



Capture the Core

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Fourth Grade

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PARCC Assessment News

PARCC Spring Testing Manuals

If you haven't already seen them, all of the PARCC testing manuals have been posted on [Pearson's Avocet site](#). The website is organized by topic and also contains a search feature that will help you better locate the information you're looking for. All documents can be downloaded and printed from the site. As the document loads on the screen, it might take a few seconds for the download button to appear.

PARCC FAQ Document Updated

PARCC's FAQ document for spring testing has been updated with new information. You can find it [here](#).

Developing the PARCC Test

PARCC has released a few new resources on the development of the PARCC test that you might find useful. "[Life Cycle of a Test Item](#)" is a

graphic that shows the lengthy path that items take before they are placed on an operational test. In "[The Role of Good Teaching in Developing Test Questions](#)," Bonnie Hain, PARCC's Director of English Language Arts/Literacy Content, talks about the involvement of educators in the rigorous process of reviewing test items to make sure they are aligned to the standards and will be fair to all students.

The PARCC PBA Practice Tests
<http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests>

Online and paper-based tutorials for each grade band <http://parcc.pearson.com/tutorial/>.

Students can practice the various tools, accommodations and accessibility features: <http://parconline.org/accessibility-accommodations-and-fairness>

Introduction to Balanced Assessment

ISBE's Dr. Diana Zaleski has recorded a short video entitled "Introduction to Balanced Assessment." process within classrooms, schools, and districts.

The purpose of this video is to introduce educators to the concept of a balanced assessment system that aligns the assessment



You can find this video on the [Teacher Resources page](#) of ISBE's website under "Webinars, Presentations, and Videos."

Looking for the Perfect Curriculum?

“The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act forbids the Federal government from intervening in school curriculum development. States independently adopted the Common Core, a set of math and English Language Arts standards for K-12 students to reach by the end of each grade level. School districts design the curricula, and teachers create their own methods for instruction, selecting the resources best tailored to their lessons.” (US News & World Report, Mar 4, 2014).

To that end, districts are allowed to purchase curriculum that they feel meets the needs of their students, teachers and the standards.

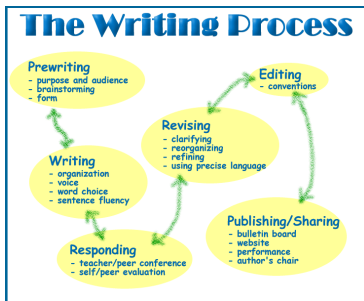
There are two tools that districts/teachers can use to determine if their current materials are sufficient to meet the standards or if additional materials are needed.

One is a clear set of expectations called the Publisher’s Criteria for [K-2](#) and [3-12](#) that district teams can

utilize in selecting published materials.

Next, is the [EQuIP Rubric](#) which is designed to evaluate already created or newly written multi day lessons or units and assessments aligned to the CCSS that include integrated content. Gaps are noted easily if older materials are used and can be addressed. Using these two tools will keep districts on track with implementation of the CCSS.

Standard 4: Develop & Organize Writing



Fourth and Fifth grade students are to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization

are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. This means that the writing process is applicable to the standards. ISBE has created a document that supports teachers in the implementation of Standards 4 and 5 which can be found [here](#).

During the writing process, the writer moves fluidly back and forth between the phases that contribute to creating the final written product.

Students are expected to

produce writing that is clear and understandable to the reader. Task (type of writing assignment) and purpose (the writer’s designated reason for writing) should be reflected in the student’s organization and development of a topic. Clear and coherent writing stays on topic and reads smoothly.

Explicitly teaching strategies at each writing phase along with allowing for collaborative conversation will promote better writing skills.

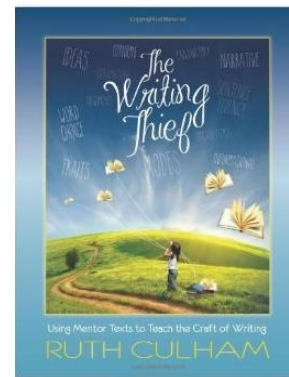
Standard 5: Develop & Strengthen Writing

To develop and strengthen writing, teachers need to teach skill lessons and strategy lessons in the context of the writing process. Some of those skills and strategies might include: activating background knowledge, identifying genre elements and infusing them into writing pieces, soliciting teacher and peer feedback, and understanding audience awareness and its effects on specific parts of writing such as tone, style, and content.

Monitoring for conventions, grammar and self-pacing are also critical skills and strategies that need to be taught in the writing process. Focusing on the traits of writing are also valuable which can be done with mentor texts. [Click here](#) for a preview of Ruth Culham’s *The Writing Thief: Using Mentor Texts to Teach the Craft of Writing*.

Other ideas to keep in mind are modeling and using creative writing, poetry, writing journals, and using read alouds to watch

other writers write! Short mini lessons in context are best.



Math Informational Guides

Newly created [Informational Guides to the Summative Assessments in Mathematics](#) provide information about the design and structure of the PARCC mathematics assessments for each grade/course. These guides were created to assist educators in understanding the mathematics content, inform instruction, and provide information about the mathematics test administration policies. The guides were developed by the



PARCC Mathematics Operational Working Group, a group of PARCC state content and assessment specialists who work together to make PARCC mathematics policy decisions and ensure the quality of the assessments.

