



Avon School

www.AvonSchool.com

Lincoln and Fifth Avenues • Avon-by-the-Sea, NJ 07717
Phone: 732.775.4328 • Fax: 732.775.0761



February 26, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Last night, Avon School offered a Parent University course called: *Preparing for PARCC*. There was a great turnout for the presentation and shared conversation about the in-depth details related to required standardized assessment and the planning to prepare for this year's shift in process. I realize it just was not possible for all parents to attend; so this letter will serve to help relay important and timely information about the process.

As you are aware, we begin administering the state testing program next week (March window) and again later in the Spring (April/May window) to all students in Grades Three through Eight. This year's assessment introduces a minor shift in that students will participate via a computer-based interface. This new testing format is called the PARCC assessment ("Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers") and will replace the paper-and-pencil High School Proficiency Assessment and NJ ASK tests (except NJASK Science Grades Four and Eight). There will be no PARCC testing prior to Grade Three.

Avon School has prepared for the transition to PARCC by upgrading technology, working with staff who will administer the test, and preparing students for the conversion to a computer-based examination.

At each grade level, PARCC will measure student progress toward state standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. State academic standards are goals for what we want our children to know and be able to do at each grade level. The state standards to be measured by PARCC have been in place in our district for more than two years. They are called the Common Core State Standards. While these standards were recently adjusted, New Jersey's public schools have had standards-based education with standardized testing for more than two decades.

Please review the **What You Need To Know** section below that offers general information about the exam schedule, including testing time and participation. Rest assured that we have taken every step possible to ensure a smooth administration of the exam for the educational benefit of your children.

For your child, test-day preparation should include a good night's sleep, a nutritious breakfast, and arriving to school on time. Maintaining typical routines at home will help students to remain relaxed and confident in the skills they have been developing this school year. Encourage your child to do his or her best, but not to worry about "failing" the test. PARCC results will not be used for promotion or report card grades.

Sincerely,
Christopher Albrizio, *Superintendent/Principal*



Avon School

www.AvonSchool.com

Lincoln and Fifth Avenues • Avon-by-the-Sea, NJ 07717
Phone: 732.775.4328 • Fax: 732.775.0761



What You Need to Know: PARCC Assessment

How long will testing take?

The New Jersey Department of Education has set aside a total of 10 hours *per year* for PARCC testing. In comparison, our district offers more than 1,200 hours of instruction per school year. Most students are expected to complete PARCC testing in less than the 10 hours allotted. For example, statewide over half of students in Grades Six through Eleven are predicted to finish all PARCC testing in seven-and-a-half hours, while most third graders are expected to complete testing in six-and-a-half hours.

Last year’s administration of the Fourth Grade NJ ASK took five hours to seven-and-a-half hours. More time has been allocated for PARCC testing because the new assessments measure progress toward all of the standards, not just a sampling of standards as was the case with NJ ASK.

When will the state tests take place?

The PARCC tests will be administered to students in two windows: March and April/May. The March testing schedule is below.

March 2-6	PARCC - Grades 3, 4 and 5
March 9-23	PARCC - Grades 3, 4 and 5 Makeups
March 16-20	PARCC - Grades 6, 7 and 8
March 23-27	PARCC - Grades 6, 7 and 8 Makeups

How will the students take the test?

The PARCC tests are designed to be taken on a computer. The process mirrors the movement toward computer-based testing, mimicking college admissions tests and high school equivalency exams of the future. In our district, students will be using their classroom Chromebooks. Students will enter responses on the device, but will have pencil and paper handy to formulate responses beforehand if they choose to do so.

In March, each child will participate in five testing sessions of 60 to 90 minutes each. These tests include selected response items (multiple-choice, matching, etc.) in addition to written response items in which the children explain and “construct” their answers. While the tests will be taken on computers, children will have paper and pencil to use if they want to work out math problems or draft written answers before entering them on computers.



Avon School

www.AvonSchool.com

Lincoln and Fifth Avenues • Avon-by-the-Sea, NJ 07717

Phone: 732.775.4328 • Fax: 732.775.0761



In the April/May window, children will be given “end-of-year assessments,” comprised largely of selected response items that assess their learning for the entire school year. These tests will take place in two sessions per child. The PARCC test results will *not* be used to determine promotion or report card grades.

How will our schools use the PARCC results?

The PARCC results will enable our district to evaluate the effectiveness of its education program in Mathematics and English Language Arts and to consider adjustments. As has always been our district’s practice, state testing is only a small portion of our total program and will not be a significant factor in determining your child’s needs. The daily review of class work, portfolio assessments, District Benchmarking, parental input, and other test results are more important in determining your child’s specific academic program. More important than any one day performance snapshot is the overlap between the Social-Emotional (Affective and Conative) and Academic (Cognitive) domains of progress and growth.

For Teachers, PARCC is more in-depth than the previous state tests. It measures student progress toward *all* grade-level standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics, rather than just a sampling of the standards. The results will help teachers pinpoint areas in which an *individual student* needs more attention. PARCC results can also guide teachers to individualize instruction for *students who exceed* grade-level standards.

For parents, PARCC will provide individualized information on their children’s progress toward meeting academic standards.

Is PARCC a high-stakes test?

PARCC is no more “high-stakes” than New Jersey’s previous tests, the HSPA and the NJ ASK. It will not affect promotion, report card grades, or college admission. For students beginning college, however, PARCC testing can eliminate the need to take additional placement tests before they start freshman year studies. Public colleges in many states, including all public colleges in New Jersey, will accept the PARCC results for student placement purposes.

Student progress demonstrated through the PARCC exams will make up 10% of the information that goes into the evaluations of teachers in the subject areas and grade levels tested. Just as demonstrating proficiency on the HSPA has been a New Jersey high school graduation requirement for many years, PARCC will become a graduation requirement in 2017.

Could personal information about my child obtained through PARCC be sold?

No. Individual student results will remain confidential. Protections at the state and federal levels, and through all contracts and agreements, prevent student-identifiable data from being marketed or distributed. The selling of student data was never allowed in New Jersey under the NJ ASK or HSPA tests, and it is not allowed under the PARCC tests.