

# Burrillville School Department

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Dear Parents and Teachers,

I realize that the PARCC assessment has created a great deal of divisiveness among educators, elected officials, parents and students. For every validated piece of research supporting PARCC, there is research denouncing the validity of PARCC.

As the lines are drawn for and against PARCC, the Superintendent and School Committee must remain focused on making decisions in the best interests of the students. The Superintendent and School Committee respect both sides of the debate. Whenever an important decision is made, some people agree and some people disagree. Some decisions we have the authority to make, other decisions are not under my purview.

The question for me as Superintendent is not the debate over the validity of PARCC, but rather how can we continue to improve student outcomes. Our challenge is to continue to engage in a thoughtful and reflective process which allows us to question, refine, examine, and revisit what we do to determine if there is a better way to do it. In a democracy, we have the ability to challenge and question; however, we are guided by laws and regulations.

Improving student outcomes must be determined by valid, objective data. Standardized testing has always provided educators with important data to determine the strengths and weaknesses of students and the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

Data is vital to improving student outcomes and improving instruction; complacency will lead to failure.

## FACTS ABOUT PARCC

- PARCC is not a graduation requirement until the class of 2020.
- PARCC will not be used to determine a student's grade for 2015.
- PARCC results on transcripts will begin with the class of 2017.
- Will PARCC affect Teacher Evaluations? Yes, but not until 2017. The results for this school year will set a baseline. RIDE bases evaluations on growth and improvement, so PARCC assessments

will not affect evaluations until RIDE has three years of results – enough to measure improvement over time. To date, the data has never affected teacher evaluations.

- Why administer the PARCC? As all standardized tests, PARCC will provide baseline data to help educators determine strengths and weaknesses of students and it will also help teachers to enhance their instructional effectiveness.
- Could PARCC data be compromised? Yes, just as agencies in the Federal Government have been compromised, along with medical facilities, Target, and many other private and public entities. Data is compromised everyday on Social Media.

Technology has compromised the world we live in.

Standardized testing is imbedded in our culture. Whether it is to enter the military, become a teacher, lawyer, doctor, secretary, job placement or advancement, standardized testing is required.

Why should students take the PARCC Assessment?

The simple answer is to acquire students' strengths and weaknesses, measure the quality of the curriculum and improve instructional effectiveness. All other reasons are important, but are secondary. The value of high stakes testing will always be debated; its intent is not to punish, but to help educators become more effective, help students improve their weaknesses, and provide overall data to move the school district forward.

We are committed to protecting rights of students, parents, and educators while abiding by law and regulation. Our intent is not to victimize, but to enhance the student's ability to achieve success. Meeting requirements, whether it is a standardized test, mid-term or final exam, passing an agility test to become a lifeguard, or serve an apprenticeship, minimum proficiency is mandated.

I hope this information eliminates any misinformation about PARCC and that you are comfortable with your child taking the PARCC assessment. As RIDE states: It is the Local School District that bears the burden of ensuring sufficient student participation. The School District's goal is 100% PARCC participation. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Frank Pallotta, Superintendent  
Burrillville School Department

Cc: School Committee