



HARMONY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

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Harmony Township School 2014-2015 PARCC - Q & A

What is PARCC?

PARCC stands for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. It is a multi-state initiative to assess Language Arts and Mathematics skills, identify strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately improve student performance. In New Jersey, the technology-based PARCC assessments replace the paper-based NJ-ASK Language Arts and Math assessments.

How does a technology-based assessment work?

Instead of test booklets and #2 pencils, students will log in to the test using a computer. The technology enables question types not found on paper-based assessments. On some questions, students will drag-and-drop to put things in order, work with manipulatives on the screen, or watch a video clip before answering questions. The testing environment is designed to take over a student's screen, and everything they need to answer the questions is provided by the test.

What if there is a technical problem?

The testing environment is designed to handle a variety of technical issues that could come up, such as loss of network or Internet connectivity. The safeguards have been designed in a way to ensure that student responses are saved in the event of a problem with either the computer or the network connection. If students experience a technical issue, we will make sure that they are given the proper amount of extra time to complete the assessment.

How long is the test?

The test is broken up into 2 main components - the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) in March and the End of Year (EOY) Assessment in May. Each component is then broken up into units approximately 1 hour in length. For the Performance Based Assessment, students will take the units over the course of a week. Unlike NJ-ASK, testing units may be in the morning or afternoon. See the testing schedule on the reverse to find out when each grade will take the assessment.

What accessibility features will be available in the PARCC test?

All students will have access to several tools built-in to the testing environment, such as a line reader, answer eliminator, and magnification. A calculator and math manipulatives such as a ruler will be provided where students are expected to use them. Accommodations driven by an IEP or 504 plan will also be provided by the testing environment or the proctor.

Do students need to prepare?

Students should not stress out over the test. They are completing tutorials and practice tests in class to learn how to navigate the testing environment and answer the different types of questions. As with previous assessments, it helps for students to get a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast or lunch before testing. Students may also want to practice keyboarding skills in preparation for the essay. 4th, 5th, and 6th graders have been practicing using edutyping.com while 7th and 8th graders may refresh their skills using sense-lang.org.

Do students need to bring anything with them?

For the Language Arts section of the March testing (Monday-Wednesday), **we ask that students bring in their own headphones or earbuds for the videos.** We do have a limited number of headphones for those that are unable to bring them in. For some Math sections, students may use their own calculator, if they choose (there is also a calculator built-in).

What is the schedule for the March Performance Based Assessment?

5th & 6th Grade - Week of March 2-6
4th & 7th Grade - Week of March 9-13
3rd & 8th Grade - Week of March 16-20

For all grades, English Language Arts testing will be Monday through Wednesday, while Mathematics testing will be Thursday and Friday.

How can I find out more?

We will be holding an information session for parents in the library on Monday, February 23rd at 6pm prior to the Board of Education meeting.