Teacher Responses:

Best decision for Arlington for the Spring 2016 state test administration would e for Arlington to do the following:
- Continue with the MCAS for a final year – 38 (66%)
- Choose PARCC paper and pencil with the "hold harmless" provision – 15 (26%)
- Choose PARCC computer-based with the "hold harmless" provision – 5 (9%)

<u>My reasons for this decision are primarily based on the following factors</u>:	#	%
Technology - not enough IT support to feel confident we could pull off a computer-based test	34	59%
Stress of one more new thing, so want to stick with MCAS	31	53%
Technology - current infrastructure too weak to support a computer-based test	29	50%
Concerned that students would have a problem with the fact that PARCC is a timed test	27	47%
Technology - challenge of coordinating 2,600 students to take a computer-based test	26	45%
Believe the "hold harmless" clause for PARCC 2016 would be worth taking advantage of	20	35%
Time to learn new format and prepare for new test would derail other initiatives	17	29%
Would like to see how students handle a timed test in a "hold harmless" environment	16	28%
Worried about new accommodations in PARCC	14	24%
Technology - would pull away IT support and resources from technology instruction in the classroom	13	22%
Want to try out PARCC, but want to stick with paper and pencil	11	19%
Since PARCC is a timed test, it will limit the amount of total time spent on the test	9	16%
No long composition with PARCC!	8	14%
Technology - want to see how students will do with the technology, since it is a "hold harmless" administration	6	10%
Interested in seeing how the accommodations in PARCC computer-based would work for students	6	10%
Testing Window - PARCC is later and would allow students more time to learn content	5	9%
Other	4	7%

Disaggregated Data for PARCC/MCAS Survey – Total 58

ELEMENTARY
Grade 3 - 11/21 classroom teachers
- 2 PARCC paper and pencil
- 9 MCAS for a final year

Grade 4 – 13/21 classroom teachers
- 1 PARCC computer-based
- 6 PARCC paper and pencil
- 6 MCAS for a final year (2 teachers administered PARCC pilot paper and pencil)

Grade 5 – 11/20 classroom teachers
- 1 PARCC computer-based
- 3 PARCC paper and pencil
- 6 MCAS for a final year (1 teacher administered PARCC pilot paper and pencil)

Grade 3-5 Special Education
- 1 PARCC paper and pencil
- 2 MCAS for a final year (1 teacher administered PARCC pilot computer-based pilot)

Other Elementary
- 1 PARCC paper and pencil (teacher administered PARCC paper and pencil)
- 2 MCAS for final year

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Grade 6
- 2 English Teachers – MCAS for final year
- 1 Math – PARCC computer-based

Grade 8
- 2 Math Teachers – PARCC computer-based (1 teacher administered PARCC pilot computer-based)

Grade 6-8 Special Education
- 2 Teachers – MCAS for a final year

Other Middle School
- 5 Teachers
  - 1 Teacher – PARCC paper and pencil
  - 4 Teachers – MCAS for a final year

HIGH SCHOOL
- 1 Teacher – PARCC paper and pencil
- 2 Teachers – MCAS for a final year

Additional teachers – not clear which grade levels:
- 2 Teachers - MCAS for a final year

Please describe your main concerns with PARCC:

The pilot had too many issues. Hopefully some will be resolved but why spend so much time on something new for just one year?

Learning how to prepare students and teaching third graders the new expectations . I know these expectations will change again as I prepare third graders for their first state test.

I believe that Parcc is more rigorous but starting now will help offer students the largest window to make the transition

I gave PARCC a few years ago. The directions were incredibly difficult to understand -- the format was tricky. There is absolutely no way the IT will work. At Thompson we have a technology fail a few times every week. The timed test would stress them out. And it is ONE MORE THING we need to do.

Internet issues

MCAS is bad enough. My learners struggle immensely. Their self-esteem is cesspool low. It would be unconscionable to ask these vulnerable students to perform at a level that is unattainable based on their language gaps. Learning should be joyful and enlightening. Standardized tests take away from the joy of learning at a developmental appropriate pace. As it is, the curriculum is moving too fast for my learners to fully absorb/internalize the academic material presented to them on a daily basis. The PARCC would add unnecessary stress to an already anxious situation.

Tech problems

I am worried that students aren't ready for the complexity of the questions, despite our best efforts to prepare them for this shift.

Not enough time to prepare students with new format. I have never seen PARCC before and would need time to learn it myself!

Too above fifth grade level

The anxiety of the test for students

As one coworker noted, it is like the GRE test.

Not under state control

we don't have reliable internet access.

I don't know enough about it and I think we need more notice than 5 months to prepare for something new.

It is like the GRE test. All the sped students would fail it.

my main concern is students taking the test on the computer when their typing skills are SO limited at this age.

