Dear Families,

As you are aware, this is the first year you are receiving Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test results. The PARCC assessment serves as an "educational GPS system," designed to measure students' current performance. It will point the way to what students need to learn in order to be ready for the next grade level, high school graduation, and for college or a career.

The PARCC test is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, which are focused on critical thinking and real world application. The PARCC test is not an "additional" test. It replaces the former state tests with one that is better aligned to the new standards teachers are using in the classroom.

The score report is designed to let you know how your child is progressing academically. The information in the score reports is designed to provide feedback about current performance in relation to the standards. We expect that the more detailed information provided by the score reports and supporting materials will lead to strong engagement between parents, teachers, and students in support of student learning.

It may appear that performance is lower than on prior tests. It is important to keep in mind that these are new, more rigorous tests that emphasize critical thinking and problem solving in the content areas. This was also the first time many students took a computer-based assessment and they may have encountered technical glitches. As a result, an individual's performance may not be fully representative. We encourage you to look at multiple sources of student work when making educational decisions about your child.

These results are a new baseline from which we can move forward. We fully expect student performance to improve as students and teachers gain the skills and knowledge needed to master these higher standards and as the technology becomes a more familiar tool. We must celebrate the good work our teachers and schools are doing to teach the new content critical for their future success. We all understand that no test can ever fully capture the skills and abilities of a great teacher or the extraordinary benefits and positive impact of a great school. Tests are one measure to help track our progress. Along with other indicators, tests help give us a sense of where and how we are succeeding and where and how we must improve. The PARCC assessment is designed to give schools and teachers more information to support improvement and differentiation in instruction.

Sincerely,

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ISBE PARCC PLACE at **www.isbe.net/parcc-place**
ISBE PARCC Score Toolkit at www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm?col2=open#toolkit
PARCC Online at www.parcconline.org/resources/parent-resources
UNDERSTAND THE SCORE at www.understandthescore.org/

Background of the ELA / Literacy Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)

Performance Levels for Reading

The development of the PLDs for **reading** reflects the standards' emphasis on a student's ability to find text-based evidence for generalizations, conclusions, or inferences drawn from text. For the **Reading Claim**, the performance levels at each grade are determined by three factors:

- **Text complexity**—the complexity of the text associated with items
- **Accuracy**—the level of accuracy that students have demonstrated in their analysis of text and depth of understanding
- **Evidence**—the quality of evidence that students use to support their inferences about text

There are a number of different combinations of these three factors that will generate a given performance level for each student. Thus, there are multiple ways to arrive at each performance level.

Performance Levels for Writing

For the **Writing Claim,** PLDs are written for the two sub-claims:

- **Written expression**
- **Knowledge of language and conventions**

Factors that determine each performance level for Writing include **development** of ideas**,** ability to draw **evidence** from one or more sources, **organization**, and **command** of grammar and usage.

Performance Level Summary for Third-Grade ELA/Literacy Overview

An abbreviated version of the grade-level PLDs for Reading and Writing are below. (Some of the descriptors have been changed in order to clarify the language and intent of the PLDs.) **For more information and a full version of the PLDs, visit http://parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/ela-performance-level-descriptors.**

Level 2 – A student who achieves at Level 2 partially meets expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and will need academic support to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a minimally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing minimal understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides minimal development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates organization that often is not controlled. The student demonstrates minimal command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 3 – A student who achieves at Level 3 approaches expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and will need some academic support to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a generally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing basic understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides basic development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates organization that sometimes is controlled. The student demonstrates basic command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 4 – A student who achieves at Level 4 meets expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and

Language and is <u>prepared</u> to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a <u>generally accurate</u> analysis of a range of complex texts, showing <u>general</u> understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates <u>purposeful</u> and <u>mostly controlled</u> organization. The student demonstrates command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 5 – A student who achieves at Level 5 <u>exceeds expectations</u> of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and is <u>well prepared</u> to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a <u>mostly accurate</u> analysis of a range of complex texts, showing understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides <u>effective</u> development of ideas, including when using evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates <u>purposeful</u> and <u>controlled</u> organization. The student demonstrates <u>full</u> command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Performance-Level Summary for Third-Grade Mathematics

Performance level descriptors (PLDs) indicate what a typical student at each level should be able to demonstrate based on his/her command of grade-level standards. In mathematics, the performance levels at each grade level are written for each of four assessment sub-claims:

