



HADDON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

500 RHOADS AVENUE • WESTMONT, NEW JERSEY 08108
PHONE: 856-869-7750 ext. 1100 • FAX: 856-854-7792
WEBSITE: www.haddontwpschools.com

Bonnie J. Edwards
Superintendent of Schools
856-869-7750 Ext. 1100
bedwards@haddontwpschools.com

Jennifer Gauld
School Business Administrator/
Board Secretary
856-869-7750 Ext. 1105
jgauld@haddontwpschools.com

Elizabeth Mennig
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum & Instruction
856-869-7750 Ext. 1108
lmennig@haddontwpschools.com

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Re: PARCC Assessment Participation for 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian of Students in Grades 3 through 8:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that state assessments must “be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all children” and “provide for the participation in such assessments of *all* students.” These requirements do not allow students to be excluded from statewide assessments. Rather, they set out the rule that all students in grades 3 through 8 must be assessed. New Jersey has selected the PARCC as its statewide assessment. If a state with a participation rate below 95% in 2016 fails to assess at least 95% of its students in 2017, the US Department of Education has a range of enforcement actions at its disposal that includes the withholding of federal funds. The USDOE will consider state and local participation rates for 2017, as well as action the state has taken with respect to any local school district noncompliant with the assessment requirements of ESSA.

As a result of Haddon Township’s low participation rate during the 2016 PARCC assessments, individual schools and the district as a whole have been required to complete and submit corrective action plans to the NJ Department of Education to improve participation rates for 2017. Failure to improve our participation rates may impact the district negatively. For example, both attendance in school and participation in the PARCC are linked not only to funding, but also to district performance reports that are published annually.

In September of 2016, new state regulations became effective for the high school graduation assessments requirements in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for the Classes of 2016 through 2021. Starting with the Class of 2020, in order to graduate, students will be required to take all PARCC assessments associated with the high school level courses for which they were eligible and receive valid scores. Attached is a document that reviews these updated regulations and how they will impact your child’s high school graduation requirements.

We recognize that families still have questions and concerns about the test. In order to address these issues, we have scheduled a parent presentation regarding year

three of PARCC on **March 8th at 6:00pm in the middle school multi-purpose room**. At this presentation, elementary and middle school parents will have the opportunity to review the PARCC for this year that maintains a shorter testing window, fewer testing sessions, and student-friendly accessibility features, as well as the benefits of the assessment. The implications of the new high school graduation assessments requirements will be discussed in detail. The goal is to ensure that Haddon Township families are fully informed about the PARCC prior to its administration this spring.

As described in detail above, there is no provision for non-participation (“opting out”) in state assessments (PARCC). Districts are left to address situations in which families disallow their children’s participation.

The following procedures, therefore, shall apply to students and their parents/guardians when not following district parameters regarding required participation in the state proficiency assessment:

Parents/Guardians who disallow participation must submit a written statement to the building principal prior to the actual dates of testing, documenting their intention to have their child not participate in the PARCC. In order to plan accordingly, we ask that the written statement be **delivered to the principal by March 20th for elementary students and April 24th for middle school students**. Please keep a copy of the written statement. During the testing period, please send your child to school each day on time unless you would have kept your child home for a valid reason anyway (illness, etc.).

Students whose families have submitted a written statement disallowing participation in the assessment are expected to come to school on the days of testing, where they will be marked present. They will be located in a room with adult supervision that is separate from the testing environment. Students should bring a book or other appropriate material. No planned instructional activities will take place. iPads or other electronic devices **cannot** be used because we are limiting network traffic for security purposes during testing. Students will be asked to read or work quietly during the testing period.

Students whose families have **not** submitted a written statement of non-participation and who are **not** present on the day of the assessment will be marked absent and will sit for the PARCC make-up tests as scheduled. Students whose families have **not** written a statement of non-participation and arrive **late** to school on testing days will be **marked tardy**. However, they **will be** expected to participate in the test make-up period.

Students whose families **have** submitted a written statement of non-participation and who **do not** attend school during the testing will be **marked absent**. However, they **will not** be expected to participate in the test make-up period.

Students whose families **have** submitted a written statement of non-participation and who **are late** to school during testing will be **marked tardy**. However, they **will not** be expected to participate in the test make-up period.

Additional information will be forthcoming from your building principal regarding the specific testing schedule and plan for your child's school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in your child's education.

Sincerely,



Bonnie J. Edwards
Superintendent of Schools