

Section III: Proficiency rates under the PARCC exams

The Common Core and PARCC assessments

Ohio will replace its current standardized assessments with new ones starting in 2014-15. The Buckeye State's current and outgoing assessments are the Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) for grades 3-8 and the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) for grades 10-12. The new assessments, known as the PARCC assessments, are aligned with the Common Core State Standards—rigorous academic standards in English language arts and math that will be fully implemented in 2014-15. The PARCC assessments will have more challenging test content and will require a higher test score to achieve proficiency than Ohio's current exams. The PARCC assessments are being field tested, and the cut score for proficiency will be set after the first round of testing in spring 2015.¹

Harder tests and higher cut scores

The combination of harder test content and higher cut scores to achieve proficiency will cause Ohio's (and other state's) proficiency rates to plummet in 2014-15. Kentucky, the first state to implement Common Core-aligned exams, saw its proficiency rate fall by more than one-third in 2011-12, the first year it administered new exams.² Other states, such as Pennsylvania³ and Florida⁴, have also ratcheted up test content difficulty and cut scores in anticipation of the more-rigorous assessments aligned to the Common Core. Florida has already seen declines in its proficiency rates when it changed exams, and Pennsylvania is expecting a fall in proficiency when it implements new high school exams next year. Wisconsin, too, is preparing its schools for the Common Core by adjusting its proficiency rates to the more-rigorous NAEP definition of proficiency in 2012-13.⁵

Ohio, however, has done far less than pro-active states, like Kentucky and Florida, to prepare schools, parents, and the public for these rigorous assessments. So, with the Common Core standards and the PARCC assessments looming for Ohio—and little done to raise public awareness about the imminent drop in proficiency—we forecast and show just how far Ohio's proficiency rates will fall in 2014-15.

¹ Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment>.

² Andrew Ujifusa, "Scores Drop on Ky.'s Common Core-Aligned Tests," *Education Week*, November 19, 2012, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/11/02/11standards.h32.html>.

³ Mary Niederberger, "Pennsylvania School Districts Plan for Keystone Exams," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 11, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/education/pennsylvania-school-districts-plan-for-keystone-exams-661594/>.

⁴ Gina Jordan, "More FCAT 2.0 Results Released," *StateImpact Florida*, May 18, 2012, <http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2012/05/18/more-fcat-2-0-results-released/>.

⁵ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Performance Level Descriptors," <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/profdesc.html>.

Projecting PARCC proficiency rates

In a February public meeting on the Common Core, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) indicated that the percentage of students who currently test “advanced” and “accelerated” on the OAA and OGT is a fair predictor of PARCC proficiency.⁶ These are the two performance levels above proficient. Further discussion with the department found that its prediction was based, in part, on an analysis of Ohio’s performance on international exams (TIMMS and PISA exams).

In addition, the department noted the correlation between Ohio’s advanced and accelerated rates on the OAA and OGT to Ohio’s proficiency rate on the NAEP exam. The U.S. Department of Education administers the NAEP across all states, and has set a higher bar for proficiency on this exam than any state has on its state-administered assessments.⁷ In fact, according to the Foundation on Excellence in Education, “a large number of states had reading proficiency standards that would qualify their students as functionally illiterate on NAEP.”⁸

Table 3.1 shows the close correlation between Ohio’s NAEP proficiency and its advanced and accelerated rates on the fourth and eighth grade OAAs. In 2011, for example, 45 percent of Ohio’s NAEP test takers scored proficient or above in fourth grade math; this matches the percent of Ohio students scoring advanced plus accelerated on the fourth grade math OAA.

Table 3.1. Comparison of percentage of Ohio students scoring proficient or above on NAEP and percentage of Ohio students scoring advanced and accelerated on OAA, fourth and eighth grade math and reading, 2007 to 2011.

	2007		2009		2011	
	NAEP	OAA	NAEP	OAA	NAEP	OAA
Fourth Grade Math	46	24	45	46	45	45
Fourth Grade Reading	36	43	36	44	34	43
Eighth Grade Math	35	38	36	31	39	34
Eighth Grade Reading	36	43	37	36	37	52

Source: U.S. Department of Education (NAEP) and Ohio Department of Education (OAA)

Assuming that the PARCC definition of proficiency (still to be determined) will be set close to NAEP proficiency, we use Ohio’s 2011-12 advanced plus accelerated rates to forecast PARCC proficiency rates. We do this for the state and for a number of districts (charter schools and traditional districts) in and around Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton. For individual school districts, we base our projections off of the advanced plus accelerated rates reported in the June 2012 unverified data set published on ODE’s website.⁹ The October 2012 ODE release

⁶ See slide 29 in former state superintendent Stan Heffner’s PowerPoint presentation at Fordham’s February 15, 2012 event, “Embracing the Common Core,” <http://www.edexcellence.net/events/embracing-the-common-core.html>.

