



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Common Core District Leads
FROM: Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer *DRW*
RE: February Newsletter: Common Core State Standards Implementation
DATE: February 6, 2014

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This is the monthly 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, (CCSS) as well as other key standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment topics. We hope that you will forward all useful items on to colleagues and that you will provide us with feedback to improve this communication.

New Website Supports Curriculum Alignment for CCSS Implementation

In Connecticut, our approach to Common Core State Standards Implementation is framed by our five Cs of Curriculum Alignment, Capacity Building, Communication, Coherence among initiatives and Collaboration. Our curriculum alignment work is intended to support local districts in their unique contexts though providing resources and models on a new Website, <http://ctcorestandards.org/>. During 2013, educators representing both K-12 and higher education collaborated in Content Clusters to apply rigorous tools to judge the alignment of curricular resources to the Common Core State Standards. Resources at our site have been reviewed by experts trained in the Tri-State and Equip rubrics. Each unit or lesson published at our site has met a high standard and is accompanied by guidance for implementation. We look forward to your feedback on our new Website and also encourage you to share resources that you have found useful in your district or school. If you have questions about resources on this site or suggestions for other resources, please e-mail Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov.

National Core Arts Standards Posted for Review

Draft National Core Arts Standards are posted and available [online](#) as of January 30, so that educators can download and review them in preparation to provide [online feedback](#) from February 14-28. Draft standards and Model Cornerstone Assessments are available for five arts areas: [dance](#), [music](#), [theatre](#), [visual arts](#) and [media arts](#). These new National Coalition for Core Arts Standards are expected to serve as the foundation for updating [Connecticut's current arts standards](#). Connecticut arts educators and program leaders are invited to participate in facilitated focus groups to review and provide feedback on the draft art and music standards during the 8:30 a.m., February 13, meeting of the [Connecticut Arts Administrators Association](#), held at the [Meriden Public Library](#). Individuals or district teams interested in participating in these focus groups, or in facilitating or participating in dance and theatre focus groups, should contact CAAA President Mike Ances at ancesm@monroeps.org

The Common Core Shifts

A new video presented by Student Achievement Partners, focuses on the Common Core shifts in mathematics. This 5-minute video addresses how the math standards push teachers to significantly narrow and deepen the way time and energy is spent in the math classroom rather than racing to cover topics in a mile-wide, inch-deep curriculum. <http://www.achievethecore.org/shifts-mathematics>

Announcing Upcoming Opportunity for Teachers

LearnZillion, in partnership with the CSDE, will select 100 talented teachers from across the state to join a Connecticut Dream Team of Common Core ambassadors. We are looking for teachers who want to broaden their impact, learn from a community of experts and challenge themselves in new and exciting ways. These teachers will attend “TeachFest” in April 2014, alongside other ultra-talented Connecticut teachers and Common Core coaches from around the country. Connecticut Dream Team Teachers will become statewide ambassadors for Common Core and the goal of college and career readiness for every student and help to lead a Common Core Fest later in the summer. Watch for an announcement regarding this opportunity. Details will be included in a dedicated announcement in the March Newsletter and at our new Website <http://ctcorestandards.org/> Questions? Contact Jennifer.Webb@ct.gov .

Smarter Balanced Update – Training Test

Smarter Balanced has a Training Test for students. The Training Test is designed to provide a means for students and teachers to quickly become familiar with the features of the Smarter Balanced assessment software interface. The full suite of accessibility and accommodations features will not be included in the Training Test until February 10, 2014. On that date, all accessibility and accommodations features will be available on the Training Test, with the exception of American Sign Language (ASL) videos. These videos will be added to the Training Test as soon as possible. <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/>

Field Test Administration Manual – See Attachment

Field Test Administration Manual release — The Smarter Balanced Field Test Administration Manual was posted to the Smarter Balanced web portal on Wednesday, January 29. The Test Administration Manual, developed with input from Consortium member states, will provide information and instructions for Test Coordinators and Test Administrators administering the Spring 2014 Field Test. Please see the attached letter that was sent to Superintendents and District Test Coordinators last week. If you have questions please contact Gail.Pagano@ct.gov .

Smarter Balanced Field Test Parent and Guardian Notification Letter Template – See Attachment

The attached letter can be personalized to meet your district or school needs in order to inform parents of Field Test window and purpose of the Smarter Balanced Field Test.

TIMSS Advanced Field Testing March 17 – April 14, 2014

A group of Connecticut high schools has been selected to participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Advanced field test this spring. Results of the TIMSS Advanced operational assessment in 2015 will provide educational policymakers with valuable information about how many high school students are excelling at highly specialized STEM content in a global context. The field test will be administered to a sample of seniors who have taken, or are taking, calculus or advanced physics courses. The purpose of the TIMSS Advanced field test is both to determine whether new questions are valid and fair for U.S. students and to help ensure that TIMSS field operations will be effective for the main study in 2015. The TIMSS Advanced field test will be administered to no more than 25 seniors in every sampled school by trained administrators. Principals of schools selected to participate in the field test will be notified no later than next week.

Connecticut Historical Society Invite – This Discussion is History! – See Attachment

The Connecticut Historical Society is offering programs that may interest many educators. Please see the attached flyer.