September 2, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators  
   School Business Administrators  
   Charter School Lead Persons  
   PARCC Test Coordinators  
   PARCC IT Contacts

FROM: Bari Anhalt Erlichson, Ph.D.  
       Assistant Commissioner/Chief Performance Officer

SUBJECT: PARCC Technology Readiness and NJTRAx Update.  
DUE: September 19, 2014

In 2014-2015, New Jersey will continue to transition to computer-based assessments and further the appropriate integration of technologies in classroom instruction. To assist the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) in gauging the technology readiness of testing sites, the NJDOE has deployed NJTRAx – a technology readiness tool. I would like to thank you and your personnel for updating the technology readiness information in NJTRAx in the past and request that NJTRAx be updated throughout the year as technology changes, such as purchases and upgrades, occur. It is important that the information in NJTRAx reflects the present reality of the district and its schools with regard to technology readiness so that NJDOE can effectively allocate and target its supports.

Realizing that many districts made technology purchases and upgrades over the course of this past summer, NJTRAx needs to be updated in order to reflect summer procurements. Therefore, districts must update their data in NJTRAx by 4:00 pm on September 19, 2014. The NJDOE will take a snapshot of the data as of 4:00 pm on September 19th in order to analyze the technology readiness across the state. Providing this updated information is essential. The NJDOE will use this September 19th snapshot for a competitive grant program centered on bridging the device gap for PARCC implementation. Failing to update or offer accurate information in NJTRAx may cause the district to be ineligible for the grant program.
Also, NJTRAx has been configured with two new features that should greatly assist districts and schools with their technology readiness plans. The dual rating feature allows districts and schools to view their readiness ratings using PARCC’s “recommended” technology specifications as well as PARCC’s “minimum” technology specifications. Currently, only minimum specifications are used for ratings. This dual rating feature should assist in taking stock of how a district/school measures up to the recommended specifications for bandwidth and devices. Another feature is the sandbox – which will allow districts and schools to create different models or scenarios using their data without actually changing the live data. This planning tool will also allow district personnel to see the readiness ratings of all schools in one report as well as receive a more detailed explanation concerning errors encountered in the data. A webinar explaining the dual rating sandbox features is available on the NJ Digital Learning Portal at [http://njdigitallearning.org/](http://njdigitallearning.org/).

Districts using Google Chromebooks will also need to revise their Operating System (OS) selection as they update NJTRAx for September 19, 2014. Due to changes in the PARCC technology specifications, the recommended OS is now version 33 or greater. There are currently two OS selections for Chromebooks in NJTRAx: OS v.18 or less OR OS v.19 or greater. These two options are being retired. Two new selections are available: OS v.32 or less OR OS v.33 or greater. All Chromebooks need to be revised to select one of these new choices. After September 19, only OS v.33 or greater will be considered “ready” for PARCC testing.


Please contact Joseph Seaman at joseph.seaman@doe.state.nj.us or 609-292-8407 with any questions or concerns.