



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 9, 2026

To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: Middle School Science Teachers, High School Science Teachers, Science Supervisors, Principals, Vice Principals, Curriculum Directors

From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Starting Strong: Free Virtual OpenSciEd Professional Learning Resources

Through its partnership with OpenSciEd, the New Jersey Department of Education is advancing implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science by providing educators with open access to high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials. OpenSciEd is a high-quality, research-based science curriculum developed through collaboration among leading science educators and researchers to support deep, engaging student learning. As an openly licensed resource, it is freely available for educators to use, adapt, and share to meet local needs.

Recognizing that many teachers begin implementing OpenSciEd without prior professional learning, OpenSciEd developed [Starting Strong](#) to provide practical, just-in-time support. This resource is designed to help educators, as well as the school and district leaders successfully launch their first middle school or high school OpenSciEd unit with confidence.

Designed with educators' schedules in mind, the self-guided experience takes approximately six hours to complete and is divided into short, flexible modules that can be completed during planning periods or department meetings. Rather than focusing on theory, each module helps teachers prepare for what they're about to teach, including:

- Preparing for the first unit
- Launching the anchor phenomenon
- Facilitating classroom discussions
- Pacing instruction
- Preparing for the first assessment

Each module concludes with planning activities teachers can immediately apply in their classrooms.

OpenSciEd has created two implementation options, each with a one-page facilitation guide and a sample email that leaders can customize and send to teachers:

- **Using Starting Strong: Solo Approach**
 - A teacher works the path on their own, alongside the unit they're about to teach: Modules 0–3 before teaching starts, then one module a week.
- **Using Starting Strong: Team Approach**
 - A team works the same path together: videos projected, modules on each teacher's own device, everyone planning their own unit side-by-side.

Contact information

For any questions, please contact Michael Heinz, Science Coordinator in the Office of Standards, at Science@doe.nj.gov.