



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads
FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer
RE: August Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation
DATE: August 2, 2013

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the fifth installment of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Academic Office monthly newsletter. We hope you will find helpful information within the newsletter that will support your district's implementation efforts of the Common Core State Standards and that you will be able to forward onto educators.

Featured in this newsletter:

- **Common Core District Lead Revisions**
- **Videos about the Common Core for Teacher Professional Development**
- **Governor Malloy Announces \$10 Million Technology Grant for Schools**
- **Technology Readiness Tool 3.0—Tool for District Leaders**
- **Algebra I Curriculum and Mathematics Unit Planning Organizers**

Common Core District Lead Revisions

The 2013-2014 school year is quickly approaching and as summer ends, the Academic Office is requesting any updates regarding Common Core District Leads. We hope that you have found our new approach, communicating directly with Common Core District Leads, collaborative and effective as we will continue communicating through the District Leads in order to facilitate a smooth transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments and continued implementation of the Common Core. Should you need to make any changes, please inform the CSDE via email at emily.byrne@ct.gov.

Videos about the Common Core for Teacher and Leader Professional Development

These two videos from the *Teaching Channel* may be informative for [STEM teachers in grades 6-8](#) or [English language arts teachers in grades 9-12](#). Standards Covered: The math standard covered is Math.8.EE.8c, Math.8.SP.1, and Math.8.SP.2. The ELA standards covered are ELA.RL.11-12.5

Additional videos: Here is a video that may be helpful for teachers and leaders who want to explore new ways of [helping students learn difficult vocabulary](#). Please note that research based practices are used. Here is a video that may be helpful for teachers who want to help students [use the SIFT method to analyze literature](#).

Governor Malloy Announces \$10 Million Technology Grant for Schools

Governor Dannel P. Malloy and Commissioner Stefan Pryor, announced last week the release of a \$10 million competitive technology grant for Connecticut school districts to bring more computers into classrooms and to increase Internet bandwidth capacity. Awards will be dependent on an applicant's ability to meet the submission requirements and will be determined in accordance with a town wealth measure based on a 20 percent-80 percent sliding scale. Many of the tools that may help you complete this application can be found in previous newsletters. Proposal Deadline: Friday, August 16, 2013.

For complete details of the RFP: [RFP #801](#). If you have questions to the information above, please contact Emily Byrne via email at emily.byrne@ct.gov.

Technology Readiness Tool 3.0

The CSDE has periodically sent information regarding the Technology Readiness Tool, which allows districts to identify potential issues (at schools or within your district) based on the results and indicators. Additionally, the reports will help inform technology related decisions for your district and help in your transition to the Smarter Balanced assessment system. It's important to note that completion and printouts of the Technology Readiness Tool are requirements of RFP #801.

The release of Technology Readiness Tool 3.0 is scheduled for August 9, 2013. There are a number of small changes to the system, as well as a few larger changes. The two most important changes for you to be aware of are as follows:

- *First*, data validation now requires LEAs to fill-in all information before you are able to mark a school's data complete, otherwise validation will show a status of "error." If any required fields are left blank, the school's completion status will be changed from "Yes" to "No."
 - Required School Readiness Survey Fields include estimated internet bandwidth, estimated internal network bandwidth, estimated internet bandwidth utilization, estimated internal network utilization, length of testing window in school days, number of sessions per day, and grades K-12 enrollment counts.
 - Required Device Fields include count of devices, operating systems, memory, screen resolution, monitor/display size, and assessment environment.
- *Second*, validation will warn users of atypical data on the completion page. If users confirm the information submitted is in fact accurate, they can mark their organization's data complete. Listed below are the five atypical data checks performed on school organization data:
 1. High grade level enrollments – grade level enrollments greater than or equal to 4 standard deviations from the median enrollment for the given grade.
 2. Bandwidth utilization irregularity – non-zero bandwidth utilization entries that are greater than or equal to 90% OR less than or equal to 5%.
 3. Devices – schools with no device data provided.
 4. Device-to-test-taker ratio – device-to-test-taker ratios that are greater than two devices for every student.
 5. Sessions per day – schools indicating more than or equal to 4 sessions per day.

If you have questions to the information above, please contact Abe Krisst via email at abe.krisst@ct.gov.

Algebra I Curriculum and Mathematics Unit Planning Organizers

[Algebra I Curriculum](#) and [Mathematics Unit Planning Organizers](#) are now available. The Connecticut Mathematics Unit Planning Organizers are designed to be a resource for developers of curriculum. The documents feature standards organized in units with key concepts and skills identified, and a suggested pacing guide for the unit. The information in the unit planning organizers can easily be placed into the curriculum model in use at the local level during the revision process. It is expected that local and/or regional curriculum development teams determine the "big ideas" and accompanying "essential questions" as they complete the units with critical vocabulary, suggested instructional strategies, activities and resources. [PLEASE NOTE: All standards are important and are eligible for inclusion on the large scale assessment to be administered during the 2014-15 school year.]

Instructions for accessing the Algebra I Resources can be found [here](#). If you have questions to the information above, please contact Charlene Tate Nichols via email at charlene.tate.nichols@ct.gov.