



## 2020-2021 New Jersey School Performance Report: FAQ

The following are frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers related to the School Performance Reports.

### 1. Why are some data elements or tables not included in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some data is not available for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey received waivers from the United States Department of Education (USED) in both [March 2020](#) and [March 2021](#) that waived some accountability and reporting requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

Therefore, as a result of these waivers and the cancellation of statewide assessments in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports will not include the following data elements:

- Statewide assessment participation and performance for the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA);
- Student growth data;
- Progress toward English language proficiency;
- ESSA Summative ratings or indicator scores; and
- Status in meeting annual targets or standards for *ESSA* indicators.

NJDOE is aware that other data elements may be impacted by COVID-19 school closures, cancellation of national assessments, and remote instruction/learning. Please pay attention to notes throughout the 2020-2021 reports that explain where there may be concerns about data quality, comparability issues with prior or future data, or where data may not be available or may be altered for the 2020-2021 school year.

For a summary explaining the impact of COVID-19 on the data in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports, see our [Impact of COVID-19 on Data Availability](#) document.

### 2. Where can I view the School Performance Reports?

Visit the [New Jersey School Performance Reports website](#) to see the most recent School Performance Reports, school reports for prior years, the database and additional resources.

### 3. Are Spanish versions of the reports and resource documents available?

Spanish versions of the detailed and summary reports, as well as most resource documents, can be found on the [New Jersey School Performance Reports website](#). After you search for a school or district, you will have the option to run Spanish versions of the Detailed and Summary reports below the English versions. There will also be links to Spanish versions of the resource document at the bottom of the page.

Additionally, there is a Google “Translate” option on the top right of the website that can be used to translate the reports into multiple languages.

### 4. Where does the information in the School Performance Reports come from?

Districts submit most of the data in the School Performance Reports through NJ SMART. This includes:

- Enrollment and Demographics
- Course Participation
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) data
- Graduation and dropout rates
- Discipline data
- Staff data
- School and district narratives

Other data comes directly from testing vendors or outside organizations:

- Statewide assessment data (New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA), Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), ACCESS for ELLs)
- PSAT, SAT, and ACT information
- Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam information
- Postsecondary Enrollment rates

For details on where all report data come from, see the [Performance Report Data Sources](#) document that provides details on every data element in the reports, where it comes from, and when it is collected. Additionally, the [New Jersey School Performance Reports Reference Guide](#) provides information on how data elements are calculated and the source of data in the reports.

#### 5. What do the symbols (\*, \*\*, N, †) in the reports mean?

These symbols help the NJDOE protect student privacy. New Jersey developed guidelines to protect student privacy under the federal Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA). [New Jersey's Data Privacy Rules](#) or the [School Performance Reports Reference Guide](#) provide more information about data privacy rules.

- \* indicates that data was available for fewer than 10 students or the data represents a small percentage of students. There may be some additional cases where the data was kept private because the data could be used to potentially identify individual students.
- \*\* indicates that data was not available for a minimum of 20 students, the required number for a student group to be included in New Jersey's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) accountability system. This will only appear in sections of the report related to ESSA accountability.
- N indicates that no data was available to report. This happens when there are no students enrolled in a particular student group or if no data was submitted by the district.
- † indicates that there is a table specific note below the table.

#### 6. What is the difference between the “Detailed” and “Summary” School Performance Reports?

The “Summary” School Performance Reports were designed to provide parents, educators and communities a summary of how a school or district is performing and preparing students for college and careers relative to the state. The “Summary” reports are available starting with the 2016-2017 reports.

The “Detailed” School Performance Reports contain more specific and detailed information about schools and districts to present a comprehensive picture of school performance. The “Detailed” reports are available for all school years from 2011-2012 to present.

#### 7. Is there a way to see what has changed in this year’s School Performance Reports?

Each year, some data elements may be added or removed from the School Performance Reports based on federal or state requirements, stakeholder engagement, and data quality or data availability. The [School Performance Reports Reference Guide](#) includes a data notes table at the end of each section that includes changes for the most recent reports.

**8. Where does the data reported in the Narrative section of the School Performance Reports come from? Why do some Narratives not include certain categories?**

Districts submit narrative information through the NJ SMART Performance Reports Data submission. This section gives schools and districts the opportunity to share highlights, achievements and other important information about programs, activities, and services that are offered in their own words. Schools and districts can choose the categories that they want to include in their reports, so the reports only show the categories where information was provided.

