
MAKING THE TRANSITION TO COMPUTER-BASED TESTING



Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner
Arkansas Department of Education
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WHAT WE KNOW: COMPUTER-BASED TESTING IN PARCC STATES

State	First Year Offered	Some /All Mandatory
Delaware	2010	✓
Florida	2006	✓
Georgia	2003, 2010	
Indiana	2006	✓
Louisiana	2006	
Maryland	2007	
Mississippi	2004	
Oklahoma	2007	✓
Rhode Island	2008	✓
South Carolina	2005	
Tennessee	2009	✓



What We Know: PARCC States with Mandatory Online Testing

Delaware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-Course: English II, Algebra I, Integrated Math I, Biology, U.S. History • Mathematics Grades 2-10 • Reading Grades 2-10 • Science Grades 5, 8, & 10 • Social Studies Grades 4 & 7
Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCAT Reading and Mathematics Retakes; FCAT 2.0 Reading Retake • FCAT 2.0 Grade 10 Reading • FCAT 2.0 Grade 6 Reading • End-of-Course Algebra I, 1, Biology 1, Geometry, US History Field Test • Postsecondary Placement (ISS) and Diagnostic: Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, College Algebra, Developmental Reading, Developmental Writing, Freshman Composition
Indiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acuity Diagnostics Assessments (Grades 3-8) • ISTEP+ Mathematics, English/Language arts, Science and Social Studies (Grades 3-8) • HS End of Course Assessments (Algebra I, English 10, Biology)
Oklahoma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-Instruction (EOI): Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English II, English III, Biology I, and U.S. History • Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT): Grades 7 & 8 Mathematics and Reading
Rhode Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th Grade TechLiteracy Assessment
Tennessee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway Exams: Mathematics, Language Arts, and Science



Essential Lessons: Learning from States That Have Made the Transition

“Planning for Failure”:

Must plan for anything that could go wrong during test administration
Set up processes for troubleshooting any technical issues that arise in local schools and districts

All schools should complete a survey or readiness checklist:

Communicates to schools what is necessary for the transition
Provides information to state education agencies about any gaps
Helps hold schools accountable for key actions necessary to making the transition

Create a specific and targeted communication plan:

Tailor messages to key audiences (including local technology coordinators and test administrators, parents, teachers)
Inform key stakeholders about the transition to computer-based assessments, but also create enthusiasm about the change



Essential Lessons: Learning from States That Have Made the Transition

Schools must balance using technology for assessment versus for instructional purposes

Not a new challenge in many states, and creative solutions are needed
Area where states and districts need more support to problem solve

Building infrastructure is challenging, but not impossible:

Local and state leaders must be creative and find ways to leverage existing resources

Planning will not end after the first year:

Implementation is an agile and ongoing process

“Debriefs” for SEA’s and key stakeholder groups after each test administration to identify priority issue and annual check-ins with schools to see what the needs are moving forward



Emerging Practices: Florida

Certification Tool:

Before the launch of computer-based testing, Florida required schools to complete an online certification

Helps the school prepare for the upcoming assessment administration

Informs the Department of Education about any gaps in technology

School & District Action Plans:

Schools with any technology gaps were required to submit action plans to the Department of Education

This held schools accountable for the transition to computer-based assessment, but also helped the Department of Education target assistance



PARCC Technology Readiness Audit Tool

PARCC released a joint RFP with SBAC to create a tool that will:

- Collect technology information at the school level in “real time”;
- Aggregate that data to district, state, and consortium level; and
- Rate technology “readiness” at each level and track progress to readiness over time.

Timeline:

- ✓ RFP Posted 5/23/11
 - ✓ Proposals Due 6/22/11
- Vendor selected Fall 2011
December 31, 2011 – Delivery of Phase 1



PARCC Technology Specifications

This Technology Guidance **is**:

Meant to be used as guidelines for PARCC states and districts to plan instructional technology hardware purchases in the near future that will meet assessment requirements, and to evaluate existing hardware

Designed to guide new purchases, but machines should exceed these minimums

Serve as an absolute floor for evaluating currently existing instructional technology

Designed to be broad enough to fit all types of machines.

This Technology Guidance **is not**:

A recommendation of what specific devices schools and districts should purchase; or

Recommendations about software, browser, network, or bandwidth requirements.



PARCC Technology Specifications: Draft Minimum Hardware Guidance

	Processor Speed	RAM	Available Disk Space	Resolution	Display Size
Minimum	1.0 GHz	1 GB	1 GB	1024x768	10" min

These minimum specifications are equivalent to running Windows 7 on a computer.



