



# Illinois State Board of Education

100 West Randolph Street, Suite 4-800 • Chicago, Illinois 60601-3223  
www.isbe.net

Gery J. Chico  
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

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## **Talking Points: Double Testing Application and PARCC (For Internal Use)**

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- I. Debut of more meaningful tests aligned to the new Illinois Learning Standards.**

ISBE staff has been working with local schools and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) on item review and test development for full implementation of PARCC-developed assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics during the 2014-15 school year. These high-quality assessments will be linked to Illinois' new internationally-benchmarked learning standards in ELA and mathematics.

  - A. These assessments should reflect classroom lessons and experiences, require higher-level thinking and analysis, and generate more meaningful data than previous state assessments.
  
- II. This spring 2014, Illinois will join other PARCC member states in administering the PARCC field test to students.**
  - A. PARCC estimates that more than one million students across the country will take part in field testing.
  - B. PARCC developed a field test sampling methodology that focused on reducing the burden of double testing for schools. A sampling process was used to determine which schools were invited to participate based on given characteristics, such as student demographics, school size, etc.
  - C. Approximately 1,900 schools and 680 districts have agreed to participate in the March and May field testing.
  
- III. Students participating in the field test will take the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) or the End-of-Year Assessment (EOY), or both, in one content area, either ELA or math. A "full test" for field testing is defined as both the PBA and the EOY in a given content area, ELA or math.**
  - A. This design was chosen to minimize the testing burden on schools, while still allowing PARCC to collect the data necessary to accomplish the purposes of the field test.
  - B. The majority of students participating in field testing will take only one component, either the PBA or the EOY of the assessment, in one of the two content areas.
  - C. While ISBE does not yet have the exact number of students who will be participating in field testing, tens of thousands of Illinois students, including high school students,

will participate. There are two to four classes in each school per grade, and one to three grades per school.

- D. Across the state, testing will vary. Students in non-field test schools will take the entire ISAT. Students participating in the field testing will either take the PARCC field test in one subject and the ISAT in another, or, more likely, they will take just one portion or "half" of the PARCC in one subject and the entire ISAT in both subjects, math and ELA. All students will take the ISAT in at least one of the subjects, math or ELA.
- E. For spring 2014 administration, all 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the state will take the ISAT in science.
- F. ISBE expects that by participating in one component of the field test, students will take an additional two to six hours of testing this spring, depending on the content area, the component (PBA or EOY), and the grade level.
- G. Ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> graders that take both the PBA and the EOY of the PARCC in one content area will be adding about six hours of testing to their school year. These students were not previously required to take a state test although many voluntarily took the ACT products "EXPLORE" and "PLAN" in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup> grade to better gauge college readiness.
- H. The PBA component of the field test will be administered between March 24 and April 11. The EOY component of the field test will be administered between May 5 and June 6.
- I. Additionally, 11<sup>th</sup> graders will take the PSAE in 2014 as they have in the past. The State Board is seeking funding for FY15 to continue to make the ACT available to students as we transition to the PARCC. Schools will gain a familiarity with the testing process, both online and on paper, that will be helpful as PARCC develops the final assessments to be used in 2014-15. Student-level scores will not be generated from the field test. The field test is meant to provide feedback on item development and administration procedures.
- J. Illinois teachers and administrators will offer feedback on this test before it's officially administered.

**IV. In terms of both this year's field test and next year's PARCC, students will face a significantly different test than prior state tests.**

- A. In ELA, the PBA for each grade level will include three tasks: a research simulation, a literary analysis task, and a narrative task.
  - 1. For each task, students must read one or more texts, answer short comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw upon textual evidence.
  - 2. In mathematics, the PBA will include short- and extended-response questions. These questions will focus on conceptual knowledge and skills.
- B. The EOY in ELA and mathematics will also differ from previous tests.

1. At each grade level, the EOY in ELA will comprise of about five texts and a number of comprehension and vocabulary questions associated with each text.
2. The EOY in mathematics will mostly comprise of short-answer questions focused on conceptual knowledge and skills.

**V. A New Way of Testing Students**

There are a number of benefits of the PARCC administration as compared to the Illinois Standard Achievement Test, or the ISAT. These are two very different tests.

