



# NEXT GENERATION OF ASSESSMENTS FORUM

**Salem Public Schools**

**December 14, 2015**

**6:30 pm**

*Ms. Deborah Amaral  
Mr. Nate Bryant  
Ms. Rachel Hunt*



*Mr. James M. Fleming  
Mr. Patrick Schultz  
Dr. Brendan Walsh*

*Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Chair*

**"Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033."**

**December 10, 2015**

Notice is hereby given that the **Salem School Committee** will hold a **Special School Committee meeting on Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of conducting the following business on this agenda.**

## **SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA December 14, 2015**

- I. Superintendent's Forum on Next Generation of Assessments in Salem – to be held in the Auditorium at Collins Middle School at 6:30 p.m.  
  
Presentation on Next Generation of Assessments
  - What are the options for Salem in the Spring of 2016
  - Feedback from the audience
- II. Special School Committee Meeting will convene in the School Committee Chambers at the conclusion of the Superintendent's Forum.
- III. Approval of the Agenda
- IV. Questions and Comments from the Audience
- V. Action Items
  - a. Deliberation on the Superintendent's Recommendation to administer the PARCC Assessment in the spring of 2016 in the elementary and middle schools
  - b. Deliberation on the approval of the position of Communications, Engagement & Marketing Strategist
  - c. Deliberation on the approval of the Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Salem School Committee and the AFSCME Council 93, Local 294 regarding "Carryover Vacation"
- VI. Questions and Comments from the Audience regarding the December 14, 2015 meeting
- IV. Adjournment

**Respectfully submitted by:**

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Eileen M. Sacco, Secretary to the  
Salem School Committee



# Changes to the State Assessment System: MCAS and PARCC

**Salem Public Schools  
Superintendent Forum  
December 14, 2015**

# Objectives

- To understand what is prompting changes to the state assessment system (MCAS).
- To understand the difference between the PARCC and MCAS assessments.
- To gather stakeholder questions and thoughts.

## Why is Massachusetts moving on from MCAS?

“Now that we have the benefit of two decades of experience, and we have **upgraded our learning expectations** through revisions to our curriculum frameworks and content standards, it is time to upgrade our assessments to a new generation.”

“Perhaps my greatest concern about continuing with MCAS as it exists now is that we have reached a **point of diminishing returns.**”

“As I see in my visits to schools and as I hear from educators and parents, too often the response to **MCAS is instruction designed to teach students to succeed on the test** rather than instruction designed to meet the learning standards.”

Mitchell D. Chester, MA Commissioner of Education

## What are the objectives of PARCC?

- ✓ Determine whether students are college- and career-ready or “on track”
- ✓ Report growth in performance, as well as absolute achievement
- ✓ Report comparable results across schools, districts and member states
- ✓ Generate valid and reliable information to inform instruction and accountability decisions
- ✓ Use technology for a range of purposes including increasing student access, providing accommodations, engaging students and creating efficiencies in administration, scoring and reporting



# What's new about the PARCC assessments?

- ✓ **They may be taken on a computer** so they are more interactive for students, allow for greater accommodations and make it more efficient for schools to use results to improve instruction. In schools that are not yet ready, students take the tests on paper. **Salem Public Schools would be taking the paper test option in Spring 2016.**
- ✓ **They allow students to show their work.** On the new tests, students are required to show their work and explain their reasoning so teachers can better understand what they know and where there are gaps in learning that need to be addressed.
- ✓ **They are more than multiple choice tests.** Rather than focusing on what a child has memorized through multiple choice questions, the new tests ask students to apply skills like thinking, reasoning and justifying answers – showing what they know and can do.
- ✓ **The tests do not lend themselves to “teaching to the test.”** Since they focus on applying skills, it is the daily practice of these skills in the classroom that will serve as the best preparation for the tests.



# How is MCAS different from PARCC?

MCAS	PARCC
Primarily uses multiple-choice format that emphasizes memorization, “test prep” and guessing.	Allows students to submit answers and detailed responses, eliminating guesswork and allowing students to show their thinking and knowledge.
Tests a basic understanding of students’ ability to read. Frequently tests students’ rote learning.	Assesses students’ abilities to read carefully, communicate clearly and problem solve.
Offers basic, one-step problems.	Presents challenging, multi-tiered problems.
Too vague to offer detailed insight to gauge students’ readiness for the next step toward success.	Provides students, parents and educators detailed information so they can understand how students are progressing, where they need assistance and where they can be encouraged to do more.

