



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: April 5, 2024  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Nonpublic School Administrators  
Route To: Assistant Superintendents, Curriculum Supervisors, Teachers  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Solar Eclipse Guidance

This memo serves as a reminder and guidance document for local educational agencies (LEAs) as they finalize preparation for the solar eclipse expected to occur on April 8, 2024. This event is estimated to commence around 2 p.m. and last until approximately 4:35 p.m., with the maximum point of darkness at or about 3:20 p.m. This guidance is to aid LEAs in supporting the safety and well-being of students and staff during this event. The following information provides some guidance and considerations for LEAs and may be shared with families as deemed appropriate.

### Safety:

- Emphasize the importance of not looking directly at the sun without proper eye protection. Direct viewing of the sun during an eclipse can cause serious eye damage or blindness.
- Inform students and staff that only certified solar viewing glasses or solar filters for viewing the eclipse should be used. Ensure that these glasses meet the necessary safety standards (ISO 12312-2).
- Inform the community that the use of homemade or improvised viewing devices, such as sunglasses or smoked glass do not provide adequate protection resulting in severe eye damage or blindness.

### Education and Awareness:

- Use this event as an educational opportunity to teach students about the science behind solar eclipses, including how they occur and their significance.
- Provide resources and materials for teachers to incorporate eclipse-related activities into their lesson plans.
- Share information about the eclipse with parents and guardians, including safety tips and recommended viewing practices.

### Schedule Adjustments:

- LEAs will need to consider their individual school schedule and how to safely dismiss students during the peak of the eclipse (at approximately 3:20 p.m.) when it will be dark outside. Schools should take extra precautions to ensure the safety of all students.
- Inform parents and guardians about the dismissal plan.
- Ensure that the dismissal area is well-lit. Schools can use temporary lighting such as floodlights or portable lamps to illuminate pathways and areas where students will be gathering.
- Increase the number of staff members present during dismissal to provide additional supervision. Teachers, administrators, and crossing guards should be stationed strategically to guide students safely.
- Provide staff with reflective vests, armbands, or other accessories to increase their visibility in the dark.
- Clearly communicate dismissal procedures to students, parents, and staff members. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do during the dismissal process.
- Staff members can use flashlights to help guide students safely to their transportation and/or designated pick-up areas.

- Establish specific meeting points for students to gather during dismissal. These points should be well-lit and easily identifiable.
- Ensure that transportation vehicles are equipped with proper lighting and that drivers are aware of the reduced visibility during the eclipse.
- Keep parents informed about any changes to dismissal procedures due to the eclipse. Provide them with clear instructions on where and when to pick up their children.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that the solar eclipse on April 8 is both a safe and educational experience for everyone in our school community. Additional information and resources may be found at [NASA 2024 Total Solar Eclipse](#) webpage.

**Contact Information**

For questions, please email Lorraine Borek at [lorraine.borek@doe.nj.gov](mailto:lorraine.borek@doe.nj.gov).

c:       Members, State Board of Education  
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          Garden State Coalition of Schools  
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