



# PARCC Tests: An Investment in Learning

Test quality and rigor increase;  
Costs for states generally hold steady

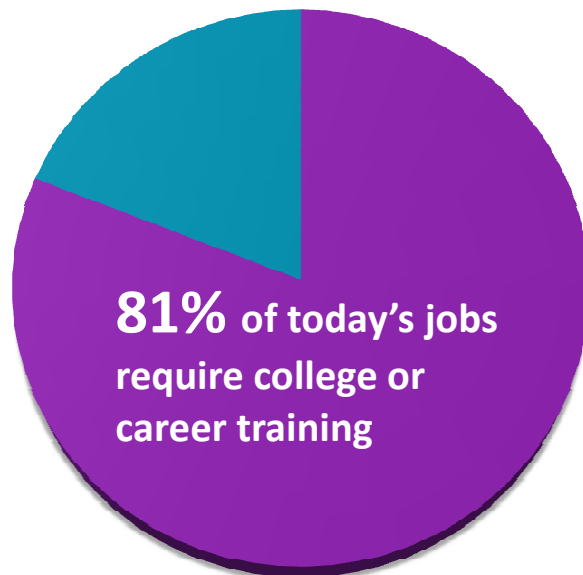
July 2013



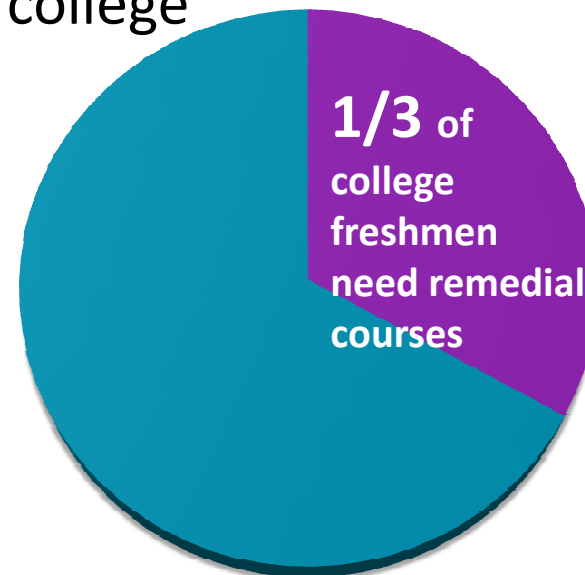
# Why We Need Better Tests

Students need to be **better prepared**; higher standards and better assessments will help

