

The background features a large, faint watermark of the Ridgewood Public Schools logo. The logo is circular with the text "RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS" around the perimeter and "EST. 1894" at the bottom. In the center is a stylized building icon.

**START STRONG: FALL 2021
ADMINISTRATIONS**

Ridgewood Public Schools

January 10, 2022

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 and in person.
- 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 New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) schedule will resume for the 2021-2022 school year.

Start Strong Assessment Overview

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 New Jersey Student Learning Standards (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 about student proficiency.

Start Strong Grade and Content Alignment

Content Area	Grade/Course in SY 2021-2022	Content of Assessment
English Language Arts (ELA)	Grade 4	Grade 3
	Grade 5	Grade 4
	Grade 6	Grade 5
	Grade 7	Grade 6
	Grade 8	Grade 7
	Grade 9	Grade 8
	Grade 10	Grade 9
Mathematics	Grade 4	Grade 3
	Grade 5	Grade 4
	Grade 6	Grade 5
	Grade 7	Grade 6
	Grade 8	Grade 7
	Algebra 1	Grade 8*
	Geometry	Grade 8*
Algebra 2	Algebra 1	
Science	Grade 6	Grades 3-5
	Grade 9	Grades 6-8
	Grade 12	Grades 9-11

*Students beginning Algebra I, Geometry, and/or Algebra II in the 2021-2022 school year may have taken different mathematics courses depending on their individual course pathways. The Start Strong Assessments for Algebra I and Geometry are based on the Grade 8 learning standards. The majority of Ridgewood students do not take Grade 8 Math, and Grade 8 Math standards are not prerequisite for success in Geometry and Algebra I.

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, not was it designed to estimate what score a student would have received if they had taken the NJSLA in spring 2021.

Start Strong

Result Interpretation Considerations

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 the student results, aligned to principles and practices outlined in the NJDOE Learning Acceleration Guide
- Using the Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for conversations between parents 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 of Education 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.

Number of Students Tested

Start Strong Fall 2021 Administrations

English Language Arts	Students Tested	Mathematics	Students Tested	Science	Students Tested
ELA04	399	MAT04	398		
ELA05	404	MAT05	404		
ELA06	428	MAT06	431	SC06	425
ELA07	443	MAT 07	443		
ELA08	432	MAT 08	42		
ELA09	445	Algebra I	423	SC09	443
ELA10	412	Geometry	470		
		Algebra II	381	SC12	386
Total	2963	Total	2992	Total	1254

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

Start Strong Fall 2021 Administrations

English Language Arts - Support Levels

Grade	Strong Support Needed	Some Support Needed	Less Support Needed
4	14%	22%	64%
5	8%	16%	77%
6	12%	27%	61%
7	13%	19%	68%
8	13%	17%	70%
9	12%	14%	74%
10	7%	16%	76%

Start Strong Fall 2021 Administrations

Mathematics - Support Levels

Grade	Strong Support Needed	Some Support Needed	Less Support Needed
4	10%	20%	71%
5	14%	24%	62%
6	18%	29%	53%
7	14%	38%	48%
8*	60%	38%	2%
Algebra 1	25%	34%	40%
Geometry	61%	24%	15%
Algebra II	4%	24%	72%

Approximately 30,000 New Jersey students in grade 8 participated in the Algebra I or Geometry assessment. Thus, Math 8 outcomes are not representative of grade 8 performance as a whole. Additionally, Algebra and Geometry outcomes are based on standards in Grade 8 Math, a course most RPS students did not take.

Start Strong Fall 2021 Administrations

Science - Support Levels

Grade	Strong Support Needed	Some Support Needed	Less Support Needed
6	16%	43%	40%
9	19%	54%	27%
12	26%	24%	50%

Notable Achievements

- High participation rates for all tests
- Strong Support Needed on all tests is relatively low



Intervention Strategies

- Start Strong was used as one data point in conjunction with other district measures to identify students for extended day programming in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Teachers continue to adjust pacing and differentiate instruction to meet student needs.
- Balance between academic rigor and mental health/social support is imperative to foster overall student wellbeing.