⁷ NAEP results can be located at U.S. Department of Education, “Publications and Products,” <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/getpubcats.asp?sid=031>.

⁸ Foundation for Excellence in Education, “Information: Common Misconceptions,” <http://excellined.org/policy-library/common-core-toolkit/information-common-misconceptions/>.

⁹ Ohio Department of Education, “Test Results,” <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=263>.

of preliminary Report Card data does not include a breakdown of test results by achievement level for individual districts.¹⁰

Statewide proficiency will fall between 20 and 50 points

The charts below show the percentage of Ohio students who tested proficient or above (figure 3.1A) and the percentage of students who tested advanced and accelerated (figure 3.1B). Math and reading scores on the 2011-12 Ohio standardized exams for grades 3-8 and grade 10 are shown.

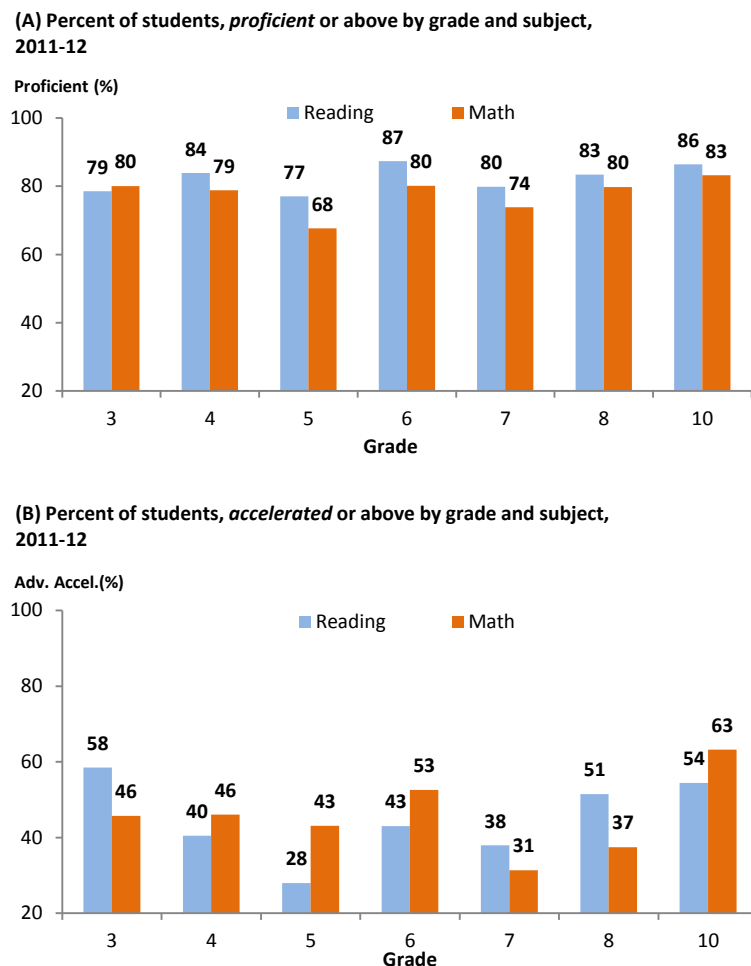


Figure 3.1: (A) Statewide percentage of students testing proficient or above; (B) Statewide percentage of students testing accelerated or above, grades 3-8 and 10, math and reading, 2011-12. **Source:** Ohio Department of Education, [Statistical Summaries and Item Analysis Reports](#), 2011-12.

¹⁰ Ohio Department of Education, "Preliminary District and School Report Card Data," <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1&ContentID=131230>. We compared the June and October fourth grade math and reading proficiency rates and found an average difference of less than one-half of a percentage point with nearly all Ohio schools (traditional public school districts) falling within ± 5 percentage points.

Table 3.2 shows the same data as figure 3.1(A) and figure 3.1(B) as well as the difference between the proficiency rate and accelerated and above rate. Remember, we expect only **accelerated and advanced** students to be proficient or above under the PARCC exams in 2014-15. The fall in proficiency is sharp—a fall of anywhere between 20 (tenth grade math) and 49 percentage points (fifth grade reading).

Table 3.2: Change in statewide proficiency rates assuming that 2011-12 OAA/OGT advanced and accelerated students will test proficient or above in 2014-15 on the PARCC exams.