**9. Why is the enrollment in the School Performance Reports different from the enrollment data on the NJDOE website?**

The enrollment data in the School Performance Reports is based on the end-of-year NJ SMART SID Management snapshot which occurs at the end of June. The enrollment data on the [NJDOE website](#) is based on the fall NJ SMART SID Management snapshot that occurs in mid-October.

Additionally, the enrollment data in the School Performance Reports includes students in contracted Pre-K programs, such as Head Start Programs, in the district and state level totals, but the enrollment data on the NJDOE website does not include these students.

**10. Why are student growth and assessment results from the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years not included in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports?**

As described in #1 above, the NJDOE received a federal waiver in March 2020 that removed the requirement to administer statewide assessments and report on statewide assessment results for the 2019-2020 school year. Statewide assessments, including NJSLA, DLM, and ACCESS for ELLs, were cancelled in spring 2020 as a result of this waiver.

Additionally, the NJSLA was cancelled in spring 2021. The DLM and ACCESS for ELLs assessments were administered in spring 2021. As a result, statewide assessment results for the NJSLA and related accountability measures are not available and will not be reported for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years. Median student growth percentiles (mSGPs) were also not calculated and will not be reported for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years.

**11. Which students are included in SAT and ACT participation and performance results?**

SAT and ACT participation rates represent the percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> graders that took the SAT or ACT at least once during high school. If a 12<sup>th</sup> grader took the test in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade, they would be included in the participation rate.

For the performance results, if students took the SAT or ACT multiple times during high school, the most recent score is used. This aligns with College Board and ACT reporting practices.

**Important note for 2020-2021:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some national administrations of the SAT and ACT were cancelled from spring 2020 through fall 2021 and some test centers had limited testing capacity. As a result, 2020-2021 participation and performance results may have been affected and NJDOE recommends using caution in comparing results for 2020-2021 to prior or future years.

**12. How was PSAT participation and performance calculated? What does it mean that the benchmarks vary by grade?**

The PSAT participation and performance results only include students taking the PSAT 10 and PSAT National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) tests during the 2020-2021 school year. The PSAT 8/9 is not included because it is a different test.

PSAT participation is calculated by taking the number of students taking the PSAT 10 and PSAT NMSQT tests during the school year and dividing by the total end-of-year enrollment for grades 10 and 11. Students typically take the PSAT 10 in grade 10 and the PSAT NMSQT in grades 10 or 11.

College Board has defined separate benchmarks for grades 10 and 11 so there is not a single benchmark for this test like there is for the SAT or ACT. The benchmark each student is expected to meet is based on their reported expected graduation date.

**Important note for 2020-2021:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some national administrations of the PSAT were cancelled from spring 2020 through fall 2021 and some test centers had limited testing capacity. As a result, 2020-2021 participation and performance results may have been affected and NJDOE recommends using caution in comparing results for 2020-2021 to prior or future years.

**13. Why are state averages for chronic absenteeism not included in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports?**

As described in #1 above, the NJDOE received a federal waiver that removed the requirement to report status in meeting annual ESSA targets for the 2020-2021 school year. For chronic absenteeism, the annual target used is the state average, so this is not reported for the 2020-2021 school year.

**14. Additionally, because the number of days students spent in in-person and remote learning environments during the school year differed, the NJDOE recommends caution in comparing 2020-2021 attendance data between schools and districts and to prior or future school years. Is discipline data for 2020-2021 comparable to data from prior years?**

While discipline data is reported for the 2020-2021 school year, due to changes in student learning environments (e.g. hybrid, in-person, remote) it may not be comparable to prior or future years and NJDOE recommends caution in making comparisons.

**15. Are 2021 graduation rates comparable to graduation rates from prior years?**

The federal waivers did not waive any requirements for reporting or calculating graduation rates for the 2021 cohort. However, [Executive Order 214](#), signed January 11, 2021 by Governor Phil Murphy, waived the [graduation assessment requirement](#) for any 12th grade student who had not yet met the graduation assessment requirements, but had met all credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements.

Students whose graduation assessment requirements were waived as a result of Executive Order 214 are still counted as graduates in the 2021 graduation rate. Information on the percentage of students whose graduation assessment requirements were waived is included in the Graduation Pathways table in the Graduation section of the reports.

