

PARCC PROPOSAL FOR SUPPLEMENTAL RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT AWARD

DECEMBER 23, 2010

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers' (PARCC's) top priority for the use of supplemental Race to the Top (RTTT) assessment grant funds is to help its member states make a successful transition from current state standards and assessments to the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and PARCC assessments by the 2014-15 school year. To support this priority, PARCC is proposing a two-part strategy that includes a coherent approach to:

- Consortium-wide support for strategic planning for the implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments; and
- Collaborative efforts to develop the highest priority curricular and instructional tools, combined with multi-state support to build leadership cadres of educators who are deeply engaged in the use of those tools, the CCSS and the PARCC assessments.

Based on these areas of need, PARCC has mapped out a strategy for supporting the consortium's governing and participating states in the transition to and implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments, as well as a short-term planning process to help strengthen and refine PARCC's plans for the full grant period to ensure the highest leverage use of all available resources.

STRATEGIC TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

To support each state's transition to and implementation of both the CCSS and PARCC assessments, PARCC plans to use some of the supplemental funds to provide governing and participating states with support to develop and execute a strategic transition and implementation plan. PARCC plans to use an institute model, drawing on Achieve's Alignment Institutes (which helped 22 states adopt college- and career-ready standards) and College & Career-Ready Policy Institute (which helped eight states advance a set of assessment and accountability policies), to provide a venue for cross-state sharing and problem-solving, as well as an opportunity for more in-depth work on key state-specific challenges. PARCC states' strategic planning work will be guided by a common framework that identifies the essential elements of a successful implementation strategy, including key milestones for states to monitor their progress toward statewide implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments by 2014-15, to identify critical state-specific challenges, and to create opportunities for cross-state collaboration and problem solving.

Multi-State Support for Transition and Implementation Strategic Planning. The development and execution of each state's transition and implementation strategy will be led by a leadership team comprised of a combination of state leaders, district/local leaders, and other critical stakeholders. The makeup of the team will be determined based on the key constituencies who need to drive and own the implementation process in each state, but every state should include district and educator leaders on its team. The team will develop the state's overarching strategy and help monitor its implementation over the four-year project. PARCC, through the supplemental grant, will support this work through a series of multi-state convenings of the leadership teams that will focus on common policy decisions, challenges, and milestones. A critical strand of work for each state will be developing its strategy to build cadres of educator leaders who understand and support the standards and assessments and to deploy those educators throughout the state to help expand deeper understanding of the CCSS and PARCC assessments throughout the broader educator community.

PARCC plans to kick off its multi-state support for strategic planning with an implementation tool that uses a tested methodology to assist states in creating a strategic plan and timeline that would help ensure that the CCSS reach the classroom and that states are prepared to make the transition to PARCC assessments. The tool will be designed to prioritize relevant activities that will help states translate work from the state-level to the classroom-level, including tracking the flow of information and relationships and evaluating the impact of transition activities

with key indicators and performance milestones. The tool will include examples of how to organize state education agencies around this effort, how to monitor progress, engaging wider circles of educators and key stakeholders to build ownership and support, and how to solve problems as they arise. It also will include case story examples of practices in the field. State leadership teams will receive coaching and feedback on this tool at an initial multi-state convening.

PARCC plans to convene the leadership teams in early 2011 for the first consortium-wide meeting and then bring the teams together as a consortium once or twice annually through the summer of 2014. PARCC will leverage one of the General Assembly meetings funded in its main grant for one of these convenings; the supplemental resources will allow states to expand their leadership teams to include a broader group of state and local leaders than was included in the initial funds for the annual General Assembly meetings. Over the four-year project, the multi-state convenings will help states address key strategic policy and implementation challenges including: developing tools to identify school and district technology infrastructure gaps and strategies for building the infrastructure to support delivery of computer-based assessments; plans to deliver the CCSS and PARCC tools to educators statewide and to provide ongoing support to educators on the standards and assessments; plans for expanding K-12 and postsecondary educator leadership cadres within each state; decisions around transitioning existing assessment systems before 2014-15; the use of PARCC assessments in the evaluation of educators; and aligning other state policies with the CCSS and PARCC assessments to create a policy environment that supports the success of the assessment system in driving instructional and systemic changes (e.g., accountability systems, graduation requirements, postsecondary entrance requirements).

