Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Education

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.

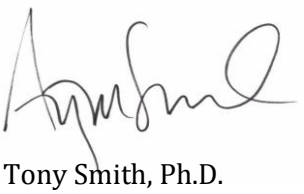
The PARCC test is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, which are focused on critical thinking and real world application. The PARCC test is not an “additional” test. It replaces the former state tests with one that is better aligned to the new standards teachers are using in the classroom.

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 Seventh-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 minimal organization. The student demonstrates minimal command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

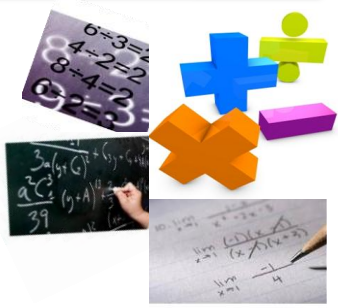
Level 3 – A student who achieves at Level 3 approaches expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and will need some academic support to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a generally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing basic understanding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

range of complex texts, showing general understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates organization. The student demonstrates command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

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

Performance Level Summary for Seventh-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

- Solves simple problems using proportional reasoning. Identifies proportional relationships given in different forms.
- Performs operations on rational numbers (positive and negative) in simple problems. Represents addition and subtraction on a number line.
- Adds and subtracts linear expressions. Solves one-step linear equations with rational coefficients.
- Draws geometric figures and describes some of their attributes. Solves mathematical problems involving circumference and area of 2-D objects, including scale drawings.
- Understands probability as the likelihood of an event occurring. Compares measures of center and variability.
- 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

- Solves simple problems using proportional reasoning and equations. Computes and identifies unit rates. Identifies constant of proportionality.
- Performs operations on rational numbers in real-world problems. Recognizes that opposite quantities combine to make zero.
- Applies properties of operations to expand linear expressions. Solves two-step linear equations with rational coefficients. Uses variables to represent quantities, constructs and solves simple equations and inequalities and graphs solution sets.
- Constructs triangles with given angle and side conditions. Solves mathematical problems involving surface area and volume of 3-D objects. Uses facts about angle relationships to determine the measure of unknown angles.

- Finds probabilities for simple events using methods such as organized lists and tables. Draws informal inferences about one population and comparative about two populations from a table or a graph generated from random samples.
- 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

- Analyzes problems using proportional reasoning and equations. Interprets a point (x, y) on the graph of a proportional relationship in terms of the situation.
- Performs operations on rational numbers in multi-step problems and determines reasonableness of a solution.
- Applies properties of operations to factor linear expressions.
- Solves real-world problems involving 2- and 3-D objects, including reproducing a scale drawing at a different scale. Represents angle relationships using equations to solve for unknown angles.
- Finds probabilities for compound events. Develops a model to approximate probabilities. Understands and uses random sampling to draw inferences about a population or two populations.
- 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

- Solves multi-step problems using proportional reasoning and equations. Determines when it is appropriate to use unit rates.
- Interprets solutions of multi-step problems requiring operations on rational numbers. Justifies steps taken to solve multi-step problems with positive and negative rational numbers and determines reasonableness of solutions.
- Interprets solutions of equations and inequalities. Rewrites an expression in different forms. Rewrites and describes the relationship between equivalent quantities expressed algebraically in different forms.
- Notices when conditions determine a unique, more than one, or no triangle. Solves problems involving composite geometrical objects. Produces a logical conclusion about the relationship between circumference and area of a circle.
- Generates a sample space to determine probabilities. Designs and uses a simulation to estimate probabilities. Generates multiple samples of the same size to gauge the variation in estimates. Analyzes whether a sample is representative of a population.
- Applies mathematics by analyzing or creating constraints, relationships, and goals; writing a concise expression or equation; and justifying and defending a model.
- Provides an efficient, logical and complete conclusion. Provides counter-examples where applicable.