August 19 Back-to-School Webinar FAQ

ASSESSMENTS

ACT and WorkKeys

Q: If a district opts in to the ACT, do charters within that district also opt in by default?
A: Yes, ACT will be available to all district schools.

Q: If WorkKeys is by school, can all grade levels take it?
A: The WorkKeys is budgeted for 11th-grade students only.

Q: Will ACT be state-funded in future years or is this a one-time only situation?
A: The Illinois State Board of Education has developed a transition plan in light of the feedback we have received regarding the importance of ACT. Pending funding by the General Assembly, we plan to offer an optional ACT this year. In 2015-16, we plan to provide vouchers for students wishing to take the ACT. The transition plan can be accessed on the Student Assessment website.

Q: Is it correct that if we opt in for ACT and WorkKeys, we will NOT receive the PSAE score as we did in the past? We will receive an ACT and a WorkKeys score only?
A: That is correct in regard to the ACT and WorkKeys. Your students will also receive a college and career ready determination based on their performance on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in ELA III and Algebra II/Integrated Math III.

Q: Does the PARCC test have to be proctored by the teacher teaching the course or simply a certified teacher? For example, can a sub be used to administer PARCC?
A: Test administrators are assigned by the school. Only certified personnel are permitted to administer the test, but it does not have to be the teacher of the course for which the student is testing.

PSAE

Q: What can you tell us about Senate Bill 3412? SB 3412 contains proposed new language for the diploma requirement. Since PSAE no longer exists and ACT is optional, will there be college and career readiness testing requirements as a condition of graduation?
A: Yes, there is a graduation requirement that students will take an assessment of college and career readiness. The master claim for the PARCC assessments is that
students are on track or college and career ready if they score at a given level in English language arts and mathematics on the PARCC assessment; therefore, if students obtain a given level on the PARCC assessment, they will be deemed "college and career ready."

**Q: For students who did not take the PSAE last year, do they remain as juniors or are they seniors? If they remain as juniors, do they take one of the PARCC assessments or the ACT?**

**A:** In the recently enacted legislation, there is not a requirement for advancement to senior status based on a state test as was the case in the past with PSAE. There is a graduation requirement that students must take an assessment of college and career readiness. We are beginning the rulemaking process for this legislation and will take into consideration the various situations for students in this time of transition to new assessments.

**Q: For a student who was enrolled as an 11th-grader last school year (but did not sit for the PSAE), will there be a different requirement for graduation?**

**A:** We are beginning the process of rulemaking for the recently enacted legislation for state assessments. We understand in this period of transition that some students will not take the PARCC assessments either in Algebra II/Integrated Math III or ELA III. We will develop rules that will allow students in special circumstances to graduate without taking a college and career ready assessment.

**Q: We have students who will graduate without taking the PARCC or PSAE under the new rules. How does that reconcile with the state law?**

**A:** Rulemaking for the new state law regarding graduation requirements is beginning. We are taking into consideration this time of transition and the different scenarios for students.

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**PARCC**

**Q: What do we do if our spring break falls within the PARCC window?**

**A:** The PARCC window is four weeks for computer or the first two weeks of the four-week window for paper. The four weeks is defined as 20 continuous days. This definition allows for flexibility for those districts that need the entire 20-day period to test.

**Q: Will the state be looking to include PARCC in the teacher evaluation as it pertains to student growth?**

**A:** The manner in which the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) is implemented is determined to a large extent at the local level. Joint committees made up of district educators make determinations about what assessments will be used in the student growth component of teacher evaluation.
Q: Can a student take ELA and math on the same day for PARCC?
A: A student can take up to three units (sessions) in a day. The schedule for administration of the tests is up to the local school/district to determine, within the parameters of the test administration manual for PARCC.

Q: How much time is being allotted for the paper-and-pencil PARCC tests?
A: The testing windows for the paper-and-pencil tests are two weeks rather than the four-week window allotted to computer-based testing.

