

TAB L – Attachment – Assessment Update LEA Feedback

State Assessment Update – LEA Feedback

Issue/ Concern	Test	Description	Action
New/Unaddressed		As of 11/17/2015	
Procurement of NCSC	NCSC	Arizona is the lead state for the release of the RFP representing the NCSC consortium. Further delays to the procurement process may impact administration of the 1% reading and mathematics test for this 2015-2016 school year.	
Ongoing/In-progress		As of 11/17/2015	
Testing Mode Comparability	PARCC KRA	PARCC: Mean scores of online testers are a few points lower than those testing on paper. There are three possible reasons: 1. Greater concentration of higher performing students took paper, 2. Familiarity with the online platform and tools had a negative impact, or 3. The online test form was simply harder. KRA: 34% of KRA items are available as app items. Teachers can choose the device or paper manipulatives for administration of those items. Remainder of items are direct performance tasks and observational items.	PARCC: The test construction process should have addressed reasons two and three. Initial research in MD suggests the first reason seems the most plausible. Only 18% of students took the test on paper. Of these included all of Harford County, a portion of Frederick, Baltimore and Ann Arundel. Maryland as well as the consortium as a whole continue to research this as more information is available. KRA: Are currently surveying teachers as to which mode they used for those 17 out of 50 items. Have requested that West-Ed run a comparability study for v.1.75 next year.
Reporting KRA Scores	KRA	Individual Student Reports are currently being distributed to parents in one of four languages- English French, Chinese, or Spanish.	LEAs have the option of printing reports from the Teacher Dashboard or as bulk at the district level. Grant funding was provided to cover printing costs.
PANext Reporting PARCC Scores	PARCC	PANext has been enhanced to include reporting functionality at the school level.	Training materials have been created to support both the access and usage of this new reporting functionality. In-person and virtual meetings are taking place to introduce this new functionality.
KRA Help Desk	KRA	Kindergarten Teachers and Data Managers were given access to the Help Desk for 2015 instead of going through Early Childhood Supervisors.	Help Desk calls were significantly fewer for 2015.
Pearson Customer Service Center	PARCC	During the 2014-15 administration, wait times for the Customer Service Center were too long during critical times (i.e. early in the school day)	Pearson has made contractual changes by adding additional resources as well as changing subcontractors.
Technology Device Deficiency	PARCC	Not enough devices to test kids online – especially without impacting instruction. 2014 initial survey reported an expected need of 75% paper.	Through various means including the approximately \$8M appropriated to local districts to increase device inventory (Race to the Top funding) as well as creative scheduling, districts were able to assess 82% online.

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Parent Opt-Out issues	PARCC	Although few students in MD did not participate on the PARCC tests, Opting out of the test continues to be a political issue through social media.	MSDE continues to provide locals with messaging emphasizing the benefits of assessments as well as shares its safeguards around student privacy and data usage. MSDE also continues to provide guidance on interpretation of legal language to support schools.
Internet Connectivity	PARCC	Some districts/schools continue to experience internet connectivity issues.	MSDE will continue to assist local districts in troubleshooting connectivity issues during system load testing during the Fall, 2015 administration. Also test platform and design have implemented safe guards to preserve student responses and the testing as a whole in order to minimize disruptions for students.
Student Unfamiliarity with Online Testing	PARCC	One of the strengths of the PARCC tests is the inclusion of constructed response items in both ELA and math. To respond, students need to be familiar with typing in text boxes as well as utilizing the various cutting edge accessibility features including the math equation editor as well as the test to speech.	Research indicates that this student unfamiliarity with online testing does not have an impact on student performance. With that said, MSDE along with the consortium have created training modules as well as have posted practice and sample tests for stakeholders to review. These will continue to be updated as more information is made available. The goal is to incorporate the use of the technology associated with the assessment as part of daily instructional practice.
Insufficient Staffing	PARCC KRA	Testing requires staffing for both testing and accommodating students. KRA: 2015 administration allowed additional trained certified teachers to assist with administration.	MSDE has worked with LEAs on creating sample scheduling models for schools and continue to explore possibilities to maximize the benefit of computers in testing to minimize the need for accommodators (i.e. electronic text to speech instead of the need for an in-person read aloud accommodator). KRA: Teacher Survey results will provide more input as to whether this change improved 2015 administration.
Lack of training on PearsonAccess Next	PARCC, HSA	PA Next is the system used the register and monitor students for PARCC. Because of the newness of the program, additional training opportunities are needed for new users.	New short training modules created by Pearson and MSDE communicating information through training modules, email, blog and webinars
Need for headsets	ACCESS	In preparation for this year's administration, headsets need to be available for the ACCESS tests and others. This needs to be understood and timely to ensure that they are available in time for testing	The requirements for headsets and other accessibility features and devises are included within all relevant documentation and have been openly discussed in multiple venues including both LACs and CIOs.
Resolved/Continue to Monitor		As of 11/17/2015	
Java Updates	PARCC, HSA	The testing platform TestNav 8 was originally dependant on JAVA for security. The updates would have to be installed on machines and updated regularly. If update missed, machine could not be used for testing	Pearson has developed an app that can be installed on each machine thus bypassing the need for any particular browser or need for JAVA updates.
Two Testing Windows	PARCC	Two testing windows is causing too much disruption to instruction.	MSDE worked with the PARCC consortium on the test design. 2015-16 admin will include only one window.