That we won't actually be held "harm less" and that the results will be used and discussed and cause undue stress. I think the questions will be too difficult for many students and trying to do them online will be even more difficult.

not sure I've prepared students adequately

difficulty and adapting to diffferences

I don't know much about the format & how to help my students.

Rigor may not match our curriculum (TERC, etc.)

Accommodations and the technology for learning disabled students

i have heard that the questions are much more challenging than MCAS questions, and i would not be sure how to help students prepare for such a test.

I think MA should retain control over its own testing system. I don't think it is fair to students to hold them to specific time limits. I think that even if we are told that teachers and districts will not be held accountable for scores, in reality, it won't be that simple. Administering a new test will require even more time to be spent on dealing with test prep and test logistics, when I feel that one of the biggest needs in education right now is for people to be less focused on testing.

It is not a fair test, should not be timed and asks too much of students, it sets them up to fail.

Please describe the main advantages you see with a possible PARCC try-out in 2016

Trial to see what it's like

gives us a chance to see it without being punished

It doesn't count

The "hold harmless" clause makes it less stressful to try it out if this is the direction we are heading in anyway

2 years of hold harmless while we reconsider aspects of the curriculum

If the "MCAS 2.0" is going to be infused with PARCC-style items, it could be helpful for students to have some familiarity with PARCC. If we are eventually going to move to a computer-based test, we will eventually have to try one out and see where the weaknesses in our infrastructure are. It could be helpful to do this in a "hold harmless" year.

Largest window to adjust to new format

At this time, I don't see any advantages. Sorry.

Honestly, seeing how badly it tanks. Having the students see the types of questions that may later be expected of them.

"Hold harmless" provision

It's an opportunity to be held harmless and see what it's like.

We are not accountable for grades; this is the direction so why not get a sneak preview?

Will give us the opportunity to see what needs to be improved in terms of technology, content, and scheduling. Might as well try out PARCC computer-based so we have time (years) to improve our tech infrastructure and scheduling processes prior to MCAS 2.0 becoming a computer-based test

Exposure for students in low stakes environment

Advantage is students AND teacher seeing what it feels like to take and administer this test.

curiosity -- let's see what all the talk is about!

Anything else you want to say on the topic?

This is too big of a change to implement for something that would happen in the current school year.

Let's stay with a familiar test format for as long as possible. There is no need to change a state test so many times. It is detrimental to children and teachers. Thank you

I feel like PARCC will be a total disaster, especially at the middle school and on the computers. I don't feel like the district realizes just how bad our technology and such can be at times and I feel like it would be a good idea to just see HOW disastrous it is. I also really do NOT want the results to be associated with me in ANY way. No one in any sort of position of authority should even comment on the PARCC results - I think that's imperative if we do opt to go with it.

(Forgive errors. I am on my cell) I know how to teach the current content and prepare students for MCAS. I don't know the best way to prepare students for PARCC. We have developed items for PARCC prep. We are doing so much "new" this year. Adding PARCC would be overwhelming.

I do not think we should ever switch to PARCC

If we switch do we need to amend IEPs so untimed test for students with special needs? Currently we do not list because my as is untimed.

If it is truly "hold harmless", then why not try it out to see where our strengths and weaknesses lie?

Factors for Consideration for MCAS/PARCC for Spring 2016

- **STRESS:** For students, teachers, administrators, and IT staff that would be involved in getting the district up to speed with this new testing format. On the other hand, the "hold harmless" clause would allow us to just let the students take the test and consider it an opportunity to learn from the experience. We would have to make it imminently clear to the administration and the School Committee that PARCC would be approached with the very clear message that this is a low-stress, try out year – not something teachers and students need to study, gear up for, and test prep for.

- **FORMAT:** PARCC would mean no "long composition" for grades 4 and 7! As far as the total sessions go, there is one testing window, and all sessions would be scheduled in that window. The total number of sessions is outlined in the chart below. The testing windows is included in parentheses after the subject area. The testing windows for PARCC are the same for both the paper and pencil and the computer-based test.

