



## PARCC – District Administrators' Responses to Queries

March 2015 will go down in the annals of educational history as the month in which a new paradigm of standardized testing was launched. The PARCC tests, which are based on the Common Core standards, signaled a historic shift in how FTBOE students will be assessed, and probably how educators will be evaluated. At FHS 1,650 students in grades 9, 10 and 11 took the PARCC assessments, which were given on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> with the make-up dates of March 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for the PARCC assessment, students participated in a practice session on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, the school district conducted multiple informative school-based workshops in preparation for these tests. The FHS PTSO has also done its part by disseminating and publishing various information about PARCC, as well as inviting school and district administrators to address the FHS PTSO membership at our monthly meetings.

To gauge the outcome of these preparations, the FHS PTSO Newsletter solicited responses from top school administrators, Dr. LeRoy E. Seitz, Interim Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Jeffrey Charney, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, on the following PARCC topics:

- Implementation
- Staff Training
- School Administrators feedback
- Challenges
- Benefits
- Percentage of students who took the tests
- Opt-out (i.e. Percentage of students that were affected)
- NJDOE's commitment
- Teacher's evaluation
- Cut-scores
- Impending Legislative PARCC Bills

These are the responses from Dr. Charney.

### IMPLEMENTATION

*Implementation has gone smoothly. The district began its planning and preparation for the PARCC last year after conducting the Pilot Exam in Spring 2014. Our technology department prepared by upgrading our systems and ensuring that our infrastructure was ready to support the assessment. One major concern encountered for the 2014-2015 administration was the equipment needed to facilitate the High School students. The district purchased over 600 Chrome books to facilitate this need.*

### TRAINING

*Staff received various forms of training. They received whole group security training and small group training as needed by building need. The trainings were run by our School Test Coordinators with assistance from the district's technology coaches. Additionally, in order to properly train our staff and prepare our students, every school ran a mock trial run. This offered the district the opportunity to troubleshoot technology glitches and provide hands-on training for our staff. The feedback received was positive from both students and staff members.*

### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FEEDBACK

*School administrators reported relatively few problems. Administration of the test has gone very well and we expect the EOY testing window to run more effectively as we do not foresee encountering any additional issues.*

### CHALLENGES

*Primarily, the challenge was the technology need and the scheduling. The assessment team, headed by Ana Washington, implemented the scheduling efficiently and according to important psychometric considerations, those pertaining to testing environment and cognitive optimization. During the actual administration of the assessment, we encountered different technology needs related to the test and system requirements. Having a technician on hand at every site proved to be beneficial as we were able to immediately identify the issue and troubleshoot with efficiency to effectively administer the assessment. Our support team (technical department, technology coaches, school test coordinator, school-based PARCC team and District Test Coordinator) worked efficiently with PEARSON to address the needs effectively.*

### BENEFITS

*The PARCC Assessment will assess our students in ELA/Literacy in both writing and critical-thinking skills. In math, students will not only have to solve complex problems, but show how they will solve them giving them an opportunity demonstrate their problem solving skills. As per the NJDOE, an individual report will be created for each student who takes the PARCC Assessment. The report will provide details on how each student performed on specific test items, which will tell parents and the school about each student's strength and weaknesses, and whether he or she needs any special assistance in meeting the expected goals.*

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO TOOK THE TESTS

*The figures are still being compiled but they meet state mandates of above 95% participation. We are still doing make ups in the high school and the report is with these makeups we will achieve in the high 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.*

**OPT-OUT** (i.e. Percentage of students that were affected)  
*Much less than 1%.*

### NJDOE'S COMMITMENT

*We have been in communication with both Pearson and the DOE. They have been forthcoming in how we should handle procedural matters.*

### TEACHER'S EVALUATION AS IT RELATES TO PARCC

*The DOE has not finalized those percentages as of this date. That will depend on the state wide data.*

### CUT-SCORES

*The DOE has not finalized those percentages as of this date. That will depend on the state wide data.*

### IMPENDING LEGISLATIVE PARCC BILLS

*There are multiple bills going through the legislature at this time concerning PARCC. We will receive direction from the DOE on how to proceed pending legislative outcomes.*

### EDITORIAL NOTE:

EOY means End of Year

PEARSON is a for-profit education testing company contracted by PARCC to administer tests aligned to the common-core standards

