

Start Strong: Fall 2021 Administration

Highlands Elementary
School District

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Support in
Identifying
Student
Needs

Start Strong Assessment Overview

Start Strong Fall 2021 Assessments:

- Produced information to be used as a standards-based complement to the resources used by educators in their classrooms to evaluate the needs of students.
- Were administered quickly, in person, and provided immediate results.
- As determined by the U.S. Department of Education, the administration of Start Strong satisfied federal statewide assessment requirements to administer general assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science only for the 2020-2021 school year. The spring NJSLA schedule will resume for the 2021-2022 school year.

Start Strong Fall 2021 Assessments do not:

- Replace local standards-based benchmark assessments districts may already have in place.
- Replace the spring 2022 New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) statewide summative assessments or are predictive of their results.

Start Strong Test Design

- Based on a subset of prioritized prior year academic standards to provide a data point on the level of support a student may need to engage in grade level content.
 - Example: Grade 5 ELA Start Strong Assessment is aligned to a subset of the NJSLs for grade 4 ELA.
 - Example: Algebra I Start Strong Assessment is aligned to grade 8 learning standards relevant to algebraic concepts.
- Used released high quality items from the NJSLA item bank.
- Contained efficient question types to produce on demand results for educators.
- Could be administered in 45–60 minutes.

Note: The test design, which allowed for shortened testing time and immediate results, means that Start Strong results must be interpreted and used differently than NJSLA results. They do not cover the breadth and depth of standards as seen on the NJSLA and do not support the same comparisons or inferences about student proficiency.

Start Strong Grade and Content Alignment

Content Area	Grade/Course in SY 2021 - 2022	Content of the Assessment
English Language Arts (ELA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 4 • Grade 5 • Grade 6 • Grade 7 • Grade 8 • Grade 9 • Grade 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 3 • Grade 4 • Grade 5 • Grade 6 • Grade 7 • Grade 8 • Grade 9
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 4 • Grade 5 • Grade 6 • Grade 7 • Grade 8 • Algebra 1 • Geometry • Algebra 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 3 • Grade 4 • Grade 5 • Grade 6 • Grade 7 • Grade 8* • Grade 8* • Algebra 1
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 6 • Grade 9 • Grade 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3–5 • Grades 6–8 • Grades 9–11

*Students beginning Algebra 1, Geometry, and/or Algebra 2 in the 2021–2022 school year may have taken different mathematics courses depending on their individual course pathways. The Start Strong Assessments for Algebra 1 and Geometry are based on the Grade 8 learning standards and, therefore, measure some of the same concepts. The Start Strong Assessment for Algebra 1 contains more items from the grade 8 learning standards relevant to algebraic concepts, and the Start Strong Assessment for Geometry contains more items from the grade 8 learning standards relevant to geometry concepts.

Start Strong Result Interpretation Considerations

- When publicly reporting assessment results, consider the impacts of COVID-19 on learning and testing conditions as well as the impact on student participation in the assessments, which were administered in person.
- Districts should not compare any individual student/school/district Start Strong data to any state level data for Start Strong, nor should comparisons be made to any NJSLA data.
- Please note that the Start Strong Assessments were not designed to predict future student performance on the NJSLA, nor were they designed to estimate what score a student would have received if the student had taken the NJSLA in spring 2021.

Start Strong Result Interpretation Considerations (Continued)

Start Strong Assessments provide a data point to support:

- District level curriculum planning and revisiting prerequisite concepts and skills.
- Evaluating scope and sequence based on distribution of student support needs.
- Providing professional learning supports for differentiation and scaffolding based on student results, aligned to principles and practices outlined in the [NJDOE Learning Acceleration Guide](#).
- Using the Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for conversations between parents/guardians and educators on where their child might need support at the beginning of the school year.

District and School Context That Impacted Start Strong Data

- The Department encourages districts to clearly and prominently provide information about the context of Start Strong data, including its limitations as a result of the pandemic or other factors.
- The results should include clearly worded context that such data are incomplete and/or not representative of the make-up of the district or school population.
 - For example, if a district sees:
 - Low participation rates at a school as a result of school quarantine.
 - Skewed results at school/grade level as a result of large numbers of individual student quarantines.
- As always, assessment data should be analyzed alongside other important measures of student outcomes, like benchmark assessments, teacher-created formative assessments, and attendance data to provide a more complete perspective on resources, support, and student success.

