



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: July 13, 2022  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads  
Route To: District Test Coordinators, District Technology Coordinators, School Test Coordinators  
From: Jordan Schiff, Ed.D., Acting Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

## Start Strong Fall 2022 Administration Information

This memo provides an overview of the Start Strong assessments, including key dates, information, and resources that districts will need as they begin preparations for the administration of the Start Strong assessments this fall.

### Purpose

As a result of the disruption to education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities to deliver instruction and supports for learning acceleration remain a critical priority at the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). Pursuant to Commissioner's regulatory authority, local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to administer the Start Strong assessment as part of the overall Statewide assessment system. The Start Strong assessment is a valuable tool for teachers, parents, and schools that provide results in real time. The identification of the most appropriate level of supports students need in English language arts, mathematics, and science based on priority New Jersey Student Learning Standards from the prior academic year is not only informative, but essential. Results will assist in providing longitudinal data to teachers, parents, and schools.

### Overview

The Start Strong assessments are intentionally brief, designed to maximize instructional time and quickly provide critical data to teachers and school leaders. These assessments provide schools and districts the flexibility to address students' unique needs at the beginning of the school year.

The Start Strong assessments:

- Are based on a subset of prioritized prior-year academic standards;
- Are available in ELA grades 4-10, Mathematics grades 4-8, Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, and in Science grades 6, 9, and 12;
- Can be administered in approximately 45-60 minutes;
- Will provide immediate results to educators through the assessment platform; and
- Will include the same accessibility features and accommodations as the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA), including forms in Spanish and Text to Speech (TTS).

The Start Strong assessments utilize three performance levels ("Strong Support May Be Needed;" "Some Support May Be Needed;" and "Less Support May Be Needed") to aid educators and families in making decisions about the types of supports that students may need. The assessments are not meant to replace any preferred assessment strategies being used locally but can be used to complement existing efforts to gather standards-based data (local benchmarks, writing samples, assignments, homework, etc.) at the beginning of the school year.

### Features for the Fall 2022 Start Strong

The Fall 2022 administration will continue to offer the enhancements districts experienced during the Fall 2021 administration, which include the following:

- 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; and
- Integrated Start Strong assessment reports in the Parent Portal established for the NJSLA.

While the Fall 2022 Start Strong assessments will not be used to satisfy federal accountability, districts are still required to publicly report school-level participation and performance disaggregated by subgroup within 60 days of receiving final reports and report individual student results to parents within 30 days of receiving printed Individual Student Reports.

#### **Start Strong Administration Window – August 31, 2022 through September 30, 2022**

Start Strong assessments will be administered in person from August 31, 2022 through September 30, 2022. All students, including students with disabilities who are not eligible for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments and English Language Learners, will be expected to participate in the Start Strong assessments.

#### **Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) Import**

For Start Strong, districts must import student data directly to the PearsonAccess<sup>Next</sup> (PAN) platform. Districts will be able to upload their initial SR/PNPs beginning on **August 3, 2022**. The SR/PNP Field Definitions document and template will be available in PAN support on **August 3, 2022**. Districts may continue to make updates to student data prior to and throughout the testing window until the district data clean-up window closes on **October 5, 2022**. All schools, including approved private schools for students with disabilities and other institutions which are not accountable schools, are responsible for registering students for Start Strong in PAN. Please note, however, that there will not be an automatic delivery of printed materials (braille and large print test kits) for Start Strong based on student registrations. Test coordinators must order these materials directly in PAN.

#### **Administration Policies, User Guides, and Ancillary Materials**

No later than **July 27, 2022**, electronic versions of the following Start Strong manuals will be made available to districts at the [New Jersey Assessments Resource Center](#) under **Start Strong**:

- Administration Policies
- Computer-based Testing (CBT) User Guide
- Paper-based Testing (PBT) User Guide
- Script for Administering the NJ Start Strong Assessments
- Reporting Groups Guidance

These resources serve as abbreviated versions of the Test Coordinator Manual (TCM) and Test Administrator Manual (TAM) that District and School Test Coordinators are familiar with from the administration of the NJSLA and NJGPA. Districts may use the existing TCM as an additional resource regarding test administration policies and procedures.

Ancillary materials include additional resources that may be helpful to districts, educators, students, and parents. Some resources have been updated to be specific to Start Strong and can be found on the Start Strong webpage. Below is a list of the Start Strong specific resources that are available:

- Start Strong Mathematics Reference Sheets
- Start Strong Test Administration Agreement
- Start Strong Post-Test Certification
- Start Strong Irregularity Report Form
- Start Strong Testing Sign

Other resources that districts are familiar with from NJSLA and NJGPA will remain the same for Start Strong, including the following:

- NJSLA and NJGPA Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual – 10<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Transfer Student Guidance

- Periodic Table
- Personal Needs Profile Guidance
- Infrastructure Trial Guide

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

The NJDOE expects District Test and Technology Coordinators to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities associated with their roles, including training Test Administrators (TAs) on the proper administration of the Start Strong assessments and ensuring the appropriate technology requirements are in place. A self-guided training presentation, which will be available no later than **August 3, 2022**, has been prepared for DTCs to view and use as a companion to the Administration Policies and Test User Guides mentioned above. To access the training slides, DTCs must visit the [New Jersey Assessments Resource Center](#) under **Start Strong**.

Additionally, the Office of Assessments will hold optional online office hours in late August and early September to answer questions related to the Start Strong administration. There will be sessions focused on the following topics:

- Technology – PAN, User Management, Infrastructure Trial, Student Data Management, SR/PNP, Preparing Test Session, Testing Tickets, Test Status, Operational Reports, Reporting Groups.
- Before/During/After Testing – Testing Requirements, Testing Environment, Accessibility Features and Accommodations, Maintaining Test Integrity, Start Strong Forms, Test Materials, Preparing Test Sessions, Testing Tickets, Test Status, Operational Reports, Post-test Activities.

The schedule for the online office hours, which were selected to accommodate the variations in district-selected opening dates, will be as follows:

Session Dates	Session Times	Topics
August 25, 2022		
August 30, 2022	AM Session: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	AM Session: Technology
September 7, 2022	PM Session: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.	PM Session: Before/During/After Testing
September 8, 2022		

District Test and Technology Coordinators identified in PAN will receive a memo via email with information about the procedures for accessing the online office hours.

### Technology – Prepare for 2022-2023 School Year

The [TestNav - Review and Prepare for 2022-23 School Year](#) communication was developed to help Technology Coordinators prepare for and administer the 2022-2023 Start Strong, NJSLA, and NJGPA assessments.

When setting up Chromebooks, it is important to ensure your testing devices’ operating systems (OS) are using Stable or Long-term support (LTS) channels through the duration of the test administration window (Infrastructure Trial through end-of-testing). **Do not use Beta or Dev channels.** Leaving testing devices on a Beta or Dev channel could lead to unexpected or disruptive system behavior during testing.

Visit [Managing Chrome OS Updates](#) article for more information about how to switch between Stable, LTS, Beta and Dev software channels.

### Paper Testing Materials

Materials needed for paper-based testing will be managed differently for Start Strong. Districts should note the following information when preparing for testing students who have an accommodation requiring regular print test booklets, braille tests kits, and large print test kits:

- Certain paper test materials, including braille test kits and large print test kits, must be ordered through the additional order process which will begin on **August 10, 2022**.
- Regular print test booklets are to be printed locally.
- There are no printed answer documents for Start Strong.
- Students with an accommodation to test on paper must be assigned to a test session in PAN so their responses can be transcribed locally into TestNav.
- Additional instructions for the handling of physical test materials and the transcription of student responses are included in the Administration Policies and the Paper-Based Testing User Guide.

For more information regarding the fall 2022 Start Strong administration key dates, please review the complete list of [Start Strong fall 2022 key dates](#).

#### **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.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [New Jersey Assessments Resource Center](#)
- [NJDOE Assessment Resources for Districts](#)
- [PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> Online Support](#)
- [Technology Setup](#)

c: Members, State Board of Education  
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