



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 our elementary schools were significantly higher than the state average. The teachers worked diligently to update curriculum and implement higher level strategies and technology. The scores at the junior-senior high school were slightly 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. It was very difficult to establish the necessity of students taking the test because in the past only juniors were tested and the assessment was tied to graduation requirements. Because of these factors, getting reliable data at the Junior-Senior High School was difficult.

As we approach year two of PARCC, we want to communicate to parents and students the importance of this assessment. In order for our school district to have successful, reliable, and valid results of this year's PARCC, please consider the following:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The changes made to the PARCC assessment for this year should give students less stress (for example, There is only one testing window which reduces the number of units students are required to take. Therefore, there are fewer overall units)
4. For our students in grades K-8, when the student takes the PARCC assessment, they gain experience with standardized testing. Although it may seem far in the future, PARCC will become a graduation requirement. 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.
5. 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.

In addition to the individual 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 district PARCC schedule is as follows and each school will send and post a specific schedule.

Grades 3 – 6: April 25 – May 13

Grades 7 & 8: April 5 – May 13

High School: April 11 – May 20

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

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Owen
Director of Curriculum and Instruction