EXAMPLE: RESULTS IN CONTEXT

Start Strong Fall 2021 School and Grade Level Outcomes English Language Arts Grade 4 – Support Levels

ELA04	More Support Needed (Count)	More Support Needed (Percentage)	Some Support Needed (Count)	Some Support Needed (Percentage)	Less Support Needed (Count)	Less Support Needed (Percentage)
Blue Elementary	50	41.67%	50	41.67%	20	16.67%
Green Elementary*	30	37.5%	40	50%	10	12.5%
Orange Elementary*1	*	*	*	*	*	*

Critical Data Considerations: Due to periods of individual and/or school quarantine during the testing window, test results from Green and Blue Elementary Schools are not representative of the student population. Results are for reporting purposes only and should not be used to draw conclusions about student performance or for comparison purposes.



Note 1: Orange Elementary School's testing population for ELA Grade 4 did not meet the threshold for reporting. Results are suppressed to protect student privacy as per suppression rules.

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Number of Students Tested

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English Language Arts	Students Tested	Mathematics	Students Tested	Science	Students Tested
ELA04	20	MAT04	20		
ELA05	23	MAT05	23		
ELA06	20	MAT06	20	SC06	20
Total	63	Total	63	Total	20

Note: "Students Tested" represents individual valid test scores for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

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English Language Arts – Support Levels

Grade	More Support Needed (Count)	More Support Needed (Percentage)	Some Support Needed (Count)	Some Support Needed (Percentage)	Less Support Needed (Count)	Less Support Needed (Percentage)
4	9	45%	3	15%	8	40%
5	9	39%	3	13%	11	48%
6	9	45%	4	20%	7	35%

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Mathematics – Support Levels

Grade	More Support Needed (Count)	More Support Needed (Percentage)	Some Support Needed (Count)	Some Support Needed (Percentage)	Less Support Needed (Count)	Less Support Needed (Percentage)
4	8	40%	7	35%	5	25%
5	12	52%	4	17%	7	30%
6	7	35%	11	55%	2	10%

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Science – Support Levels

Grade	More Support Needed (Count)	More Support Needed (Percentage)	Some Support Needed (Count)	Some Support Needed (Percentage)	Less Support Needed (Count)	Less Support Needed (Percentage)
6	5	25%	12	60%	3	15%

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Subgroup

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Subgroup - Percentages

Subgroup	More Support Needed	Some Support Needed	Less Support Needed
Economically Disadvantaged			
ELA04 and MAT04	*	*	*
ELA05 and MAT05	*	*	*
ELA06, MAT06, and SC06	*	*	*
English Language Learner			
ELA04 and MAT04	*	*	*
ELA05 and MAT05	*	*	*
ELA06, MAT06, and SC06	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities			
ELA04 and MAT04	*	*	*
ELA05 and MAT05	*	*	*
ELA06, MAT06, and SC06	*	*	*

*The testing population did not meet the threshold for reporting. Results are suppressed to protect student privacy as per suppression rules. To protect the anonymity of individual students, it is common practice to suppress results if a group comprises fewer than ten students and to suppress totals when it is possible to calculate back to the results of one or two students.

Additional Assessment Data

i-Ready Beginning-of-Year (BOY)

Reading	Tier 3 (More Support Needed)	Tier 2 (Some Support Needed)	Tier 1 (Less Support Needed)
Grade K	0%	75%	25%
Grade 1	12%	72%	16%
Grade 2	26%	58%	16%
Grade 3	39%	13%	48%
Grade 4	35%	40%	25%
Grade 5	43%	13%	43%
Grade 6	48%	24%	29%

Additional Assessment Data

i-Ready Beginning-of-Year (BOY)

Mathematics	Tier 3 (More Support Needed)	Tier 2 (Some Support Needed)	Tier 1 (Less Support Needed)
Grade K	0%	83%	17%
Grade 1	12%	76%	12%
Grade 2	21%	68%	11%
Grade 3	39%	55%	6%
Grade 4	45%	40%	15%
Grade 5	39%	39%	22%
Grade 6	29%	57%	14%

Notable Achievements

- Of the 146 Start Strong Assessments administered for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, all 146 were completed and yielded valid scores.

Intervention Strategies

- Adjustment of scope/sequence to prioritize learning standards
- Collaborative lesson planning/lesson study
- Data collection/analysis for i-Ready
- Emphasis on tiered, small group instruction
- Implementation of basic skills programming (during/after school)
- Model lessons (English Language Arts)
- New Jersey Department of Education resources/supports (Science/STEM)
- Peer observations (Mathematics)
- Refinement of Intervention and Referral Services