



Haddon Heights Public Schools

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It is that time in the year in which we are required to administer the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). After receiving and analyzing the data from last year's assessment, we were able to conclude the following. The scores at the junior-senior high school were lower than state averages although the junior high was consistent with state average. At the high school, there were many challenges. There were a high number of students who refused to test including many high achieving students because they had already met graduation requirements established by the state. Based on the short amount of time most students were engaged in actually taking the PARCC assessment, it led us to believe that these students did not take the assessment seriously.

As we approach year three of PARCC, we want to communicate to parents and students the importance of this assessment. Not only will we receive successful, reliable, and valid results of this year's PARCC, but this year's assessment will impact students and their schedules. Please consider the following:

- 1. Graduation requirements are different for the Class of 2020 (this year's freshmen class). Students in this class will be able to demonstrate graduation assessment proficiency through same alternative means as Classes of 2016-2019, provided that students in the Class of 2020 take all end-of-course PARCC assessments for which they are eligible (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and ELA 9, 10, 11). If students do not take these assessments, they will be required to meet the graduation requirement through the Portfolio Appeal. This will require a PARCC class in math and ELA be taken in their senior year.**
- 2. Graduation for the Class of 2021 (this year's 8th graders) and thereafter, students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the ELA 10 and Algebra I assessments, and have taken all end-of-course PARCC assessments for which they are eligible, can demonstrate graduation assessment proficiency by meeting criteria of the Portfolio Appeals Process. This will require a PARCC class in math and ELA be taken in their senior year.**
3. For students in grades 7 & 8, when the student takes the PARCC assessment, he/she gains experience with standardized testing. As stated above, PARCC will be a graduation requirement for these students. By taking it in the earlier years, students will become comfortable with format, question types, and how to respond and use accessibility features in an environment in which the assessment is part of his/her daily activities rather than in a high stakes environment.
4. For our high school students, achieving a score of 4 or 5 can reduce college costs by avoiding the need for remediation. Students who attend schools in states who administer PARCC have made agreements with colleges and universities that students who achieve a score of 4 or 5 are not required to take placement tests or take remedial courses. Students also get practice in taking online assessments which helps with college preparation and in jobs that require licensure assessments which are also given online.

5. PARCC can serve as an academic check to ensure students are meeting grade-level expectations. The assessment will measure growth over time (year-to-year) and provide meaningful and timely feedback to teachers and parents. This additional measure, in conjunction with teacher assessment, can provide valuable information to support the growth of student learning.
6. PARCC gives teachers detailed reports on each student's strengths and areas that need to be improved. Each year, the score reports will improve and provide teachers with information to help them determine instructional strategies and differentiated learning that can support the student. More specifically, the data can provide information about persistent learning (achievement) gaps and will allow teachers to identify strategies and appropriately allocate resources for individual students.
7. Because of the Chromebook initiative, we were able to reduce the amount of time that students would be impacted by scheduling of PARCC testing.

In addition to the individual requirements and benefits to students, there are other reasons testing is important. Districts are required by state and federal law to administer the assessment to check for consistency of education across grade levels in English Language Arts and mathematics for both regular and special education students. The state and federal government hold districts accountable to ensure fair and equitable education for all students. Because our district fell below the required 95% participation requirement for last year's assessment, we were required to do a Corrective Action Plan and in the future it could affect our federal grant money.

The Haddon Heights School District is dedicated to providing all students with the educational foundation necessary to succeed in school and in life. To ensure your child's success, we have set high standards that are reflected in what is taught in our classrooms. We believe the PARCC is one way to evaluate individual student progress, identify strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum, improve instructional strategies, and have departments and grade levels work collaboratively to ensure student success as they progress through our schools and in their post-secondary lives.

Therefore it is important for your child to take part in the PARCC. The JSHS PARCC schedule is as follows:

High School: mornings of March 27 – April 3

Junior High: mornings and afternoons of April 4 - 6

The Haddon School District is committed to the success of each student in our district.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Owen

Director of Curriculum and Instruction