

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

512 Cedar Street
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

October 7, 2021

Dear SPF Families:

As per state and federal requirements, all New Jersey public schools will administer the Start Strong assessments this Fall. Start Strong assessments are similar in design to the NJSLA with the exception that the assessments are much shorter and feature only multiple-choice questions. Tested subject areas/grade levels are as follows:

English Language Arts: Grades 4 through 10

Math: Grades 4 through 8, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra II

Science: Grades 6, 9, and 12

Administration of the Start Strong Assessment will take place in our schools between October 12, 2021-October 22, 2021. The Start Strong assessments are brief, designed to maximize instructional time and quickly provide critical data to teachers and school leaders. These assessments are based on a subset of prioritized prior-year academic standards, can be administered in approximately 45-60 minutes, and will provide immediate results to educators.

The Start Strong assessment utilizes three performance levels (“Strong Support May Be Needed”; “Some Support May Be Needed”; and “Less Support May Be Needed”) to describe the level of support that a student might need to master the current year’s prerequisite skills and concepts.

Upon completion, parents will receive a detailed student performance report. Please know that the district will not use Start Strong Testing as a means of grouping or placing students; test data will only be used to inform instruction and identify curriculum areas in need of focus as a result of the pandemic. Students will complete their Start Strong assessments in person utilizing district devices.

The testing platform will include all of the same accessibility features provided in NJSLA assessments. All students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners who are not eligible for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments, will be expected to participate in Start Strong just as all students and groups of students are ordinarily expected to participate in NJ Student Learning Assessment.

Further information regarding Start Strong testing can be located at the following link:

<https://nj.mypearsonsupport.com/startStrong/>. Please join your child's teacher in encouraging him/her to do their best but also know that there is no reason for anyone to be anxious about this assessment as it is designed and will be used to help our teachers accelerate student learning.

Thank you for your continued support as we continue our strong start to the new school year!

With gratitude-

Robert A. McGarry, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction