



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: December 13, 2021

To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

Route To: Principals, School Counselors, Instructional Coaches, District Test Coordinators and Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction

From: Gilbert E. Gonzalez, Acting Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Deadlines: \*January 13, 2022 for mailing paper Individual Student Reports (ISRs) to parents/guardians (30 days after December 14)  
\*February 14, 2022 for reporting results to local boards of education (60 days after December 14)

### **Fall 2021 Start Strong Statewide Assessments Individual Student Reports**

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) would like to thank all districts for participating in the statewide Start Strong assessments administration. As determined by the U.S. Department of Education, the administration of Start Strong satisfied federal statewide assessment requirements to administer general assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science only for the 2020-2021 school year. The spring New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) schedule will resume for the 2021-2022 school year.

#### **District Receipt of Individual Student Reports (ISRs)**

By December 14, 2021, Start Strong assessments ISRs for English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science will be distributed to district central offices.

ISRs will be sent to both the sending and receiving districts for students who receive instruction at a school other than their accountable school. **Once districts receive the ISRs, a copy must be mailed to parents/guardians within 30 days<sup>1</sup>**, which will be January 13, 2022 (30 days after December 14). The NJDOE encourages districts to share the ISRs with students' families as soon as practicable to facilitate timely discussion of key areas in which their child(ren) may need additional supports. To support these communication efforts, a sample parent cover letter is linked in the district communications resources section of this broadcast.

#### **District and State Reporting**

Summative and summary files were made available electronically to assigned school and district staff on December 9, 2021. The NJDOE strongly encourages school and district leaders to review, analyze, and discuss all assessment results with staff as soon as possible. Assessment results should be carefully interpreted in combination with additional indicators of achievement, considering local education conditions. When publicly reporting assessment results, consideration should be given to the impacts of COVID-19 on learning and testing conditions, as well as the impact on student participation in the assessments, which were required to be administered in person. In light of these considerations, and of the different design and purpose of Start Strong compared to the NJSLA, the NJDOE would strongly discourage districts from comparing any individual student/school/district Start Strong data to any state-level data for Start Strong or to any NJSLA data.

Please note that the Start Strong assessments were not designed to predict future student performance on the NJSLA, nor were they designed to estimate what score a student would have received if they had taken the NJSLA

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<sup>1</sup> Per [N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.3\(b\)](#): Chief school administrators shall provide educators, parents, and students with the results of annual assessments as required under N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.2(a), within 30 days of receipt of information from the Department.

in the spring of 2021. The Start Strong assessments were developed in response to the disruption in education caused by the pandemic and were designed specifically to inform instruction going forward.

**Districts must report student-level assessment results to local school boards within 60 days of receipt**, which will be February 14, 2022 (60 days after December 14).<sup>2</sup> Districts must complete this reporting to satisfy the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) requirements for board reporting in the 2021-2022 school year. While meeting this reporting requirement will be included as an NJQSAC indicator, please note that Start Strong assessments results themselves will not be used in the NJQSAC district performance review for the 2021-2022 school year. See the [September 15, 2021](#) broadcast for more information.

The report must include aggregated and disaggregated subgroup data, as well as comparative analyses and appropriate intervention strategies.<sup>3</sup> The number of students for reporting is a minimum of 10 as per suppression rules applied to student data to protect student confidentiality.

Please note that in accordance with federal requirements that the NJDOE publicly report school-level participation and performance data disaggregated by student subgroup, the NJDOE plans to publicly release statewide district and school-level data in late winter 2022.

### **District Communication Resources**

To support communication efforts, the NJDOE has developed the following resources to assist districts in communicating statewide assessment results with educators, boards of education and parents/guardians:

- [Sample cover letter](#) for the mailing of Individual Student Reports.
- [Score interpretation guide](#).
- Sample PowerPoint template for reporting statewide assessment results to local boards of education.

### **Online Portal with Video Score Reports**

In addition to the paper ISRs, 2021 Start Strong assessments student reports will be accessible in the online portal for parents/guardians, the [NJ Parent Portal](#), on December 17, 2021. To view the ISRs in the parent portal, parents/guardians must create an account. If parents/guardians do not already have an account, then one can be created by using the claim code provided on the paper ISR.

The portal will also include a video score report which communicates information from the ISR through animations and a voiceover in New Jersey's top five student home languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding the release of the fall 2021 Start Strong statewide assessments results, please contact the Office of Assessments at (609) 376-3960 or [assessment@doe.nj.gov](mailto:assessment@doe.nj.gov).

For questions regarding NJQSAC requirements, please contact your County Office of Education or the NJQSAC Office at [qsac@doe.nj.gov](mailto:qsac@doe.nj.gov) for further assistance.

c: Members, State Board of Education  
Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education  
NJDOE Staff

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<sup>2</sup> Per [N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.3\(a\)](#): Chief school administrators shall report final results of annual assessments to district boards of education and members of the public at a public meeting within 60 days of receipt of information from the Department.

<sup>3</sup> [N.J.A.C. 6A:30](#): Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts Appendix A and Appendix B

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group