



## Proposal

### PARCC College-Ready Determination Policy in English and Mathematics &

### Policy and General Content Claims for PARCC Performance Levels

#### Note on Career Readiness

The policy detailed in this proposal reflects PARCC K-12 and Higher Education Leadership discussions to date, which have focused on characterizing college readiness and defining entry-level, credit-bearing courses in English language arts/ literacy (ELA/ literacy) and mathematics. Addressing career readiness remains a priority for PARCC, as the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards are necessary for success in both postsecondary education and the workplace. In the coming months, PARCC intends to engage representatives from the career and technical education and business communities in order to further examine what it means for students to be prepared to successfully engage in a career.

#### I. College-Ready Determinations in English Language Arts/ Literacy and Mathematics Policy

##### Meaning of the College-Ready Determination

A student who is determined to be College-Ready by PARCC is one who has demonstrated the *academic* knowledge, skills, and practices in ELA/ literacy and mathematics necessary to enter directly into and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in those content areas at two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

PARCC will make College-Ready Determinations in ELA/ literacy and in mathematics.

- Students who earn a College-Ready Determination in ELA/ literacy will have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to enter directly into and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition and Literature, and introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences.
- Students who earn a College-Ready Determination in mathematics will have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to enter directly into and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory College Statistics.

It should be noted that the acquisition of academic knowledge, skills, and practices are *necessary but not sufficient* to succeed in college. Other factors contribute to success, such as study and social skills, motivation, physical and emotional health, and finances. Many states are engaged in describing these factors and determining ways to support students in acquiring them as part of a broad agenda to increase college graduation rates.

Since these non-academic factors are so important, PARCC College-Ready Determinations can only provide an estimate of the likelihood that students who earn them will succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses. Accordingly, the information and process used to identify the scores on PARCC assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations will be designed to promote confidence in the estimate, realizing that no estimate can be 100 percent accurate. A brief description of the information and process that will be used to establish the scores is provided in the final section of this proposal.

### **Benefit of Earning a PARCC College-Ready Determination**

One of PARCC's primary objectives is that students who earn a College-Ready Determination and are admitted to two- or four-year institutions of higher education will be exempted from having to take and pass other placement tests designed to determine whether they are academically prepared to enter directly into entry-level, credit-bearing courses in English, mathematics, and a wide range of disciplines that require college-level reading, such as history and the social sciences.

The College-Ready Determination is not being designed to inform college admission decisions or to exempt students from having to take tests designed to place them into more advanced courses beyond entry-level courses.

### **Criteria Used to Make College-Ready Determinations**

In order to earn and maintain a College-Ready Determination in ELA/ literacy, a student will need to achieve at least the threshold score for Level 4 on the designated PARCC high school ELA/ literacy assessments.

**In order to earn and maintain a College-Ready Determination in mathematics, a student will need to achieve a at least the threshold score for Level 4 on the designated PARCC High School Mathematics assessments.**

Reference to "designated PARCC high school assessments" is purposeful, because the specific assessments used to make PARCC College-Ready Determinations have not yet been determined as there are options to consider. One option is to use the terminal assessment in each content area: the grade 11 ELA/ literacy assessment and the Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III assessment. Another option is to use all three PARCC high school assessments in each content area. This would include end-of-grade assessments in English language arts/ literacy in grades 9, 10 and 11, and end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, or Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III in mathematics. The ACCR and Governing Board will be asked to consider the options and vote on adopting one in winter 2012.

## Maintaining a College-Ready Determination

To use the PARCC College-Ready Determination to place students into entry-level, credit-bearing courses, higher education institutions may impose additional conditions, such as continuous enrollment through graduation from high school in courses offered through dual/concurrent enrollment or high school courses that build on the standards used to make the College-Ready Determination.

## Determining and Validating College-Ready Threshold Scores

PARCC will establish a systematic standard-setting process to identify the threshold scores, also known as cut scores, on the designated high school assessments that will be used for making College-Ready Determinations.

The standard-setting process will begin with the development of PARCC performance levels and associated performance level descriptors. The descriptors will describe the knowledge, skills and practices in ELA/ literacy and Mathematics contained in the Common Core State Standards that students performing at each level must be able to demonstrate. PARCC anticipates there will be five performance levels. The descriptors for Level 4 for PARCC high school assessments will depict the knowledge, skills and practices that are needed to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

The standard-setting process will continue with a standard-setting event after the first administration of PARCC in summer 2015. The event will result in identification of the threshold scores for all PARCC performance levels and make use of multiple sources of information including the judgments of K-12 and higher education professionals serving on standard-setting panels, as well as relevant data about how students participating in PARCC assessments perform on other achievement measures.

