

## Press Clippings 2/10/2018

---Daily Herald--- 2/10/18

### Illinois to change controversial PARCC test after this year

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY

State education officials confirmed Friday the state's controversial standardized test is changing again, barely three years after its launch.

Illinois began mandatory statewide [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers](#) testing in March 2015 of students in third through 11th grades in English language arts and math. The test measures the mastery of important educational milestones based on [Illinois Learning Standards](#).

The test was given to third- through eighth-graders last school year, while high school juniors took the revised SAT college entrance exam for the first time instead of PARCC.

The Illinois State Board of Education next week will seek requests for proposals to redesign the PARCC test.

While its name may change, standardized testing is not going away and some elements of PARCC will remain in whatever new format takes its place, said Jackie Matthews, ISBE spokeswoman.

"The test will evolve," she said. "Some foundational things of PARCC will remain.

"PARCC is the only large-scale, summative accountability assessment to fully meet all of the federal accountability requirements. We are going to retain and build on the things that are of higher quality."

The test has been plagued by opposition since it was implemented, with educators saying it was too time consuming to administer and didn't provide accurate and timely data about students' performance. Adding to the frustration, test results were released sporadically, and some schools weren't able to properly administer tests due to technical problems.

"I'm glad the state is looking for a change for several reasons. ... Chief among them is providing timely feedback to teachers and students," said Tony Sanders, CEO of **Elgin Area School District U-46**.

PARCC results have not been promising thus far with test scores declining at a majority of suburban elementary and middle schools.

Roughly two-thirds of students did not meet proficiency expectations on the test. And of 540 suburban schools surveyed by the Daily Herald, 309 schools saw declines in the number of students meeting and exceeding proficiency; 220 schools showed improvement, and 11 remained flat, according to the [2017 Illinois School Report Card](#) data.

PARCC has changed significantly since its inception. In its first year, exams were administered over two testing periods as performance-based and end-of-year assessments. More than 20,000 students opted out of taking them.

A year later, the test was shortened and taken at one time. Criticism from educators who favored college entrance exams prompted the state to drop PARCC in high schools. The state paid for those students to take the SAT.

Students will take a shortened PARCC test this spring.

In the future, officials hope to offer computer-adaptive testing that tailors questions to students' proficiency levels.

"If I get a question right, the next question will be harder. If I get a question wrong, the test will adjust," Matthews said. "There is going to be a standardized test. It's just not going to look like PARCC."