



State of New Jersey

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September 30, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  
Directors and Supervisors of Mathematics  
Directors and Supervisors of Human Resources

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

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Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer

SUBJECT: 2014-15 8<sup>th</sup>-Grade Math Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)

The transition from the NJASK to the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015 means that this year New Jersey middle school math assessments can be better aligned with students' course content by allowing schools to choose between the PARCC grade level assessments and the PARCC End-of-Course assessments. This transition has the following important impacts:

1. Eighth-grade Algebra I students can be assessed with the PARCC Algebra I test in lieu of the grade-level PARCC test. Based on data that districts have submitted via NJ SMART over the last few years, approximately 30-40% of students statewide will take the Algebra I assessment instead of the PARCC Grade 8 mathematics assessment.
2. We will continue to calculate Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs)<sup>1</sup> in our transition from NJASK to PARCC for tested grades and subjects with the exception of growth between 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math. Until we have at least one year of data from PARCC to evaluate how students are divided into the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade vs. Algebra I PARCC assessments, we will not calculate SGPs between 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. Therefore, **the state will not provide student, educator, or schoolwide SGPs in 2014-2015 that include 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math.**

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<sup>1</sup> As you know, we've been calculating SGPs since 2010 at a student level. SGPs are a normative metric, referenced against a peer group of students with similar assessment score histories. Based on the NJSMART course taking data, we are expecting a non-random, self-selected division of students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade – between those who take PARCC 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and those that take Algebra I. Thus, the reference grouping – the construction of the academic peer groups – is likely to also be influenced. Therefore, we will take more time to develop reliable SGPs for this group.

3. All educators teaching 8<sup>th</sup>-grade math during 2014-2015 must set two Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) as part of the AchieveNJ evaluation process.

c:      Members, State Board of Education  
         Senior Staff  
         Executive County Superintendents  
         Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers  
         Executive County Business Official  
         NJ LEE Group  
         Garden State Coalition of Schools