



# Frequently Asked Questions about the PARCC Field Test

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## General Questions about the PARCC Field Test

### **1. What is the purpose of the PARCC Field Test?**

The primary purposes of the PARCC Field Test are to:

- ✓ Examine the quality of items so that PARCC can build assessment forms for the 2014-15 school year;
- ✓ Pilot assessment administration procedures; and
- ✓ Give schools and districts the opportunity to experience the administration of PARCC assessments.

### **2. How many students are participating in the PARCC Field Test?**

Across all PARCC states, over one million students will participate in the Field Test.

### **3. How will my school be informed if it has been selected to participate in the PARCC Field Test?**

Schools will be notified by their districts/LEAs. Pearson, PARCC's Field Test contractor, will send letters (via email) to districts/LEAs notifying them if schools in their district have been selected to participate in the PARCC Field Test. These letters will be sent by early September 2013. Schools unable to participate in the Field Test will be replaced by schools with similar demographic criteria and will be notified of their selection through their districts in October 2013. The final list of participating schools is expected to be completed by early November 2013.

### **4. Will the PARCC Field Test include paper-based tests?**

Yes. While the goal is that all students will take PARCC assessments on a computer in the future, PARCC intends to offer paper-based versions of its assessments in the near term. Accordingly, some schools will be selected to field test computer-based assessments, and others will administer paper-based assessments. No school will be asked to administer Field Tests in both paper and computer modes.

**5. Why are some students only taking one component (Performance-Based Assessment OR End-of-Year Assessment), while other students are taking both components (both Performance-Based Assessment AND End-of-Year Assessment)?**

The majority of students will take only one half of the assessment in one content area. This design was chosen to minimize the testing burden on schools, while still allowing PARCC to collect data needed to accomplish the purposes of the Field Test.

**6. May I talk to the press or my colleagues about my experience in the Field Test?**

Yes. However, the PARCC Field Test is a secure testing event – only students being tested can view the assessment items. Therefore, discussion about specific PARCC items must not occur in order to protect the security of the items. Further, members of the media and other visitors are not permitted to interfere with students during a test session.

## **Requirements for Participating in the PARCC Field Test**

**1. May a school change the grades, content areas, testing modes (i.e., computer-based, paper-based) for which it was selected?**

No. Schools were selected to participate in a particular grade, content area, and mode for the Field Test. In order to collect representative data, schools will not be able to change the tested grades, content areas, or testing modes for the Field Test.

**2. How does my school select a classroom (not applicable for Colorado or Mississippi)?**

It is important that classrooms are randomly selected. PARCC will provide additional guidance to schools on how to select classrooms later this fall.

**3. My school was selected for the computer-based assessment. How do I know if my school has the technology capacity to administer the Field Test?**

PARCC's technology requirements for test-taking devices and bandwidth can be found here: [www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology). Schools should refer to the *Technology Readiness Quick Start Checklist* on that page to determine if they have the technical capacity to administer the PARCC assessments.

**4. Is there a low-bandwidth option for PARCC Field Test?**

Yes. There is a low-bandwidth option for administering the PARCC Field Test. Caching is a secure option that will enable schools and districts to deliver interactive computer-based tests even in very limited Internet bandwidth conditions. For the PARCC Spring 2014 Field Test, schools using the caching option should plan on bandwidth capacity equivalent to 5 kbps per simultaneous test-taker to implement proctor caching. Please see more information about proctor caching here: [www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology)

**5. If my school does not have technology capacity to administer the PARCC Field Test for the selected grades/courses, can my school request to participate in a fewer number of grades/courses?**

Yes. In the rare instance that a school thinks it might not have adequate technology for Field Test, a request must be made when districts submit the participation confirmation form, indicating that a school does not have sufficient technology capacity to administer the Field Test and would like to participate in a fewer number of grades/courses. When submitting the confirmation form for your

district, please select the grade(s)/course(s) for which the school does not have the technology capacity to administer the Field Tests and provide a rationale on the next page of the confirmation form.

**6. What accommodations will be available for the field test?**

During the PARCC field test administration, some accessibility features and accommodations will not be available due to ongoing research that is required to ensure that all accessibility features and accommodations provide a valid reflection of what students know and can do. In addition, some specific accessibility features and accommodations may not be available on specific devices such as Android and Linux devices. A detailed list summarizing which accessibility features and computer-based accommodations will be supported for the Spring 2014 Field Test versus the School Year 2014-2015 Operational Assessment is available in the document *Full Technology Specifications for PARCC Spring 2014 Field Test* available at [www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology).

