



Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Education

Dear Families,

As you are aware, this is the first year you are receiving Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test results. The PARCC assessment serves as an "educational GPS system," designed to measure students' current performance. It will point the way to what students need to learn in order to be ready for the next grade level, high school graduation, and for college or a career.

The PARCC test is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards, which are focused on critical thinking and real world application. The PARCC test is not an "additional" test. It replaces the former state tests with one that is better aligned to the new standards teachers are using in the classroom.

The score report is designed to let you know how your child is progressing academically. The information in the score reports is designed to provide feedback about current performance in relation to the standards. We expect that the more detailed information provided by the score reports and supporting materials will lead to strong engagement between parents, teachers, and students in support of student learning.

It may appear that performance is lower than on prior tests. It is important to keep in mind that these are new, more rigorous tests that emphasize critical thinking and problem solving in the content areas. This was also the first time many students took a computer-based assessment and they may have encountered technical glitches. As a result, an individual's performance may not be fully representative. We encourage you to look at multiple sources of student work when making educational decisions about your child.

These results are a new baseline from which we can move forward. We fully expect student performance to improve as students and teachers gain the skills and knowledge needed to master these higher standards and as the technology becomes a more familiar tool. We must celebrate the good work our teachers and schools are doing to teach the new content critical for their future success. We all understand that no test can ever fully capture the skills and abilities of a great teacher or the extraordinary benefits and positive impact of a great school. Tests are one measure to help track our progress. Along with other indicators, tests help give us a sense of where and how we are succeeding and where and how we must improve. The PARCC assessment is designed to give schools and teachers more information to support improvement and differentiation in instruction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Smith".

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ISBE PARCC PLACE at www.isbe.net/parcc-place

ISBE PARCC Score Toolkit at www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm?col2=open#toolkit

PARCC Online at www.parcconline.org/resources/parent-resources

UNDERSTAND THE SCORE at www.understandthescore.org/

Background of the ELA / Literacy Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)



Performance Levels for Reading

The development of the PLDs for **reading** reflects the standards' emphasis on a student's ability to find text-based evidence for generalizations, conclusions, or inferences drawn from text. For the

Reading Claim, the performance levels at each grade are determined by three factors:

- **Text complexity**—the complexity of the text associated with items
- **Accuracy**—the level of accuracy that students have demonstrated in their analysis of text and depth of understanding
- **Evidence**—the quality of evidence that students use to support their inferences about text

There are a number of different combinations of these three factors that will generate a given performance level for each student. Thus, there are multiple ways to arrive at each performance level.



Performance Levels for Writing

For the **Writing Claim**, PLDs are written for the two sub-claims:

- **Written expression**
- **Knowledge of language and conventions**

Factors that determine each performance level for Writing include **development** of ideas, ability to draw **evidence** from one or more sources, **organization**, and **command** of grammar and usage

Performance Level Summary for Sixth-Grade ELA/Literacy Overview

An abbreviated version of the grade-level PLDs for Reading and Writing are below. (Some of the descriptors have been changed in order to clarify the language and intent of the PLDs.) **For more information and a full version of the PLDs, visit <http://parconline.org/assessments/test-design/ela-literacy/ela-performance-level-descriptors>.**

Level 2 – A student who achieves at Level 2 partially meets expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and will need academic support to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a minimally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing minimal understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides minimal development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates minimal organization. The student demonstrates minimal command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 3 – A student who achieves at Level 3 approaches expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and will need some academic support to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a generally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing basic understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides basic development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates some organization. The student demonstrates basic command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 4 – A student who achieves at Level 4 meets expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and

Language and is prepared to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a generally accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing general understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates organization. The student demonstrates command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

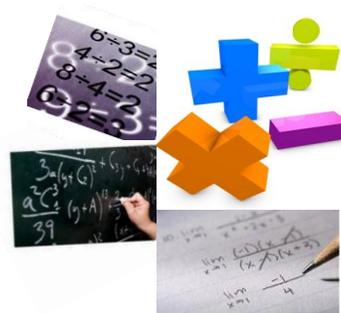
Level 5 – A student who achieves at Level 5 exceeds expectations of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and is well prepared to succeed in this content area. The student demonstrates a mostly accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides effective development of ideas, including when using evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates effective organization. The student demonstrates full command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Performance Level Summary for Sixth-Grade Mathematics

Performance level descriptors (PLDs) indicate what a typical student at each level should be able to demonstrate based on his/her command of grade-level standards. In mathematics, the performance levels at each grade level are written for each of four assessment sub-claims:

