

Common Core and PARCC

Transitioning to the New Maryland Common Core State Curriculum and Next Generation Assessments

Maryland is striving to create a world-class education system that prepares all students for college and career success in the 21st century. To achieve this, the State has adopted rigorous, internationally benchmarked academic standards – the Common Core State Standards – and is implementing a new State curriculum and next generation assessments aligned to those standards.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of high quality academic expectations in English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics that define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level in order to be on track for success in college and career. The CCSS were created through a state-led initiative and have been voluntarily adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia. Maryland adopted the CCSS in June 2010 and in the years since has worked to translate those standards into a challenging and engaging curriculum – the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum.

A parallel effort has also been underway to develop a new assessment system that can measure the critical content and skills found in the CCSS. In spring 2010, Maryland became a Governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) – a consortium of 22 states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and Mathematics anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers.

The transition from the State's current curriculum content standards and the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) to the Common Core curriculum standards and the PARCC assessments will be complete by 2014-2015.



Business Support for Common Core

Over 70 top business leaders have proclaimed their support for the Common Core State Standards in an open letter appearing in *The New York Times* on February 12, 2013.

Leaders from companies including 3M, Intel, Time Warner Cable, and General Mills, signed on to express their support, writing:

"We support these new, tougher academic standards that are currently being rolled out in classrooms across the country. These standards will better prepare students for college and the workplace, something of critical importance to the nation's employers."

www.achievethecore.org/business-speaks-for-the-core

Transitioning to the CCSS in Maryland

The new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum will be fully implemented statewide in school year 2013-2014. In the years since adopting the CCSS, classroom educators, instructional leaders, administrators, and higher education representatives have provided critical assistance to State officials in the development of and transition to the new curriculum.

Maryland educators played a key role in the development of the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks, which define the essential skills and knowledge associated with the standards and are the foundation of the new curriculum, as well as sample units and lessons aligned to the CCSS in ELA and Mathematics.

Teams of teachers and the principal from every school in Maryland have also participated in the Educator Effectiveness Academies, which provide professional development on the State's new curriculum and other reform initiatives, and helped guide school teams in creating transition plans to implement the new curriculum in their schools.

In addition to the professional development initiated at the State level, local school systems have implemented their own strategies for transitioning to the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum and ensuring that their classroom educators are prepared to teach the new curriculum in the 2013-2014 school year.

Instructional Shifts in the CCSS

The CCSS ask teachers and students to dig deeper into the core skills and concepts for each grade level. This means that students will learn much more about fewer topics and teachers will have more time to cover subjects in greater detail – ultimately giving students an opportunity to really understand what is being taught.

Key Instructional Shifts of the Common Core State Standards:

Shifts in English/Language Arts (ELA)

These apply to English teachers as well as content area (Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects) teachers.

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts, in addition to literature.
2. Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text, both literary and informational.
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.

Shifts in Mathematics

1. Focus: Learn more about fewer, key topics in each grade.
2. Coherence: Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade.
3. Rigor: Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts.



Summer 2013 Educator Effectiveness Academies

The transition to the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum continues this summer with the 2013 Educator Effectiveness Academies.

In summer 2013, Maryland will hold 11 regional Educator Effectiveness Academies to provide professional development on the new curriculum, assessments, and evaluations to teams of educators from each of the State's 1,500 schools.

School teams consist of four representatives: the principal, and teachers of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and STEM. This year, a fifth team member will also participate on Academy day one and Academy day four to support cross-curricular discussions and implementations.

2013 Educator Effectiveness Academies Outcomes

- Build internal capacity to fully implement the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum;
- Understand the implications of the shifts in instruction for ELA and Mathematics, examine the PARCC resources, and apply best practices to maximize student learning;
- Develop a deep understanding of the CCSS for Literacy in History/Social Studies and in Science and Technical Subjects, and the cross-content connections in the application of complex texts and Disciplinary Literacy thinking skills;
- Build internal capacity for implementation of STEM education by developing an understanding of how Maryland State STEM Standards of Practice can be incorporated across all disciplines and how they are aligned with college- and career-ready standards;
- Develop an understanding of the structure, content, and resources available in the Race to the Top online portal that support implementation of ELA, Mathematics, STEM, and Disciplinary Literacy; and
- Create a school transition plan to guide school staff to fully implement the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum, STEM education, and the Teacher and Principal Evaluation System.

Next Generation Science Standards

In April 2013, the final version of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) was released – a new set of voluntary, rigorous, and internationally benchmarked standards for K-12 science education. Maryland is one of the 26 states that have worked together to lead the effort to draft these new stronger standards for science education.