Q: Will a test for the new science standards be implemented after 2016?
A: We are negotiating the science requirement of ESEA with the U.S. Department of Education. We have proposed delaying implementation of a science assessment until teachers have familiarized themselves with the new science standards. We will keep the field updated on the federal decision.

Q: Are you going to have workshops on PARCC training for those who administer the test? PSAE was done under very controlled conditions. Not sure we will have that accountability with teachers giving tests in a window.
A: There will be webinars and training materials available for test administrators that are revised and updated from the materials that were available for field testing. We obtained a lot of feedback from those who field tested and adjusted and improved the test administration materials based on that feedback.

Q: What is a special education co-op’s role in PARCC assessment? Will we need to complete the survey?
A: Just as in the past, all state assessment materials will be available to sites where the tests are given. Responsibilities for students and ensuring that the correct data is in the SIS system for students remain the purview of the home school. Communication between home schools and serving schools is very important for students to receive the appropriate accessibility features and accommodations.

Q: For PARCC Performance-Based-Assessment, our district's spring break overlaps the testing window. Will there be an option for districts to test during an alternate four-week testing window that doesn't conflict with our spring break? This had been an option in the past with ISAT.
A: No. The testing window for computer-based testing is four weeks. The four weeks is defined as 20 continuous days. This definition allows for flexibility for those districts that need the entire 20-day period to test.

Q: Earlier in the summer, we heard there was not sufficient information to design a test schedule for each testing window. Have these "unknowns" been figured out (i.e., length of time of each test part, what specific days are each test parts available)?
A: The PARCC consortium is developing sample test schedules for various scenarios. We have not had a final testing time determination, but will have that later this fall. We will provide the sample schedules once these become available.

Q: You have different cohort profile of students in Algebra II/Integrated Math III or English language Arts III based on the rigor of the curriculum and enrollment patterns in schools. How can you use this data for comparisons between schools knowing that?
A: The comparison being made based on student performance on the PARCC Algebra II/Integrated Math III and ELA III tests is mastery of the specific standards associated with that assessment. The test has been constructed using an evidence-centered design, meaning that there is a strong relationship between given standards (ELA/mathematics for specific tests) and the test items. Student mastery of the specific standards will result in higher performance on the assessments. A student’s lack of mastery of standards will result in lower performance on the assessments.

Q: Are districts expected to be developing more Type III assessments for grades 9-12 since the only PARCC is for ELA III and Algebra II?
A: It is up to each district’s joint committee to determine the components of their teacher evaluation system.

Q: If I have a junior who is past the Algebra II level, say Pre-Calc, is it OK that they will never take a state math assessment in their high school career?
A: We understand that this is a time of transition and that some students, at this point in time, will not take a PARCC mathematics assessment. In the future, students will take the Algebra II/Integrated Math III assessment when they are enrolled in the course, whether that is as a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.

Q: If PARCC high school End-of-Course (EOC) assessments are given when students take English language arts III AND CCSS standards are written 11-12, how are districts to determine which of the 11-12 standards are going to be the focus of the English language arts III PARCC assessment?
A: Each PARCC assessment has accompanying support materials that outline the test framework. These materials specify the standards that are the focus of the tests. The evidence table and test specifications can be found at http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs.

Q: Every district is determining for themselves which of the 11-12 CCSS ELA standards are prioritized for English language arts III. What if it does NOT match the priority standards PARCC is using for the English III assessment?
A: Districts are responsible for identifying the courses their students take that most closely align with the ELA III test.

Q: After the test administration of PARCC, will a follow-up survey be given to students asking if the student took the test seriously and gave their best effort on the assessment?
A: There is not currently a plan to survey students after the operational assessment.

Q: Is there any movement toward using PARCC as a Type I assessment for teacher evaluation?
A: The components of a district's teacher evaluation system are determined by the district's joint committee.

