



MEASURING STUDENT LEARNING IN 2021: What will be Different in New Jersey?

Since COVID-19 first led to sudden school closures in 2020, families have stepped up in unprecedented ways to support learning at home as students began learning remotely. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to put plans in place to ensure students are safe, offering students across New Jersey different learning models—remote, hybrid and in-person, with some school districts transitioning between them as circumstances demanded. But the unprecedented changes in learning have impacted students in many ways, from their relationships with peers and social emotional growth to academics.

This year, it is more important than ever to measure student learning to understand the impact that COVID-19 and different learning models have had on students. This is especially important for families, who need objective information about how well their child learned grade-level skills so they can better support learning at home. While state tests are only one of many ways to measure student learning, families, schools and leaders need the objective and actionable information they provide to identify learning gaps to best support students and fully recover from the pandemic. While New Jersey students may not take the NJSLA this spring, families should talk with teachers before summer to discuss results from other measures that may be available and whether their child met the expectations of the grade level.

How will State Tests be Different in 2021?

Knowing that the pandemic has deeply affected students, teachers and schools, the state tests will be different than in the past. New Jersey has asked the U.S. Department of Education to cancel the NJSLA tests for 2021. If this is not approved, students will be required to take the tests. As of March 2021, the following changes have been made:

- **To reduce stress for teachers and students in an already challenging year, results from the NJSLA will not be used to rate schools or districts as they have in the past.**
- **Students graduating this spring will not be required to earn a Level 3 on the English or Algebra 1 NJSLA to receive a diploma.**
- **Districts have a longer window for students to take the test. This will allow teachers additional time to cover content. Districts will have until June 11th for students to complete the test.**