PARCC Technology Specifications: Rolling Out to Districts

Milestone	Date
Preliminary Hardware Guidance	October 2011
PARCC Recommended Hardware Specifications	December 2011
Technology Readiness Audit Tool	January 2012
Bandwidth and Network Specifications	Fall 2012



Fall 2011 PARCC Procurements

Technology Needs Assessment (Joint SBAC/PARCC)

Technology Architecture Services, Interoperability Standards Development Services, and Systems Implementation Services

Operational Item Development

Text Complexity Tool

Educator Leader Cadres

ESEA FLEXIBILITY: AN OVERVIEW



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USDE OFFERS FLEXIBILITY

The ESEA waiver offers the **opportunity** to request flexibility on behalf of the State, Districts, and Schools to better focus on

*improving educational outcomes,
closing achievement gaps, and
increasing the quality of instruction.*

This flexibility will build on and support the significant State and District **reform efforts** already underway.



The Big Picture

In exchange for state action in *each of 3 key areas*:

1. College and career-ready standards and assessments
2. Differentiated statewide accountability systems
3. Educator evaluation based in part on effectiveness at growing student learning

AND

A FOURTH AREA – *Reduction in duplicative, burdensome reporting and administrative requirements that have little impact on student achievement, then...*



The Big Picture

The Administration will waive key accountability provisions of NCLB, including

- Current AYP goals (100% by 2014)
- Required school improvement activities (identification/notification, choice, SES, restructuring, etc.)
- Required district improvement activities including identification/notification



Standards and Assessments

Implement college and career-ready standards in at least ELA and math by 2013-14

- Common Core, or
- Standards that have been validated by state institutions of higher education as meeting the requirements for entry into credit-bearing, non-remedial entry-level coursework

Implement assessments aligned with those standards by 2014-15

- Assessment Consortia (PARCC or SBAC), or
- State-developed assessments



Accountability

By 2012-13, implement a statewide system of differentiated accountability that includes:

1. New goals for student performance on college and career-ready standards for all districts, schools, and groups

Options include:

- Cut in half the difference between current proficiency rates and 100% in six years, overall and for each group,
- 100% proficiency by 2020, or
- Other “similarly ambitious” goals—looking for innovative models



Accountability

2. Identification and action in, three specific school types:

Priority schools – the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools, Title I high schools with grad rates below 60%, or current SIG schools

- Current SIG recipients must continue one of the four turnaround models
- Other Priority Schools don't need to do one of the turnaround models, but must engage in turnaround by hiring high performing staff, giving staff autonomy, and examining use of time and curriculum

Focus schools – 10% of Title I schools with the biggest achievement gaps and/or lowest subgroup achievement

- Must intervene on behalf of low-performing students

Reward schools – high performers and big improvers

- Eligible for financial rewards and other incentives



Teachers and Principals

Demonstrate a plan for evaluation systems for teachers and principals that includes:

- At least 3 tiers of differentiation (ratings)
- Evidence of growth in student learning as a significant portion of the evaluation
- Multiple measures of teacher/leader practice
- Plan to use evaluation results to
 - Help improve instruction*
 - Inform personnel decisions*



Teachers and Principals

Submit a timeline for implementation that meets the following criteria:

- Pilot of the new evaluation system by 2013-14
 - As part of pilot, teachers must receive data on their impact on student learning
 - Data will not count as part of evaluation
- Full implementation of the evaluation system by 2014-15



Teachers and Principals

- Highly qualified teacher provisions remain in place
- States are not exempt from the requirement to ensure equitable distribution of experienced, in-field and certified teachers
- When states and districts move to new evaluation systems, they can use the results of these systems to meet this requirement



Other Waiver Request Components

Flexibility for:

- Rural LEAs receiving Rural School Achievement Program funds
- Transfer of Certain Federal Funds to Title I
- 21st Century Learning Community funds



Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder consultation is a major requirement of the waiver request

Opportunities for meaningful engagement and input in shaping the waiver request must come from:

- Federal Programs Committee of Practitioners
- Teachers and Leaders
- Other stakeholders, including such groups as students, business and community organizations, and representatives of students with disabilities, among others.



Other Information

- No limit on the number of waivers granted
- All state applications will be peer-reviewed
- First round of applications will be due November 14th, with decisions made before the end of the year
- Second round of applications will be due in mid-February with Spring 2012 decisions
- USDE has pledged a collaborative process for refinement of waiver requests
- Waivers will last through 2013-14, with Department review and possibility for additional flexibility at that time.



USDE Concluding Thoughts:

The waiver process gives the states the opportunity to set higher standards, define accountability, and address plans to improve low-performing schools and reward those doing well.

The waiver plan allows for the right balance between the states and the federal government.

The process allows states a much greater role in setting expectations and aligning resources.

States have been demanding greater flexibility which this process now provides.



Information and Questions

USDE Website for Official Documents related to the waiver request

<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>

ADE Contacts:

John Hoy, Assistant Commissioner of Academic
Accountability

john.hoy@arkansas.gov

Dedicated ADE email address to be checked daily
ade.nclbwaivers@arkansas.gov