



UNION COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

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Mr. Peter A. Capodice
Superintendent of Schools

February, 2015

Good Afternoon Parents,

As I'm sure you are aware, the New Jersey Department of Education is transitioning its state mandated assessment requirements this school year. The new assessments have been developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and are aligned to the State adopted Common Core State Standards. With respect to high school in particular, the PARCC assessments are to be administered in both Language Arts (grades 9, 10, & 11) and Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II), will be delivered in an online testing environment, and will replace the previously administered High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

There has been a great deal of discussion about these assessments in the news and media in recent months and as such, I would like to take a moment to reassure you that we believe our students are well prepared for these exams. While PARCC is a new assessment system for us this year, our district faculty has been working for the past several years in adjusting our curriculum and instruction to be aligned more with the specific content of the Common Core State Standards. Additionally, our district philosophy continues to be, and has always been, centered on critical thinking, problem solving, applications, connected learning and high level academics – goals which are also in alignment with the Common Core State Standards and assessed through PARCC. While we recognize the value in gaining feedback regarding the growth of our students and our programs, we also have great confidence that our students will perform well on this new assessment, as we work hard every day to provide our students with a quality education.

Provided below, in Q & A format, please find important information and details regarding the PARCC test administration at UCVTS which will begin on March 2nd, 2015.

Who will be tested?

Language Arts – All students in grades 9, 10, and 11

Mathematics – All students currently enrolled in the following UCVTS coursework: Algebra I, Combined Algebra, Geometry, Geometry/Trigonometry, Algebra II/Trigonometry, and Math Analysis. *(Please note, any student in grade 9, 10, or 11 who is enrolled in a course of a higher level than those listed above will be exempt from taking a PARCC mathematics assessment.)*

Additionally, all public schools in New Jersey received a memo from the Commissioner of Education, David Hespe, which cites a number of state regulations, including N.J.S.A. 18A: 7C-1; N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1(a) – (d) that clearly require all students to participate in State assessments as scheduled. Make-up testing dates will be scheduled for students who are absent from testing days.

When will UCVTS Students be tested?

There are two components of the PARCC assessments which must be administered, a Performance Based Assessment (PBA) and an End of Year Assessment (EOY). Please see the schedule below for specific information.

Component	Dates of Testing	Course/Content Tested	Testing Time	Make-up Days
PBA	March 2 & 3	Grade 9 – English Language Arts (World Literature)	Day 1: 8:00 – 11:23 Day 2: 8:00 – 9:23	March 5 & 6
	March 4	Algebra I, Combined Algebra	8:00 – 11:23	
	March 9 & 10	Grade 10 – English Language Arts (Early American Lit.)	Day 1: 8:00 – 11:23 Day 2: 8:00 – 9:23	March 12 & 13
	March 11	Geometry, Geometry/Trigonometry	8:00 – 11:23	
	March 16 & 17	Grade 11 – English Language Arts (Modern American Lit.)	Day 1: 8:00 – 11:23 Day 2: 8:00 – 9:23	March 19 & 20
	March 18	Algebra II/Trig, Math Analysis	8:00 – 11:23	
EOY	April 27	Grade 11 – English Language Arts (Modern American Lit.)	8:00 – 10:50	To be scheduled on an as needed basis after May 4
	April 28	Algebra II/Trig, Math Analysis	8:00 – 11:23	
	April 29	Grade 10 – English Language Arts (Early American Lit.)	8:00 – 10:50	
	April 30	Geometry, Geometry/Trigonometry	8:00 – 11:23	
	May 1	Grade 9 – English Language Arts (World History)	8:00 – 10:50	
	May 4	Algebra I, Combined Algebra	8:00 – 11:23	

*****Additional make-up days will be scheduled on an as needed basis*****

If my child is not testing on a given day, what will she/he do?

Any student who is not being tested on a given day, *including seniors*, are expected to attend class as usual. It is our goal to minimize the loss to instructional time wherever possible.

How can my child prepare?

By working hard in their coursework and doing their best, as is expected every day.

Are there materials my student needs to bring?

Yes. Testing in the PARCC online environment requires the use of headphones. Earbuds are acceptable. For student comfort and for sanitary reasons, in the weeks prior to testing, we will ask that every student bring in a pair of headphones, stored in a plastic storage bag and labeled with their name and school. We will have some sets of additional headphones on hand the day of testing. More information will be communicated to families soon.

Additional information will be communicated to families in the upcoming weeks through your child's building principal. Please be on the look-out for this information and read each communication carefully as we wish to make the testing process as smooth and seamless as possible. Also in the upcoming weeks, parent resources regarding PARCC and the Common Core State Standards will be made available and updated on our district website and will be accessible via the district main page.

As always, we appreciate your support in helping our students perform to their potential. Please discuss the importance of these assessments at home with your children and be sure to reach out with any questions. Questions can be addressed through our teaching staff, our school counselors, our building principals, or our central office administrators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Capodice", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter A. Capodice
Superintendent