



12

December 15, 2015

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

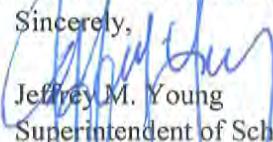
Approval of the Administration of the PARCC (Partnership of Assessment for Readiness for College & Careers) to Students in Grades 3-8 during Spring of 2016

RECOMMENDATION: That the School Committee approve the administration of the PARCC Assessment (Partnership of Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers) to students of grades 3-8 during spring 2016 as detailed below.

DESCRIPTION: This approval is being proposed in order to provide the district with a one year transition window in preparation for the full implementation of the "Next Generation" of standardized testing in Massachusetts scheduled to go into effect spring 2017. Using 2016 as an assessment transition year allows for:

1. An opportunity for students and staff to experience the new assessment content and format for one administration cycle without fear of negative accountability status impact;
2. individual schools to decide the pace for use of technology when administering the assessment --- the state expectation for full technology implementation is spring 2019 ; and
3. an opportunity for the district to monitor and adjust technology needs as part of a multi-year process. All districts in the Commonwealth are required to submit a decision on their spring 2016 assessment by December 18, 2015 or, if necessary request an extension for decision submission.
4. If a district decides to continue with MCAS in the spring of 2016, which will be a hybrid of the MCAS and PARCC tests, the district WILL NOT be "held harmless" in terms of 2016 school and district results. This means, based on our results, the Accountability Status of the CPS may go up or may go down or stay the same. However, if a district decides to move forward with the PARCC Assessment in the spring of 2016, the district WILL be "held harmless" in terms of 2016 school and district results. This means, based on our results on the PARCC exam, our Accountability Status may go up, may stay the same, but will NOT go down. This is an important consideration now that the district has moved up to Level 2 Status.

SUPPORTING DATA: Attached memo from Commissioner Mitchell Chester and PowerPoint From December 4, 2015 Urban Superintendent Network Meeting

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Young
Superintendent of Schools



*News from Commissioner Mitchell Chester & the
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

On the Desktop - Dec. 1, 2015

Dear Superintendents:

I want to allay concerns you might have about some recent stories in the media that inaccurately described Massachusetts as "abandoning" the Common Core and PARCC. We have not abandoned either one.

In 2010, our state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education incorporated the Common Core State Standards into the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in English language arts and mathematics to reinforce the importance of reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. These are skills that we know students need and that employers and colleges value. Educators have been teaching curricula aligned with the Common Core for several years, and under the state [Board's November 17, 2015 vote](#), teachers will continue to do so as the state builds on and adjusts the standards as needed. Please remember that at all times, curriculum decisions have been and will continue to be made at the local level. While the state standards outline what students should know and be able to do, it is up to districts, schools, and teachers to decide what materials and curriculum will help their students meet the standards.

The Board's November 17 vote also embraced PARCC as a major component of Massachusetts' next-generation assessment, which will be administered starting in spring 2017. Massachusetts remains part of the PARCC consortium and will include PARCC content in our updated assessment. I urge all districts to use PARCC in 2016 so students will have experience with it; it will serve them well as we move to a next-generation test that draws from PARCC development. Administering PARCC in 2016 will also provide your teachers with feedback on students' performance on an assessment designed to measure updated skills.

In short, if your district administered only MCAS in spring 2015 and is now deciding whether to administer PARCC in grades 3-8 in spring 2016, PARCC is the better choice, assuming your decision is based on which assessment will best provide your students, teachers, and parents with a year's head start on the instructional and student performance expectations that will be incorporated into the Commonwealth's 2017 exam. I recognize that your district's decision may include considerations other than which test will best prepare students and educators for the Commonwealth's next-generation assessment, in which case you are best positioned to weigh the instructional considerations with other factors. Please call on me if I can be of service in assisting you and your district with this decision.

