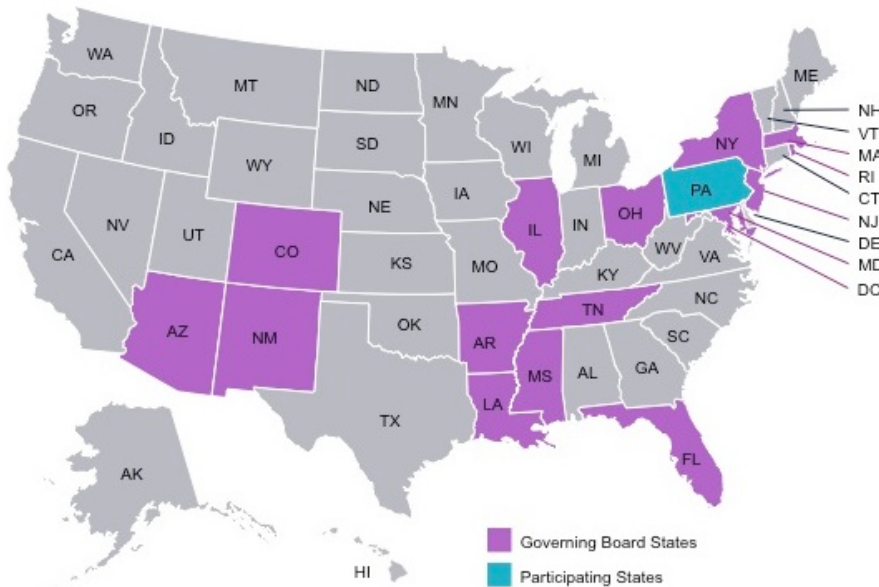


# What Families Need to Know About New Tests in Schools



November 2013

# Who Will take PARCC Tests and When



**17 states and the District of Columbia are working together to develop better reading, writing and math tests for their students**