The goal has been to develop standards identifying science and engineering practices and content that all K-12 students should master in order to be fully prepared for college, careers, and citizenship.

The NGSS are based on the Framework for K-12 Science Education, developed by the National Research Council, and are grounded in a sound, evidence-based foundation of current scientific research – including research on the ways students learn science effectively – and identify the science all K-12 students should know.

To view the NGSS, go to: www.nextgenscience.org/



"With the State of Maryland playing the role of one of the lead states in the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards, we are poised to place the already considerable achievement of the state on a path toward excellence as measured on an international scale."

- **Dr. S. James Gates**, University System of Maryland Regents Professor, John S. Toll Professor of Physics, Director of the Center for String and Particle Theory at the University of Maryland, and member of the State Board of Education

Advances in the Next Generation Science Standards

- Every NGSS standard has three dimensions: disciplinary core ideas (content), scientific and engineering practices, and cross-cutting concepts. The integration of rigorous content and application reflects how science and engineering is practiced in the real world.
- Scientific and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts are designed to be taught in context – not in a vacuum. The NGSS encourage integration with multiple core concepts throughout each year.
- Science concepts build coherently across K-12. The emphasis of the NGSS is a focused and coherent progression of knowledge from grade band to grade band, allowing for a dynamic process of building knowledge throughout a student's entire K-12 scientific education.
- The NGSS focus on a smaller set of Disciplinary Core Ideas that students should know by the time they graduate from high school, focusing on deeper understanding and application of content.
- Science and engineering are integrated into science education by raising engineering design to the same level as scientific inquiry in science classroom instruction at all levels, and by emphasizing the core ideas of engineering design and technology applications.
- The NGSS content is focused on preparing students for college and careers. The NGSS are aligned, by grade level and cognitive demand, with the ELA and Mathematics CCSS. This allows an opportunity both for science to be a part of a child's comprehensive education as well as ensuring an aligned sequence of learning in all content areas.

About the PARCC Assessment

Better standards require better tests – and the shifts in the CCSS call for critical advances in assessment quality. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), of which Maryland is a Governing Member, is developing a common set of K-12 assessments aligned to the CCSS in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. The computer-based assessments will be able to measure the higher order skills outlined in the new standards, such as critical thinking, communicating effectively, and problem solving.

PARCC's Vision is to:

- **Build a pathway to college and career readiness for all students:** students who score proficient on the assessments will know they are on track for the next steps in their education. High school students will receive an early signal about whether they are ready for entry-level, non-remedial courses at post-secondary institutions in all PARCC states.
- **Create better assessments:** having a mix of items – short answer, longer open response and performance-based, in addition to richer multiple choice items – will enable PARCC to create assessments that better reflect the full range of content and skills found in the CCSS.
- **Support educators in the classroom:** PARCC will support educators by providing teachers with the tools they need to be successful. These tools – created with and for educators – will include content frameworks, sample assessment tasks, and sample instructional units. Professional development, including educator-led training on the new assessments as well as professional development on how to interpret and use the assessment results, will be developed and made available online.
- **Make better use of technology in assessments:** PARCC's approach includes producing timely snapshots of students' knowledge, giving parents and students better information and teachers the ability to adjust instruction and student supports accordingly.
- **Advance accountability at all levels:** PARCC will support the ability of states to develop dynamic accountability systems that meet multiple needs, including state and federal requirements.



PARCC: Assessment Advances

The PARCC assessments are being designed to measure the full range of the CCSS and full continuum of student abilities, including the performance of high and low achieving students. The new assessments will test writing skills at every grade level, and critical-thinking and problem-solving skills in an in-depth manner.

In regards to ELA/Literacy assessments, this means PARCC will include:

- Texts worth reading – the assessments will use authentic texts worthy of study instead of artificially produced or commissioned passages.
- Questions worth answering – sequences of questions that draw students into deeper encounters with texts will be the norm, rather than sets of random questions of varying quality.

In regards to the Mathematics assessments, this means PARCC will include:

- Problems worth doing – multi-step problems, conceptual questions, applications, and substantial procedures will be common.
- Focus – instead of randomly sampling a mile-wide array of topics, the PARCC assessments will have a strong focus where the CCSS focus. This will reinforce the concept of “going deep” rather than simply “covering topics.”



Components of the PARCC Assessment

To effectively carry out the PARCC design, assessments in both content areas will be administered in two components:

1. A performance-based assessment (PBA) component, administered after approximately 75% of the school year, and
2. An end of year assessment (EOY) component, administered after approximately 90% of the school year.

