

Curriculum Corner

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Assesment Update September 2016

In the fall of 2015, the district elected to shift from the MCAS to the PARCC assessment for students in grades three through eight in English and Mathematics. All high school and science assessments remained on the MCAS system. The purpose in shifting to the PARCC test was to acclimate students to an online, rigorous assessment while learning the technical requirements. Students were asked to do their best knowing that the testing environment and platform were new as were the types of tasks. In receiving the results, the district continues this philosophy of learning the tools and process while having a first exposure to the type of outcomes the test provides.

Results of the 2016 spring administration of MCAS and PARCC are now available both for individual students and aggregate groups. Parent reports will be mailed on October 7. MCAS results are reported in the same traditional format that was used in the past. PARCC results are different in that the scaled scores, proficiency levels and aggregate outcomes are different. A brief overview of each is found below:

	MCAS	PARCC
Tests	Grade 5 and 8: Science Grade 9: Biology (graduation requirement) Grade 10: ELA and Math (graduation requirement)	Grades 3-8: English and Math
Scale	220-280	650-850
Proficiency Levels	Advanced Proficient Needs Improvement Warning	Level 5: Exceeded expectations Level 4: Met expectations Level 3: Approached expectations Level 2: Partially met expectations Level 1: Did not meet expectations

For the current school year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to adopt the "Next-Generation MCAS" for grades three through eight in English and Math. This new test promises to include test questions from the PARCC exam as well as questions recently embedded in the traditional MCAS. The test will be conducted online as PARCC was last year. The testing window is slightly earlier with test administration occurring between April 3 and May 26. Please watch for the release of specific schedules from the building administrators. Student participation in the assessment is a key factor in the state's accountability formula so it is important that all students participate. The science tests in grade five and eight remain on the prior MCAS system and are pencil and paper assessments. The high school MCAS, a graduation requirement, also remains in the traditional MCAS format in English, Math and Biology at least through the class of 2020 who will be testing as sophomores in 2018 (Biology as freshmen in 2017).

Later this fall, the district will release its "Report Card" which reflects the first time administration of the PARCC assessment. These reports are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction to the best extent possible. The state requires parental notification of these reports so please watch for them in the coming weeks.

As the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides information to the local districts, it will be shared with teachers, students and parents. The district's priority is focused on the success of all students. Your support during these transitions is highly valued. Please do not hesitate to contact an administrator or faculty member if you have questions or concerns.