

**Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for
College and Careers (PARCC)
Implementation Review Workgroup**

Preliminary Report



**Annapolis, Maryland
August 2014**

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**Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Partnership for
Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)
Implementation Review Workgroup
2013 Membership Roster**

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Background

On April 14, 2014, Governor Martin O'Malley signed legislation establishing the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Implementation Review Workgroup. The Workgroup members were appointed on June 12, 2014.

The workgroup consists of the following:

- Two members of the Senate of Maryland
- Two members of the House of Delegates
- The State Superintendent of Schools, or designee
- The Secretary of Higher Education, or designee
- One representative of the State Board of Education
- Two representatives of the Maryland State Education Association
- One representative of the Baltimore Teachers Union
- One representative of the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland
- One representative of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education
- Two representatives of the Maryland Parent Teacher Association who are parents of students enrolled in a Maryland public school
- One representative of the Maryland Association of Student Councils who is a student enrolled in a Maryland public school
- One academic expert whose area of expertise is educational measurement
- One academic expert whose area of expertise is curriculum and instruction
- One representative of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education
- One representative from the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals
- One representative from the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals

So far, the workgroup has met on the following dates:

- July 10, 2014
- July 25, 2014
- August 12, 2014

Future meetings are scheduled for:

- September 17, 2014
- October 21, 2014
- November 12, 2014
- December 11, 2014

All meeting materials are posted at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/parccworkgroup/>.

Workgroup Charge and Process

The Workgroup shall:

- (1) identify and analyze the best practices of local education agencies in the State and in other jurisdictions that are successfully implementing the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments;
- (2) assess how the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and the PARCC assessments will affect the students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals;
- (3) determine what, if any, new curriculum resources will be needed in order to fully implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards;
- (4) identify how the State Department of Education plans to assist local education agencies in preparing parents and students for the PARCC assessments;
- (5) assess the needs of teachers and principals in the area of professional development related to the implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, including determining:
 - i. what, if any, State and federal funding is available to supplement the funding that local governments provide toward the professional development of teachers and principals; and
 - ii. what, if any, professional development and ongoing support from local education agencies is available to expand the use of technology as an instructional tool in the classroom;
- (6) assess the technological readiness and needs of the public schools for the implementation of the PARCC assessments, including what resources will be needed to teach students the necessary computer skills to take the PARCC assessments;
- (7) begin recommending a professional development plan for the State Department of Education to implement during the 2014-2015 school year to assist local education agencies in implementing the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards;
- (8) recommend a plan to meet the technological infrastructure needs of public schools related to the implementation of the PARCC assessments;
- (9) assess how the PARCC assessments testing window will affect the normal school calendar and school schedule;
- (10) assess how local education agencies are including teachers in the discussion to improve the implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards;
- (11) analyze the guidance local education agencies have received from the State Department of Education in regards to measuring student growth in light of the new teacher evaluation system and student learning objectives;

- (12) assess how the new teacher evaluation system is impacting local education agencies' ability to implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards; and
- (13) develop a plan to transfer from the Maryland High School Assessments in English and Algebra/Data Analysis to the comparable PARCC assessments as a graduation requirement.

On or before August 15, 2014, the Workgroup shall submit a preliminary report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and, in accordance with §2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

On or before December 31, 2014, the Workgroup shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and, in accordance with §2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

Appendix I contains the full legislation.

PROCESS

Meetings have been organized around the areas of the Workgroup's charge. Each meeting starts with a presentation from a local school district about a best practice it is using to successfully implement the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) and/or the PARCC assessments.

For each meeting agenda item, there has been a brief presentation followed by questions and comments. Some of these questions and comments may become the basis of recommendations.

