Louisiana PARCC Frequently Asked Questions

This guide answers frequently asked questions related to the PARCC assessment, including:

- Administration
- Schedules
- Materials
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Scoring
- Resources

Administration

1. *New* **Will homeschool and nonpublic students be required to take PARCC to determine placement into 5th and 9th grade in public schools?**
   During this transition year, private school and homeschool students may choose to test using the PARCC ELA and Math assessments in grades 4 and 8 but are not required to do so and results will not be returned in time to inform placement. Test results in 2015 will be returned in the fall so that results can be double checked to make sure scoring of students' results was fair and accurate.

   Districts should determine guidelines for entry, which can include use of the placement tests as well as other evidence of grade level proficiency (e.g., transcripts, local assessments). The Department will continue to provide placements tests for use as needed.

2. **What ELA and math tests are students in grades 3-8 taking in spring 2015?**
   Louisiana will administer the PARCC paper-based assessments for grades 3 to 8 English language arts (ELA) and math in spring 2015.

3. **Are these the same PARCC tests that are being taken in other states?**
   Yes. These are the same tests as those taken by students in PARCC-participating districts and states across the country and will include the same questions field tested by nearly 50,000 Louisiana students during spring 2014.

4. **Will the PARCC tests be administered online or on paper in spring 2015?**
   In Louisiana, students in grades 3-8 will take the paper-based PARCC assessments in spring 2015. Louisiana will move to computer-based assessments in spring 2016.

5. **Will there be a summer retest?**
   No. There will be no summer retests available for grades 4 and 8 during the summer of 2015. However, summer retests will be available in future years.

6. **When should we expect to receive scores from the spring administration?**
   Test results in 2015 will be returned in the fall, so that results can be double checked to make sure scoring of students' results were fair and accurate.

7. **When will test coordinator and test administrator manuals be available?**
   Test coordinator and administrator manuals will be available in January 2015.

Scheduling

8. *Will districts follow a specific testing schedule?*
Yes. All districts must administer the test according to the schedule below. To maximize student success, Louisiana students will take only one PARCC Assessment unit (session) per day. Students will take the ELA units (sessions) first as scheduled below during Phase I (PBA) and the math units (sessions) first during Phase II (EOY).

Performance Based Assessment (Phase I) Schedule					
	Monday **March 16** **ELA Unit 1** *Literary Analysis*	**Tuesday** **March 17** **ELA Unit 2** *Research Simulation*	**Wednesday** **March 18** **ELA Unit 3** *Narrative Writing*	**Thursday** **March 19** **Math Unit 1**	**Friday** **March 20** **Math Unit 2**
Grade 3	75 min	75 min	60 min	75 min	75 min
Grade 4	75 min	90 min	60 min	80 min	70 min
Grade 5	75 min	90 min	60 min	80 min	70 min
Grade 6	75 min	90 min	60 min	80 min	70 min
Grade 7	75 min	90 min	60 min	80 min	70 min
Grade 8	75 min	90 min	60 min	80 min	70 min

Phase I make-up testing for all grade levels will occur March 23 and 24, 2015.

End of Year Assessment (Phase II) Schedule					
	Monday **May 4** *Math Unit 1*	**Tuesday** **May 5** *Math Unit 2*	**Wednesday** **May 6** **ELA Unit 1**	**Thursday** **May 7** *ELA Unit 2 (gr 6-8)*	**Friday** **May 8**
Grade 3	75 min	75 min	75 min	Make-up testing	Make-up testing
Grade 4	75 min	75 min	75 min	Make-up testing	Make-up testing
Grade 5	75 min	75 min	75 min	Make-up testing	Make-up testing
Grade 6	80 min	75 min	60 min	60 min	Make-up testing
Grade 7	80 min	75 min	60 min	60 min	Make-up testing
Grade 8	80 min	75 min	60 min	60 min	Make-up testing

Phase II make-up testing for all grade levels will also occur on May 11 and 12, 2015.

9. *What are the test administration dates for the PARCC assessments in Louisiana?*
- PARCC Phase 1 (PBA) ELA and Math Grades 3-8: March 16-20 with makeup dates of March 23 and 24
- PARCC Phase 2 (EOY) ELA and Math Grades 3-8: May 4-7 with makeup dates of May 8, 10, and 11

10. *What are PARCC test "units"?*
PARCC test units are sessions or parts of the assessment. These were previously referred to as sessions during the PARCC field test and on LEAP/iLEAP.