Grade	MCAS - untimed	PARCC - timed
3, 4, 5 Note: Session 2 for Grade 3 is 75 minutes.	**ELA (3/21-4/5)** Session 1 (60 minutes) Session 2 (60 minutes) **Math (5/9-5/24)** Session 1 (45 minutes) Session 2 (45 minutes)	**ELA (4/25-6/6)** Session 1 – 90 minutes Session 2 – 75/90 minutes Session 3 – 90 minutes **Math (4/25-6/6)** Session 1 – 60 minutes Session 2 – 60 minutes Session 3 – 60 minutes Session 4 – 60 minutes
Grades 6-8	**ELA (3/21-4/5)** Session 1 (60 minutes) Session 2 (60 minutes) **Math (5/9-5/24)** Session 1 (50 minutes) Session 2 (50 minutes)	**ELA (4/25-6/6)** Session 1 – 110 minutes Session 2 – 110 minutes Session 3 – 90 minutes **Math (4/25-6/6)** Session 1 – 80 minutes Session 2 – 80 minutes Session 3 – 80 minutes
Grades 4 and 7	**Long Composition 3/22** Session 1 (45 minutes) Session 2 (45 minutes)	NONE
Grades 5 and 8	**Science & Technology (5/10-5/24)** Session 1 (45 minutes) Session 2 (45 minutes)	All students will take the MCAS Science and Tech. Assessment

*Note: Some schools will be selected for field testing in ELA. If a school is selected, some students ill take an additional unit.

TESTING WINDOW: PARCC has a much larger window and falls later in the year (April 25 – June 6). MCAS has narrower windows that fall earlier in the year – especially for ELA (3/21 - 4/5).

TECHNOLOGY:
- Do we have enough, the right kind, of hardware for 1,200 Middle School students and 1,400 Gr. 3-5 students?
- Is our WiFi capacity up to the task? (Note all of the many times we have lost WiFi on a regular, sometimes daily, basis.)
- Is out IT infrastructure up to the task?
- How disruptive will it be to other technology initiatives (use of technology for teaching, progress report writing, grades, evaluation system, and data entry)?
- Will keyboarding be an issue?
- Challenge of coordinating a schedule for 2,600 students for three subject areas
- Challenge of coordinating a total of 11 sessions x 7 elementary schools (77) for grades 3-5, and 10 sessions each x 3 grades at Ottoson, plus the science MCAS
- Challenge of scheduling make-up test sessions for 43 different tests with technology support and appropriate equipment.
- In 2015 – state offered to take care of uploading student information and pre-loading accommodation data based on last year's accommodations. Will they still offer this level of support for 2016?
- DESE also offered a summer institute and a "9 month plan" to prepare districts who agreed to take PARCC in 2015. Are they going to offer this same level of support to districts new to PARCC in 2016?

TIME FACTOR:
- PARCC is a timed versus MCAS untimed test.
- Students with disabilities who specifically have untimed test written into their IEP can have extended time (IEP plans may need to be amended).
- ELL students are also allowed extended time.
- Challenge of proctoring different time allowances with staffing, space and technology support constraints.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
- "MCAS Alternate" tests for students who are not able to take the regular test are still allowed.
- Text to speech feature for math allowed for any student.
- Paper and pencil test can be an accommodation for any student who is unable to access the computer-based test, if this is stated in their IEP (IEP's may need to be amended).
- Graphic organizers, checklists, and reference sheets are **not** allowed (approved organizers are allowed only for the MCAS).
- For ELL Students:
  - Use of a bilingual dictionary allowed.
  - Extended time allowed.
  - Scribe allowed for math test.
  - Read/clarify directions on all tests.
- **NOTE:** Many students will require changes to their IEP so that the appropriate accommodations allowed on PARCC are reflected in their IEP.

TRAINING TIME AND ITS AFFECT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIME:
- How much time will teachers need to familiarize themselves with the new assessment system? When will these sessions occur? District PD time already booked for the year with curriculum sessions for all content areas. Will replacing these sessions with a PARCC focus derail plans for work on curriculum and instruction already in place?
- How much time will be required for students to familiarize themselves with the new testing format, and computer-based tools for ELA and Math? (online video tutorials and practice tests) Who will support this work? What will the people that carry out these orientation sessions be pulled away from?

OVERALL QUESTIONS:
- Will the School Committee and the administration truly allow the district to take PARCC (if that's the decision that is made) and use it as a baseline to help us better understand places where our curriculum is aligned with CC and PARCC, and where there are gaps – and to better ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the test itself?
- Will there be a united and public message that Arlington is going to administer PARCC without diverting large quantities of student and teacher time to prepare for and perform well on this new standardized assessment that is still in its infancy?
- Will the SC and administration have the courage to allow the district to really take this test cold, and use the information we learn for the purpose it was intended – to see where the strengths and weaknesses in our curriculum and instruction lie?
- Will teachers truly be "held harmless" in the same way that DESE is saying schools and districts will be held harmless?
    - DESE explicitly states that districts can drop Year 1 PARCC scores from the 4 year PPI calculations, and that CPI and SGP calculations will only be used if they keep a school or district at the same performance level, or if they improve it
    - Will teacher median SGP rates be excluded for this year? Can we get this in writing?
- What kind of input will teachers have into this decision?
- Teachers keep trying to get back to a focus on curriculum and instruction – lots of new initiatives already underway. To what extent would the change to PARCC derail other efforts?