THE TRUTH ABOUT COMMON CORE TESTING AND STUDENT PRIVACY

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Common Core protects student data

A lot of critics of Common Core say the new exam, called PARCC (pronounced "park"), will result in large amounts of personal student data being provided to the federal government.[1] This simply isn't so. To make sure that no personal student data will be given to the federal government, Arkansas's Commissioner and the other states' leaders that are members of PARCC sent a letter to the U. S. Department of Education (USED), stating that this isn't going to happen.

Since President Bush's time in office and even before, states have submitted school-level data to USED. That will continue. But no student level data has been provided in the past and no student level data will be provided now.

Here's an excerpt from the letter to USED with emphasis added:

We are writing today to confirm that the consortia will not share any personally identifiable information about K–12 students with USED or any federal agency. Our states have not submitted student-level assessment data in the past; the transition to the new assessments should not cause anyone to worry that federal reporting requirements will change when, in fact, the federal government is prohibited from establishing a student-level database that would contain assessment data for every student. As we have historically done, our states will continue to provide USED with school-level data from our state assessments as required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended in 2002. Our states and local education agencies will continue to retain control over student assessment data and will continue to comply with all state and federal laws and regulations with regard to the protection of student privacy.

Student Assessment Data Will Be Kept Safe

Testing companies will not have access to student data collected through the testing process for corporate profits. When the testing company is selected this summer, contractual arrangements will limit use of student assessment data by the successful bidder.

The amount of time required for tests will vary by grade

Students will not spend excessive amounts of time taking tests, as critics have suggested. The amount of time required for the new tests will vary by grade. The test is divided into two parts - performance-based and end-of-year - taken at different times. Based on estimated times for the performance-based section, the literacy exam for third graders is 2.5 hours. The math section is less than two hours. The end-of-year section is two hours each for math and literacy. These are estimated completion times for typical students. All students will have additional time available to them.[2]

Technical glitches won't slow students down

Students working on older slower processing and responding PC's will not be at a disadvantage compared to those working on newer faster equipment.

Several steps are being taken to address technology concerns. PARCC has adopted minimum and recommended specifications for all testing equipment and bandwidth. Schools will use this to decide which equipment at their schools will be used for testing. If there are some districts with limited equipment or bandwidth, solutions are available including a 20 day testing window so that fewer students are tested in one time period. This means fewer students competing for available bandwidth at any single internet access point. It also allows districts to conduct the test on their highest quality computer equipment.

Notes

[1] Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

[2] Estimates provided by the Arkansas Department of Education.

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2   The Truth About Common Core   www.aradvocates.org