
NEWS RELEASE

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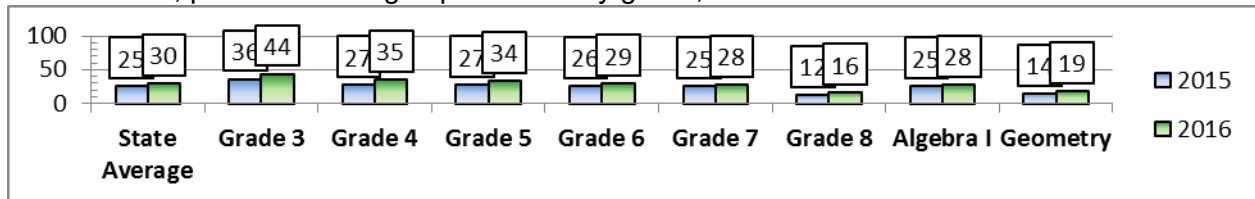
R.I. PARCC achievement levels rise, participation rate increases Statewide leaders call for continued focus on teaching and learning

Rhode Island students' scores improved and participation rates rose on the 2016 PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments, according to results that the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE) released today (August 25).

As a result of statewide conversations in all communities, the statewide participation in both English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics reached 96 percent (up from 90 percent in mathematics and up from 88 percent in English). The U.S. Department of Education sets the participation-rate target at 95 percent. Participation rates improved at all grade levels.

In mathematics, statewide achievement improved by 5 percentage points since 2015, with 29.9 percent of all students meeting or exceeding the learning expectations for their grade level. Students improved on every mathematics assessment (grades 3 through 8, algebra I, and geometry).

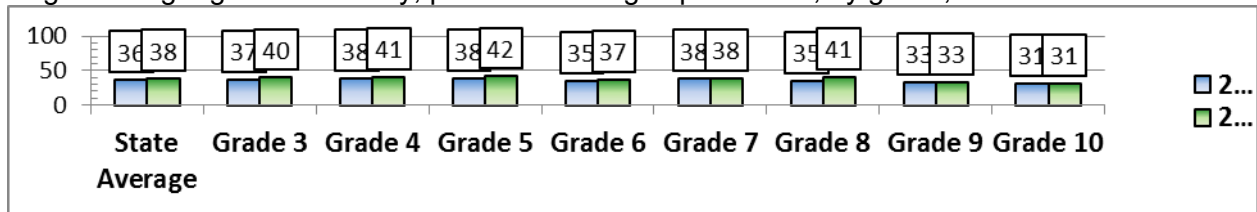
Mathematics, percent meeting expectations by grade, 2015 and 2016



In English language arts/literacy, statewide achievement improved by 2 percentage points, with 37.9 percent of all students meeting or exceeding the learning expectations for their grade level (grades 3 through 10). Students improved in five grade levels and scores were unchanged in three grade levels.

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English Language Arts/Literacy, percent meeting expectations, by grade, 2015 and 2016



PARCC also reports a “scale score” (between 650 and 850) for each assessment. Rhode Island scale scores improved on all 8 mathematics tests and on 6 of the 8 reading tests. On all tests but one (grade-8 mathematics), Rhode Island students attained Level 3: Approached expectations.

What they’re saying

“I commend Rhode Island students, families, and teachers for the improvements we see this year in PARCC participation and performance,” said Barbara S. Cottam, Chair of the Board of Education. “We need to continue providing students with access to great instruction and challenging courses to ensure that all of our graduates are ready for success, and we need to continue investing in early learning so that students are reading at grade level at least by grade 3. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but today’s results are a positive sign.”

“While all of us should be pleased with this year’s improvements in PARCC results and participation rates, we should also recognize that the majority of our students did not meet all of the learning expectations for their grade,” said Daniel P. McConaghy, Chair of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. “We see a positive trend this year, but we have to continue working to support and improve teaching and learning and to adopt on a broader scale some of the best practices that successful Rhode Island schools have put into action.”

“With student scores and participation rates on the rise, the assessment results we released today show we are on the right path,” said Education Commissioner Ken Wagner. “Test results are only one measure of student achievement, but if we stay focused and continue working together, hold high standards and expectations for all students, provide challenging coursework opportunities in every school, and re-imagine schooling for the 21st century, we’ll meet our goal of preparing all graduates for success in postsecondary education and in challenging careers.”