**Timing and Scheduling for the PARCC Field Test**

**1. What are the test administration windows for the Field Test?**

The Field Testing windows are as follows:

- Performance-Based Assessment (PBA): March 24–April 11, 2014
- End-of-Year (EOY): May 5–June 6, 2014

Several states have a minor adjustment in their testing window, due to special circumstances in their state. Districts in these states are being notified of this difference in their recruitment letters. If you have any questions about the administration window in your state, please contact the PARCC Support Center, which is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CT). The telephone number is 888-493-9888. Schools can also contact the PARCC Support Center via email at [PARCC@support.pearson.com](mailto:PARCC@support.pearson.com).

**2. Will the PARCC Field Test be timed?**

Yes. In March 2013, PARCC released the number of sessions and estimated time on task students will need to complete each session for each component of its English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA/Literacy) and Mathematics assessments. A set amount of additional time will be added to these estimates to ensure that students have ample time to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

**3. How many test sessions will there be in the Field Test and how long will each session be?**

The number of test sessions for each PARCC assessment component in each subject area is as follows:

PARCC Component	Number of ELA/Literacy Test Sessions	Number of Mathematics Test Sessions
Students Selected for Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) Only	3	2
Students Selected for End-of-Year (EOY) Only	2	2
Students selected for Both PBA and EOY	5	4

The administration times for the Field Test include the estimated times that the typical student will take to complete the test component (Estimated Time on Task) **plus** a set amount of additional time for students who need it to complete the session. These times vary by grade level/course, content area, and assessment component. For more information, please see guidance found on the PARCC Field Test website at [www.parcconline.org/field-test](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test).

**4. What is the recommended time for scheduling testing sessions?**

PARCC recommends that schools schedule two hour blocks for each session of the Field Test (or two and a half hour blocks for the literature analysis and research simulation task in English Language Arts/Literacy Performance-Based Assessments for grades 4-11). These blocks will allow for plenty of time to complete administration activities, such as those found below, as well as for students to complete the test session with the additional time allotted, if needed.

Computer-Based Administration	Paper-Based Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading instructions to students</li> <li>• Responding to student questions</li> <li>• Conducting any additional end of session activities (e.g., closing testing sessions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading instructions to students</li> <li>• Responding to student questions</li> <li>• Distributing materials to students</li> <li>• Collecting materials</li> </ul>

For more information, please see the scheduling guidance found on the PARCC Field Test website at [www.parcconline.org/field-test](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test).

**5. Is there a particular time during the testing window in which I must schedule the field tests?**

Unless additional guidance was provided by states to districts, schools may test at any time during the testing window. Schools (or districts/LEAs) should schedule make-up sessions as needed.

**6. Can I test two different grade levels and/or content areas on the same day?**

Yes. If schools are selected to participate in multiple grade levels/courses and/or content areas, schools may determine when each particular grade level/course and content area is administered. For example, if grade 5 is scheduled to give the ELA PBA and grade 4 is scheduled to give the Math PBA, both assessments can be assessed on the same day. However, they cannot be administered in the same room at the same time.

**Preparing for Administration of the PARCC Field Test**

**1. What kind of training and support will be provided to schools participating in the PARCC Field Test?**

PARCC will provide a variety of training options for schools involved in the PARCC Field Test. Training will include regional training workshops, recorded webinars, and on-demand training modules. A full schedule for training will be released later this fall. The PARCC Support Center will also be available to answer questions and provide additional assistance. Schools may call the PARCC Support Center, which is available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CT). The telephone number is 888-493-9888. Schools can also contact the PARCC Support Center via email at [PARCC@support.pearson.com](mailto:PARCC@support.pearson.com).

**2. Will sample test items be provided prior to the Field Test that students can practice answering?**

Yes. PARCC released task prototypes in August 2012 and sample items in August 2013, which can be found here: <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>. The new sample items are first presented in PDF format to emphasize a focus on the content of the items, allowing students to gain familiarity with different item types. Later in 2013, the new sample items will be re-released on the technology platform that students will use for the Field Test, providing an early opportunity for students and educators to engage with the tools and functionalities on the assessment.

**3. What technology readiness support is available to schools preparing for the Field Test?**

PARCC has a number of technology-specific supports, including:

	Description	Date Available
<b>PARCC – Smarter Balanced Technology Readiness Tool</b>	Online computer device inventory and gap analysis tool. School accounts are established through state and district points of contact.  Link: <a href="http://techreadiness.org">http://techreadiness.org</a>	Available Now
<b>PARCC Capacity Planning Tool</b>	Spreadsheet based tool to help schools model testing capacity and “what if” scenario planning.  Link: <a href="http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCCapacityPlanningTool_3-5-13FINAL4-12-13.xlsx">http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCCapacityPlanningTool_3-5-13FINAL4-12-13.xlsx</a>	Available Now
<b>Key Local Considerations Guide</b>	This supplement to the Technology Readiness Tool addresses some of the considerations and/or local decisions that district and school staff may need to include in their transition planning or in their determinations of technology readiness for PARCC assessments.  Link: <a href="http://techreadiness.org/u/TRT_Key_Local_Considerations.pdf">http://techreadiness.org/u/TRT_Key_Local_Considerations.pdf</a>	Available Now
<b>Systems Check Tool</b>	An auto-detecting systems configuration tool that provides a “final” check of individual systems. The tool will launch TestNav 8 for authoritative confirmation of device and bandwidth readiness and will provide additional scenario-modeling of network variables. More information coming soon!	Beginning Fall 2013
<b>Regional and Online Workshops</b>	More information coming soon!	Beginning Fall 2013
<b>Infrastructure Trials</b>	More information coming soon!	Beginning Fall 2013

