



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads
FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer
RE: November Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation
DATE: November 4, 2013

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the eighth 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:

- **Technology Grant—Update**
- **Connecticut Revising the Social Studies Framework**
- **The “Word Gap”**
- **2013-2014 LEA Assessment Option—Update**
- **Spotlight on District Exemplars**

Technology Grant—Update

We have been informed that an official announcement will be made in November. Thank you again to the LEAs that submitted a response to the “Technology Investments to Implement Common Core State Standards and administer Common Core aligned assessments, specifically Smarter Balanced Assessments” RFP. The CSDE received 128 proposals representing 128 towns. The CSDE will be reaching out to districts directly in the coming weeks.

Connecticut Revising the Social Studies Framework

The existing Social Studies Framework dates back to 1998 and guides Connecticut educators in the instruction of social studies for K-12 students. The CSE has assembled a team of content area specialists to revise the frameworks to be inclusive of the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and the Technical Subjects and mindful of the recently released national standards framework for College, Career and Civic Life (known as the C3 Framework). The committee charged with revising the Social Studies Framework is led by 1) Stephen Armstrong, Social Studies Department Supervisor, West Hartford Public Schools and President of the National Council for the Social Studies; 2) Dr. John Day Tully, Professor of History and Teacher Effectiveness at Central Connecticut State University and Past-President of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies; and 3) David Bosso, Social Studies Teacher, Berlin High School, Board of Directors of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, and the 2012 Connecticut Teacher of the Year. The committee has assembled five writing teams as well as a large and diverse review committee. The committee the CSDE Academic Office has set an ambitious timeline for development of the K-12 Social Studies Framework and potential adoption by the State Board of Education this academic year.

The “Word Gap”

We all know that children's oral language development is crucial to their academic success. The questions—what words and how to teach them? Esther Quintero, a senior research associate with the Albert Shanker Institute, writes an interesting [blog](#) on why the “word gap” is more than about words.

2013-2014 LEA Assessment Option—Update

Thank you to all the LEAs that submitted their assessment option form. 17 LEAs have chosen to administer the CMT. 12 LEAs have chosen to administer the CAPT and 163 LEAs have chosen to administer the Smarter Balanced Field Test for Grades 3-8. 133 LEAs have chosen to administer the Smarter Balanced Field Test for Grade 11 and 3 LEAs have chosen to administer both the CMT and Smarter Balanced Field Test in Grades 3-8 and 5 LEAs have chosen to administer both the CAPT and Smarter Balanced Field Test in Grade 11. 2 LEA will default to the CMT and CAPT. We are no longer accepting Connecticut LEA assessment option forms for the 2013-14 school year. [NOTE: Some LEAs may only house elementary or middle or high school grades.]

LEAs that have chosen the CMT/CAPT will proceed as they have done in the past. Administration information will be provided directly to District Test Coordinators (DTCs). DTC information can be edited on the Measurement Incorporated [website](#). (Once the main user logs in, you will be able to update contact information in the DCV section.) Training on the CMT/ CAPT administration will not be provided for DTCs this school year.

LEAs that have chosen the Smarter Balanced Field Test have already received or will soon receive a communication sent to the DTC from the Assessment Bureau. The email includes instructions for each LEA to indicate their testing windows and numbers of students assessed during these windows. **We have asked that DTCs complete the information in the files and return them to the CSDE by Wednesday, November 8, 2013.** Each LEA Common Core District Lead or Superintendent must sign-off on the files prior to returning them to the CSDE. Completed files should be emailed to marlene.chameroy@ct.gov and emily.byrne@ct.gov.

Smarter Balanced Field Test – Participation Information

Students are required to take both the Mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) assessments. Each student will be administered the following:

- A set of “Computer Adaptive Test” (CAT) items for each content area
- One performance task for Math with a Classroom Activity
- One two-part performance task for ELA with a Classroom Activity

[CAT items are those items being developed for computer adaptive delivery on the operational test, but will be delivered as fixed form sets of items for the field test.] The Classroom Activity for each Performance Task will be administered sometime during the week before the Performance Task is administered. The testing window opens on March 18 and closes June 6. Schools may assess students at any time during the testing window. The Smarter Balanced assessments are not timed. However, for scheduling purposes, participating schools should plan for approximately 3.5 hours of testing per grade and content area. Testing is intended to be administered over multiple sessions of about 45 minutes each, but may be administered in shorter or longer sessions as appropriate for the students and the school. (There is a pause feature that allows a test to be resumed at a later time either the same day or on a subsequent day; the student is not allowed to go back to previous items.) The Field Test will approximate the length of the 2015 operational assessments.

Spotlight on District Exemplars

The CSDE is vetting exemplar classroom units and lessons aligned to the Common Core to eventually be shared with districts and we invite you to submit a unit or lesson for alignment vetting. Selected exemplars will be posted on our new website (currently under construction). If you are willing to share your exemplars with us, please contact Ellen Cohn via email at ellen.cohn@ct.gov.