While details of the standard-setting event will be considered by the ACCR and PARCC Governing Board in the near future, in addition to the sources of information described above, the following statement will be used to inform the judgments of the panelists and to conduct validation studies of the efficacy of PARCC's College-Ready Determinations in the future.

At least 75 percent of the students who earn a PARCC College-Ready Determination by performing at Level 4 in Mathematics should earn college credit by attaining at least a grade of C or its equivalent in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics, and at least 75 percent of the students who earn a College-Ready Determination by performing at level 4 in ELA/ literacy should earn college credit by attaining at least a grade of C or its equivalent in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses in disciplines requiring college-level reading, such as history and the social sciences.

## II. Policy and General Content Claims PARCC Performance Levels

### Definitions of Terms

#### **Performance Levels**

- Student results on PARCC ELA/ literacy and Mathematics assessments will be reported according to numerical scaled scores and performance levels. Performance levels are used to classify student performances into categories that describe the knowledge, skills and practices students in the category typically are able to demonstrate, including the consistency with which they can demonstrate these traits. Each PARCC performance level will have a specified minimum scaled score associated with it – often referred to as cut score. Cut scores for PARCC performance levels will be determined through a systematic, standard-setting process in the summer of 2015. The *policy claims* and *general content claims* that follow in the remainder of this document will serve as the basis for the standard-setting process.

#### **Policy Claims**

- Policy claims describe the educational consequences that PARCC ascribes to students who attain a particular performance level.

#### **General Content Claims vs. Grade/Course-Specific Content Claims**

- *General content claims* in a particular content area describe, in broad terms, the knowledge, skills, and practices students performing at a given performance level are able to demonstrate. *General content claims* are applicable to any grade level.
- PARCC will also develop *grade/course-specific content claims*. These claims will profile the knowledge, skills and practices students performing at a given performance level/course and grade level are able to demonstrate (e.g., grade 4 ELA/literacy, Algebra I).

## Level 5

Students performing at this level demonstrate a **superior command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level.

### Policy Claims

*For reporting results of assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations*

- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level. They are academically well prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences. Students performing at this level are exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course(s). They are academically well prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics. Students performing at this level are exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 9 and 10 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and are academically well prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They are *on-track* to become academically prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences, without the need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have a **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course, and are academically well prepared to engage successfully in further studies further studies in this content area. They are on-track to become academically well prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics without the need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 3-8 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy [Mathematics] assessed at their grade level, and are academically well prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

### General Content Claims

- In ELA/literacy, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Full comprehension of a range of complex literary and informational texts by drawing relevant evidences from texts to construct effective arguments and analyses;
  - Use of context to effectively determine the meaning of words and phrases;
  - Highly effective writing when using and analyzing sources, with comprehensive development of the claim, topic and/or narrative elements<sup>1</sup> by using clear and convincing reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description; the development is consistently appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience;
  - Highly effectively demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English consistent with effectively edited writing;
  - Highly effective ability to build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of complex ideas.
- In mathematics, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade at which they are assessed:
  - Solve most problems involving the major content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Solve most problems involving the additional and supporting content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Almost always can express grade level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements;
  - Almost always solve real world problems, engaging particularly in the Modeling practice; and
  - Strong fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in their grade.

## Level 4

Students performing at this level demonstrate a **solid command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level.

### Policy Claims

*For reporting results of assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations*

- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level. They are academically prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences. Students performing at this level are exempt from having to take and pass college placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for courses without need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course(s). They are academically prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics. Students performing at this level are exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 9 and 10 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and are academically prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They are *on-track* to become academically prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences, without the need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have a **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course, and are academically prepared to engage successfully in further studies further studies in this content area. They are on-track to become academically prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics without the need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 3-8 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy [Mathematics] assessed at their grade level, and are academically prepared to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

### General Content Claims

- In ELA/literacy, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Extensive comprehension of a range of complex literary and informational texts by drawing relevant evidences from texts to construct effective arguments and analyses;
  - Use the context to effectively determine the meaning of words and phrases;
  - Effective writing when using and analyzing sources that provides effective development of the claim, topic and/or narrative elements by using clear reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description; the development is largely appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience;
  - Effectively demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English consistent with edited writing;
  - Effective ability to build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of complex ideas.
- In mathematics, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Solve problems involving the major content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Solve problems involving the additional and supporting content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Express grade level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements;
  - Solve real world problems, engaging particularly in the Modeling practice; and
  - Adequate fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in their grade.

### Level 3

Students performing at this level demonstrate a **partial command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level.

