



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 17, 2021  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads  
Route To: District Test Coordinators, District Technology Coordinators, School Test Coordinators  
From: Lisa J. Gleason, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Academics and Performance  
Deadline: March 29, 2021 for the registration of NJSLA District Test Coordinator (DTC) Training

## 2021 Statewide Assessments Administration

This memorandum serves to provide follow-up information for the administration of statewide assessments for the 2020-2021 school year, including the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA), the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments, and the ACCESS for ELLs assessments, as required by the United States Department of Education (USED) under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

### Background

On February 11, 2021, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) [announced the postponement](#) of the planned start dates of all spring statewide assessments. Since then, the USED has provided a pathway to waive accountability requirements.<sup>1</sup> While the USED is currently maintaining the requirement that all states administer statewide assessments, the NJDOE will continue to pursue additional assessment flexibility based on the specific circumstances within the State. On or before March 19, 2021, the NJDOE will submit a detailed request for a complete waiver of the requirement to administer statewide assessments for the 2020-2021 school year.

While the NJDOE is pursuing all flexibilities possible via the waiver process, school communities must prepare for all contingencies. Under federal law, the USED has 120 days from submission to respond to NJDOE's waiver request. If the waiver is denied or is still pending as of the scheduled dates for administration, spring assessment administration will move forward as required by federal law. **For this reason, the NJDOE will resume a significantly amended statewide assessment administration this spring.**

In these difficult circumstances and while the NJDOE continues to advocate for federal flexibilities on behalf of New Jersey schools, the NJDOE encourages local education agencies (LEAs) to make their best efforts to plan for and administer statewide assessments this spring. While the NJDOE expects that most districts will administer the NJSLA on-site and in-person given the prevalence of fulltime in-person and hybrid instructional models, the NJDOE will maintain the option to administer the NJSLA remotely, as previously announced in the [January 27, 2021](#) broadcast memo, for students who receive this model of instruction. As described below, the NJDOE will provide guidance and supports for in-person and remote administrations of the NJSLA. Due to the in-person supports required for the student populations who participate in the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and DLM assessments, their respective assessment vendors have not offered a remote administration option.

---

<sup>1</sup> Included in the waiver of the accountability requirements is a waiver of the 95% assessment participation rate threshold.

## Key Dates and Important Activities

To meet the USED's requirement for administration, the NJDOE will provide the following opportunities to administer these assessments in the spring of 2021:

Statewide Assessment	Original Start Date	New Testing Window
ACCESS for ELLs	February 16, 2021	April 5, 2021 to June 11, 2021
DLM	March 8, 2021	April 5, 2021 to June 11, 2021
NJSLA Math, ELA, Science	March 15, 2021	May 3, 2021 to June 11, 2021

Additional [key dates](#) and information to assist with preparation for administering the NJSLA statewide assessment program in ELA, mathematics, and science may be found on the NJDOE's [assessment webpage](#).

## NJSLA Administration Information

### NJSLA Remote Administration

Remote testing is the administration of the NJSLA to students who are not receiving in-person instruction from a teacher in a school building during the assessment window and who do not require certain in-person accommodations and modifications. Students who are remote testing may be at home or in another setting where they are receiving remote instruction. These students will be remotely monitored by the test administrator and other authorized personnel designated by the school or district.

The same testing platform, TestNav, that New Jersey students have used in the past will be used in the 2021 NJSLA administration for both in-person and remote testing scenarios. To simplify remote testing implementation, TestNav can be accessed through the TestNav application or through a browser.

Additional information regarding remote testing can be found in the [NJSLA Resource Center Remote Testing Modules](#). These modules, as well as the Remote Testing [webpage](#) may be shared with schools and families.

### District Test/Technology Coordinator Training (DTC Training)

Each year, the NJDOE requires all District Test Coordinators and District Technology Coordinators to participate in training on the administration of the NJSLA statewide assessment program in ELA, mathematics and science. The Spring 2021 District Test and Technology Coordinator Training will be **virtual and on-demand**. Training modules will be available from **March 29–April 16, 2021** and must be completed within that timeframe.

### Registration Instructions

District Test Coordinators and District Technology Coordinators may register until the **final day of training, April 16, 2021**, for the mandatory NJSLA training. Limits on attendance are lifted for the 2021 virtual training modules, and all school and district coordinators are welcome to register.

Registration for the mandatory on-demand training modules, Q&A sessions, and technical support are available on the [Spring 2021 District Test & Technology Coordinator Training](#) website. Presentation materials and resources will also be available through the training platform. The completion of the training modules with your registration credentials will serve as confirmation of your completed training.

### On-Demand Support

Pearson's technical support team is available to support districts prior to, during, and after the assessment administration window. District Test and Technology Coordinators may contact the NJSLA helpdesk at any time for support by calling (888) 705-9416. Additionally, appointments can be made with level 2 technical support engineers through the virtual office hours feature available in Pearson Access<sup>next</sup>.