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Test Time	PARCC KRA	PARCC and KRA: The tests are too long.	PARCC: Test redesign trimmed an average of 90 minutes off each content without impacting the number of standards measured. The consortium continues to study the test itself looking for more efficiencies for future administrations. KRA: The 2015 KRA set of items was reduced 20%. Of the remaining items, the number of items that could be completed by students on the device was increased from 12 to 17 items.
Personal Needs Profile (PNP) Complexity	PARCC	The PNP is used to identify the particular accessibility features needed by individual students when testing. This file submission is new and requires multiple data sources to complete the file.	MSDE will communicate information through training modules, emails, blogs and webinars monthly beginning in Fall, 2015. MSDE staff working directly with Pearson have created training modules to meet the needs of LACs and school test coordinators (STC) to better understand reasons for and the use of the PNP. MSDE will continue to monitor and determine ways to make this process more efficient moving forward.
Online test platform (TestNav 8) issues	PARCC, HSA	There have been reported issues concerning several of the new accessibility tools available to students. Test-to-Speech, Drag and Drop, use of the highlighter, and the equation editor for math.	MSDE and the consortium as a whole have worked closely with Pearson to quality assure these features and have developed training modules and practice tests for stakeholders to engage.
Browser Issues	PARCC, HSA	The testing platform TestNav 8 was originally dependant on JAVA for security. Chrome no longer supports JAVA and many of the districts use Chrome exclusively.	Pearson has developed an app that can be installed on each machine thus bypassing the need for any particular browser or need for JAVA updates.
AAP Issue	KRA	2014 KRA v.1.0 app was not available on android devices.	The 2015 KRA v.1.5 was made available for all devices including Chromebooks.
Student Mobility	PARCC	Because of the time between the PBA and EOY windows students moving between districts was an issue. Student moving during a particular window is also an issue.	PARCC tests have been redesigned to include only one window moving forward. For those students transferring from LEA to LEA during the testing window, functionality has been built into the system permitting state personnel to transfer the students' electronic tests to the new district.
Test Item Complexity	PARCC	PARCC has new types of test items that require students to do things that they are not used to...	MSDE has posted training modules as well as practice tests and other training tools to familiarize stakeholders with the new test item formats.

Is your school system considering changing its system wide approach to high school final exams?

Three (3) counties do not mandated system wide final exams and have no plans to change this approach.

Two (2) counties have recently approved policy changes to replace high school final exams with quarterly assessments.

Six (6) counties are in some phase of exploring the possibility of eliminating or changing the requirement for locally mandated final exams in the future. Options include eliminating all final exams, eliminating some final exams, using benchmark exams instead of final exams, eliminating final exams in courses that have end of the year state assessments (PARCC, HSA) and replacing traditional final exams with cornerstone tasks.

Seven (7) Counties are not considering making changes to their final exam practices.

Five (6) counties did not respond to our request for information

NOTE: Many counties are in a period of transition and are analyzing their overall approach to student assessment. Many are considering reducing the overall number of locally mandated assessments in an effort to balance the need for timely information about student progress, the need for accountability, and wanting to maximize instructional time.