Current MCAS	PARCC
<p><b>5</b> Read the sentence from paragraph 2 in the box below.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Now, the governor had no idea which boy was the guilty one, for the thief didn't own up.</p> </div> <p>In the sentence, what does the phrase "own up" mean?</p> <p>A. to give to someone            B. to admit something            C. to return something            D. to belong to someone</p>	<p><b>1. Part A</b></p> <p>What is the meaning of the word <b>drift</b> as it is used in paragraph 18 of "Just Like Home"?</p> <p>Ⓐ consider            Ⓑ wander            Ⓒ change            Ⓓ hover</p> <p><b>Part B</b></p> <p>Which detail from the story helps the reader understand the meaning of <b>drift</b>?</p> <p>Ⓐ Priya, Enrique, and Farah create drawings that have different colors and shapes.            Ⓑ Jasper studies the drawings and decides they look like tropical fish swimming in a coral reef.            Ⓒ Lily, Jasper, and Enrique make comments about the drawings as the students come close enough to see them.            Ⓓ Priya smiles when her teacher and classmates show an interest in the drawings by describing them to one another.</p>
<p><b>What's different?</b></p>	
<p>This question has context, but a student could guess and get the answer correct. This does not address the full standard.</p>	<p>To receive credit for this item a student must demonstrate that they understood the word through the context of the text. This item addresses the full rigor within the standard.</p>

To take a practice PARCC test: <http://www.parcconline.org/take-the-test>

# Time spent testing

- Students will engage in the tests a few days in early spring, and a few days in late spring.
- Most students will spend about **four** hours each on the mathematics and English language arts/literacy portions of the test throughout the year, totaling less than 1% of the school year.
- Those will be broken down into smaller units that will take about 40 to 60 minutes, though schools will schedule up to 90 minutes for each unit to make sure that all students have the time they need.
- Students with disabilities may have more time, as is called for in their Individualized Education Plan.

Average time waiting  
in the lunch line:



**39**  
hours/year

# PARCC Data & Privacy Policy

The PARCC consortium's Data Privacy and Security Policy is designed to ensure that PARCC and any PARCC contractors:

- Only have access to personally identifiable student information for **specific purposes authorized by states** needed to carry out assessment programs
- Implement specific stringent policies and procedures that **protect the security of data**
- **Limit access** to personally identifiable student information to only those contractors who need it for specific purposes authorized by states
- Ensure compliance with federal **privacy laws**, including FERPA

# PARCC Reporting Levels

PARCC uses five performance levels that delineate the knowledge, skills, and practices students are able to demonstrate:

<b>Level 1:</b> Did Not Yet Meet Expectations	<b>Level 2:</b> Partially Met Expectations	<b>Level 3:</b> Approached Expectations	<b>Level 4:</b> Met Expectations	<b>Level 5:</b> Exceeded Expectations
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# Options for 2016

Option	Accountability
MCAS with PARCC items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountability levels are determined by results.</li> <li>Salem's accountability level could go up or down based on results.</li> </ul>
PARCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountability levels could increase if growth is determined based on assessment results.</li> <li>Salem's accountability level <b>cannot</b> drop based on the results ("hold harmless" provision).</li> </ul>
<p>All Massachusetts districts' will administer the new MCAS 2.0 assessment in 2017. All districts in the state will be held harmless for the results of the Spring 2017 test.</p>	

# Weighing the Options

*Parent/Family Discussion Notecatcher*  
*School:*

<b>PARCC vs. MCAS</b>	
<b><i>Questions/Thoughts</i></b>	<b><i>What needs to be further investigated?</i></b>

# Scoring the PARCC Test



The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states that have collaborated to create high quality assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school. The assessments give teachers and parents meaningful information they can use to support student success at every grade level and on their path to being ready for college and career by graduation.

The accurate and reliable scoring of PARCC assessments is critical to providing valid information about a student's achievement and growth. PARCC states partner with a testing company, Pearson, which recruits and trains qualified scorers at the national and local level. Applicants complete a rigorous and selective evaluation, hiring and training process to qualify as PARCC scorers. Accuracy and consistency is monitored throughout the scoring process.

