



## FACT SHEET

# 2015 PARCC ASSESSMENT RESULTS

**Later this fall/winter**, families of Baltimore County Public Schools' students will receive score reports from the first administration of the new statewide assessment, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam. These are the results of exams in English language arts and mathematics that students took starting in March 2015. Maryland students in grades 3-8 and some high school students took the PARCC test in two parts – the Performance-Based Assessment and the End-of-Year Exam – that used different types of questions to measure students' knowledge and skills. The Performance-Based Assessment and End-of-Year Exam result in one score that helps educators and parents know how well students have learned the appropriate grade-level material to prepare them for the next grade and eventually for college and careers.

**The PARCC exam is not** an “additional” test but replaces the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and the High School Assessments (HSAs) in Algebra 1 and English 10. It also marks a significant departure from these previous assessments. This change will produce much different test results that will give us new information about individual students and schools and their performance. The PARCC assessment measures students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and writing skills, which are all essential for success in higher education and the workplace. Now students must demonstrate and explain their knowledge and understanding as opposed to simply reciting memorized facts or filling in a bubble for a correct answer. These changes mean that we cannot compare PARCC exam results to those of the MSA or HSA.

**The PARCC score reports** will show how a student performed on each portion of the PARCC assessment as well as the student's overall score. This overall score will fall within one of five performance levels that indicate the extent to which a child demonstrated understanding of grade-level subject standards. Students whose scores fall within level 4 or 5 have demonstrated that they have a thorough understanding of grade-level content and are on the right track to being ready for college-level coursework. Students with level 3 scores are approaching expectations, but may need additional assistance mastering content. Students earning level 1 or 2 scores need greater supports and help to master content. The reports will also allow families to compare how their student is doing compared to others in his/her school, district, or state.

**Results for schools and individual students** will likely appear lower than what educators and families typically expect. The PARCC assessment sets new goals for our students using higher expectations that match the rigor and scope of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. Lower proficiency scores do not mean that our schools are performing worse or that students are learning less or are not as capable. The change simply reflects how statewide assessments have

evolved to meet higher standards that promote college and career readiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for all students.

**There are no immediate consequences** for schools or students tied to the 2015 administration. The first year of PARCC testing is serving as a baseline for test scores and will establish the performance targets for future years. Therefore, the release of the 2015 scores is taking longer because Maryland educators and their colleagues from other states needed to review students' work to determine the performance levels. Going forward, PARCC test results will be available sooner so that they can help teachers, parents, and students inform instruction.

**The PARCC exam provides an opportunity** to better prepare students for the next step of their academic career at each grade level of their K-12 journey. While no single test can give a complete picture of achievement, the PARCC exam will provide more accurate information about how each child is performing against the Maryland College and Career Ready standards. This information will help teachers and parents determine if students require remediation or more advanced instruction earlier in their schooling, ensuring that they graduate from high school fully prepared for the demands of college and/or careers.

For more information about the PARCC exam and other statewide assessments, please visit <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/parcc/index.html> or <http://www.parcconline.org/>.