These multi-state convenings will provide several benefits to PARCC states: dedicated time for teams of state and local leaders to spend on strategic planning and problem solving; the opportunity to network and collaborate with state and local leaders from across the nation who are facing the same challenges; and light facilitation of state work during the meetings, with some additional substantive expertise to support state planning. The work also will require a significant commitment from PARCC states to continue the strategic planning process when they are back in their own states, including monitoring the progress and success of implementation activities and ensuring integration with the state's work to build leadership cadres of K-12 and postsecondary educators who can educate their peers on the CCSS and PARCC within their respective communities. In between convenings, PARCC will hold regular webinars on specific high-priority topics to help all states continue to make progress toward implementation of the standards and assessments; PARCC also will hold periodic meetings with state leadership teams via videoconference technology, as needed, to provide specific expertise or to help teams problem solve.

Multi-State Support to Build Educator Leadership Cadres. To help each state build and expand the number of educators who understand, support, and feel ownership for the successful implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments, PARCC will use some of the supplemental resources to bring together K-12 educators from across the consortium states to develop their expertise on the CCSS and PARCC, help them become ambassadors for the CCSS and PARCC among their peers, and train them in the use of the PARCC tools as they are developed and released, including those tools described in the next section of this proposal and those already included in the main PARCC grant. While PARCC's original proposal to the U.S. Department of Education included some opportunities for educators to be involved in the assessment design and development, here we envision a broader and more robust series of opportunities for educators to be engaged in the consortium's work.

Through multi-state regional convenings, PARCC will deeply engage a cadre of K-12 educators from each state to build expertise in the CCSS and PARCC assessments, using the tools PARCC will develop as a key vehicle for providing professional development and training. Over the course of the project, these multi-state convenings will help each state increase the size of its educator leadership cadre through a series of "train the trainer" meetings on a strategic set of topics tied to the PARCC tools. These educator leaders will then be equipped to go back to

their states and, through existing networks, train other educators using the PARCC tools so that understanding of, support for, and ownership of the implementation of the new standards and assessments will grow throughout districts and schools. Members of the educator leadership cadres will also be prepared to serve as ambassadors for PARCC within the K-12 educator community and beyond; they might be asked to present about PARCC at meetings of disciplinary societies or state educator conferences, or they might testify alongside key state officials at state board or legislative committee meetings. While the PARCC tools and leadership cadre convenings will provide them with in-depth, content-based training on the standards and assessments, members of these leadership cadres also will be selected strategically to help each state grow support for the CCSS and PARCC at the local level.

Through PARCC's facilitated strategic planning process, state leadership teams will map out their strategy to select educators to participate in the leadership cadres, provide additional support and training to those educators as needed, and create or leverage existing opportunities for the state's educator leaders to train their peers on the CCSS, PARCC assessments, and PARCC tools.

Multi-State Technical Working Groups. In addition to the need for support around strategic planning, there are a set of technical issues that PARCC states will grapple with during the transition period, and states could benefit from having a venue in which to problem solve collectively. A limited set of PARCC technical issue working groups will be organized to bring together a small number of key state and/or local officials from across the PARCC states around focused transition and implementation challenges. Based on early conversations, PARCC anticipates that the working groups might address challenges states face in modifying their assessment blueprints; using PARCC assessments in teacher evaluations; or aligning instructional and curricular tools to the CCSS, PARCC tools, and PARCC assessments.

To keep the size of working groups manageable enough to support collaborative problem solving, about six to eight states will be invited to participate in each working group, and, over the four year project, every PARCC state will be invited to participate in at least one of these groups. The products and lessons from the working groups will be shared with all PARCC states through the strategic planning institutes, webinars, white papers, conference calls, or other means.