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11. *Will the PARCC assessments be timed?*
    Yes. PARCC tests will be timed for students without IEPs, IAPs, or LEP plans that indicate extended time accommodations. Unit (session) testing times can be found in the chart above and in the PARCC Assessment Guides. Please note, the times allowed already include additional cushion for students who need to check their work or for students who need slightly more time (e.g., if the field test data shows that a unit will take students 60 minutes to complete, PARCC allows 90 minutes for completion of the unit).

12. *What happens if a student misses a testing date?*
    Students may either make up the test unit (session) during the scheduled testing day if the student is in attendance or on the make-up days, as in previous years. Students should be provided a break between units (sessions) and should not complete more than one makeup testing unit (session) in addition to the scheduled unit (session) each day. During the scheduled make-up days, students should take no more than two testing units (sessions) in a day.

13. *Do the units (sessions) (e.g., Literary Analysis Unit, Research Simulation Unit, Narrative Task) need to be administered in order?*
    Yes. All units (sessions) within a content area must be administered in sequential order, with the exception of make-up testing. Additional guidance about make-up testing will be available in the Test Coordinator and Test Administrator Manuals in January 2015.

14. *May a school administer more than one unit (session) per day?*
    No. In this first year of PARCC administration, Louisiana schools must administer only one unit (session) per day. Students may be administered one additional makeup unit per day but should have a break between the scheduled and makeup sessions (units).

15. *Will all students be allowed additional testing time?*
    Only students with approved IEP, IAP, or LEP Plans for extended testing time accommodation are allowed additional time beyond the mandated unit testing time. Students with the accommodation of extended time must complete the unit (session) on the day in which it is started.

Materials

16. **New What is a consumable test booklet?*
    A consumable test booklet is a document that includes questions and answers in the same document. Students will not use separate answer documents during the PARCC administration.

17. **New Will students be able to highlight, annotate and underline in the consumable test booklets?*
    Students will be able to underline in passages and questions within the consumable test booklet, and use non-carbon yellow highlighters in the text of the passages and questions. Highlighting text in options or placing an X to the right of the text in an option are recommended ways for students to eliminate options. However, crossing out options could create scoring issues if students mark through bubbles.

18. **Updated What resources will be available to students when writing?*
    Students will be provided scratch paper by the test administrator on which to do their planning. There is only space for the student's final written response in the test booklet. Students will not be provided with a Writer's Checklist or a rough draft page, beyond the blank paper provided.

19. What calculators can students use on the PARCC assessment?

The table below outlines which students may use which calculators on calculator and non-calculator sections of the test.

Grade Level	Non-accommodated Students	Accommodated Students
Grades 3-5	• No calculator usage allowed	• Four function calculators with only percent and square root • For the entire assessment
Grades 6-7	• Four function calculators with only percent and square root • For the calculator portions of the assessment	• Four function calculators with only percent and square root • For the entire assessment
Grade 8	• Scientific calculators • For the calculator portions of the assessment	• Scientific calculators • For the entire assessment

20. How may districts purchase calculators at reduced rates?

Districts can use the state purchasing contracts below for purchase of additional calculators at reduced rates:

• General Office Supply Contract: Independent Stationers or Staples
• School Supply Contract: Unity Education Resources and Equipment
• Microcomputer and Peripherals Contracts: Various Vendors

These contracts are already in place and are available here: http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/osp.htm

21. Can students use dictionaries and thesauruses on the assessment?

No. Students will not be allowed to use dictionaries and thesauruses on any part of the test. Because the PARCC tests integrate reading and writing, the use of a dictionary or thesaurus would compromise the measurement of many reading standards. For example, a student would be able to look up key vocabulary words or other words essential to measuring a student's understanding of a text.

However, definitions will be provided as a part of the assessment text for words that are important to understanding the text but do not have sufficient context.

Please note, the scoring of the written responses takes into account the absence of such resources and the time constraints of each task.

