



# Kankakee School District 111

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear parents and guardians,

As many of you are aware, Illinois students this past spring participated in a new state assessment, called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam, in English language arts and math. The PARCC assessment replaces the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and marks a significant change from these previous assessments.

The PARCC exam asks students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills, rather than reciting facts and filling in a bubble for the correct answer. The test lines up with the updated Illinois Learning Standards and measures students' problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and writing skills, which are abilities all students need to stay on track for college and career readiness after high school.

The new test also signals a change in how student performance will be reported. The PARCC exam score reports will show how each child performed on each portion of the test. It will also reveal their overall score, which will fall within one of five performance levels. Students whose scores fall within levels 1 or 2 require greater supports to understand content. Students receiving a 3 are approaching expectations, but may need additional assistance mastering content. Those who receive a 4 or 5 have shown a thorough understanding of grade-level content and are on track to be ready for college-level coursework. The reports will also allow you to compare how your student is doing compared to others in his/her school, district, or state.

As you review these reports, your child's scores, as well as the school and district averages, will look much different and may appear lower than what you typically expected on previous state assessments. It is important to remember that these score reports are not comparable to your child's previous scores on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT) or Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). The PARCC exam uses higher expectations for what it means for students to truly master content and grade-level standards. The 2015 PARCC test scores provide a new baseline to measure student progress going forward. These results do not mean our students know less or are less capable or that our schools are failing. Our schools are continuing to do great work to teach the updated learning standards and prepare our students for the demands of college and careers. We have simply raised the bar for the type of skills and knowledge students must possess before moving onto the next grade level.

As with any change, we anticipate some growing pains as students and teachers adjust to the new format of the PARCC exam and the higher expectations of the Illinois Learning Standards. We are confident that results will improve as they become more familiar with the test. Our staff will work hard to keep you informed about our progress as a district and will provide opportunities for discussion and feedback. Teachers are the experts about what is happening in their classrooms and are an invaluable resource for parents. I encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher(s) with any questions you may have about your child's score report or academic progress.

The purpose of the PARCC exam is to better help you and our teachers support your children's learning. Illinois students now face clear, consistent, and high expectations at each grade level. Families and educators will receive more accurate information about where students fall on the path to college and career readiness, in order to provide the appropriate supports at an earlier age. As this year is the first for PARCC testing, individual student results will not be released until later this fall. In subsequent years, we will have results available at the start of the school year so that interventions and support can be provided at the start of instruction.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that all students are prepared for success in college and beyond. The PARCC exam will be a valuable tool to make that goal a reality. No test provides a complete picture of student performance, and the PARCC exam results are simply one of many factors that we use to measure progress. We will continue to recognize and value the great teaching, innovation, leadership, commitment, and achievements that make our schools unique.

For more information about the PARCC exam and the latest updates on statewide assessments, visit [www.isbe.net/parcc-place/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/parcc-place/default.htm) or [www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm](http://www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm). And please feel free to contact us at 815-802-7728 with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to your child's academic growth and success.

Sincerely,

Laura Fisher  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Curriculum & Instruction

Julie Penrod  
Director of Enrichment Programs