



NJ'S NEW GRADUATION POLICIES:
IMPACT ON CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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What current NJ law requires

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- The NJ High School Graduation Standards Act (N.J.S.A.18A:7C) requires:
 - An 11th grade test in Math & LAL
 - Re-testing opportunities in senior year
 - An alternative assessment
- The current Standards and Assessment regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6) require:
 - Students must pass HSPA or AHSA to get a diploma
- NJ's Administrative Procedure Act (N.J.S.A. 52:14B) requires agencies, like NJDOE, to follow rule-making procedures, providing notice and opportunity for public comment, to change policies like HS graduation requirements.

NJDOE's new graduation policies

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- New rules imposed without revision of the statute or adoption of new regulations.
- NJDOE eliminated the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) and the Alternative High School Assessment (AHSA)
- Replaced the HSPA with PARCC as the only free, state-developed assessment given to all public high school students.
- Legal challenge filed on behalf of parents/students for violations of the HS Graduation Act, the Standards and Assessment regulations, and the APA.

NJDOE's new graduation policies

Graduation Requirements for the Classes of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019

The updated chart below details how students can satisfy their assessment graduation requirement.

PARCC ELA Grade 9 ≥ 750 (Level 4) <i>or</i>	PARCC Algebra I ≥ 750 (Level 4) <i>or</i>
PARCC ELA Grade 10 ≥ 750 (Level 4) <i>or</i>	PARCC Geometry ≥ 725 (Level 3) <i>or</i>
PARCC ELA Grade 11 ≥ 725 (Level 3) <i>or</i>	PARCC Algebra II ≥ 725 (Level 3) <i>or</i>
SAT Reading* ≥ 400 <i>or</i>	SAT Math* ≥ 400 <i>or</i>
ACT Reading or ACT PLAN Reading ≥ 16 or	ACT or ACT PLAN Math ≥ 16 <i>or</i>
Accuplacer Write Placer ≥ 6 or	Accuplacer Elementary Algebra ≥ 76 or
PSAT10 Reading or PSAT/NMSQT Reading** ≥ 40 <i>or</i> PSAT10 Reading or PSAT/NMSQT Reading*** ≥ 22 <i>or</i>	PSAT10 Math or PSAT/NMSQT Math** ≥ 40 <i>or</i> PSAT10 Math or PSAT/NMSQT Math*** ≥ 22 <i>or</i>
ACT Aspire Reading ≥ 422 <i>or</i>	ACT Aspire Math ≥ 422 <i>or</i>
ASVAB-AFQT Composite ≥ 31 <i>or</i>	ASVAB-AFQT Composite ≥ 31 <i>or</i>
Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal	Meet the Criteria of the NJDOE Portfolio Appeal

Note: * SAT taken prior to March 2016; ** PSAT taken prior to October 2015; ***PSAT taken after October 2015. The College Board will establish new 'threshold scores' in May 2016 for the new SAT.

NJDOE's new graduation policies

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- Use PARCC as a graduation exit exam. All previous NJ graduation tests had multiple years of “due notice” testing.
- Put graduation at risk for many more students:
 - PARCC exams have passing rates of 30-40%.
 - HSPA typically had passing rates of 80-90%.
- Elimination of AHSA closed a path to graduation used annually by approximately 10,000 students, including a large percentage of the state's English Language Learners.

NJDOE's new graduation policies

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- Rely on tests not authorized by state assessment regulations
- Rely on commercially-produced college entrance exams with fees
- Utilize tests not aligned with state standards or validated as graduation exams
- Eliminate opportunities for re-testing required by statute
- Utilize 'English only' tests that eliminate accommodations for ELLs
- Make the appeals process more difficult and burdensome for schools and students.

Impact on Class of 2016

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Statewide PARCC ELA11 Results	Students must pass one ELA test and one Math test to graduate
Students registered	94,625
Tested	61,768
Not Tested	32,857
Passed	39,840
Didn't pass	21,928
At risk for graduation	54,785*

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet graduation requirement for ELA

Impact on Class of 2016

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PARCC ELA11 Results by ethnicity	Passed	Failed	At risk for graduation*
AFRICAN AMERICAN	51.7%	48.3%	4,538
HISPANIC	56.6%	43.4%	6393
WHITE	68.8%	31.2%	9559
ASIAN	82.1%	17.9%	1,084
All NJ students tested	64.5%	35.4%	21,866

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for ELA

Impact on Class of 2016

PARCC ELA11 Results by subgroup	Passed	Failed	At risk for graduation*
Non Economically Disadvantaged	69.4%	30.7%	12,669
Economically Disadvantaged	54.9%	45.1%	9,246
English Language Learners	27.0%	73.0%	1838
Students with disabilities	31.5%	68.5%	6191

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for ELA

Impact on Class of 2016

PARCC ELA11 Results by DFG	Passed	Failed	At risk for graduation*
Low income	55%	45%	6709
Middle income	64.3%	35.7%	10,591
High income	78%	22%	2,581

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for ELA

Impact on class of 2016

Results of PARCC math exams

Senior results on PARCC math exams			
<i>Students must pass one math test to graduate</i>	Passed	Failed	At risk for graduation*
Algebra I	4%	96%	1,346
Algebra II	23%	77%	24,743
Geometry	18%	82%	4,832
Seniors tested in math			30,921

