

Education Dive

As goes PARCC for Massachusetts, so goes the nation?

By [Erin McIntyre](#) | November 23, 2015

Correction: *A previous version of this article misidentified Common Core as the PARCC exam.*

Dive Brief:

Massachusetts' rejection of the Common Core-aligned PARCC exam is symbolic, since the state "is widely seen as kind of the gold standard in successful education reform," according to Morgan Polikoff, assistant professor of education at the University of Southern California.

Polikoff told the New York Times that the move might help other states repeal Common Core, as two decades before Common Core, Massachusetts had already adopted uniform testing and subsequently went on to lead the nation and many countries in student scores and performance.

Despite many states dropping out of standards like Common Core and testing consortiums like PARCC, some experts like Achieve President Michael Cohen say that its higher standards will remain in place, helping to even out student performance scores nationwide.

Dive Insight:

"The state's rejection of that test sounded the bell on common assessments, signaling that the future will now look much like the past — with more tests, but almost no ability to compare the difference between one state and another," the New York Times reports.

So is PARCC done? With the new Massachusetts decision, a [tipping point](http://www.educationdive.com/news/is-parcc-at-a-tipping-point/402844/) (<http://www.educationdive.com/news/is-parcc-at-a-tipping-point/402844/>) seems to have been reached. The Times [noted](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/us/rejecting-test-massachusetts-shifts-its-model.html?ref=education&_r=1) (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/us/rejecting-test-massachusetts-shifts-its-model.html?ref=education&_r=1) that the state's participation in itself was a validation of Common Core, and the fact that Mitchell Chester, education commissioner for Massachusetts, also sits on the PARCC board. That puts him in the "awkward" position of having to renege on his own test.

Because only five states and the District of Columbia remain as part of the consortium, prices for testing [could rise](http://www.educationdive.com/news/is-parcc-at-a-tipping-point/402844/) (<http://www.educationdive.com/news/is-parcc-at-a-tipping-point/402844/>). As more states leave the consortium and the number of students taking the test drops from 10 million a year ago to less than 5.5 million, the testing cost

per student to PARCC is likely to go up.

After last week's State Board of Education [decision](#) (<http://www.educationdive.com/news/massachusetts-to-use-blend-of-parcc-mcas-exams/409474/>) in Massachusetts to abandon PARCC in favor of a blended test that will update the MCAS for the first time in nearly 20 years, the state will have to spend an additional year and an unknown quantity of money developing its own state-specific test.

Recommended Reading

The New York Times: [Massachusetts's Rejection of Common Core Test Signals Shift in U.S.](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/us/rejecting-test-massachusetts-shifts-its-model.html?ref=education&_r=0) (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/us/rejecting-test-massachusetts-shifts-its-model.html?ref=education&_r=0)

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