



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** John B. King, Jr.

**SUBJECT:** Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment Design and Development Update

**DATE:** January 26, 2011

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Discussion**

Update on the design and development of the PARCC assessments.

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Review of Policy.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the February 2011 meeting.

#### **Background Information**

In December 2009, the Regents approved a proposed process for review and adoption of the Common Core Standards. Also in December 2009, the Regents approved recommendations to redesign the New York State Assessment Program to include the development of formative, interim and summative assessments in ELA and mathematics; make the grades 3-8 test more comprehensive and integrate computer-based assessments with the Science testing program; and make long-term changes to the Regents Testing Program by adding English (9 & 10) and Social Studies (splitting 9 & 10) exams, and including curriculum frameworks and matched assessments in the Arts, Economics and Multi-media/computer technology.

In January, 2010, the Regents endorsed the participation of New York State in the 25-state Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is a consortium of states that worked together on a joint proposal to

USDE to seek Race to the Top funding for the development of a K-12 assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics.

In June, 2010, PARCC submitted a \$170 million proposal to USDE, and in September 2010, PARCC was awarded these funds, as well as a Supplemental Grant for \$15.8 million (see section on Governing Board for more information on the Supplemental award). Achieve, Inc. is the managing partner for PARCC; the state of Florida is the fiscal agent; and New York serves as one of 13 governing states.

The PARCC assessment system is scheduled to be operational in 2014-15.

### Update

In December 2010, Achieve convened three groups to commence PARCC assessment design and development: the Assessment Design and Development Team, the Leadership Team, and the Governing Board. A brief description of each team and meeting follows.

The **Assessment Design and Development Team**, which includes representatives from all 26 participating states in the PARCC Consortium (including all Leadership Team members), met to review and provide feedback on the guiding principles of the PARCC assessment design. These guiding principles were extracted from the PARCC proposal.

### General Principles

- Standards drive assessment. The Common Core State Standards define the scope and nature of what is to be measured<sup>1</sup>.
- The goal of the assessment system is to improve student learning.
- The assessment system will be fair and valid for its intended purposes.
- Reporting is not an afterthought. Test results are not information until they are received and understood by the relevant audience. Improved learning requires that information be timely and acted upon wisely.

### Design Principles

The assessment system as a whole will:

- Model work worth doing in classrooms in order to promote high-quality student work and student learning.
- Accurately measure student achievement across a wide performance spectrum.
- Accurately measure student growth across a wide performance spectrum.

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<sup>1</sup>The New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (approved by the Board of Regents, January 2011) include the Common Core Standards. Some of the supplemental standards added to the Common Core Standards by New York State will be assessed by the PARCC assessments because of overlap with assessment of the Common Core Standards. The NYS Common Core Learning Standards will also be assessed via formative assessments to be designed and developed through our RTTT funding. Some NYS Common Core Learning Standards can only be assessed by the classroom teacher.

- Attribute student growth fairly to individual teachers.
- Satisfy logistical demands including timing of results, as detailed in the proposal.
- Be scalable and sustainable from a cost perspective.

## Purpose

Assessment results will be used to:

- Guide instruction and intervention and improve teaching and learning.
- Identify professional development needs and additional program supports.
- Inform determinations of teacher and school leader effectiveness for accountability purposes.
- Inform determinations of school effectiveness for accountability purposes.
- Inform student placement into entry-level, credit-bearing college courses.
- Provide for valid state to state comparisons and information for international benchmarking, while also allowing individual states to fulfill additional specific purposes, such as informing decisions about high school graduation, etc.

Draft assessment frameworks for ELA and Math that were authored by the writers of the Common Core Standards were also shared with the state representatives for feedback.

The **Leadership Team**, which is comprised of the assessment lead from each of the 13 Governing States, met to determine next steps based on the feedback from the Assessment Design and Development Team. (Note: All Leadership Team members are also members of the Assessment Design and Development Team.) The Leadership Team decided to form a small working group, comprised of representatives from four states, to draft options and recommendations on several assessment design issues on which sufficient consensus is needed in the near-term to draft and release an RFP for prototype task development in the spring. New York serves on the working group.