# Franklin High School PTSO Newsletter

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## BOE Corner

### BOARD MEETING NOTES - MARCH 19, 2015 WORK SESSION

- Dr. Seitz, Interim Superintendent of Schools, and Mrs. Biesiada, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary, presented the Preliminary Budget. The [presentation](#) is posted on the website. The final budget will be presented on May 7, 2015.
- Dr. Seitz reassured the Board and the public about the reported sighting of a bed bug at Franklin High School. The student was examined by the nurse and the room inspected by our custodial staff and an exterminator. No bed bug or insects of any kind were found. Dr. Seitz informed the Board that our PARCC testing had gone well and that only a few of our students had "opted out" of the test.
- The Board of Education accepted the letter of resignation submitted by Board Member, Mr. Richard Arline. Mr. Arline is re-locating to Virginia. The Board, Dr. Seitz and members of the public expressed gratitude to Mr. Arline for his years of service and wished him well. The process to fill Mr. Arline's position is as follows: individuals interested in serving as a Board of Education member until the next re-organization meeting on January 7, 2016 should submit a resume and letter of interest by Wednesday, April 1, 2015 to Mrs. Arlene Biesiada; the Board of Education will interview the candidates and vote to appoint someone to fill the vacancy. This process should be completed on or before May 19, 2015.
- This year's Harmony Day district wide evening performance, scheduled for April 21, 2015, has been postponed until the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. LeRoy Seitz advised the Board of Education of this decision earlier this week. He had conferred with our school principals and Mrs. Roberta Mitchell, Director of Fine, Visual & Performing Arts, who supported the decision to postpone this event.
  - As you may recall, Franklin Township Public Schools held a district wide event in December. Franklin's Finest: A District Showcase, featured information about our curriculum; a workshop on the PARCC examination; sample mini lessons taught by our teachers; several performances by our talented students and a finale song featuring all grade levels.
  - As there was preparation time spent on that event, there would also be preparation/rehearsal time necessary for the Harmony Day performances. Another consideration for this time of year is the PARCC assessments. It would be difficult to justify modifying our student's instructional programs again this year in light of the PARCC program.
  - Earlier this year, modifications were made in consideration of the PARCC assessment at Franklin High School when mid-term examinations were eliminated. By postponing the Harmony Day evening show, instructional time will be saved this school year and students can continue their work as they prepare for the PARCC assessments.
  - Harmony Day will be re-scheduled in the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. Seitz has asked Mrs. Mitchell to work with our Principals and teachers to not only re-schedule Harmony Day, but to use this extra time to see if they can expand the Harmony Day program to increase student participation and community attendance.

Source: Mary Clarke, Coordinator of Policies and Regulations

## FHS Students & Staff

### RECOGNIZING AND ACKNOWLEDGING FHS STAFF AND STUDENTS

- **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES** – The Young Science Achievers Program awarded \$800 in funding to students in the FHS Science Research Club. The projects funded are "Visualizing Air Flow in a Wind Tunnel" and "Efficiency Enhancement and Feasibility Study of Hydrogen Fuel Cell". The students who submitted the successful proposals are Rahul Boppa, Abole Raul, Rochelle Regis, Sydney Rosen, Forrest Smith, Jonathan Tsai, and Alyssa Wells-Lewis.
- **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES** – Mrs. Tracey Damena, Vice Principal, is mentoring to staff members Tracey Schwartz and Seam Thomas.
- **SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS** – Congratulations to the following contestants from for placing in the Skills USA Cosmetology Local Competition. Junior, Daniells Russo earned 1<sup>st</sup> place in Cosmetology Advanced and Senior Terena Walton earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Esthetics/Makeup. Both students are share-time FHS students who spend half of their day at FHS and the other half at Somerset County Vocational School!
- Franklin High School is pleased to announce today that Sheryl Dalal, Benjamin Hsueh, and Kyle Huang has been named Finalists in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program. In April 2014, the 50,000 highest PSAT scorers were offered an opportunity in which to continue in the competition. Of this select group of students, 16,000 were designated Semifinalists on a state representational basis. Additional requirements were then met within this group for Finalist standing and will be considered for National Merit Scholarships to be offered later this year. It is anticipated that scholarship offers will be made to approximately 8,000 students nationwide. The entire Franklin Township school community congratulates Sheryl, Benjamin and Kyle on this prestigious recognition.
- Congratulations to the JV Academic League Team Champions winning First Place in the Somerset County Academic League Competition Finals. The students achieving this achievement are Akshay Janakiraman, Neal Dalal, Melissa Tu, Renuka Venkatesh, Kelvin Qian and Sokaina Williams. These students represented the Franklin Family with dignity, confidence and respect without lauding their success over their competitors.
- FHS Winter Athletics Students were recognized at the March 26<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting for their excellent individual and team performances. Congratulations to all and continued success!

### Mark your Calendar – APRIL/MAY EVENTS

Apr 01	College and Career Fair Night
Apr 03	School Closed – Spring Break
Apr 06 – 10	School Closed – Spring Break
Apr 15 – 16	Prom Dress Giveaway
Apr 20 – 24	Administrative Professionals Week
Apr 22	Administrative Professionals Day
Apr 23	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Marking period
Apr 23	BOE Meeting
May 03 – 09	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 05	National Teacher Day
May 06	National School Nurse Day
May 07	String/Guitar Concert
May 07	BOE Meeting
May 08	3 <sup>rd</sup> Marking period Report Card Distribution
May 12	FHS Choral Concert
May 13	Drama III/IV Concert
May 21	BOE Meeting
May 22	Drama II Docudrama
May 25	School Closed – Memorial Day
May 26	District Dance