Q: Will there be a separate webinar regarding special education and accommodations as they relate to PARCC and compliance on IEPs (in addition to the ones that have been provided)?
A: The Student Assessment Division and Division of Special Education Services are developing a joint webinar that will be available later this fall.
Q: What about students who do not attend their neighborhood schools because of an IEP placement? How do they take these tests?
A: The process for implementation of PARCC is the same as it was for ISAT/PSAE. The student’s home school is responsible for ensuring that student data is uploaded to SIS. The home school and the serving school should be in close communication regarding the individual student’s needs to ensure that the student receives the appropriate accessibility features and accommodations when taking the test.

Q: What if you don’t have Algebra II or Integrated Math III?
A: The New Illinois Learning Standards, adopted in 2010 by ISBE, contain standards to address Algebra II and Integrated Math III content. These standards should be taught in all high schools. The course in which these standards are taught would be the course in which students take the associated PARCC assessment.

Q: Are you assuming that ALL students in high school will take the Algebra II and ELA III assessments BEFORE they graduate?
A: All students should have access to all of the New Illinois Learning Standards, including those of Algebra II and those contained in an ELA III course. In this period of transition, we recognize that some students will not have the opportunity to take these courses or will have completed these courses prior to this spring. We are beginning the rulemaking process to address the transition to the new legislative requirements for the new assessments.

Q: How long are the actual tests in minutes?
A: The consortium has been analyzing the data from the field tests to determine what the actual testing time will be for the operational test. A final recommendation has not been made. As soon as the testing time is finalized, we will be communicating that information.

Q: There was a recent schedule change for when the PARCC PBA and EOC assessments are offered for schools operating under a block schedule. The assessment availability now spreads well into the second semester for first-semester students. Will ISBE alter the schedule to accommodate the school calendar of buildings under a block schedule?

Q: Has there been a discussion about the length of the PARCC assessment, in particular whether or not extended time should be allowed to all students and, if so, would it be reduced or omitted?
A: The consortium has been analyzing the data from the field tests to determine what the actual testing time will be for the operational test. A final recommendation has not been made. As soon as the testing time is finalized, we will be communicating that information.

Q: If a student repeats a class, would they take the EOC exam again?
A: The primary purpose for the PARCC assessments is as an accountability measure for schools and districts. Students will take the PARCC high school tests once for accountability purposes.
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Q: What is continuous improvement?
A: Continuous improvement is the process of engaging community stakeholders to:
   o Collect and analyze data;
   o Define district or school goals;
   o Identify management structures (e.g., leadership, data systems, resources, operations);
   o Research and implement effective strategies and activities to meet those goals, and;
   o Monitor and evaluate the success of that implementation.

Q: Who has to engage in continuous improvement?
A: ISBE expects all Illinois districts and schools to engage in a process of continuous improvement.

Q: Who must submit a plan to ISBE?
A: With the approval of Illinois’ ESEA Flexibility Waiver on April 18, 2014, all district improvement plans and school improvement plans required under the No Child Left Behind Act were waived. Under this approved waiver, planning obligations remain for districts and schools identified for priority and focus services.

Q: What are the requirements for districts and schools identified for priority services?
A: Districts are required to have their District Leadership Team (DLT) develop District Improvement Plans and schools must have transformation plans aligned to the seven federal turnaround principals.

Q: What are the deadlines for submitting transformation and intervention plans for priority schools and their districts?
A: At this time, districts with priority schools are using their District Leadership Teams, who are working with the Illinois Center for School Improvement (Illinois CSI), to meet planning obligations due to this identification.

Q: What are the requirements for districts and schools identified for focus services?
A: ISBE has not fully identified districts and schools for focus services. When the identification is made, Illinois CSI will work with those schools and districts regarding their plan submission requirements.

Q: Will there still be Title I, Title III and Response to Intervention (RtI) planning obligations and timelines for submitting plans?
A: If a district or school is required to submit a plan to ISBE for fiscal year 2015 in these areas, the Rising Star platform will be used. Please contact your specific program consultant with any questions.