**Tests are for grades 3-11**

**Field testing will take place in 2013-14 for about 10 percent of students in PARCC states**

**Schools will administer tests broadly in 2014-15**

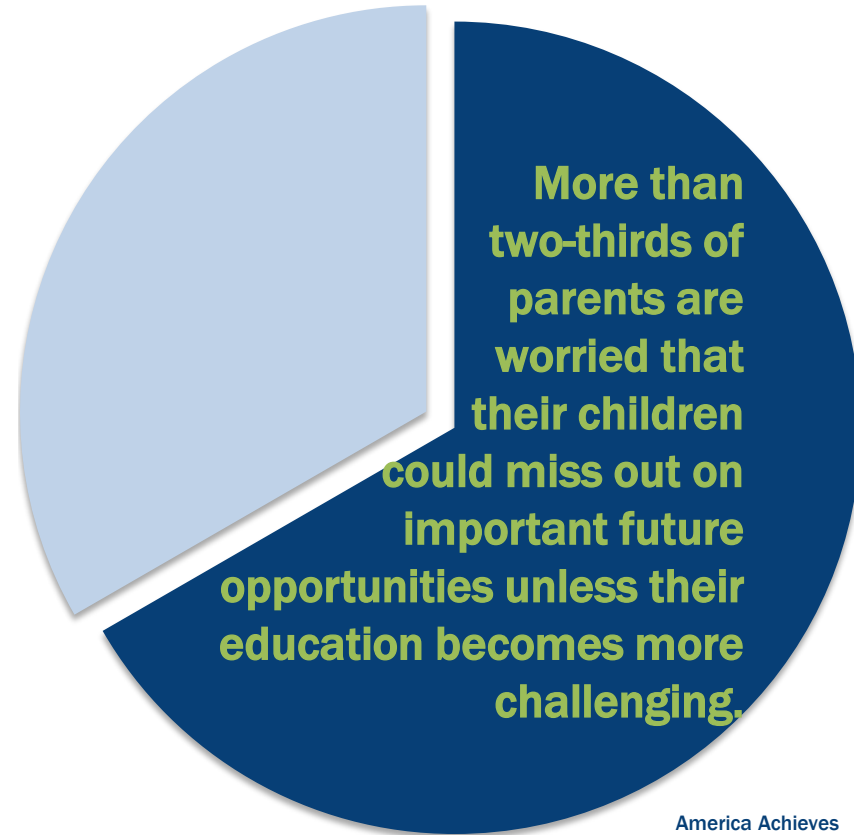
# New Standards Require New Tests



- **PARCC tests are aligned to the new Common Core State Standards now in place in K-12 schools nationwide**
- **In most states, the outgoing tests were not linked to these more rigorous reading, writing, and math standards**
- **The Common State Core Standards are designed to better prepare students for college and the workforce**

# Widespread Support Among Parents for PARCC Rigor

- PARCC tests are more meaningful and challenging than outgoing fill-in-the-bubble state tests
- They measure essential skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, reason well, and solve real-world problems
- Parents want the increased rigor that comes with PARCC



America Achieves  
Survey, Oct. 2013

# Why We Need to Raise the Bar

- **Only about a third** of eighth-graders are meeting math and reading standards nationwide
- **Half of U.S. students** who enter community colleges need remedial coursework because their schools haven't prepared them for success
- **One in five students** entering four-year college also isn't ready to do college work

Every year...

**1.7 million**

entering college students  
need remediation

Cost:

**Over**

**\$3 billion**

Data: Complete College America





## The PARCC Promise: **Ready for College**

- **PARCC will signal in high school whether students are prepared to enter college without needing remediation first**
- **Hundreds of colleges plan to use PARCC scores when placing freshmen into courses**
- **Students who are off track in high school will have time to get help before graduating**

# Online Tests for an Online Era

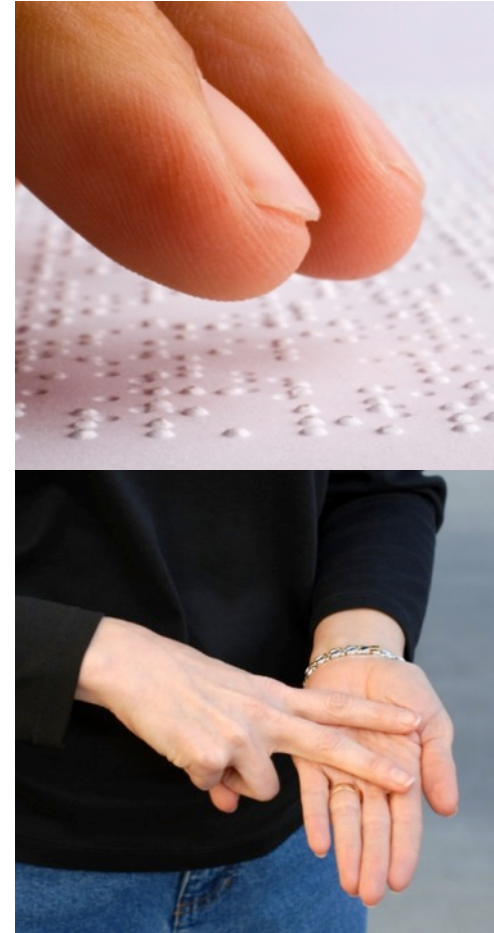
- PARCC tests are computer-based and far more engaging and innovative than outgoing paper-and-pencil state tests
- PARCC is flexible; can be administered on a variety of devices that schools can use for instruction