## Who scores my child's PARCC exam?

- In order to recruit from a large pool of qualified graders, the testing company advertises for open scoring positions on its corporate website as well as in online and local publications across the country.
- According to PARCC state requirements, only applicants who have a Bachelor's degree or higher in mathematics, English, education or a related field may be hired.
- Scorers for the mathematics portions of the PARCC assessments hold at least a four-year degree in a related field and have demonstrated the knowledge needed to effectively score responses to math questions.
- Scorers for the English language arts and literacy portions of the PARCC assessments hold at least a four-year degree in English, education, history, psychology, journalism or a related field, and/or teacher certification or other work experience that will enable them to effectively score the literacy analysis, research simulation, or narrative writing tasks found in the PARCC assessments.
- Not all scorers are teachers, but as many as three-quarters have previous teaching experience. Half of all PARCC scorers are current K-12 teachers.

## How are scorers trained?

- All PARCC scorers complete extensive training to evaluate student performance on a select and specific group of questions across multiple exams.
- The process of training and scoring PARCC exams on a question-by-question basis ensures that all scorers are well-versed in the subjects and skills that they are



## Scoring the PARCC Test

scoring. Rather than having a scorer score an entire portion of a student's assessment, they will instead score the same question on hundreds of student exams to ensure that scoring is fair and unbiased for each student's answers.

- During training, scorers and their instructors discuss the question and rubric and analyze several pre-scored sample answers to understand why the answers received certain grades.
- Scorers then must score two sets of practice answers, which they must pass in order to be deemed eligible to score that set of specific questions.
- Pearson instructors train each scorer for the questions they will be responsible for evaluating. Training for each question can take from three to four hours to several days, depending on the question.

## **How is the PARCC test scored?**

- First, each student is assigned an identification number.
- Student answers are then separated and sorted question-by-question and sent to the scorers that have been trained and qualified to score that particular question. This maintains student anonymity and allows scorers to become experts in scoring one question at a time.
- Scorers work out of more than a dozen scoring centers across the country, and from their homes. There are strict procedures in place to protect test security.
- Scorers assign points to each answer. Depending on the question, up to six points could be available.
- Each scorer has a binder for each question with the scoring rubric and examples of pre-scored answers that they can use to compare their scoring against the guide that was prepared by educators.
- To ensure that scorers are maintaining accuracy standards throughout the scoring process, scorers will routinely be given pre-scored answers along with unscored answers. A scorer's evaluations must match the "true" scores at least 70 percent of the time.
- When a scorer's accuracy declines, they receive additional training on the test question. If a scorer cannot maintain consistency and accuracy, their previous scores are all put back into the system for re-scoring.

# The PARCC Difference Elementary School





**PARCC tests reflect what students must know each year as they build toward the knowledge and skills needed for college and careers.**

By letting students know they are on track long before they graduate, PARCC opens the door to college and careers and gives them a ticket to entry directly into credit-bearing courses. This can save students and families money and help ensure that they have access to college.


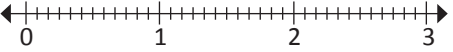
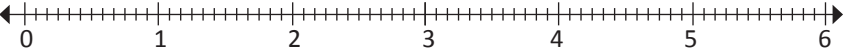
**In English language arts/literacy**, students at every grade (3–11) must read one or more texts (and sometimes watch a video), write about what they read and/or viewed, and provide evidence drawn from the reading — skills that are critically important for students in college and in the workplace. In the past, students have typically been asked to write only once in each grade span in elementary, middle, and high school. PARCC measures writing at every grade because it is key to college and career readiness. **In elementary school**, students develop critical skills in using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown academic words and build the vocabulary needed for both reading complex texts and developing their own ideas in writing.

**In mathematics**, students must reason mathematically, make sense of quantities and their relationships to solve real-world problems, and show their understanding. Many previous assessments focused mostly on rote procedure only. **In elementary school**, students develop procedural skills, conceptual understanding, and modeling and application skills with a particular focus on number sense, place value, fractions, and properties of operations.

## English Language Arts/Literacy, Grade 5

 OLD TEST ITEM	 PARCC TEST ITEM
<p>Which two words are synonyms for heap?</p> <p>A. pile B. row C. corner D. mound E. pattern</p>	<p><b>PART A</b> What is the meaning of the word <b>dictate</b> as it is used in paragraph 23*?</p> <p>a. Hint b. Fix c. Understand d. Decide</p> <p><b>PART B</b> Which phrase helps the reader understand the meaning of dictate?</p> <p>a. "...recreate the tree house..." b. "...determine the shape..." c. "...is less expensive to build..." d. "...has all the time in the world..."</p> <p><i>*Students will have a reading passage in front of them with numbered paragraphs to which they can refer.</i></p>
WHAT'S DIFFERENT?	
<p>Students must identify the meaning of words without context.</p>	<p>At first, this may look like the multiple choice questions of the past. But note that in Part A students have the advantage of the reading passage to gather meaning and, in Part B, students are asked to find words in the reading passage that back up their choice in Part A. PARCC focuses attention on vocabulary, particularly <i>academic language</i>, which is emphasized in the standards.</p>

