

Children as young as 8 take PARCC. There's no evidence that testing during elementary school is a useful measure of a child's college or career prospects. Test scores in middle school and high school are weaker predictors of college success than grades and attendance.¹ Most of the variance in standardized test scores is explained by socioeconomic factors.



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PARCC is 15% shorter this year. Length of testing ranges from >8hrs for 3rd grade to ~10 for HS. At one CPS HS even students not taking PARCC will miss 17 hours of school for the test.

PARCC has released no validity data to show that the larger achievement gap on PARCC v. previous state tests is due to anything other than test and question design with greater bias against students of color.

PARCC score reports will not be returned until the end of the school year at the earliest. Tests are scored by a combination of computers and temp workers who are not required to have a background in education. Teachers sign a nondisclosure agreement saying that they will not view test content. Although they released some questions from 2015, PARCC does not plan in general to release test questions. Students are forbidden to discuss the tests even after administration is complete.

Dear CPS Families,

We are writing to let you know that the testing window for PARCC, which helps us assess how well we're preparing your children for success in college and career, begins on March 28, 2016. There is a lot of debate these days about the value of standardized tests, so we want you to understand how CPS uses PARCC and why we believe it is critical to your child's education.

PARCC is an annual exam that tests the content and skills taught in your student(s) classroom every day. It is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and will not only provide crucial data to principals and teachers on Math and Literacy skills, but also on problem-solving and critical thinking skills - all of which will be crucial to their success in college, and in whatever career they choose.

This year's test will also see a format that uses each student's time more wisely. Based on feedback from last year's test takers, PARCC will be consolidated into one testing window instead of two, and can be administered in less overall time.

The data from the exam is a huge help to our teachers and principals, as the results provide a path to increase student growth. For those children who are struggling, PARCC data provides guidance on the areas where they need extra support, and helps teachers know which students are ready for a greater challenge. It's also a powerful tool in revealing achievement gaps, with results serving as the basis for providing all students with the equal resources they deserve.

CPS views PARCC as a necessary tool for making sure students stay on track and receive the supports they need. PARCC testing is mandatory for CPS students. As our testing window gets closer, you may hear people talk about not participating. Please know that refusing to participate in PARCC may have big implications that are important for parents to understand. Student refusal is damaging in two ways: not only does it mean less significant results for principals and teachers to utilize as they develop curriculum, but it incurs a financial consequence for our district. If 95% of CPS students do not take the exam, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the U.S. Department of Education can withhold millions of dollars in funding. This is particularly challenging given our current financial condition - and will mean even fewer resources dedicated to teaching and support positions, as well as programs that support student learning.

As you prepare your student(s) for their PARCC exam, know that there are a wealth of resources online to help guide you. From information on our own site (www.cps.edu/parcc) to resources at the national level (www.illinoistestguide.org and www.belearninghero.org), we encourage you to explore and use as needed.

We firmly believe in PARCC as a tool that empowers our principals and teachers. The data provided to our district from the test allows for more accurate analysis and adjustment, in turn allowing them to better support and prepare our students.

As always, we thank you for your active involvement in your child's education, as well as our district - and look forward to sharing the next round of PARCC results later this year.

Best,

Janice K. Jackson, Ed.
Chief Education Officer

No federal or state law *requires* financial penalties for schools or districts for student test refusal. And no state, district or school has *ever* been penalized due to low participation on state-mandated tests.

Restriction of funding is a mechanism that the US Dept of ED can use to enforce *any* provision of federal education law in order to impose sanctions for serious, willful violations by state or district officials. Student refusal to participate in testing is not such a violation.

~20% of CPS students were rated as proficient on math, <30% on ELA PARCC last year. As such, it is likely that this test will primarily be used as a method of further destabilizing CPS via labeling our under-resourced schools as under-performing.

PARCC score reports consist of four numeric values and some pre-written statements that correspond to meeting, exceeding or below expectations in nine categories². Assessments created, administered and graded by a child's own classroom teachers provide far more immediate, accurate and useful data for learning.

Both of these websites are supported by foundations of billionaires like Bill Gates, the Walton family, and Michael Bloomberg. These foundations have been some of the biggest advocates of privatizing the public education system.³

Due to the lack of an opt out law in IL, CPS does not allow parents to have a say in whether their children participate in PARCC.

1 <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Middle%20Grades%20Report.pdf> and <http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/nacac-research/Documents/DefiningPromise.pdf>

2 <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/parcc/2015/score-reports/score-report-interp-guide-14-15-parents.pdf>

3 <http://www.greatschools.org/about/supporters.page> and <http://belearninghero.org/about>