

Manasquan Public Schools

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Dr. Frank Kasyan, Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The following letter contains information about Manasquan School District's process and procedure for administering the PARCC assessment test. This information gleaned from the Department of Education Broadcast, NJ School Board's Association and the Manasquan School District's process and procedures. The PARCC states' high quality assessments will allow parents and educators to see how children are progressing in school and whether they are on track for postsecondary success. The PARCC assessment also provides teachers with the ability to identify students who may be falling behind and need extra help. In a presentation before the State Board of Education, state officials compared information on the new reports to the reports from prior state standardized tests. The **PARCC (<http://www.parcconline.org>)** results, which will be printed in color and mailed directly to families, will help parents and teachers better analyze student learning, Assistant Education Commissioner Bari Erlichson said. The previous tests, The New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge and the High School Proficiency Assessment, gave parents and teachers a student's individual score compared to an average score. Because the PARCC tests, administered in grades 3-11, are longer than their predecessors they allow the state to reliably test a full range of skills each year, something NJ ASK and HSPA did only partially, Erlichson said.

The **Manasquan Public Schools** will administer the state testing program in March and May to all students in grades 3 through 8 and in high school. This year, a new computer-based test, the PARCC assessment ("Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers"), will replace the paper-and-pencil High School Proficiency Assessment and NJ ASK tests. There will be no PARCC testing prior to 3rd grade.

Our district has prepared for the transition to PARCC by upgrading its technology, working with the teachers who will administer the test, and preparing students for the conversion to a computer-based examination. **"Our students and teachers had previous experience with PARCC when it was field tested in our district in March 2014."**

At each grade level, PARCC will measure student progress toward recently adopted state standards in mathematics and language arts. State academic standards are goals for what we want our children to know and be able to do at each grade level. The recently adopted state standards to be measured by PARCC have been in place in our district's schools for more than a year. They are called the Common Core State Standards. While these math and language arts standards were recently adjusted, New Jersey's public schools have had standards-based education for two decades.

For your child, test-day preparation should include a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast. Encourage your child to do his or her best, but not to worry about "failing" the test. PARCC results will not be used for promotion or report card grades.

On the following pages are answers to commonly asked questions to PARCC. Rest assured that we have taken every step possible to ensure a smooth administration of the exam for the educational benefit of your children.

Please contact **Building Administration, High School: 732.528.8820, Elementary School: 732.528.8810** if you need additional information about our district's participation in the state testing program.

Sincerely,

Frank Kasyan Ed.D.

Dr. Frank Kasyan Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Tom Pellegrino

Tom Pellegrino
President, Board of Education

The Manasquan School District's PARCC Assessments: What You Need to Know

How long will testing take?

The state has set aside a total of 10 hours *per year* for PARCC testing. In comparison, our district schedules more than 1,110 hours of instruction per school year. Most students are expected to complete PARCC testing in less than the 10 hours allotted. For example, statewide over half of students in grades 6 through 11 are predicted to finish all PARCC testing in 7-and-a-half hours, while most third graders are expected to complete testing in 6-and-a-half hours.

Last year's administration of the fourth-grade NJ ASK took 5 hours to 7-and-a-half hours. More time has been allocated for PARCC testing because the new assessments measure progress toward all of the standards, not just a sampling of standards as was the case with NJ ASK.

When will the state tests take place?

The PARCC tests will be administered to students in two windows, in March and May. The testing dates are as follows:

Elementary School:

Performance Based Component – March 2, 2015 – March 27, 2015

End of Year Component – April 27, 2015 – May 22, 2015

High School:

Performance Based Component – March 2, 2015 – May 1, 2015

End of Year Component – April 20, 2015 – June 5, 2015

In March, each child will participate in five testing sessions of 60 to 90 minutes each.

The March tests require written answers in which the children explain and “construct” their answers. While the tests will be taken on computers, children will have paper and pencil to use if they want to work out math problems or draft written answers before entering them on computers.