### Mathematics, Grade 4

OLD TEST ITEM	PARCC TEST ITEM
<p>Justine is using the stickers below to decorate a picture frame.</p>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What fraction of Justine's stickers are hearts? Which of the number in your fraction represents the whole set of stickers?</li> <li>2. Draw and label a number line and mark an X on the number line to show the location of the fraction of Justine's stickers that are ladybugs.</li> </ol> <p>BE SURE TO LABEL YOUR RESPONSES 1 AND 2.</p>	<p>Ava and Mia are comparing the fractions <math>\frac{3}{2}</math> and <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>.</p> <p><b>PART A:</b> Ava created this number line to graph <math>\frac{3}{2}</math>.</p> <p>Select the correct point on the number line to represent <math>\frac{3}{2}</math>.</p>  <p>Mia created this number line to graph <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>.</p> <p>Select the correct point on the number line to represent <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>.</p>  <p><b>PART B:</b> Is <math>\frac{3}{2}</math> greater than or less than <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>? Explain how you know.</p> <div data-bbox="532 804 1469 940" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 65px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><b>PART C:</b> Write a fraction that is between <math>\frac{3}{2}</math> and <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>. <input type="text"/></p> <p>Explain how you know your fraction is between <math>\frac{3}{2}</math> and <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>.</p> <div data-bbox="532 1077 1469 1178" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 48px; width: 100%;"></div>
<h4>WHAT'S DIFFERENT?</h4>	
<p>Notice the focus on procedure (counting, in this case). You can also see that students do not engage with the material.</p>	<p>The PARCC item is in several parts. Part A asks students to show they know that a fraction is a number, rather than just a ratio (like heart stickers to total number of stickers in the old test item). This puts the focus on understanding the concept. Students interact with the problem by placing fractions on the number line, an example of using technology to enhance the question.</p> <p>In Part B, students are asked to make sense of the fractions as numbers by comparing them — taking a step beyond just putting them on the number line.</p> <p>In Part C, students apply their understanding by creating a fraction that is between <math>\frac{3}{2}</math> and <math>\frac{5}{6}</math>. You can see that the tasks build upon one another and ask students to do more than just procedures. Students are asked to demonstrate understanding and apply and explain their knowledge.</p>

Try out the practice tests at [parconline.org/practice-tests](http://parconline.org/practice-tests)

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# The PARCC Difference

## Middle School





**PARCC tests reflect what students must know each year as they build toward the knowledge and skills needed for college and careers.**

By letting students know they are on track long before they graduate, PARCC opens the door to college and careers and gives them a ticket to entry directly into credit-bearing courses. This can save students and families money and help ensure that they have access to college.



**In English language arts/literacy**, students at every grade (3–11) must read one or more texts (and sometimes watch a video), write about what they read and/or viewed, and provide evidence drawn from the reading — skills that are critically important for students in college and in the workplace. In the past, students have typically been asked to write only once in each grade span in elementary, middle, and high school. PARCC measures writing at every grade because it is key to college and career readiness. **In middle school**, as students learn to read and integrate ideas from several passages and to write about what they have learned from multiple texts, they develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in multiple disciplines.

**In mathematics**, students must reason mathematically, make sense of quantities and their relationships to solve real-world problems, and show their understanding. Many previous assessments focused mostly on rote procedure. **In middle school**, students develop procedural skills, conceptual understanding, and modeling and application skills with a particular focus on broadening number sense into rational numbers, ratios, and proportions while transitioning to algebraic skills including working with expressions, equations, and graphs.

### English Language Arts/Literacy, Grade 7

 OLD TEST ITEM	 PARCC TEST ITEM
<p>Writing Prompt:</p> <p>Going to the movies is a major source of entertainment for many students. Imagine that the only discount movie theater in your area is closing.</p> <p>Write a persuasive essay in support of keeping the discount movie theater open.</p>	<p>Writing Prompt</p> <p>You have read a website entry and an article, and viewed a video describing Amelia Earhart. All three include information that supports the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person. The three titles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Biography of Amelia Earhart”</li> <li>• “Earhart’s Final Resting Place Believed Found”</li> <li>• “Amelia Earhart’s Life and Disappearance” (video)</li> </ul> <p>Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart’s bravery.</p> <p>Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments related to Earhart’s bravery in at least two of the three supporting materials. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.</p>
WHAT’S DIFFERENT?	
<p>Writing prompts on past assessments often did not require a careful reading of the passages associated with them or, as in this case, include a reading passage. In this example, students are asked to write a persuasive essay, which is good, but with nothing more than their opinions as “evidence.”</p>	<p>PARCC’s writing prompts address both reading and writing standards, giving students the opportunity to show their analytical skills.</p>

