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**MINUTES – November 18th 7PM Cameron Middle School
Special Presentation Co-sponsored with Framingham Special Education Advisory Council
“Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and
Test Accommodations”**

Announcements were made by **Sheryl Goldstein**

Bullying and safety presentation on 12/4 at Hemenway will be hosted by F-SEPAC, Police Dept and Police Association. This community is susceptible to bullying; kids can be a target. The presentations will be helpful so kids will know what to look for.

Officer Riley, who is a nationally certified crime preventer will speak

Kathleen McGrath to talk to kids about safe internet use.

Pizza and drinks will be provided.

Susan Arndt welcomed Dr. Grace Wai and Ildefonso Arellano.

Grace Wai—started in March as Director of Curriculum and Staff Development in Framingham. Prior to her current position, she served as a principal for 17 years in urban and suburban districts and a teacher before that.

Ildefonso Arellano—is in his second year as the Assistant Director of Special Education. He used to be at Barbieri and Cameron and has been in Framingham since 2003. Prior to that, he was a speech pathologist.

The audience was surveyed to get an idea of who was present, what schools were represented, and what some of the concerns were for the kids. There were about 20 people in the audience. We had parent representatives from at least Hemenway, Walsh, Dunning, FHS, McCarthy

Grace Wai realizes that there are concerns about moving toward PARCC. She was a principal in CT when they started testing there and testing seemed to follow her here.

MA has done MCAS for 17 years and it is time to move on. **Massachusetts is very highly ranked nationally and we want to stay #1 and remain competitive.** MCAS has served as an early warning system before students get out of HS.

PARCC is different from MCAS, which is about K-12 learning. **PARCC is about whether kids are ready for college learning.** Nowadays, we need to be continuous learners, no matter what stage of education we are in.

PARCC will test grades 3–11 in literacy and math, every year. Currently, MCAS only assesses writing in grades 4, 7 and 10.

In 2015, 25% of Framingham students will take the computer based version of PARCC. The following year, the split will be 50–50. Then 75–25 and by the fourth year, 100% of the schools will be taking the PARCC on the computer.

This means that there will be two elementary schools and one middle school this year, and only grades 3–8 will take PARCC. The high school students will still take all MCAS exams (see handout for timeline about when high school students will be taking PARCC as well).

To try to help with the technology concerns, there will be carts in every elementary school so equity in all schools, hopefully by the middle to the end of January. Chromebooks have been effective.

As far as problems during the test, one thing that has been learned is that the test needs to be cached (saved) while the kids are working until it's time to send it all back. Otherwise, the students' work might be lost.

PARCC is set up to test Literacy and Math, twice—There is a **Performance Based Assessment** in the spring (March–April) and then **End of Year Assessment** (late May/early June).

What about a science test for PARCC?

Currently, there are no common core standards or new frameworks for science, so there is no PARCC exam for science. The science and technology/engineering MCAS will still be given in grades 5 and 8 and the technology/engineering MCAS in high school. This will occur regardless of what happens with PARCC implementation, although the name might be changed.

The state started looking into PARCC five years ago, and agreed that we'll do PARCC as long as it's as good as MCAS (or better!)

The 'Worse' scores don't count this year, only the 'Better' scores count.

Sample test questions

(See handout for examples) **Math questions** are not multiple choice, so it prevents 'elimination' and guessing the correct answer.

There is no long composition/open response in 4th and 7th **ELA** with PARCC. A parent expressed a concern about no 'written expression', since almost all jobs require written communication.

Students will still do short responses.

The writing in PARCC is all about responding to text—two pieces of text and how they are related, back up with evidence. Content areas are encompassed in literacy framework→ it's all about taking information and synthesizing it.

Higher Expectations. Some written responses might be about social studies, or science, or some other component of the curriculum.

Concerns from audience

What if a student is reading at a lower level than their grade?

The state dictates what is tested and this is no different from how MCAS is right now. If a child is in third grade, he or she is tested at that grade level to see how they are doing and what their growth is compared with kids at the same level.

There is no opt out for PARCC; the School Committee voted to adopt PARCC for this year.

We've moved to common core→all curriculum has shifted and this is reflected in the PARCC exam.

PARCC has opportunities to provide assessments during the year→ We aren't using these now, but if we did, they would replace some of the system-wide assessments (e.g. DRE, MAPS)

Level 4 is proficient level (although it goes to level 5) and there are ways to be able to compare schools/towns in MA who are doing MCAS versus those doing PARCC. In October 2015, the state will decide if everyone will do PARCC.

Can students change an answer?

Students can make changes to questions within the section. Can't go back to earlier section and work on it. This is similar to MCAS.

With two assessments (Performance based and End of Year), will this take away more instructional time compared to MCAS?

Actually, it should take less time, since the tests are timed for general education students and are designed to last one hour.

Ildefonso Arellano—Timelines

MCAS-Alt will still be available for students who qualify for this. All students will still take Science MCAS, since there is no PARCC science test. All grade 10 students will still take all HS MCAS tests—through class of 2019

Is there a cap to how many times a student can take it?

There are kids taking MCAS past graduation (kids who don't pass MCAS get different diploma). They can do this up through age 22.

The Alt-MCAS version is specific for what they need. It's not across the board for a given student, so a student can have the Alt-MCAS version for math but take the standard MCAS ELA and vice versa.

All students with disabilities with **untimed tests** noted in their IEPs and 504s will get that accommodation.

Everybody can take up to 50% longer, though.

Graphic organizers are not allowed, even if they are in a student's IEP. They are allowed on MCAS, and there was much discussion and concern about this. People mentioned that teaching students mnemonics and ways to simplify their graphic organizer so they can replicate it the day of the PARCC exam might be helpful.

What if my child shows up with a graphic organizer the day of the test?

It will be taken away. If he still uses it, his test scores will be invalidated.

Would invalidating his scores be a problem?

Not as far as promotion to the next grade, but with a 0 there would be no measurement of the child's growth, so it would be more difficult to plan the next steps for his education.

What about out-of-district programs?

This year, they make decision. If state decides to go PARCC next October, then all state approved programs would need to use PARCC. There is a way for them to figure out how to calculate growth whether they take MCAS or PARCC.

When is keyboarding going to be introduced in the curriculum?

It was mentioned that we are in the digital age and computer-based testing is here. A few audience members shared anecdotes about how the keyboarding instruction in their kids' fourth grade classes at the same school varied widely.