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Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s):

Each year, your child participates in a number of assessments that are either mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education or are administered by the District to assist us in determining individual student educational levels. Each of these assessments also assists us in developing instructional practices that meet the needs of our students based on the data collected. Furthermore, these assessments assist us in revising our curricula to be certain we are providing our students with the best possible programming. This letter serves as information regarding the assessments your child will participate in during the 2021-2022 school year.

**New Jersey Start Strong Assessments:** These statewide assessments, which are aligned to a small set of standards from last year, will help educators understand the level of support that students need to be successful this year. The NJ Start Strong Assessment window will take place from September 13, 2021 - October 22, 2021. The results will complement our classroom measures to guide instruction for all students. Additional information and specific schedules for the NJ Start Strong Assessments will be sent home by your child's school as we near the administration.

<https://nj.mypearsonsupport.com/resources/educator-resources/startStrong/Fall%202021%20Administration%20Information%20for%20Parents.pdf>

**New Jersey Student Learning Assessments:** Students will continue to participate in the statewide NJSLA, which provides us with rich information that helps to strengthen our educational programming in ELA and Math. The NJSLA window will take place from April 25, 2022 - June 3, 2022. Additional information and specific schedules for the NJSLA will be sent home by your child's principal as we near the administration.

Additionally, some of our students will participate in standardized assessments in science as mandated by the NJDOE. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will participate in the NJSLA Science assessments during the NJSLA window as well. <https://nj.mypearsonsupport.com/ForParent/>

It is important to note that if any student is permitted extra time or any other accommodations by their IEP, all accommodations and accessibility options will be followed for the Start Strong, NJSLA, and science assessments. In some instances, as per a student's IEP, the student may participate in an alternate proficiency assessment entitled the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM). If you have any concerns regarding these, please contact your child's case manager who will be able to assist you.

**Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System (GOLD)** District Pre-K students will participate in Gold Assessments. This is a **formative assessment system** that has been designed and extensively validated for use with young children ages birth to kindergarten. Families will meet with their classroom teachers and be provided with an assessment report three times a year (fall, winter, and spring).

**STAR Renaissance Assessments:** Students in grades K-11 will participate in STAR assessments. We introduced this assessment as a means to improve our ability to determine your child's

instructional level, as well as allow the classroom teacher to measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year, in the areas of Math and Reading. Your child will participate in the STAR assessment 3-4 times during the school year so that we can measure progress made during the year, creating a longitudinal picture of your child's educational growth. More information regarding the STAR testing may be found at <https://www.renaissance.com/2016/09/09/parents-guide-star-assessments/>

**Advanced Placement Exams:** Students at Columbia High School who participate in any of our Advanced Placement courses will also participate in the AP testing. This assessment window will take place from May 2, 2022 - May 13, 2022, for the following courses:  
<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/exam-calendar>

Individual student grade reports will be sent to your homes directly from the College Board. Information about Advanced Placement tests can be found at  
<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/exploreap/for-parents>.

**Teachers College Reading Assessment:**

Students in grades K-8 are given this assessment 2-3 times a year based on their benchmark scores. Students work one-to-one with a teacher to assess their fluency, accuracy, and literal/interpretive comprehension of a text. This information is used to support the student as a reader.

**Early Reading Assessment:**

Students in grades K-2 are given this assessment to determine readiness in literacy, math, and small motor skills to understand a student's needs better.

**Language Assessment:**

Students in grades K-2 are given a phonics assessment, 3-5 a spelling assessment, 6-8 a vocabulary assessment, 9-12 a grammar assessment - this information is used to support the student as a language learner.

**PAR Assessment:**

The Predictive Assessment of Reading (PAR) screening given twice a year in 1st grade (new students to the district in 2nd grade) provides the classroom teacher and building administrators with information that can inform instruction and indicate students at risk for various reading difficulties. In addition, the assessment highlights areas that might become obstacles in a student's current and future reading proficiencies.

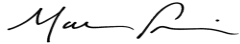
**Writing Assessment:**

Students in grades K-12 are assessed twice a year to determine grade level proficiency for writing skills in narrative and non-narrative genres of writing. This information is used to support the students as a writer.

**ACCESS Assessment:** All students, K-12, who attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or were found eligible for ESL, but declined services will participate in ACCESS for ELLs testing during the assessment window from February 14, 2022 - April 8, 2022. ACCESS for ELLs is given annually to monitor students' progress in learning academic English, which is a U.S. federal requirement of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Students are assessed in the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. More information about ACCESS for ELLs testing may be accessed at <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>.

As a district, we continue to discuss assessments, and how we can make them a part of our program without impeding too much on teaching within the classroom. We believe that the schedule shared with you within this letter allows us to satisfy all mandated testing requirements, along with allowing us, on a district level, to track progress without being overwhelming to our students. We will continue to monitor our practices during the school year so we can reflect and enhance the process in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Friedman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Matthew Friedman