#### Policy Claims

*For reporting results of assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations*

- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level. Students will likely need academic support to be prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass college placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course(s). They will likely need academic support to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 9 and 10 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and will likely need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will likely need continued academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences, without the need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have a **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course, and will likely need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will likely need continued academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics without the need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 3-8 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy [Mathematics] assessed at their grade level, and will likely need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

### **General Content Claims**

- In ELA/literacy, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Comprehension of a range of complex literary and informational texts by drawing relevant evidences from texts to construct effective arguments and analyses;
  - Use the context to determine the meaning of words and phrases;
  - Somewhat effective writing when using and analyzing sources that provides some development of the claim, topic and/or narrative elements by using some reasoning, details, text-based evidence, and/or description; the development is somewhat appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience;
  - Demonstrate inconsistent command of the conventions of standard English;
  - Somewhat effective ability to build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of complex ideas.
- In mathematics, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Solve some problems involving the major content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Solve some problems involving the additional and supporting content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - [Often/ Inconsistently] express grade level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements;
  - Solve some real world problems, showing some evidence of engaging in the Modeling practice; and
  - [Often/ Inconsistently] demonstrate fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in their grade.

## Level 2

Students performing at this level demonstrate a **limited command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level.

### Policy Claims

*For reporting results of assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations*

- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level. Students will need academic support to be prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass college placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course(s). They will need academic support to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 9 and 10 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and will need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will need continued academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences, without the need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have a **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course, and will need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will need continued academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics without the need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 3-8 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have a **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and will need academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

### **General Content Claims**

- In ELA/literacy, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Limited comprehension of a range of complex literary and informational texts by drawing relevant evidences from texts to construct effective arguments and analyses;
  - Use the context inconsistently to determine the meaning of words and phrases;
  - Write with limited effectiveness when using and analyzing sources by developing the claim, topic and/or narrative elements<sup>1</sup> minimally by using limited reasoning, details, text-based evidence and/or description; the development is limited in its appropriateness to the task, purpose, and/or audience;
  - Demonstrate limited command of the conventions of standard English;
  - Show limited ability to build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of complex ideas.
- In mathematics, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Solve a limited number of problems involving the major content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Solve a limited number of problems involving the additional and supporting content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Occasionally express grade level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements;
  - Solve a limited number of real world problems, often not showing evidence of engaging in the Modeling practice; and
  - [Inconsistently/ Infrequently] demonstrate fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in their grade.

## Level 1

Students performing at this level demonstrate a **very limited command** of the knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the Common Core State Standards assessed at their grade level.

### Policy Claims

*For reporting results of assessments used to make College-Ready Determinations*

- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **very limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level. Students will need extensive academic support to be prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass college placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have demonstrated a **very limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course(s). They will need extensive academic support to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics. Students performing at this level are not exempt from having to take and pass placement tests in two- and four-year institutions of higher education designed to determine whether they are academically prepared for such courses without need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 9 and 10 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have **very limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level, and will need extensive academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will need continued extensive academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College English Composition or Literature, or introductory courses requiring college-level reading in a range of disciplines, such as history and the social sciences, without the need for remediation.
- Students performing at this level have **very limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for Mathematics assessed at the end of their course, and will need extensive academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area. They will need continued extensive academic support to become prepared to engage successfully in entry-level, credit-bearing courses in College Algebra or Introductory Statistics without the need for remediation.

*For reporting results of grades 3-8 assessments*

- Students performing at this level have **very limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the CCSS for English language arts/ literacy assessed at their grade level and will need extensive academic support to engage successfully in further studies in this content area.

### **General Content Claims**

- In ELA/literacy, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Very limited comprehension of a range of complex literary and informational texts by drawing relevant evidences from texts to construct effective arguments and analyses;
  - Use the context ineffectively to determine the meaning of words and phrases;
  - Write with little or no effectiveness when using and analyzing sources; writing is underdeveloped and therefore inappropriate to the task, purpose, and/or audience;
  - Demonstrate little to no command of the conventions of standard English;
  - Very limited ability to build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of complex ideas.
- In mathematics, students at this level demonstrate the following as appropriate for the grade level at which they are assessed:
  - Solve very few problems involving the major content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - Solve very few problems involving the additional and supporting content\* for their grade with connection to the Standards for Mathematical Practice;
  - [Rarely/Seldom] express grade level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements;
  - Solve very few real world problems, not demonstrating evidence of engaging in the Modeling practice; and
  - [Rarely/ Seldom] demonstrate fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in their grade.

## Notes about Terms and Phrases Used in the Policy Descriptors

- Additional and Supporting Content (mathematics)
  - The Additional and Supporting Content in a grade/course is determined by the grade level's Additional and Supporting Clusters as identified in the *PARCC Model Content Frameworks for Mathematics* (<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks>).
- Major Content (mathematics)
  - The Major Content in a grade/course is determined by the grade level's Major Clusters as identified in the *PARCC Model Content Frameworks for Mathematics* (<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks>).