

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

TO: Dr. Mike Riggle
FROM: Dr. Rosanne Williamson
RE: State Testing Update
DATE: February 2, 2016

Background:

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), new assessments that differed from the old, paper, multiple-choice format were first administered online through student Chromebooks during the 2014-2015 school year. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) recently developed assessments in English and mathematics to measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and careers. Originally, twenty-five states, including the District of Columbia, planned to participate in the PARCC assessments. As of this spring, seven states, including the District of Columbia, are current PARCC users; however, two of the seven existing users are in jeopardy of dropping PARCC. Illinois' contract with PARCC is in effect through the 2016-2017 school year.

Critical Question: What has changed for 2015-2016 required Illinois assessments?

PARCC Assessments:

- Last year the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) was administered after approximately 75% of the school year and the End-of-Year Assessment (EOY) was administered after approximately 90% of the school year. This year there will be one testing window that will extend from roughly the 75% mark of the school year to the 90% mark. Within the new testing window, there is no specific designation for PBA or EOY Assessments. This provides districts more flexibility in testing dates.
- This year the PARCC exam will consist of six test units, compared to the eight units students took last year. The math testing time was reduced by 60 minutes and the English testing time was reduced by 30 minutes.
- The English exam will still focus on writing effectively when analyzing text and reading comprehension. The mathematics exam will still focus on expressing mathematical reasoning, modeling real-world problems and demonstrating further conceptual understanding.
- Last year students in grade-11 English and Algebra II were tested. Districts were provided the opportunity to determine courses for PARCC participation. This spring, students in grade-9 English and Algebra I will be tested instead of grade-11 English and Algebra II. This change was made in an effort to reduce the hours of testing juniors already experience because of college entrance exams (ACT/SAT) and AP exams.
- Universities do not recognize PARCC as a college entrance exam.

PARCC Assessment Timeline:

- April 11 – May 20, 2016
- Total test time is approximately 730 minutes, including pre- and post-administration activities

New Required Illinois Science Assessment (ISA):

- The federal government requires public schools to assess students in science
- High school students enrolled in Biology, Advanced Biology, or AP Biology must test
- The test window is expected to be open throughout May 2016
- ISA will be administered in an online format only
- ISA is based on the Illinois Learning Standards in Science & the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- The Illinois State Board of Education has an agreement with the Superintendent of the District of Columbia and is working in partnership to build the ISA.

New State-Funded College Entrance Exam-SAT:

- Pending contract finalization and assuming timely funding, the SAT will be administered in the spring of 2016. Potential testing dates have not been identified by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- The SAT takes the place of the previously state-funded ACT exam.