Status of Work

Identify and analyze the best practices of local education agencies in the State and in other jurisdictions that are successfully implementing the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments

The Workgroup begins each meeting with a local school system presentation about a best practice it uses to support the successful implementation of the MCCRS and/or PARCC. So far, the Workgroup has heard from the following districts:

- **Anne Arundel County Public Schools, July 10, 2014**

Presenter: Dr. Kathryn Kubic, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Topic: A model that visually presents how the Common Core State Standards and PARCC Claims are aligned in a purposeful way. Using this visual model as a starting point, the school system is unpacking the components for teachers. (Appendix II, Exhibit I)

- **Prince George's County Public Schools, July 25, 2014**

Presenters: Dr. Shawn Joseph, Deputy Superintendent; W. Wesley Watts, Jr., Chief Information Officer; Yakoubou Ousmanou, Director of Testing; Pauline Carey, Testing Administration Specialist

Topic: The collaboration between the departments of instruction and informational technology to ensure a successful online PARCC administration. The school system is ramping up the number of devices available for both instruction and testing while developing a plan for technology support. (Appendix II, Exhibit II)

- **Carroll County Public Schools, August 12, 2014**

Presenters: Dr. Margaret Pfaff, Director of Curriculum and Instructional Resources; English Language Arts Supervisor; Mathematics Supervisor

Topic: Best Practices in the areas of curriculum development, writing and implementation, including professional development and communications (Appendix II, Exhibit III)

In addition to monthly presentations, the Workgroup has asked each school district to provide a one-page white paper on one or more successful best practices. The Workgroup will review these submissions and consider how they can be effectively shared among districts. Appendix II, Exhibit IV)

Assess how the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and the PARCC assessments will affect the students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals

On July 10, Henry Johnson, Asst. Superintendent for the Division of Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability, Marcella Franczkowski, Asst. Superintendent for the Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, and Kristina Kyles, Asst. Superintendent for the Division of Student, Family, and School Support – all from the Maryland State Department of Education - presented data regarding the achievement of English language learners, students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals, and students who receive special education services. Discussion revolved around the achievement gaps between these student groups and students as a whole. These gaps have persisted for decades.

The Workgroup requested additional, targeted information, which will be provided at future meetings. (Appendix XI)

Determine what, if any, new curriculum resources will be needed in order to fully implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

On July 25, Judy Jenkins, Director of the Division of Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability, discussed some of the curricular resources that have been developed so far, what is in development, and how these are being shared with teachers, parents and students. Resources are available in all content areas and grades, and include the needed shifts in instruction. Resources are shared through organizations (e.g. PTA, Maryland Assoc. of Student Councils), at conferences, during school system visits and online.

As the MCCRS approach full implementation, more teachers and parents are accessing these resources.

To address this area of its charge, the Workgroup is developing a survey for distribution to local school districts about the curricular resources teachers need now. A draft survey was discussed on August 12. A new draft survey will be shared with the Workgroup prior to its distribution to teachers and superintendents.

Identify how the State Department of Education plans to assist local education agencies in preparing parents and students for the PARCC assessments

On July 25, Laura Motel, Communication Specialist at MSDE, said that communication strategies include producing print resources, posting online information, organizing demonstrations, inviting the media to visit schools, and the using social media to push out information. A flash drive containing resource documents was mailed to each school district so they could print materials for distribution to parents, staff and/or students. This coming year, communications will focus on what the transition looks like and the new graduation requirements. Information about the MCCRS and PARCC will be merged, since they operate in tandem. (See Appendix III, Exhibit I)

Douglas Strader, Interim Chief, Planning and Assessment Branches, said that MSDE is also sharing information from the PARCC online website, which has a wealth of information. www.parcconline.org (Appendix III, Exhibit II)

Workgroup questions and comments dealt with issues such as hard to reach parents, the development of an App, asking students how they would like to receive information and giving parents information that is actionable.

Assess the needs of teachers and principals in the area of professional development related to the implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, including determining:

- (1) what, if any, State and federal funding is available to supplement the funding that local governments provide toward the professional development of teachers and principals; and***
- (2) what, if any, professional development and ongoing support from local education agencies is available to expand the use of technology as an instructional tool in the classroom***

To address this charge, the Workgroup is developing a survey for distribution to local school districts. Questions may be added about what professional development and local government funding is available.

A draft survey was discussed on August 12. A new draft survey will be shared with the Workgroup prior to its distribution to teachers and superintendents.