# Meaningful Tests for All Students

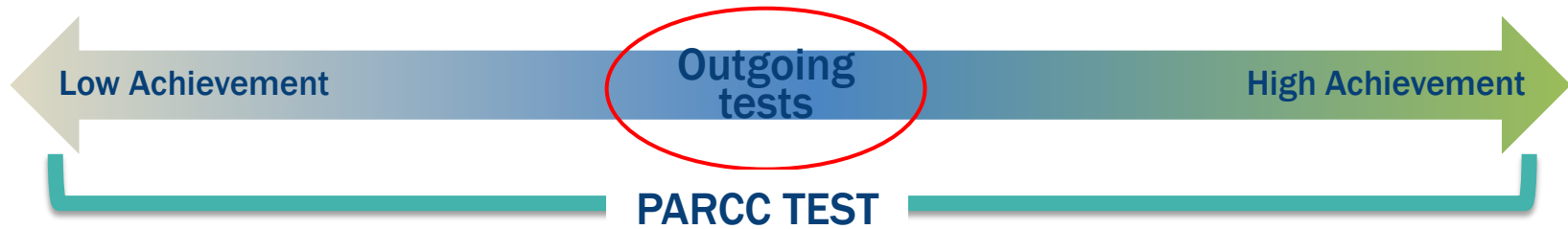
*Some PARCC features that will help students with disabilities or those learning English show what they know and can do:*

- Highlighting
- Customized colors
- Text to speech
- Captions for audio
- Home language supports/tools
- Braille (tactile/refreshable)
- Signing supports (ASL)
- Assistive technology





# Meaningful Tests for All Students



- Outgoing state tests are too narrow, focusing on “the bubble,” or kids working in the middle of the performance spectrum
- Old tests do a poor job assessing kids at the low and high ends of the achievement scale
- PARCC is designed to measure student performance across all ability levels

# In Reading and Writing, Students Will Have To...



**Show they can read and understand complex passages**



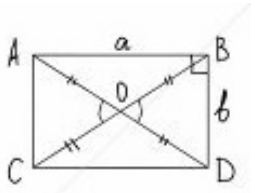
**Write persuasively**

**Conduct research and present findings**



**Demonstrate speaking and listening skills**

# In Math, Students Will Have To...



**Show their work and demonstrate that they understand a concept rather than simply memorize a formula**

$$7 \times 7 = 49$$

**Compute quickly and accurately**



**Apply their mathematical knowledge to solve real-world problems**

# Old Test vs. New Test

See the PARCC difference for yourself

## Writing prompt on an old, outgoing state test

### Third Grade Example

- Read the writing prompt below and complete the writing activity:
- Jump out of bed! Look out the window! It is a perfect weather day!
- Write a story about a day when the weather seemed perfect

## PARCC writing prompt

### Third Grade Example

- You have read two texts about famous people in American history who solved a problem by working to make a change
- Write an article for your school newspaper describing how Eliza and Carver faced challenges to change something in America
- In your article, be sure to describe in detail why some solutions they tried worked and others did not work
- Tell how the challenges each one faced were the same and how they were different

# Old Test vs. New Test

See the PARCC difference for yourself

## Math outgoing state test

### 5th Grade Example

The town of La Paz, Bolivia, is in the Andes mountains.

Which of these units could be used to describe the distance of the town of La Paz above sea level?

- A. Degrees
- B. Feet
- C. Cubic Inches
- D. Pounds

## PARCC test

### 5th Grade Example

Mr. Edmunds shared 12 pencils among his four sons as follows:

- Alan received  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the pencils
- Bill received  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the pencils
- Carl received more than 1 pencil
- David received more pencils than Carl

**PART A:** On the number line, represent the fraction of the total number of pencils that was given to both Alan and Bill combined. Use the buttons on the right to increase or decrease the number of equal sections on the number line.

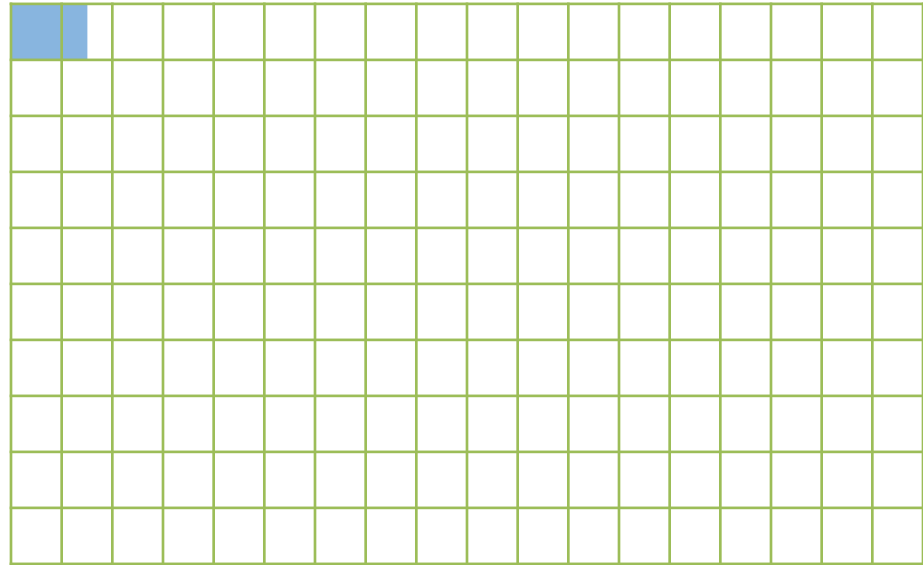
**PART B.** What fraction of the total number of pencils did Carl and David each receive? Justify your answer.



