

**SERIES 2000-2001**

**CIRCULAR LETTER: C-3**

**TO:** Superintendents of Schools  
Directors of Special Education  
School Principals  
District Test Coordinators

**FROM:** Theodore S. Sergi  
Commissioner of Education

**SUBJECT:** Participation of Special Education Students on the 2000-2001 Connecticut Mastery Test/Connecticut Academic Performance Test and Accuracy in Reporting on All Students

**DATE:** July 25, 2000

This letter serves as a follow-up to Circular Letter C-14, issued on March 17, 2000, in which new statewide testing requirements, expectations and reporting issues, particularly with regard to special education students, were discussed. Two separate issues are important to reiterate. For your convenience, you may access a copy of Circular Letter C-14 from the Department's web-site ([www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)).

1. As you know, the 2000–2001 school year begins the third generation of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and brings, as well, new federal requirements that all special education students in grades 4, 6 and 8 must participate in the standard administration of the CMT or an alternate assessment. Two alternate assessment options have been developed and are outlined in the *Assessment Guidelines, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2000*, available on the Department's web-site ([www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)). Department staff have conducted statewide training for test coordinators and special education administrators on these options and the federal requirements.

As noted in Circular Letter C-14, it is the Department's expectation, consistent with federal expectations, that **80 percent or more of all special education youngsters will participate in each subtest of the standard grade-level version of the CMT.** More specifically, it is expected that:

- no more than 15 percent of the special education population in any district will participate in Alternate Assessment Option #1 - Out-of-Level Testing, **and**
- no more than 5 percent will participate in Alternate Assessment Option #2 - The CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist.

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Please be advised that districts unable to stay within the 15 and 5 percent parameters for participation will be identified for an on-site audit by the Department and will be required to provide an analysis of all exemptions from standard grade-level testing. Districts not meeting the targeted participation rates will be flagged as being non-comparable in the state and district score reporting which occurs in early February.

**I urge all superintendents to receive assurances this summer from their special education administrators and test coordinators that these guidelines will be met.**

2. In view of these new requirements, every student in grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 must be accounted for. In order to do this, student information on the appropriate CMT or CAPT forms must be completed for **every student**, whether tested on the standard or non-standard tests, exempted or absent. **It is imperative that the coding be accurate and complete** since this information will be reported (e.g., race and gender achievement; special education; bilingual and ELL achievement, etc.) in the release of the state and district results. Furthermore, the total number of student information forms should be highly consistent with your October 1 enrollment data (ED006).

**I urge all superintendents to instruct their test coordinators and principals to develop and use a process to ensure the accuracy of the data submitted on all students.**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the federal requirement or reporting of student information, please call Dr. Douglas Rindone, Chief, Bureau of Student Assessment and Research, at 860-566-1684, Dr. Peter Behuniak, Director of Student Assessment and Testing, at 860-566-2201, or George Dowaliby, Chief, Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services, at 860-807-2025.

Thank you.

TSS:sk