



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 19, 2026

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Principals, Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisors, Instructional Coaches, Teachers

From: Natalie Franzi Dougherty, Director
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Office of Learning Equity and Academic Recovery

Universal Literacy Screener Data Collection Update

This memo informs Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of updated universal literacy screener administration and data submission requirements for the 2026–2027 school year, **including the new requirement to administer screeners three times per year** and submit student-level data to the NJDOE according to the timelines below. LEAs must administer universal literacy screeners to students in kindergarten through grade 3 three times per year, submit student-level screener data to the NJDOE by the deadlines listed below, review results to provide timely supports, and notify parents or guardians of screening results within 30 days after each screening window.

Screener Administration

Under [P.L. 2024, c.52](#), LEAs are required to administer universal literacy screeners at least twice per year. In alignment with the focus of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) on early identification and timely support, **the NJDOE is now requiring LEAs to administer screeners three times per year** to strengthen the use of data for instructional decision-making. LEAs must also submit student-level universal literacy screener data to the NJDOE on a designated timeline defined below.

Following each screening period, LEAs are responsible for reviewing results and providing appropriate responsive supports to students, which may include secondary diagnostics and targeted interventions. LEAs must notify parents or guardians of their child's screening results within 30 days after the conclusion of each screening window. The notification should include clear information about the child's performance compared with grade-level norms as well as the support and services available to them.

Screener Data Submission

Recognizing the additional reporting requirements associated with universal screening, the Department is taking steps to reduce the burden on LEAs and make reporting as efficient as possible. LEAs will no longer be required to manually enter data into the state reporting template and may instead submit raw data files. A future broadcast will include a list of approved vendor exports that can be used for submission.

The NJDOE is also investigating options for Data Sharing Agreements that would allow assessment vendors to submit data directly to the Department on behalf of participating LEAs. By streamlining the reporting process, these efforts aim to reduce administrative hurdles for LEAs while ensuring accurate, reliable data for statewide reporting and continuous improvement efforts.

More information about this requirement, including sample family notification letters, is available in the [New Jersey Literacy Framework: A Guide to Evidence-Based Literacy Practices & Universal Screeners](#), located on the Department's [Office of Learning Equity and Academic Recovery](#) webpage.

Key Steps/Actions

1. Plan the Administration

To support successful implementation of P.L. 2024, c.52, LEAs should begin by ensuring that universal literacy screeners are administered to all students in kindergarten through grade three, three times each year, in alignment with the recommendations provided by the screener vendor. LEAs should work with their screener vendor to establish administration windows that allow sufficient time for scoring and submission within the NJDOE reporting timelines. The NJDOE data submission due dates are as follows:

Collection	Data Submission Due Date
Beginning of Year (BOY)	November 13, 2026
Middle of Year (MOY)	February 12, 2027
End of Year (EOY)	July 2, 2027

It is important that LEAs plan ahead to meet these timelines and ensure full participation for all students.

2. Prepare the Submission File(s)

As previously noted, the Department will accept raw data files from approved universal literacy screeners. This change streamlines reporting by allowing LEAs to submit data directly from their assessment platform rather than manually entering information into a state template.

Submitted files must meet the following requirements:

- Be submitted in .xlsx format.
- Include all grades in a single file (grades may be organized on separate tabs or worksheets).
- Include each student's State Student Identifier (SID) and grade level.
- Include County, District, School codes.
- Include the composite score and performance level, as well as all applicable subtest scores and performance levels.

3. Attend Upcoming Technical Assistance Sessions

To support LEAs with the new submission process, the Department will offer technical assistance sessions prior to the BOY submission date. Information about these sessions, including registration details and session dates, will be distributed through a future

broadcast and posted on the NJDOE website. Additional guidance materials and submission resources will also be made available at that time.

4. Provide Support as Needed

Beyond data submission, LEAs play a critical role in using screening results to assess the health of Tier 1 instruction, identify and intervene early for students at risk, and guide instruction and support. LEAs are expected to review results promptly and provide appropriate interventions based on student needs. These supports may range from additional diagnostic screenings to targeted instructional strategies designed to ensure students receive timely and effective assistance.

Additional literacy resources are available through the [LEARning Hub](#), a curated, searchable collection of vetted research, professional learning opportunities, and instructional materials aligned with P.L. 2024, c.52. Educators can also access required training modules and related resources through the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#), with new professional learning opportunities added annually to support implementation priorities and educator needs.

5. Dyslexia Support

Please note that universal literacy screening data serves as the initial step in identifying potential risk factors for reading disabilities, such as dyslexia. For a comprehensive explanation of dyslexia requirements, refer to [The New Jersey Dyslexia Handbook: A Guide to Early Literacy Development & Reading Struggles](#) on the NJDOE webpage.

6. Engage Parents and Families

Family engagement is an essential component of this work. LEAs must notify parents or guardians of their child's screening results within 30 days of the end of each screening window. These notifications should clearly communicate student performance and outline the supports and services available, helping families understand how schools are responding to their child's learning needs.

To support family engagement, the newly created [Learning about Literacy: Family Series](#) from the Office of Learning Equity & Academic Recovery helps families better understand how children learn to read—and how to support that learning at home. Schools and community groups may consider sharing the information in the series at events such as family literacy or back-to-school events, or families can also explore the sessions on their own at their own pace.

Contact information

Please email the Office of Learning Equity & Academic Recovery at LEAR@doe.nj.gov with questions regarding The New Jersey Literacy Framework: A Guide to Evidence-Based Literacy Practices & Universal Screeners, professional learning, and/or data collection, and visit our website for more information: <https://www.nj.gov/education/lear/>.