### **Live Virtual Sessions**

Live virtual question and answer (Q&A) sessions regarding DTC training topics will be available during the last week of the training window from **April 12–April 15, 2021**. These sessions are available to participants as an *optional* support resource. However, there will be capacity limits on these sessions and registration will be handled on a first come, first served basis. Due to these capacity limits, only the District Test Coordinator and District Technology Coordinator can register for the live Q&A sessions and technical support sessions. The NJDOE will make every effort to ensure that DTCs with questions or technical support needs are accommodated.

### **Test Coordinator and Test Administrator Manuals**

Electronic versions of the spring 2021 test coordinator manual will be posted no later than **March 26, 2021** and the test administrator manuals will be posted no later than **April 5, 2021** on the [NJSLA Resource Center](#) webpage.

### **Paper Testing Materials**

The NJSLA-ELA, mathematics and science assessments are computer-based assessments and it is recommended that, when possible, students should take the assessment on a computer. Students who are unable to use a computer, based on a need documented in a valid Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP), will take the paper-based assessment. The paper-based assessment will be available to schools **for in-person administration only**.

Districts will receive paper materials for testing (test booklets and answer folders, mathematics reference sheets, periodic tables, large print and Braille test booklets) no later than April 19, 2021. Additional paper materials may be ordered for students enrolled after the initial registration of students in the assessment administration platform. Districts must specify the exact number of individual test booklets required when requesting additional orders. Districts must wait to receive the initial order of paper materials before ordering additional materials through the “Additional Orders” process. The Additional Order window opens on April 19, 2021 for ELA, math and science.

### **Reminder: 2020-2021 Cancelled NJSLA English Language Arts (ELA) Field Test**

The ELA field test unit **will not be a part of** the state ELA assessments for spring 2021. Districts that were selected for the canceled spring 2020 field test will not have to reschedule for a field test unit.

### **ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Administration Information**

The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs administration window will open on April 5, 2021 and close on June 11, 2021. Districts should have received their initial materials orders for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS testing on February 10 and 11, 2021. The Additional Materials Ordering window will open on March 29, 2021. Please visit the [New Jersey WIDA webpage](#) for updated key dates, and also for New Jersey-specific documents, including the [New Jersey ACCESS DTC Training document](#). All test administrators should be trained and certified appropriately, and ACCESS DTCs should ensure that district security and administration training is completed ahead of the start of administration.

Please note that [as per the vendor](#), these assessments must be completed in-person as the supports required to administer this assessment to its specific population of students must be completed in person; there is **no remote option** for administration of the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Districts may want to consider prioritizing the testing of students who are likely to meet the proficiency scores required for exiting purposes. If parents of students participating in remote instruction do not wish to bring students into buildings to participate in testing, then a “Declined” Do Not Score code may be entered for each domain for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS testing.

**Note:** The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS provider, Data Recognition Corporation, provided an overage of test materials to each district in the initial materials order that was received by districts on February 10-11, 2021. Overages should be shared among schools in a district. Before ordering additional testing materials, school districts should ensure all current inventories of overages have been exhausted across the school district and consolidate overage materials before placing any additional materials orders.

**Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Administration Information**

The DLM spring administration window will open on April 5, 2021 and close on June 11, 2021. Please note that as per the vendor, the DLM assessments must be administered in person due to the design of the assessment and the supports required to administer the assessment to its specific population of students. There is **no remote option** for administration of the DLM. Students who are in remote instruction for the 2020-2021 school year and whose parents do not wish to bring them into the building to test may be coded using the ["Parent Refusal" Special Circumstance Code](#).

The New Jersey-specific DLM training documents have been available on the [New Jersey DLM webpage](#) under the "Supplemental Materials" tab since February 2021. Below are updated task completion dates to help plan for an April 5 opening of administration:

DLM Spring 2021 Administration Task	Date for Completion
Contact Parents/Guardians to provide information on student testing and test scheduling for in-person administration	Ongoing
Continue to review Educator Portal student enrollment data and verify information	March 22, 2021
Complete district DLM test administrator training and complete Moodle certification as DLM Test Administrator for 20-21 administration	March 22, 2021
Roster students by appropriate content area/test administrator	March 26, 2021
Signatures on required Security Agreements	April 1, 2021
Complete First Contact Survey (FCS) and Personal Needs Profile (PNP) for each student	April 2, 2021
Create student testing folders	April 2, 2021
<b>Test Administration Window</b>	<b>April 5, 2021 to June 11, 2021</b>
Last Day to Add Special Circumstance Codes	June 11, 2021

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions, please contact the NJDOE’s Office of Assessments at [assessment@doe.nj.gov](mailto:assessment@doe.nj.gov) or (609) 376-3960 as we are at the ready to support you.

- 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