### Mathematics, Grade 6

 OLD TEST ITEM	 PARCC TEST ITEM												
<p>Ms. August's class went to the museum on February 14th and they had an ice-cream party on March 2nd. How many days were there between the museum trip and ice-cream party? (Not a leap year)</p>	<p>Mr. Ruiz is starting a marching band at his school. He first does research and finds the following data about other local marching bands.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="535 462 1323 588"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Band 1</th> <th>Band 2</th> <th>Band 3</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of Brass Instrument Players</td> <td>123</td> <td>42</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of Percussion Instrument Players</td> <td>41</td> <td>14</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>PART A:</b> Enter your answer in the box.</p> <p>Mr. Ruiz realizes there are <input type="text"/> brass instrument player(s) per percussion player.</p> <p><b>PART B:</b> Mr. Ruiz has 210 students who are interested in joining the marching band. He decides to have 80% of the band be made up of percussion and brass instruments. Use the unit rate you found in Part A to determine how many students should play brass instruments.</p> <p>Show or explain all your steps.</p> <div data-bbox="535 850 1526 997" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 70px; width: 100%;"></div>		Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Number of Brass Instrument Players	123	42	150	Number of Percussion Instrument Players	41	14	50
	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3										
Number of Brass Instrument Players	123	42	150										
Number of Percussion Instrument Players	41	14	50										
WHAT'S DIFFERENT?													
<p>This is a simple counting question that only requires students to read a calendar and provide an answer. Little to no mathematical reasoning is expected.</p>	<p>This focuses on the college- and career-ready concept of data analysis and expects students to provide justification of reasoning. There are several options for solving the problem. This item takes students through a staircase of smaller tasks that leads them to the final answer.</p>												

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## **FAQs: The Shift in State Testing - Salem Public Schools**

**Q: Why is Massachusetts moving on from MCAS?**

**A:** For more than 20 years, Massachusetts has used the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to monitor student achievement and growth. This assessment has served us well, guiding the direction of teaching and learning so that Massachusetts students now consistently rank at or near the top of all national and international measures. However, in light of increased expectations for college and career readiness, many educators feel that MCAS has run its course and outlived its usefulness.

**Q: What was the initial plan for a replacement assessment?**

**A:** “PARCC” refers to the Partnership of Readiness for College and Careers, a consortium of states that worked to develop a modern assessment to replace previous stated standardized tests. During the past few years, our state has taken a leadership role in the PARCC group during the development of a next generation of assessments. Many saw PARCC as a superior assessment. Last year, more than 53% of Massachusetts districts opted to take the PARCC in place of the MCAS as a pilot.

**Q: PARCC or MCAS?**

**A:** During the past few months, there has been much debate statewide about whether to remain with MCAS or whether to move to the new PARCC assessment. On November 17, the Board of Education made the decision to do **neither**, but instead to adopt a PARCC-like assessment known as “MCAS 2.0”. This assessment will combine the best of MCAS and PARCC, but will allow our state to retain control over its own assessments. MCAS 2.0 will be used starting in the spring of 2017.

**Q: Since the MCAS 2.0 won't be ready until the spring of 2017, what test will students take this spring?**

**A:** For this year, Massachusetts districts have some options. The districts that administered PARCC last year will be required to use PARCC again this year. All other districts (including Salem Public Schools) have the option of staying with MCAS for one more year, or implementing PARCC for the interim year. *(Important note: High school students will continue to take MCAS through the spring of 2017.)*

**Q: What is the advantage of choosing PARCC as an interim assessment as we shift from MCAS to MCAS 2.0?**

**A:** It may seem illogical to move from the MCAS to the PARCC to MCAS 2.0 over the next two years. However, there are some very real advantages to making this interim shift. Most importantly, it will give teachers more time to adjust their instruction to match the rigor expected on the “next generation” assessments. It will give students opportunities to practice more complex tasks. Unlike the MCAS, it is not possible to “teach to the test” when preparing for PARCC-like tests. Students will have to rely on excellent instruction over the course of the year in order to be ready for these new assessments. Finally, districts that elect to use PARCC for this interim year will be “held harmless”.