Grade	Math			Reading		
	Proficient and Above	Accelerated and Above	Change	Proficient and Above	Accelerated and Above	Change
3	80	46	-34	79	58	-21
4	79	46	-33	84	40	-44
5	68	43	-25	77	28	-49
6	80	53	-27	87	43	-44
7	74	31	-43	80	38	-42
8	80	37	-43	83	51	-32
10	83	63	-20	86	54	-32

Proficiency rates will fall in all types of school districts

Figures 3.2 to 3.5 show the proficiency rate declines for a few selected school districts (traditional and charter) located in four of the state's largest metropolitan areas. We use fourth and eighth grade math and reading proficiency rates, reported in the Ohio Department of Education's June 2012 unverified, unofficial data set. District of varying sizes and wealth should expect large falls (anywhere between 20 to 50+ points) in their proficiency rates when the PARCC exams are administered in 2014-15. A few examples from Columbus area districts' fourth grade math rates serve as illustration (figure 3.3):

- Columbus City proficiency falls from 55 percent to 23 percent
- Bexley City proficiency falls from 88 percent to 49 percent
- Upper Arlington City proficiency falls from 94 percent to 72 percent
- Northland Prep (charter school) proficiency falls from 47 percent to 13 percent

When the going gets tough, students, schools, and public must embrace higher standards

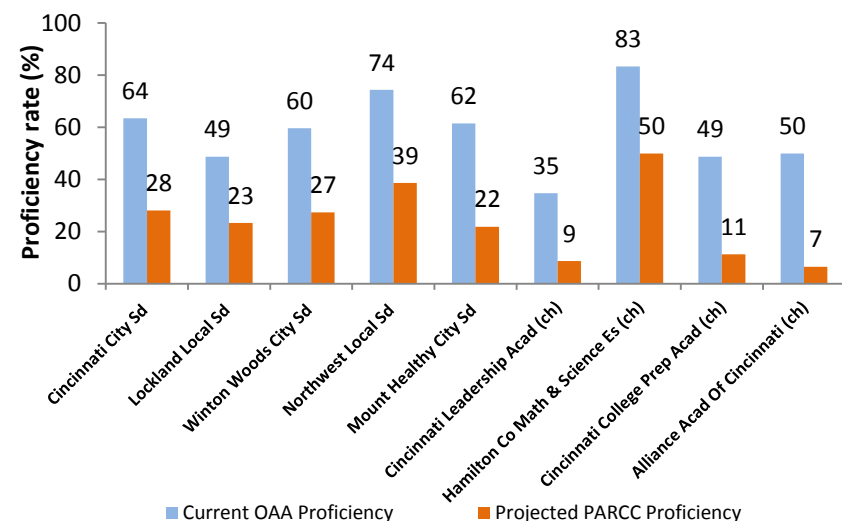
Our analysis indicates that the Common Core and PARCC assessments will jolt Ohio's K-12 educational system when they arrive in 2014-15. But Fordham's recent report *Future Shock* indicated that educators are not shying away from embracing the rigor of the Common Core. We urge the public, as well, to embrace the Common Core—even in the face of shocking proficiency rate falls. For the Common Core are the academic standards that will put Ohio's next generation of students on the pathway to being truly college and career ready.

References

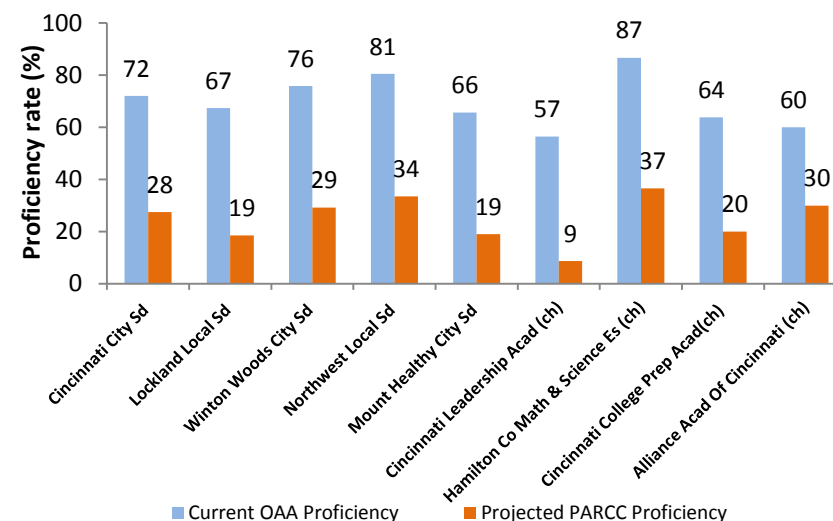
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Cincinnati area school districts

