

This document provides suggested questions and answers to help guide parent-teacher conferences or conversations about what to expect on the 2014-2015 student assessment results for [English language arts](#) and [math](#). The list of questions is not exhaustive, but reflects evidence-based answers to questions that parents have frequently asked about our statewide assessment results.

Click [HERE](#) to view a model parent-teacher conference by Louisiana Teacher Leader Advisor Emily Martin, from Math, Science & Arts Academy East in Iberville Parish.

Q. WHY DID MY CHILD TAKE NEW TESTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATH LAST YEAR?

- New tests were needed to fully measure the more rigorous standards adopted by Louisiana, which are guiding classroom instruction in English language arts and math. These standards focus on the skills students need in the real world, like critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. The tests not only measure the new expectations, they also reflect the types of classroom activities your child is engaged in every day.

Q. IF WE ARE MOVING TO A NEW TEST THIS YEAR, WHY IS THE PARCC TEST STILL IMPORTANT FOR MY CHILD?

- The PARCC test helps you and your child's teachers understand how your child is progressing in math and English language arts and how his or her performance compares to peers in the same grade level across the state and nation. The test also identifies where your child may need more support or additional challenges, which allow for more personalized instruction.

Q. WHAT WILL THE RESULTS TELL ME ABOUT MY CHILD'S PERFORMANCE?

- Your child's overall score will provide a **summary of how your child is performing in each subject** and whether he or she needs additional support moving forward.
- The overall score is reported in one of five achievement levels, with 5 being the highest:
 - Students who score at Level 4 or Level 5 have met or exceeded the expectations for that grade level and subject.
 - Students scoring in Level 3 are approaching the expectations for that grade level and subject.
 - Students scoring at Level 2 partially met the expectations for that grade level and subject.
 - Students scoring at Level 1 did not meet the expectations for that grade level and subject.
- The test results will also include a breakdown of your child's performance in more specific categories within each subject.

Q. HOW CAN I USE THE RESULTS TO HELP MY CHILD IMPROVE?

- Student performance is broken down into subcategories within each subject. This information will help you understand where your child may need additional practice or more challenging work in a particular area. You can use this information to ask about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in class, and how you can support your child at home.

Q. WILL THE SCORES LOOK DIFFERENT THAN THE SCORES FROM PREVIOUS STATE ASSESSMENTS?

- The bar has been raised for students and the new tests are measuring more complex skills, including critical-thinking, persuasive writing, and problem solving. The tasks on the new tests are more challenging than those found on previous tests, so we need to rethink the way we interpret the results and the newly defined achievement levels. A low score does not mean that your child did not improve or learned less. This first year's scores set a new baseline from which progress will be measured moving forward.
 - *Suggestion:* Teachers might provide parents with an example of what a student could do last year versus what they are doing this year, or an example of an old test question and a PARCC question to show the new expectations which call for more meaningful, complex work.

Q. HOW WILL MY CHILD'S SCORE BE USED?

- Scores are used to identify where a child excels and can be challenged to go deeper into the subject matter, or where he or she needs extra support or practice. The scores will also be used to measure how well schools and districts are preparing students to meet the higher expectations.
- This test is just one measure of how well your child is performing academically. Other information, such as grades, teacher feedback, and scores on other tests, will help determine your child's academic strengths and needs.
- **Results on the new tests will not be used to determine student promotion** and will not negatively impact teacher evaluations.

Q. HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT MY CHILD CONTINUES TO PROGRESS?

- As students and teachers spend more time working with the new standards, the scores are expected to improve, especially for younger students. Several states have been using tests aligned to raise standards for a few years now and have seen dramatic improvement in student achievement.

Q. WHAT TYPES OF QUESTION WERE ASKED ON THE TESTS?

- The PARCC test was divided into two sections, performance-based tasks (completed in early spring) and the end-of-year assessment (completed near the end of the school year.) Performance-based tasks include complex, multi-step writing assignments that ask students to apply their knowledge and skills to address real-world problems. For example, in the English language arts/literacy performance-based component, students apply their research and writing skills, and in math, they solve complex problems and then describe and defend their reasoning.
- The end-of-year assessment includes traditional multiple-choice questions, plus questions that ask students to choose more than one correct answer or to fill in their own answers, which is similar to what happens in the classroom every day.
 - To see a practice test for your child's grade, visit: <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/practice-tests>.

Q. WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEST RESULTS?

1. In preparation for the release of 2014-2015 Results:

- Review the parent guide to understand what to expect on the student report, and how to read and interpret the results. The parent guide can be accessed here: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/family-support-toolbox-resources/parent-guide-to-parcc-student-reports.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.
- For more detailed information about the PARCC tests, read the "Family Guide to the PARCC Tests," http://belearninghero.org/downloads/PARCC_family_guide_EN.pdf.

2. After the Release of the 2014-2015 Results:

- Review the resources we will share at the time of the release of student results so that you can support your child's learning at home and better understand your child's performance on the tests.
- Use your child's test results to guide a discussion with his or her teacher about how you can help at home.