
PASS 2: Key Points for Superintendents to Welcome Parents & Families

Parent Academy for Student Success #2 Measure What Matters: Assessing Student Learning and The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC)

Superintendents may want to consider using some of the points below when communicating with parents about the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC).

- Welcome to our Parent Academy for Student Success. We call the program “PASS” and the purpose is to improve student achievement through effective home/school academic partnerships. We want to use this as an opportunity to create stronger academic partnerships and hold more informed conversations surrounding the new expectations for teaching, learning and measuring student success.
- The members of our board of education, staff and I have renewed our commitment to engage you in discussions about the changes and improvements occurring in the education program here at _____ and we hope that you will partner with us to help your son or daughter graduate from the district prepared for college or a career.
- You have heard us talk about the updated learning standards called the Common Core State Standards. The CCSS outline what all students should know and be able to do in English language arts and mathematics in each grade level. The standards reflect the knowledge and skills needed to successfully enter college or the workforce after graduation, and they are benchmarked to the standards of the world’s top-performing countries.
- Here at _____ we have always worked hard to ensure that our students receive the best education possible. Our mission and goals are:

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Our educational values are exceptionally meaningful at this time of change when employers and experts in higher education tell us that American high school graduates are underprepared for college and careers.

- Since 2010, when the state adopted the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts, we have worked to strengthen our curriculum and instruction and align our educational program to the Common Core. I am extremely proud to tell you that during that time, your sons and daughters have become quite successful at learning and demonstrating their new knowledge and skills in new and interesting ways.
- It has been three or four years since our students began using the CCSS, and it is time that we begin to measure how well they are doing. New Jersey educators will use a measurement tool that is directly aligned with the Common Core; is of high quality; supports teaching and learning; and provides a guide to continually improve our program of education.

- Shortly after adoption of the Common Core, the State Board of Education approved the PARCC assessments. PARCC stands for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career, and PARCC assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The tests were created to measure students' ability to apply their knowledge of concepts rather than memorizing facts.
- PARCC is a computer-based test that will replace the former paper-and-pencil-based NJ ASK and HSPA. The PARCC tests measure a student's understanding and ability to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills that are contained in the Common Core State Standards.
- The state requires that we collect annual data on how well our students are learning and on how our educational program is preparing them for their future. This school year, PARCC is the annual state assessment. It is aligned with the Common Core and is designed to provide annual feedback on whether your son or daughter - our students - are on track and on time to be properly prepared for high school graduation, college entrance, and the workplace. In addition, PARCC will provide our district with meaningful data to help us improve classroom instruction and raise performance for all of our students.
- The PARCC assessments require students to solve problems using mathematical reasoning and to be able to model mathematical principles. In English language arts (ELA), students will be required to closely read multiple passages and write essay responses in literary analysis, research tasks and narrative tasks. The assessment results will provide parents and teachers with valuable information on student progress to inform instruction and provide targeted student support to apply in school and at home.
- Our district's vision for testing and how each test relates to an important learning or strategic objective is:
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- Some of the steps that we have taken to prepare for PARCC are:
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- The timelines for testing are:
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- This first year of the PARCC test may bring with it some challenges in scheduling. However, we are using it as an opportunity to examine the district's entire assessment program. Moving forward we will look at any adjustments that may need to be made to our testing calendar. It is our intent to determine efficient and effective ways to ensure the best use of our students' learning time.
- We understand that some parents have questions or concerns about the new PARCC tests. Others have heard media reports that are confusing and cause anxiety about new test questions and the process of taking the test. These reactions are completely understandable, and tonight at our PASS program, we would like to discuss any questions or concerns so that you and your son or daughter will feel more confident in the updates and changes to our assessment program.
- Responding to questions and concerns from parents, families and students is a district responsibility. Tonight we will learn together and discuss the details of new teaching and learning and the ways that we will measure if it is successful for your son or daughter.
- We are glad to see you here at our PASS event, and personally, I look forward to our renewed partnership commitment to support student learning in and out of school.