COLLABORATION ON DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS

As part of its initial proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, PARCC plans to develop a set of professional development tools that will help classroom teachers and other educators better understand the uses of and information generated by the PARCC assessments. In addition, the main PARCC grant includes significant resources for research and development, including on artificial intelligence scoring. PARCC will ensure the integration of those activities with the work funded by the supplemental grant as well as coordination with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium in areas where both consortia are pursuing similar research and development work.¹

The supplemental funds provide an important opportunity to complement and significantly strengthen PARCC's plans by developing a robust set of high quality instructional tools that will support good teaching, help teachers develop a deeper understanding of the CCSS and their instructional implications, and provide early signals about the types of student performance and instruction demanded by the PARCC assessments. PARCC plans to allocate

¹ PARCC will use funds included in its main Race to the Top assessment grant to coordinate with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium on research in a few areas of shared interest, including artificial intelligence scoring, setting achievement levels, and anchoring high school assessments in the knowledge and skills students need to be prepared for postsecondary education and careers.

a substantial portion of the supplemental resources toward the development and use of such tools. Further, recognizing that ten PARCC states, including eight governing states, have resources from Race to the Top state grants to develop instructional tools, the consortium will develop a framework that would enable these states to coordinate the use of state RTTT resources with each other and with PARCC resources to produce a coherent and complete set of tools from which all states could benefit. The tools will be developed and rolled out over the four-year PARCC effort so that they can support ongoing efforts in each PARCC state to help educators understand and deliver instruction aligned to the CCSS and better prepare themselves and their students to participate in the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015.

To accomplish this, PARCC will take the following steps using funds from the supplemental grant:

1. **Develop a framework that will define the priority tool set most important for improving teaching and learning and for supporting the implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments.** This priority tool set may include a mix of instructional, formative assessment, professional development and communication tools, for use by teachers, students and administrators.
2. **Rapidly create prototypes of the through-course assessments to enable PARCC states to share them with educators as quickly as possible.** PARCC's goal is to create a number of prototypes that educators can try out during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years through small-scale pilots. Through these limited pilots, PARCC will have an early opportunity to see how the through-course assessments work in real classrooms, whether they can be implemented as anticipated, whether students understand the tasks, and what kinds of challenges states are likely to face when the through-course assessments are brought to scale. It also will give educators an opportunity to test and help shape the through-course assessments early in the assessment design and development process. These prototypes, modified as necessary based on the initial pilots, will provide the models that competitively-selected vendors would subsequently use to develop both through-course assessments and the instructional units that would be aligned to them. We anticipate that the development work will be designed to allow for ongoing piloting and improvement of these tools throughout the development cycle.
3. **Focus the development of tools on a set of robust, high-quality model instructional units that highlight the most significant advances in the CCSS and PARCC assessments.** These instructional units, each of which will include a coherent set of priority tools, will be strategically selected to address:
 - Standards that will be measured by the through-course assessments.
 - Standards that are the most essential and/or foundational, and that will require the greatest "stretch" by teachers because they are new and different.
 - Content and skills that large numbers of students have difficulty mastering.

Each model unit could include components such as: instructional materials; formative activities that would give teachers information they need about student understanding relative to the CCSS and PARCC assessments; professional development materials for educators; and tools to inform conversations between principals and teachers, teachers and students, and teachers and parents about the results of the through-course assessments. The units developed by PARCC will serve as powerful models for others to develop similar tools for other standards or grades, and will help states and districts evaluate the quality and alignment of similar tools in the market.

Additionally, PARCC's K-12 and postsecondary leaders have underscored the importance of using information about student performance on PARCC's high school assessments to help students who are not on track to

college readiness get on track before graduation. PARCC plans to use some of the supplemental resources to develop college readiness tools aligned to the CCSS and PARCC assessments, such as model 12th grade bridge courses for students who don't score college ready on the high school assessments, or online tools to help diagnose students' gaps in college-ready skills.

One advantage of this approach is that it can leverage PARCC and state RTTT funds in a coordinated manner, by targeting investments to the highest needs and providing a common framework across states. Yet states that are interested in a full curriculum rather than a selected set of instructional units could more efficiently create one by incorporating and building on the instructional units. By calling for the careful development of robust instructional units anchored in both the CCSS and PARCC through-course assessments, this approach will promote instructional coherence, creating tightly aligned curriculum materials, tools for formative instruction, professional development modules and the like. It also leaves room for states to use RTTT resources to develop or collect a rich set of additional materials that can supplement this core set.

As models, these instructional units will be voluntary. The intent is that states, districts and teachers (depending on the locus of decision-making) will decide to use them because of their quality and effectiveness in preparing students to do well on PARCC exams, but will not be required to do so. The intent is also that the quality of these models will lead states and districts, curriculum developers, textbook publishers, etc. to model their own material on these units.