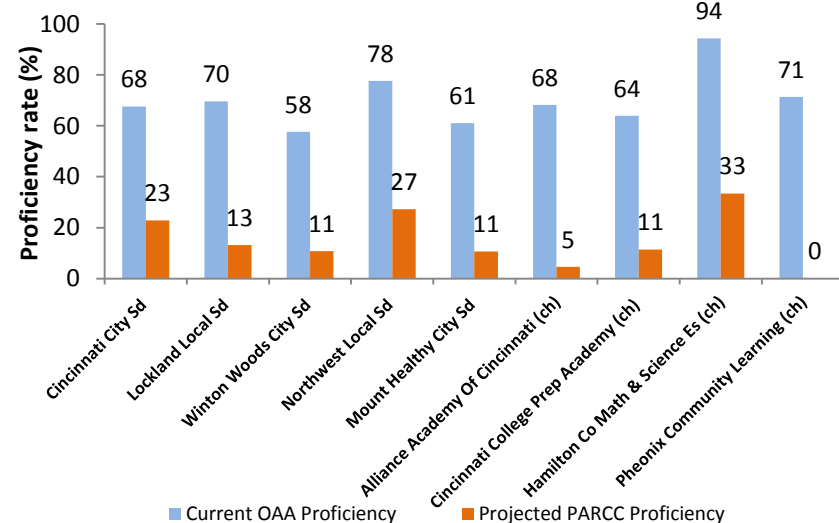
4th grade math



4th grade reading



8th grade math



8th grade reading

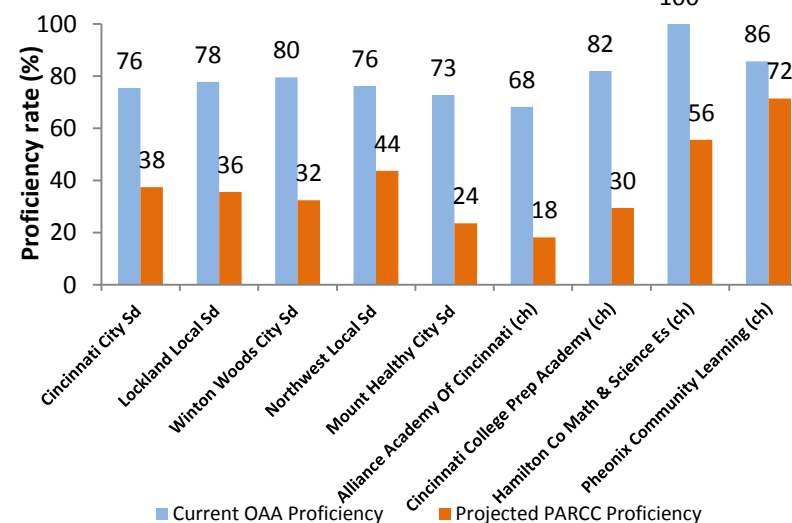


Figure 3.2. OAA proficiency rates versus projected PARCC proficiency rates, fourth and eighth grade math and reading, for select Hamilton County traditional districts and charter schools (ch). 2011-12 OAA and PARCC proficiency rates are from June 2012 ODE unofficial, unverified data set. PARCC proficiency rates are based on 2011-12 OAA advanced and accelerated rates.

