

The top 10 things teachers need to know about the new Illinois assessments

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ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Illinois has implemented new, higher standards for student learning in all schools across the state. The New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core have been adopted in conjunction with similar changes in over 40 other states. These new standards provide students with the relevant, real world knowledge and skills needed for success in college and careers.

In order to measure student mastery of the new standards and provide educators with reliable data that will help guide instruction, Illinois will implement new state assessments such as PARCC and DLM that will replace the current tests required by the state.

Because teachers are at the center of these changes and directly contribute to student success, the Illinois State Board of Education has compiled a list of the ten most important things for teachers to know about the new tests.

To learn more, join our listserv! Send a blank email to assessment@isbe.net with the word "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

Helpful Resources:

- **ISBE Assessment:** <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/>
- **PARCC Online:** <http://www.parcconline.org/>
- **PARCC Sample Questions:** <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>
- **Dynamic Learning Maps:** <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/>

#1 What is PARCC?

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is the new state test and accountability measure for Illinois students. It is based on the New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core and will assess students in math and English language arts. Illinois is a member of the PARCC consortium with several other states across the nation. A large number of Illinois educators have been involved in the development of this assessment.



#2 Who will take PARCC?

For the 2014-15 school year, all students in grades 3-8 as well once in high school are required to take PARCC. The specific high school courses are determined by the district.

#3 What is required?

PARCC is part of a larger balanced assessment system but for the 2014-15 school year, all that is required is that students take both parts of the summative exam: the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and the End-of-Year Assessment (EOY).



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#4 When is PARCC administered?

You can find the test dates for 2014-15 by following the link. Most Illinois schools will be following the "Regular Administration" guidelines. PARCC defines "Blocked Schedule Courses" as the courses in which students complete the entire class in one semester, similar to a college schedule.
<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/pdfs/parcc/parcc-test-windows14-15.pdf>

#5 Is PARCC a completely computer-based test?

The ultimate goal is for the PARCC summative assessment to be administered online in all schools. Realistically, this goal will take a few more years. So, for the first few years, as schools continue to update their equipment and infrastructure, PARCC will be available as a paper-based test for those that need it.



#6 How is PARCC created?

The individual PARCC items are developed and analyzed through a long process of writing, reviewing, and testing before they are included on an operational test. Various teachers and other educators from across the PARCC member states serve as item writers and reviewers and base the questions on the blueprints and task generation models that can be found here: <http://parconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs>. All items are pilot tested before being placed on the operational assessment.

#7 How is PARCC different from previous Illinois Assessments?

PARCC will replace the ISAT and PSAE assessments in Illinois. The new assessment adds new elements to the old multiple-choice format and allows for a better measure of students' skills and abilities. Using technology-enhanced items and various other innovations, students will get the chance to better showcase their skills. The results will provide teachers, schools, students, and parents with more accurate information on whether students are on track for college and careers.

#8 What about the ACT® college readiness assessment and ACT WorkKeys®?

High schools will still be provided the opportunity to offer a state-funded ACT Plus Writing test and WorkKeys test, but it is no longer a mandatory part of the Illinois assessment system.

#9 Is there still an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

The IAA will be replaced with the new Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) system. This system is an instructionally relevant system that supports student learning and measures what students with significant cognitive disabilities know and can do. The assessment is aligned to the New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE). If the students are able to take PARCC, they will be supported by various accessibility features and accommodations. The PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual can be found here:

#10 How will English Learners be assessed?

Illinois will continue to use the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS tests as the measure of English language proficiency. Additionally, EL students will take the PARCC and DLM assessments using appropriate accommodations. The PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual can be found here:

<http://parconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual>