



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

FAQs

PARCC ASSESSMENT

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Q: What is the testing time for the PARCC assessment?

A: In response to feedback from schools, the PARCC governing board decided to shorten the spring 2016 PARCC test. The old format was divided into two separate administrations (PBA and EOY) but those have now been consolidated into one. The single testing window will be 30 days and will extend from when roughly 75 percent of instruction is complete to the 90 percent mark. Testing time will also be reduced for most students by 90 minutes – 60 minutes for the math portion and 30 minutes for English language arts.

Q: What are the consequences of PARCC testing?

A: PARCC is Illinois' state accountability test. The 2015 administration served as a baseline year, however, so there were no immediate consequences for schools or students. The numbers are being used as a baseline in order to measure growth by students, schools, and districts in the future. The first year of data are also being used to establish cut scores that determine the performance levels at which students can be deemed "college and career ready." The PARCC assessments are standardized and the performance results of students in Illinois can be compared directly with their peers across the nation.

Q: Will ISBE offer a college entrance exam?

A: ISBE would like to continue to offer a college entrance assessment free of charge to juniors and is seeking bids on a college admission assessment for 2016.

Q.: Why couldn't Illinois delay implementation of the PARCC assessments?

A: In 2010, the Board adopted the new Illinois Learning Standards in ELA and math and districts were free to begin reviewing and implementing the new standards with the 2013-14 school year set as the deadline for full implementation prior to the PARCC assessments.

In December 2014, the U.S. Department of Education confirmed our understanding of current laws regarding accountability and that there is no waiver to districts that may want to delay administering the PARCC. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) – requires states (including Illinois) receiving Title I funds to provide for administration of the state's academic assessment to all designated students. Additionally, the department confirmed that the same assessment must be used for all students, with some limited exceptions such as an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The department spelled out expectations for both state and local education agencies in addition to outlining the possible penalties that could be imposed upon each in its letter posted at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/USED-ESEA-asmt-clarification-1214.pdf>.

Q: Can the PARCC assessment be used for college acceptance?

A: Institutions of higher education are working toward acceptance of PARCC assessment results as a way to show readiness for college-level work without remediation. The Illinois Council of Community College Presidents in April decided to start using the PARCC exam to determine a student's readiness for college-level courses. This decision means that students who earn certain scores can be placed directly into Illinois community college classes that earn credit toward their degree without spending extra time and money on other placement exams for remedial courses. PARCC assessments have 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).

Q: Can individual students opt out of the PARCC assessments? Can parents opt their children out of the PARCC assessments?

A: No. Illinois does not have a policy that allows students to opt out of assessments, nor are the parents allowed to opt their children out of tests. Allowing this would result in a loss of federal funding for Illinois education. Districts are obligated to present each and every student with the opportunity to take the assessment. If a student refused to test at the time the test is presented, the school district is required to account for this occurrence during the data correction period following testing.

Q: Will students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) also take the PARCC assessment and if so, what types of accommodations will the test allow?

A: Students with disabilities will take either the PARCC or the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM-AA) assessment. The DLM-AA is the test for the students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. IEP teams determine which test will be most appropriate for individual students. The PARCC assessment includes a number of features to assist students with disabilities. A manual listing potential accommodations has been made available [here](#) on the PARCC website. The manual addresses the specific needs of students with disabilities, English learners and English learners with disabilities.

ELLs will take the PARCC and DLM-AA assessments using appropriate accommodations. Illinois will also continue to use ACCESS For ELLs®, a standards-based, criterion-referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure ELLs' social and academic proficiency in English.

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