Cleveland area school districts

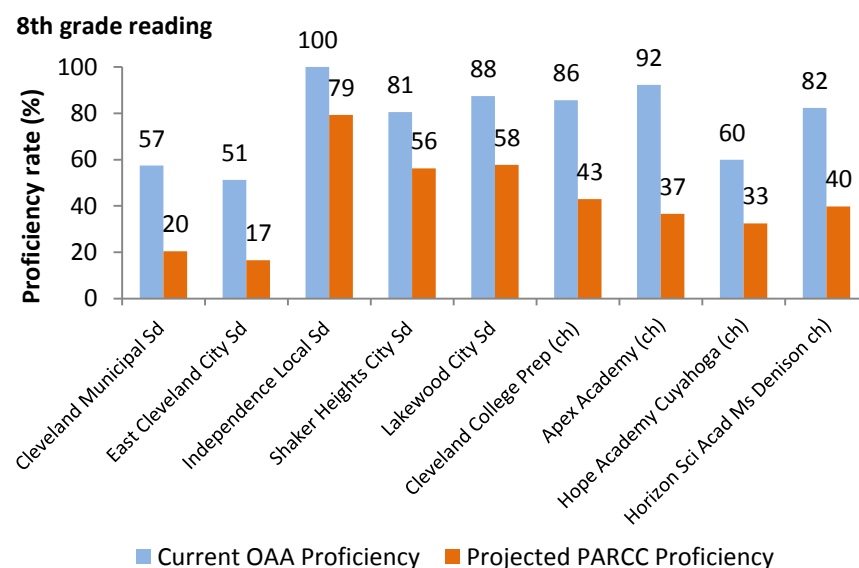
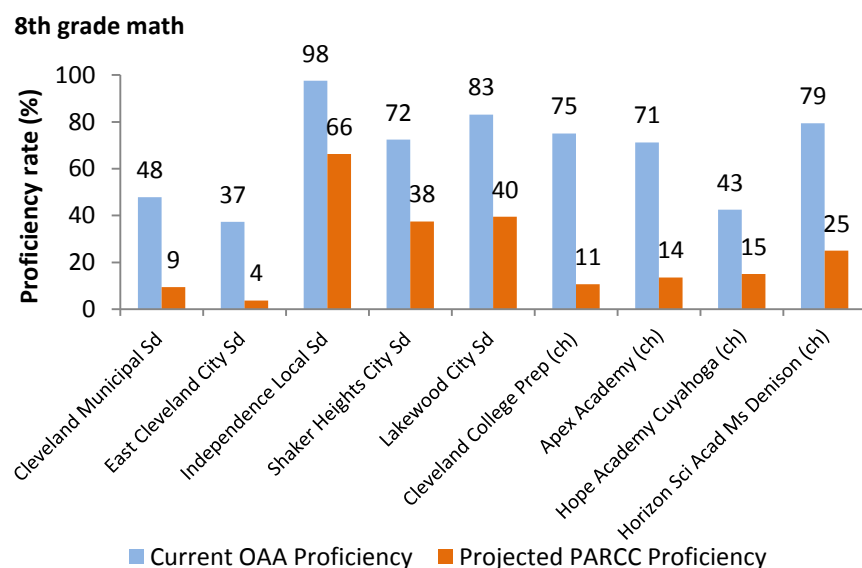
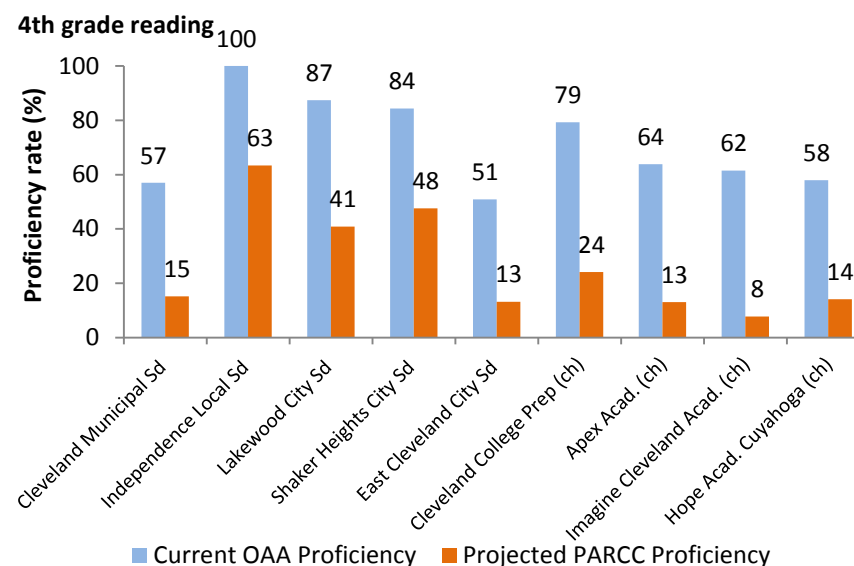
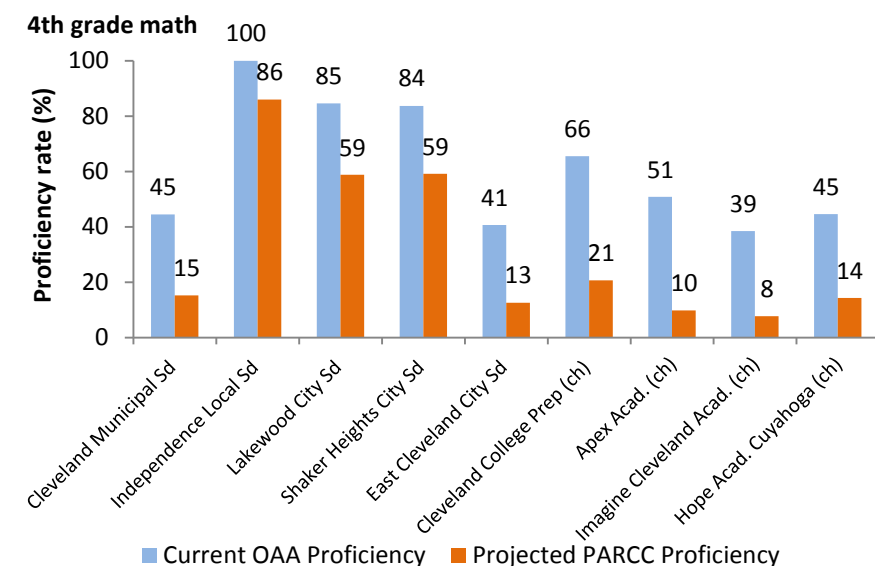
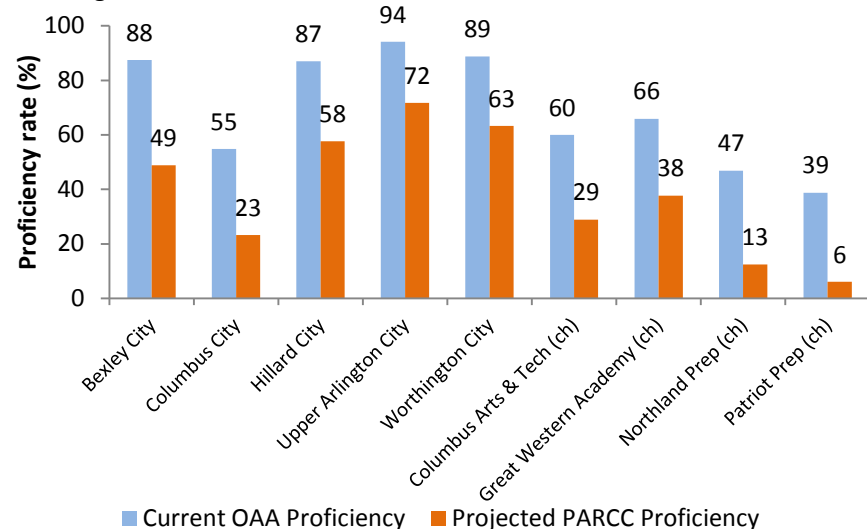


