



Partnership for Assessment of
Readiness for College and Careers

January 2015

COUNTDOWN TO PARCC FOR FAMILIES

Educators use assessments to understand student mastery of content and skills, and to provide students with effective, individualized instruction. There are four types of assessments:

- **Formative Assessments** are typically informal “checks” administered frequently by teachers to monitor student progress and adjust teaching to help students learn.
- **Short-Cycle Assessments** are periodic (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and/or monthly) assessments such as DIBELS, reading checks, learning logs, exit slips, quizzes, etc. that provide regular feedback to teachers. Results of short-cycle assessments help teachers ensure that students are learning and provide concrete feedback to help students improve their understanding and apply their knowledge.
- **Interim Assessments** are administered three times at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. These tools measure student progress throughout the course of the year.
- **Summative Assessments** are formal assessments administered at the end of a unit, course, or year to determine a student’s proficiency of the standards at each grade level.

The PARCC tests are summative assessments that are taking the place of the SBA in English language arts (ELA) and math. Aligned with instruction, they assess student mastery of the Common Core State Standards, which are designed to better prepare our students for college and/or a career. The upcoming PARCC tests, which begin in early March, will provide teachers with important information about students’ learning to help support better instruction and increase student achievement.

PARCC RESOURCES

In the past few months, PARCC has developed excellent resources to help students and their families become familiar with the PARCC assessments. In addition to general test information, the following resources are available for grades 3 – 11 in ELA and math:

- **Tutorials.** Located at <http://parcc.pearson.com/tutorial>, the tutorials will help familiarize students with the new computer platform (called TestNav), text-to-speech, online tools, and other resources.
- **Sample Items.** Available at <http://parcc.pearson.com/sample-items>, sample items are available in online and paper formats. In addition to providing practice with new types of test questions, the math sample items include practice with equation editors and online calculators.
- **Rubrics.** Available on the same webpage as the sample items, you will find rubrics for ELA writing questions. The rubrics show the number of points students can earn and skills students are expected to know.



Practice Tests. You can find practice tests for grades 3 – 11 here: <http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests>. Using online practice tests requires that computers have the appropriate hardware and software (<http://parcc-test.pearson.com/technology-setup>). If your home computer is unable to run the practice tests, they can be printed so students can practice PARCC questions on paper. Additionally, these practice tests are available in large print and Braille.