- A. The PARCC assessments require higher-order thinking and more time to analyze information, rather than merely filling in the bubble of a multiple choice exam.
- B. The PARCC is designed to provide timely results and inform instruction. With this assessment, students – and their teachers – will not have to wait until they are in the next grade to learn their scores and to see where they require additional help and attention.
- C. The PARCC is more closely aligned to international assessments, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), than the ISAT.
- D. The PARCC has five performance levels, whereas the ISAT only has four. Illinois will continue to talk in terms of whether or not students are meeting or exceeding standards. The five performance levels of PARCC will better help schools to target assistance to students and provide more opportunities for students and schools to demonstrate growth.
- E. Perhaps most importantly, the PARCC is aligned to Illinois' new learning standards. These learning standards set college and career readiness expectations for students at every grade level.

**VI. PARCC Field Testing and Federal Accountability Implications**

Field testing of PARCC has some implications for the determination of Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, as Illinois remains under NCLB as of January 2014.

- A. If Illinois gets approval for the "double testing" application from the U.S. Department of Education, students at a given field test school must take both components of the PARCC, the PBA and the EOY, in order for the schools' AYP status to remain constant from last year. Those students will still have to take the ISAT in the other content area.
- B. Illinois is trying to avoid "double testing," but the U.S. Department of Education has defined a "full test" as both the PBA and the EOY. Therefore, students that take only one half of the PARCC, either the PBA or the EOY, must still take the ISAT in that content area.
- C. The greater balance of participating PARCC field test schools will still have AYP computed for both reading and math.

- D. ISBE will know more details about how AYP will be determined once we receive status about our waiver application.

**VII. Readiness for Online Testing**

The goal is that all Illinois schools will eventually administer the PARCC online. ISBE recognizes, however, that not all schools have the capacity to administer online assessments at this time. Therefore, some schools will field test the PARCC through paper-based assessments.

- A. As of today, we estimate that about half of our school districts have the capability to administer the PARCC online. We will be assessing school districts again.
- B. We can't view online learning and testing as a separate issue. We must increase capacity at districts in order to expand online learning.
- C. The State Board's FY15 recommendation includes a \$450 million capital request to support districts as they improve their technology infrastructure. This funding will be targeted toward improving the connectivity of buildings to broadband internet service as well as improving the network capabilities with the classroom. This request does not include funding for individual devices.

**VIII. Building a New Trend Line and Purposes**

Districts already use many different forms of assessments: their own formative assessments, national assessments, and teacher-developed assessments. These various metrics help schools to inform parents on student growth and achievement/performance.

- A. Currently, Illinois is a universal ACT state, ensuring every student in the state takes this college-entrance exam. ISBE is requesting that state funds continue to cover the cost of the ACT in FY15.
- B. The long term goal, however, is to administer the PARCC to students in grades 3-11. Administering the PARCC in grades 3-10 and the ACT in grade 11 would result in a disconnect between grades 10 and 11. Furthermore, the ACT does not closely mirror the new Illinois learning standards and does not represent the performance of our students on our adopted standards.
- C. The State Board's FY15 budget recommendation also includes voluntary administration of the ACT WorkKeys. ISBE is currently working to determine whether or not subcomponents of the PARCC can be used for academic workplace skills. The ACT WorkKeys do not currently align to Illinois' learning standards. After staff review, ISBE found the highest level of mathematics assessed by the ACT WorkKeys is at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level of Illinois' learning standards. It is necessary to develop indicators of career readiness that align to the state's standards, rather than using assessments developed by ACT, which may not reflect the curriculum and instruction occurring in Illinois.

- D. We are still in the early phases of transitioning to PARCC and it is expected that research and collaboration with higher education institutions will determine the best practice going forward in terms of college entrance.

**IX. Communications**

ISBE will be working with schools to inform parents whose children will be participating in field testing. A sample parent letter is provided for districts to use as they see fit.

- A. ISBE will be conducting workshops, webinars, and regional trainings to assist districts and schools in administering the field tests and to answer questions from educators. Additionally, the PARCC Support Center will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 8p.m. (CT) at (888) 493-9888.
- B. ISBE worked with Pearson, the PARCC test contractor, to provide in-person workshops in January. Additionally, ISBE is providing webinars every other week for educators in field test districts to answer questions that arise.
- C. ISBE has developed a listserv for districts that are field testing and will continue to provide information to districts via this mechanism.