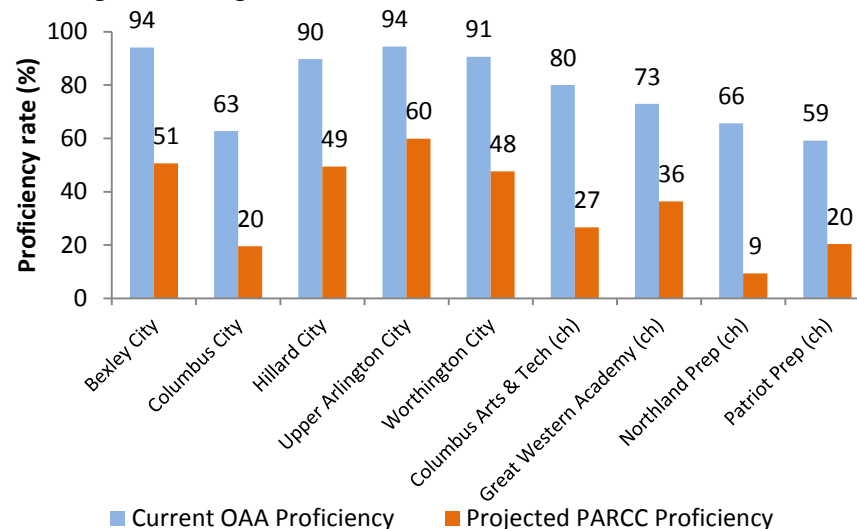
Figure 3.3. OAA proficiency rates versus projected PARCC proficiency rates, fourth and eighth grade math and reading, for select Cuyahoga County traditional districts and charter schools (ch). 2011-12 OAA and PARCC proficiency rates are from June 2012 ODE unofficial, unverified data set. PARCC proficiency rates are based on 2011-12 OAA advanced and accelerated rates.