Informational Guides are at the bottom of the page: <http://www.parcconline.org/mathematics-test-documents>

PARCC Tutorials

The purpose of these [tutorials](#) is to demonstrate the navigation and tools available for Computer-Based Assessments and the use of the Test Booklet and Answer Documents for Paper-Based Assessments. The items appearing in these tutorials are samples used to allow students and educators to gain familiarity with the technology platform and

paper-based format that will be used for PARCC assessments. Tutorials include TestNav 8, Printable Paper-Based Student Tutorials, Online Student Tutorials, Text to Speech Tutorials, Equation Editor Guide and Tutorial, Practice with Equation Editor, and TI Graphing Calculator Software.

Sample Tweet

@Susan_Kahn
thank you!
Can honestly say my
son's experience with
#PARCC
reaffirmed my belief in
this assessment hundred
fold #coreadvocates

Practice Tests

Practice Mathematics End-of-Year Assessments are available for grades 3-8 and all high school courses. The PARCC mathematics practice tests, both paper and computer-based, do not indicate the unit breaks that are included with the operational assessment forms. The paper and online versions do indicate section breaks between non-calculator and calculator sections.

These breaks indicate when students should have calculators for the appropriate test items. By excluding unit breaks, educators have more flexibility with how they choose to use these practice tests with their students. Answers and scoring guidelines are available via the [Answer Keys](#).

Types of practice tests available include: Computer-Based, Paper-Based, Large Print Paper-Based, Accommodated Screen Reader Version, and Braille ASCII File.

Check back often because the Performance Based Assessment Practice Tests will be released soon. <http://parcc.pearson.com/practice-tests/math/>



Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Planning for Student-Led Conferences

Student-led conference (SLCs) have been shown to increase student achievement, hold students accountable for their own learning, increase students' understanding of the learning standards and increase parent connections to school. Implementing SLCs can achieve these positive outcomes when appropriate pre-planning occurs. As with any effective classroom practice, involving stakeholders in a collaborative manner to plan for implementing SLCs will offer an opportunity to incorporate unique perspectives and reduce the potential of issues occurring. SLCs can be implemented through grade-level teams or as a school-wide practice.

Successful SLC's include several steps to be completed by the student and the teacher (or advisor) during the months prior to the actual conference. Students should begin to curate a portfolio of items to be shared with the individual they invite to the conference. (See included article.) The design and structure of the portfolio can be as simple as a binder or an interactive online creation.

Teachers and students will need to also create an agenda for the conference time. By including multiple opportunities for students to reflect on the work being shared, not just "showing the work", conversations are prompted and positive interactions occur. Students can complete reflective writings about each item they have selected prior to the conference to keep the process moving efficiently.

Several weeks prior to students should also start practicing for their conference. Modeling the SLC process for students in a "fish bowl" style collaborative activity is a great way to show all students how the conference should progress and how long the conference should take to complete. The students can then work in groups of 3 or 4 to walk through their portfolios with each other one at a time. This will allow peers to give feedback and students to practice the structure and flow of the conference.



Benefits of SLCs

The effort needed to implement SLCs can take time, but the benefits far exceed the effort. Studies have shown some of the benefits over time for students are:

- ◆ Students engaged in self-evaluation are more highly motivated to produce quality work.
- ◆ Students' skills of organization, leadership, and public speaking are strengthened.
- ◆ Students are empowered to make improvement through the goal-setting process.
- ◆ Home and school share the responsibility for supporting student achievement.
- ◆ The conference itself is a form of authentic assessment that increases the students' accountability and responsibility for learning. Students have the opportunity to learn and practice skills of evaluation and reflection.
- ◆ Positive communication between parent and student is fostered.
- ◆ A significantly higher percentage of parents attend SLCs than parent-teacher conferences.
- ◆ Students' self-confidence and self-esteem increase.
- ◆ Students and parent have a clearer understanding of the expectations for student learning.

(Kinney, P. (2012). *Setting the Stage*. In *Fostering student accountability through student led conferences*. Westerville, OH: Association for Middle Level Education.)

Related [Conditions for Learning Indicators](#) are included in the [Rising Star on IIRC](#) school improvement tool and accessible at the [ISBE Learning Supports](#) web site.



Implementing Student-Led Conferences - Jane M. Bailey and Thomas R. Guskey July 2002
ISBN 9780803968561

Portfolio Keeping: A Guide for Students - Nedra Reynolds, Elizabeth Davis Aug 2013
ISBN 9781457632853

Fostering Student Accountability Through Student Led Conferences - Patti Kinney Sept 2012
ISBN 9781560902492

Student Led Conferences Using Portfolios to Share learning with Parents - Janet Grant June 1995
ISBN 9781551380544

Student-Led Parent Conferences - Linda Pierce-Picciocto Jan 1997
ISBN 9780590896498

Changing the View: Student-Led Parent Conferences - Terri Austin Nov 1994
ISBN 9780435088187

Student Portfolios

There are two major types of portfolios in which students collect their work—a portfolio for learning or a portfolio for presentation. The learning portfolio shows the process of the learning whereas the presentation portfolio focuses on the product of the learning. Both styles of portfolios can be used for the SLC, however a portfolio for learning tends to be a better tool to show the progression of skills that the student has mastered or is currently working to improve. Once the decision has been made as to which portfolio type will be used, artifacts can be collected.

Some artifacts that might be included are:

- ◆ Writing pieces—including all drafts
- ◆ Collaborative work—including student reflections on how the group worked and completed the project.
- ◆ Science experiments—including lab notes and findings
- ◆ Mathematics problem solving—including process, solution and proof
- ◆ Book Reviews—including summary as well as all writings and discussions
- ◆ Research Projects— including notes, processes, reflections and student-created products

Some artifacts that maybe less effective at showing the student's progression on skills would be:

- ◆ Spelling tests
- ◆ Answers to chapter questions
- ◆ Mathematics timed test
- ◆ Multiple choice test



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