



BELLEVUE CITY SCHOOLS

FAQ's on PARCC Testing and Common Core in 2015

Parents and Community Members,

The teachers, staff, students and parents of Bellevue City Schools have all been working very hard to prepare for our new state tests. We appreciate all of the effort that has been made to balance our new testing structure while maintaining a quality educational environment for our students. The new state tests are a new experience for all of us and I appreciate everyone working together to make it work for our students in Bellevue. While assessment plays a critical role in helping us offer individualized education to our students I understand the issue of excessive assessment in Ohio and work diligently with our state legislators to help them understand the issues as well. I encourage all of you to also contact your state legislators to share your thoughts on the testing structure in Ohio as this is the only way to impact change in our state. In the meantime, we are fortunate to live in Bellevue where we all work together to make sure that our kids have the best opportunity to succeed. We find a balanced approach even when the state mandates are unbalanced. I hope that you find the following FAQ helpful as we journey through the new PARCC assessments and New Ohio Learning Standards. The FAQ is an effort to dispel rumors and share with you what to expect as we navigate through the implementation of the new state learning standards (also known as common core) and PARCC testing. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's building principal or myself if you have any questions or concerns. Again, I thank you for working with us to make sure that our kids are our top priority!

*With Redmen Pride,
Mrs. Schubert*

Are we implementing PARCC testing this year? – YES. Ohio students will take the online PARCC assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition to PARCC, some students will also take social studies and science assessments in grades 4-12.

Are we implementing the New Ohio Learning Standards (Common Core) this year? Yes. There are six “Key Shifts In Learning” that support Ohio’s new learning standards. These shifts have been happening in classrooms across Ohio, including Bellevue, since the standards were adopted in 2010. “Key Shifts” include:

- Students using a variety of resources beyond their textbook to help them build knowledge of a topic.
- Students reading a wide range of challenging materials including fiction, poetry and non-fiction, then using quotes from the reading to support their ideas and opinions.
- Students learning vocabulary by reading, writing and talking about math, science, literature, history, government and the fine arts.
- Students using their **understanding of math** to solve problems in the world around them.
- Students building on math knowledge from the prior year to extend their thinking and understanding of math concepts.
- Students working on understanding math concepts by using the right tools and a variety of strategies to solve problems.

I have heard that there are so many MORE tests this year, than before. Why? – *There is a different FORMAT to the testing this year.* The State of Ohio wants to see what PROGRESS your child has made in each respective grade and each respective subject. Therefore, your child will participate in a “Performance Based Assessment” (when 75% of the school year is completed) and an “End of Year” assessment (when 90% of the school year is completed). In theory, these assessments will then be able to demonstrate growth from one point of time to the next. **The “old format” of the OAA’s had students in testing sessions for a minimum of 2 ½ hours per subject area so testing sessions are actually shorter this year but there are more testing sessions.**

Is student testing impacting instructional time? We have developed a creative schedule at each school in the Bellevue School District that minimizes the impact of testing on the instructional day. Quality instruction remains our top priority. The nice thing about the new assessments is that they allow us to administer them in smaller sessions, which helps kids with maintaining focused attention.

When will parents receive their child’s test results? As of our last update from Columbus, we have been told the earliest we can expect our students’ results is October 31, 2015.

What can I do to help my child be successful? –Reinforce with your child that they have been well prepared for the state tests. Let them know that you believe in them and give them positive encouragement. Students should get a good night’s rest and eat a healthy breakfast.

Is there an Opt Out provision in the state law for the new state assessments?

There is no opt out provision in state law for state assessments. The Ohio Department of Education has printed the following information on their website regarding student participation in state tests and the consequences to school buildings, districts, and students for not participating in the state assessments.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE TESTS

Federal and state laws require all districts and schools to test all students in specific grades and courses. There is no law that allows a parent or student to opt out of state testing and there is no state test opt-out procedure or form. If a parent withdraws his or her child's participation in certain state tests, there may be consequences for the child, the child's teacher, and the school and district. Schools should provide the information below and other district consequences in writing to parents that withdraw their child or children from state tests. Though there is no requirement in law, schools may want to request that parents document this decision in writing to record the reason why the student was not tested. Additionally, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 487 in the spring of 2014 that provides for a one year "safe harbor" for districts and teachers as Ohio transitions to new tests for the 2014-2015 school year. This means that some consequences may not apply to all districts and teachers based on results from the 2014-2015 tests.

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENTS WHEN THEY DO NOT TAKE STATE TESTS

1. Third Grade Reading Guarantee a. A student who does not take the state's grade 3 reading test will not have a score on that test and may not be promoted to the fourth grade as part of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Some students may be exempted from this requirement or use an alternative test. Information on the exemptions and alternative tests is posted on the department's website.
2. High School Graduation Requirements a. A student who entered ninth grade for the first time before July 1, 2014, who does not take and pass the Ohio Graduation Tests will not be eligible for a high school diploma. b. A student who entered ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2014, who does not take and reach the needed score on the tests for at least one graduation option will not be eligible for a high school diploma. More information on these new graduation requirements can be found on the department's website. These options include: i. Cumulative performance earned on the state end-of-course tests or their approved substitutes; ii. A remediation-free score on a college admissions test; or iii. A workforce ready score on the WorkKeys test, in combination with an approved industry credential.