PARCC's initial proposal calls for the development of a digital library of tools; that library, and the work to create it, is important. The broader set of tools in the library will provide choices and supplemental materials (beyond the instructional units) for teachers to use. The development of the library also will identify materials that can be used to inform the development of the instructional units or even become the instructional units, perhaps with minor modification.

- 4. Facilitate a dialogue among the PARCC RTTT state grant winners to enable them to coordinate their investments in instructional tools to the maximum extent possible.** PARCC will support this coordination by creating common definitions, scopes of work, evaluation criteria, etc. so that tools developed by different states through state-specific procurements can be part of a coherent set.

Through this full suite of work – multi-state strategic transition and implementation support, collaboration on the development of high-quality tools, and building cadres of educators who are deeply engaged with PARCC tools and assessments and the CCSS – PARCC will provide its governing and participating states with a coherent set of activities that will support their transition to the new standards and assessments and also leverage the best work already underway across states and districts.

APPENDIX A

OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES FOR PARCC SUPPLEMENTAL PROPOSAL

Category of Work	Needs Addressed	Expected Outcomes	Deliverables	Timeline
1. Support for RTTT Assessment Technical Assistance and Coordination with SBAC	Support for Non-RTTT states to attend U.S. Department of Education technical assistance meetings.	States in PARCC that did not secure state RTTT grants will participate in U.S. Department of Education RTTT technical assistance meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of state leaders will participate in six technical assistance meetings during the grant period. 	Spring 2011 – Summer 2014
	Collaboration of PARCC and Smarter Balanced during the assessment development and implementation process.	PARCC and Smarter Balanced will coordinate the work of their Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) to explore comparability of the assessment systems developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARCC and Smarter Balanced will jointly convene members of their TACs for four meetings during the grant period. 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014
		PARCC will coordinate with Smarter Balanced to ensure collaboration in areas where both consortia are pursuing similar research and development work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARCC will conduct regular Web-based and phone communication with SBAC leadership and staff. PARCC will seek opportunities to leverage existing convenings, including the U.S. Department of Education’s RTTT technical assistance meetings, to meet with SBAC leadership and staff. 	
2. Strategic Transition and Implementation Support	Strategic support and targeted tools to support state transition to the CCSS and PARCC assessments to ensure full and successful implementation by 2014-15.	PARCC states will develop strategic implementation plans to guide state transition to CCSS and PARCC assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARCC will develop a comprehensive implementation and transition tool, including modules on generating delivery plans, setting trajectories, and routines to monitor and evaluate progress. PARCC will release tool to PARCC states during Strategic Transition and Implementation Support convening. PARCC will organize webinars and conference calls to provide additional guidance on tool modules. 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014
		PARCC state leadership teams will be ambassadors for CCSS and PARCC, creating a smooth transition to new standards and assessments in the states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARCC will organize and execute two annual convenings for state leadership teams, including state leaders, district/local leaders, and other critical stakeholders. 	

Category of Work	Needs Addressed	Expected Outcomes	Deliverables	Timeline
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will leverage one of the General Assembly meetings funded in the main PARCC grant for one of these convenings; the supplemental resources will allow states to expand their leadership teams to include a broader group of state and local leaders. • PARCC will identify key milestones to monitor state progress toward implementation of the CCSS and transition to the PARCC assessments. • PARCC will assist state leadership teams in creating overarching strategies to transition to PARCC assessments and develop mechanisms to monitor progress over the four-year project. 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014
		State leadership teams will collaborate and communicate to ensure a smooth transition to new standards and assessments in the states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will provide summaries of key take-aways from each convening and distribute to all PARCC states. • PARCC will organize webinar/conference calls to provide venue for additional cross-state sharing and problem solving in between convenings. • PARCC will communicate with state leadership teams in between convenings to discuss progress and identify challenges. • PARCC will use video teleconference technology to meet with state leadership teams as needed to discuss progress, provide specific expertise or help teams problem solve. • PARCC will organize webinars on specific high-priority topics to provide all PARCC states a venue for continued dialogue and problem solving. 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014
3. Multi-State Technical Issue Working Groups	Provision of venues for small groups of state and/or local officials to collectively	PARCC states will exhibit a high level of problem-solving capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will organize and lead three technical issue working group convenings per year for 6-8 states per 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014