Columbus area school districts

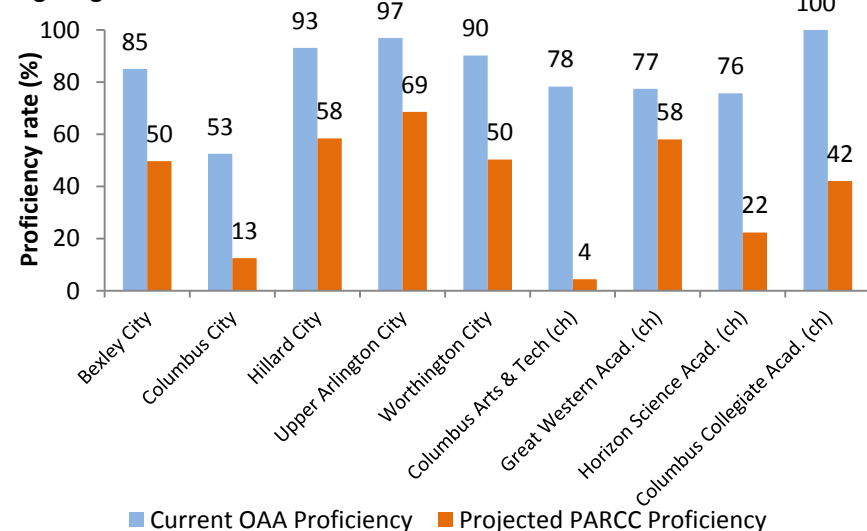
Fourth grade math



Fourth grade reading



Eighth grade math



Eighth grade reading

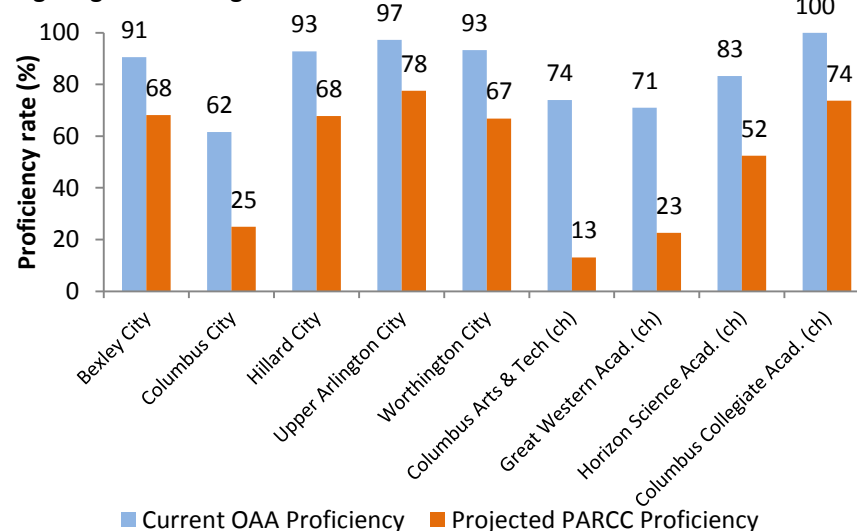
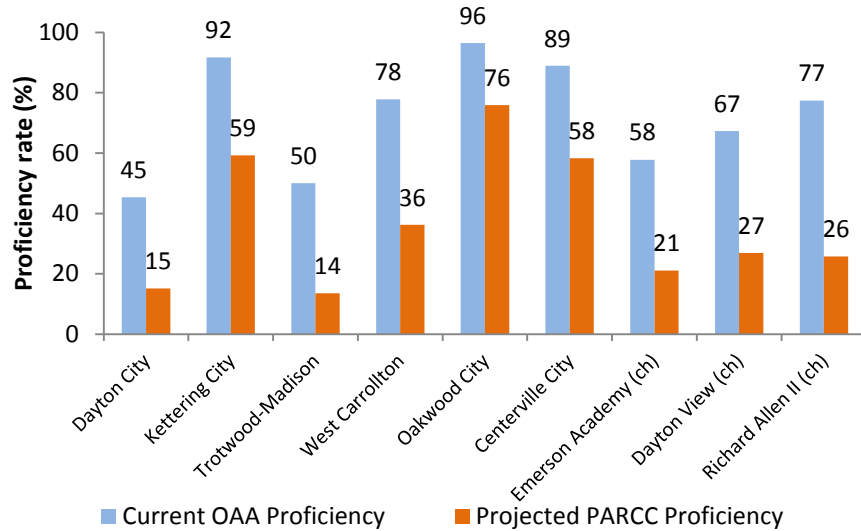