22. What additional materials are needed for administration of the PARCC assessments?

Students will be permitted to have school-issued scratch paper (blank, lined, or graph). Please note, any paper provided to students is to be collected by the test administrator at the conclusion of testing each day and returned to the test coordinator to be destroyed.

Accessibility and Accommodations

23. What are accessibility features and are these available on the paper assessment?

Accessibility features are supports available to any student on the PARCC assessment. School-level committees will determine when students need to utilize accessibility features and will document any such need through a personal needs profile (PNP). The Personal Needs Profile lists available accessibility features and is used to determine those supports most appropriate for students. For more guidance on the PNP, click here.

*For students with IEPs, IAPs, and LEP plans, the accessibility features are included in those documents.

24. *Where can districts get additional information on accessibility features and accommodations?*
    Team-level committees should use the PARCC Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for additional guidance. Additional guidance on accessibility features and accommodations can be found in the Louisiana Quick Guide to Accessibility Features and Accommodations.

25. *How should districts/schools document accessibility features and accommodations?*

    Accessibility and accommodations should be recorded on relevant documents for each population of students utilizing the supports as noted below. All documentation of accessibility and accommodations must be made 30 days prior to the assessment window.

Document	Location	Population	Content
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Special Education Reporting (SER)	Special Education Students	Accessibility Features and Accommodations
Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)	Assessment Library	504 Students	Accessibility Features and Accommodations
Limited English Proficiency Accommodations Checklist (LEP Plan)	Assessment Library	English Language Learners	Accessibility Features and Accommodations *(Updated form available in Nov 11 newsletter)*
Personal Needs Profile (PNP)	Assessment Library	All students requiring additional support without other plans in place	Accessibility Features *(Form available in Nov 11 newsletter)*
Unique Accommodations Form	SER and Assessment Library	Special Education, 504 and LEP Students	Accommodations

26. *Which students are eligible for read aloud on the math assessment?*
    As a predetermined accessibility feature, any student can have the math assessment read aloud if a school level committee determines this as a needed support. This decision should be documented on the Personal Needs Profile (PNP), the IEP, the IAP or the LEP plan and should be based on individual student need.

27. *Which students are eligible for read aloud on the ELA assessment?*
    A very small number of students with disabilities may be eligible for read aloud on the ELA Assessment. Because every session of the ELA assessment includes reading passages (unlike previous LEAP tests), this accommodation must be applied very carefully so as not undermine the validity of the test.

    As outlined in the PARCC Accessibility and Accommodations Manual, IEP and IAP teams shall use the following guidelines in determining eligibility for this accommodation:

    • Blindness or a visual impairment and has not learned (or is unable to use) braille;

    • A disability that severely limits or prevents him/her from accessing printed text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (e.g., student is unable to decode printed text or read fluently);

    • Deafness or a hearing impairment and is severely limited or prevented from decoding text due to a documented history of early and prolonged language deprivation.

Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 plan, teams should also consider whether:

- The student has access to printed text during routine instruction through a read or other spoken-text audio, format, or interpreter;

- The student's inability to decode printed text or read braille is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments;

- The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions in the foundational reading skills to continue to attain the important college and career-ready skill of independent reading.

Students who receive this accommodation will have a notation on their student reports that states that the student was given a reading access accommodation.

28. **Is read aloud on the ELA assessment an accommodation available to LEP students?**
    No. English Language Learners may have the Math assessment read aloud as a predetermined accessibility feature, like all students, but may not have the ELA assessment read aloud unless part of a separate IEP or IAP plan.

29. **Can English Language Learners use dictionaries on the assessments?**
    As a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) accommodation, English Language Learners may use word-to-word native language dictionaries (paper or electronic). These dictionaries may not include definitions in either English or the native language.

30. **Is the math test available in another language?**
    The math test is available in Spanish. Initial shipments of testing materials will include quantities based on English Language Learner SIS information and ELDA testing files. The accommodation of Spanish form of math assessment must be noted on the LEP Accommodations Checklist in order for a student to receive the Spanish form.

31. **What should an IEP/IAP team do if a student requires accommodations not listed on the IEP/IAP form?**
    For approval of accommodations not specifically listed on the IEP and IAP forms, districts should submit the Unique Accommodation Request Form available in the Assessment Library.

