

# Cumberland School Department

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PHILIP D. THORNTON, ED.D.  
*Superintendent*

ROBERT A. MITCHELL  
*Assistant Superintendent*

February 25, 2015

Dear Cumberland Parents/Guardians,

As you have heard, Rhode Island is among a group of states that will be taking a new assessment called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The PARCC is a group of states including Rhode Island that have come together to develop high-quality student assessments aligned with the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. These computer delivered assessments will replace the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). PARCC assessments:

- Encourage students to experience engaging, real-life texts and solve meaningful problems based on high-quality classroom work.
- Show whether students are on track for success in college or a career.
- Use a computer system that is easy for students to learn and use.
- Provide information about students' academic achievement—what they are doing well and where improvement is needed.
- Build in accessibility features that help all students do their best, and expand access for students with disabilities by providing a range of accommodations.

All students in grades 3-11 will be taking the PARCC. There are two assessment sessions associated with PARCC. The first is the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) which has a testing window from March 16, 2015 through April 10, 2015. The second is the End-of-Year Assessment (EOY) that has a testing window from May 4, 2015 through June 1, 2015. Students will not be testing during the entire testing window. The testing window includes make-up days.

Rhode Island along with all of the other states that have adopted the CCSS have been working hard over the last four years to learn and implement these new standards. The PARCC results will provide an opportunity for the Cumberland School District to assess whether our students are learning at expected levels or need extra help. We will be able to determine whether our instructional programs and practices are working. Since the CCSS have been adopted by many other states, we will be able to collaborate and learn from one another.

We have been preparing for the PBA which will begin on March 16th. Students and staff are becoming acclimated with the technology that students will be using to take the assessment. It is important to note that with any new assessment, there is what is referred to as an “implementation dip”.

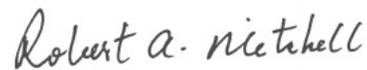
Michael Fullen (2001), in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change* defines the implementation dip as the following: "...a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings". Please don't be surprised if there is a “dip” in performance when we get our results.

If you would like to learn more, there is a wealth of helpful information on the PARCC for parents at <http://parconline.org/for-parents>. If you have any specific questions about PARCC please contact your child's teacher or principal.

Sincerely,



Philip D. Thornton, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



Robert A. Mitchell  
Assistant Superintendent