Educators and assessment experts in Massachusetts spent years helping to build PARCC, and Massachusetts students will continue to benefit from that work. The Board's 8-3 vote enables Massachusetts to combine PARCC with parts of our existing state assessment and items developed specifically for Massachusetts, ensuring that students, educators, and families will have the accurate information they need. I look forward to working with you to build a stronger assessment for our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner

Student Assessment Update for Urban Superintendents' Network

December 4, 2015

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION



2016: Transition Year

- ★ Districts default to test and mode administered in 2015 unless a change is registered:
 - ★ MCAS districts in 2015 can choose to switch to PARCC in 2016 and select their mode of administration (CBT or PBT)
 - ★ PARCC districts in 2015 can choose to change their mode of administration (CBT or PBT)

**Deadline to register changes:
December 18**

(or request an extension before 12/18 by emailing
assessment@doe.mass.edu)



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

2016 Administration Details

★ PARCC

- ★ Districts can assign students in grade 8 to either the grade 8 math test or Algebra I test.
- ★ Voluntary high school testing in grades 9 and 11 will **not** be offered.

★ MCAS

- ★ Augmented with a small number of PARCC items
- ★ The PARCC component of the ELA test will require that students write in response to text at all grades
- ★ MCAS will remain untimed; however, revised guidance on suggested testing times with the addition of the writing task will be forthcoming.
- ★ No separate ELA Composition at grades 4 and 7
- ★ Testing window for grades 3-8 ELA pushed one week later (grade 10 ELA, all math and STE dates remain unchanged)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



Planning for 2017 and Beyond

In the coming months, the Department will:

- ★ Convene new committees to advise the Department on many aspects of assessment, including test administration policies, test content, accessibility and accommodations, and high school testing/CD requirements.
- ★ Issue a Request for Proposals and award a contract to administer a next-generation test for the spring 2017 administration.
- ★ Begin work on a plan for gradual phasing in of computer-based testing, with goal of 100% CBT by 2019

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education



What did 127,000 MA students say after taking the PARCC online tests in 2015?

- ★ 92% said they had enough time to finish, 6% "rushed" and 2% did not finish in time
- ★ 38% (ELA) and 47% (Math) said the test was harder than their normal school work
- ★ 27% Experienced problems logging into the test; 25% experienced technical problems during the test; 23% reported the computer "worked slowly"
- ★ 65% said they prefer taking the test online to paper



Source: Online surveys compiled by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education HumRRO, Sept. 2015

Student Test Experience: PARCC ELA/L CBT

2015 PARCC Student Survey English Language Arts/Literacy CBT Experience								
Grade Span	Test was harder than school	Had enough time to finish	Felt "rushed"	Didn't finish in time	Had problem logging into test	Experienced tech. problems during	Computer "worked slowly"	Preferred CBT to PBT
3 to 5	37.3%	93%	4.4%	2.5%	22.9%	20.1%	17.5%	72.8%
6 to 8	36.5%	92%	6.9%	1.1%	28.1%	25.7%	20.9%	62.8%
9 to 11	50.7%	87%	10.2%	2.7%	39.2%	31.9%	28.4%	44.2%
Total	38.0%	92%	6.1%	1.9%	26.7%	23.7%	20.0%	65.8%



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Student Test Experience: PARCC Math CBT

2015 PARCC Student Survey Mathematics CBT Experience								
Grade Span	Test was harder than school	Had enough time to finish	Felt "rushed"	Didn't finish in time	Had problem logging into test	Experienced tech. problems during	Computer "worked slowly"	Preferred CBT to PBT
3 to 5	34.1%	95%	3.1%	1.5%	26.7%	21.0%	20.1%	73.6%
6 to 8	53.9%	91%	7.6%	1.6%	27.7%	27.1%	23.4%	59.7%
9 to 11	78.4%	84%	12.4%	3.7%	33.8%	33.4%	33.1%	39.2%
Total	47.3%	92%	6.0%	1.8%	27.8%	24.9%	22.6%	64.1%



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education