- **Major content**
- **Additional and supporting content**
- **Reasoning**
- **Modeling**
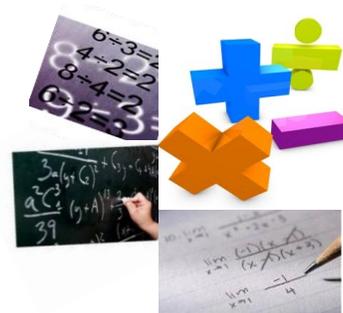
Level 2

- Multiplies and divides within 100. Finds unknown numbers with factors less than or equal to 5. Solves for the sum, difference, product, or quotient in two-step scaffolded word problems. Adds and subtracts within 1,000.
- Recognizes equivalent fractions with denominators of 2, 4, and 8, given a visual model. Identifies $1/b$ on a number line and represents a/b using a visual model. Expresses the number 1 as a fraction.
- Writes and measures time. Measures volumes and masses using objects. Solves one-step problems with scaled bar graphs.
- Recognizes area. Finds perimeters with given side lengths. Identifies examples of quadrilaterals and subcategories.
- Applies mathematics using assumptions and approximations, identifying important quantities, using provided tools to create models, writing an arithmetic expression or equation, analyzing relationships to draw conclusions.
- Uses limited grade-appropriate communication with an intrusive calculation error in tasks that call for written explanations. When a conclusion is required, uses faulty assumptions or provides an incomplete or illogical response.

Level 3

- Interprets products and quotients of whole numbers.
- Understands and generates equivalent fractions with denominators of 2, 4, and 8, given a visual model. Compares two fractions with same numerator or denominator. Recognizes fraction comparison must refer to the same whole. Understands and represents $1/b$ on a number line. Expresses whole numbers as fractions.
- Solves one-step, scaffolded addition or subtraction time interval problems. Estimates volumes and masses using objects. With scaffolding, completes scaled picture and bar graphs and makes line plots with scales marked in whole numbers and halves.
- Identifies rectangles that have the same areas and different perimeters.
- Applies mathematics by illustrating relationships between important quantities to draw conclusions, modifying

the model or interpreting mathematical results in a simplified context.

- Uses some grade-appropriate communication with minor calculation errors. When a conclusion is required, provides a complete response with a partial justification and evaluates the validity of others' responses, approaches, and conclusions.

Level 4

- Determines unknown numbers in problems with one factor greater than or equal to 5.
- Justifies comparisons of two fractions with same numerator or denominator with a visual model. Demonstrates understanding of the quantity a/b on a number line and its relationship to $1/b$.
- Solves one-step word problems involving addition or subtraction of time intervals. Measures and estimates liquid volumes and masses using any of the four operations. Solves one-step word problems using estimated measurements. Represents data on a scaled picture graph, a scaled bar graph, or a line plot with appropriate units.
- Represents area of a plane figure as square units. Solves mathematical problems with unknown side lengths in perimeters of polygons. Understands properties of quadrilaterals and subcategories. Draws examples of quadrilaterals with stated attributes
- Applies mathematics by making assumptions and approximations, mapping and analyzing relationships to draw conclusions, selecting appropriate tools to create models, improving the model, or interpreting mathematical results.
- Uses precision in grade appropriate communication and calculations. When a conclusion is required, provides a well-organized complete response and interprets and critiques the validity of others' reasoning.

Level 5

- Understands products and quotients of whole numbers Determines unknown numbers in problems with both factors greater than 5. Solves two-step unscaffolded word problems using the four operations, rounding where appropriate. Represents a multiplication or division situation as an equation and identifies multiple contexts
- Recognizes fractions that are equivalent to whole numbers. Plots equivalent fractions on a number line. Given a context with two fractions and a whole number, plots the numbers and determines which fraction is closest to the whole number.
- Solves two-step word problems involving time intervals. Estimates and solves multi-step word problems involving volume and mass using the four operations. Uses estimated measurements to compare answers. Uses a line plot to solve problems.
- Solves problems involving perimeters of polygons and rectangles with the same and different perimeter and areas. Partitions shapes into equal parts, expresses area of the part as a unit fraction. Solves multiplication and division word problems involving area and measurement other than area. Draws examples and non-examples of quadrilaterals with and without attributes. Sorts quadrilaterals that have shared attributes. Partitions shapes into parts with equal areas in multiple ways.
- Applies mathematics by analyzing or creating constraints, relationships, and goals, writing a concise arithmetic expression or equation and justifying and defending a model.
- Provides an efficient, logical, and complete conclusion. Provides counter-examples where applicable.