I am very pleased to report that the efforts and teamwork of New Jersey educators across the state led to a successful initial experience with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) field tests. Across the PARCC consortium, more than 400,000 Performance-Based PARCC assessments were completed, with 62,000 from New Jersey alone!

The field test provides an opportunity for the PARCC Consortium to “test the test” and use the resulting information to improve both the assessment and the technological interface. More importantly, by replicating test administration environments, the field test allows local districts to identify technology capacity strengths and needs, administrators and educators to preview planning and proctor requirements, and students to become familiar with the online assessment.

Initial feedback indicates that the practice run was an overall positive experience. However, its purpose was also to proactively identify challenges prior to full implementation. The New Jersey Department of Education is collecting data to better understand what support, communications, and technology assistance will be necessary over the next twelve months to fill the identified gaps. In order to assist districts and schools preparing for the End-of-Year field-test session, we would like to share a few “lessons learned” to-date.

Lessons Learned

1. **Proctor Caching**

Proctor caching prior to the test administration reduced the amount of technology issues experienced by schools and delays associated with registering student responses. Proctor caching refers to the practice of downloading the full test content to a local computer prior to administration. As a preventative measure to reduce bandwidth burdens, it is strongly recommended that all schools proctor cache prior to test administration. For more information on proctor caching, including installation links and guides, see the [PARCC Proctor Cache Manual and Resources](#).
2. **Equation Editor**

Some students that had not been exposed to PARCC practice items or the initial test tutorial were uncertain how to navigate the Equation Editor in the math assessment component. Prior to the second round of the field test, it is recommended that test proctors review the Equation Editor Quick Reference Guides available under the tutorial section at: [http://practice.parcc.testnav.com](http://practice.parcc.testnav.com). Guides are also available at:

- Grades 3-5
- Grades 6-8
- High School

3. **Student Survey**

PARCC has included a student survey as a ‘test session’ at the end of each test to gather student feedback regarding the assessment. Student feedback will be analyzed nationally to improve the test’s usability and results will be publically available from PARCC during the summer of 2014. Students are not asked for any identifying information as part of the survey.

4. **Additional Resources**

Once registered to administer the PARCC field test, many additional resources to aid both test administrators and test coordinators can be found on the password protected site. Amongst those resources are self-paced training modules. Test administration manuals and other user guides can be found here: [http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-administration](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-administration)

PARCC updated the Field Test Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to incorporate new questions asked during the Performance-Based Assessment administration. The revised FAQs are posted at [http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-faqs](http://www.parcconline.org/field-test-faqs).

If you should have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Jeffrey B. Hauger, director, Office of Assessments, at 609-984-6311 or email assessment@doe.state.nj.us.