Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers and School Leaders (1/4)

1. Will PARCC be used for accountability measures this year?	No, PARCC is in "pilot" mode until the 2015-2016 school year. DESE recognizes that this is a transition year and thus, PARCC schools will be held harmless in 2014-2015[1]. School accountability ratings can only improve or remain constant – they cannot decline. Despite being held-harmless in 2014-2015, the results should still be used to identify potential teaching development areas and to address student needs for the following year. [1]This provision does not apply to Level 4 schools. The Commissioner maintains the discretion to designate these schools as Level 5 regardless of the assessment administered.
2. If I'm taking the paper-version of PARCC this year, should I still incorporate technology into my classroom and instruction?	Yes, while there will be a paper and pencil option this year, it will not be offered next year (unless accommodations are necessary). To prepare for next year, it is best to incorporate technology into learning today. In addition, usage of technology will not just prepare students for PARCC, but for college and career readiness.
3. Can we practice similar PARCC questions? If so, is there a list/repository of practice questions?	Yes, please navigate to http://parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes (contains sample questions) and http://www.parcconline.org/practice-tests (contains sample tests). In addition, we will work with our Office of Engagement to supply all schools with toolkits that school leaders and teachers can use this Fall to help families and students know what to expect.
4. Who is involved with the PARCC planning?	We are working with the Boston Teachers Union and Network Superintendents to ensure teachers and principals are included in our PARCC planning and preparation efforts. In addition to school leaders and teachers, we are working with our Academic, Technology, and Data & Accountability central office teams. Lastly, we are engaging our Student Advisory Council to ensure the needs of students are heard. We have been preparing for PARCC (and, more specifically, Common Core standards) for several years and have adjusted our entire approach to curriculum and instruction so our students can be ready to succeed -- not just on an assessment, but in college, career, and life.

5. Is there a high-level summary of PARCC?	Yes, please see this link: http://parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCC-General-One-Pager-5-15-14.pdf. The link contains relevant information on the benefits of PARCC, its layout, and its purpose. In addition, the link provides background information on the PARCC consortium and its purpose.
6. How do I know what technology is compatible with PARCC?	Please see this link for technology recommendations and guidelines: http://www.parcconline.org/technology
7. What central office technology support is available prior and during testing?	OIIT will provide on-site assistance when requested.
8. What academic resources should I use to prepare my students for PARCC?	Because PARCC is aligned to the Common Core, it is necessary that educators review the MA Curriculum frameworks (which have been refreshed in 2011 to embed Common Core standards). Please see this link for the MA Curriculum frameworks: http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/ . In addition, please navigate to the PARCC for Educator's page: http://www.parcconline.org/for-educators. The page contains sample test items, online learning modules, and teaching guides.
9. How will we compare MCAS and PARCC?	The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be using "Equipercentile Linking to translate the results between PARCC and MCAS. Please see this link for more information: http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/CompareResults.pdfhttp://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/CompareResults.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers and School Leaders (3/4)

10. When will the tests take place?	As of September 2014: The tentative schedule is as follows: PBA (computer) March 16-April 10 PBA (paper) March 23-April 3 EOY (computer) May 4-29 EOY (paper) May 11-22 Note: Schools have the discretion of when to administer PARCC within the above time frame
11. How long is each session supposed to last?	PARCConline.org has provided great information on how long the tests should be administered for - by grade, subject, and test type (PBA vs. EOY). Please see http://parcconline.org/update-session-times for details of each session.
12. Does PARCC provide any online support?	PARCC is developing a series of online professional learning modules to help teachers, counselors, school leaders, and school and district testing coordinators understand the new PARCC Assessment System. These tools will help educators learn how to read results from the assessments, make inferences about the results, and identify learning gaps in time to make relevant instructional decisions and modifications. Please see the following link regarding professional learning modules: http://www.parcconline.org/professional-learning-modules-parcc-assessments. In addition, http://parcconline.org/for-educators and http://www.parcconline.org/top-12-resources-educators has great content for educators to prepare their classrooms and instruction.

13. Where else can I get more information on PARCC and MA Curriculum Frameworks?	Please see the following resources: 1. http://bostonpublicschools.org/parcc (BPS PARCC/Common Core Site) 2. http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/ (MA Dept. of Education PARCC Site) 3. http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/10Questions.pdf (MA DOE FAQs) 4. http://www.doe.mass.edu/parcc/CommTool/10things.pdf (MA DOE FAQs for Parents) 5. http://parcconline.org/ (National PARCC Site) 6. http://parcconline.org/for-educators (National PARCC Site dedicated to Educators) 7. http://www.parcconline.org/top-12-resources- educators (National PARCC Site – Top 12 Resources for Educators) 8. http://www.corestandards.org/ (Common Core Standards Site)