



**What's New in the Fourth Edition of the
PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual?
September 19, 2015**

The fourth edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual (PARCC AF&A Manual)* was released in late August 2015 in preparation for the second year of PARCC administration. The *PARCC AF&A Manual* is a comprehensive policy document that provides guidance to districts and decision-making teams to ensure that the PARCC summative assessments provide valid results for all participating students. The full policy document and all of the appendices can be found online here: <http://parcc.pearson.com/manuals-training/>. While the vast majority of the new *PARCC AF&A Manual* is consistent with the third edition, there are some changes we would like to call to your attention.

1. Streamlining the Assessment

In spring 2015, the PARCC states unanimously approved changes to the assessment design, including consolidating the two testing windows (Performance-Based Assessment and End-of-Year Assessment) into one and reducing the total test time by approximately 90 minutes. These changes will be implemented beginning with the spring 2016 administration. Note that high school students taking the fall block 2015 assessments will take both the Performance-Based Assessment and the End-of-Year Assessment.

For more information, please refer to the press release online here:

<http://parconline.org/news-and-updates/press-releases/219-parcc-states-vote-to-shorten-test-time-and-simplify-test-administration>

2. Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile

The Student Registration File and the Personal Needs Profile Layout have been combined into one file. The Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) not only registers students for the PARCC assessments, but also allows for customization of the assessment to the student's unique accessibility and accommodations requirements. In previous administrations, these files had been imported separately, but they are now combined to streamline the student registration process and reduce administrative burden.

For more information, refer to Section 2 of the *PARCC AF&A Manual* and/or the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile Training Module. <http://parcc.pearson.com/manuals-training/> Note: The fall block training modules will be posted in mid-October 2015. In addition, the modules will be refreshed prior to spring administration.

3. Test Administration Guidance

In Sections 2 and 3 of the *PARCC AF&A Manual*, additional guidance is provided for Test Coordinators and Test Administrators on the before testing, during testing, and after testing activities necessary for successful administration of each accessibility feature and accommodation. Information on identification, materials, and test administrator training is also included.

Example of Test Administration Guidance for Accessibility Features (Section 2)

Accessibility Feature		Administration Guidelines
1r	Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics Assessments (SR/PNP)	<p>Before Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification for SR/PNP: Student’s SR/PNP must have Text-to-Speech selected to activate the feature on the platform. Once a student is placed into a test session, the student will be assigned a form with embedded text-to-speech. Proctor caching is strongly encouraged. If this content is not cached, it may present challenges for students during testing. Volume level must be determined prior to testing; once the test session begins, the volume level cannot be changed. Student will not have access to volume control in the secure TestNav environment. • Test Administrator Training: Refer to the Text-to-Speech Tutorial on parcc.pearson.com for full training on tool functionality. <p>During Testing: The student selects the “Text-to-Speech Player” icon on the toolbar on the right side of the screen. The test is read aloud to the student using embedded text-to-speech software. The student may pause and resume the audio. To choose a speed (slow, normal, fast); select the “Text-to-Speech Settings” icon. Once the test begins, the volume level cannot be changed. Student must be tested in a separate setting if unable to wear headphones.</p>

Example of Test Administration Guidance for Accommodations (Section 3)

Accommodation		Administration Guidelines
3m	ASL Video for the Mathematics Assessments	<p>Before Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification for SR/PNP: Student’s SR/PNP must have ASL Video selected. Once a student is placed into a test session, the student will be assigned an ASL Video form.¹ Proctor caching is strongly encouraged. If this content is not cached, it may present challenges for students during testing. If a student does not use ASL, a human interpreter and separate test setting will be required. <p>During Testing: The student views an embedded video of a human interpreter for the mathematics assessments. The student may pause and resume the video but cannot adjust the pace.</p>

¹ Since there is no embedded multimedia on the ASL form, students taking this form will not also require Closed Captioning.

4. Changes to the Accessibility Features and Accommodations

There are a few additions/changes to the PARCC accessibility features and accommodations for the second year of administration.

