

NJSLA OVERVIEW

New Jersey has administered statewide assessments since the 1970s; however, the testing program has evolved over the years to coincide with changes that have been made to the state's academic standards, now called the **New Jersey State Learning Standards (NJSLA)**. These standards, adopted in May 2016, changed the expectations in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics to emphasize higher-order thinking skills and not just memorizing information.

In the spring of 2019, New Jersey will transition from its former assessment the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment in both mathematics and English Language Arts. The updated assessments are designed to accurately measure the higher-level skills developed under the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and provide parents and educators with meaningful information to improve teaching and learning.

While the New Jersey State Assessments provide parents and districts with valuable information regarding College and Career Readiness, it is only one data point. When combined with information that educators receive from district assessments, such as NWEA MAPs (Measurements of Academic Progress), Developmental Reading Assessments (ORA), benchmark assessments, and teacher tests and quizzes, a comprehensive student portfolio emerges. This is what we call multiple measures of assessment.

In 2016, The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) published the results of an important study entitled, *Make Assessment Work for All Students: Multiple Measures Matter*. The study revealed that multiple measures of assessment provide "education stakeholders—from state officials to teachers and principals, to students and parents — with the necessary information to adapt the learning process at various levels to meet the needs of each and every student."

WHO WILL TAKE THE NJSLA ASSESSMENTS

NJ students in grades 3-10 are required to participate in the NJSLA test. The tests are intended to measure students' ability to apply their knowledge of concepts in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 are also required to participate in the NJSLA-Science assessment. The math assessments require students to solve problems using mathematical reasoning and to be able to demonstrate understanding of mathematical principles. In English Language Arts (ELA), students will closely read multiple passages, answer comprehension questions, and write essay responses in literary analysis, research tasks, and narrative tasks. In Science, students will be assessed on their ability to utilize Science and Engineering Practices within the context of the Disciplinary Core Ideas to explain phenomena.