

## **Additional Frequently Asked Questions from District 105 Families** **PARCC and the Common Core Standards**

### **What is the Common Core and who is implementing them?**

State education chiefs and governors in 48 states came together to develop the Common Core, a set of clear college- and career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Today, 43 states have voluntarily adopted and are working to implement the standards, which are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to take credit-bearing introductory courses in two- or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. For an overview, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5ktLyHDjL4>

### **Who developed the Common Core Standards?**

States across the country collaborated with teachers, researchers, and leading experts to design and develop the Common Core State Standards. Each state independently made the decision to adopt the Common Core. Local teachers, principals, and superintendents lead the implementation of the Common Core in their states. The federal government was not involved in the development of the standards.

### **Do the Common Core Standards tell the teachers what they have to teach?**

No! Teachers know best about what works in the classroom. That is why these standards establish what students need to learn, but do not dictate *how* teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers decide how best to help students reach the standards.

For even more specifics on who developed the Common Core Standards, click [HERE](#).

### **Will the PARCC test be administered each year for all subjects?**

At this time, it is expected that the PARCC assessment will be given to 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Math and Literacy. Once results are provided for this year's testing (expected in the fall of 2015), more information regarding future PARCC testing requirements will be shared with us.

### **When will the PARCC test results be sent to the parents and guardians?**

At this time, it is expected that PARCC results will come to us in the fall of 2015. Upon receiving the results, we will review them, use them to support instruction in any way possible, and share your child's results with you in a timely manner.

### **How much exact time will the PARCC test take versus ISAT testing times?**

ISAT testing was approximately 3-5 hours of testing time based on grade level. PARCC assessments will be given during two separate testing windows in the spring, doubling the testing time. Depending on the grade level, testing time can last from 6-10 hours total.

### **How will the previous ISAT scores translate to PARCC scores?**

In consideration of the new CCSS, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) reviewed ISAT performance expectations for students in grades 3-8 prior to 2012 and determined that they were too low and did not give an accurate picture of a student's ability to succeed in college and the workforce. Therefore, in order to prepare students for the rigor required to master the new Common Core Standards, ISBE raised the 2013 and 2014 Math and English Language Arts ISAT performance expectations for elementary and middle school students .

This adjustment of the ISAT performance expectations raised the academic bar for all students across Illinois. Students needed to demonstrate greater proficiency than ever before in order to reach the threshold of “meets” or “exceeds” on the Common Core Standards aligned ISAT assessment. As a result, school districts throughout the state experienced a downward shift of student rank on the 2013 and 2014 ISATs as compared to previous years. This shift was significant. As a state, in 2012 82% of students met or exceeded on math and reading standards combined compared to 59% meeting or exceeding on the 2013 ISAT. To further illustrate this shift, District 105’s results from the 2012 ISAT showed 87% of our students met or exceeded standards in combined reading and math. With the adjusted performance expectations for 2013 ISAT, 66% of our students met or exceeded standards.

These new performance expectations brought the 2013 and 2014 ISAT student results in line with those typically seen on the more rigorous MAP assessment that District 105 has given its students over the last 7 years. The ISAT performance expectations for the last two years are also more in line with results we should expect from the first PARCC assessment in spring of 2015.

**Will the district look to drop other forms of testing or reduce the number of MAP tests due to the addition of the PARCC assessment?**

In order to make the best instructional decisions for all students in District 105, we must be well informed. Though the PARCC assessment will be given this spring, we will not have results until the fall. Having more timely information regarding student growth over the school year to inform instructional practice is critical. Therefore, consistent to what we have administered in past, our kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> grade students will participate in the MAP test this spring as well. Each year we review testing measures to be certain they best serve our students. This spring will be no different. The amount of testing we implement in future years will *always* be directly related to how well it serves the diverse needs of our students.

**How do the Common Core Standards relate to MAP testing?**

MAP, which stands for *Measures of Academic Progress*, is a computerized-adaptive test that dynamically adjusts according to a student’s response while taking the test. If a student answers a reading or math question correctly, the test presents a more challenging item. If a student misses a question, the MAP test adapts and offers a simpler item. In this way, the test narrows in on a student’s individual reading and math learning levels. The MAP assessment results provide teachers, principals, and specialists with detailed information on individual student strengths and areas of need in both math and reading. Instruction can then be adjusted and individualized to best meet the needs of each student in the classroom. MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessments, given in the fall, winter, and spring in District 105, are aligned to the Common Core Standards.