## Administration of the PARCC Field Test

### **1. Can anyone view PARCC items during the PARCC Field Test?**

No. The PARCC Field Test is a secure testing event. Items may not be viewed by anyone other than the students who are participating in the Field Test.

### **2. What are the security requirements for administering the PARCC Field Test?**

PARCC is developing a School Test Coordinator Manual and a Test Administrator Manual scheduled for completion in fall 2013. These manuals will contain specific information about test security protocols, which schools must strictly follow to maintain test security. There will also be a Security Agreement that summarizes security protocols that all individuals authorized to be involved in test administration—including School Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Technology Coordinators, and Proctors—must sign and follow.

### **3. What do I do about students who are absent on the day(s) scheduled for the Field Test? Should they make it up on a different day?**

Yes. Students who are absent on testing day may make up their testing session as long as they do so within the testing window. Schools or districts/LEAs should schedule make-up sessions as needed.

### **4. What support is available for schools in preparing for the PARCC Field Test?**

Schools may call the PARCC Support Center, which is available Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (CT). The telephone number is 888-493-9888. Schools can also contact the PARCC Support Center via email at [PARCC@support.pearson.com](mailto:PARCC@support.pearson.com).

## Preparing for the Operational Assessments in 2014-2015

### **1. My school was not selected for the PARCC Field Test. How can I help my school prepare for the operational assessment in 2014-2015?**

Since not all districts and schools will be included in the Field Tests, PARCC will provide all schools with practice tests in spring 2014 at the same time as Field Testing begins. The practice tests will be similar in content to the Field Tests and allow all schools to become familiar with administering computer-assessments and with the item types, interactive item functionalities, and computer-delivered accessibility features and accommodations that will be included on the operational assessments in 2014-2015.

PARCC also intends to provide districts and schools with other supports to assist them in getting ready for the operational assessments in 2014-2015, in particular support to build capacity to administer the assessments on computers. Already available on the PARCC website are *Technology Guidelines for PARCC Assessments* and a *Capacity Planning Tool* (<http://www.parcconline.org/technology>). These resources will assist you in decisions about purchasing devices and determining whether schools have sufficient devices and bandwidth available to administer computer-based assessments within the PARCC testing windows. Later this fall, PARCC will provide schools with a range of tools to assist schools in evaluating their technology readiness, which will allow schools to further evaluate their readiness to administer tests online. PARCC also released additional Assessment Administration Guidance (<http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-administration-guidance>), which contains more information about administration of PARCC in the operational year (2014-2015).

Additionally, PARCC released task prototypes in August 2012 and sample items in August 2013, which can be found here: <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>. The new sample items are first presented in PDF format to emphasize a focus on the content of the items, allowing students to gain familiarity with different item types. Later in 2013, the new sample items will be re-released on the technology platform that students will use for the Field Test, providing an early opportunity for students and educators to engage with the tools and functionalities on the assessment.

**2. Will the testing windows for first PARCC operational assessment in 2014-2015 be similar to the administration windows for the PARCC Field Test?**

PARCC is currently finalizing the testing windows for the operational assessment in 2014-2015 and expects to release information later this year.

**3. Will all of the computer-delivered accessibility features and accommodations that will be available during the operational assessments be provided during the Field Test?**

During the PARCC Field Test administration, some accessibility features and accommodations will not be available due to ongoing research that is required to ensure that all accessibility features and accommodations provide a valid reflection of what students know and can do. In addition, some specific accessibility features and accommodations may not be available on specific devices such as Android and Linux devices. A detailed list summarizing which accessibility features and computer-based accommodations will be supported for the Spring 2014 Field Test versus the School Year 2014-2015 Operational Assessment is available in the document *Full Technology Specifications for PARCC Spring 2014 Field Test* available at [www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-technology).

**4. Are the technology requirements for Field Test identical to what the requirements will be for the Operational Assessment in 2014-2015?**

No. Because the PARCC assessment is still undergoing field testing, research studies, and technical development, there are features and functionalities of the test delivery platform that are not yet ready to be compatible with all computer operating systems. PARCC is still planning to fully support the range of operating systems, devices, and accommodations features described in the complete PARCC Technology Guidelines for the first operational assessment in 2014-15. While Android and Linux operating systems and some accessibility features are not yet supported for Field Test, PARCC plans for them to be included for the 2014-2015 school year.