- A high school diploma isn't enough

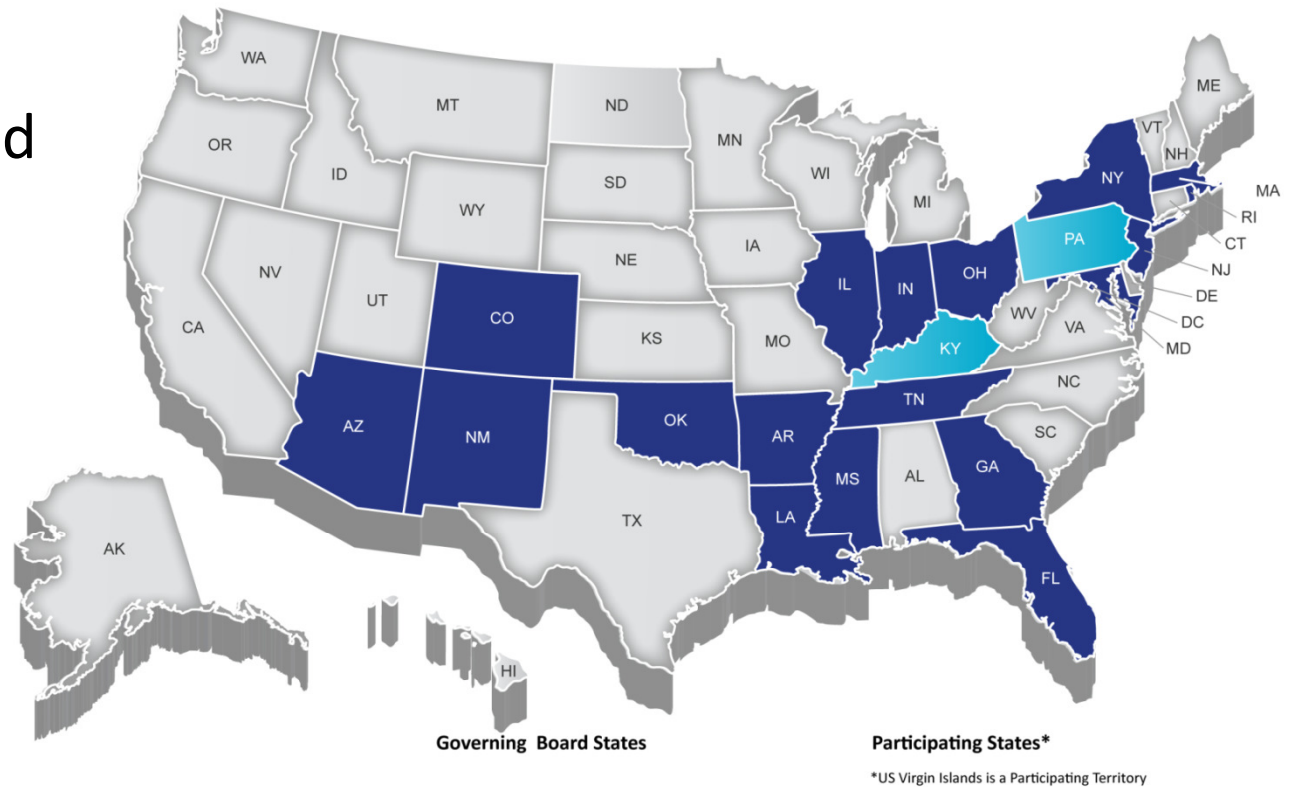


- K–12 system is not getting enough students ready for college



# PARCC: A Better Way of Measuring What Students Know and Can Do

- 21 states
- 16 million students in tested grades
- Aligned to the **Common Core State Standards**
- 2013–14 field testing
- 2014–15 implementation





# Summative Tests Have Two Parts

## ELA/literacy and math tests

- **Performance-based test** (early spring)
  - **Math:** reasoning and modeling real-world problems
  - **ELA/literacy:** writing effectively when analyzing texts
- **End-of-year test** (late spring)
  - **Math:** further understanding of key concepts and ability to use math facts
  - **ELA/literacy:** reading comprehension
- **Both tests**
  - **Will measure critical-thinking and problem-solving skills**



# Better Tests, Better Value

## Now

Few current state tests emphasize writing at every grade; some not at all

No connection to college or career readiness

Current tests focus on “kids in the middle”

## With PARCC

Separate reading and writing scores at every grade level, critical for career and college success

On-track indicators in high school and direct placement into credit-bearing college courses

For students working at all performance levels



## Better Tests, Better Value

### Now

Tests are often a mystery to parents and the public

Old-fashioned, pencil-and-paper bubble tests

Test results released late, often after school year is over

### With PARCC

Release of a significant number of test questions

Innovative, engaging and computer-based

Actionable results by end of school year



# The PARCC Advantages

## What They Are

- **Tests worth taking:** Will measure critical thinking, problem-solving, math reasoning and other key skills
- **Support good instruction:** Extension of quality coursework
- **Writing across grades:** Minimal writing requirements on current tests, though skill is essential in school and beyond



# The PARCC Advantages

## How They Work

- **Next generation:** Computer-based, interactive, engaging
- **Computer-delivered supports:** Will help English learners and students with disabilities show what they know and can do
- **Timely Info:** Results returned quickly, so they can better inform instruction and improve student learning





# PARCC Advantages

## Why We Need Them

- **College and career ready:** Meeting college and career readiness standard in high school means students will avoid costly college remediation
- **Comparable scores:** Will allow policymakers and educators to compare student performance across states, and give teachers information about what students transferring from other states and districts know and can do
- **Economies of scale:** No state can, on its own, develop robust, high-quality, performance-based tests aligned to the CCSS at this price
- **Measuring student learning:** The public invests in schools and deserves to know how well students are doing in return. We need to measure what students are learning, and we need to do it in a meaningful way