# PARCC Means Time Spent Learning

- 8 to 9.5 hours over a year, for reading, writing and math
- Less than 1% of school year
- REPLACES outgoing tests, not given on top of them
- Items on PARCC mirror good coursework, so time on PARCC is time spent learning

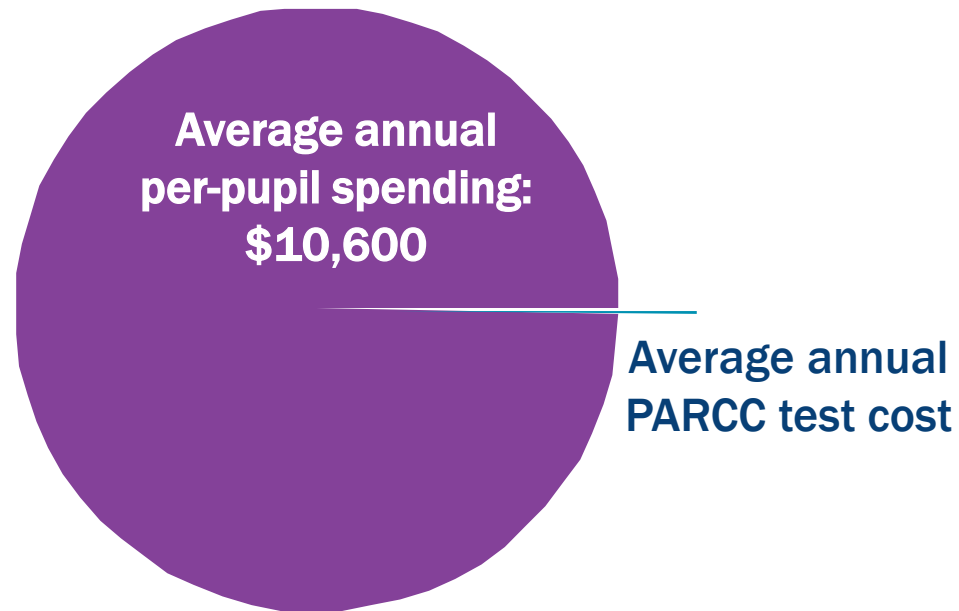
Approximately 1.5 days out of 180 days



# PARCC: Quality and Value

*PARCC costs \$29.50 per student annually for reading, writing and math.*

- Slightly less than states' current median test costs
- Less than 1% of annual per-pupil spending
- Less than the cost of a single textbook



# Developed By Teachers

- Thousands of teachers across PARCC states are helping develop PARCC and review questions to ensure they yield meaningful information
- Every item on PARCC will be reviewed by at least 30 experts
- Teachers, students, and parents will get test data back much more quickly under PARCC, making it easier to address problems in a timely way

# Many Advantages of Working Together Across PARCC States

## Consistent Expectations

- Mastering high school math should not mean two different things in two different states
- Parents who move, including military families, shouldn't have to worry about whether their child is on track

## Economies of Scale

- By banding together, states are lowering the cost of producing fair and accurate tests



# To Learn More



[www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org)



Common Core Resources  
<http://www.pta.org/commoncore>