**What are lexile scores and how are they connected to the Common Core Standards?**

Based on our research, the Common Core Standards provide text complexity grade bands and associated Lexile bands that are intended to put students on a college- and career-ready trajectory. These grade and Lexile bands are the basis for determining at what text complexity level students should be reading—and at which grades—to make sure they are ultimately prepared for the reading demands of college and careers. For more on lexile levels, visit [www.lexile.com](http://www.lexile.com)

## What are the expected lexile reading levels at each grade level?

Grade Band	Previous Lexile Band	NEW CCSS Lexile Band*
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450L-730L	420L-820L
4-5	640L-850L	740L-1010L
6-8	860L-1010L	925L-1185L
9-10	960L-1120L	1050L-1335L
11-CCR	1070L-1220L	1185L-1385L

\*COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH, LANGUAGE ARTS, APPENDIX A (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION), NGA AND CCSSO, 2012

### How can I determine the lexile reading level of my child?

Ask your child's teacher to provide you with your child's CCSS lexile level. This level is calculated following each MAP testing window.

### How are teachers assessing students around the Common Core Standards? How is this assessment information being shared with parents?

Currently, across the district, our kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers have created extensive unit plans spanning the course of the school year. Each unit plan aligns with specific Common Core grade level standards. A pre-assessment is given to the students to determine what each student already knows regarding the unit standards and what he/she still needs to learn. Students are then grouped and instruction is individualized to support learning needs. Throughout the unit of instruction, teachers are examining student progress through a series of formative tasks that inform teachers what students are understanding and where confusion may exist. These formative tasks consist of everything from homework, class assignments, small group activities, quick quizzes, etc. This information informs the teacher and drives ongoing unit instruction. Finally, at the end of a given unit, a post-assessment is given to determine how well students progressed from the beginning to the end of the unit around that given set of standards. Standards that have not been mastered are addressed in future units in order to support students toward greater standards mastery.

The standards being addressed in each unit should be shared with parents through e-mails, newsletters, and other forms of communication. Assessment results can be shared in a variety of ways. Teachers may forward assessments to parents for review or they may share classroom and individual student goals based on these assessment results.

### How is the district supporting changes that drive instruction around the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?

Similar to districts around the state and country, District 105 is in the third year of CCSS implementation into the classroom. The CCSS is not simply a set of standards just to be taught, but instead a set of standards that is changing how we deliver content and how children express what they know. A focus on these standards across the district is increasing levels of student engagement and expecting higher levels of critical thinking. Learning today must consist of more than just "knowing" the facts. To be

college and career ready, children need to demonstrate a deeper understanding and synthesis of information to solve problems and reason. To support this dramatic shift, District 105 connected with *C2 Collaborative* to develop our long term CCSS implementation plan. *C2 Collaborative* is currently working with states across the country on CCSS implementation including statewide professional development for Indiana, over 200 schools in New York, and the Chicago Public Schools.

**Is the push for increasingly more data collection from pre/formative/and summative tests pulling time away from teacher lesson planning?**

District 105 takes assessment very seriously. All assessments given are purposeful and intended to drive instruction and set learning goals with students. The data that is collected from pre, formative, and post assessments inform teachers of what students know and don't know in a given unit. Without this information, lessons and instruction cannot be properly individualized to meet the needs of students that require enrichment and/or intervention support around the standards. With purposeful unit-based assessment information, lesson planning is more focused to meet specific learning needs in the classroom.

**When will new textbooks be introduced be aligned with the Common Core Standards?**

Teachers are essential for student achievement, and they need quality instructional materials to be effective. As we proceed with implementation of the Common Core, we are in need of the best classroom materials that reflect these new standards. Unfortunately, instructional materials that claim to be Common Core-aligned have saturated the market over the last few years. We know that many of these materials are simply "repurposed" and their claims of CCSS alignment have not been verified by a reliable source. Slowly, new materials are being developed with the Common Core in mind. We will be examining those materials beginning the 2015-16 school year to determine which will best meet our instructional needs.

**Will there be other Common Core Standards related curriculum nights?**

Yes, we plan to have future evening events to highlight how the Common Core Standards are "brought to life" in the classrooms across District 105. Look for more evenings at each school during the 2015-16 school year.