# PARCC Estimated Costs Similar to Current Median Costs



**PARCC**

**\$29.50**

Reading, Writing & Math

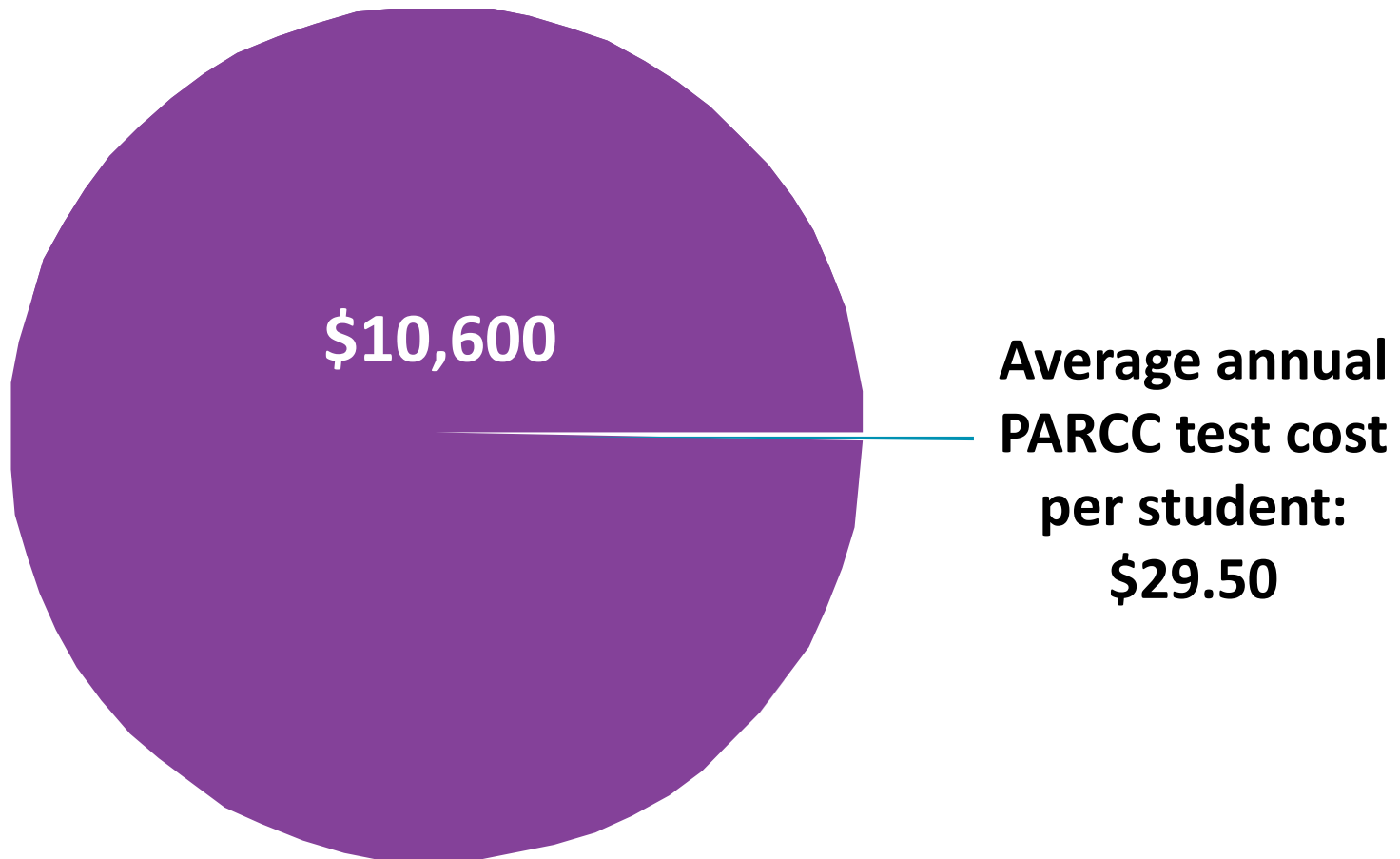
**\$29.95**

Current median for  
State Tests



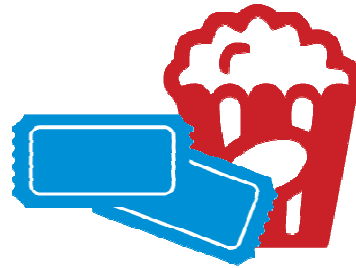


## Less than 1% of Per-Pupil Spending



# Tests Cost the Same as ...

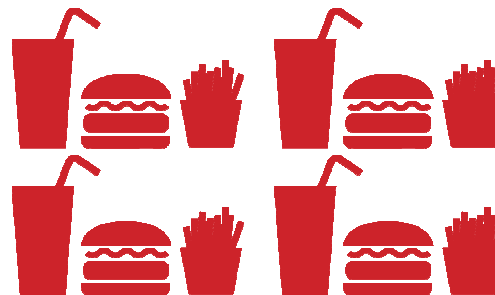
A movie date:



Less than half a tank of gas  
in a family-sized large car:



Dinner for 4 at a fast-  
food restaurant:





## What you get from PARCC

### **In ELA/Literacy, you will know:**

- Whether students can read and comprehend texts of sufficient complexity
- How well students can integrate information across texts/multi media to write a persuasive argument
- The degree to which students can use context to determine the meaning of academic vocabulary



## What you get from PARCC

### In math, you will know:

- Whether students understand and can use key math ideas, including number sense, algebraic thinking, geometry, and analyzing data
- The extent to which students can use math facts and reasoning skills to solve real-world problems
- How well students can justify their approach to solving a problem



# Current State Assessment 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Prompt

## GRADE 8 WRITING

### PROMPT No. X

Your school is planning to issue laptop computers to ninth graders next year. Do you think this is a good idea? Write to explain why or why not.



# PARCC 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA/Literacy Sample Item (Part 1)

## SAMPLE ITEM

### Student Directions

Based on the information in the text “Biography of Amelia Earhart,” write an essay that summarizes and explains the challenges Earhart faced throughout her life.

Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

Answer:

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## PARCC 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA/Literacy Sample Item (Part 2)

### SAMPLE ITEM

Below are three claims that one could make based on the article “Earhart’s Final Resting Place Believed Found.”

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Claims</b> | Earhart and Noonan lived as castaways on Nikumaroro Island. |
|               | Earhart and Noonan’s plane crashed into the Pacific Ocean   |
|               | People don’t really know where Earhart and Noonan died.     |

**Part A:** Highlight the claim that is supported by the most relevant and sufficient facts within “Earhart’s Final Resting Place Believed Found.”

**Part B:** Click on two facts within the article that best provide evidence to support the claim selected in Part A.



# PARCC 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA/Literacy Sample Item (Part 3)

## SAMPLE ITEM

### STUDENT DIRECTIONS

You have read three texts describing Amelia Earhart. All three include the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person. The three texts are:

- “Biography of Amelia Earhart”
- “Earhart’s Final Resting Place Believed Found”
- “Amelia Earhart’s Life and Disappearance”

Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart’s bravery.

Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments about Earhart’s bravery in at least two of the texts. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

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$x_2$

$x^2$





# Current State Assessment 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Item

The distance, in miles, jogged by four students in a week is shown in the table below.

**Jogging Distances**

| Student | Distance Jogged<br>(in miles) |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| Paula   | $9\frac{1}{3}$                |
| Amy     | 16.3                          |
| Winston | $\frac{182}{25}$              |
| Charlie | 11.8                          |

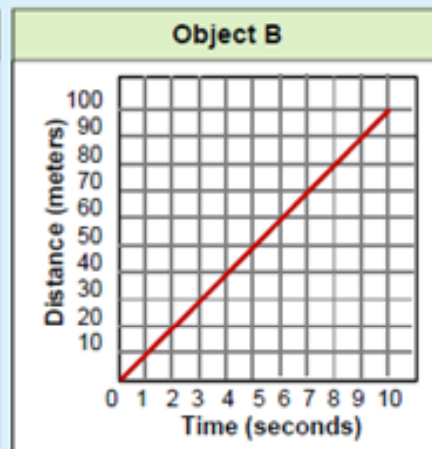
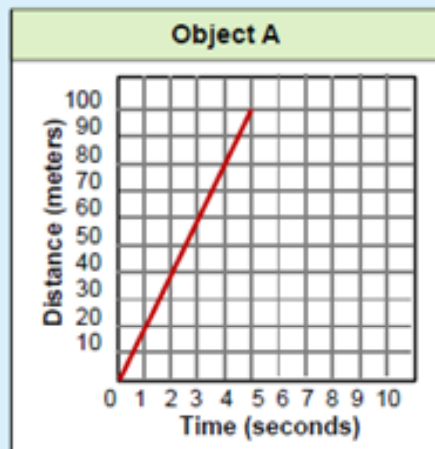
Who jogged the least distance?

