PARCC Technology Bulletin
December 31, 2014

Purpose
The following communication was developed to help school and district technology coordinators prepare for and administer the PARCC assessments. Bi-weekly technology updates will include technology information, implementation resources, hot topics, and troubleshooting guidance.

In this edition, you will find information regarding:
- Upcoming Release Dates
- Google to Disable NPAPI for Chrome Browser
- Technical Guidelines Update
- Infrastructure Trials
- Reminder - PearsonAccess
- Reminder - Computer-Based Assessments Guide
- Reminder - New Proctor Cache Tool
- Reminder - PARCC URLs
- Technology Bulletin
- PARCC Support Center

Upcoming Release Dates
- Pearson is committed to verifying that the new/upgraded software components (such as browsers, operating systems, etc.) listed below, function properly with TestNav8. However, due to changes made to the beta versions of these components, it is possible that the final released version may not function correctly with TestNav8. If this occurs, a Technology Communication will be issued immediately detailing next steps.
- Please note: Pearson recommends freezing the test environment to no longer accept automatic updates once the technology has been successfully verified prior to the testing window by administering the SystemCheck tool and secure practice tests as part of the Infrastructure Trial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Date of Release</th>
<th>Actions Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firefox 35</td>
<td>*January 2015</td>
<td>None at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java</td>
<td>January, 20 2015</td>
<td>None at this time. A Technical Bulletin will be communicated near the date of this release detailing any necessary actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exact Date of Release has not been posted by the vendor

Google to Disable NPAPI for Chrome Browser
- This information applies to any school or district planning to take PARCC online assessments with the Google Chrome web browser on MacOS or Windows devices.
  - This does not affect Chromebooks.
- Google plans to phase out support for the Netscape Plugin Application Programming Interface (NPAPI) architecture. Beginning in January 2015, additional configuration steps will be required to use the Google Chrome web browser with PARCC online assessments.
- Instructions for Windows and MacOS devices, and more information regarding the impact of this change can be found here:
  - TestNav8 Online Support - Technical Bulletins
Technical Guidelines Update

- Based on feedback received after the release of the Technology Guidelines for PARCC Assessments version 4.3, the January update of the Technical Guidelines document will include revised text clarifying the proctor caching requirements. The current text will be replaced with the following:
  - “Minimum bandwidth requirements are based on the needs for the PARCC assessment, and account for the maximum level of connectivity needed to administer test content for any one portion of the assessments for Math and English language arts/literacy, recognizing that some sessions may require less than the published minimum bandwidth. Due to the heavy bandwidth burden of certain test forms and/or accommodations, proctor caching is very strongly encouraged for the administration of the following tests and/or accommodations.
    - ELA Performance-Based Assessments
    - Text-to-speech (Math/ELA English and Math Spanish)
    - ASL (ELA and Math)
  - In addition, schools with low bandwidth and/or large numbers of simultaneous users, including instructional and other non-assessment uses taking place concurrent with testing, are strongly encouraged to utilize PARCC’s options for proctor caching for all PARCC tests, a strategy that will significantly reduce bandwidth demand for testing.
  - Note: because certain accommodations (including text-to-speech and ASL) are form-specific, the Personal Needs Profile information must be uploaded or updated prior to proctor caching. If a change is made to a student’s PNP after proctor caching, you may need to re-cache to ensure that the appropriate form is available.”

- Additional updates to the Technical Guidelines document will be outlined after they are finalized for release in January.

Infrastructure Trials

- An Infrastructure Trial is an opportunity for districts, schools, and students to prepare for the computer-based PARCC Assessments by simulating test-day technology utilization to confirm all testing devices can successfully run the appropriate software.
- Pearson has provided a “PARCC Infrastructure Trial Guide” to help prepare schools for Infrastructure Trials. This material will detail all necessary steps in the process. The guide can be found on the PARCC Technology Setup page under Technical User Guides. Also, the “Infrastructure Trial: Running a Dress Rehearsal” training module is now available on the PARCC Training Site.

Reminder - PearsonAccess\textsuperscript{next}

- PearsonAccess\textsuperscript{next} has been updated since the 2014 PARCC Field Test. It is a web-based technology platform that provides a full range of online assessment services. PearsonAccess\textsuperscript{next} allows educators and test administrators to manage their organizations, user roles, student data, paper and online test delivery, and scoring and reporting services. The latest version incorporates feedback from the field test and provides a more user friendly experience.
- The following email addresses should be white-listed, or added to your address book, to ensure receipt of PARCC communications and new account information from PearsonAccess\textsuperscript{next}:
  - Parcc@support.pearson.com
  - Parcc@pearson.com
  - Noreply.parcc@pearson.com
- After receiving your PearsonAccess\textsuperscript{next} Login additional communications will be sent from your state outlining next steps.
• Additional documentation for PearsonAccess™ next related to system requirements and performing key customer interactions can be found here:
  o PearsonAccess™ next Online User Guide
  o PearsonAccess™ next System Requirements
• The schedule for PearsonAccess™ next events and other administrative information is contained in the PARCC Administrative Bulletins.
  o http://parcc.pearson.com/bulletins/

Reminder - Computer-Based Assessments Guide

• A Spring 2015 PARCC Computer-Based Assessments Guide is available. The guide can be found on the PARCC Technology Setup page, under Technical User Guides. It includes a detailed preparation steps to facilitate computer-based assessments:
  o Evaluate Technology Readiness
  o Training
  o Site Readiness
  o Student Readiness
  o Infrastructure Trial
  o Final Preparation
• Schools participating in online testing are encouraged to review the guide and take action to ensure students, administrators, and technology infrastructure are ready for Spring assessments.

Reminder - New Proctor Cache Tool

• A new Proctor Cache tool was released on October 15, 2014. The install file and new process documentation can be located on the PARCC Technology Setup page under Proctor Caching. This new version of Proctor Caching software contains an updated user interface and multiple bug fixes, resulting in better efficiency and an improved user experience.
• For schools with existing Pearson Proctor Cache software already installed, it is strongly recommended that you upgrade to this new version prior to Infrastructure Trials and online testing. However, this is not a requirement since the existing Proctor Cache software will still function with TestNav8.

Reminder - PARCC URLs

• TestNav8 and PearsonAccess™ next URLs are being updated to prepare for PARCC Operational Testing. Each state will have their own URL for both PearsonAccess™ next and TestNav8. In addition, there will also be a separate landing page for both systems, along with a PARCC landing page, where anyone can navigate to their correct state page or to the training site.
  o If necessary, based upon your school’s network security procedures, please ensure internet traffic to the URLs listed below is allowed. Also, the URLs are specific, “https://” will not allow you to access sites that need to be “http://” or vice-versa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landing Sites</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARCC</td>
<td><a href="http://parcc.pearson.com">http://parcc.pearson.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PearsonAccess™ next</td>
<td><a href="http://pearsonaccessnext.com">http://pearsonaccessnext.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TestNav8</td>
<td><a href="http://parcc.testnav.com">http://parcc.testnav.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Sites</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PearsonAccess™ next</td>
<td><a href="https://trng.pearsonaccessnext.com">https://trng.pearsonaccessnext.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Site</td>
<td><a href="http://systemcheck.parcc.testnav.com">http://systemcheck.parcc.testnav.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technology Bulletin

- The PARCC Technology Bulletin schedule has been modified to help prepare for online testing in Spring 2015. Updates will be sent bi-weekly and on an as-needed basis. The next communication is tentatively scheduled for January 13, 2015.

PARCC Support Center

- If you have questions regarding the administration of the PARCC assessments, please contact Pearson’s PARCC Support Center: 1-888-493-9888 (open Monday through Friday, 5:00am to 7:00pm CT) or PARCC@support.pearson.com.
- For state policy questions, please contact your state PARCC contact.