



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIELD TESTS: PARENTS

---

### What is field testing?

Field testing is a chance for the states developing new computer-based math, reading and writing tests to “test the test questions” that will be on the final version of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests and make sure the questions do a good job measuring content, are clear and are fair. It also gives students the chance to try out the new computer-based tests and see what they are like before taking the actual PARCC tests in the 2014–15 school year. This is an opportunity for thousands of teachers and more than a million students to do a practice run and offer feedback on the final version of their states’ tests.

### Who is taking the field tests?

More than 1 million students in grades 3–11 are expected to take these field tests. That is about 10 percent of the students enrolled in those grades who live in the [District of Columbia and the 14 states](#) administering the field tests.

### When will students be taking the field tests?

Most students will only try out one portion of one subject of the tests. Between March 24 and April 11, participating students will take the performance-based assessment in either English language arts, which features writing, or in math, with its multi-step, real-world problems. Between May 5 and June 6, participating students will take a different part of the test, known as the end-of-year assessment. They will take English language arts, including reading comprehension, or math, both of which measure students’ conceptual understanding.

### How long will the field tests take?

The field tests will take no more than three hours for most students. Individual students will only answer a subset of test questions.

### Is PARCC releasing scores?

No. PARCC will not have or release individual student scores. This is a practice run, so the PARCC states can “test the test” and students and educators can experience the new assessment before the actual PARCC tests are administered in 2014–15; it is not intended to measure student or school performance. The value for students and schools is in making the state’s final tests fair and relevant.

### Will a paper-based version of the field tests be available?

Yes. While most schools will administer the field tests on computers, some will offer students a paper-and-pencil version in this practice run. When the operational tests are rolled out, PARCC will make paper-and-pencil versions available initially for schools that are still building their technology infrastructure. The states anticipate that one day all students will take the PARCC assessments on a computer. Among many other advantages, computer-based testing will be engaging for students, result in lower costs, and ultimately allow for faster scoring and reporting of results. However, the PARCC assessments will always be available in paper-and-pencil format for students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs that call for that accommodation.

### What do the PARCC states hope to learn from these field tests?

The PARCC consortium will take lessons learned from this practice run to ensure the operational tests, which will be administered to students in the 2014–15 school year, are the best possible assessments. Through field testing, researchers and teams of educators from the states will examine the accessibility and fairness of test questions, the quality of accommodations for students who need them, how well test questions measure performance on relevant content, whether the tests can be linked to international tests to see how American students do compared with students abroad, whether the length of time given to students to complete the assessment is appropriate, how performance on the computer-based version compares to the paper-based version and more. PARCC will issue a report on lessons learned from the practice run over the summer.



### **Will students be able to offer their feedback on the field tests?**

Yes. Students and teachers continue to play an important role in developing their states' future tests. They will be asked to answer survey questions at the end of the field tests designed to let PARCC test developers know what worked well and what improvements could be made. You can view the student surveys [online](#).

### **Which schools are taking the field tests?**

Districts notify schools as to whether they will participate in the field tests. Schools and classrooms are randomly selected.

### **Will students take both the field tests plus the state's regular standardized exam this year?**

In most states. The federal government requires states to conduct annual accountability testing for all students in grades 3–8 and grade 11. Most students taking a portion of the field tests will also have to take the current state exam. In some states, the few students who take both portions of a subject area test will not have to take the state exam in that subject. For more information, please contact your state education agency.

### **How does participating in the field tests benefit students and schools?**

Students learn by doing. Engaging in challenging tasks allows students to continue to learn reading, writing and mathematics and to grow as critical thinkers and problem-solvers. The PARCC field test items are the kinds of activities that good teachers use in their daily instruction.

### **What data will be collected and with whom will the data be shared?**

The PARCC states are highly committed to protecting student data and privacy. The consortium has taken a number of steps, including adopting a [data privacy and security policy](#), to ensure the information gathered is used for the sole purpose of measuring student progress. No personally identifiable student information will be shared with the federal government.

### **What information will students be asked for in the student surveys?**

An important component of improving the tests is getting feedback from students through surveys that students will complete after taking the field tests. The surveys ask questions such as whether students had enough time to answer questions and whether they understood the instructions. You can see the surveys on the field test Web page: [PARCCOnline.org/field-test](http://PARCCOnline.org/field-test).

### **How can students who are not taking the field tests get ready for PARCC?**

The PARCC states are making a practice test available for all students this spring, around the same time as the field tests. Teachers and schools can administer the practice test as a practice run for their students. Students (and parents) can try out the practice test at home.

Even before the practice test, anyone can view sample test questions at [PARCCOnline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes](http://PARCCOnline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes). Be sure to check out the technology specifications first, however. The PARCC field tests work on many devices, but not all. And you must have an external keyboard if using a tablet device, for example.

### **How can I find out more?**

Please visit us online for more information on the field tests at [PARCCOnline.org/field-test](http://PARCCOnline.org/field-test). And sign up for updates at the top of any [PARCCOnline.org](http://PARCCOnline.org) Web page, or at <http://bit.ly/1pJpimV>.