



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the seventh 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:

- Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System—Professional Development
- Common Core State Standards *NEW* Website
- Technology Grant—Update
- School Counselor Role in Common Core Implementation—Tool for School Counselors
- What is the Common Core?—Tools for Parents
- Parents' Attitudes on the Quality of Education in the United States
- 2013-2014 LEA Assessment Option—ATTACHED
- Spotlight on District Exemplars

Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System—Professional Development

SAVE THE DATE! This Assessment Literacy workshop will provide participants with information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. District teams will participate in a one-day workshop that will include an overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System and an overview of the assessment system specific to Mathematics or English language arts/Literacy (ELA). Content specific presentations will be delivered in concurrent breakout sessions. Participants in both groups will examine the key shifts of the Common Core State Standards relevant to the content, and ascertain how the Smarter Balanced assessments will be used to provide overall indicators of progress toward college and career readiness.

[NOTE: The one-day workshop will run from 8:30AM – 3:30PM on November 13, 14, 18, and 19 and will cover either math or ELA. Registration will be limited to two educators per local educational agency (LEA). Preference will be given to LEAs that administered the CSDE Common Core aligned practice assessment as indicated on their 2013 Memorandum of Collaboration.]

Common Core State Standards *NEW* Website

COMING SOON: The CSDE will be unveiling a new website devoted to the Common Core for Connecticut educators, families, and students this month! This will be a one-stop site for all things Common Core. Resources, tools, and annotated units and lessons will be available for teachers; helpful information will be posted for families and students. An official announcement will be forthcoming.

Technology Grant—Update

Thank you 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. Overall, the proposals were outstanding and a true testament to your leadership and commitment to the Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessment System. Awardees will be notified later this month.

School Counselor Role in Common Core Implementation—Tool for School Counselors

The American Counseling Association created a [document](#) with the top ten things a school counselor should consider if their state is following the Common Core Standards. We encourage district leaders and school counselors to read and share this document.

What is the Common Core?—Tools for Parents

NPR aired a short but comprehensive [clip on the Common Core](#). Though the clip is from a national perspective it airs the main issues that may be helpful for communications purposes to parents.

The National PTA® Parents' Guide to Student Success was developed in response to the Common Core. They created the guides for grades K-8 and two for grades 9-12 (one for English language arts/ literacy and one for mathematics). [Two-page Parents' Guide](#) and [Four-page Parents' Guides](#)

Parents' Attitudes on the Quality of Education in the United States

The Associated Press released the results of a poll, which surveyed parents' views of tests and the Common Core. The survey, conducted by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, found:

- *52 PERCENT OF PARENTS* have heard little or nothing about the Common Core and a third are unsure if they live in a state using them. Still, when given a brief description of what the standards do, about half of parents say educational quality will improve once the standards are implemented, 11 percent think it will get worse, and 27 percent say they'll have no effect.

One of the biggest questions regarding the Common Core is what to do with test results given the discussion around the drops that may occur.

- *93 PERCENT OF PARENTS SAY* standardized tests should be used to identify areas where students need extra help. Smaller majorities think such tests should be used to measure school quality, evaluate teachers or determine whether or not students are promoted or can graduate.

The [AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey](#) was conducted June 21 through July 22, 2013.

The nationally representative poll, conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago, involved landline and cellphone interviews in English or Spanish with 1,025 parents of children who completed grades K through 12 in the last school year. Results for the full sample have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.1 percentage points; it is larger for subgroups.

2013-2014 LEA Assessment Option—ATTACHED

In a July 18, 2013 letter to Superintendents, we addressed the 2013 CMT and CAPT Data Release and 2013-2014 State Assessment Update. As a reminder, our intention is to seek the U.S. Department of Education's authorization to provide Connecticut school districts with new flexibility on statewide standardized tests. Attached to this email is a memo that outlines some of the key differences between the legacy CMT/CAPT and the Smarter Balanced Assessment options that we can share at this time. It has already been shared with special education directors and district test coordinators. An option form will be forthcoming.

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