Q: Can a district or school continue to use the Rising Star platform for planning?
A: ISBE will continue to maintain the Rising Star platform for continuous improvement planning, but there are no rules or requirements regarding the use or submission of plans as a result of Adequate Yearly Progress or Status under NCLB. Use of Rising Star is free to Illinois districts and schools electing to use the system.
Q: Can a district or school not identified for priority or focus services use a different continuous improvement planning system?
A: Yes.

Q: If a school or district not identified for priority or focus services uses a different continuous improvement planning system, how would the plans be submitted?
A: There is no requirement to submit plans unless the district and/or school are required to by priority or focus identification or through program-specific requirements.

Q: Where can I find the results of the Rising Star survey and focus groups that were convened by ISBE last year?

Q: Will resources and support still be available if my district or school chooses to continue to use the Rising Star platform for continuous improvement?
A: Yes. There are several online resources and archived webinars that can support ongoing efforts by districts and schools to use Rising Star. There are also trained providers in your local Regional Office of Education or Intermediate Service Centers to provide assistance or training, if needed.

Q: So we don't need to use Rising Star for our Title I funding process?
A: No. Title I funding is done through IWAS. Rising Star was also used for School Improvement, but that has been waived.

Q: Are schools that did not make AYP on the spring 2014 ISAT still required to participate in the Supplemental Education Services (SES) program this fall? I was told by someone at ISBE that SES might be put on hold due to the recent NCLB waiver and the fact that this past spring was the final administration of the ISAT.
A: No. SES as well as AYP has been waived.

5ESSENTIALS/REPORT CARD

Q: Will the classic IIRC continue to be maintained with 2014 data?
A: We are working to incorporate the features of classic IIRC into the new illinoisreportcard.com site. When all features have been migrated, we will shut the classic site down.

Q: Is 2013 5Essentials data FOIA-able?
A: Yes.

Q: Will results from alternatives to the 5Essential survey be included in the local School Report Cards?
A: Yes, the revised statute regarding the survey of learning conditions requires that the alternative survey results be posted on the School Report Card.
Q: Our district has not received the email regarding the 5Essential results. Who can we contact to gain access to review the results?
A: Please contact the Illinois 5Essentials help desk at 5essentials@uchicago.edu or 1 (866) 440-1874.

Q: When will the School Report Card be "opened" up so that principals can add school-level information?
A: We will open the principal data collection in early September. Please watch the Superintendent's Weekly Message, sent directly to superintendents and posted on the ISBE homepage each Monday or Tuesday.

OTHER

Q: Our area is concerned about making sure everyone is informed of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) assessment. Is the timeline for implementation still on track for 2015-16?
A: Yes. The Illinois KIDS assessment is on track to be implemented beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

Q: How will we now be testing science?
A: We are negotiating with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the science requirement of ESEA. We have proposed delaying implementation of a science assessment until teachers have familiarized themselves with the new science standards.

Q: When will the committees for social studies and the arts be created and how will committee members be selected?
A: Both committees are being selected now and the chairs of each will develop a list of members, to be approved by State Superintendent Koch. You can learn more at http://www.isbe.net/news/2014/aug27.htm.

Q: Are the PE standards ready for us to use?
A: Yes, they are being implemented in schools now.

Q: How are PE teachers, music teachers, PK, Title 1 reading teachers evaluated on student performance? What type of data is acceptable? Are their guidelines developed?
A: Teachers falling within these categories are evaluated with student growth in the same manner as other teachers. However, a Type I or Type II assessment may not be as applicable to this group as others. Consequently, these groups of teachers are more likely to use two Type III assessments to ascertain student growth. Per part 50 administrative rules, a “Type III assessment is an assessment that is rigorous, that is aligned to the course’s curriculum, and that the qualified evaluator and teacher determine measures student learning in that course” (see Section 50.110(b)(2) of this Part ). Teachers using these types of assessments are most likely to use student work samples, portfolios, performance tasks, or teacher created measures to establish student growth. This definition provides every category of educator with many options.

Guidance for such specialized areas of teaching is being explored.