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,

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 11th-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://parcconline.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 higher education courses requiring college-level reading and writing. 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 limited development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates limited organization. The student demonstrates limited 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 likely need academic support to succeed in higher education courses requiring college-level reading and writing. The student demonstrates a somewhat accurate analysis of a range of complex texts, showing minimal understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides partial development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates some organization. The student demonstrates partial 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 entry-level, credit-bearing content area higher education courses requiring

college-level reading and writing. The student demonstrates a <u>generally accurate</u> analysis of a range of complex texts, showing <u>basic</u> understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides <u>adequate</u> development of ideas, including when drawing evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates organization. The student demonstrates <u>moderate</u> command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Level 5 – A student who achieves at Level 5 <u>exceeds expectations</u> of the grade-level standards for Reading, Writing, and Language and is <u>well prepared </u>to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing content area higher education courses requiring college-level reading and writing. The student demonstrates a <u>mostly accurate</u> analysis of a range of complex texts, showing understanding when referring to textual evidence. In Writing, the student provides <u>effective</u> development of ideas, including when using evidence from multiple sources, and demonstrates <u>effective</u> organization. The student demonstrates command of the conventions of grammar and usage.

Performance Level Summary for 11ᵗʰ-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**
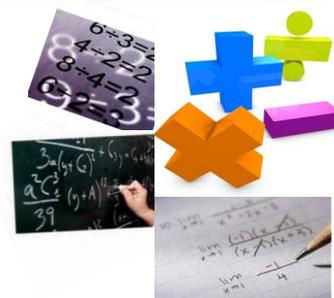
Math 3

Level 2
*   Solves problems involving polynomial equations. Given a graph, identifies key features of polynomials. Constructs linear function models.
*   Identifies the effects of a single transformation limited to $f(x)+k$.
*   Given a trigonometric value in quadrant 1, identifies other trigonometric values for that angle. Solves problems and reasons about given simple geometric properties and theorems. Constructs a copy of line segment or angle.
*   Identifies characteristics of a sample survey, experiment, and observational study. Identifies when sample data can be used to make inferences about the corresponding population. Identifies mean and standard deviation for given normal distribution.
*   Applies mathematics using given assumptions, tools, and functions; analyzing relationships; and writing an incomplete algebraic expression or equation.
*   Communicates a response, which may be incomplete, illogical, based on faulty assumptions, or include major calculation errors in written justifications.

Level 3
*   Uses inverses where appropriate. Uses multiple representations to reveal key features of polynomial and exponential functions, sketches graphs, and creates equivalent expressions. Constructs exponential function models.
*   Identifies the effects of a single transformation limited to $kf(x),$ and determines if the resulting function is even or odd.
*   Given a trigonometric value and quadrant for an angle, identifies other trigonometric values for that angle. Makes basic geometric constructions. Uses and applies the Pythagorean Theorem and properties of arcs of circles.

- Identifies sample survey, experiment, and observational study. Fits data to normal distributions.
- Applies mathematics illustrating and analyzing relationships between important quantities; writing an incomplete algebraic expression, equation, or function; modifying the model; and interpreting mathematical results in a simplified context.
- Communicates a logical response, which may be incomplete and include minor calculation errors in written justifications. Evaluates the validity of others' approaches and conclusions.

Level 4

- Solves problems involving exponential and trigonometric equations using inverses where appropriate. Creates multiple equivalent polynomial and exponential expressions. Constructs quadratic models.
- Identifies the effects of a single transformation of the form $f(kx)$ and $f(x+k)$.
- Identify trigonometric relationships in the unit circle. Understands geometric constructions. Uses completing the square to solve geometric problems.
- Determines appropriateness of sample survey, experiment, and observational study. Uses sample data to make inferences about the corresponding population. Fits trigonometric functions to data to solve multi-step, real-world problems.
- Applies mathematics by making assumptions; mapping and analyzing relationships between important quantities; selecting appropriate tools to create models; writing a clear and correct algebraic expression, equation, or function; improving the model; and interpreting results in context.
- Communicates a precise, logical response in written justifications. Makes mathematical connections and evaluates, interprets, and critiques the validity of others' responses and reasoning.

Level 5

- Solves multi-step problems involving linear, exponential, quadratic, and trigonometric equations. Creates multiple equivalent expressions. Uses multiple representations to reveal and compare key features of polynomial, exponential, trigonometric, and logarithmic functions and sketches their graphs. Identifies the effects of changing parameters.
- Identifies effects of transformations of the form $f(x)+k$, $kf(x)$, $f(kx)$, and $f(x+k)$. Applies the Remainder Theorem.
- Describes the relationship between radian measure and subtended arcs. Uses and applies trigonometric ratios. Models relationships, solves design problems, and formulates generalizations using appropriate geometric properties and theorems. Makes and understands geometric constructions using a variety of tools.
- Determines why a sample survey, experiment, or observational study is most appropriate. Makes changes to statistical study designs as necessary. Uses sample data to critique inferences and conclusions about the corresponding population. Decides when models fitted to data are inappropriate.
- In real-world problems, analyzes and justifies constraints, relationships, and models.
- Evaluates, interprets, and critiques the validity of others' responses, correcting as necessary. Generalizes a conclusion or provides a counter example.