



Illinois State Board of Education

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FACT SHEET

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION TO PARCC ASSESSMENTS

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This school year, Illinois high schools will administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) aligned to one English language arts and one math course.

Districts have been given the flexibility this year to choose one of the following three combinations:

- (1) ELA/Literacy 1 and Algebra 1/Integrated Math 1
- (2) ELA/Literacy 2 and Geometry/Integrated Math 2
- (3) ELA/Literacy 3 and Algebra 2/Integrated Math 3

The PARCC replaces the state's former mandatory high school-level test, the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), which included the ACT.

Unlike the PSAE, which was administered to all juniors, students will take PARCC assessments in spring 2015 near the completion of courses that contain the corresponding standards. That means that students in any high school grade may be taking the PARCC this spring. The majority of high schools – more than 60 percent - will administer ELA/Literacy 3 and Algebra 2/Integrated Math 3. The remainder will administer one of the other two combinations mentioned above.

A corresponding PARCC Assessments [fact sheet](#) offers more details about how these K-12 assessments have been developed to reflect the Illinois Learning Standards adopted in 2010.

Higher education representatives have been involved in development of PARCC assessments and will continue to be throughout the implementation process. Institutions of higher education are working toward acceptance of PARCC test results as a way to show readiness for college-level work without remediation. The PARCC assessment has always been framed as a placement exam and not an entrance exam, allowing colleges and universities to place those students testing at the “college and career” ready level in credit-bearing courses (as opposed to remedial courses).

Members of the PARCC consortium

Illinois
Arkansas
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Massachusetts
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
Ohio
Rhode Island

As Illinois planned its move toward exams aligned to college and career readiness, ISBE heard from districts that still wanted the option of giving their students access to the ACT. ISBE requested full funding -- about \$54.5 million -- for both PARCC tests and the ACT for the 2014-15 school year. The state budget approved by the General Assembly appropriated \$9.9 million less for assessments than ISBE's original recommendation and, due to this reduction and feedback from districts, the Board decided to limit the administration of the available PARCC exams for high school-level courses this year to just two -- one in English language arts and one in math so that the state could still cover the cost of the ACT administration. The state is therefore delaying the administration of the full suite of high school-level PARCC assessments this year. **ISBE offered districts the opportunity to "opt in"** and administer ACT Plus Writing and/or ACT WorkKeys to all grade 11 students on March 3 and/or 4, 2015, respectively.

There are differences between the PARCC high school-level exams and the ACT. PARCC assessments are aligned to the new learning standards in a very transparent manner -- all tasks on the high school end-of-course exams are aligned to the deep content of that course. ACT is designed to measure overall learning at a given point in time.

The ACT is a test of cumulative knowledge across subjects (as opposed to a course-specific test like the PARCC tests) and offering it in March -- six weeks prior to the previous administration in Illinois -- is not a significant time difference. Additional options for taking the ACT are offered throughout the year on National Test dates. Note also that the ACT is not required for federal accountability purposes; however, ISBE listened to local districts that wanted the state to continue to fund and provide this additional standardized test.

The multistate PARCC assessments offer a common metric for both educators and policymakers to gauge student performance on a level playing field. The state and local districts will continue to monitor other metrics such as student and school progress, attendance and graduation rates, school climate and learning conditions.

Learn more online

Additional details regarding the PARCC and ACT can be found online:

The PARCC website:

<http://www.parcconline.org/>

- <http://parcc.pearson.com/#>

ISBE Student Assessment website:

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/parcc.htm>

- Time allotment:
<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/pdfs/2015/parcc/parcc-unit-times14-15.pdf>

ISBE-funded ACT information website:

General information:

<http://www.isbe.net/assessment/act.htm>

- Test Dates:
<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/pdfs/2015/assessment-dates-14-15.pdf>

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