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**Chief Education Office**

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Dear CPS parents and families,

We work to provide a high-quality education for every child in every neighborhood. One of the key ways we are able to measure how well we are educating your children is through standardized assessments. The PARCC assessment is an important source of information that we use to ensure that we are preparing your children for success.

The 2018 PARCC assessment administration window begins on Monday, March 5th, and the state-mandated assessment will be administered to students in grades 3-8 by Friday, April 20th. PARCC was developed to align with the Common Core State Standards and gauge student understanding of the concepts required to be successful in the 21st Century. In addition to assessing math and reading skills, PARCC evaluates students' writing, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requires that at least 95% of students take the exam. If we do not meet this requirement, ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education can withhold millions of dollars in funding from CPS.

I also want to note that this year is the last year of the state's contract to administer the current PARCC exam. The state has indicated that it intends to use PARCC assessment questions going forward and transition to a revised testing process for next year. The details of that process have not been finalized by the state, but we will provide additional updates as we receive more information.

While students can't study for a standardized assessment like they would for a regular classroom assessment, there are ways you can help your child prepare to do their best:

- Ensure your student attends school regularly so that they don't miss out on important instruction
- Talk to your child about testing so that they understand why they are being tested
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep the night before the exam
- Ensure your child arrives to school on time
- Remind your student to take their time, listen to and read all directions, and tackle one question at a time
- Help your child maintain a positive mindset by reminding them of their strengths and accomplishments

For additional information on the assessment and how it is used in our schools, please visit our PARCC website at [www.cps.edu/parcc](http://www.cps.edu/parcc) and access state and national-level resources at [www.illinoistestguide.org](http://www.illinoistestguide.org) and [www.bealearninghero.org](http://www.bealearninghero.org).

Sincerely,

LaTanya D. McDade  
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Chicago Public Schools