



A NEW VISION OF ASSESSMENT

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of **states that have come together** to develop high-quality student assessments linked to new, more rigorous English language arts (ELA)/literacy and math standards. The assessments will be ready for the 2014–15 school year for students in grades 3–11 and will replace the statewide tests in those subjects that students take now.

The computer-based assessments will address longstanding concerns that parents, educators and employers have about current state assessments. Many current state tests do not measure the ability of students to think critically and apply their knowledge rather than just memorize facts. The new assessments will ask students to answer a variety of types of questions, show their work and explain their reasoning.

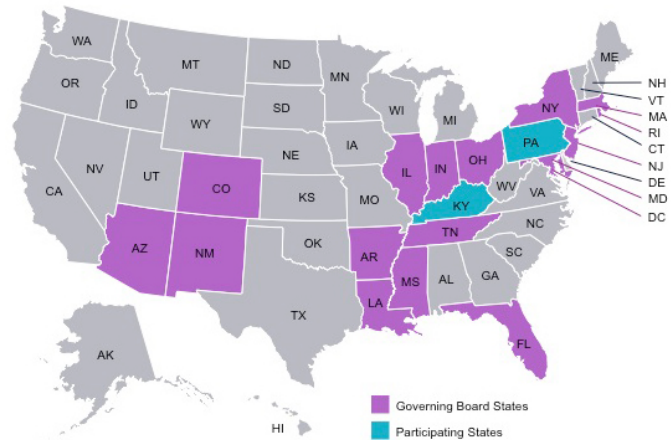
Educators need to assess whether students are learning at expected levels or need **extra help**, and they need to determine whether **instructional programs and practices are working**. But educators should measure student learning in useful ways, with meaningful assessments that are worth your child’s time.

Depending on the state in which you live, the time your child spends taking the new tests could be shorter, somewhat longer or the same as with current state tests. It is important to remember that the new tests are more comprehensive than the outgoing ones. PARCC will test writing skills at every grade level and critical-thinking and problem-solving skills in an in-depth manner. In math, for example, your child will be asked to explain mathematical reasoning, not just get the answer right. In ELA/literacy, he or she will be asked to read complex passages and draw evidence from the material to make inferences and present a persuasive argument.

How PARCC Will Be Different

The new assessments will:

- **Be innovative and engaging.** PARCC assessments will be tests worth taking, made up of engaging texts and real-world problems. They will ask your child to write essays and answer questions that resemble the kind of high-quality coursework you see in the best classrooms at all grade levels and in colleges.
- **Monitor and signal whether your child is on track for success in college or a career.** The new tests will signal whether your child is making expected progress and whether he or she is on track to succeed in college or careers or needs extra support. Right now, too many young people graduate from high school unprepared and unexpectedly get stuck in expensive, noncredit-bearing remedial courses in college —





courses that do not lead to a degree or certificate at a community college, four-year college or university, or technical training program.

- **Provide educators and parents useful data on student achievement in a timely way.** Teachers, parents and students sometimes get test data much too late, even after the school year has ended. The new computer-based PARCC tests will provide results much faster and in a more useful format than before. PARCC plans to release more than just scores. It also will release a portion of the test questions and answers at the end of each year, so parents and educators can use the data to help reinforce what students are doing well and where they need to improve.
- **Connect to the Common Core State Standards.** Nearly every state is working to implement rigorous K–12 standards that spell out what your child needs to know in each grade in ELA/literacy and math to ensure he or she is on track to succeed in college or careers. The new tests will assess learning based on these new standards.
- **Provide comparability among states and equity among students.** Every child in America deserves access to excellent standards and assessments, and mastering 4th grade math should mean the same thing from school to school and state to state. PARCC will assess what every student knows and can do — from high-achieving to low-achieving children. The computer-based tests will also better enable people with disabilities and English language learners to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Grade 3 Sample Test Item

SAMPLE ITEM

Part A
A farmer plants $\frac{3}{4}$ of the field with soybeans.
Drag the soybean to the field as many times as needed to show the fraction of the field that is planted with soybeans.

Part B
Type a fraction different than $\frac{3}{4}$ in the boxes that also represents the fractional part of the farmer's field that is planted with soybeans.

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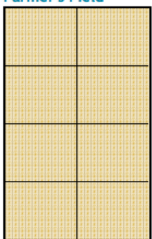
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Farmer's Field



Soybean

Explain why the two fractions above are equal.

This sample test item has more than one possible solution. Unlike traditional multiple choice, guessing the correct answer or using a strategy to eliminate choices is difficult. Students can also create a visual representation even though the task is scored by a computer.

Getting Ready

- **Training Teachers.** Educators from across the country have been working with their states through PARCC to become leaders and experts on the new assessments. They are sharing their knowledge and expertise with their peers and will help other teachers get up to speed on the new tests.
- **Technology.** Schools will be able to use a range of devices from desktop computers to laptops and tablets. This is the same technology used for instructional purposes throughout the year. Schools across the country are now determining what additional technology and bandwidth they may need to administer the tests.
- **What You Can Do.** Now is the time to ask questions and find out how teachers are preparing for the new assessments, what kind of planning is happening and how you can help your child get ready.

Please visit the PARCC website at www.PARCCOnline.org. You will find sample test questions and more information about the design and development of these new assessments. If you would like to contact PARCC, please go to www.PARCCOnline.org/contact.