- **Major content**
- **Additional and supporting content**
- **Reasoning**
- **Modeling**

Students in sixth grade will focus on connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and developing understanding of statistical thinking. **For more information and a full version of the PLDs, visit <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/test-design/mathematics/math-performance-level-descriptors>.**



Level 2

- Uses a limited variety of representations to solve mathematical problems involving ratio and rate.
- Performs all four operations on multi-digit numbers and decimals with limited accuracy. Divides fractions with common denominators. Understands that positive and negative numbers describe quantities and can be represented on a number line and determines absolute value.
- Identifies parts of expressions using mathematical terms. Writes algebraic expressions without exponents and single-step equations to solve mathematical problems.
- Solves mathematical problems involving area of polygons by composing.
- Understands that a set of collected data has a distribution, which can be described by its center, spread, and shape. Displays numerical data in dot plots and histograms and summarizes in context by reporting the number of observations, describing the attribute under investigation, giving a measure of center, and using the interquartile range as measure of variability.
- Applies mathematics using assumptions and approximations, identifying important quantities, using provided tools to create models, writing an arithmetic expression or equation, analyzing relationships to draw conclusions.
- Uses limited grade-appropriate communication with an intrusive calculation error in tasks that call for written explanations. When a conclusion is required, uses faulty assumptions or provides an incomplete or illogical response.

Level 3

- Uses ratio and rate reasoning to solve mathematical problems involving ratio and rate.
- Performs all four operations on multi-digit numbers and decimals. Divides fractions with common denominators and applies this skill in solving scaffolded word problems. Plots ordered pairs on a coordinate plane to solve mathematical problems.
- Reads numerical and algebraic expressions. Relates tables and graphs to equations. Graphs inequalities to represent a constraint in a mathematical problem.
- Solves mathematical problems involving area of polygons by decomposing. Uses nets of 3-D figures to find surface area. Finds volume of right rectangular prisms with fractional edge lengths.
- Recognizes a statistical question.
- Applies mathematics by illustrating relationships between important quantities to draw conclusions, modifying the model or interpreting mathematical results in a simplified context.
- Uses some grade-appropriate communication with minor calculation errors. When a conclusion is required, provides a complete response with a partial justification and evaluates the validity of others' responses, approaches, and conclusions.

Level 4

- Solves one-step word problems by dividing and performing all four operations on multi-digit numbers. Divides fractions with unlike denominators in solving scaffolded word problems. Uses the distributive property to rewrite the sum of two whole numbers using the greatest common factor. Understands that positive and negative numbers can be compared with or without the use of a number line. Understands absolute value. Plots ordered pairs to solve real-world problems.
- Evaluates numerical and algebraic expressions. Identifies equivalent expressions using properties of operations. Writes algebraic expressions with whole number exponents and single-step equations to solve real-world problems. Writes and graphs inequalities to represent a constraint or condition in a real-world or mathematical problem.
- Solves real-world problems involving area of polygons by using strategies of composing or decomposing. Determines nets of 3-D figures to find surface area.
- Displays data in box plots and summarizes in context by using the mean absolute deviation as measure of variability.
- Applies mathematics by making assumptions and approximations, mapping and analyzing relationships to draw conclusions, selecting appropriate tools to create models, improving the model, or interpreting mathematical results.
- Uses precision in grade-appropriate communication and calculations. When a conclusion is required, provides a well-organized complete response and interprets and critiques the validity of others' reasoning.

Level 5

- Uses a variety of representations to reason with and solve real-world and mathematical problems involving ratio and rate.
- Solves two-step word problems by dividing and performing operations on multi-digit numbers and decimals and problems involving division of fractions by fractions. Distinguishes comparisons of absolute value from statements about order. Recognizes that when two ordered pairs differ by sign, the locations of the points are reflections across one or both axes.
- Views one or more parts of a numerical or algebraic expression as a single entity. Understands solutions of single-step problems. Expresses relationships between dependent and independent variables given in tables and graphs. Understands that inequalities have an infinite number of solutions.
- Uses volume formulas to find unknown measurements. Understands the concepts of area and volume to solve problems.

- Describes deviations from the pattern of a numerical data set with reference to the context in which the data were gathered.
- Applies mathematics by analyzing or creating constraints, relationships, and goals; writing a concise expression or equation; and justifying and defending a model.
- Provides an efficient, logical and complete conclusion. Provides counter-examples where applicable.