



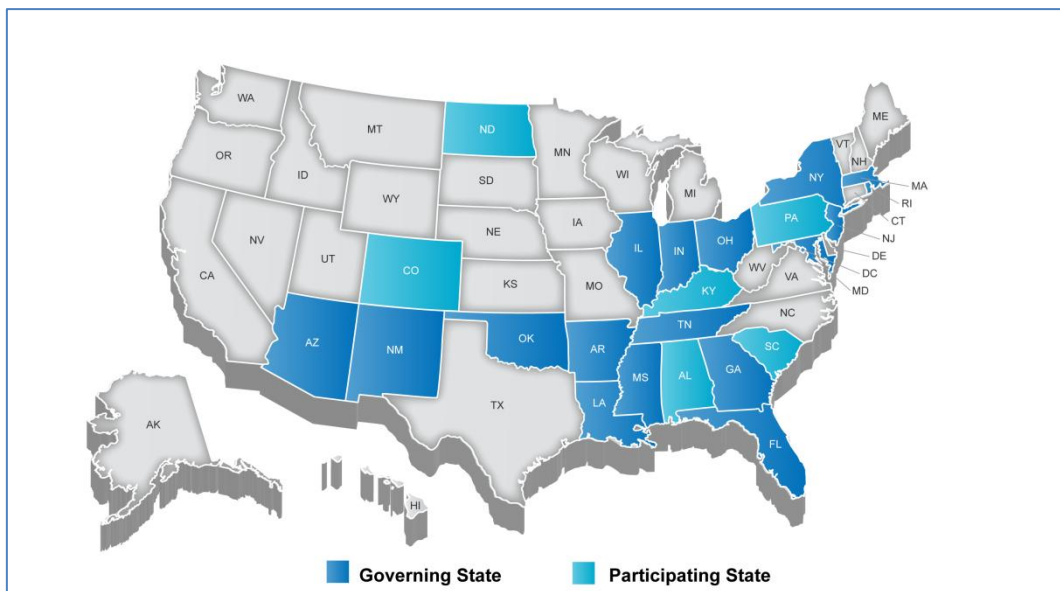
## Career and College Readiness for the Next Generation

PARCC is an alliance of 24 states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and mathematics, anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. The CCSS call on students to have not only solid content knowledge but also the skills to apply their knowledge in ways demanded by colleges, careers and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Measuring the full breadth of the CCSS will require new kinds of tests that measure what matters for students' futures. Moving to such an assessment system will require re-imagining assessments as we know them.

The next-generation assessment system envisioned by PARCC will have several benefits not found in current assessment systems including benefits to: **students**, who will know if they are on track to graduate ready for college and careers; **teachers**, who will receive regular results to guide learning and instruction; **parents** who will have clear and timely information about the progress of their children; **states** who will have valid results that are comparable across the member states, and; **the nation**, since the assessments are based on the college- and career-ready, internationally-benchmarked CCSS.

### The PARCC States

State-based collaboration is the hallmark of PARCC, and collectively these states educate about 25 million students. PARCC is state-led and a subset of 18 PARCC states makes up its Governing Board. PARCC is managed by Achieve, a nonprofit group with a 15-year track record of working with states to improve student achievement.



### Our Vision

PARCC's assessments will yield significant advantages for educators, state policymakers, and most importantly, parents and students. PARCC assessments will measure what matters – the full range of the content and skills called for in the English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics Common Core State Standards. Students will take parts of the assessment at key times during the school year – closer to when they actually learn the material – giving teachers more timely information so they can adjust instruction and student supports as appropriate throughout the school year. PARCC assessments will also be computer based in order to maximize technology and deliver faster turnaround of student results. PARCC's high school assessments will be

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developed in collaboration with higher education and will tell students whether or not they are ready for entry-level college courses. Finally, states in PARCC will adopt common performance standards that will allow policymakers to compare results within and across states to identify pockets of innovation and achievement.

### **PARCC's Vision is to:**

- 1. Build a Pathway to College and Career Readiness for All Students.** Anchoring the assessments in college and career readiness by the end of high school will create a more meaningful target for students. Students who score proficient on the assessments will know they are on track for the next steps in their education. In high school, students will receive an early signal about whether they are ready for entry-level, non-remedial courses at postsecondary institutions in all PARCC states. Targeted interventions and supports will be created so that students can fill missing gaps and graduate from high school ready for postsecondary education while they are still in high school. Postsecondary partners in PARCC – more than 200 institutions and systems covering hundreds campuses across the country – will help develop the high school assessments.
- 2. 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 ELA and math CCSS. Testing at key points throughout the year will give teachers, parents and students better information about whether students are “on track” or need some additional support in particular areas. This is how many good classrooms function already; what’s different about the PARCC vision is that these high-quality assessments – and the instructional tools and supports to back them up – will be available in all classrooms, in every state, for the benefit of every student.
- 3. Support K-12 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 model content frameworks, model instructional units, and sample item and task prototypes. The timely student achievement data on tests given throughout the year will be designed and reported with teachers in mind so they can maximize their use. Finally, 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.
- 4. Make Better Use of Technology in Assessments.** Traditionally, assessments have been pencil-and-paper/fill-in-the-bubble tests administered once a year. But these days, faster and more affordable technology makes it easier than ever to offer computer-based assessments at key moments throughout the school year. This is PARCC’s approach – producing timely snapshots of students’ knowledge, giving parents and students better information and teachers the ability to adjust instruction and student supports accordingly.
- 5. Advance Accountability at All Levels.** Creating common assessments grounded in common standards is the logical next step to ensure that *all* students get the knowledge and skills they need. Many PARCC states intend to use the assessments to inform accountability in a way that is not possible now. PARCC will support the ability of states to develop robust accountability systems that meets multiple needs, including state and federal requirements. States will also be able to get an accurate view of how they stack up against one another.

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### **What's Next?**

The PARCC blueprint includes an ambitious timeline to develop and deploy new common assessments. States in the Partnership will see increasing levels of activity between now and fall 2014 when new assessments are fully launched.

- ✓ 2010-11 School Year: Launch and design phase
- 2011-12 School Year: Development begins
- 2012-13 School Year: First year pilot/field testing and related research and data collection
- 2013-14 School Year: Second year pilot/field testing and related research and data collection
- **2014-15 School Year: Full operational administration of PARCC assessments**
- Summer 2015: Set achievement levels, including college-ready performance levels