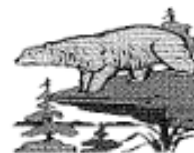




Middletown Township Public Schools Leonardo Grade School

14 Hosford Avenue
Leonardo, NJ 07737
(732) 291-1330
FAX (732) 291-2782
www.middletownk12.org



William O. George III, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Kathleen A. Sidoti
Principal

February 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In the coming months, New Jersey will administer the second-year of the PARCC test in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The assessment was first administered in 2015, replacing the NJASK and HSPA tests. It aligns with the content and skills outlined in the standards that guide everyday instruction in the classroom and it offers valuable data about student learning. We are committed to providing accurate information to parents and families in our community, as well as clarifying any misperceptions about the value of student participation in statewide assessments.

The NJ Department of Education has made significant changes to the administration of the PARCC test as a result of the feedback it received after last year's implementation. For 2016, the two testing windows that existed last year have been collapsed into one, which is similar to that of previous statewide assessments. The overall amount of testing time has been significantly reduced by about 1½ hours. In addition, current 11th graders who participate in other testing programs such as Advanced Placement in English Language Arts will be exempt from taking the PARCC Grade 11 ELA assessment. Accommodations available for students with IEPs include a variety of features that ensure students have equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Our district administrative team has given priority to creating a testing plan that minimizes disruptions to the school day and student schedules.

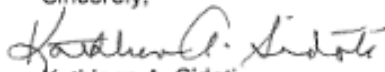
No single test can offer a complete picture of achievement, but when combined with student grades and teacher reports, it can provide important information about student progress. With this year's scores, you will be able to compare your child's performance this year to last year's and track your child's progress over time. State assessments give parents and educators the information they need to determine whether students can demonstrate what they are expected to learn for their grade level and identify students' strengths and needs. High achieving students may need additional challenges and enrichment opportunities and low performing students will require targeted support to acquire the skills and strategies needed to promote foundational learning. In addition, when all students participate, our District and schools can more accurately use assessment results to measure the effectiveness of our instructional programs.

The New Jersey Commissioner of Education has reaffirmed districts' obligation to administer the PARCC assessment to all students. Standardized testing has been a required component of our program since the 1970s, pursuant to state and federal law, and there is no "opt-out" from the PARCC assessment, just as there is no "opt-out" from a required class. Failure by any public New Jersey school district to successfully administer the PARCC to a sufficient percentage of all students, places such a district in jeopardy in terms of funding and other district reviews.

When a student does not participate in the annual state test, we lose the opportunity to evaluate powerful and valuable information about how that student is learning. We are committed to student achievement, and the PARCC test raises the bar for our students to ensure they are on the path to success. We are confident that through the quality instruction delivered by our dedicated staff, and with your support, our students can meet and exceed these expectations. I encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher, case manager and/or guidance counselor with any questions you may have about the PARCC test or your child's progress.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together for the benefit of our students.

Sincerely,


Kathleen A. Sidoti
Principal