



Illinois State Board of Education

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FAQs for Parents

PARCC ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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Q: When can we expect to receive the score reports?

A: We anticipate the 2015 score reports to be released in late fall. The results from the first Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam administration are taking additional time to produce because Illinois educators, along with their colleagues from other states, needed to review students' work to determine performance levels. In future years, score reports will be released earlier.

Q: What is a "good score"?

A: Score reports show how students performed on each portion of the PARCC assessment as well as their overall score. The student test results mark a new baseline that enables all of us to know where students currently stand on their path to success in college and career. Students scoring a 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 receiving a 3 are approaching expectations, but may need additional assistance mastering content. Students receiving a 1 or 2 need more assistance in mastering the content and are in need of greater supports.

Q: Why do scores look different than scores from previous years?

A: The bar has been raised for students and the new tests are measuring more complex skills including critical thinking, persuasive writing, and problem solving. This is different than previous tests. A low score does not mean that your child did not improve or learned less. This first year's scores set a new baseline from which progress will be measured moving forward.

Q: Can we compare this year's scores to last year's Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT) or Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) scores?

A: No. It's important to remember that the PARCC assessment is a completely different test than past years. The results represent a new baseline that teachers and parents can use to measure progress toward college and career readiness.

Q: What are the consequences of this year's scores?

A: This is a baseline year so there are no consequences for schools or students. The numbers will be used as a starting point in order to measure growth by students, schools, and districts in the future. The PARCC assessments are standardized and the performance results of students in Illinois can be compared directly with their peers across the nation.

Q: How should we expect our students to perform?

A: We expect that the percentage of students who show proficiency on the PARCC exam will likely be lower than the percentage of students who met and exceeded standards on the previous state assessments. Lower test scores do not necessarily mean that schools are performing worse or that students are learning less. Similarly, a drop in student proficiency scores does not necessarily reflect a drop in performance. It is rather a reflection of the higher

standards Illinois adopted to ensure students achieve college and career readiness. As with any change, there is a period of transition as teachers and students get used to the new standards and tests. We fully expect results to improve as teachers and students become familiar with the higher standards.

Q: How will students' scores be used?

A: Scores are used to identify in what subjects a child is doing well and how they can be challenged to go deeper into other areas or where he or she needs extra support or practice. Having accurate data is an important part of ensuring that our schools are providing the right supports for your child to be successful. Your child's score provides a valuable indicator of where your child is on his/her path to college and career and how our schools can better support him/her along that journey.

Q: Where can I see how my child compares with other students in the district or state?

A: The reports will allow families to compare how their student is doing relative to others in his/her school, district, or state. ISBE ultimately hopes to give parents the tools they will need to help their student improve in areas where he/she is weakest and learn how their student performs in the context of college and career readiness.

Q: What can I as a parent do with the results?

A: Parents should review the results and work with teachers to identify ways to improve student performance. For example, tutoring or after-school programs may be available to help students practice their skills. In addition, parents can support their child's learning at home by focusing on areas of difficulty. Parents should also encourage their children to do their best and reassure them that test scores are only one indicator of progress.

Q: Will my child's score hurt his/her chances of being accepted by colleges?

A: We want every child in our district to be college and career ready. That's why we've adopted a set of standards aligned to college-level work. Your child's score provides a more accurate indicator of his/her college readiness. Also, these results can be used for the purpose of placement into college-level, credit-bearing courses in English language arts and some math classes.