**Q: What does “held harmless” mean?**

**A:** The state recognizes that there will be an adjustment period as students, teachers, and parents get used to the new assessments. Districts that use PARCC this year will be “held harmless”. This means that if scores go down, it will not affect the school’s or district’s accountability level. However, if scores increase, the school or district may go up a level. In the spring of 2017, all districts will be “held harmless” as MCAS 2.0 is implemented. If Salem chooses to go with the PARCC this spring, that means we would have two years to adjust to the new tests without fear of penalties. (Since all high schools will be taking MCAS, the “hold harmless” provision does not apply to them.)

**Q: Does this mean that families and schools would not receive any information about the student's progress?**

**A:** Families and schools would still receive detailed reports about the student’s achievement and growth.

**Q: What subjects does PARCC test?**

- A:**
- ELA/Literacy, Grades 3-8
  - Mathematics, Grades 3-8
  - Although PARCC offers high school assessments as well, these won't be used in Massachusetts.

**Q: How is the PARCC different from the MCAS?**

**A:** The way some PARCC test questions are asked may look unfamiliar. While the MCAS looks for the right answer, PARCC is looking for evidence that the student understands and can apply concepts. Students may be expected to read several short texts to synthesize information, or to choose the correct definition of a vocabulary word and then identify the phrase in the text that helped them to make meaning of the word. In math, students are often expected to show their work. The following two math items show the difference in expectations.

**Sample MCAS fraction question:**

Ms. Montano asked her students to solve the equation shown in the box below.

$$\frac{6}{7} + \frac{5}{6} = n$$

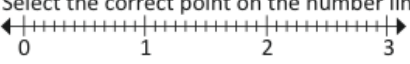
Which of the following is **closest** to the value of  $n$ ?

- A.**  $\frac{1}{4}$
- B.**  $\frac{3}{4}$
- C.**  $1\frac{1}{2}$
- D.**  $5\frac{1}{2}$

**Sample PARCC fraction question:**

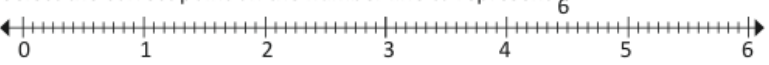
Ava and Mia are comparing the fractions  $\frac{3}{2}$  and  $\frac{5}{6}$ .

**PART A:** Ava created this number line to graph  $\frac{3}{2}$ .



Select the correct point on the number line to represent  $\frac{3}{2}$ .

Mia created this number line to graph  $\frac{5}{6}$ .



**PART B:** Is  $\frac{3}{2}$  greater than or less than  $\frac{5}{6}$ ? Explain how you know.

**PART C:** Write a fraction that is between  $\frac{3}{2}$  and  $\frac{5}{6}$ .

Explain how you know your fraction is between  $\frac{3}{2}$  and  $\frac{5}{6}$ .

**Q: When is the PARCC administered?**

**A:** The testing window for this year is April 25 – June 6.

**Q: How many sessions does the PARCC test have?**

**A:** At each grade level, there are 6-7 sessions of testing. Session lengths are approximately 1 – 1½ hours long.

**Q: Is the test timed?**

**A:** Unlike the MCAS test, the PARCC is timed. However, students may have a specified amount of additional time if they need it; last year, this was equal to an additional half of the scheduled testing session time. Most students are able to finish within the allotted times. Having a timed test means that students are not working on a test for an entire school day, as some did with MCAS. Students with disabilities and English language learners are entitled to all allowed accommodations as noted on 504s and IEPs, including extra time if needed.

**Q: How is PARCC scored?**

**A:** The MCAS has four categories: *Warning, Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced*. PARCC has five categories:

5: *Exceeded expectations*

4: *Met expectations*

3: *Approached expectations*

2: *Partially met expectations*

1: *Did not yet meet expectations*

**Q: Is PARCC taken online or paper-pencil?**

**A:** PARCC is available in both modes. Decisions may be made at the school level as to which option to choose.

*Note: By spring 2019, all districts will be required to take MCAS 2.0 online.*

**Q: What is the next step for Salem Public Schools?**

**A:** Superintendent Ruiz is collecting input from various stakeholders and will make a recommendation to the School Committee at the December 21<sup>st</sup> School Committee Meeting.



**Parent/Family Discussion Notecatcher**

**School:**

**PARCC vs. MCAS**

***Pros***

***Cons***

***Questions***

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