

**Contact:**  
**Ernie Grigg**  
[Ernie.Grigg@Widmeyer.com](mailto:Ernie.Grigg@Widmeyer.com)  
**212-715-1556**

**NJPTA LAUNCHES 'WE RAISE NJ' COALITION  
THAT WILL ASSIST PARENTS DURING TRANSITION TO NEW STATE ASSESSMENTS**

**TRENTON, NJ (January 23, 2015)** – The New Jersey PTA (NJPTA) announced that it will lead a broad coalition called We Raise NJ to help parents raise student achievement. Among its first initiatives, the coalition will provide objective information, tools and resources during the state’s transition to new student assessments.

The NJPTA formed the coalition in collaboration with the NJ School Boards Association, the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association, the NJ Association of School Administrators, the NJ Council of County Colleges and other organizations to constructively engage parents during this important time for students. We Raise NJ will present clear facts about PARCC implementation, provide a range of support services to help parents understand the new test and help all stakeholders collaborate on opportunities to improve student learning.

“Parents understandably have many questions about the PARCC assessments, and we think it’s essential to address all of them by helping parents understand what to expect,” said Debbie Tyrrell, NJPTA president. “This is the first time students across New Jersey will take this test. We want to make sure parents have the right information in order to help their children put their best feet forward.”

[Patricia Wright](#), executive director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, is a strong advocate for parents, students, teachers and school leaders during this transition. “We're looking forward to partnering with the NJPTA and other organizations. School leaders and parents can use these resources to improve our conversations about student learning based upon the rich information we hope to receive from these assessments. The promise of PARCC is that it will provide educators and parents with important new information about students' strengths and challenges. This information will be critical to ensuring that we’re meeting our students' learning needs.”

Dana Egreczky, senior vice president of workforce development at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, believes that students will benefit from the new assessments because their future is at stake: “Unfortunately college presidents and employers tell us that too many students go to college or start jobs without being ready for success. Students themselves realize they are under-prepared. According to a recent survey by Achieve, more than [80 percent of recent high school graduates](#) felt a lack of preparedness on some level.”

“New Jersey’s community colleges are working with high school partners throughout the state to better ensure that more high school students graduate ready for college-level work,” said Dr. Lawrence Nespoli, president of the NJ Council of County Colleges. “The pilot program, College Readiness Now, is making a real difference in ensuring college-readiness, but it is not enough. PARCC tests are another important part of our efforts to align high school academic achievement and readiness for college and careers.”

“*We Raise NJ* will provide parents with accurate information about the administration and impact of the new PARCC test,” said Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod, executive director of the New Jersey School Boards

Association. “PARCC will replace New Jersey’s previous statewide tests. It’s important that parents learn how PARCC aligns with New Jersey’s academic goals, how information from the test can be used to individualize instruction and how students’ privacy will be protected.”

Dr. Richard Bozza, executive director of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators adds: “We believe that we must work together to prepare students for the world that awaits them. NJASA members will lead the discussion about assessments as an essential component of the teaching-learning process and speak candidly and directly about the planned PARCC assessments. Together we shall work through the challenges, learn from our experiences and elevate student achievement.”

Another organization that will be supporting NJPTA’s work is called JerseyCAN: The New Jersey Campaign for Achievement Now, which focuses on both closing the achievement gaps that exist across the state as well as raising the bar. JerseyCAN believes annual assessment data is crucial to uncovering inequities in our education system. “Last week, we heard almost every [civil rights organization](#) in the country say that annual assessments allow parents, educators and policymakers to shine a light on achievement gaps between poor and minority children and their peers. Without that data we cannot tackle these inequities,” said Janellen Duffy, the Executive Director of JerseyCAN.

National PTA also supports the state-focused initiative. “It is a top priority of PTA to educate and support families every step of the way as states transition to new assessments,” said Otha Thornton, president of National PTA. “We commend NJPTA for taking an important leadership role and building a coalition to fill a need for all parents.”

The first round of PARCC assessments will take place in early March. For more information about assessments, go to [www.state.nj.us/education/sca/parcc](http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/parcc).

For more information about the NJPTA, go to [www.njpta.org](http://www.njpta.org).

### ***We Raise NJ Coalition Members***

New Jersey PTA  
National PTA  
New Jersey Association of School Administrators  
New Jersey School Boards Association  
New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association  
New Jersey Council of County Colleges  
New Jersey Chamber of Commerce  
JerseyCan

### ***About New Jersey PTA***

*New Jersey PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the state. National PTA is the nation’s original and premier parent involvement organization in schools. Membership is open to all who support the health and educational achievement of our nation’s children, and more than 4 million parents, teachers, community members and other concerned citizens are currently PTA members. PTA promotes parent involvement in all schools, and works to ensure nationwide access to quality public education—primarily by providing parents and communities with tools and resources to support their students and by speaking with a powerful voice on behalf of every child.*

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