



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 24, 2020
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Principals, District Test Coordinators, Staff Involved with Statewide Student Assessments
From: Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

New Jersey Cancels Statewide Student Assessments

Given the continued threat of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) to our school communities and the resulting school closures, Governor Phil Murphy today announced that the State of New Jersey is cancelling all statewide student assessments for the spring 2020 testing window. This includes the springtime administration of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA), ACCESS for ELLs, and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has notified states that it will grant a waiver to any state that is unable to assess its students due to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing relief from federally mandated testing, accountability, and reporting requirements for this school year. With students unable to attend school due to the COVID-19-related closures, it is not feasible to move forward with statewide testing. As such, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has applied for the waiver and the USDE has granted approval of the waiver. Therefore, New Jersey will not be required to administer a statewide assessment for federal accountability purposes.

We acknowledge that cancelling statewide assessments will impact various aspects of education, including educator evaluations and certification, and school and district accountability. We recognize educators, students, and families will have questions. We are working to mitigate any unintended consequences, and we will work through multiple channels to keep stakeholders fully informed of updated guidance and other changes.

Graduation Options

Cancellation of statewide assessments will not prevent students from meeting their graduation assessment requirements.

The NJDOE continues to process portfolio appeals for the small percentage of current seniors who have not yet met their graduation assessment requirement.

The NJDOE will make the NJSLA available in the summer or fall for current high school freshman, sophomores, and juniors (and middle school students taking high-school level courses) who may want to use the NJSLA high school assessments to meet their graduation assessment requirements.

Current juniors and sophomores also have access to the menu of alternate assessments (the SAT, etc.) and the portfolio appeal process as pathways to complete their [graduation assessment requirement](#). These students are not required to take the NJSLA to access the menu of alternate assessments or the portfolio appeal process.

Refer to the NJDOE's [COVID-19 webpage](#) for more information on these and other issues as it becomes available.

Contact information

We look forward to working with school districts through this unprecedented period. For questions or comments, please contact the NJDOE at assessment@doe.nj.gov.

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