

Louisiana Department of Education:

PARCC FIELD TEST REPORT



The Louisiana Department of Education, in partnership with 15 other states, conducted the first phase of the PARCC Field Test March 24–April 11.

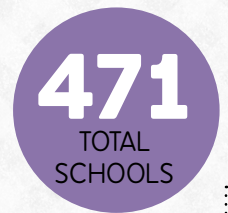
The Field Test allowed students, teachers, principals, and district staff to practice the new assessment 12 months before the full administration of the PARCC test, which will occur in spring 2015.

This report is intended to capture initial findings from the Field Test so as to inform the state's plan for supporting schools and school systems in the year to come.

SUCCESSES:

MORE THAN 24,000 STUDENTS

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE FIELD TEST: 24,415 students across 76 Local Education Agencies (LEA) participated in the Field Test, many of whom practiced for the Field Test's look and feel by using the tutorial and sample test questions published by the Department. All students who participated in the Field Test had the opportunity to experience the new technology features of the assessment, and many reported that the new features were engaging and easy to use, which enabled them to more easily complete the assessment.



"The PARCC test was a cool test. It is way better than taking a test on paper. It helped me to stay on task by being electronic. One of the reasons I liked it is because who doesn't like using a computer?" – Jeremiah, 6th grader in Lafayette Parish

1,646 TEACHERS ACROSS THE STATE

ADMINISTERED THE TEST IN THEIR CLASSROOMS: Teachers were able to administer the computer-based tests without any major challenges. The Department trained more than 800 teachers and district/school leaders through 18 in-person sessions in 15 cities across the state. These events trained school-level staff on how to administer the test.

"The teachers I spoke with stated that the testing environment seemed less stressful because it was on the computer. The children also seemed more at ease."

– Kasie Mainiero, University Elementary, Caddo Parish

TEST DEVELOPERS WILL USE LOUISIANA STUDENT RESPONSES TO ASSESS THE VALIDITY

OF EACH TEST QUESTION: Because nearly 25,000 Louisiana students have taken the test, psychometricians and other test developers will be able to determine whether test questions truly measured skills accurately and will be able to determine how each question can be graded fairly.

THE DEVICES AND INTERNET BANDWIDTH ACROSS THE 76 LEAs MET THE

TECHNOLOGY DEMANDS OF THE TEST:

The Department partnered with the district technology and assessment coordinators in all participating parishes to ensure desktop computers, laptops, and tablets were ready for the test. Districts conducted 'infrastructure trials' before the field test to confirm the district's network and Internet bandwidth could support testing requirements. During the testing window, the Department provided a support center to assist districts in answering assessment administration questions as well as troubleshooting any challenges they encountered during testing. The support center fielded and answered more than 180 calls throughout the three weeks.



My team has been very impressed by the responsiveness and follow-up of LDOE's PARCC support team. Our calls have been logged, messages passed on, return calls placed, and support offered. In the event a solution was not available, we have even been contacted 24 hours later to check in. Kudos to LDOE's support team and the issue tracking process."

– Rob Logan, Technology Coordinator, Livingston Parish

AREAS TO IMPROVE:

WITHIN THE ASSESSMENT, STUDENTS NEED CLEARER INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW TYPES OF QUESTIONS AND TOOLS. The assessment includes new types of test questions, such as videos that students view, as well as new tools such as online calculators. The test will need clearer directions for students to make better use of these new tools.

TEACHERS AND DISTRICTS NEED STATE-SPECIFIC GUIDES FOR TEST ADMINISTRATION.

District staff have asked the Department to develop Louisiana-specific administration guidance for teachers, technology staff, test administration staff, and district leaders, taking into account past testing policies that are specific to this state.

DISTRICTS AND THE DEPARTMENT WILL PARTNER TO ENSURE DEVICES AND INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE WILL BE READY FOR ALL

3RD-8TH GRADERS. Next year, more than 300,000 students will be taking the assessment. The Department and the district staff will need to work together to ensure the successes of the field test are repeated during the full assessment.

COMING UP:

THE DEPARTMENT WILL HOST ADDITIONAL TRAININGS FOR PHASE II OF THE FIELD TEST.

Phase II of the PARCC Field Test is May 5-June 6. The Department will host eight regional, in-person sessions for school-level staff to prepare for the next testing window.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL SHARE ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO HELP TEACHERS LEARN THE NEW ASSESSMENTS AND TRAIN MORE THAN 6,000 EDUCATORS THIS SUMMER.

The Department has released assessment guides, curriculum guides, and additional resources in the Classroom Support Toolbox. This summer the Department will host professional development across the state during three major statewide events that offer over 6,000 seats to teachers.

THE DEPARTMENT WILL HOLD PARCC DRY RUN DAYS IN FALL 2014 THAT WILL HELP DISTRICTS TEST THEIR DEVICES AND

INTERNET CAPACITY. In addition to testing devices and internet capacity, PARCC Dry Run days will give more teachers and students an opportunity to practice the new assessments before the test is administered in full during spring 2015. For districts that need more time to fully expand their technical infrastructure, the Department will provide a waiver to administer the paper-based test for the 2014-2015 school year.