

Berkeley Heights Public Schools
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am sure you are aware that we are approaching the windows established for participation in the New Jersey State-Wide Assessment Program. These assessments match the content and skills outlined in the NJ Student Learning Standards that guide instruction in the classroom and provide valuable information about student learning. The state assessments will be given to all public school students in New Jersey beginning mid-April.

While this is the fourth year of the PARCC Assessment, the State Science Assessment has undergone some changes. The new science assessments will be given on the same computer-based testing platform as the PARCC tests. The science tests will now be administered to all students in Grade 5, Grade 8, and Grade 11, replacing the NJ ASK4 Science, NJ ASK 8 Science, and the NJ Biology Competency test.

We are committed to providing up-to-date information and support to parents and families in our community. As a district, we continue to take steps to ensure a smooth delivery of the state tests. Many classroom activities provide opportunities for our students to prepare for the upcoming assessments and become familiar with the kinds of items and format used for the upcoming tests. Although Berkeley Heights students have performed well on standardized test measures over the years, we recognize that standardized tests, given over the course of just a few hours in the whole scope of a school year, do not completely reflect all the student knows and can do. Therefore, we will encourage students to do their best and will do all that we can to provide a comfortable testing environment with minimal anxiety. Following the tests, our students will return to the exciting and dynamic instructional activities they are accustomed to.

The PARCC test provides a deeper level of information about student progress than previous tests, which makes it a valuable tool to measure student performance. PARCC identifies the areas in each subject where a student needs additional support and where he or she has mastered the content and can be challenged to go deeper into the subject matter – information that is useful for parents, teachers, students, and school administrators. With this year's scores, you will be able to track your child's progress and growth over time.

When a student does not participate or give their best effort on the annual test, we lose out on valuable information and the opportunity to improve our programs for all students. We are committed to student achievement, and the PARCC state tests raise the bar for our students to ensure they are on the path to success. We are confident that with the quality instruction delivered by our dedicated educators, and your support, our students can exceed these expectations.

In Berkeley Heights, the test dates for the PARCC assessments range from April 23 through May 25. The English/Language Arts test will ask students to demonstrate: reading comprehension, effective writing when analyzing text, and completing a research simulation. For Mathematics, students will be asked to demonstrate: conceptual understanding, skills mastery, fact fluency, solving multi-step problems requiring abstract reasoning, precision, perseverance, and the strategic use of tools. The Science Assessment will assess students' ability to: understand scientific ideas, skills, and cross-cutting concepts for their grade band, analyze data, formulate predictions, develop explanations, and work with various scientific representations.

While the district testing calendar can be found on the website, our administrators have all been working to develop building schedules that will provide for not only optimal test administration, but also maximize instructional time outside of the tests. We have also compiled what we hope is helpful information for you as a parent. If you would like to learn more about the State Assessments, please visit the Assessment links on the Berkeley Heights district websites at www.bhpsnj.org.

Each of the school principals will inform you of the specific dates and times for testing. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's principal.

As a district, we expect that these state-wide assessments will provide us with valuable information about your child's academic progress and needs and each individual student's performance which will help us to differentiate instruction.

Thank you for your continued support.



Judith A. Rattner
Superintendent of Schools

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