Accessibility Features

- **Blank Scratch Paper:** Test administrators must supply at least one page of blank scratch paper (as opposed to at least two pages) for each student. Additional pages may be provided as needed. Recommended that if graph paper is used during mathematics instruction that it be provided as scratch paper. Added abacus and Math Window as scratch paper options for students who are blind or have a visual impairment.
- **Bookmark:** “Flag Items for Review” has been renamed “Bookmark” based on focus group discussions on frequently used technology terms.
- **General Masking:** General masking is a new accessibility features that will be available beginning with the spring 2016 PARCC assessments. The student will use an onscreen tool to create custom on-screen masks using the updated Line Reader Mask tool. The mask box can be resized by the student to cover content on the screen as necessary. The Line Reader Mask tool will include additional functionality to close the line reader window and allow the feature to work as only a general masking tool. In addition, the Line Reader window will be moveable anywhere within the boundaries of the Line Reader tool.
- **Highlight Tool:** The highlighter color option will change depending on the color contrast option selected. Given the overlap with color contrast options, not every color for the highlighter may be available.
- **Line Reader Tool:** During the fall block PARCC assessments, the student selects “Show Line Reader” in the User Dropdown Menu. The student uses an onscreen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text onscreen. The Line Reader can be resized and the size of the reader window can be adjusted. The student may disable this feature by selecting, “Hide Line Reader” in the User Dropdown Menu. Beginning with the spring 2016 PARCC assessments, the line reader tool name will be changed to line reader mask tool. The student selects “Show Line Reader Mask” in the User Dropdown Menu. The student uses an onscreen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text onscreen. The Line Reader can be resized and the size of the reader window can be adjusted. The student may disable this feature by selecting, “Hide Line Reader Mask” in the User Dropdown Menu. Note: With the January release of TestNav, the Line Reader will include additional functionality to close the line reader window and allow the feature to work as a general masking tool. In addition, the Line Reader window will be moveable anywhere within the boundaries of the Line Reader tool. The Line Reader Mask box color will change depending on the color contrast option selected.

- **Spell Check:** Embedded spell check has been added as an accessibility feature this year. The student uses the embedded spell check icon within the editor text box in TestNav to review his or her constructed responses for errors. If preferred, the student uses an external spell check device. If the device has embedded grammar check, it must be turned off during the assessment. The external device may not connect to the internet or store information. If the student uses different spell check software, it must be on a separate computer. The additional computer must meet the criteria listed above for external devices.

Accessibility Features Identified in Advance

- **Color Contrast (Background/Font Color):** With support of our vision experts, a high contrast color combination of yellow on blue has been added to replace the light blue on dark blue contrast option.



Administrative Considerations

- **Frequent Breaks:** Additional information regarding medical breaks, individual bathroom breaks, in-chair stretch breaks, and frequent breaks is included in Section 2 of the *PARCC AF&A Manual*.

Accommodations

- **Assistive Technology:** Reminder added that PARCC assessments are designed to be Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant.
- **Screen Reader Version:** For optimal screen reader usage, PARCC recommends using JAWS 15 with Firefox.
- **ELA/Literacy Assessments Reading Access:** Modes include text-to-speech; ASL video; and human reader/human signer. No reporting notation is included for students who use this accommodation.

- **Calculation Device & Mathematics Tools on Non-Calculator Sections:**
 - Allowable calculators include:
 - Grades 3-5: Four-function with square root and percentage functions
 - Grades 6-7: Four-function with square root and percentage functions
 - Grade 8: Scientific calculators (Student may also bring a four-function with square root and percentage functions in addition to grade-level calculator.)
 - High School: Graphing calculators with functionalities consistent with TI-84 or similar models. (Student may also bring a scientific calculator or a four-function with square root and percentage functions.)
 - Allowable mathematics tools include:
 - Arithmetic tables (e.g., addition charts, subtraction charts, multiplication charts; division charts)
 - Two-color chips (e.g., single-sided or double-sided)
 - Counters and counting chips
 - Square tiles
 - Base 10 blocks
 - 100s chart

- **Monitor Test Response:** Monitor test response is an accommodation available now for students taking both the computer-based and paper-based assessments. The test administrator monitors proper placement of student responses. This accommodation is to ensure that the student is marking the answer for the problem the student intends to answer. For example, a student may accidentally skip a question. The test administrator CANNOT assist the student in any way with respect to the content of the item.

- **Word-to-Word Dictionary:** An updated, state-developed list of approved bilingual word- to-word dictionaries can be found here:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep-bilingual-dictionary.pdf>

- **General Administration Directions Read Aloud & Repeated in Student's Native Language:** Based on current PARCC state enrollment data, for 2015-2016, PARCC will provide written general test administration directions in the following languages:
 - Spanish
 - Arabic
 - Navajo
 - Chinese Mandarin
 - Vietnamese
 - Portuguese
 - Polish
 - Haitian Creole
 - Urdu
 - Russian

Appendices

- **Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments**

- Appendix A has been reformatted to include policy changes and test administration guidance. The tables are formatted in the following way:

CBT Comparable Accessibility Feature	PBT Accessibility Feature	PBT Administration Guidelines
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- **Answers Recorded in Test Booklet:** Beginning spring 2016, students in grade 3 will have consumable test booklets while students in grades 4 and above will use test booklets and separate answer documents. For students using test booklets and answer documents, the student records answers directly in the test booklet.
- **Appendix L: Human Signer Guidelines:** New guidelines for human signers have been developed and added to the *PARCC AF&A Manual*.
 - **Appendix M: PARCC Assessments for Students with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness:** The technical assistance bulletin for PARCC assessments for students with visual impairment, including blindness has been added as an official appendix to the *PARCC AF&A Manual*.