



# PARCC Teacher Journey

## BEFORE PARCC

### Curriculum and Instruction

In the weeks leading up to PARCC administration, school and classroom routines begin to shift. More time is dedicated to cramming in information for the test because it is administered before the end of the school year. Test prep begins to take more time, both during and after school. The shifting routines result in a loss of valuable teaching time in exchange for preparing students to take the PARCC test.

### Student Mental Health

In the weeks leading up to administration, educators begin to focus on students' mental health—managing student anxiety over the test, frustration over the shifting schedule, and waning engagement with the emphasis on learning PARCC software, practice testing, and test prep. This ranges from interpersonal reassurances, counseling, and encouragement to PARCC pep rallies.

### Technology

While PARCC has brought more technology into schools, the technology gets sequestered in the weeks leading up to the test. As much as one month prior to administration, IT departments take the technology away to configure it for testing. This coincides with the optimal time to teach students how to use the technology effectively on the test, leading to frustration. It also constrains educators who have built classroom routines and differentiation around modern technology.

### School Disruption

Managing refusal requests, schedule changes, school technology, and space availability are disruptive to school. These disruptions affect educator planning, course consistency, class meeting days and times, access to resources, and considerable lost instructional time. Additionally, the classroom environment is disrupted as teachers are required to remove any posters and informational materials with content-specific tips, formulas, etc. resulting in bare walls and sterile classroom environments.

## DURING PARCC

### Impact on Time

On days when PARCC is administered, learning time is affected before, during, and after test administration. Half of the day is dedicated to completing the test and the students are either physically exhausted or disengaged after testing. In many cases, students are forced to sit and do nothing due to early PARCC section completion or test refusal. Nontesting classrooms are also disrupted because they must be quiet to not disrupt nearby testing classrooms and they cannot access resources like technology or the library.

### Conflicted Process

Educators are supporting and encouraging students through an experience that both educators and students know has no personal meaning, value, or purpose to students as individuals. Further, the educators have no authority to make the test or testing experience more relevant to their students. Educators expressed significant concerns with technology: "breakdown of equipment and internet" as well as suboptimal testing conditions such as a "gym with 120 students on laptops," creating additional hurdles to success.

### Exhibited Effort

During testing, educators express that many students do not exhibit effort on the PARCC. Students are observed simply "clicking through" the test, surrendering quickly due to frustration, and frequently "going to sleep" instead of exerting best effort on the PARCC assessment.

### Continued Testing

In the weeks after PARCC, there is little reprieve from testing. At all levels, teachers are preparing students for final assessments, benchmarks, and the state-required science standardized assessments. Additionally, many high school teachers are preparing their students for AP testing. There is immense frustration because PARCC undermines the teachers' ability to fully prepare their students for these other tests that are more immediately relevant and significant to students and teachers alike.

### Continued Disruption

Immediately following PARCC administration, technology and other resources are still not available for classroom use, as schools must undergo makeup testing. Students are pulled from classes to complete makeup PARCC assessments, further disrupting classroom instructional time, curricular timelines, and class schedules. Libraries and resources remain inaccessible throughout this time frame. Student services may be disrupted (child study team, guidance counselor or access) due to the need for proctoring.

### Repairing the System

PARCC is such a focal point and heavy emphasis for schools that its completion leaves students with a sense that the school year has ended. This, coupled with the timing of test administration, creates a situation where teachers need to re-establish the classroom culture of teaching, learning, and productivity. PARCC's timing creates the impression that the "year is over" among students while simultaneously creating a sense of frustration and urgency for teachers to overcome this faulty impression.

The prevailing educator feelings during this time are **frustration, anxiety, stress, anger, and confusion.**

The prevailing educator feelings during this time are **stress and frustration** followed by **exhaustion and discouragement.**

The prevailing educator feelings during this time are **relief, yet exhaustion; frustration and an urgency to make up for lost time.**



PARCC timing constrains the curriculum, resulting in:

- Teaching to the test.
- A coverage model over a focus on developing deep understanding.
- A focus on PARCC skill development over competency development.



The test creates an anxious time for teachers that creates anxiety in students.

*"I believe in assessments, but not at the expense of my students' mental health."*  
- NJ Educator



Tech configuration disrupts both normal teaching and the ability to fully prepare students to navigate the testing software.

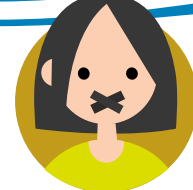


School routines and schedules are halted, making school unpredictable for students and teachers alike. This greatly affects teacher planning and school culture.



PARCC affects learning time by constraining available minutes for teaching, diminishing a student's willingness to learn, altering the surrounding learning environment, and reducing the availability of resources such as technology and spaces. PARCC administration affects those not testing as well.

*"Sorry - no gym, music, art, or recess again because the big kids are testing." - NJ Educator*



PARCC forces teachers to advocate for a process that has little perceived value to either teachers or students as individuals. This forced disingenuousness has a negative impact upon how teachers see themselves.

*"This is not why I became a teacher."*  
- NJ Educator



PARCC imposes an overly strict culture upon the school during its administration. Students become frustrated and overwhelmed by the experience; many are seen shutting down and giving up.



PARCC is immediately followed by final exams and AP testing. PARCC testing is seen as an irrelevant exercise interfering with more personally relevant activities.



PARCC causes lingering disruption post-administration as resources are tied up for make up testing and inventorying while service providers are pulled to proctor.



The timing and taxing nature of the PARCC has a lasting impact on the remainder of the school year.

*"PARCC frustrates my students so much that some lose hope and give up for the rest of the school year." - NJ Educator*