
**Overview of PASS 2: Assessing Student Learning and
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)**

**Parent Academy for Student Success #2
Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)**

The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) model is different from other traditional parent/family involvement activities. The model allows parents and educators to discuss the details of new teaching and learning practices and strengthen positive academic home/school relationships that will benefit student achievement.

The topic for PASS 2 is the engagement of parents in district and school discussions around high learning standards and the measurement of student learning.

- ✓ The New Jersey student learning standards in English language arts and mathematics were updated in 2010. The new standards - the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) - replaced outdated learning standards and are based on the knowledge and skills that students need to succeed in the next grade level and after graduation.
- ✓ Since the CCSS adoption in 2010, both teaching and learning in New Jersey classrooms have been aligned to the new standards. After using the CCSS for the past four years, it is the appropriate time to begin to measure how well students are learning.
- ✓ Student learning with the CCSS will be measured with assessments called the Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC). Students in New Jersey will take the PARCC tests in spring 2015. However, the results will not affect students until 2019.
- ✓ PARCC is a computer-based test that replaces the current New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) and the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).
- ✓ PARCC assessments are carefully designed to challenge students to go beyond a surface-level understanding of academic subject matter and learn how to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply their learning to the real-world workplace. The standards and assessments both raise the bar for students' knowledge and skills to accurately measure student progress toward success after graduation and match the rigor of college and the workplace.

Assessing student learning is a complex process with a simple goal -- measure *what* students know and what they can *do* with what they know.

The PARCC tests will measure students' understanding and mastery of the CCSS.

Districts and schools can use the PASS program to help keep stakeholders informed and engaged in conversations about meaningful assessment of student learning as it applies to college- and career-readiness.

Through the PASS program, educators and parents discuss techniques used in the classroom to provide a real-life context for student performance in and outside of school. Discussions include the following: the purposes and benefits of assessment; how current assessments align with the CCSS that reflect increased rigor for college and careers; and ways that parents can help students learn out of school so that they can gain more from their in-school experiences.

PARCC comprises performance-based items, tasks to provide evidence of learning and some traditional-style questions.

- Performance-based assessments are administered after 75 percent of the school year is complete (March), and they include extended tasks, as well as applications of concepts and skills.
- End-of-year assessments are administered after 90 percent of the school year is complete (May), and they include short-answer items.

Academic assessment is a powerful tool for measuring student learning and the effectiveness of educational programs. Assessment is not an end in itself, but one vehicle to support student success and enable educational improvement.

Teacher-designed assessments and PARCC measure students' understanding of the complex nature of learning and the application of knowledge by utilizing a number of different instructional and assessment methods that are designed to collect information, including measures of actual student performance, such as reading a passage and writing about what was learned in that passage.

In the past, assessments required students to recite facts from memory, choose one answer from a multiple-choice list, and select a true/false answer linked to a restrictive statement. We now know that this type of measurement tool does not help students transfer classroom knowledge to real-world situations. Neither teacher-developed assessments nor the PARCC assessments are limited to measuring students' memorization of facts. They assess the knowledge, problem-solving ability, thinking skills and students' ability to apply the needed skills to succeed after graduation.

Some general concepts of the CCSS that are measured through PARCC.....

- English language arts standards build students' skills to:
 - Focus on reading comprehension;
 - Read complex texts independently;
 - Write effectively when analyzing text and using various sources;
 - Build and present knowledge through research;
 - Develop speaking and listening skills; and
 - Acquire other abilities required for success in college and careers.
- Mathematics standards build student skills to:
 - Model real-world problems;
 - Apply skills, concepts and understanding to solve multi-step problems;
 - Combine reading skills and mathematical practices;
 - Reason and justify answers;
 - Use precision, perseverance and strategic tools; and
 - Acquire other abilities required for success in college and careers.

Student learning standards (CCSS) drive what is taught and learned, and teacher-developed assessments and PARCC measure students' demonstration of the knowledge and skills required in the current and future workplace.

Assessment of improved student learning and deep understanding of the CCSS requires a range of assessment practices with three overarching purposes for students:

- Assessment FOR learning - occurs when teachers in students' current and future grade levels use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching.
- Assessment OF learning - occurs when teachers use assessment results to tailor teaching to best meet students' needs and ensure that the educational program is of the highest quality. Teachers also use evidence of student learning to measure achievement against goals and standards. Educators and states use a summary of test results to ensure that their education program compares positively with other schools, districts, states and nations.
- Assessment AS learning - occurs when students reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their knowledge, skills, motivation to learn and their future learning goals. These skills are called "self-regulated learning" and help students become individuals who are life-long learners.

The overriding purpose of high-quality education assessments, which includes PARCC, is to improve student learning. Learning the concepts of the Common Core State Standards and measuring that learning over time with PARCC assessments can instill change, reinforce growth and increase students' ability to apply their new knowledge and skills to other situations beyond the assessment.

Clearly, student learning and assessment involve mastery of subject knowledge that requires the instructional skills of professional teachers. However, parents can take the lead in discussions about how and when a student learns outside of the classroom. Such discussions may include factors that are difficult to measure in a classroom or on an assessment.

The PASS 2 model provides tools and supports for use by educators and parents so that they can build partnerships around assessing student learning and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC).

As the implementation of PARCC assessments continues throughout the state, the Department of Education, districts and schools urge all stakeholders to remain committed to ensuring that our students are learning with high-quality standards and assessments. The PASS model for home/school partnerships will help to ensure that commitment continues.

PASS 2 documents and partnership supports are intended to complement information about the New Jersey Department of Education's Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Assessments and provide resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to work together in the best interest of New Jersey students.

*For information on the NJDOE PASS model, the PASS #1 theme of **Student Learning with the Common Core State Standards** or the PASS #2 theme of **Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and PARCC** go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Send questions to: informccss@doe.state.nj.us.*