

## CONSORTIA DOLLARS FOR COMMON-CORE TESTING

The two main consortia designing common-core tests—the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium—have collectively received \$360 million in federal Race to the Top funds to develop the exams.

The two consortia estimate that they have awarded a combined \$305 million of that money to testing vendors and other organizations to date. This chart shows prime contracts awarded to companies and organizations with federal funding, but does not show subcontractors hired to help carry out that work.

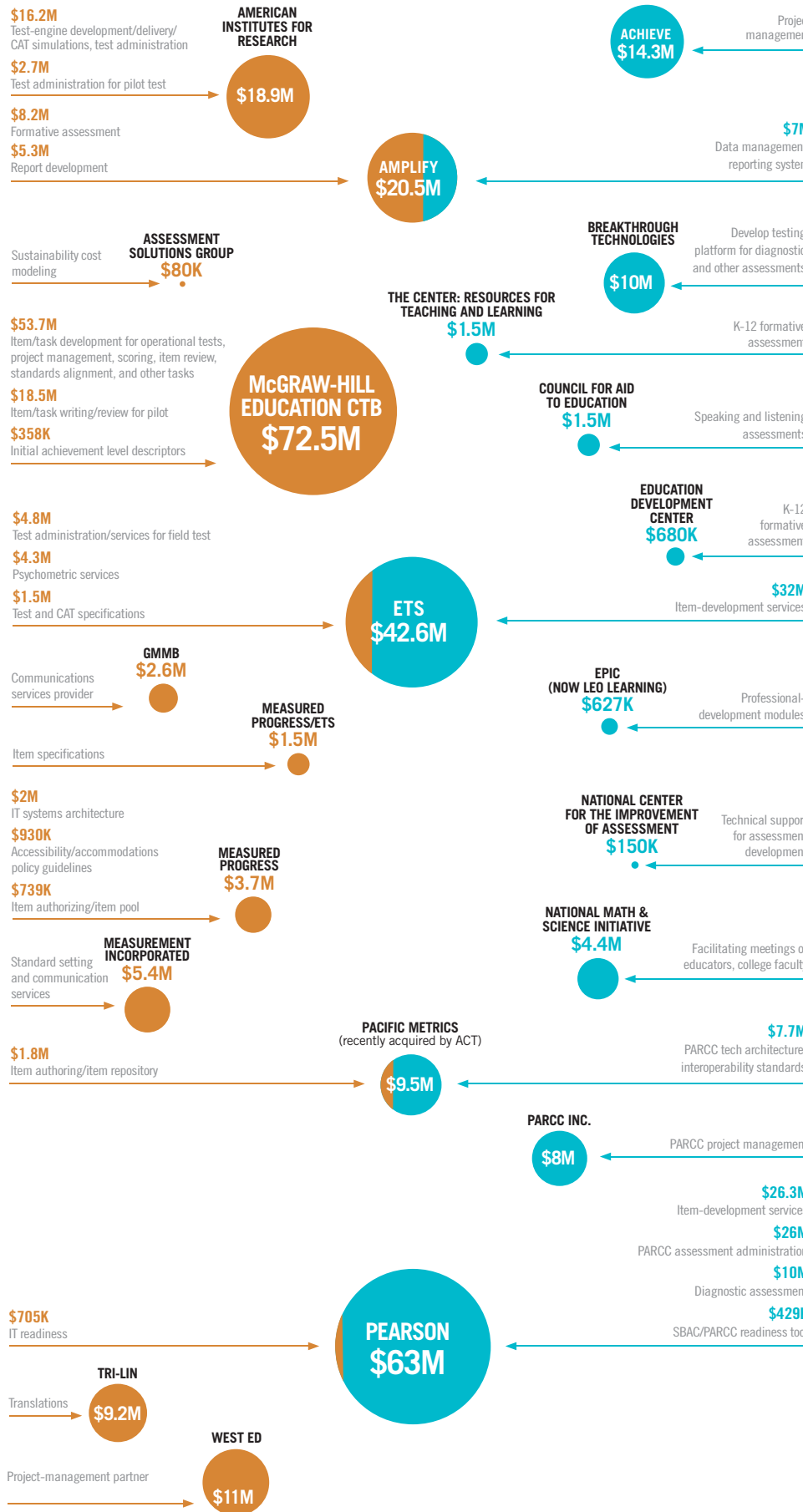
### NOTES

**NOT SHOWN IN THE CHART:** The potentially huge amount of testing work being paid for by the 24 states, at last count, that are either not giving consortia tests or are undecided about the tests they will give. The chart also does not include contracts given by individual Smarter Balanced states for administering those exams—work the consortium has chosen to leave to individual states.

Dollar figures were provided by PARCC/Smarter Balanced, as were, in most cases, brief contract descriptions; vendors' actual duties may go well beyond descriptions provided. Contract amounts can change over time if the consortia require more work. Dollar figures have been rounded.

SOURCE: *Education Week*, PARCC, and Smarter Balanced.

## SMARTER BALANCED



## PARCC

The terminology of testing is complex. *Education Week*, with input from Smarter Balanced and PARCC officials, has created simpler definitions of some terms used by either consortia in its contract descriptions.

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Achievement Level Descriptors:** Text descriptions of what students know and are able to do at each achievement level; used to support students, teachers, and parents in interpreting test results.
- CAT Specifications/Simulations:** Creation of specifications for computer-adaptive testing (CAT) software; process of testing and readjusting question-selection process within software.
- Diagnostic Assessment:** In this context, tests providing teachers with real-time data throughout the school year on student strengths and weaknesses, to shape instruction.
- Formative Assessment:** Often described as tests designed to provide teachers with information so they can adjust instruction to improve student learning throughout the school year.
- Item/Task Writing:** Development of individual test questions and performance tasks that appear on exams.
- Item Authoring:** In this case, creation of software application used by question writers to create and store questions, as well as related information, such as questions' alignment to standards.
- IT Readiness:** In this context, creation of software application allowing states, districts, and schools to submit information about computing devices and networks, and provide reports on preparedness to give the test.
- Item Specifications:** Guidance for writing test questions, based on content specifications and other factors.
- Tech/Systems Architecture:** In general, work on the design of plans that show various tech features and functions and how they operate together.
- Psychometric Services:** Research and data analysis required for test development.

## STATE AWARDS TO VENDORS

Independent of the contracts awarded through the consortia using federal funds, individual states that adopted the common core have made large and small awards to vendors for a variety of services, including test design and administration.