Category of Work	Needs Addressed	Expected Outcomes	Deliverables	Timeline
	<p>problem solve on a set of focused issues related to transition and implementation.</p>	<p>Products and lessons from working groups will be shared with all PARCC states via strategic planning institutes, conference calls, white papers, etc.</p>	<p>convening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will contract with expert(s) to provide substantive and technical guidance on identified priority issues at convenings. • PARCC will provide summaries of key take-aways from each working group convening for all PARCC states. • PARCC will produce and disseminate white papers to capture lessons learned, as appropriate. • PARCC will organize webinar/conference calls to discuss outcomes/share lessons learned with all states, as needed. 	<p>Winter 2011 – Summer 2014</p>
<p>4. Coordination Support for Project Management Partner</p>	<p>Consistent and coordinated support for states from the project manager (Achieve).</p>	<p>PARCC states will make a successful transition from current state standards and assessments to the implementation of Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments by the 2014-15 school year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will hire high-quality staff to oversee and manage supplemental projects. • PARCC will conduct annual performance evaluation of personnel. 	<p>Winter 2011 – Summer 2014</p>
<p>5. PARCC Tool Development</p>	<p>Provision of tools and resources to help states transition to new state standards (CCSS) and new state assessment systems.</p>	<p>PARCC states will develop prototypes of through-course assessment aligned to CCSS to prepare districts, schools and classroom teachers for instructional changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will plan for development of prototypes (e.g., timeline, grades, piloting plans). • PARCC will develop a framework for prototypes linked to instructional units. • PARCC will release final prototypes through Partnership Resource Center. 	<p>Spring 2011 – Fall 2011</p>

Category of Work	Needs Addressed	Expected Outcomes	Deliverables	Timeline
		PARCC states will implement model instructional units aligned to CCSS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will create a framework to determine priorities for instructional units. • PARCC will review and analyze winning state Race to the Top applications in PARCC. • PARCC will coordinate dialogue among state leaders on how to collaborate to maximize state RTTT resources and work toward coherent set of tools that could be used by all states. • PARCC will plan for development of units (e.g., timeline, grades, feedback process). • PARCC will generate a framework for/map of each instructional unit linked to through-course prototypes. • PARCC will draft materials for state and district feedback. • PARCC will develop final instructional unit materials and post to Partnership Resource Center. 	Summer 2011- Summer 2014
		PARCC states will implement model bridge courses aligned to the CCSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will produce a framework for model courses. • PARCC will plan for development of units (e.g., timeline, feedback process). • PARCC will share model bridge courses through Partnership Resource Center. 	Fall 2012 – Summer 2014
6. Technology Support	Ensure states have technology infrastructure to implement new computer-based assessments.	PARCC states will complete self-audit of school/district technology infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will contract with technology experts to develop (or adapt) technology infrastructure self-audit. • PARCC states will draft plans for completing technology self-audit. • PARCC will release technology self-audit to PARCC states. • PARCC will generate overview of results 	Winter 2011 – Fall 2011

Category of Work	Needs Addressed	Expected Outcomes	Deliverables	Timeline
			of technology audit; share with U.S. Department of Education.	
		PARCC states will prepare to implement computer-based assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will identify recommendations and strategies to help states and districts close technology gaps. • Technology experts will provide support to PARCC states in building strategies for building school/district infrastructure to support delivery of computer-based assessments. 	Spring 2011 – Summer 2014
7. Building Educator Leadership Cadres	Training for educators in the use of the CCSS, PARCC assessments, and PARCC tools; development of buy-in; and creation of a cadre of ambassadors to support CCSS and PARCC assessments.	K-12 educators from PARCC states will be prepared to use the CCSS, the PARCC assessments, and the PARCC tools as they are developed and released.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARCC will organize and lead two multi-state regional convenings per year (1 per region) for 24 educators per state for all PARCC states. • PARCC will organize webinars/conference calls to provide additional detail on materials shared and answer questions in between convenings. • PARCC will contract with vendor to manage and run training sessions, in close collaboration with PARCC project management staff. 	Winter 2011 – Summer 2014