**16. What is the difference between the state graduation rates and the federal graduation rates reported in the 2020-2021 school performance reports?**

Beginning with 2021 graduation rates, the NJDOE was required to make changes to the methodology used to calculate the adjusted cohort graduation rate for federal reporting and accountability purposes. USED determined that the NJDOE must include only those students who receive a diploma that is fully aligned with the state's standards, meaning they have met the state's graduation assessment requirements, course requirements, and local attendance requirements. This means that students who did not meet some or all graduation requirements because of modifications or exemptions in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may not be counted as graduates in the calculation of the adjusted cohort graduation rate used for federal reporting and accountability purposes.

As a result of this requirement, the NJDOE is now calculating and reporting two versions of the adjusted cohort graduation rate starting with 2021 graduation rates. The "state version" will continue to use the same methodology as previously used and will include all students who receive a state-endorsed diploma as graduates. In the 2020-2021 reports, the "state version" appears in the

Summary Reports, Graduation Rate Trends and Progress tables, and the Graduation Cohort Profiles.

The “federal version” will align with ESSA requirements and will be used for federal reporting and ESSA school accountability. For the 2020-2021 school year, students with disabilities who did not meet either the state course requirements and/or local attendance requirements for graduation because of a modification or exemption in their IEP will not be included in the graduates count (the numerator) when calculating the “federal version” of the graduation rate. In the 2020-2021 report, the “federal version” appears only in the new Federal Graduation Rates table.

**17. Which staff members are included in the teacher and administrator counts?**

Districts submit staff data through the NJ SMART SMID Management and Staff Submissions. Staff data submitted as of the fall snapshot is used in the School Performance Reports.

Job codes are used to identify different staff member types:

- **Teachers:** 1000-2999, 4000, 4001
- **Administrators:** 0100-0600
- **Librarian/Media Specialists:** 0003, 3105
- **Nurses:** 0007, 0008, 3114, 3115
- **Counselors:** 0001, 0002, 3100, 3101
- **Child Study Team Members:** 0009, 0010, 0011, 3116, 3117, 3118

**18. How were the indicators in the ESSA accountability system determined and how were the indicator scores and summative scores and ratings calculated?**

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, stakeholders from across the state collaborated with the NJDOE to develop, within the legal confines of ESSA, the ESSA accountability system that is reported in the School Performance Reports. See New Jersey’s [approved ESSA state plan](#) for more information.

More information about how indicator scores and summative scores and ratings were calculated can be found in [NJDOE’s ESSA accountability resources](#).

**19. How is accountability data in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and federal waivers?**

As described in #1 above, the NJDOE received federal waivers in both 2020 and 2021 that removed the following accountability requirements:

- Calculate indicator scores and summative scores for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years;
- Measure progress toward long-term goals and measures of interim progress for accountability indicators for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and
- Identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years (based on 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 data, respectively).

As a result of these waivers, any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement during the 2019-2020 school year will retain the same status for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years and continue to receive support and interventions from the NJDOE. All currently identified schools will be eligible to exit status at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

The 2020-2021 Accountability Indicator Scores and Summative Ratings and Accountability Summary by Student Group tables will not be included in the report for 2020-2021 as these tables include indicator scores, summative scores, and progress toward long-term goals and the requirement to report those measures was waived under the federal waiver.

**20. Who should I contact if I have questions or would like to provide feedback or suggested improvements to the report?**

NJDOE welcomes public feedback. Please fill out our [feedback survey](#). You can also email [reportcard@doe.nj.gov](mailto:reportcard@doe.nj.gov) with feedback or any questions.

**21. Where can I find additional information?**

Click the links below to learn more about each of the topics listed:

- [ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 English Language Proficiency test](#)
- [ACT test](#)
- [Advanced Placement \(AP\) courses and tests \(College Board\)](#)
- [Attendance/Absenteeism data](#)
- [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\)](#)
- [Dynamic Learning Maps \(DLM\) alternate assessment](#)
- [Dropout rates](#)
- [Graduation Assessment Requirements](#)
- [Graduation rates](#)
- [International Baccalaureate \(IB\) courses and tests](#)
- [NJDOE Finance District Report Search](#)
- [National Student Clearinghouse \(postsecondary enrollment\)](#)
- [New Jersey Digital Learning and Assessment](#)
- [New Jersey's ESSA state plan](#)
- [New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy](#)
- [New Jersey Student Learning Assessment \(NJSLA\)](#)
- [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#)
- [New Jersey User-Friendly Budgets](#)
- [PSAT and SAT tests \(College Board\)](#)
- [Staff Certification and Induction](#)
- [Student Growth Percentiles \(SGP\)](#)
- [Suspensions and expulsions](#)
- [Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse reports](#)
- [Visual and Performing Arts](#)