



Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer

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March 2, 2015

Dear CPS Parent or Guardian,

During the past few months, you may have heard about the implementation of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) in our schools. I am writing to let you know that, after careful consideration and discussion, Chicago Public Schools plans to move forward with the administering of PARCC District-wide beginning March 9. Although we continue to believe that a pilot in 10 percent of our schools would have been best for our students, we cannot risk the devastating financial cuts of more than \$1.4 billion threatened by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the U.S. Department of Education and our students' futures by administering PARCC to only 10 percent of schools.

If Title I, Title III, and IDEA funds are withheld from CPS, it would destroy our students' ability to receive the best possible education. Currently these dollars are used to fund:

- 1,200 positions, including 824 teachers, 103 teacher assistants, 87 security officers, and 18 counselors;
- Pre-K programs at Child Parent Centers for 2,300 children;
- 988 diverse learner support staff, including 716 teachers and 103 paraprofessionals

In addition, if the State Board also withheld General State Aid as threatened, this would further jeopardize our ability to fund thousands of teaching and instructional support positions, as well as our ability to pay pension obligations. The State Board has even threatened to rescind recognition of our District. The attached letter from ISBE outlines these sanctions.

In light of the State Board's refusal to consider other options and compromises, CPS has no choice but to follow the direction of ISBE to administer PARCC in all schools next week. Fortunately, in planning to expand our pilot, CPS asked all schools to prepare for PARCC, so administrators and teachers have been working hard to ensure that schools are as ready as possible to begin testing.

We encourage every student to complete the test and do their best, as these scores will help provide valuable information to educators across the district and state.

I am confident that PARCC will, in the years ahead, be a superior assessment, allowing us to better measure our students' readiness for college, careers, and life and we will learn much from this year's assessment. We invite you to learn more about PARCC by visiting www.cps.edu/PARCC. Information is available in English and Spanish.

As always, I thank you for playing an active role in the education of your children. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the implementation of PARCC, please contact your school principal.

Sincerely,

Barbara Byrd-Bennett
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools

