Start Strong
Fall 2021 Administration: Information for Educators

New Jersey Department of Education

Office of Assessments

July 2021
Fall 2021 Start Strong: Purpose and Overview
Fall 2021 Start Strong Assessments

• Start Strong Fall 2021 is intended to...
  • Produce information that should be used as a standards-based complement to the resources used by educators in their classrooms to evaluate the needs of students.
  • Be administered quickly, in person, and provide immediate results.
  • Meet federal flexibility for the 2020-2021 school year associated with the administration of general English language arts (ELA)/mathematics/science assessment, including public reporting of school-level results disaggregated by subgroup.

• Start Strong Fall 2021 is not intended to...
  • Replace local standards-based benchmark assessments districts may already have in place.
  • Replace the spring 2022 New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) statewide summative assessments.
Fall 2021 Start Strong: Overview

**Brief**
- The test can be administered in a single class period (45–60 minutes).
- Administration setup and security procedures are similar to traditional state assessments, with some exceptions.

**Standards Aligned**
- Aligned to the previous year’s academic standards to help educators understand the level of support students require for current grade-level instruction.

**Administered Across Content Areas**
- English language arts (ELA) grades 4–10;
- Mathematics grades 4–8, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II; and
- Science (6, 9 & 12).

**Flexibly Administered**
- Seamless online delivery through the assessment administration platform.
- Provides immediate results.
Fall 2021 Start Strong: Test Design

**Uses High-Quality Items and Passages**
- Uses released items that have gone through the rigorous development processes associated with the NJSLA.

**Fast Scoring and Reporting**
- Overall support levels with additional item-level reports that can be used to inform instruction.
- Dynamic and PDF reporting for item analysis, including the item image and student responses, by student and by item, as well as an Individual Student Report (ISR) for parents after the administration.

**Efficient Question Types**
- Computer scored, multiple-choice and technology-enhanced items allow for real-time feedback and shortened testing time.

**Comprehensive Support**
- In addition to help desk support, administration manuals, report interpretation guides for teachers and district administrators, and other documents will be available on the vendor site this summer.
Fall 2021 Start Strong Administration: Enhancements

• Start Strong was administered for the first time in fall 2020. Based on educator feedback and lessons learned, the following enhancements are expected for the fall 2021 administration:
  • Expanded demographic data collection to mirror the NJSLA student group data (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity)
  • Expanded reporting to provide additional details on the Individual Student Report (ISR), with information about the student’s score and what it means
  • Integration of Start Strong assessment reports into the Parent Portal established for NJSLA
  • Availability of additional support resources through the released assessment item bank
  • Inclusion of the same accessibility features included in NJSLA assessments
Fall 2021 Start Strong: Reports
The following reports will be available for the Fall 2021 Start Strong Assessment:

- Student Report – To access this report, please select OnDemand Reports (HTML, PDF, Excel, CSV) - 24-48 hours
- Results by Question Report (HTML, PDF)
- Student Performance Item Level (HTML, PDF)

Note:

- Users must have the District Test Coordinator or Report Access Role to view OnDemand Reports.
- In addition, Test Administrators assigned to reporting groups may also view results for student tests that are also assigned to the same reporting group.
Educator Report Sample: On Demand Student Reports (ELA, Math, Science)

• This report provides an overall raw score and level of support indicator to be used with other data to inform decision making.

• A student’s overall level of support should be considered for decision-making while the raw score is used as a reference for how that level of support is determined.

• Raw scores should not be calculated or used as % correct or translated into A–F grades.

• Educators will be able to see information about concepts on which students were tested.
Educator Report Sample: **Results by Question/Subject**

- Reports provide links to interactive items in this view.
- The Start Strong assessments are based on publicly available released items, which enables educators to review the questions that students struggled with following the administration of the test.
Educator Report Sample: Results by Question Report - Item Preview

A preview of the items can be seen in the Results by Question/Subject Report by clicking on the link to the interactive items.
Educator Report Sample: **Results by Question/Student**

This is an additional view of the “Results by Question” report that is displayed when the “Show Students" check box is selected.
Provides detailed information about each item a student completed including the standard the item was aligned to, the associated reporting concept, and the student response.

Note: Responses to some technology enhanced items (e.g. drag and drop) will appear as “n/a” and an indication of correct, incorrect, or partially correct response is provided.
Parent Portal

Provides parents with:

✓ Online access to how their child performed on the Start Strong assessments.

✓ Translated videos in New Jersey's top five spoken languages:
  ✓ English
  ✓ Spanish
  ✓ Chinese
  ✓ Portuguese
  ✓ Arabic

✓ Access to additional assessment resources through the New Jersey Digital Item Library.
Fall 2021 Start Strong: Using Results and Additional Supports
Curriculum and Instructional Planning

Start Strong provides a data point to support curriculum and instructional planning.

**District Curriculum Directors**
- District-level curriculum planning (reconsideration of prerequisite concepts and skills)
- Evaluate scope and sequence based on distribution of student support needs
- Provide professional learning supports for differentiation and scaffolding based on student results, aligned to principles and practices outlined in the [NJDOE Learning Acceleration Guide](https://www.nj.gov/education/)

**Teachers**
- Engage in process of regularly monitoring student performance
- Establish a continuum of supports and interventions for students based on data and conversations with parents
- Focus instructional planning time on analysis of data to enhance student engagement and learning
- Use results as one possible data point when setting Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)

**School Administrators**
- Develop or use existing problem-solving teams to provide data-driven decision making that promotes positive student outcomes
- Allocate time and resources to instructional planning and PLCs
- Enhance intervention services (Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) framework)
- Encourage conversations between parents and teachers through strategic messaging
Start Strong Student Reports: Supporting Conversations Between Parents and Educators

• Individual Student Reports from the Start Strong assessments will provide parents with information on key areas in which their child may need additional supports at the start of the school year.

• The reports provide a starting point for parents to have conversations with their child's teacher(s) at the beginning of the school year.

• Early conversations about where their child may need additional supports in the 2021-2022 school year will help parents monitor their child's progress throughout the school year, as their child receives instruction and academic supports.

• Possible questions parents might ask include “What additional supports are available to help my child during the school day and beyond regular school hours?” or “How will I know if my child is improving?”
Maximizing the Use of Reports

Start Strong reports provide both student-level and item level information. They should be used in conjunction with other data to work through a process for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

Using these reports together can provide an initial indication about:

- The overall level of support that students may need when compared against other local assessment data
- Performance on a particular standard
- Performance on specific item types
- Possible misconceptions through the ability to view the assessment items and individual student responses
Maximizing the Use of Reports, continued

Example planning questions:

• Do the data indicate common areas of strength or learning needs for our students?
• What can and can’t the data tell us about the needs of our students?
• What other data might we use to verify the outcomes of the Start Strong data?
• What common formative assessment(s) might help us understand more about student learning needs in relation to this data?
• What do the data tell us about the need for differentiating classroom instruction?
Supporting Resource: NJDOE Digital Item Library

Provides:

• Access to released items from the NJSLA ELA and mathematics assessments

• Ability to search for specific items by subject and grade, as well as sorting by Evidence Statement or standard

• Assessment items are displayed online and allow users to interact with the items in the same way as student test-takers.
Thank You!

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Office of Assessment webpage

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