

Pupil Personnel Services

Report to the Board of Education

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The focus of this report will be an overview of the newly implemented standardized testing process that became operational in the spring of 2015. New Jersey is one of 42 states, the District of Columbia, four territories and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) who have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Grade level and end-of-course assessments that measure student attainment of proficiencies in both English Language Arts and mathematics are key component associated with the new Common Core State Standards. In a July 22, 2015 article in the Education Week newspaper, it was stated that: “At its height, the testing consortium [PARCC] boasted 24 member states as well as the District of Columbia. After a couple of years of damaging political battles, PARCC now officially lists 12 member states and D.C.” In a recent November email correspondence with an NJDOE official, it was revealed that this number has fallen, indicating that New Jersey is one of five states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Schools who selected the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC) as the instrument to measure student proficiency.

Standardized Testing Overview:

Unlike previous state assessments, the expectation was for the PARCC to be offered almost exclusively as an on-line assessment. Exceptions would be offered for students testing at home due to illness. Woodbury began preparation for the PARCC during the 2012-13 school-year to ensure technology readiness. The early work made it clear that the district needed to enhance the infrastructure in place to support simultaneous users in addition to purchasing the hardware to complete testing within the designated testing windows.

The first, official administration of the PARCC in the early spring was completed without any major issues. The teachers and administrators were well-prepared and the technology department played a key role in supporting each school throughout the established testing windows. The issue that most schools were not prepared to address was the opt-out movement that gained momentum throughout the state (and across the nation). Each school worked with parents as requests were received and appropriate alternative activities were put in place for students during the testing time. The district will develop a more formal process for the coming year that includes a required conference with the parent to fully explain the PARCC assessment and how the results will be used. A standard form will also be used for parents to submit in advance of the testing so that the school can make appropriate plans and modifications.

The PARCC testing has been modified from two distinct sessions (last year, there was a Performance Based Assessment at the 75% mark in the school year and a Year-End Assessment at the 90% mark) to one, year-end assessment for the 2015-2016 school year. The tentative plan is to test students in grades 3-8 over a 7-day block in May and high school students during a second 7-day block in April. This more consolidated schedule will pose much less disruption to the daily instruction and hopefully make for a better testing environment for all students.

Graduation Testing Requirement:

New Jersey Department of Education released its first memo on September 30, 2014, outlining the new testing graduation requirement. In keeping with previously released communications, the Department was careful to emphasize that new PARCC would not be a requirement for graduation for the classes of 2016-2018. Rather, students would be permitted to demonstrate proficiency on a variety of alternate measures during this period of transition. The chart below outlines the various methods available for students in the class of 2016-2018 to fulfill the state testing requirement. The new requirements have now been applied to students in the class of 2019 – the as well.

English Language Arts	Mathematics
Achieve a passing score on a PARCC *English Language Arts Assessment in grades 9, 10 (750) or 11 (725) <i>or</i>	Achieve a passing score on PARCC *Algebra I (750) or *Geometry (725) or *Algebra II (725) <i>or</i>
Achieve a passing score on a Substitute Competency Test <i>or</i>	Achieve a passing score on a Substitute Competency Test <i>or</i>
Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal	Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal

*A score of 725 on the PARCC equates to a student who is “approaching proficiency”. A score of 750 equates to a student who “meets proficiency”.

Below is a list of substitute assessments and the corresponding minimum passing scores:

Substitute Assessment	Minimum Passing Score
*SAT – Critical Reading and Math	400
ACT – Reading and Math	16
ACT Aspire-Reading and Math	422

ASVAB-AFQT Score	31
Accu-placer – Write Placer	6
Accu-placer Math – Elementary Algebra	76
*PSAT Critical Reading and Math	40
Advanced Placement Language or Literature	3

*The PSAT 2015 will receive a new cut-score to reflect the new format. The SAT from March 2016 and beyond will receive a new cut-score to reflect the new format.

Results from the paper-based High School Proficiency Assessment, which had been administered the first week in March each year, were consistently received in late May. Having the results prior to the end of the junior year enabled the school to plan effectively for senior year activities to assist students who had not met minimum proficiency levels. Up until this year, seniors were given two additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on the HSPA as well as three separate opportunities to do so through the Alternative High School Assessment (AHSA). Finally, a portfolio consisting of the work that was completed in the AHSA class could be submitted as an appeal. The state removed the AHSA as a means for students to demonstrate proficiency. The AHSA process allowed students to demonstrate proficiency via “Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs)” that corresponded precisely to the specific sub-tests in math or language arts in which the student did not meet the minimum passing score. A dedicated AHSA preparation class in math and language arts was included in each student’s schedule who had not demonstrated proficiency leading into his/her senior year. At Woodbury, over the past eight years, only one student did not graduate as a result of not having fulfilled the testing requirement.

In contrast to the senior year process outlined above, the current seniors were provided one opportunity to pass a PARCC English Language Arts assessment and a math assessment. As an end-of-course assessment, students are not permitted to re-take an assessment in a class in which they are not enrolled (there is no expectation, either locally or at the state level, that a passing PARCC score is required in order to pass the course and enroll in the next sequential course). In a memo dated October 8, 2014, districts were informed that student reports would be received no later than mid-October, 2015. Although statewide results have been published, as of this date (11/13/15) these individual student results have not been released. As a precaution, Woodbury has developed contingency plans for 25 seniors who have yet to demonstrate proficiency in either math and/or English Language Arts. While we await those results, these seniors participated in the administration of the PSAT in October, the ASVAB will be administered on December 1, and the district has purchased the license to administer the Accu-placer math and

writer on-line assessments. Test waivers will also be provided to eligible students to take the SAT on the national test dates. Finally, a portfolio will be established for each student to help display the depth of work completed in school that corresponds to standards expected.

The counselors will be responsible to both track the attainment of proficiency and document the assessment utilized to do so. A master spreadsheet has been developed for the senior class and the counselors have sifted through the testing data in each academic file to begin this process, and it will continue to be a major focus throughout the year.

Moving forward, the district will continue to test all students in grades 9-11 on the PSAT during the school week; the ASVAB will be offered in school to seniors in both the first and second semester; the Accu-placer will be administered to students at key points in the year and there will be focused instruction on the concepts covered. Finally, a policy proposal will be advanced through our board's Policy Committee to allow students the opportunity to "audit" classes in either the math or English Language Arts course in which they did not meet the minimum proficiency level. The class audit will strengthen requisite skills while providing students the opportunity to participate in the PARCC assessment for that particular course again.