provide as much flexibility to schools and students as possible to make decisions in the best interests of students.

Q2: Can PSAT be added to the list of substitute assessments?

A2: Yes. The list of substitute assessments that was provided in the September 30, 2014 memo was exactly the same list that the NJDOE utilized during the State's transition from the Special Review Assessment (SRA) to the Alternative High School Assessment (AHSA) in June 2010. But the NJDOE is able to modify the list under the authority granted to the Commissioner in *N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-3*. The NJDOE has begun conversations about finding a suitable cut score for the PSAT and welcomes other suggestions for substitute assessments.

Q3: With all of these substitute assessments, why use the PARCC scores at all?

A3: The reason for the transitional period for the graduation requirements is to assist both students and school administrations. We anticipate that a great number of our students will be successful on these tests! Accordingly, using a passing score on PARCC as a way to demonstrate proficiency ensures that we are not penalizing those students who earn passing scores by not allowing their work to count toward graduation. In addition, it will ease the administrative burden on school districts by giving districts administrators a quick and easy way to determine that a large portion of their students have met graduation requirements.

FAQs from October 3, 2014:

Q1: Do students in the middle school who are taking Algebra I have to take the Algebra I PARCC assessment?

A1: If a district has communicated to its stakeholders that a student who completes Algebra I in the middle school will then move on to Geometry in the next grade level then the students should sit for the PARCC Algebra I assessment in lieu of the grade level PARCC exam. However, we are cognizant that course titles may not accurately reflect the content of the course. So districts should carefully evaluate the alignment of the course to the PARCC Model Content Frameworks.

Q2: Will the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year (EOY) Assessment be scored separately?

A2: No, students will receive a single score report that brings together the student's performance on both the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year (EOY) Assessment sessions.

Q3: When will the 2015 PARCC scores be available to school districts?

A3: Student score reports will be available toward the end of September/Early October 2015.

Q4: Is passing the PARCC assessment a requirement for graduation for the classes of 2016, 2017, and 2018.

A4: No. At a student level, many different demonstrations of proficiency are possible for the classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018. For instance, a student may demonstrate proficiency via an SAT or ACT score in addition to the NJDOE's long standing portfolio appeal process.

However, if a student does pass a PARCC assessment in English language arts or math those scores will be honored as demonstration of proficiency.

Q5: Is a student who does not pass a PARCC End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment required to retake the assessment?

A5: No. A student is not required to retake an assessment or retake the course based on their PARCC scores. However, if based on other local measures a school requires a student to retake the course, the student can participate in the same EOC assessment in the following year or summer school.

BAE/gm

- c: Members, State Board of Education
 - David C. Hespe, Acting Commissioner
 - Senior Staff
 - Executive County Superintendents
 - Executive Directors of Regional Achievement Centers
 - Executive County Business Officials
 - Garden State Coalition of Schools
 - NJ LEE Group