



West Orange Public Schools
179 Eagle Rock Avenue
West Orange, New Jersey 07052
(973) 669-5400 ext. 20512 Fax (973) 669-1432

Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Jeffrey S. Rutzky

February 17, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all schools with students in grades 3 through 12 are required to meet established accountability standards. In order to meet these standards, a school must ensure that annual state assessments are taken by at least 95% of the students enrolled in each grade and subgroup. The New Jersey State Board of Education has selected the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as the state assessment for grades 3 through 11.

Students graduating as members of the Classes of 2017, 2018, and 2019 can meet graduation assessment requirements through a variety of ways, including:

1. Achieving passing scores on certain PARCC assessments;
2. Achieving certain scores on alternative assessments such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT or ASVAB; or
3. The submission by the district of a student portfolio through the Department of Education's portfolio appeals process. (Special education students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) specify an alternative way to demonstrate proficiencies will continue to follow the graduation requirements set forth in their IEPs.)

The Class of 2020 (current 9th grade students) can demonstrate graduation assessment proficiency through the same alternative means as students in the Classes of 2017 through 2019, provided that students in the Class of 2020 take all PARCC assessments associated with the high school level courses for which they are eligible.

"Eligible" is defined as a student who is enrolled in a high school level course for which there is a PARCC test. This includes the following courses: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, ELA 9, ELA 10, and ELA 11. In other words, in order to meet the graduation requirements, **all current 9th grade students must take the PARCC assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics.**

For the Class of 2021 (current 8th grade students) and thereafter, students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the ELA 10 and Algebra I assessments, and have taken all PARCC assessments associated with the high school level courses for which they are eligible, can demonstrate graduation assessment proficiency by meeting the criteria of the portfolio appeals process. Alternate assessments will no longer be accepted to meet the graduation assessment requirement.

It is important that parents/guardians understand that 2017 PARCC test results could be used in making decisions with regard to class placements and gifted and talented/honors programs.

Since the New Jersey Department of Education requires student participation in these assessments, there is no approved "opt out" by which parents/guardians can elect to have their child(ren) exempt from taking the test. If parents/guardians refuse to permit their child(ren) to take the PARCC assessment, they must submit a signed, written letter in a sealed envelope as indicated below. Emails will not be accepted.

For Elementary and Middle School Students

If parents/guardians refuse to permit their child(ren) in grades 3-8 to take the PARCC assessments, the refusal letter must be submitted to the principal with the name of the child(ren), daytime phone number, signed by the parent/guardian in a sealed envelope. Emails will not be accepted. This notice of the refusal to test must be submitted no later than Friday, March 3, 2017. If refusing, please notify the building principal as early as possible to enable the district to make the necessary entries into the PARCC system and establish testing logistics for the building.

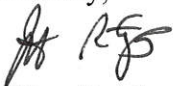
For West Orange High School Students

If parents/guardians refuse to permit their child(ren) in grades 9-12 to take the PARCC assessments, the refusal letter must be submitted to the student's counselor only during lunch or after school. Please include the name of the child(ren), daytime phone number, signed by the parent/guardian in a sealed envelope. Emails will not be accepted. This notice of the refusal to test must be submitted no later than Friday, March 3, 2017. If refusing, please notify the counselor as early as possible to enable the district to make the necessary entries into the PARCC system and establish testing logistics for the building.

The district considers the administration of the PARCC assessment to be our curriculum for those days when testing is scheduled. There will be no alternate instruction or curriculum for those students refusing to test. Students with a refusal letter will meet in another room within the building to read for the duration of the testing time. This will provide a testing environment that will not distract the students taking the test.

District performance results on the PARCC are now being used as a basis of comparison with other schools and districts. In examining our district results from 2015 and 2016, it appears that some students who have taken the PARRC have not put forth their best effort on this test. I ask that all parents/guardians encourage their children to take this assessment seriously so that our results can accurately reflect the academic achievement of our students when this data is shared with the West Orange community and beyond. Please understand that I do not support PARCC refusal and encourage all parents/guardians to have their child(ren) take the PARCC.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Rutzky
Superintendent of Schools