PARCC ELA/Literacy Assessments:

The ELA/Literacy PBA assessments at each grade level will include three tasks: a research simulation, a literary analysis, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read one or more texts, answer several short comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the texts.

The ELA/Literacy EOYs at each grade level will include four to five texts, both literary and informational. A number of short-answer comprehension and vocabulary questions will also be associated with each text.

PARCC Mathematics Assessments:

The Mathematics PBAs at each grade level will include both short- and extended-response questions focused on conceptual knowledge and skills, and the mathematical practices of reasoning and modeling.

The Mathematics EOY assessments will be comprised of primarily short answer questions focused on conceptual knowledge, skills and understandings.

Scoring the PARCC Assessments

Annual combined results from the summative components will be reported back to states, districts, and schools in time for information about each student's progress toward college- and career-readiness to be included on their report card. PARCC states will adopt a common set of performance standards and scoring rubrics so results will be comparable across states.

It is important to remember that this is a brand new assessment system with a new way of scoring. Therefore, it will not be possible to directly compare the new PARCC assessment scores with the old MSA scores. New academic standards are being measured in new ways, so the students' results will be different from the previous reports they have received.

Technology and the PARCC Assessments

The expectation is that 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. Paper-based tests will be offered on a selective, limited basis only to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEP) require them or in circumstances where states permit local school systems to "qualify by exception" if they lack the capacity.



PARCC's Educator Leader Cadre program is aimed at helping member states build a network of educators with expertise on the CCSS and PARCC who can become leaders in their states and among their peers as these initiatives are implemented. Maryland's Educator Leader Cadre is comprised of educators from K-12 and Higher Education, including teachers of ELA/Literacy, Mathematics, Science, STEM, Social Studies, and with expertise working with students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and Gifted and Talented students, in addition to state, district, and school leaders. Through face-to-face and virtual meetings, the Cadres share best practices for the implementation and use of PARCC materials, review instructional resources, and learn to become active leaders in state and local implementation efforts.

PARCC Assessment Timeline

2013-2014

Field testing of the PARCC assessments and related research and data collection

- All local school systems will have an opportunity to participate in some aspect of the field testing of the new assessment system
- MSA Reading and Mathematics assessments are administered in grades 3-8
- HSA is administered in Biology, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and English 10

2014-2015

Full operational administration of the PARCC assessments

- MSA Reading and Mathematics assessments are discontinued
- PARCC ELA and Mathematics assessments are administered in grades 3-8
- PARCC English and Mathematics assessments administered for high school students
- HSA continues in Biology and Government

Summer 2015

Set achievement levels, including college-ready performance levels, for PARCC assessments

Follow these Links to Learn More about Common Core and PARCC

Background

Learn why the CCSS and PARCC assessments are needed, from Achieve:

<http://www.achieve.org/college-and-career-readiness>

And for more about college and career readiness, visit Achieve's Future Ready Project:

<http://www.futurereadyproject.org/college-and-career-readiness>

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

MSDE's Common Core page: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/ccss/>

The Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks - the foundation of the State's new curriculum:

<http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html>

Learn the Key Points in the CCSS:

- Key Points in ELA: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/key-points-in-english-language-arts>
- Key Points in Mathematics: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/key-points-in-mathematics>

Read the full Common Core State Standards in ELA and Mathematics:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

FAQs about the CCSS: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

Visit the PARCC website: <http://www.parcconline.org/>

The PARCC Model Content Frameworks serve as a bridge between the CCSS and PARCC assessments:

<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks>

See what assessment questions will look like by viewing the PARCC Item and Task Prototypes:

<http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>

Refer to the PARCC Timeline for Future Guidance to learn when more information will be released:

http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCCommunicationsTimeline_March%202013_FINAL_0.pdf

PARCC resources specifically for K-12 educators: <http://www.parcconline.org/K12-educators>

PARCC Facts at a Glance for K-12 Educators:

<http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/FactsAtAGlance-K-12%26PARCC-2011.pdf>

Learn about Maryland's role in PARCC:

<http://www.parcconline.org/maryland>

For the latest news from PARCC:

<http://www.parcconline.org/news>



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Maryland Classroom

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Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *State Superintendent of Schools*

Charlene M. Dukes, *President, State Board of Education*

Martin O'Malley, *Governor*

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Maryland State Department of Education,
200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.
Phone: 410.767.0425 • TTY/TTD: 410.333.6442 • Fax: 410.333.2226

If you have any questions or comments about this publication, please contact 410.767.0484.