



Dr. Janice K. Jackson
Chief Education Officer

Principals,

Everyday you're working to ensure your students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to succeed in a 21st century workforce. At CPS, and throughout Illinois, we use the Common Core standards to help outline the content our students should master at each grade level to continue on the path to college and career readiness. The PARCC assessment is one of many important sources of information that let us know if our students are on track and moving in the right direction.

The upcoming PARCC assessment window is from March 28– May 13, 2016. As we prepare for this, it is important that each school is PARCC-ready by developing an assessment schedule, ensuring technological readiness, and that your school community understands the importance of this assessment for students, schools and CPS. Please lean on lessons learned from colleagues as you develop your schedule to ensure time is maximized time for instruction and is as minimally disruptive as possible to the learning environment. It is important to work with your teachers and staff on roles and responsibilities to ensure that PARCC is successfully implemented.

This year, PARCC data will be available by early summer. This quick turnaround will allow time to better understand the successes and challenges across groups of students and for individuals and can be a useful tool for your teachers as they plan for the next school year.

ISBE requires that all districts and schools test at least 95 percent of eligible students to ensure that test results for individual schools or the district are representative. Additionally, ISBE does not recognize a parent's right to opt a child out of required student assessments.

Failure to meet the 95 percent threshold may put schools and CPS at risk of financial sanctions and/or other punitive actions by ISBE. The U.S. Department of Education recently reiterated that states are expected to enforce the participation requirements by exercising their ability to withhold, or place conditions on, Title I funding for non-compliant districts, making changes to their state accountability policies (e.g. counting non-participants as non-proficient in state school accountability determinations) and/or taking other actions against districts or schools that do not meet the 95 percent participation threshold.

To meet these requirements all students should be provided the opportunity to participate in each unit of the test. Per ISBE's SY2014-2015 guidance, this means that students must be presented a testing ticket (online testers) or a test booklet for each unit. Students who refuse to participate may be provided a silent, self-guided activity in the classroom (in a content area other than what is being assessed) or may be removed to another supervised location to engage in quiet self-directed activities.

We recognize that you, your staff and school parents may have additional questions about PARCC. For additional information, please refer to: <http://cps.edu/parcc/Pages/parcc.aspx>. We also recommend holding a parent meeting in advance of the testing to clear up misconceptions. You can find a helpful set of slides to use with a parent audience [here](#) on the Knowledge Center. This uses parent-friendly language to help parents better understand the Common Core standards and PARCC as a measure of them. Another helpful resource for parents is the Great Kids PARCC Score Report guide. This provides parent friendly guidance on PARCC score reports and next steps parents can take to support their children.

Throughout this process, please contact the Department of Student Assessment at (773) 553-2430 for any questions regarding PARCC administration policy or logistics. And as always, please let your Network Chief know if you need additional support so we can ensure you have all necessary resources.

Looking forward to working with you to ensure this testing period is a success for our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janice K. Jackson
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