The **Governing Board**, which is comprised of the Chiefs in each of the Governing States, also met. A primary point of discussion was how to most effectively and efficiently leverage over **\$15 million in supplemental funds** awarded to PARCC. See Appendix A for details on the plans to use these funds to support transition and implementation of the Common Core curricula and assessments.

The second main point of discussion for the Governing Board was how to most effectively and authentically include higher education representatives in the design and development of the high school assessments. To this end, PARCC is funding a meeting in February of the higher education leads from each state, as well as two additional higher education faculty and two additional secondary faculty to meet together with Leadership Team representatives to discuss preliminary assessment design issues for the high school assessments. New York's Higher Education Leads for PARCC are Nancy Willie-Schiff (SUNY) and David Crook (CUNY).

## Next Steps

New York is participating in two small working groups, each facilitated by Achieve, Inc., and comprised of representatives from a few select states, Student Achievement Partners, Inc. (i.e., authors of the Common Core standards), and Center for Assessment. The two working groups are focused, respectively, on (a) drafting the RFP for prototype assessment design and development and (b) prioritized content and sequence for Common Core ELA and Math. An update on the assessment design options will be presented for discussion and Regents input at the February meeting.

## Appendix A

### PARCC Supplemental Grant

#### **1. Strategic planning for the implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments**

##### A. Multi-State Transition and Implementation Strategic Planning Institutes

- ▶ Leadership teams of state and district leaders from PARCC states will receive support to develop and execute strategic transition and implementation plans.
- ▶ Two annual multi-state convenings for leadership teams to focus on common policy decisions, challenges, and milestones and to develop and monitor progress against strategic plan.
- ▶ Regular webinars on specific high-priority topics in between convenings to help all states continue to make progress towards implementation.

##### B. Multi-State Technical Working Groups

- ▶ Limited set of working groups organized for small number of key state and/or local officials to work on focused transition and implementation challenges.
- ▶ Potential topics might include: modifying state assessment blueprints, using PARCC assessments in teacher evaluations, or aligning instructional and curricular tools to CCSS and PARCC.
- ▶ 6-8 states in each group; every PARCC state invited to participate in at least 1 group.

##### C. Multi-State Support to Build Educator Leadership Cadres

- ▶ Convene K-12 educators from across PARCC states to be trained in the CCSS and PARCC, to use the PARCC tools as they are developed and released, and to be leaders in the state on the standards and assessments.
- ▶ Goal is to help each state increase the size of its educator leadership cadre through a series of "train the trainer" meetings on a strategic set of topics tied to the PARCC tools or through other ways of linking cadre members to existing professional development networks in the state.
- ▶ PARCC states will need to deploy these educator leaders throughout the state to help train other educators and to build awareness of and grow support for CCSS and PARCC assessments throughout the broader educator community.

#### **2. Development of model curricular and instructional tools combined with multi-state support to build leadership cadres of educators who are trained in the use of those tools, in the CCSS, and in the PARCC assessments.**

##### A. Develop a framework to guide decisions about highest priority tool set

- ▶ May include a mix of instructional, formative assessment, professional development and communication tools, for use by teachers, students and administrators.
- B. Goal is to focus tool development on set of robust, high-quality model instructional units that highlight most significant advances in the CCSS and PARCC assessments.
- ▶ Each unit would include a coherent set of priority tools.
  - ▶ Sets of tools would be strategically selected to address priority standards for the through-course assessments, standards most foundational, and standards that will require the greatest “stretch” for teachers and students.
- C. PARCC Governing State RTTT winners have agreed to explore coordinating the use of their RTTT resources with each other and with PARCC resources, to produce a coherent, complete set of tools from which all states could benefit.
- D. Desire to develop prototypes of through-course assessments as rapidly as possible to start testing out the components in real classrooms and to inform ongoing development of PARCC tools and assessments.