MSDE is asking grant personnel to explore options that can be shared with school systems. MSDE will provide information about current funding available

Assess the technological readiness and needs of the public schools for the implementation of the PARCC assessments, including what resources will be needed to teach students the necessary computer skills to take the PARCC assessments

On July 10, MSDE provided a summary of the successes and challenges of the spring PARCC field testing. MSDE recommends that teachers use PARCC practice test items during class so students become familiar with the tasks. It also encourages teachers to use technology during instruction so students learn to use the device (iPad, laptop, desktop) in class in the same way they use it during testing. This use includes skills such as “drag and drop” and calculators.

School districts are being encouraged to increase each year the percentage of students participating in the online PARCC assessments. The goal is to have 100% online testing by 2016-2017.

The Workgroup members discussed the length of the PARCC assessments. On July 29, 2014, PARCC, Inc. recommended to the Governing Board changes in the assessment in English Language Arts to reduce testing times. The Governing Board approved the following changes:

- Grade 3 – reduce reading passages from 4 to 2, which will reduce the testing time by 72 minutes
- Grade 4 & 5 – reduce reading passages from 4 to 2, which will reduce the

testing time by 40 minutes

- Middle school and high school – reduce reading passages from 5 to 4, which will reduce testing time by 20 minutes

The Workgroup has preliminarily discussed the budgetary impact of technology infrastructure and support.

Begin recommending a professional development plan for the State Department of Education to implement during the 2014-2015 school year to assist local education agencies in implementing the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

To address this charge, the Workgroup is developing a survey for distribution to local school districts about professional development needs. A draft survey was discussed on August 12. A new draft survey will be shared with the Workgroup prior to its distribution to teachers and superintendents.

Recommend a plan to meet the technological infrastructure needs of public schools related to the implementation of the PARCC assessments

Preliminary conversations took place on July 25 during the Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) presentation. PGCPS has created a comprehensive schedule that is posted on their website.

Assess how the PARCC assessments testing window will affect the normal school calendar and school schedule

On July 25, William Cappe, MSDE Ombudsman, presented school calendar considerations. He reviewed legal requirements (such as minimum number of school days and hours and certain holiday mandates), local school district opening and closing days, how inclement weather affects calendars, and how school systems have autonomy in setting calendars. (Appendix IV)

Discussion revolved around testing windows and the number of state and local testing days for students. PARCC is working on reducing testing time. The Workgroup plans to poll school districts about both of these issues.

Assess how local education agencies are including teachers in the discussion to improve the implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

This area has not yet been discussed.

Analyze the guidance local education agencies have received from the State Department of Education in regards to measuring student growth in light of the new teacher evaluation system and student learning objectives

This area has not yet been discussed.

Assess how the new teacher evaluation system is impacting local education agencies’ ability to implement the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

This area has not yet been discussed.

Develop a plan to transfer from the Maryland High School Assessments in English and Algebra/Data Analysis to the comparable PARCC assessments as a graduation requirement

On August 12, the workgroup was briefed on the State Board of Education's plan to transition from the Maryland High School Assessments in English and Algebra I/Data Analysis to the PARCC assessments as graduation requirements. The calendar of PARCC and HSA test administrations for the 2014 – 2015 and 2015 – 2016 school years, as well as a visual depiction of the calendar, were distributed. (Appendix VIII)

At each meeting, data and information is provided to address unanswered questions from previous meetings. (Appendix IX)

Appendix Summary

- Appendix I: Chapter 246 (HB 1164) Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Implementation Review Workgroup
- Appendix II: Exhibit I – Anne Arundel Public Schools Best Practice
Exhibit II – Prince George’s County Public Schools Best Practice
Exhibit III – Carroll County Public Schools Best Practice
Exhibit IV – Local Education Agency Best Practice White Papers
- Appendix III: Exhibit I – Parent, Staff and Student Resources
Exhibit II – PARCC Resources
- Appendix IV: School Calendar Handouts
- Appendix V: July 10, 2014 Agenda and Minutes
- Appendix VI: July 25, 2014 Agenda and Minutes
- Appendix VII: August 12, 2014 Agenda
- Appendix VIII: Maryland High School Assessment Program – Transition Plan
- Appendix IX: Data Addressing Workgroup Questions