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City Schools' PARCC Results Show Modest Increases *District to build on momentum with new blueprint for success*

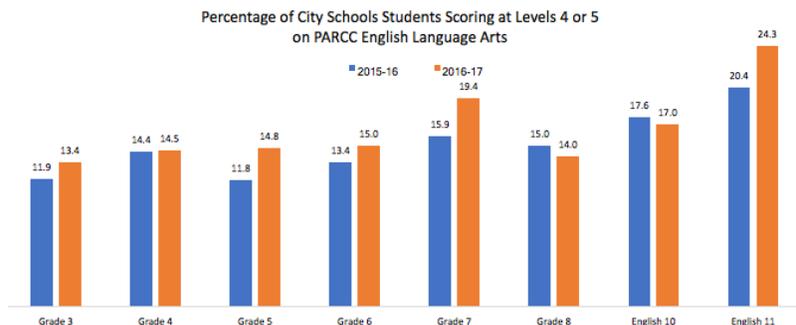
(Baltimore, MD) – Baltimore City Public Schools' results on the 2017 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), released today by the Maryland State Department of Education, show modest gains at almost all grade levels in both English language arts/literacy and mathematics. PARCC results are one measure to indicate whether students are on track for success as they progress toward college and careers. Results are used by teachers to inform instruction.

In 2017, students in grades 3 to 8 took PARCC in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, and high school students took PARCC in English 10, English 11, Algebra I, and Algebra II. The tests are scored on a 5-point scale, with 4 indicating “meets expectations” and 5 indicating “exceeds expectations.” Overall, 16.1 percent of City Schools students met or exceeded expectations in English language arts/literacy, an increase of 1.5 percentage points over 2016. In mathematics, where grade-level gains were smaller, 11.9 percent of students overall met or exceeded expectations, virtually unchanged from 11.8 in 2016. (Note that results reported by City Schools differ slightly from those reported by the state because the former include only students attending City Schools and not those placed in non-public schools at public cost.)

“I’m encouraged that there is movement in the right direction, but these results reinforce for me the urgency of the work we need to do,” said Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, City Schools’ chief executive officer. “After three years’ experience with the PARCC tests, far too few of our students are where they need to be – and where I know they can, should, and deserve to be. Moving the needle in academic achievement takes time, but we must accelerate progress so that students are on track early and don’t lose ground as they move up through the grades. Later this week, I will introduce a new blueprint for our work, designed to give the entire City Schools community a clear, comprehensive, and shared focus on students’ success.”

English Language Arts/Literacy

In English language arts, the percentage of City Schools students scoring at level 4 or 5 increased in grades 3 to 7, with statistically significant increases in grades 3, 5, and 7; a slight, statistically insignificant decrease was noted in grade 8. In high school, there was a slight decrease in English 10, and a statistically significant increase in English 11.

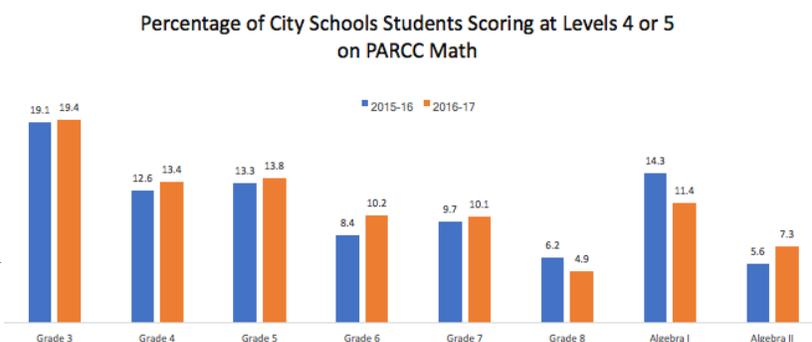


In 2016-17, City Schools launched several initiatives designed to improve student outcomes in literacy. For example, with support from community partners and grants, the district invested in several early learning tools in literacy, including an online library of hundreds of books in English and Spanish that students can access at school and at home. A literacy institute was offered for teachers in the summer and, during the school year, teams of elementary school teachers were able to participate in webinars on literacy skills, including close reading of complex texts.

“Last year we established the goal that, by 2020, all students will be analyzing and understanding challenging content and expressing themselves clearly and confidently,” said Chief Academic Officer Sean Conley. “We spent the year focused on curriculum implementation and ensuring that all students in all classrooms were supported. Moving forward, the blueprint we are adopting emphasizes literacy across all grades and subjects, and engages the support of families and community members. By expanding our emphasis on literacy schoolwide, we expect to see increased momentum toward our goals for all students’ success.”

Mathematics

Similar to the results in English language arts, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in mathematics increased in grades 3 to 7, with a statistically significant gain in grade 6; a significant decrease was noted in grade 8. In secondary-level math, a decrease was noted in Algebra I and an increase in Algebra II, with both changes reaching statistical significance.



In recent years, the district has expanded access to Algebra I, offering the course to more 8th-grade students who are advanced in math.

“Schools are implementing a new math curriculum this year,” said Conley. “Eureka is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, connects to real-world problems, offers online access to professional learning for teachers and school leaders and has a track record of success. It has a very clear sequence and progression from grade to grade, so that students can more readily build skills and understanding on the foundation of what they’ve already mastered.”

City Schools’ Blueprint for Success

This week at the annual CEO Institute that kicks off the school year for school and district leaders, Dr. Santelises will launch *Building a Generation: City Schools’ Blueprint for Success*. Based on national and international research and best practices, the blueprint provides a plan for the next five years—what students will be taught, how they will be taught, and how to improve the environments where they’re taught. In the 2017-18 school year, all schools will begin to implement components of the blueprint (excepting charter and contract schools, which have autonomy to follow the pedagogical approaches and focus areas defined in their charters and contracts).

“City Schools’ vision is that every student will graduate prepared to be successful in higher education and the global workforce,” said Cheryl Casciani, chair of the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. “Our new blueprint lays out a clear, coherent, and specific plan for achieving this goal for our city’s

young people. We're excited about the next steps for the district—and to realizing improved outcomes for our students.”

The blueprint focuses on three key areas with significant promise for ensuring students' success:

- ***Student wholeness.*** Our students are unique people with unique experiences, talents, challenges, and social, emotional, and physical lives. By keeping the wholeness of our students in mind, hearing their voices, and building partnerships with their families and communities, we can ignite their passion for learning.
- ***Literacy.*** To meet and exceed high academic standards and access the opportunities they deserve, our students must be able to comprehend challenging content and express themselves powerfully.
- ***Leadership.*** All staff members must take leadership roles in connecting with, supporting, inspiring, and challenging students and contributing to their success.

“If students are excited about learning, have the skills to think critically, analyze deeply, and express themselves effectively, and have adults around them who encourage them to persist and excel, they will be on the path to college and career readiness,” said Dr. Santelises. “That’s what our new blueprint is all about, and we are looking forward to putting it in place as the new school year gets underway.”

More information about City Schools' 2017 PARCC results is available at www.baltimorecityschools.org. Detailed information about *Building a Generation: City Schools' Blueprint for Success* will be available online on August 24.