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for Math

Impact in Newark

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PARCC ELA11 Results: NPS	
Students registered	1851
Tested	985
Not Tested	866
Passed	528
Didn't pass	457
At risk for graduation	1323*
Students who have not met graduation requirements through any of NJDOE's options (as of Feb)	1000+

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for ELA

Impact in Paterson

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PARCC ELA11 Results: NPS	
Students registered	1372
Tested	963
Not Tested	409
Passed	297
Didn't pass	665
At risk for graduation	1074*
Students who have not met graduation requirements through any of NJDOE's options (as of Feb.)	690

*Students who will not be able to use PARCC scores to meet the graduation requirement for ELA

Impact on English Language Learners

- Only 27% of ELLs in class of 2016 passed PARCC ELA11.
- Survey of 52 districts found only 10% of ELL seniors qualified for graduation on NJDOE's "substitute assessments." (NJTESOL/NJBE)
- AHSAs were available in four state-developed translations (Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, Gujarati). All NJDOE's "substitute assessments" are "English only."
- ELLs will have to rely disproportionately on "portfolio appeals" with significant extra impact on districts serving ELL students.
- ELLs already have the lowest graduation rate: 71.1% compared to state average, 88.6%.

SAT Scores & New Graduation Rules

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- In 2014, about two-thirds of the 11,000 seniors in the state's A and B districts took the SAT or ACT.
- Their average SAT scores did not reach the NJDOE's proposed cut scores for graduation. (400V/400M)
- About 6000 students had scores near or below the cutoff, while another 4000 didn't take the tests at all.
- 8 of the 10 largest A/B districts had average scores below NJDOE's graduation cutoff.
- Such students are at risk of not graduating this June, even if they successfully complete all credit, attendance and other local and state requirements.

'Portfolio Appeals Process'

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- NJDOE's new rules rely on massive expansion of appeals (including thousands who formerly used AHSA).
- District staff currently preparing thousands of appeals
- State reviews appeals and accepts/rejects.
- Changes in 2016 appeals process
 - Districts must prepare student 'tasks' previously supplied by state testing vendor
 - Districts/schools must complete appeals for many more students who have not received a passing score on PARCC or one of the 'substitute' tests

Impact across state

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"What we are seeing is that the number of students as of February that haven't met graduation requirements is significantly more than what we have ever experienced before.... I don't think any of us anticipated what we were going to be facing at all."

— Dana Karas, president-elect of the New Jersey School Counselor Association. (NJ.com 2/9/16)

Impact across state

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- **“Why some N.J. seniors are still scrambling to graduate”** (NJ.com February 15, 2016)
- **“Thousands of HS seniors face state appeal to graduate in June”** (Atlantic City Press, Feb. 9, 2016)
- **Nearly 200 Clifton High seniors at risk of not graduating because of new test** (NorthJersey.com Jan. 22 2016)

Legal Issues

- NJ parents, represented by ELC and ACLU-NJ, have filed a legal challenge against NJDOE's new graduation rules.
- NJDOE did not follow the legally required steps for changing graduation requirements, especially for current HS students and class of 2016.
- Case is pending before an Administrative Law Judge
- Students denied diplomas on basis of the new rules may also have a legal claim against districts and NJDOE.

Recommendations

- Legislature should direct NJDOE to withdraw improperly imposed graduation rules.
- No senior in the class of 2016 should be denied a diploma on the basis of DOE's new testing requirements.
- All graduates should meet credit, attendance, GPA, and other local diploma requirements.

Recommendations

- Legislature should seek implementation of Governor's 2012 Task Force on College and Career Readiness recommendation:

a phased transition to new assessments during which *“the state Department of Education will not establish a minimum passing score as a graduation requirement. Instead, graduation will be dependent on satisfactory completion of the required courses, as established by local boards of education, with accountability coming from a more robust transcript....”* (Final Report, p. 47)

DOE Proposal Before State Board

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- Current rules would remain through class of 2020
- Beginning next year, freshmen who opted out of PARCC would lose access to all other options and risk not graduating
- “Substitute assessment” options would be phased out by 2021
- Passing PARCC ELA11 and Alg. I would become mandatory for a diploma in 2021.
- This year overall passing rates were 37% on ELA11 and 36% on Alg.1

PARCC ELA Results By Leg. District

Assemblywoman Mila Jasey LD27 2014-2015 PARCC ELA11 Results *Students who did not take or did not pass PARCC ELA11*

LegD ist	District	PARCC Test	# Passed	# Did Not Pass	# Not Tested	# At risk for graduation
27	Caldwell-West Caldwell	ELA 11	49	34	115	149
27	Essex Co Voc-Tech	ELA 11	446	78		78
27	Hanover Park Regional	ELA 11	235	91	97	188
27	Livingston Twp	ELA 11	33	13	409	422
27	Madison Boro	ELA 11	36	12	166	178
27	Millburn Twp	ELA 11	148	46	187	233
27	Morris County Vocational	ELA 11	144	15	26	41
27	Sch Dist Of The Chathams	ELA 11	66	8	215	223
27	South Orange- Maplewood	ELA 11	59	88	308	396
27	West Essex Regional	ELA 11	134	79	59	138
27	West Orange Town	ELA 11	33	30	424	454
			1383	494	2006	2500