In May, children will be given “end-of-year assessments,” largely multiple-choice questions that assess their learning for the entire school year. These tests will take place in two sessions per child.

How will the students take the test?

The PARCC tests are designed to be taken on a computer. This mirrors the movement toward computer-based testing, which will also affect college admissions tests and high school equivalency exams in the future. In our district, students will be using a combination of desk top computers and tablet devices. Students will enter responses on the computer or device, but will have pencil and paper handy to formulate responses beforehand if they choose to do so.

How will our schools use the PARCC results?

The PARCC results will enable our district to evaluate the effectiveness of its education program in mathematics and language arts and to consider adjustments.

PARCC is more in-depth than the previous state tests. It measures student progress toward *all* grade-level standards in language arts and mathematics, rather than just a sampling of the standards.

PARCC results will help teachers pinpoint areas in which an *individual student* needs more attention. For example, test data will enable an elementary school teacher to know if a student requires attention in a specific application, such as multiplication and division, in addition to his or her overall progress toward grade-level math standards. PARCC results can also guide teachers to individualize instruction for *students who exceed* grade-level standards.

For parents, PARCC will provide individualized information on their children's progress toward meeting academic standards.

The Manasquan School District's PARCC Assessments

The PARCC test results will *not* be used to determine promotion or report card grades.

As has always been our district's practice, the state testing program will not be the sole factor in determining entry into gifted-and-talented programs, honors classes or advanced placement courses. As appropriate, class work, teacher review, portfolio assessments, parental input and other test results are major factors in determining your student's school program."

In addition, "passing" the PARCC exam will not be a high school graduation requirement for the classes of 2016, 2017 and 2018.

For students beginning college, however, PARCC testing can eliminate the need to take additional placement tests before they start freshman year studies. Public colleges in many states, including all public colleges in New Jersey, will accept the PARCC results for student placement purposes.

Student progress demonstrated through the PARCC exams will make up 10% of the information that goes into the evaluations of teachers in the subject areas and grade levels tested.

Is PARCC a high-stakes test?

PARCC is no more "high-stakes" than New Jersey's previous tests, the HSPA and the NJ ASK. It will not affect promotion, report card grades, or college admission. Just as demonstrating proficiency on the HSPA has been a New Jersey high school graduation requirement for many years, PARCC will become a graduation requirement in 2017.

Could personal information about my child obtained through PARCC be sold?

No. Individual student results will remain confidential. Protections at the state and federal levels, and through all contracts and agreements, prevent student-identifiable data from being marketed or distributed. The selling of student data was never allowed in New Jersey under the NJ ASK or HSPA tests, and it is not allowed under the PARCC tests.

What happens if I refuse to let my child take the test?

Our district will follow the same policies and protocols that it has had in place to govern student participation, or non-participation, in the previous state tests (NJ ASK and HSPA).

"A. Written Notice from Parents

- 1. A parent who refused to have their child participate in a Statewide assessment shall submit a letter to the Principal stating their child will not participate in a Statewide assessment.**

2. The parent shall indicate in the letter the testing date(s) and the specific Statewide assessment(s) their child will not be taking.
3. The letter shall be submitted to the Principal at least five school dates before the scheduled testing date.
4. The letter shall be maintained with the student's academic records.

B. Testing Date

1. A student whose parents has provided prior written notice informing the Principal their child will not be participating in a Statewide assessment will be required to report to the testing location on the date of the assessment.
2. The student will be required to be removed from the testing location to an area in the building such as a study hall, media center, or other location in the school where the student can be supervised by a school district staff member.

New Jersey statute and regulation state that all students *shall* take the statewide assessment, which is now the PARCC test. We strongly encourage you to make sure your child participates in PARCC. The information obtained through the assessment will determine how we can improve our school district's education program and help your child reach his or her full academic potential.

*For information about our school district's testing program, contact **Building Administration,**
High School: 732.528.8820, Elementary School: 732.528.8810*