



Howell Township Public Schools

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

During the month of October, students in Grades 4-8 across the State of New Jersey will be participating in the START STRONG assessments. These brief, computer-based assessments are designed to help district identify students' learning needs at the start of the school year.

As you may recall, during the Spring of 2021, the annual New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) was not given to students, due to the impact of COVID-19. The State's commitment to administer the Start Strong formative assessments during the Fall of 2021 was a condition of the United States Education Department's approval of the postponement of the statewide assessment of students in New Jersey during the Spring of 2021.

Each student in Grades 4-8 who would normally take the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) are scheduled to participate in the Start Strong assessments in the content areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in Grade 6 will also have an assessment in Science. Each content area test is brief, taking approximately one hour. The chart below reflects the schedule for Start Strong.

START STRONG ASSESSMENT	Grade Levels	Dates	Make-up Testing
English Language Arts	Grades 4-5	October 12 th	Through October 22 nd
Mathematics	Grades 4-5	October 13 th	
English Language Arts	Grades 6-8	October 13 th	
Mathematics [^] Algebra [^] Geometry [^] <i>[^]Students participate in the mathematics assessment aligned with their current middle school course, either general grade level mathematics (including pre-algebra), Algebra, Geometry</i>	Grades 6-8	October 14 th	
Science	Grade 6 only	October 15 th	

Please continue to assist us in providing each and every one of our students with the greatest opportunity to be successful and demonstrate their true abilities. It is important that you are aware that any student who arrives late to school while the test is being administered, will have to make up that particular test. They will not be admitted to the classroom once testing has begun.

The Start Strong assessments are aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and cover content from the prior grade level/course. Since this test is intended to identify instructional needs by measuring what students have mastered, there is no need for your child to study for the assessment. Your support in ensuring that your child is well-rested and eats a nutritious breakfast, on the days of testing, will be beneficial to your child. Above all, your child will benefit most from your support and encouragement to do his or her very best.

As a school district, we are very sensitive to the needs of students who may be experiencing a COVID-19-related exclusion from school during this time. Rest assured that, should your child be impacted in a way that makes them unable to attend school in person throughout the entire testing window, our district has ample and robust measures available to identify the academic strengths and needs of all of our students. Your child will not be prevented from being considered for any district programs, as a result of Start Strong.

Parents will be able to view their child's results in an Individual Student Report (ISR) for each content area in which their child is tested. More information can be found at: <https://nj.mypearsonsupport.com/startStrong/>, and through the District Website at: https://www.howell.k12.nj.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1163721&type=d&pREC_ID=1416119.

We appreciate the support you provide throughout your child's educational program. Questions about the Start Strong assessments can be directed to your child's school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Isola". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "I".

Joseph Isola
Superintendent