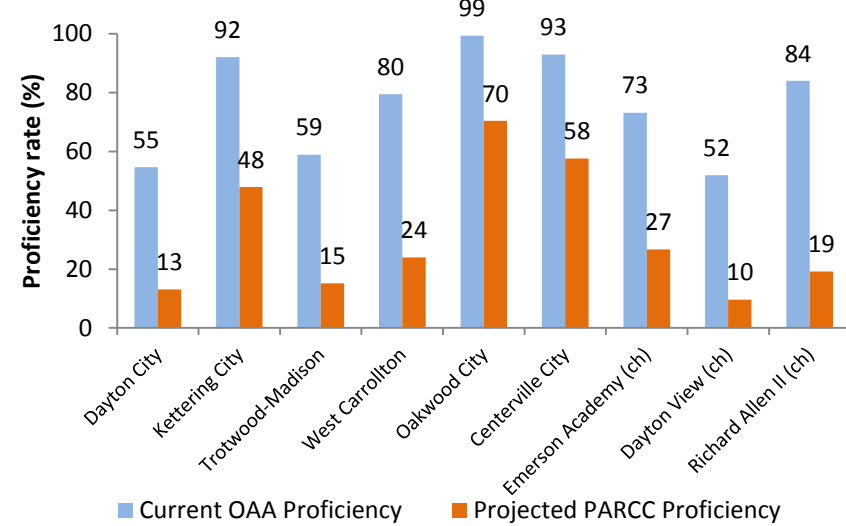
Figure 3.4. OAA proficiency rates versus projected PARCC proficiency rates, fourth and eighth grade math and reading, for select Franklin County traditional districts and charter schools (ch). 2011-12 OAA and PARCC proficiency rates are from June 2012 ODE unofficial, unverified data set. PARCC proficiency rates are based on 2011-12 OAA advanced and accelerated rates.

Dayton area school districts

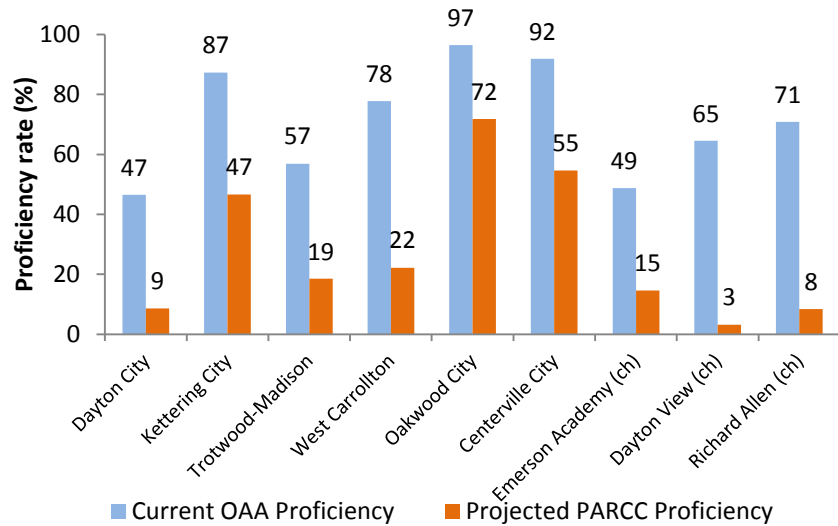
Fourth grade math



Fourth grade reading



Eighth grade math



Eighth grade reading

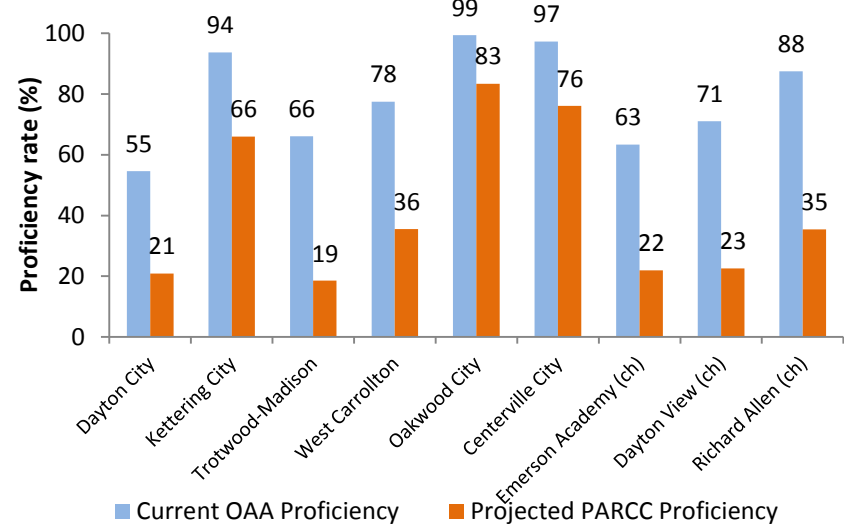


Figure 3.5. OAA proficiency rates versus projected PARCC proficiency rates, fourth and eighth grade math and reading, for select Montgomery County traditional districts and charter schools (ch). 2011-12 OAA proficiency rates and PARCC proficiency rates are from June 2011-12 ODE unofficial, unverified data set; PARCC proficiency rates are based on 2011-12 OAA advanced and accelerated rates.