



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads
FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer
RE: May Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation
DATE: July 12, 2013

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the fourth 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:

- **What is the Common Core?—Tool for Parents**
- **Videos about the Common Core for Teacher Professional Development**
- **Student Achievement Partners Releases New Tools—Tool for Teachers**
- **Changing Role of the ESL Teacher**
- **Institute for Education Sciences to Study Common Core Implementation Best Practices**
- **District Assessment Survey**
- **Spotlight on District Exemplars**

What is the Common Core?—Tool for Parents

NPR recently aired [a 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). The [Two-page Parents' Guide](#) includes:

- Key items that children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade, once the standards are fully implemented.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career (high school only).

Black and white versions of the four-page Parent Guides Color versions of the four-page Parent Guides

- [Four-page Parents' Guides](#) (Black and white)
- [Four-page Parents' Guides](#) (Color)

Videos about the Common Core for Teacher Professional Development

These two videos from the *Teaching Channel* may be informative for [math teachers in grades K-2](#) or [English language arts teachers in grades 6-8](#). Standards Covered: The math standards covered are Math.2.NBT.1a, Math .2.NBT.2, Math.Practice.MP5. The ELA standards covered are ELA.RL.6.1, ELA.RL.6.5, and ELA.SL.6.1c.

Additional videos: Here is a video that may be helpful for teachers who want to [use video to improve practice](#). Here is a video that may be helpful for teachers who want to use research-based practices for [vocabulary instruction of complex texts in technical subjects](#).

Student Achievement Partners Releases New Tools—Tool for Teachers

Student Achievement Partners recently launched an upgraded [website](#). We know that many districts are already using this excellent source for all things Common Core but wanted to highlight two new resources that may help district and school leaders in the implementation of Common Core.

- [Evidence guides for instructional practice that provide specific guidance for what the CCSS for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics look like in planning and practice](#); they are designed as developmental tools for teachers and those who support teachers.
- [10 sample close reading lessons](#) that contain full lesson materials, which are written by teachers and contains material for up to five lessons including readings with teacher and student instructions, text dependent questions, student discussion activities, vocabulary and syntax tasks for challenging words and phrases, and writing-based formative assessments.

Changing Role of the ESL Teacher

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) has [released a report](#) summarizing discussions that took place during a convening of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and administrators, experts, and thought leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to give ESL teachers a venue to speak about the Common Core State Standards and discuss their role in implementation. Since the Common Core seeks to ensure all students are college and career ready, ESL teachers will have an important role to play in successful implementation.

Institute for Education Sciences to Study Common Core Implementation Best Practices

The Institute of Education Sciences is encouraging applications to study the Common Core State Standards, within the Continuous Improvement Education Research topic of the Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy program. The Continuous Improvement topic funds partnerships that apply an iterative approach to improving the implementation of policies, programs, or approaches aimed at improving student outcomes. Within this topic, the Institute is encouraging applications from partnerships within a state or district that is taking an innovative approach to implementing the Common Core standards. In the case that an application is accepted to study the Common Core State Standards, grant funds would be used to adapt the approach to implementing the Common Core standards; collect data to track implementation; and iteratively refine the approach to work within the target environment.

The Institute will fund up to 4 grants of up to \$2.5 million each under this topic during fiscal year 2014. Grants will be reviewed and awarded on a competitive basis by an independent review panel. Those interested in applying to this grant program should visit the [information page](#) or contact one of the program directors: Dr. James Benson, James.Benson@ed.gov or Dr. Amanda Hoffman, Amanda.Hoffman@ed.gov. *Applications are due on September 4, 2013.*

District Assessment Survey

The CSDE is conducting an informal survey of the various local formative, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments being used. If you are currently using a district-created assessment and are willing to share it with us, please contact Emily Byrne via email at emily.byrne@ct.gov.

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 a new website currently under construction. If you are willing to share your exemplars with us, please contact Emily Byrne via email at emily.byrne@ct.gov.