- F** Paula
- G** Amy
- H** Winston
- J** Charlie

Content: Mathematics  
Item Number: 14  
Item ID: 01173017  
Item Type: Multiple Choice

Answer Key: H  
Max. score points: 1  
Standard: 7.NSO-N.1  
Reporting Category: Number Sense & Operations

# PARCC 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Sample Item



**Object C**

| Time (seconds) | Distance (meters) |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 0                 |
| 3              | 10                |
| 6              | 20                |
| 9              | 30                |

Object C moves at constant speed.

**Object D**

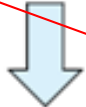
| Time (seconds) | Distance (meters) |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 0              | 0                 |
| 1.5            | 10                |
| 3              | 20                |
| 4.5            | 30                |

Object D moves at constant speed.

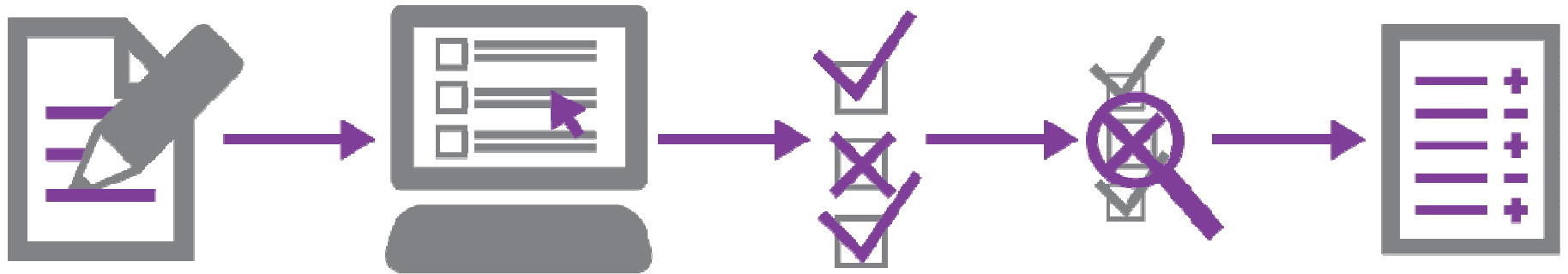
The speed of an object is defined as the change in distance divided by the change in time.

Information about objects A, B, C and D are shown in the graphs and tables.

Based on the information given, drag and drop the object names in order from greatest speed to least speed in the table provided.

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| Object A | Greatest Speed<br><br>Least Speed |  |
| Object B |  |  |
| Object C |  |  |
| Object D |  |  |

# What Impacts Test Costs



- Development of test questions
- Online delivery of assessment
- Scoring, including hand scoring essay questions
- Data analysis
- Reporting



# Advantages of Computer-Based Testing



## Better Instructionally

- Results returned quickly
- Security, no erasures
- Creates more engaging tasks for students
- Assesses skills that are hard to measure on pencil-and-paper tests

## More Efficient

- \$3 – \$4 cheaper; potentially bigger savings later
- Accommodations, computer-based supports delivered virtually and consistently.
- No shipping and printing costs



## Transitioning to Computer-Based Tests

- Some states are already conducting online assessments
- Others are making the investments in infrastructure and devices
- PARCC will have a pencil-and-paper test for 2014-15
- Investments in new technology should be for learning first – assessment is a secondary use
- Access to 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology is important for helping students prepare for college, careers and citizenship



# The Value of Releasing Test Questions

- PARCC is releasing a large number of test questions

## ELA/literacy

Performance-Based Assessment: 75%  
End-of-Year Assessment: 40%

## Mathematics

Performance-Based Assessment: 66%  
End-of-Year Assessment: 33%

- This will provide transparency around:
  - what PARCC tests look like
  - what strong performance relative to the Common Core State Standards looks like
- Data can help drive good instruction





# Continuous Improvement

- Cost estimates for administration of PARCC tests **will continue to be refined** as development of the tests continues and technology for automated scoring continues to improve.
- It may be possible to **achieve greater cost savings** if student essays can eventually be scored using technology.
- PARCC will continue to innovate and leverage technology. So, **quality will continue to rise** even as costs go down.



**Learn More**



[www.parcconline.org/about-parcc](http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc)