



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 22, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities
Route To: Principals and District Test Coordinators
From: Jordan Schiff, Ed.D., Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Discontinuation of Start Strong Assessments

The Start Strong assessment was originally piloted in the fall of 2020, and its administration has continued since then. In the fall of 2021, this assessment was mandated as a mechanism to ensure that districts had access to high-quality, standards-based student data through the suspension of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). With the successful reinstatement of the NJSLA in the spring of 2022, the New Jersey Department of Education (Department) will discontinue the Start Strong assessment effective fall 2023. The Department is grateful to the education community for their partnership in successfully implementing the Start Strong assessment over this period.

Discontinuation of Start Strong

The Department's Office of Assessments initially offered the Start Strong assessments during the fall of 2020 as a tool to provide educators with an early indication of the level of support students may need at the beginning of the school year. This program was initiated in response to the suspension of the NJSLA. With the suspension of the NJSLA spanning from 2020 through 2021, the Start Strong program was able to provide high-quality, timely data to assist schools and districts in their decision-making process. The Start Strong program was then continued in the fall of 2022, providing districts with data that would serve as a comparison point to their students' performance in the prior year and help evaluate progress in preparing students for the school year during the two-year pause of administration of the NJSLA. The resumption of the NJSLA will allow the Department to continue to offer a high-quality assessment to determine the academic needs of New Jersey's students to engage in grade-level content as Start Strong comes to an end.

The Department will be reallocating the funds of the Start Strong program, which will enable the funding for the 2023-2024 school year to support other initiatives within the New Jersey Partnership for Student Success (NJPSS).

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Instructionally Embedded (IE) Assessments

The Department will offer the DLM IE assessments as an optional resource for the fall of 2023.

Contact information

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Assessments at (609) 376-3960 or assessment@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group