



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: February 25, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
From: Lisa J. Gleason, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Academics and Performance

The Road Forward: Spring Assessment Data Collection

As announced on February 19, 2021, to fill data gaps caused by unusual statewide assessment circumstances and to ensure that students are making meaningful growth toward grade-level standards, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will collect data from locally administered assessments that provide a snapshot of student learning during this school year.

The purpose of this collection is to obtain mid-year local assessment data that can be used to determine whether students are on track to meet their grade level New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) for this year. Each district will rely on local English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science interim assessment data to report student progress through a NJDOE-provided template. Specifically, districts will report progress on:

- ELA; K-10
- Math; K-8; Algebra I, II and Geometry
- Science: K-11; Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Earth and Space Science

Districts will use local assessment data to report on whether students are below, on, or above grade level, with "grade level" referencing the district's expectations of student mastery of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) at a designated point in time. While yearly midpoints vary across the state, for the purposes of this collection, the interim assessment data must come from assessments administered between **November 16, 2020 and February 19, 2021**. An interim assessment will be defined as a comparison of student understanding or performance against a set of uniform standards within the same school year at periodic intervals, frequently at the end of a grading period. It may contain hybrid elements of formative and summative assessments, or a summative test of a smaller section of content within a unit or a semester. Alternative assessments for special populations of students may be utilized provided that they align with the standards used for all other students and occur within the designated time frame.

The participation and performance data will be disaggregated districtwide by subgroups, including major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, military-connected students and students experiencing homelessness. For each grade and assessment subject collected, districts shall provide the raw numbers of all students who participated in the interim assessments used for this unique data submission, and the number of students below, on, or above grade level as described above.

Data Collection Process

The collection process will be open to all districts from **March 15, 2021 through April 16, 2021 and will occur through [NJ Homeroom](#)**. To support the data collection effort, virtual technical assistance training will be forthcoming. **The NJDOE is also seeking volunteers to participate in a pilot of this data collection for the period of March 1 through March 10.** Districts that wish to volunteer should submit [The Road Forward Spring Assessment Data Collection Pilot Participation Form](#) no later than 5 p.m. on **February 26, 2021**.

Connection to ESSER II Application

As announced on February 19, 2021, to address the areas most impacted by the disruption and closure of schools caused by COVID-19, the NJDOE will release applications for \$1.2 billion in federal ESSER II funds (Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) on March 15, 2021, including grant opportunities dedicated to learning acceleration and mental health supports. The ESSER II applications will include a certification of data reporting to NJDOE, and references to the data sets will be required when describing the needs assessment and explanation of priorities within the application.

This data collection effort is part of the Administration's broader [Road Forward Initiative](#) announced on February 19, 2021. The Road Forward plan consists of a series of coordinated initiatives to support students and educators as districts actively work to reopen schools and recover from the myriad challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this initiative, the NJDOE remains committed to ensuring that districts are measuring how students are performing on grade and subject level standards.

Contact information

Please contact DOERoadForward@doe.nj.gov if you have any questions or need additional information.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group