Achievement gaps

PARCC achievement levels rose for just about all student groups, in both English and mathematics. In English, the performance of English learners rose by 2 percentage points, low-income students rose by 2 points, black students rose by 2 points, and Hispanic students rose by 3 points. Students with disabilities’ results were unchanged. Because statewide results improved by 2 points, the achievement gap for Hispanic students narrowed by one point, the gap for students with disabilities widened by 2 points, and the other gaps were unchanged.

In mathematics, the performance of students with disabilities improved by 1 point, English learners improved by 2 points, low-income students improved by 4 points, black students improved by 3 points, and Hispanic students improved by 4 points. Because the statewide results

improved by 5 points, the achievement gap for each of these students groups widened, despite the overall improvement in achievement.

School and district results

Several school districts saw significant improvements in both student achievement and participation rates in both English and mathematics, including Bristol Warren, Chariho, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Providence, and Warwick.

Schools making the most significant improvement in English include Mount Hope High School (Bristol Warren), up 37 percentage points in the percent of students meeting expectations and up 25 points in participation; Chariho Regional High School, up 27 points in achievement and up 10 points in participation; Marieville Elementary School (North Providence), up 22 points in achievement and 10 points in participation; Leviton Dual Language Elementary School (Providence), up 20 points in achievement; Scituate High School, up 26 points in achievement and 49 points in participation; and The Learning Community Elementary School, up 23 points in achievement.

Schools making the most significant improvement in mathematics include Chariho Regional High School, up 31 points in achievement and 8 points in participation; Jamestown Melrose Elementary School, up 20 points in achievement; Kingston Hill Academy, up 22 points in achievement; North Smithfield High School, up 29 points in achievement and 32 points in participation; The Learning Community Elementary School, up 22 points in achievement; and the Fort Barton Elementary School (Tiverton), up 30 points in achievement and 12 points in participation.

About PARCC

A consortium of states, including Rhode Island, developed the PARCC assessments, which are designed to determine whether students are meeting the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. These learning standards, based on an international set of benchmarks, establish expectations for each grade level in literacy and mathematics. The standards are designed to prepare students for success in their next grade level, in postsecondary learning, and in career opportunities.

After a year of pilot testing, students took the first official PARCC assessments in 2015. The second administration of PARCC assessments took place in the spring of 2016; about 85,000 Rhode Island students participated. Students in grades 3 through 10 took the English assessments; students in grade 3 through 8 plus those enrolled in algebra 1 and geometry took the mathematics assessment. PARCC reports student results at five scoring levels; students in levels 4 and 5 have met (or exceeded) the learning expectations for their grade or subject. Students at level 3 have “approached expectations.”

Assessment modes: Paper v online

In 2016, 81 percent of Rhode Island students took the PARCC assessments online; 19 percent took the paper-based version of PARCC. In both English and mathematics, achievement levels for Rhode Island students taking the online version were 2 percentage points higher than for those who took PARCC on paper. In English, 7 tests had higher achievement levels online, 2

tests had higher achievement levels on paper, one test was the same for both. In mathematics, 8 tests had higher scores online, 2 tests had higher scores on paper. In 2017, we expect all students to take the PARCC assessments online, except for those students needing special accommodations.

Uses of PARCC

PARCC assessments provide important information to families and to educators about student achievement and student progress in relation to their peers. Teachers and family members will use these results to identify student strengths and learning needs and to improve instruction. Beginning this week, school districts are receiving individual score reports for each participating student. School districts will send these reports to parents and families over the course of the next several weeks.

The 2016 PARCC results will be one component of the 2016 Rhode Island accountability system, which includes the classification of schools and identification of commended schools and schools in need of improvement. RIDE is in the process of redesigning the accountability system for 2017 and beyond.

The 2016 PARCC results provide us with a measure of one year's growth for all participating students. School districts will use this measure as part of their teacher evaluations, though they will not use the measure until we have 2017 PARCC results, which will provide measures of growth for two school years.

Subject to the approval this fall of the proposed changes to the Secondary School Regulations, standardized assessments (including PARCC) will not be part of statewide graduation requirements (although school districts retain the authority to establish local graduation requirements).

For more information

The complete RIDE report on 2016 PARCC results is posted [here](#), or:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/AssessmentResults.aspx>

More information from RIDE on PARCC assessments is available [here](#).

Information from the PARCC Consortium about score reports, "Understand the Score," is available [here](#).

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