Scoring *New

32. ***New*** **How will PARCC be scored?**
    Like Louisiana's prior assessments, the PARCC test will be scored using both computer- and human-scoring (e.g., computers score the multiple choice tests, humans score the essays).

    Like Louisiana's prior assessments, the consortium of states responsible for PARCC released performance level descriptors (similar to Louisiana's achievement level descriptors) to define the skills that a student should demonstrate in order to earn a Level 3, 4, etc. score.

33. ***New*** **When will results be released?**
    Test results for the first year of PARCC (Spring 2015) will be returned in Fall 2015, so that results can be double checked to make sure scoring of students' results was fair and accurate. This is standard practice for any first year assessment.

    Because results will be returned on a longer timeline, the release of other accountability metrics will also occur later than normal including (a) transitional student growth data for ELA and math and (b) school and district report

cards. NOTE: Transitional student growth data for science and social studies will be released in summer 2015, as it would be in any other year.

34. *New* **Will PARCC results represent a "drop" from prior years?**
   Because LEAP used NAEP and PARCC is using NAEP to guide standard setting, significant drops are not expected.

   Like Louisiana's prior assessments, the "cut scores" for what it means to score at a level 3, 4, etc. will be driven, in part, by the NAEP Assessment. On prior LEAP tests, a score of "Basic" (or level 3) equated to roughly a score of Basic on the NAEP. PARCC will set cut scores informed by the same guidance.

   In addition, BESE passed a series of transition policies as stated below to ensure that students and educators have "time to learn" the new expectations.

   - **School accountability.** Letter grade distributions will remain the same from 2013 to 2014 and 2015. During the two-year transition, any school or district that maintained or improved its annual performance score will not experience a decrease in its current letter grade. As in any other year, if a school improves, the performance score and letter grade may go up.
   - **Teacher accountability.** For 2014 and 2015, "value-added data" will not be available because there will be no baseline from which to calculate. Compass policies will remain in effect, but student learning scores will not need to be based on value-added data. However, transitional student growth data will be available for teachers.
   - **Student accountability.** In 2014 and 2015, LEAs may promote any first-time fourth grade student, who has demonstrated readiness for fifth grade content through evidence of student learning, to fifth grade. Each LEA shall include guidance in its local pupil progression plan outlining the evidence of student learning used to make such promotion decisions, including but not limited to performance on classroom assignments or benchmark assessments. The state shifted the 8th grade retention standard to be a remedial standard with remediation occurring on the high school campus in a "transitional 9th grade" year.

   For a review of the transition policies, click here.

Resources

35. **What resources are available for districts, schools, and teachers?**

   Resources available now:

   - Assessment Month-By-Month Checklist, this document details the steps that schools and districts should be taking to ensure an effective testing cycle.
   - Assessment guides for state assessments in grades 3 through high school
   - PARCC paper practice test are available for ELA PBA and Math EOY
   - Sample PARCC prototype questions for ELA are available on the PARCC website and provide educators with a detailed view of questions, tasks, and scoring guidance.
   - Sample PARCC prototype questions for math are available on the PARCC website and provide educators with a detailed view of questions, tasks, and scoring guidance.
   - EAGLE now features printable versions of all guidebook tasks and will soon include search and test-building features

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- Curriculum guides in math and ELA that include tasks aligned to the end-of-year assessments

- Ed Connect newsletters and Teacher Leaders newsletters including new resources and sample tasks

- PARCC Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for use in informing accommodations and accessibility decisions

- Quick user guide, which explains the similarities and differences between the PARCC accommodations and those offered on our past assessments as described in the Louisiana administrative rules

- PARCC Read Aloud Decision Making Presentation, that details the school level decision-making process to determine read aloud accommodations on the spring administration of the PARCC test.

- Personal Needs Profile Decision Making Presentation, that details the school level decision-making process to determine which students need to have a Personal Needs Profile during spring PARCC testing.

- Statewide contracts to purchase calculators, as needed

- PARCC parent website

36. *What additional resources will be available for districts, schools, and teachers?*
    - Resources on how to use practice tests will be released this winter.
    - Additional sample items will be released in EAGLE on an ongoing basis.

37. *Who should districts contact with additional PARCC questions?*
    Districts should continue to email assessment@la.gov with any questions related to the PARCC assessments.

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