

The pathway to success

Understanding the new Illinois learning standards and assessments

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do we need new standards and assessments, and why are they important?

High academic standards and assessments are important because they help ensure all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents and school districts; build students' knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students. Illinois adopted its first set of learning goals in 1985 and revised them in 1996. The new standards and assessments are the next step in the journey of student success. Similar to the car industry making adjustments as they learn more about driver safety, Illinois is implementing new standards and assessments because we have learned more about how to help students be successful.

Is PARCC replacing the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE)?

Yes. During the 2014-15 school year, students in third through eighth grade and high school students will take the PARCC assessment in English language arts and math. PARCC is aligned to the new learning standards and can be given online, so as to facilitate administration and return of results and to reduce cost of administration. These assessments were developed to help bridge student performance from elementary school to high school. PARCC also can be used for instruction, unlike past assessments.

Does Illinois still have local decision-making authority?

Yes. The new standards establish what students need to learn, but do not tell teachers how to teach. Implementation decisions will remain local. Teachers and school leaders will determine how the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do, allowing for continued flexibility and creativity.

* For more information, go to

THE PATHWAY MIGHT CHANGE, BUT THE DESTINATION REMAINS THE SAME

→ No matter what changes are made to the learning standards and assessments, the goal remains the same – making sure students are prepared to be successful in college and the workforce.

MOVING FROM AN ACHIEVEMENT MODEL TO A GROWTH MODEL

→ The new standards and assessments will allow school districts to gain comprehensive data that will show the growth of each student. This will provide a “photo album” of each student’s success, rather than a “snapshot” that was provided by the previous standards and assessments.

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS = SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

→ Illinois has always embraced high standards. We know how important high standards are to helping students become competitive in the workforce, which in turn helps communities through increasing property values.

See sample questions
from the new
assessment at
[www.parcconline.org/
samples/item-task-](http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q - What are educational standards?

A - Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

Q - Why are high academic standards important?

A - High academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students. Illinois adopted its first set of learning goals in 1985 and revised them in 1996. Illinois has long been a believer in setting high expectations for students in order for them to be successful. The new standards are the next step in this journey.

Q - What is the relationship between the new Illinois Learning Standards and the federal government?

A - The new standards in English Language Arts and math are the result of a state-led initiative. They are independent of the federal government.

Q - Does the implementation of the new Illinois Learning Standards give the federal government control over our state's curriculum?

A - The standards do NOT amount to a national curriculum for our schools, as the standards are not a curriculum. The standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met and design the curriculum locally as Illinois has always done.

Q - Does Illinois still have local Decision-Making authority?

A - The new standards establish what students need to learn, but do not tell teachers how to teach. Implementation decisions will remain local. Teachers

and school leaders will determine how the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do, allowing for continued flexibility and creativity.

Q - Are the new Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts and math the only standards Illinois has? ☒

A - Illinois has in place educational standards for early childhood, fine arts, foreign language, physical development and health, science, social emotional, and social science.

Q - Is PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) replacing the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE)?

A- Yes. During the 2014-15 school year, students in third through eighth grade and high school students will take the PARCC assessment in both English language arts (ELA) and math. The PARCC exams will replace the ISAT, formerly given to third- through eighth-graders, and the PSAE, previously given to 11th-grade students.

Q - Why do we need new assessments?

A - The new tests were developed in response to the longstanding concerns of educators, parents and employers who want assessments that better measure students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills and their ability to communicate clearly.

Q - Why did Illinois choose PARCC?

A - PARCC is aligned to the new learning standards and it can be given online so as to facilitate administration and return of results and to reduce cost of administration. These assessments were developed to help to bridge knowledge of student performance from elementary to high school and between elementary and high school districts. It can be used for instruction unlike past assessments

Q - Where can I learn more about the new English Language Arts and Math standards for my child?

A - The national PTA in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education has developed brochures for each grade level (Kindergarten through high school) to provide an overview of the new standards and how they will prepare students for college and the workforce. To see these brochures go to <http://www.pta.org/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2909>

Check out this website http://parcconline.org/give-time-back-kids?utm_source=PARCC+Updates+10%2F02%2F14&utm_campaign=9%2F5%2F2014+Update&utm_medium=email