



West Orange Public Schools
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Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Jeffrey Rutzky



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Dear Parents and Guardians:

As part of the No Child Left Behind legislation, all schools with students in grades 3 through 12 are required to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In order to attain AYP, a school must ensure that annual state assessments are taken by at least 95% of the students enrolled in each grade and subgroup (special education, English language learners, economically disadvantaged and ethnicity).

In February 2014, the New Jersey State Board of Education passed a resolution confirming that district boards of education are obligated to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) to “ensure students meet the expectations and proficiency standards as measured by current and future State and local assessments.”

At the State Board of Education meeting last month, the Standards Review Committee, created at the direction of Governor Christie, presented its report and recommendations. The Committee’s recommendation is to retain the Common Core State Standards with minor recommendations to wording of certain standards and some movement of specific standards in the area of K-2 English Language Arts. There were no grade level placement changes to the math standards. Therefore, the essence of the Common Core State Standards will remain as the adopted standards in New Jersey.

The Study Commission on the Use of Student Assessments in New Jersey presented its final report in January. This report contains a series of 49 separate recommendations. Most importantly, the Commission recommended that the State of New Jersey continue its involvement with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium and continue the use of the PARCC as the state assessment. The Class of 2021 (current grade 7) would be required to pass the PARCC. In sum, State law and regulations require that all students take State assessments.

Parents must understand that the 2016 PARCC results may be used in making decisions with regard to class placements and honors programs. All high school students must satisfy a testing requirement for graduation. While the New Jersey Department of Education does allow students to satisfy this requirement by attaining a certain score on other standardized tests, it is important to note that the PARCC satisfies graduation requirements.

It is important to review the New Jersey High School Graduation Requirements to ensure that your child has met the graduation requirement prior to having your child refuse to take the PARCC. Unfortunately, there are current grade 12 students who refused to take the PARCC last year and have not yet met the graduation requirement. By simply taking and passing the PARCC, this distraction would not exist for any grade 12 students.

The PARCC assessment provides a detailed profile of student achievement. This data will be used by teachers in developing an instructional program that will best meet the needs of their students. Teachers will be able to clearly identify those areas where students have mastered the standards and those areas where proficiency has not yet been attained.

Since the New Jersey Department of Education requires student participation in these assessments, there is no approved “opt out” by which parents can elect to have their child(ren) exempt from taking the test.

For Elementary and Middle School Students

If parents refuse to allow their child in grades 3-8 to take the PARCC assessments, the refusal letter must be submitted to the principal with the name of the child(ren), daytime phone number, signed by the parent in a sealed envelope. Emails will not be accepted. This notice of a refusal to test must be submitted no later than Monday, March 21, 2016. If refusing, please notify the building principal as early as possible to enable the district to make the necessary entries into the PARCC system and establish testing logistics for the building.

For High School Students currently enrolled in English 9, 10, 11; Algebra 1 & 2, and Geometry

If parents refuse to allow their child in grades 9-12 to take the PARCC assessments, the refusal letter must be submitted to the child’s counselor only during lunch or after school. Please include the name of the child(ren), daytime phone number, signed by the parent in a sealed envelope. Emails will not be accepted. This notice of a refusal to test must be submitted no later than Monday, March 21, 2016. If refusing, please notify the counselor as early as possible to enable the district to make the necessary entries into the PARCC system and establish testing logistics for the building.

The district considers the administration of the PARCC assessment to be our curriculum for those days when testing is scheduled. There will be no alternate instruction or curriculum for those students refusing to test. Students who submitted a refusal letter will meet in another room within the building to read for the duration of the testing time. This will provide a testing environment that will not distract the students taking the test.

Please understand that I do not support PARCC refusal and encourage all parents to have their child take the PARCC.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Rutzky
Superintendent of Schools